

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **National Curriculum Statement policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

Chapter 4 concentrated on public policy analysis; approaches to policy-making processes and the five critical variables that have an influence on policy implementation. In this chapter the National Curriculum Statement as education policy and assessment practices shall be highlighted.

Politics play a major role in the nature and character of educational practices in any democracy. With the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, it became necessary to develop an education system that was also based on the principle of transparency. Educational reform is therefore a product of political struggle in which the ruling party would like to influence and implement policies that conform to the reforms that were conceptualized according to the needs identified and in line with party policies.

Like any reform the assessment policies emerged as a result of political processes that were aimed at changing the assessment practice of the previous education system. The assessment practices were primarily based on pen-and-paper activities.

In this chapter, the National Curriculum Statement and various curriculum policy documents that assist educators in the implementation of the National

Curriculum Statement shall be discussed. Assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning and how assessment should be managed shall also be discussed.

## **2. Rationale for the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement.**

Prior to 1994, the system of education that was followed in South Africa was based on racial lines, influenced by apartheid ideology and doctrine. The education policies, education administration and education structure were developed in such a way that the education provision including funding, were designed in a manner that some learners from certain sections of the communities should not benefit, educationally, on equal basis as other races. The control of education, what the curriculum should entail and the training system was not based on democratic principles. The major stakeholder in education including teachers, parents, students and workers in educational institutions were excluded from decision-making processes.

In 1995, the South African government initiated processes to develop a new curriculum that ushered a new system for schools to follow. This system was influenced, among others, by technological changes that enable future labour force to use these technologies in the workplace as well as in their individual daily life; growth and development as well as globalisation that would required that people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be equipped with skills and knowledge that would enable them to compete in the global market on an equal footing (Department of Education (2008) (a) (p.3). These social

changes required that learners be exposed to knowledge that will enable them to transfer skills and knowledge gained in an education system to the world of work and at the same time that the education system should be sensitive to the rights of learners and society. Education should prepare learners to contribute to their community as members. The changes in the political arena and the constitutional framework necessitated the change in curriculum in order to reflect the values, principles and ethos that are enshrined in the constitution.

The adoption of the **Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996** created a basis through which educational transformation and development could take place. This curriculum laid a foundation for the achievement of goals that are stipulated in the preamble of the South African Constitution, 1996, as well as reconstructing and developing the education system that will promote the principles of non-racism; freedom of religion and democracy ( DoE 2007 (a) p5).

In order to minimize the disruption in schools, the new curriculum was phased in stages. The first stage was in the Foundation Phase in 1997 and was referred to as Curriculum 2005 (C2005). In 1999 Curriculum 2005 was revised and developed to be the National Curriculum Statement for General Education and Training (Grades R–9) and the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10–12, which consists of twenty nine subjects that are not differentiated into higher or standard grade, as was the case in the Nated

550 or Report 550 (that is the curriculum that was phased out from the system from 2008 in grade 12), (Limpopo Department of education: 2005).

There are varied views on the new approach as to whether its structure and content is really different from the Nated 550 or whether the difference lies only in the names. Views on what curriculum is, also adds to uncertainty to what educators ought to do; whether educators are developers of curriculum and change agents or whether they are merely implementers.

### **3. Educators and the Curriculum**

Hoyle (1986:166) argues that any change that should take place within the school and is educational in nature should be done by educators for it to be fully institutionalized because if they do not, the innovation happening within the school might go through the appearance of change but the reality will continue as before. However, Kelly (1990:104) indicates that there is a wide gap between planning and implementation. Kelly (1990:104) regards educators as curriculum implementers in their classroom and they are not necessarily policy developers. This suggests that a distinction between the official curriculum and the actual curriculum, the planned and the received curricula be made, Kelly (1990:105). The difference between the official planned curriculum and the actual received curriculum is influenced by the street level bureaucracy. Educators have knowledge of what actually works and will use their experience to adapt what is indicated in policy document to what the circumstances dictates. This distinction shall, in curricula, result in implementation gaps. Kelly (1990:106) indicates that the gap between the intentions of the planners and the realities of attempts to implement those

intentions arise because of conflicts. If this gap is not narrowed and the conflict addressed it could lead to non-attainment of the intentions of the policy proposal.

The type of curriculum implemented in the classroom, influences the manner in which learner performance is assessed. Olivier (1998:44) argues that what is assessed and achieved depends on the format, nature and scope of a curriculum which is a statement of what is hoped to be achieved. Therefore assessment should be structured in a manner that states the steps that enable the achievement of the aims of education and should form part of a learning process. Hence the implementation of assessment should be valid and reliable. If the assessment practices are not aligned to educational reform and the envisaged changes, then the policy intentions of producing learners that are envisaged in Chapter one of the National Curriculum Statement might not be realized.

One of the roles that educators are regarded to play is to be designers of curriculum as envisaged in the National Curriculum Statement. This view is emphasized by what Lipsky (1980) refers to as street level bureaucrats because of the knowledge that educators have and the discretion they use in implementing policies. These educators are not only designers, but they should be administrators and implementers. If the argument raised by Kelly (1990) is true that there are various interpretations of the concept “curriculum” between designers or planners and implementers which might lead to differences between what is implemented from what was intended, then it is necessary to establish a common understanding of what “curriculum” is.

### 3.1 Definition of Curriculum.

Weiler (1993:281) indicates that curriculum is a site riddled with struggle, conflict and debate. It is often expressed in terms of specific disagreement over knowledge content to be covered in the syllabi and at times what forms of assessment would be appropriate. Such conflicts reflect sharp differences regarding the kind of society policy-makers wish to create. Every government depends on education to create a society it envisages and develops laws and policies as tools to achieve its objectives. However, the policies that are developed should be in the interests of the society in order to reduce conflict that may arise should policy intentions not address the needs of the majority. The government may create bureaucrats by appointing those who will ensure that those policies are implemented. Since governments consist of people voted into positions of power and mandated to serve society, they should also provide systems that sustain government programs through education and training. Therefore curriculum issues cannot be separated from politics and governance and should not be changed without due consideration. Young (1993:17) maintains that anyone who wishes to implement serious curriculum change cannot avoid grasping the political nature of education because curriculum will remain a political question at every level in every sense.

Moore (1999); Kelly (1990:23) and Ornstein and Hunskins (1998:265) point out that curriculum involves a number of key aspects other than:

- (a) Regarding curriculum as simply a body of knowledge, because curriculum is a process - not just knowledge acquired.

- (b) Viewing curriculum as an end product because curriculum should be regarded as a process that aims at producing desired change. This change should reflect the society's view of the school and society at large.
- (c) Perceiving curriculum to be a value-free concept because views on curriculum are influenced by certain traditions which have their distinctive values and ideals. These ideals shall be reflected in what should be taught at schools in view of preparing learners to contribute to the society and the country at large. The concept "curriculum" reflects what type of society is envisaged by those who develop policy and education Acts.

Curriculum, as Moore (1999) pointed out, should be underpinned by epistemology, psychology and sociology because a school curriculum consists of all those activities designed within the school organisational framework to promote the intellectual; personal; social and physical development of its pupils, DES (1981: 7).

The African National Education (ANC: 1994) indicates the following regarding curriculum:

- The curriculum is understood to be more than syllabus documentation. The term refers to all of the teaching and learning opportunities that take place in learning institutions. It includes:

- The aims and objectives of the education system as well as the specific goals of learning institutions.
- What is taught: the underlying values, the selection of content, how it is arranged into subjects, programs and syllabuses, and what skills and processes are included.
- The strategies of teaching and learning and the relationships between teachers and learners.
- The forms of assessment and evaluation which are used and their social effects.
- How the curriculum is serviced and resourced, including the organisation of learners in the learning sites, and of time and space and the materials and resources available.
- How the curriculum reflects the needs and interests of those it serves including learners, teachers, the community, the nation, the employers and the economy, ANC (1994).

The South African Qualification Authority, 1995 (SAQA) indicates that the curriculum has to:

- determine the purpose and values of the learning
- analyse the needs and nature of the learners
- decide on the outcomes or learning objectives



- select the content; the subject matter that will support achieving the outcomes
- decide on the activities, the methods and media for teaching/training and learning
- plan how assessment will be done
- plan how the overall effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum will be evaluated (SAQA,1995).

