CHAPTER 2

POLICY DIRECTIVES FOR OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that the state is a system of institutions each of which must contribute to satisfactory living together of human beings. The institutions are usually classified as legislative, executive and administrative. Sometimes judicial institutions, known as "courts of law", are mentioned as a fourth category of institutions. The crux of the matter is that one category of institutions be involved in the provision of appropriate essential services to the population of the state. Each category of institutions will perform the functions entrusted to it according to appropriate traditions or prescriptions generally referred to as legislation.

The aforementioned state of affairs apply also to education and the institutions involved. It is understandable why section 29(1) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), provides that –

> Everyone has the right –
> (a)   to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
> (b)   to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make
>   progressively available and accessible.

Subsection 104(4) of Act 108 of 1996 provides that Parliament and the legislative authority of every province have concurrent powers to pass legislation on any matter listed in Schedule 4 of the Act. "Education at all levels, excluding tertiary education" is one of the listed matters. However, it could be accepted that Parliament will be the dominant legislature in respect of educational matters. Furthermore, it could be accepted that the national executive institutions and functionaries entrusted with educational matters (particularly the Minister of Education and the Department of

23

Education) will play directive roles for the educational activities entrusted to the different spheres of government. This state of affairs will *inter alia* be dealt with in this chapter on policy matters.

Politics has a major influence on the nature and character of every education system of a state. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), ushered in democracy, which in turn, necessitated a review of the national education system. A need was felt for an education system which respects and upholds demo-cratic principles and values, such as –

❖ a high standard of professional ethics;
❖ efficient, economic and effective use of resources;
❖ services which should be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
❖ transparency;
❖ good human resource management and career development practices; and
❖ public administration which should be non-partisan and broadly representative of the South African people (Section 195 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).

Before explaining the definition, origin, characteristics and kinds of outcomes-based education, it is necessary to understand the reasons that led to its introduction.

2.2   JUSTIFICATION FOR OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Before explaining the nature, origin and character of outcomes-based education for the Republic of South Africa, it is necessary to look at the education which was offered previously, especially for the blacks. In this regard the *Bantu Education Act*, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953), is of utmost importance. This Act dealt with the principles, and aims of education for the blacks and their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteris-tics, aptitudes and needs (Malherbe, 1977:545).

CHAPTER 2

Education of the blacks, from kindergarten to university, as well as vocational education, became the responsibility of the central government. The administration of education for the blacks was adapted for the needs of the so-called homelands and the ethnic characteristics of the people. Gradually the homelands became more or less autonomous in administering the education of their inhabitants. The organisation of schools was seen as part of a plan of social development. This plan was particularly essential to the overall policy of separate development for racial groups propagated and implemented by the National Party from 1948 (Malherbe, 1977:349 & 545).

Shortly after the National Party came into power in 1948 it appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Dr W.W.M. Eiselen to investigate the question of Bantu education. In 1951 the Commission brought out a report which proved to be the blueprint of Bantu education. The report paved the way for the abolition of missionary influence. Prior to the promulgation of the *Bantu Education Act*, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953), missionaries were the only educators for blacks in most black areas. The ruling party was totally opposed to churches offering education for they regarded this activity as nothing else, but the destruction of black culture (Lodge, 1985:114).

In a speech before the Senate in 1954, Dr H.F. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, made what is probably the clearest general statement of the Nationalist Government policy in connection with education for the blacks. Verwoerd said that it was the policy of his Department that [Bantu] education should have its own roots entirely in the Native areas, the Native (indigenous) environment and the Native community. There Bantu education must be able to give itself complete expression, and there it will have to perform its real service. The Bantu must be guided to serve their own community in all respects. There is no place for them in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. However, within their own community all doors are open for them. For that reason it is of no avail for them to receive training which has its aim absorption into the European community, while they cannot and will not be absorbed there. Up till then they had been subjected to a school system which drew

them away from their own community and practically misled them by showing them green pastures of the European, but still did not allow them to graze there. This attitude was not only uneconomic because money was spent on education which had no specific aim, but was even dishonest to continue with. The effect on the Bantu community was frustration of educated Natives who could not find employment acceptable to them (Malherbe, 1977:546).

In fact in 1954 only 37% of the blacks were domiciled in the homelands, where all the doors would be open to them. The 63% of the blacks worked in white areas, where they went to earn a living. According to Dr Verwoerd the blacks felt frustrated in white areas because they could not quickly acquire the whites' education and know-how. In addition, blacks felt frustrated because of the policy that only certain forms of labour would be open to them in white areas (Muller, 1981:523). This was Verwoerd's persuasive argument to justify the provision of a separate form of education for the blacks.

2.2.1 Regional and homeland administration

The report of the Eiselen Commission led to enactment of the *Bantu Education Act*, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953). Amongst other changes resulting from the Act were that the control of education for blacks was removed from the provinces to the central government. Secondly, a division of Bantu Education was established within the then Department of Native Affairs (Muller, 1981:532).

On the one hand, the administration of the schools for black children living in white areas in course of time were divided into five regions on ethnic basis. On the other hand, the schools for black children living in the homelands were administered by the eight different homeland authorities, namely Transkei, Lebowa, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, Kwazulu, Venda and Qwaqwa – and later on by KwaNdebele as well (Posel, 1991:233).