The National Curriculum Statement for FET (Schools) Concept Document April (2002) indicates that the National Curriculum Statement for FET (General) derives its definition of curriculum from the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 which defines curriculum as a selection from society, certain aspects of our way of life, certain kinds of knowledge, certain attitudes and values regarded of such importance that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance.

The view expressed by Moore (1999); Kelly (1990) and in the SAQA document on curriculum, suggests that schools are bureaucracies and educators are bureaucrats. Schools choose the curriculum they wish to offer, and determine the programs that the schools follow for that year, including how and when to assess learners. Educators will use their discretion to choose what they think and feel ought to be taught, influenced by their value system. The transmission of these values, knowledge and attitudes which reflects a way of life of a people is a process that involves the participation of both educator and learner. In the case of the South African Education system, this aspect of a way of life is based on the Ten Fundamental Values that are enshrined in the South African Constitution (1996), namely:

1. Democracy in the context of South Africa was born of a leadership who wished to lift the country out of the quagmire of apartheid and created an environment in which an organised group of numerical majority can make decisions which are binding on the whole group. This leadership brought a political orientation of those who favour government by the people or by their elected representatives, Ijeoma (2008:99-112).
  
2. Social Justice and Equity as it relates to a just world where there is respect of human rights and every citizen is equal in the eyes of the law. Social justice could be regarded as an apolitical concept if the bias toward a particular organisation could be removed from any philosophical analysis of politics, when service-delivery is evaluated, Rawls, (1971:291-292).
  
3. Equality should involve the recognition of the disadvantages that the marginalised suffer in all spheres of their lives. Therefore promotion of social, economic, political and legal equality should create an environment that would enable the have-not access to the means of production. According to Rawls (1971:3) each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. However justice denies that the loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others. Within the context of the South African political environment, programs of affirmative action may be a means of achieving such equality.

4. Non-racism and non-sexism mean that the application, interpretation, adjudication and enforcement of the law at all times should be the realisation of equality for all.
5. Ubuntu is perceived as a classical African concept which defines the individual in their relationships with others and it is regarded as a religious concept, Tutu (1999). The concept stresses that man is not an island. However, Louw (1998) indicates that the concept Ubuntu may have no apparent religious connotations in Western society's context.
6. An Open Society is a society in which a democratic political system works, and civil society has an influence on national issues. The general citizenry has greater influence on how and who should govern them.
7. Accountability is closely linked with ethics, responsibility and answerability. It is viewed as an obligation the state has to its citizens to justify its actions. The leadership in government have to acknowledge their responsibility for actions and policies developed within the scope of their mandate.
8. The rule of law is founded on the constitution which is the highest authority and the state is founded on it. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states that all citizens must respect the accepted code of conduct and should obey laws, regulations and rules. No one is above the law.

9. Respect for human dignity. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) Chapter 2 indicates that all persons are equal. This section of the constitution strives to instill in the citizen respect for other members rights as members of the broader community.
  
10. The principle on reconciliation is a means through which the government aspires to create a country of people who are characterised by unity and who could peacefully co-exist.

These fundamental values should help bring about the realization that there is a need for understanding; reparation and the respect of human dignity which could be inculcated through an education system that is based on the constitutional provisions that promote democracy, equality and human dignity.

#### **4. The National Curriculum Statement and the Constitution**

The Preamble in the **Constitution of the Republic of South African** (1996) provides a basis on which the transformation of education should take place. In the Preamble, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) states the following as its aims and the Supreme Law of the Republic. That the constitution should help to:

- Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.

- Lay the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.
- Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The aims of the government of the Republic South Africa as stated in the preamble were translated into policy that would govern educational practice through the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The NCS seeks to provide schools with opportunities to develop learning programs that best address the needs of learners, based on the situation in which the school operates. It stipulates what should be achieved in each subject through stipulated Learning Outcomes and indicates how to determine the performance of learners by applying the Assessment Standards. The values and principles of the National Curriculum Statement on which the education is based, is regarded as the cornerstone of democracy as they affirm the democratic values of human dignity; equality and freedom. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) Chapter 2, states that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that is reasonably practicable. In order to achieve these aims it was necessary to change the curriculum and introduce educational approaches that will help redress the result of past racially discriminatory practices. The new approach was based on nine principles.

#### **4.1. Social Transformation principle**

Implementation of the principle of social transformation in education will find expression in the way educators conduct their teaching and assessment of learners. The policy is aimed at providing a framework for student entitlement in relation to teaching and learning and particularly in the way they are assessed in the National Curriculum Statement programs. Assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning experiences of students. With the introduction of Outcomes Based Education, there has been a growth of interest in modes of assessment that reflect the policies of the government in relation to educational practices. These modes of assessment should promote standards and quality of teaching. This policy has a profound implication for individual learners, institutions and the educational system itself. The purpose of this policy is to facilitate and coordinate the many activities involved in achieving the desired state. The various education institutions must put in place the infrastructure and conditions needed to support implementation of the change, as well as the strategy for managing work during the transformation.

The National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 (General) p2 explicitly expresses the reasons why it was necessary to transform education and indicated that transformative tools should be developed to address the legacy of apartheid in all human activity and in education in particular. The envisaged social transformation in education was aimed at ensuring that educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and to provide equal education opportunities for all sectors of the population in South Africa.

This assertion for transformation is based on the belief that there were artificial barriers for certain sections of the population that hindered them from achieving their potential. Through the National Curriculum, it is intended to develop the potential of all learners and equip them for the responsibilities of citizenship. The learners that are envisaged are those who will be imbued with the values and who will act in the interests of a society guided by the respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice as promoted in the South African Constitution (1996) (National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 (General) p5).

The declared intention is to alter the structure of education and society through equipping learners with cognitive skills needed for adult life and employment in an environment that provides equal opportunity for all. This environment is characterised by the existence of common values and morality that give meaning to individual and social relationships that are based on non-racialism and non-sexism. This will ensure that all learners study a balanced and broad range of subjects throughout their compulsory schooling. In addition to the declared intention, the new system of education shall ensure that all pupils regardless of sex, ethnic origin and geographical location have access to the same good and a relevant curriculum and programs of study which include the key contents, skills and processes which they need to learn. These will ensure that the content that is taught from various elements of the National Curriculum bring out their relevance to and links with the own experiences of learners, and their practical application and continuing value to adult and working life Kelly (1990:15);

and National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 (General) Accounting pages 10 and 11). Teaching should be aimed at achieving intended outcomes.

#### **4.2. Outcomes Based Education (OBE)**

Outcomes Based Education strives to enable learners to reach their potential by setting the Learning Outcomes that should be achieved at the end of the education process (National Curriculum Statement 10-12 General p2).

In all subjects that make up the National Curriculum Statement, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards are used to describe what learners should know and be able to demonstrate by indicating the type of skills, knowledge and values to be displayed at the end of the learning experience. The National Curriculum Statement states that the building blocks for Learning Outcomes for Grades 10-12 are the Critical and Developmental Outcomes that are inspired by the Constitution and guided in their development by democratic principles. These critical outcomes provide national benchmarks for learners' participation in Further Education and Training which they should strive to achieve.

The Critical Outcomes require learners to identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking; work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community; organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively; collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information; communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes; use science and technology effectively and critically show responsibility



towards the environment and the health of others, and demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving ( National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12, *General*, p2) is a skill. These Critical Outcomes are directly linked to Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards.

In a subject like Economics all four Learning Outcomes and most Assessment Standards require learners to have the ability to solve problems by decision-making skills through investigation, analysis, identifying and explaining. These processes of investigating, analysing and explaining are directly linked with the first Critical Outcomes which indicate that learners are required to identify and solve problems and make decisions while using critical and creative thinking.

The suggestion is that Critical Outcomes should be reflected in the teaching strategies that educators use and also in the development of Learning Programs. The teaching methods should focus on challenging and guiding learners to identify Economic problems and issues in their environment. Learners should be trained to apply their acquired skills and knowledge to identifying, explaining and solving the identified problems in an environment that encourages creative thinking.

The Developmental Outcomes require all learners in the new approach to reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively; participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities; be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of

social contexts; explore education and career opportunities, and have the ability to create entrepreneurial opportunities.

When teaching, the educator will address some of these Developmental Outcomes because they describe the essential characteristics of the type of South African citizen that the education system hopes to produce. As educators teach and assess learners, they should lay emphasis on the acceptance of responsibility as citizens and the contribution that learners could make in their community.

### **4.3. High knowledge and high skills**

The principle of high knowledge and high skills indicates that the National Curriculum Statement aims to develop a high level of knowledge and skills which learners ought to achieve by specifying the minimum standards of knowledge and skills at each grade. It further states that learners should be entitled to equal opportunities and that through social justice those sections of the population that were previously disempowered by the type of education offered to them, could be empowered because the standards of education throughout the country will be the same (Kelly 1990: 2; National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) p3). This type of curriculum indicates that high levels of knowledge and high skills are acquired through the setting of clear objectives over a full range of abilities for learners to achieve. At the same time educators are supposed to set realistic but challenging expectations for learners according to their individual ability.

This principle if properly implemented, could ensure that learners are exposed to a balanced range of subjects and that all learners regardless of geographical location, have access to a similar and relevant curriculum that specifies key content, values and skills that are linked to the learners own experience. This would enable them to apply the knowledge, values and skills in their adult life as responsible citizens of their communities.

The objective as set out in the national education policy is to indicate the minimum standards to be achieved at the end of each grade and phase. Educators should be equipped with competent knowledge in order to help learners achieve this principle. The level of educators' preparedness in implementing this principle could promote or hamper its success. Through advocacy alone where practice rather than theory was emphasized, the amount of school support given would raise concerns on the level of preparedness of school to meet the requirements of the policy, Kelly (1990:15).

Educators as facilitators of learning should help learners achieve the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. In a subject like Agricultural Science, the principle of High Knowledge and High skills means that learners should develop knowledge and mastery of agricultural production processes and be equipped to acquire research skills that could be used in this science. While in History these principles require learners to develop enquiry skills and conceptual knowledge which would enable them to engage critically with the past, which would help them to construct their own understanding, DoE (2003:10) History Learning Programme Guidelines p10).

This principle, therefore, indicates what the South African learner is expected to achieve in all subjects in the Further Education and Training band in order to be awarded the National Senior Certificate.

#### **4.4. Integration and applied Competence**

The assessment policy indicates that integration within a particular subject could be achieved by links between Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards and Content. In integration of the Assessment Standards natural links should be established by checking the content implied. This grouping of Assessment Standards is used to enrich learning, teaching and assessment as indicated in the Agricultural Science Learning Program Guidelines page9.

The Subject Statement of Accounting indicates that “the integration of knowledge and skills across subjects and terrains of practice is crucial for achieving applied competence as defined in the National Qualification Framework”, p3. The learners are therefore required to use the knowledge gained by studying a subject practically in a given situation and be able to reflect on its practices. In such instances the learners shall have integrated the learning theory, practice and reflection.

#### **4.5. Progression**

Progression as a principle of the National Curriculum Statement would mean the process of developing more advanced; more complex knowledge and skills in any subject. The subject statement spells out how knowledge and

skills within a subject increase in complexity through the progressive arrangement of Assessment Standards in a Learning Outcome. In a particular subject, progression of Assessment Standards within a learning Outcome will increase in complexity from Grade 10 to grade 12. In all the subjects, levels of complexity are incorporated within Assessment Standards across all three grades and each Learning Outcome is followed by a clear explanation of what level of performance should be expected from learners.

This principle suggests that educators should integrate Learning Outcomes from different subjects in order to enrich the main Learning Outcome that is addressed. This will enable learners to see conceptual progression within the subject. Through integration, learners' understanding of concepts will broaden and links between subjects could be established. At the same time educators are expected to assist learners to satisfy the requirements of the Assessment Standards.

#### **4.6. Articulation and Portability**

Articulation refers to the relationship between qualifications in different National Qualification Framework levels or bands in ways that promote access from one qualification to the other, DOE (b) (2002:3). The National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 gives access to learners from the General Education and Training Band (Grade R-9) to the Higher Education Band. The learners required to take Economics and Management Sciences in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R-9) will use the knowledge gained through the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards to understand content of Business Studies in Grade 10-12, because the Learning

Outcomes of Economic and Management Sciences are closely linked with those Business Studies in the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12, DoE, (2008:11).

The development of each Subject Statement included a close scrutiny of the exit level expectations in the General Education and Training Learning Areas, in order to achieve articulation of the learning assumed to be in place at entrance level in Higher Education, DoE (b) (2002:3).

When developing learning Programs, educators need to be aware of the learners' prior knowledge that they should have in order to enable them to move from the known to the unknown. To determine the prior knowledge educators would need to do a baseline assessment.

The aim of the principle of articulation and portability is to ensure that learners are offered a broad and balanced range of subjects grouped into learning fields that lead to a particular carrier path. There are subjects that are regarded as core such as Mathematics or Mathematical literacy, Life Orientation and two languages, one of which should be on home language level which all learners are required to take. By offering core or fundamental subjects, learners are able to change from one institution to another assured that the knowledge gained in one institution will be used in the other. The Subject Statement for Business Studies refers to this as portability because it refers to the extent to which parts of a qualification, a subject or unit standards are transferable to another qualification in a different pathway of the same National Qualification Framework. DoE (b) (2002:3) states that “for purposes of enhancing the portability of subjects obtained in Grades 10-

12, various mechanisms have been explored, for example, regarding a subject as a 20 credit unit standard subject contained in the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) compare with appropriate unit standards registered on the National Qualification Framework”. This enables learners to move from one field of learning to another and change only the choice subjects.

#### **4.7. Valuing indigenous knowledge System.**

The Western world prior to 1960 valued logical Mathematical and specific linguistic ability to be the only way of processing information and rated people as intelligent, only if they were adept in that way, DoE (d) (2008:12). The theory of multiple intelligences during the 1960s made educationists to recognize that there were many ways to process information and make sense of the world, DoE (2002:4). “Now people recognize the wide diversity of knowledge systems by which they make sense of and attach meaning in which they live. Indigenous knowledge systems in the South African context refer to the body of knowledge embedded in African Philosophical thinking and social practices that have evolved over a thousand years. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) has infused-indigenous knowledge systems into the Subject Statements, to acknowledge the richness of the history and heritage of this country, DOE (d) (2008:12).

Ubuntu as value systems were practiced by the African peoples long before Westernization. The history of African people was not documented but passed on from generation to generation through folklore. These teachings were central to the promotion of human values. Cultural practices and

traditions are some of the many memory systems that shape our values and morality and form part of a people's history. History is considered to be central to the construction of our identity, building a collective memory based on the recognition of our past histories and to develop critical and responsible citizens that are ready to participate in a democracy at all levels, Working Group on Values in Education (2000). This means that educators should help learners understand and appreciate the contribution of those that would otherwise be regarded as unscientific knowledge.

#### **4.8. Credibility, quality and efficiency and relevance.**

The aims to achieve credibility through pursuing a transformational agenda and providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries and whose quality is assured and regulated by South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No.58 of 1995) to meet requirements of the Education and Training Quality Assurance Regulations, General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001) as expressed in the National Curriculum Statement, DoE (b) (2008:10). Such a curriculum shall ensure that learners at all levels, regardless of ethnic origin or gender or geographical location have access to the same good and relevant curriculum and programs of study which they need to learn, and which ensure that the content and teaching of various elements of the national curriculum bring out their relevance to the learners own experiences, so that they could apply this practically to adult and working life, Kelly (1990: 2). The credibility, quality and efficiency of the Business Studies curriculum according to, DoE (b) (2008:10) is evident in



that it tries to bring to life business skills that learners would need as adult citizens, within the context of South African society and global community.

The subject should help learners follow current events in both national and international markets. This will enable them to obtain quality information that is relevant to their studies while preparing them and equipping them with skills and knowledge to compete in the international markets.