CHAPTER 2

2.2.2 The elimination of missionary control

At the local level of government the biggest change came about in the shift of control from the churches to the local communities. Two statutory bodies (school committees and school boards) were established to take over control of the schools catering for blacks. Institutions that bore the heaviest brunt were the teacher training institutions. The majority of these institutions were controlled by missions and teaching was conducted by white teachers. The government decided that the training of all teachers for government and government-aided schools should in future be conducted in state training institutions only. Management of mission training colleges were invited to say whether they proposed to rent or sell their schools to the Department, or to close the teacher training schools and instead conduct a primary or secondary school in their buildings. If they were not prepared to do either they might train teachers for their own schools entirely at their own expense, but the Department would not necessarily employ teachers so trained. Regardless of their choice, the Minister could decide to transfer any of these schools to a black community (Malherbe, 1977:549-550).

It was beyond the material resources of any church in the 1950s to provide education for great masses, especially of very poor children without financial help from the government. Due to lack of financial assistance many churches had to abandon schools because they happened to be built in areas allocated to whites. Churches accepted the inevitable and surrendered or closed their schools (Muller, 1981:149).

2.2.3 Decline in quality of education

The decline in the quality of education for the blacks in the 1950s was almost entirely the result of the inadequate financial provision made for it. With the take-over of Bantu Education by the Department of Bantu Affairs in 1954 the government reverted to the inelastic basis of finance which had been adopted in the 1920s. In 1955 the amount of money that was made available by the state was again pegged, despite the fact that learner numbers continued to increase (Polley, 1988:85).

CHAPTER 2

There was, from the time of the take-over and in the subsequent twelve years a sharp decline in the amount of money the government spent in terms of real money per black learner. There was great overcrowding of learners in the classrooms, resulting in deterioration in the quality of the teaching. In making grants towards buildings hardly any account was taken of the depreciation of money over the years. The result was that by the time classrooms were built they cost nearly 30% to 40% more than the amounts originally budgeted for (Grobler, 1988:103).

Pretorius (1999:vi) and Lodge (1985:116-117) confirm that the quality of education in South Africa for a particular majority group was so poor that millions of adults are functionally illiterate. They stated further that educational circumstances for the blacks are reminiscent of the most impoverished countries in Africa. Other reasons for the need to introduce outcomes-based education are the following:

❖ The curriculum was too structured, prescriptive and not easily adaptable.
❖ Traditional curriculum processes made no room for stakeholders participation in the decision-making process.
❖ The emphasis was on academic education to the exclusion of skills education.
❖ A large gap that existed between education in the formal educational sectors and training by employers.
❖ The curriculum was content-based with the result that the teacher instructed and the learners memorised.
❖ The curriculum was teacher-centred and not learner-centred.
❖ Learner achievement was measured in symbols and percentages which are often no real indication of actual performance.
❖ Learner achievement was compared to that of other learners which led to unhealthy competition (Pretorius, 1999:viii-ix).

Outcomes-based education was adopted as fundamental for education policy to improve the quality of education for all South Africans. It will also require improving

the standard of teaching and learning which was seriously dented by the effects of the *Bantu Education Act*, 1953 (Act 47 of 1953). It is a constitutional right of everyone to have access to basic education including adult basic education and further education which the state must make progressively available and accessible. To satisfy this policy directive, the Department of Education launched an education mobilisation campaign in 1999. One of the nine priorities addressed by the campaign was that the success of active learning had to be ensured through outcomes-based education (*South Africa Yearbook*, 2000/01:429).

It was obvious that the new Republic of South Africa established by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), would have to obtain an appropriate national education system. It was envisaged that outcomes-based education could be required to attain the objectives of the Constitution. This matter is dealt with in the following sub-headings of this chapter and subsequent paragraphs.

2.3   DEFINING OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

According to Spady and Marshall (1994:1), outcomes-based education is not new, but is as old as mankind. For example, how to teach a child to cross a road safely. In this case it is known what the child must do and can be imagined. This exercise can be taught to the child repeatedly until he/she can do it safely.

Kudlas (1994:32) concurs with Spady and Marshall that outcomes-based education is an age-old, common sense approach to teaching. He continues to state that outcomes-based education is a process that focuses on what is to be learned, that is, the outcome. He describes an outcome as a demonstration of learning, that is, what the leaner is to know or do. Spady and Marshall (1994:18) agree with Kudlas when they define outcomes as high quality culminating demonstrations of significant leaning that happens at the end of a learning experience. Therefore, outcomes are a result of learning and are actual, visible, observable demonstrations of three things, namely

knowledge, orientations and motivational, and relational elements. The demonstrations happen in a real life setting, and are influenced and defined by the elements and factors that constitute that setting, situation or context.

Consequently, from the aforementioned, it can be deduced that an outcome is not a great deal of content or knowledge that a learner has memorised. Neither is it a test score, symbol or percentage. It is merely a visible, observable demonstration of something that the learner can do as a result of a range of learning experiences and capabilities that underlie it. This demonstration does not occur in a vacuum, but in a particular context which has a direct bearing on what is being carried out.