#### **4.9. Human Rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice**

The new approach to teaching seeks to promote human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General) seeks to sensitize policy implementers to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors and encourages the adoption of an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. The principle acknowledges that all learners could be developed to their full potential provided they receive the necessary support and the learners' rights are protected.

##### **4.9. (i). Human Rights**

Every learner according to the South African Schools Act (1991) is subject to compulsory attendance until the learner reaches the age of fifteen or grade nine. This is in line with section 29(1) of the Constitution of South Africa that guarantees everyone the right to basic education. This basic education system provides schools the opportunity to prepare learners in an integrated

non-racial environment and also prepares them to live in an integrated society. This could only happen if our schools are transformed on every level.

DoE (2001:6) noted that despite the attempt by some schools to integrate, there are some schools that use certain practices to exclude certain learners from attending their schools, such as the use of Afrikaans as the only medium of instruction so as to exclude those learners who cannot understand the language; charging unusually high fees to exclude learners from economically challenged families; recruiting learners from outside their feeder schools in order to reduce space for those who are non-language speakers at the school, or to encourage a high number of the preferred race; scheduling of School Governing Body meetings and parents meetings during times that are not suitable for working parents, for example during times that black parents might be at work and cannot attend; scheduling separate meetings for English-speaking parents from Afrikaans-speakers; creating separate classes for blacks apart from whites in the same grade; using staff compliment as a means to exclude black people from joining the school and by not offering a dominant African language in which their school is situated, as a home language subject, to discourage learners to study it as a first language.

These forms of exclusion in the school setting could be perceived as an intentional or unintentional racial discrimination by a school to deny some learners to participate fully in the education process. DoE (2001:6) refers to such exclusions as the denial based on race which is therefore racism. Racism would impair the learners from enjoying education on an equal basis.

This is indirectly denial of the learners' basic human rights; unless if such an action of discrimination could be justified as a fair discrimination as indicated in Section 9 (5) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

#### **4.9. (ii). Inclusivity**

The White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education acknowledges that all children can learn and need support; that education structures, systems and methods used should be aimed at addressing the needs of all learners who differ in terms of gender, age, ethnic grouping, language and class.

The differences that are brought about by some of the learners' needs lead to a complex and dynamic relationship between the learner, the centre of learning, the broader education system and the social, political and economic context of which they are all part. The complexity of this relationship plays a vital role in whether effective teaching and learning takes place. If a problem exists in one of these areas it impacts on the learning process that causes breakdown in learning or the exclusion of some learners in the learning process.

According to the White Paper (6) on Inclusive education, the ministry of education acknowledges that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time. If these needs are not addressed learners may fail to learn effectively or may be excluded from the learning system. In this regard, learning needs do arise from a range of factors including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and

developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbance differences in intellectual ability - particularly life-experiences or social economics deprivation, White paper (6:7).

By acknowledging that there are learners who experience barriers to learning, the South African Education Ministry committed to provide educational opportunities for those learners who experience barriers to learning through inclusive education and training systems offered in special schools, referred to as full-service schools that are aimed at serving learners with special education needs, such as disabilities and impairment. However, by emphasizing the notion that barriers to learning and development exist, the policy on inclusive education tries to move away from looking at the learner as lacking abilities to learn and creating conditions that could enable learners to achieve.

The implication of this policy is that there should be training and support for all educators and managers in schools, in order to help learners who experience challenges and who cannot attend a normal school. The content to be taught should be revised in order to make it relevant to the needs of these learners and the medium of instruction should not alienate learning or create a barrier to learning. The learning site should be organised and adapted to the needs of learners, and the pace of teaching and time for accomplishment of tasks should be structured around the learners' needs.

By adopting an inclusive approach to education it would be possible to address any barriers to learning. At the same time the approach will be consistent with the principle of Outcomes Based Education which indicates

that education should be learner-centered. If the teaching and learning is based on the needs of learners, it will be possible to develop their strengths and ensure that they participate actively in the learning process. On the other hand, the evidence gathered from assessing learners will be a reflection of the learners' ability.

#### **4.9. (iii). Environmental and Social Justice**

In trying to meet our current needs, natural resources are used. Some of these natural resources are not replaced. It is important that we should not compromise needs of future generations. Everyone has the right to have a safe and protected environment. The government should develop legislations that will secure an ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development for the benefit of present and future generations through reasonable means, Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) 24 (b) (111).

This requires educators to mediate learning in such a manner that will be sensitive to the needs of future generations by instilling in the learners the respect of other's culture and the protection of the environment in diverse forms. The educator in his pastoral role is best placed to inculcate in the learner the love and promotion of democratic values and the acceptance that the school is a microcosm of the society.

The design and development of learning programs and the use of appropriate assessment instruments should be able to address the social, emotional and physical needs of learners. Social justice refers to the concept of society, in

which justice is achieved in every respect of society, rather than merely the administration of law.

Social justice is a concept that is both values laden and political in nature. To a capitalist, social justice will refer to a situation where free market could provide equal opportunities. To some, social justice would mean income redistribution through progressive taxation and property redistribution. When social justice is used to describe the movement towards a socially just world then the concept should mean the world where there is equality and the promotion of human rights.

According to Rawls (1971) the principle of Social Justice is based on the general rejection of discrimination based on distinction between class, gender, ethnicity or culture. Its emphasis is on the importance of eradication of poverty and illiteracy through the development of sound policies that create equality of opportunities for healthy personal and social development, which every person is entitled to as they are basic human needs.

The challenge that the education system is facing is how to implement this principle in a society that is based on economic inequality and different value systems. The effectiveness of this principle could be viewed from the context of public policies where such policies are viewed and evaluated on how they affect the poor.

When teaching, educators are expected to infuse the principle and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of South Africa. Learners should be made aware of diversities

in society that are brought about by poverty, race, gender and economic inequality so as to understand and respect the democracy and the acceptance that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity, Constitution of South Africa (1996).

These principles should guide educators when they plan their lessons. Lessons or learning experiences should contain a number of activities which might require more time than the length of a period as indicated on the time table. These activities are informed by the assessment standards that are indicated in all Learning Outcomes. This therefore, suggests that the assessment approach that should be adopted should be in line with the teaching approach. The assessment tasks should describe what the learner should know and be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and values that are required to achieve a particular Learning Outcome, which the educator in his teaching endeavours to impart and inculcate.

The teaching of any content should address what should be taught. The content should be dictated by the subject policy statement and should address the appropriateness of the content, skills and values required of the learner in that particular subject.

Educators would be required to be qualified, dedicated, caring and competent in the subjects that they offer in order to implement these principles in their teaching. Meanings of what a learning program is, varies between people Carl (1986:17). Ornstein and Hunskins (1998:2) argue that the values that the individual regards as important, his/her perception of reality, experiences and knowledge gathered and his/her personal view of the

world, influences the person's approach to the curriculum. Because of the attached meaning to concepts such as a learning program and curriculum, the approach to implementing the new and the prevailing curriculum of the school or district in which one works, it is possible that conflicts will arise between formal organisational views and one's own professional view Ornstein and Hunskins (1998:2). The educators' views could be influenced by various curriculum models available and cultural factors according to Du Plessis, Conley and du Plessis (2007:38). Ornstein and Hunskins (1998:265) indicate that educators are not influenced by curriculum models only; they need to consider the interest and value system of not only the learner but should include fears and aspirations of the communities from which these learners come, as well as meeting the needs and objectives of government when developing learning programs.

The learning programs that are developed should place the learner at the center of educational activity where the emphasis is on how the learner acquires knowledge and how s/he understands it rather than what type of knowledge is acquired du Plessis, Conley and du Plessis (2007:30); Stenhouse (1975). The educational activities suggested afford children the opportunity to develop a questioning mind, discover things and acquire information on their own, and to apply the knowledge gained in other situations.

Learners should be given room to take part in classroom activities where they could air their views and reflect on own experiences and to learn from others through cooperative learning. This could only be possible if the educator is a leader, administrator, researcher and lifelong learner.



Du Plessis, Conley and du Plessis (2007:30) posit that the purpose of the school is to provide children with opportunity to engage in scholarly activities. These activities should provide learners with experiences; should be designed around objectives that are based on the results of situations that are related to the child's environment. The main aim of these experiences should be the development of citizens who are able to solve problems and engage in democratic processes. The type of learner envisaged in the National Statement "is one who is imbued with values and acts in the interest of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity and social justice promoted in the constitution", DoE (2003:5). The learners that are envisaged in this approach should be able to demonstrate achievement of the Critical and Development Outcomes when they exit the Further Education and Training band. These learners should be equipped to use his/her knowledge and skills to contribute to the community and society they live in. In addition they should be able to understand that the world consists of a set of related systems and they should use knowledge and skills acquired in the band to solve problems. Above all, they should identify and solve problems by making use of critical and creative thinking.

The implication of these views of the envisaged educator and learner is that there should be a form of collaboration and construction of knowledge by different role-players in the education process. These views of how knowledge is constructed require learners to engage in ideas and develop abilities that could be used to pursue independent and lifelong learning which is characterised by creativity, problem solving, research and critical thinking. At particular intervals learners ought to be assessed to determine

how well they are achieving and to determine whether the teaching strategies yield the desired results.

## **5. Assessment**

Assessment is all the processes and end products that indicate what learners have learnt; how the aims of teaching relate to the overall goals of education Satterly (1981:3); du Plessis; Croxley and du Plessis (2007:68). This process occurs when a teacher during his interaction with the learners, consciously obtains data on the learners' performance, Frith and Macintosh (1984:4) that is aimed at assisting stakeholders in making decisions based on the recorded and reported information. The data that is collected through various assessment strategies is analysed and evaluated in order to facilitate choices, such as promoting or retaining learners; informing educators on possible barriers to learning experienced by learners which could be emanating from the teaching style. When planning a learning program/lesson plan, educators should indicate ways in which assessment will be done and how expanded opportunities to address barriers will be undertaken.

This suggests that educators should constantly use learner performance to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Clemson and Clemson (1991:3) point out that the imposition of external National Curriculum Assessment demands on educators led to them losing sight of the "efficacy of carrying out assessment and confidence in their expertise which created a climate of uncertainty, stress and a feeling of oppression", Clemson and Clemson (1993:3) and Weiler (1993:281). How educators perceive assessment has a

direct bearing on how they will implement the National Curriculum Statement, Relly, (1990:71).

Learner assessment is central to Outcomes Based Education and the National Curriculum Statement. It is suggested in the principle of Outcomes Based Education that assessment should be based on criteria that focus on the outcomes to be achieved; that skills and values are as important as the knowledge learned; that educators should have knowledge and understanding on how learners learn and read, have knowledge of various teaching approaches, Kelly (1990:72) so that they will be able to develop assessment tasks that are transparent and clearly focused on the outcomes to be achieved, and at the same time yielding valid and reliable responses from learners.

Any changes in curriculum as well as changes in the roles that educators are required play in teaching, educators are expected to adapt within the new context and be driven by change in order to be able to disseminate innovation in the curriculum of their schools.

Educators should have knowledge of the purpose of evaluating learner performance because their involvement in the assessment process is vital in the realization of the objectives of teaching and learning, as outlined in Chapter 1 of every subject statement of the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (general); Murphy and Torrance (1988:107).

Assessment could be used for various purposes to inform curriculum planning and learning programs, such as defining each child's ability in

order to determine what the learner knows and understands in order to apply the information to different situations; to reveal the learner's weaknesses and strengths; identifying whether learners have special educational needs; for future planning, and to set targets, informing educators, parents, pupils and other stakeholders about the learner's performance and to comply with statutory requirements.

The educator could use any of the following types of assessment depending on the objectives to be achieved; baseline, diagnostic, formative, systemic, summative or alternative.

### **5.1. Baseline Assessment**

When learners are promoted to the next grade and particularly when they come from different feeder schools, they are at varying levels of knowledge when admitted to e.g. Grade 8 or 7. The educator should establish what learners already know in order to develop learning programs and activities that are based on learners' prior knowledge, du Plessis; Conley and du Plessis (2007:71). The educator will use Baseline assessment to determine whether the knowledge of learners at the beginning of the phase or grade, is in accordance with what the subject statement suggests. In the case where learners lack knowledge on content of the previous grade, educators should incorporate the contents of the previous grade in order to help learners cope with new content.

## **5.2 Diagnostic Assessment**

Diagnostic Assessment is used to determine the strength and challenges that learners' experience. When causes and nature of barriers to learning are discovered, appropriate guidance and support should be given to the learners. Intervention strategies should be developed to assist the learner experiencing barriers to cope. These strategies could be offered by specialists such as educational psychologists. The purpose of this type of assessment is to help educators identify causes that could be barriers to learning in order to come up with intervention strategies.

## **5.3 Formative Assessment**

Educators should constantly monitor the effectiveness of the methods they use in teaching. Formative Assessment is one of the methods that could be used to inform educators about progress made; whether intervention strategies are required and what type of support should be provided (du Plessis, Conley and du Plessis 2007:72). Frith and Macintosh (1984:4) refer to formative assessment as an evaluation as it helps teachers evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in order to take necessary corrective action.

## **5.4 Systemic Assessment**

Du Plessis; Conley and du Plessis (2007:72) point out that systemic evaluation is used in curriculum development as it compares performances of learners at regular intervals, through the use of national or provincial defined measuring instruments, with national indicators on learner

achievement. In the General Education and Training Band, Systemic Evaluation was conducted in Grade 3 during 2002, Grade 6 in 2005 and in 2008 assessment was repeated in Grade 3 and 6. For the Further Education and Training Band the matriculation pass rate is the instrument that may be used to evaluate the system. These assessment types help in the monitoring of the system to determine whether the intended educational objectives are realised.

When a learner is issued with a General Education and Training Certificate, it would mean that the candidate has met the minimum program requirements as contemplated in the National Qualification Framework; the South African Qualification Authority Act number 56 of 1995 and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act No.58 of 2001. The qualification should serve as an indication that the candidate can compete with learners of other countries because the type of education s/he received is comparable to those of other countries. From other sources it is indicated that learners in the General Education and training Band cannot read and write. According to the Systemic Evaluation report of 2006 for Grade 6 “the achievement of learners in the Limpopo for Mathematics, Natural Science and Language of Learning and Teaching was generally poor. Overall scores for the Limpopo Province were lower than the national scores across learning areas”. This would mean that if disparities exist between provinces, e.g. learners from Limpopo are not comparable with learners from other provinces; therefore these learners cannot compete on an equal basis with their peers from other countries.

## **5.5. Summative Assessment**

At the end of a single learning activity, a unit, cycle, term, semester or at year-end, learners are assessed in order to obtain an overall picture of the progress made. The information gathered could, according to Frith and Macintosh (1984:6), be used for grading purposes and/or promotion or retention in a grade. When learners are to be transferred to other schools information from summative assessment is used.

## **5.6 Alternative Assessment**

Some learners will experience barriers to learning which may create special educational needs. Those learners would need a different approach to learning and assessment. In order to minimize the impact that could be created when a general approach to assessing is used to both groups of learners (who experience barriers to learning and those who do not) an alternative assessment is required.

The use of an alternative Assessment does not mean watered down assessment tasks but a different approach to accommodate those learners that experience a challenge when general assessment tasks are administered to them. In the case of a learner whose eye-sight is poor, for instance, the educator could enlarge the size of the font to enable easier reading for the learner. In the case where the learner is blind audio tapes could be used and the learner could be assessed orally. The National Department of Education indicated that learners who are not first language speakers of English or Afrikaans find it difficult to cope with questions because of phrasing of

questions or the language itself. This leads to these learners performing poorly compared to their counterparts.

## **6. Educator Assessment Practice**

DoE (a) (2006:41) argues that it is essential for educators to collect information on learner performance in order to identify the strength and weakness that learners have in order to develop appropriate strategies that could be used to address the weaknesses. From feedback on the performance of learners, the educator's teaching practices could be strengthened and educators could tell whether the intended objectives have been met.