In specific areas of learning, such as mathematics, languages and social studies, their outcomes are based on facts and skills. Outcomes that are pertinent to other learning areas expect learners to demonstrate their ability and knowledge concerning projects, presentations, or products that they have completed at the end of a phase of learning. Besides, there are outcomes based on experiences that learners can expect to encounter after the completion of their schooling career. These outcomes require that learners apply their learning in relevant settings and situations related to life outside school (Spady & Marshall, 1994:2).

In order to understand what outcomes-based education entails, according to Fitzpatrick (1991:18), answers to the following questions are needed:

❖ What should learners know at the end of their schooling career?
❖ What must learners be able to do?
❖ What do learners need to feel or believe?

The determination of what learners need to achieve is helpful to deduce outcomes therefrom. Thereafter these outcomes are categorised so that learners, educators and parents know what they need to do to be able to succeed at every level. This, in turn,

necessitates the need for periodic assessment of learners to measure their progress. It is essential that learners, before leaving school, demonstrate that they have mastered the ability to attain the outcomes (*The News-Sentinel*, 1993:2).

Outcomes-based education can be compared to curriculum development in order to identify its unique features. Firstly, curriculum developers traditionally worked on the assumption that knowledge is absolute; that theory and practice, education and training differ and are irreconcilable. Secondly, school subjects were included in the curriculum because they were regarded as valuable. The outcomes relevance of these subjects were ignored. That is, the content to be taught was fixed before the aims of education were identified. Notwithstanding the change in the aims of education, it was assumed that the new aims could be achieved by means of the traditional school subjects (Malan, 1997:10-11).

Outcomes-based education differs from the previous system in the sense that it views knowledge to be negotiable and changeable. This approach rejects the view that school subjects are valuable in themselves. The argument is that today's knowledge might be irrelevant to tomorrow's needs and circumstances. Hence, knowledge gained by learners from the school subjects they study may not equip them for the ever-changing technological world. In this regard Guthrie and Pierce (1990:180-181) state that technological invention is another factor that influences education because countries failing to react quickly to technological developments get left behind. Still on the issue of curriculum development as a means of indicating the uniqueness of outcomes-based education, Malan (1997:11) states that this process has three stages, namely, exit outcomes, subject outcomes and lesson outcomes, which follow each other in this sequence.

Firstly, exit outcomes are derived from an analysis of the skills and knowledge which learners will need to lead successful lives in future. It, therefore, follows that exit out-comes must be formulated in terms of the roles which successful and responsible adults

are expected to fulfil on completion of their school education. After defining the exit outcomes, they are to be allocated to a learning programme as well as an extramural programme (Malan, 1997:12).

Secondly, more specific outcomes must be developed for each exit outcome. Thus, specific outcomes must be developed for each school programme. Furthermore, it is imperative that the specific outcomes must show a direct correlation with the contribution to the original exit outcomes. Hereafter grade-level or course outcomes have to be formulated. These are outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in a year or period of a course. Grade-level outcomes are also known as range statements because they describe the range and complexity of expected learner performance at each exit point from a course, programme or module (Malan, 1997:12). Wessels and Van den Berg (1998:xxi) describe range statements as fixed and indicate the levels of complexity and depth whereby learners in different phases, demonstrate their achievement of the specific outcomes.

Thirdly, and finally, educators have to identify lesson outcomes. These serve as criteria against which learners' learning progress and development have to be assessed (Malan, 1997:12).

A major point of departure is that in outcomes-based education learners are at the centre of the teaching process. It, therefore, follows that outcomes-based education is not only learner-centred, but also results-oriented because it is based on the assumption that all people can learn (Department of Education, 1997:17). Furthermore, outcomes-based education emphasises that learners must demonstrate what they have learned. That is, its focus is on learning by doing, problem solving and skills development (Christie, 1999:282). Another distinguishing feature of outcomes-based education is that it is opposed to the content-laden and examination-oriented style of education which encourages rote learning or memorisation of facts even without understanding. In the case of outcomes-based education educators assess

each learner individually to determine whether he/she has mastered relevant learning material and is ready to move on to the next (Laubser, 1997:19). In conclusion, Olivier (1998:20) identifies another unique feature of outcomes-based education, which is, the best way to get where one wants to be is to first determine what one wants to achieve. Thereafter, appropriate strategies and techniques must be formulated which will make it possible to achieve the desired outcomes.

After describing what outcomes-based education is, it is befitting to trace its origin.

2.4   ROOTS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Outcomes-based education is based on key beliefs about learning and success. The beliefs are universally accepted as genuine outcomes-based education efforts, and are:

❖ What and whether learners learn successfully is more important than exactly when, how, and from whom they learn it.
❖ Schools exist to ensure that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed to be successful after they exit the education system.
❖ Schools should be organised, structured and operated so that all their learners can achieve these life performance outcomes.
❖ All learners can learn and succeed, but not all on the same day in the same way.
❖ Successful learning promotes more successful learning, just as poor learning fosters more poor learning.
❖ Schools control key conditions and opportunities that directly affect successful school learning (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999:29).

The main message imbedded in the six statements is that there is a definite commitment to creating the conditions that are conducive to learning and using practices that help each learner become the most successful learner he/she can be. Outcomes-based education educators require their learners to be successful learners and performers. To

33

achieve this aim they do their utmost to focus, organise, and operate their schools and classrooms to achieve that aim. Research and experience have shown that outcomes-based education achieves results (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999:29-30).

The aforementioned key beliefs of outcomes-based education are condensed into three characteristics by Spady and Marshall (1991:67), which are –

❖ all learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day and in the same way;
❖ success breeds success; and
❖ schools control the conditions of success.

Experience has indicated that although all learners can learn and succeed, they do so at different paces and use different methods. That is, each learner, given sufficient time and proper assistance can learn successfully (Boschee & Baron, 1994:195).

It is an accepted fact that all learners can learn successfully regardless of their mental abilities. McKernan (1993:1) concurs with this fact when he states that children learn all the time and that they are good learners. For instance, they learn how to talk, walk and ride bicycles. Danielson (1988:1) also shares this viewpoint when he writes that in the pre-school there are no unsuccessful learners. He continues to say that young children differ in learning speed but all of them do learn.

Danielson (1988:2) advocates that success breeds success in school. When learners succeed in school they are motivated to embark upon new challenging tasks to gain more success. The major benefit of learners who tasted success is that they become persistent until they achieve any objective that they have stated for themselves. Unfortunately, the converse is also true. Repeated failure at school is detrimental in the sense that it may encourage the learners to avoid tasks in future and may negatively affect the learners' self-esteem.

CHAPTER 2

It is a truism that schools control the conditions of success. Through its curriculum, the school have to provide a conducive environment for all learners to learn successfully.

The aforementioned key beliefs of outcomes-based education are also supported by Killen (1998b:5) when he states that –

- ❖ all learners have talent and it is the duty of schools to develop it;
- ❖ it is the responsibility of schools to find ways and means for learners to succeed;
- ❖ mutual trust is a driving force of all good outcomes-based schools;
- ❖ all learners are endowed with the gift of excellence;
- ❖ by inculcating the spirit of success in learners, they will work hard to reduce errors in their work;
- ❖ learners must be taught and encouraged to learn collaboratively and to avoid unhealthy competition;
- ❖ no learner should be excluded from any school activity; and
- ❖ a positive attitude is essential for all learners.

Apart from the key beliefs of outcomes-based education Malan (1997:9) maintains that the following are the roots of outcomes-based education –

- ❖ educational objectives;
- ❖ competency-based education;
- ❖ mastery learning; and
- ❖ criterion-referenced assessment.

These concepts can be explained as follows.

2.4.1 Educational objectives

The origin of educational objectives could be traced back to the book by Ralph Tyler, entitled *Basic Principles of Curriculum*, which was published in 1950. In this work Tyler identified key issues which educators must take into account when they develop curricula and plan their instruction. The key issues are –

❖ educational purpose;
❖ content;
❖ organisation; and
❖ evaluation (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:9).

2.4.2 Competency-based education

Competency-based education was introduced in the United States of America towards the end of the 1960s. The main reason for its introduction was in response to the concerns raised by businessmen. Their complaint was that education was not preparing learners adequately for the world of work. Their concern was that learners were not taught the actual skills that they would need in the world of work. The aim of competency-based education was that it would focus on an integration of outcomes goals in terms of specific skills, instructional experiences to teach the outcomes, and assessment devices to determine whether the learner has mastered the outcomes (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:10). Towers (1994:2) concurs with the above stated viewpoint with his definition of competency-based education. He defines it as a general term applied to instructional and assessment efforts aimed at evaluating learners' performance.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:10-11) there are six critical components that characterise competency-based education, namely –

❖ learning outcomes which are explicit with regard to the required skills and level of

CHAPTER 2

proficiency required in these standards of assessment;

❖ time which is flexible, for example, learning time which is not only restricted to seat time;

❖ instruction which facilitates learning by means of a variety of instructional activities;

❖ measurement which entails explicit, criterion-referenced testing of required outcomes;

❖ certification which depends on a demonstration of required outcomes by the learner; and

❖ programme adaptability which is managed sensitively to ensure optimum guidance to the learner.

In essence, competency-based education supports the concept that all learning is individual and that the individual, who may be a learner or an educator, is goal-oriented. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:11) go on to state that the teaching-learning process is facilitated if the educator knows in advance what he/she wants the learners to learn and if the learner also knows in advance exactly what he/she is expected to learn. Moreover, personal responsibility and accountability for learning are emphasised. To understand the essence of competency-based learning it is necessary to describe the origin, nature and character of competency-based education.

Competency-based education was conceptualised, amongst other reasons, because many learners were unable to keep up in learning basic skills in traditional education programmes; in many classrooms in many schools some learners seemed to learn to hate schools and educators rather than school subjects; higher cost of education and increased public awareness of some of the poor outcomes of education for many learners, resulted in a call for accountability of schools and educators for their learners' success and lack of progress in the classroom; and advances in the art and science of teaching and increased public awareness of the right of everyone to obtain a good education (Bell, 1978:16). In a nutshell, competency-based education evolved from the need to correct deficiencies in traditional education, the appropriateness of preserving

the best elements of the desire to combine instructional methods that are effective, and the human nature to try something new.