The educator should be able to identify assessment tools that are relevant to his/her subject as well as the frequency with which the different types of assessment practices should be conducted and how information generated from assessment practices should be utilized. For example, the National Protocol on Recording and Reporting as well as the different Subject Assessment Guidelines indicates that a minimum of seven tasks should be used to assess learners during the year in the Further Education and Training Band.

When developing an assessment task, the educator should bear in mind the following:

1. What is the objective for assessing learners?
2. Which Learning Outcomes should be addressed?
3. What is the rationale for using a particular strategy to accomplish the intended objective?



The educator should be informed by policy guidelines and legal framework which governs education and educational practices when developing and assessing learner performance. These policy guidelines should be seen as a means through which the quality of education is managed, and its delivery and evaluation are of a high quality. The attainment of quality according to DoE (a) (1998:10), will require that all members of the organisation (school, a district, a region, a province or the nation) be committed to producing outcomes that not only meet the needs of learners and their parents but should also meet the nationally predetermined standards to ensure that learners could compete favourably in the global market, as indicated by the principle of “High knowledge and high skills for all”.

For educators to be effective in their assessment practices and to enhance the quality of education provided by the system “up-to date material such as curriculum guidelines; learning support material; assessment policies and guidelines” should be provided and educators and principals should be trained and supported on how to use these resources.

To ensure that quality education is provided and maintained, a system of accountability that provides broad guidelines is developed. These guidelines should provide a context and authority for assessment at National, Provincial, District, Region and School level.

## **7. Legislative considerations**

Improving the quality of education is a key policy objective in any democratic country. Educational reforms around the world are a direct

response to the demands of making lifelong learning opportunities available to all. Analysing education policy provides an opportunity to reflect on, and learn from, this experience based on the rules, laws and regulations. The legal framework forms a basis on which a department formulates its strategies to carry out its functions and against which it is assessed. “Public decisions and activities are undertaken in Public Education under the authority of a well established legal framework which governs how educational services are delivered to the Public”, Limpopo Department of Education: Service Standards: (p3). There is a need for prescriptive guidelines for teachers to assist them in effective and efficient planning, teaching and assessment of learners.

After the 1994 general election it became imperative that education in South Africa should be transformed to cater for all citizens in South Africa. The Education White paper (1995) emphasized the right of all to quality education with the intention to redress the discriminatory and inequitable distribution of the education provision and services of the National Party, and to provide a National Education that would prepare learners to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This resulted in the creation of a single National Education system. To ensure that this is realised several policies were developed and Acts were passed that would promote equal education for all.

The Limpopo Department of Education Service Standards states that the Department and functions of educators were regulated by Acts and regulations in the discharge of their responsibilities. According to the Limpopo Education Department these Acts, such as the Employment of

Educators Act No. 76 of 1998; the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 which promotes social justice, peace and democracy in the workplace will enable the provincial department in upholding the Constitution; respect its clients and listen to them; provide meaningful and quality service; foster good work ethics and remain accountable for the services it is supposed to render.

The following Acts and policies inform assessment of learners in schools in general and public schools in Limpopo in particular. Provinces are required to develop their own policies guided by national requirements. The provincial assessment guide is informed by the following legislative frameworks and guidelines.

According the **South African Schools Act of (1996)** children between the age of seven and fifteen are compelled to be at school provided they have not yet passed grade nine. It promotes access to a schooling system and ensures quality and democratic governance through the establishment of School Governing Bodies. This requirement means that parents should be held accountable if their children are not attending school and that education institutions should provide programs that keep these learners at school.

The implementation of this Act would require the cooperation of various Government Departments such as Justice, that would prosecute those who violate the Act; the Department of Safety and Security; and Department Public Works that should provide infrastructure as well as the Department of Education, among others.

The **National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 (NEPA)** ensures that there is a principle of cooperation between the National department and Provincial departments. It identifies the policy, legislature and monitoring responsibility of the Minister of Education and formalizes a relationship between National and Provincial Departments. Subsection 3(4) of NEPA indicates that the Minister is responsible for national planning, provision, financing, coordination, management, governance, program, monitoring, evaluation and well-being of the education system. While subsection 3(4) (1) indicates that:

The Minister may determine National Policy for Curriculum Frameworks, Core Syllabuses and Education Programs, Learning Standards, Examinations and the certification of qualification subject to the provisions of any law establishing a National qualification framework or a certifying or accrediting body.

The conclusion from this assertion is that the content to be taught and assessment thereof should be informed by the National Department of Education. According to subsection 8(1) of the National Policy Act, the National Department of Education directs the standards of education provision throughout the Republic and that all the provinces should be accountable to the Minister of Education for delivery and performance of educational standards, guided by the provisions in the Constitution.

In terms of subsection 4 (a) (1) and 4(b) the Constitution of South Africa in Chapter 2 indicates that every person has a right to be protected against

unfair discrimination within or by an education department or institution, on any grounds while 4(b) states that the National Education Policy should be directed by an enabling education system that contributes to the full personal development of each student, including the advancement of democracy and Ubuntu.

Therefore assessment practices should always comply with the provision of the Constitution and with National Education Policy. When Provincial Policies on assessment are in conflict with National Policy, the National Policy should prevail (subsection 3 (3)). The provisions of this Act are aimed at ensuring that all South Africans are provided with the opportunity for life-long learning and that no person is denied the opportunity to receive education to the maximum of his/her abilities.

Section 3(4) (f) and (r) of the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 determines Norms and Standards for educators. The policy describes the Norms as a set of applied competences while Standards as qualification. “These norms and standards provide a basis for purposes of employment” (National Policy Act No. 1996) which the educator in an initial teaching qualification should possess.

These norms and standards should also refer to the ability to integrate competencies which constitute the seven roles of educators, one of which being an “assessor”. According to National Education Policy (Act No.27 of 1996) the educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purpose, methods

and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and should meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment”. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into process for the improvement of learning programs.

This means that educators should be able to use varied assessment practices in order to diagnose challenges that the learner might be experiencing, that the form of assessment should be appropriate to the developmental stage of learners and that the assessment should be fair and valid; based on the competences to be assessed. The educator should be able to record and report on the performance of the learners, in order to interpret the assessment results and to give feedback to the stakeholders. As an assessor of learning, the educator will be required to reflect on appropriate assessment decisions made and sometimes adjust assessment tasks and approaches in order to accommodate those learners who experience barriers to learning.

It is indicated in the **National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996** that the process of assessing learners with special needs, including gifted learners should follow the principles as outlined in the policy. In the event of learners experiencing barriers to learning the problem should be identified early in order to be supported. Special education support personnel could be utilized where specialized assessment procedures are required to identify a learning difficulty. In cases where severe difficulties are noticed, the educator could allocate more time or a different approach could be used

instead of assessing all learners in the same way. However, the choice of what assessment strategies to use remains subjective and unique to a teacher, grade and subject which depend on the professional judgment of the educator. This judgment should always be influenced by the purpose of the assessment and the appropriate Assessment Standards. An integrated assessment approach should include a range of formative and summative tasks that cater for a wide range of abilities and challenges for learners within the educational policy provisions.

The professional, moral and ethical responsibilities as well as competences of educators should be regulated by the **Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998** (EEA). Educators as street level bureaucrats should be guided and regulated in their practice and held responsible for their actions. Section 16 of the Employment of Educator's Act 76 of 1998 indicates that the employers must assess the capacity of the educators and should take action against educators for poor performance of duties attached to the educator's post.

The educator is by profession required to teach and assess learner performance and to record and report to the different stakeholders. In reporting the educator should reflect the true state of affairs regarding the performance of the learners. According to Section 17(1) (a) an educator must be dismissed if he/she is found guilty of theft, bribery, fraud or an act of corruption in regard to examination or promotional reports; or (f) causing a learner or student to perform any act that will compromise the integrity of examinations.