Honston and Howsam (1972:5-6) list the following characteristics of a competency-based education programme:

❖ specification of learner objectives in behavioural terms;

❖ specification of the means for determining whether performance meets the indicated criterion levels;

❖ provision of one or more modes of instruction pertinent to the objectives, through which the learning activities may take place;

❖ public sharing of the objectives, criteria, means of assessment, and alternative activities;

❖ assessment of the learning experience in terms of competency criteria;

❖ placement on the learner of the accountability for meeting the criteria;

❖ other concepts and procedures, such as modularised packaging, the systems approach, educational technology, and guidance and management support are employed as means in implementing competency-based education.

2.4.3 Mastery learning

Mastery learning is defined as an instructional process which involves organising instruction, providing learners with regular feedback on their learning progress, giving guidance and direction to help learners correct their learning mistakes. In addition, to provide extra challenges to learners who have mastered learning material (Towers, 1994:2). From the definition of mastery learning, it can be deduced that there are two major advantages from this learning process, which are –

CHAPTER 2

❖ making learners responsible for their own learning; and

❖ affording each learner an opportunity to learn.

Mastery learning owes its origin from the earlier work of Bloom's mastery learning theory in the publication *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. The purpose of this hierarchical classification system is to categorise the cognitive changes produced in learners as a result of the goals and methods of instruction. The taxonomy can be used by educators as an aid in formulating instructional objectives, selecting teaching methods, and designing tests and activities to determine learners' learning (Bell, 1978:168).

Mastery learning advocates that there is much more that the schools could do to learners apart from encouraging memorisation. Its philosophical underpinning is that all learners can master a core curriculum provided they are given sufficient time. Notwithstanding that, learners must master prerequisite skills before moving on to advanced skills (Capper & Jamison, 1993:30). This implies that learners need to have prerequisite knowledge before they can be allowed to learn a skill. In keeping with the philosophy of outcomes-based education, learners must be given multiple chances to learn prerequisite skills. In this respect Killen (1998a:1) maintains that mastery learning reduces learners' concerns about their ability to learn, and encourages them to attempt more challenging tasks.

From the above discussion it can be deduced that learners who are mastery-oriented focus on learning goals because they value achievement and regard ability as improvable. In mastery learning the responsibility is placed on the educator to provide and to create conditions that are conducive to learning. Pursuant to this aim of pro-viding suitable conditions for effective learning to occur, Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:11) maintain that the educator needs to find out why learners fail to reach mastery and to either –

❖ provide more time for learners; or

❖ provide different media or materials; or

❖ diagnose which missing prerequisite knowledge or skill the learner must acquire to master the learning material.

In general, the aim of mastery learning is to ensure that learners are given opportunities to be successful at most tasks by providing an enabling environment, and appropriate learning materials and backup guidance. In this regard the educator's input is vital. Hence, mastery learning programmes are correctly described as being educator-controlled and not educator-centred (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:12).

2.4.4 Criterion-referenced assessment

In outcomes-based education assessment is one of the educator's most important activities. Therefore, in terms of criterion-referenced assessment, testing is done in which learners' scores are compared to a set standard. For example, in order for a university student to pass an examination of a course or module he/she needs to obtain 50% or higher. The minimum percentage required, which is 50%, is called the minimum standard of proficiency (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:12). In this regard Moeca (2000:24) states that the implication is that learning should not be driven by competition, and each learner who is endowed with unique capabilities should be given sufficient time and support to achieve specified outcomes.

Criterion-referenced measurements is appropriate for outcomes-based education because it puts the learner's score on a scale ranging from no proficiency to excellent. Along the scale are tasks that the learner must perform and the performance level that indicates acceptable level of achievement. The educator needs to interpret the results of the criterion-referenced test in order to adapt his/her teaching. Consequently, a criterion-referenced test is an assessment tool which can be used effectively in outcomes-based education. However, criterion-referenced testing should only form a

small part of comprehensive assessment in outcomes-based education (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:12).

It is also worth noting that the preferred form of assessment in outcomes-based education is continuous or ongoing assessment. Therefore, assessment forms an integral part of all teaching-learning activities in outcomes-based education. Thus, assessment in outcomes-based education is not done only at the end of a semester or year, but should also be based on classroom observation of learners' answers and responses, in homework, classwork, exercises and assignments, projects, portfolios and other work done by the learner (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:13).

In the explanation of the roots of outcomes-based education, its characteristics are clearly discernible.

2.5   CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Outcomes-based education, like other teaching approaches to education, has charac-teristics that are unique to it. These characteristics are the major reasons why education systems are attracted to it. According to Pretorius (1999:xi), the reasons that make outcomes-based education attractive are –

❖ it is learner-centred as it advocates that all learners can achieve on condition that they are given ample time to do so;

❖ time and help is given to learners to meet their innate potential;

❖ learners focus on what they should learn because they know outcomes in advance;

❖ it allows educators to be flexible in their teaching methods because the emphasis does not lie in the procedure, but on whether the learner reaches the required outcomes;

❖ learners are given multiple chances to demonstrate that they have reached the outcome;

❖ learner advancement is based on demonstrated achievement;

❖ learner achievement is not measured in terms of the achievements of other learners, but only on whether the learner has achieved predetermined outcomes or not;

❖ learners are expected to accept greater responsibility on reaching the required outcomes;

❖ learners who reach required outcomes successfully are given the freedom and flexibility to expand their learning by being allowed to engage in enriching activities;

❖ the culminating demonstrations of significant learning must be of high quality;

❖ it emphasises high expectations for all learners to succeed, though at different times;

❖ it involves a wide range of stakeholders, like parents, educators and business leaders in determining required outcomes. This enables it to address more directly community needs;

❖ the emphasis falls on skills needed in everyday living and requirements of the world of work, but not on memorisation of learning material;

❖ the emphasis also falls on inculcating in learners' problem-solving skills and not memorisation of learning material;

❖ it is focused on the future and can address the ever changing needs of the community;

❖ it is a long-term commitment based on the notion of continuous improvement. Therefore, it creases opportunities for local communities to strive for excellence through strategic planning.

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:13-14) identify four characteristics of outcomes-based education as follows:

❖ The learning material which must be learned should be stated unambiguously.
❖ The learner's progress should be based on his/her demonstrated achievement.

❖ Different instructional strategies and assessment tools should be used.

❖ The learner is given the necessary time and guidance to achieve optimally.

Firstly, in an attempt to state the learning material clearly, the learning outcomes must be future-oriented; learner-centred; focused on knowledge, skills and values; characterised by high expectations for all learners; and a bias for further instructional decision-making. Furthermore, the learner is facilitated by the educator towards the attainment of required outcomes (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:13).

Secondly, the learner indicates achievement by being able to use and apply learned knowledge, skills and values. In addition, learners are advanced from one class to another because they are capable of demonstrating skills for independence and future success (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:13).

Thirdly, the educator must cater for the needs of the learner by analysing the needs of the learner. Thereafter the educator should structure his/her instructional method for each learner as a continuous process of observation, reflection and analysis (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:14).

Fourthly, in assisting the learner to reach his/her potential, the educator should keep in mind and assist the learners to be –

❖ hard workers;

❖ responsible for their own learning;

❖ independent in learning and thinking; and

❖ able to assess their own work.

Zlatos (1993:12) summarises the characteristics of outcomes-based education as the model that can address future needs more satisfactorily, implement technological inventions and the changes that have taken place in the work environment. Outcomes-

based education has identifiable advantages which will be dealt with in subsequent paragraphs.

2.6   ADVANTAGES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Understanding the characteristics of outcomes-based education makes it possible to identify particular advantages (Boschee & Baron, 1994:193). One of the major advantages is that it is committed to the learning of all learners. The commitment of outcomes-based education to help each learner to be successful is the desire of every nation. On account of the fact that learners are endowed with different mental abilities, outcomes-based education recognises this fact by giving learners sufficient time and a variety of instructional methods to learn.

Unlike the past where the pace of instruction was controlled by academic year, outcomes-based education advocates that the pace of instruction be determined by the individual needs of the learner (Furman, 1994:1). Educators were under pressure to complete syllabi at specified times. Learners were also adversely affected by this race against time. The educator was forced to cover the syllabi, had to move from one topic to another regardless of the fact that learners mastered the previous topic or not. Outcomes-based education has corrected the anomaly by coming up with instructional design in which learning is the constant and time the variable, and not the other way round (Towers, 1994:2).

On account of an integrated approach to knowledge, related topics are presented and taught together. This encourages educators to work in teams and learners to learn in groups. Therefore, it means that outcomes-based education encourages the spirit of collegiality amongst educators. It also enhances the chances of group collaboration and empowerment, whereby all stakeholders are actively responsible, accountable and committed. Furthermore, learners are afforded as much opportunities as is necessary

for them to successfully master the learning material. Another major advantage of outcomes-based education is that it encourages learners to think for themselves. Learners take responsibility of their own learning, by assessing themselves and others, and by constructing meaning and discovering knowledge. The underpinning philosophy of outcomes-based education as embedded in its roots is supportive of the fact that learners must be helped to develop critical thinking. This idea is also advocated by Carl and Van der Merwe (1998:67) stating that the curriculum and teaching methods should encourage independent and critical thought.

There are particular advantages of outcomes-based education that are specific to the learners and educators. As far as the learners are concerned, they know well in advance what the purpose of their learning is. They also know that they have to demonstrate their competence in a specific learning area. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:14) concur with this viewpoint by arguing that learners will know what is expected of them and will be in a position to measure their achievement. This implies that learners will feel to be in control of their learning by making use of self-assessment. Besides, learners should at all times be aware of what they should aim to achieve, what criteria will be used to assess their performance, and where they stand in comparison to achieving stated outcomes. To accomplish this aim, learners are provided with more instructional support. In addition, assessment is transparent to the learners as they will be involved in continuous assessment. In turn, the involvement of the learners in assessment as well as clarity of purpose of teaching and learning serve to motivate learners (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*:7).

Advantages of outcomes-based education that are related to the educators is that it affords them an opportunity for more precise planning of their teaching. Educators' selection of content and strategic planning should be guided by outcomes. In addition, educators do not only focus on completion of the syllabi, but on whether learners have mastered contents, concepts, skills and values (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:15).