It is regarded as misconduct if an educator fails to comply with regulations or legal obligations relating to education 18(1) (a); or (g) absence himself from work without a valid reason or permission; 18(1) (aa) falsifies records or any other document. The provision of this Act applies to education at public schools, training institutions and adult basic education centers, and requires educators to perform their functions within the legal framework. This include the roles proposed in the National Curriculum Statement and Norms and Standards for Educators which indicate that the new approach requires qualified and dedicated educators who are caring and competent. A competent educator would be that educator who as a subject specialist can use a variety of assessment methods and can develop tasks that will enable learners to show their skills, knowledge and value as required by a particular Assessment Standard in a particular Learning Outcome. Educators are expected to meet other requirements as indicated in the assessment policies as well as in the Protocol for Recording and Reporting. The Protocol states that educators should develop an assessment program; and develop assessment tasks that refer to certain criteria and outcomes based.

A caring educator would be an educator who recognizes the needs of learners and who enables them to experience reality through different approaches; and design learning programs that would address the learners' needs. In addition he/she should, according to the National Education Policy Act No.76 of 1998; the Norms and Standards for Educators; the Educator Employment Act and the South African Qualification Act, be a qualified educator.



According to **Education White Paper 4** on Further Education and Training Act of 1998 and the Further Education and Training Act (Act No. 98 of 1998) provide coordinated structure for development which consists of the senior secondary component of schooling and technical colleges. The programs that are offered in grade 10-12 should conform to the prescriptions of this Act. The qualification that should be issued in this program should conform to the requirements of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council referred to as **Umalusi**.

This council ensures that providers of education conform to set standards guided by the General and Further Education Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001). Umalusi has to ensure that the assessment throughout the country is uniform. One other program that Umalusi is involved in is that of quality assurance of assessment. To ensure quality of assessment, Umalusi monitors and moderates Continuous Assessment of learner performance which is school-based assessment and moderates and verifies marking of examination and moderates question papers for the National Senior Certificate. The following criteria are used to ensure that all question papers written nationally are standardized in terms of technical criterion; how internal moderation should be conducted; content to be covered and the adherence to Assessment Policies and Guidelines Document.

The National Qualification Framework was created in terms of the **South African Qualification Authority Act of 1995** to assist in accelerating the redress of the past education system's practices that were based on discrimination, by creating an integrated national framework for learning achievements; facilitate mobility and progression within education and to

enhance the quality of education and training. Section 5 (1) (a) of this Act indicates that this statutory body shall:

- (i) oversee the development of the National Qualification Framework
- (ii) formulate and publish policies and criteria for
  - aa. the registration of accreditation bodies
  - bb. the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications
- (b) oversee the implementation of the National Qualification Framework, including
- (c) (iii) steps to ensure compliance with provisions for accreditation.

The Act is informed by a number of principles and the third principles indicate that the Further Education and Training Certificate should equip learners with knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in society as well as providing a basis for continued learning in higher education. This principle addresses the objectives of the Act which endeavours to create a framework for mobility and progression within education.

Principle 5 indicates that for a learner to be awarded a Further Education and Training certificate he/she should have accumulated a minimum of 120 credits. 72 thereof should be at level 4 and above. To enhance the quality of education, the Act prescribes that 20 credits must be obtained from one of the eleven official languages provided by **South African Constitution of 1996** at level 4. A further 20 credits must be obtained from a second official

language at a minimum of level 3. 16 credits at level 4 must be obtained from Mathematics.

An integrated assessment according to principle number 7 must be incorporated to ensure that the purpose of the qualification is achieved. Educators should use a range of formative and summative assessments, such as simulation; tests; examinations; projects and assignments to collect data on learner performance. The educator should be guided by the Subject Assessment Guidelines when developing assessment tasks. The assessment guide indicates which assessment tasks are suitable for which subject and Assessment Standards.

However, it should be borne in mind that the acquisition of a Further Education and Training certificate does not automatically provide admission to Higher Education. The Further Education and Training certificate enables progression to the course of study and that the qualifications will in most cases differ in content, skill and value. Therefore educators should be familiar with the rules of combination of choice subjects in order to provide a curriculum that would lead to a particular career path.

A qualification according to the South African Qualification Authority will mean a representation of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning, section 8 (1) (a).

This suggests that the principles of the South African Qualification Authority are based on allowance for flexibility and that the Further Education and Training Certificate qualification should respond to a variety of social and economic needs, and that the education provided should:

- promote an opportunity for lifelong learning
- provide an opportunity for the transfer of learning from educational system to the world of work
- enable learners from different backgrounds to take up opportunities for further learning.

In view of the fact that there will be varied competences, skills and values for the same qualification: how is the quality standardized? The National Department of Education provides guidelines through the Subject Statement and Subject Assessment Guidelines and tries to ensure that learners are assessed properly, according to the National Protocol on Recording and Reporting.

**The National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (2006)** provides a regulatory framework for the management of school assessment and basic requirement for safe-keeping of learner's portfolios. It should be read in conjunction with the **South African Schools Act (1996)**, the National Curriculum Statement grade 10-12 (General) and **National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996** among others. **The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 sections 19 to 21** states that it is the responsibility of all educators to assess the progress of learners in order to determine whether the expected outcomes have been achieved. The evidence of learner performance

collected from assessment tasks should be measured against specific outcomes. According to section 21, all educators should have a sound knowledge of all assessment techniques in order to ascertain a balanced performance that is fair and transparent and record the evidence of the performance in such a way that it could be communicated effectively to the stakeholders.

The **National Protocol for Recording and Reporting** aims to standardize the recording and reporting process within the National Curriculum Statement framework. The protocol seeks to provide requirements and examples for the design of a learner's profile, educator portfolios, report-cards, record sheets and schedules. The direction on the implementation of the protocol should be provided by the different Subject Assessment Guidelines. These guidelines suggest what should be assessed and how assessment could be implemented.

The program of assessment for all subjects in grade 10 and 11 would require learners to have completed seven tasks during the year. Two of which should be June and November examinations, two other tasks should be tests and three remaining tasks that make up the program of assessment shall depend on the subject in question. In grade 12 learners are supposed to do seven or six tasks depending on the subject, (DoE (a) (2008:4).

The subject educators have responsibility for all aspects of assessment, including recording and reporting. The National Protocol on Recording and Reporting in section 17 (1) (a) is stated that recording and reporting of learner evidence of performance should be against the assessment tasks. This

suggests that for a subject like Business Studies grade 12, the educator should have a record for each of the assessment tasks in his portfolio to show that he/she has covered all learning Outcomes in the formal task, DoE (a) (2008:5). The **National Protocol on Recording and Reporting** stipulates that the assessment task should be appropriate to the development of the learner and that not all assessment needs to be recorded.

Due to portability of knowledge from one learning area and learning field to another and progression from a lower grade to a higher grade, educators are required to give a minimum number of certain forms of assessment tasks, based on that particular subject's assessment policy, which should also be recorded. The subject assessment policy should inform the schools' assessment policy to enable monitoring and moderation of assessment both at school and district levels. Both the school and subject assessment policies should be clear to both educators and learners. When learners are informed about the purpose of and the times, during which they will be assessed, the chance of them not availing themselves for assessment might be reduced.

To ensure that all Learning Outcomes in a particular subject are assessed, the National Protocol on Recording and Reporting in Chapter 2, subsection 11 and DoE (a) (2008:2) states that educators should develop a year-long formal Program of Assessment for each subject and grade that should be submitted to the School Management Team before the start of the school year. This annual program of assessment shall be used to develop a School Assessment Plan for each grade. During the first week in the first term, learners and parents should be given the Annual Assessment Program for that grade. When parents have an annual program of assessment, this could ensure that

they assist their child in preparing for the assessment to be conducted at any given time. The plan ensures that educators plan for assessing learners as agreed on the plan. The annual assessment program could be used for monitoring of assessment done at school and to inform different stakeholders of when and how learners will be assessed during the year.

## **8. Recording**

Evidence of learner performance should be kept and used to inform various stakeholders on the progress made by learners. Recording of the achievement of learners should be done for each task. Although Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards are used to inform planning and development of assessment tasks, the recording of learner performance should be done against the assessment task only, DoE (2005:11). Educators should use the national codes for recording and reporting. The rating codes from grade R to grade 6 consist of four levels while the rating codes from grade 7 to 12 consist of seven levels which describe competence of learners. According to DoE (2005) and Assessment Policy Regulation of (2006), educators may choose to work from marked allocation or percentage to rating codes, or from rating codes to percentages when recording and reporting learner performance.