45

Moreover, it also gives them a wider choice about the content, methods of teaching and organisational procedures that will enable them to achieve their desired outcomes. With the freedom of educators to choose appropriate content and methods of teaching, comes the responsibility to achieve outcomes (Pahad, *et al.*, *s.a.*:7).

Other advantages of outcomes-based education which are based on an instructional approach, according to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:15), are –

❖ failure is avoided because learners who have not achieved required objectives are given further opportunities;

❖ memorising is reduced and understanding of content is encouraged;

❖ learners are encouraged to contextualise their understanding; and

❖ learners are provided with knowledge, skills and values that prepare them for the world of work.

Understanding the advantages of outcomes-based education necessitates also descriptions of different types of outcomes-based education.

2.7   TYPES OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

There are three types of outcomes-based education which are in an evolutionary sequence. The three outcomes-based education designs are –

❖ traditional outcomes-based education;

❖ transitional outcomes-based education; and

❖ transformational outcomes-based education (Pretorius, 1999:x).

Outcomes for traditional outcomes-based education are defined as instructional objectives based on the subject matter content (Spady, 1994:19). It advocates that the

demonstration of specific learner competencies in a particular school subject or topic should be determined at the end of small segments of instruction (Malan, 1997:15). Here the focus is on the mastery of content, with the emphasis on remembering and understanding.

Although the traditional outcomes-based education can assist learners to improve their learning, it has the following shortcomings –

❖ it does not spell out clearly to learners and educators why learning is important;
❖ it focuses mainly on recalling content and not on linking or integrating skills, knowledge and values;
❖ educators do not change the learning environment much;
❖ although teaching and learning may be clearly focused, it is highly unlikely that traditional outcomes-based education may transform schools significantly (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*, 17).

Transformational outcomes-based education focuses on higher level competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving (Department of Education, 1996:17). The outcomes of transitional outcomes-based education are complex and generalisable across content areas. In the case of lesson planning, the starting point is critical outcomes which focus on skills, knowledge and values. These outcomes require integration, synthesis and functional application of content (Spady, 1994:19).

Transitional outcomes-based education has characteristics in common with traditional outcomes-based education because both stress that educators need to be clear about what they want to achieve. Conversely, the two approaches have some elements of difference such as –

❖ critical outcomes come first and not the other way round;

❖ it questions whether the outcomes are valuable in society contrary to being helpful in teaching and learning;

❖ it aims at integrating knowledge, doing and feeling and not attending to them individually or separately; and

❖ it encourages change in the learning environment (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*:19).

Transformational outcomes-based education arises out of the need to assist learners to develop attitudes, knowledge and skills that will enable them to participate fruitfully in the world of work on completion. Pretorius (1999:29) concurs with this fact that learners must become competent future citizens. Malan (1997:16) also shares the same sentiments when she writes that the outcomes of transformational outcomes-based education are formulated in terms of the roles which competent, well-adjusted adults might be expected to perform in the world after completing school education. This approach of outcomes-based education also interrogates the existing school system and syllabus to determine whether they are amenable to meet the needs of the new social order as well as the needs of learners (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*:19).

This form of outcomes-based education is commonly used where there is a need for an accelerated social change. In this regard politics play a prominent role in restructuring the education system in such a manner that it will be used as a means of preparing citizens for a new social order. Such an education system will serve as an agent of change by producing learners who will fit into the vision of the new social order (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*:19).

Transformational outcomes-based education in its pursuit to prepare learners for the new social order is guided by the following question: "What sort of qualities – both as workers and as human beings – do we want citizens to have?" Appropriate critical outcomes will have to be formulated. That is, listing of the package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip learners to function as useful members of the community

48

become determinants of a new curriculum. In this regard schools are encouraged to select any content and to use a variety of methods of teaching which will enable them to achieve the agreed upon critical outcomes. This exercise makes it possible for educators to relate teaching to the immediate environment and also to change the syllabus frequently (Pahad *et al.*, *s.a.*:19).

Establishing the theoretical basis of outcomes-based education as explained above, would facilitate a better understanding of the origin and major policy directives of out-comes-based education within the South African context. The latter will be described in the following paragraphs.

2.8   ORIGINS AND POLICY DIRECTIVES FOR SOUTH AFRICAN OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

After the Union of South Africa was established in 1910 the arrangements for the education of the population were re-organised repeatedly in search of appropriate education systems for the various population entities and specific areas. However, it was obvious that all the existing educational arrangements would have to be adapted to provide for the new Republic of South Africa established in terms of the provisions of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), many years later.

Before Parliament finally passed Act 108 of 1996 it had already passed the *South African Qualifications Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995); the *National Education Policy Act*, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996); and the *Schools Act*, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). Act 27 of 1996 is particularly relevant here because it provides specifically that the Minister of Education "should determine national education policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and this Act". When giving effect to this directive the Preamble of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 had to be borne in mind. According to its Preamble the aims of the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic are to –

Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social

> justice and fundamental human rights;
> 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;
> Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
> Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign
>
> state in the family of nations.

The curriculum of every school subject – indeed of all educational programmes – would obviously have to respect these basic aims/outcomes of the Constitution and contribute to their realisation.