## **9. Reporting**

Schools have a statutory obligation to report to parents the progress of their children. The **National Protocol on Recording and Reporting** (2006) prescribes a format that should be used to record and report learner

performance. These reports to parents form part of communication that is aimed at fostering a partnership between educators, learners and parents. The report should give a broad indication of what the learner can achieve and at what level she/he has achieved in a particular task. The **National Protocol on Recording and Reporting** indicates that learners should be given feedback that indicates how well he/she has done and what ought to be done to improve on his/her performance and to account for the assessment process undertaken.

## **10. PLANNING FOR ASSESSMENT.**

The purpose for developing an assessment policy is to make explicit the functions of the processes linked to assessment to all those involved. The process involves various stakeholders such as the teachers, trainers, as well as the senior management teams and parents, governors, employers and training providers. Teaching and learning processes should be quality assured by assessment programs that provide consistency across any institution, for the benefit of all learners.

Assessment should form an integral part of teaching and learning that should be reflected in all three levels of planning. In developing a learning program for any subject an educator shall develop a subject framework; a scheme of work and a lesson plan. In a subject framework educators should consider forms of assessment that would be used in the assessment plan and also ensure that a wide range of assessment activities are incorporated in the teaching and learning plan. The educator should ascertain whether the

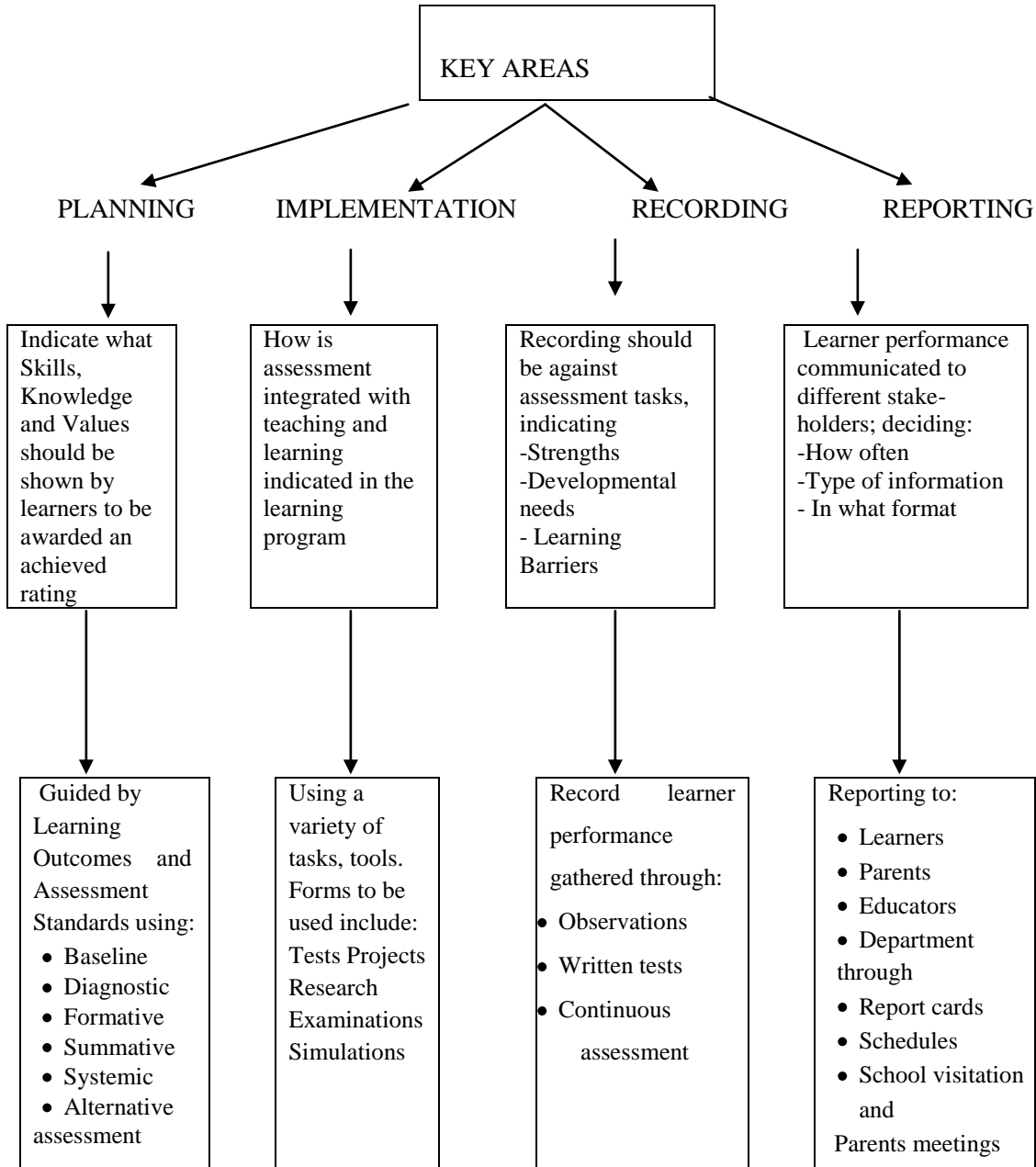


assessment forms indicated in the subject frame will address the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards that are indicated for that particular subject. When developing a lesson plan educators will indicate the assessment strategies in detail as well as the assessment activities.

The continuous nature of the assessment process starts when an educator sets targets to achieve and plan how they could be achieved, including the teaching and learning process. Actual assessment takes place once the teaching and learning process has been done or at the start through baseline assessment. The educator has to reflect on the whole cycle to determine whether the set objectives were met, which also implies that a variety of assessment methods should be employed in assessing learners because they learn in their individual ways and have varied educational needs. Therefore to facilitate learning for all learners, assessment methods should accommodate a wide range of learners and should be learner-paced, and flexible enough to include expanded opportunity. According to the South African Qualification Authority (1999:29) there are eight possible steps that an educator could follow when planning for teaching and assessment, which involves a good understanding of the module/program or subject; develop an assessment plan; inform learners of the requirements and ensure that they understand their role and responsibility regarding assessment; selecting appropriate methods and instruments and develop materials. Educators should conduct assessment, which includes collection of learners' evidence of performance; the educator should give feedback to learners after evaluating the whole process.

This implies that the process of assessing learners does not end with feedback but that the process also needs to be evaluated. By evaluating the process the educators could identify, gather and interpret evidence of learner performance in order to assist learners improve their performance.

## 5.2. Assessment Program



The figure is adapted from the Limpopo Business studies Facilitator's training manual (2005)

The following schematic representation depicts an assessment program that could be followed at school level. Assessment should not be regarded as incidental to teaching nor should it be viewed as a form of punishment. Assessment is part of the whole process of teaching and learning and should be planned in advance. The program should assist the educators in collecting, analysing and interpreting information on learner performance for the purpose of making decisions about the progress of the learner. Assessment should be planned based on the principles contained in the policies that regulate the practice. Classroom assessment should provide an indication of learner's performance in an efficient and effective way. The **National Protocol on Recording and Reporting** regulates how the learner evidence of performance should be recorded and reported.

## 5. Conclusion

The National Curriculum Statement endeavours to provide a uniform education that allows for portability of skills and allows learners to study anywhere in the Republic because the core subjects are similar and the weighting of credits is the same.

The National Education Policy Act of 1996, the Employment of Educators Acts, Norms and Standards for Education and Manifesto on values, Education and Democracy, the South African Schools Act and Assessment policy provide a legal framework which governs teaching and learning in all public schools.

Educators are required to assess learners and to give feedback to different stakeholders, including parents on the performance of learners using a prescribed format. The National Protocol on Recording and Reporting indicates that educators should develop an assessment plan for the subjects that they teach and these subjects' assessment plans should be used to develop a school annual assessment plan to be given to parents at the beginning of the year.

Educators should be familiar with assessment strategies as well as the prescribed assessment tasks and forms in the subject Assessment Guidelines. In the next chapter the collection of data and analysis shall be discussed.