The *National Education Policy Act*, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996), was passed by Parliament "... to provide for the determination of national policy for education: and related matters". Section 3(4) of the Act provides that "... the Minister of Education shall determine national education policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and this Act". Section 7 provides that the Minister must within 21 days after determining policy in terms of section 3

> (a) give notice of such determination in the Gazette and indicate in such notice where the policy instrument issued with regard thereto may be obtained;
> (b) table the policy instrument referred to in paragraph (a) in Parliament within 21 days after the notice has appeared in the Gazette, if Parliament is then in ordinary session, or, if Parliament is not in ordinary session, within 21 days after the commencement of the first ensuring ordinary session of Parliament.

The Minister of Education gave notice in the *Government Gazette* of 23 December 1998 that he had in terms of section 3(4) of Act 27 of 1996 determined national policy in respect of curriculum frameworks, core syllabus, education programmes and other relevant matters in relation to outcomes-based education. Outcomes-based education is described "... as a learner-centred, result-oriented approach to education and training that builds on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but that this may not happen in the same way or within the same period".

Outcomes-based education policy was introduced in South Africa by Professor Sibusiso Bengu, who was the Minister of Education from 1994 until 1999. His task was not easy as it involved policy formulation, adoption, advocacy and implementation at a time during which both educators and learners were unprepared for extensive transformation of the education. Other stakeholders, such as parents and education officials, were not well conversant with outcomes-based education. Hence, the role of Minister Bengu was to lay a foundation. Professor Kadar Admal's role as the Minister of Education from 2000 until 2004, was that of consolidation and strategising outcomes-based education policy. Relevant resources were made available for the implementation of outcomes-based education as well as appropriate education and training provided for the educators. The roles played by both Ministers may be described as complementary and supplementary to each other.

2.8.1 Objectives of the national education policy

Section 4 of Act 27 of 1996 prescribes extensively the objectives for the national education policy envisaged by section 3 of the Act. The policy must, according to subsection 4(a) of the Act, provide for:

(a)   the advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person guaranteed in terms of Chapter 3 of the Constitution, and in terms of international conventions ratified by Parliament, and in particular the right –

   (i) of very person to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department of education institution on any ground whatsoever;

   (ii) of every person to basic education and equal access to education institutions;

   (iii) of a parent or guardian in respect of the education of his or her child or ward;

   (iv) of every child in respect of his or her education;

   (v) of every student to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable.

   (vi) of every person to the freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression and association within education institutions;

   (vii) of every person to establish, where practicable, education institutions based on a common language, culture or religion, as long as there is no discrimination on the ground of race;

   (viii) of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution.

(b)   enabling the education system to contribute to the full personal development of

each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic develop-
ment of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human
rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes;

(c) achieving equitable education opportunities and the redress of past inequality in
education provision, including the promotion of gender equality and the advance-
ment of the status of women;

(d) endeavouring to ensure that no person is denied the opportunity to receive an
education to the maximum of his or her ability as a result of physical disability;

(e) providing opportunities for and encouraging lifelong learning;

(f) achieving an integrated approach to education and training within a national
qualifications framework;

(g) cultivating skills, disciplines and capacities necessary for reconstruction and
development;

(h) recognising the aptitudes, abilities, interests, prior knowledge and experience of
students;

(i) encouraging independent and critical thought;

(j) promoting a culture of respect for teaching and learning in education institutions;

(k) promoting enquiry, research and the advancement of knowledge;

(l) enhancing the quality of education and educational innovation through systematic
research and development on education, monitoring and evaluating education
provision and performance, and training educators and education managers;

(m) ensuring broad public participation in the development of education policy and the
representation of stakeholders in the governance of all aspects of the education
system;

(n) achieving the cost-effective use of education resources and sustainable implemen-
tation of education services;

(o) achieving close co-operation between the national and provincial governments on
matters relating to education, including the development of capacity in the depart-
ments of education, and the effective management of the national education
system.

Objectives of the national education policy is to protect the fundamental human rights
of individuals enshrined in the Constitution. These rights, amongst others, include: no
discrimination; equal access to educational institutions; learners be taught in their
preferred language; and freedom to choose an educational institution. All learners
must also benefit from opportunities that are created by the implementation of
outcomes-based education policy.

Other objectives of the national education policy are: development of the individual in
full; provision of equal educational opportunities to develop the individual's potential
optimally; to encourage lifelong education; equip individuals with knowledge and skills
to contribute to the reconstruction and development of South Africa; and to cultivate a

culture of respect for teaching and learning in educational institutions.   These democratic education objectives may be realised through the implementation of out-comes-based education policy which major aim is to improve the quality of education.

Research plays a prominent role in any educational system. In fact, the need is more acute when it involves the re-engineering of the entire education system countrywide. For change to be effective, it is crucial to ensure broad public participation in educational policy development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This will contribute to achieving cost-effective use of educational resources. As the implementation of outcomes-based education policy is throughout the country, it is essential to achieve co-operation between and amongst the national and provincial departments of education. Thus, the objectives of the national education policy will contribute to the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

2.8.2 Policy preparation requirements

Section 5 of Act 27 of 1996 provides that the policy must be determined by the Minister after consultation with appropriate consultative bodies established for that purpose in terms of any applicable law. There must be consultation with –

(a)   the Council [of Education Ministers(consisting of the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education and every provincial political head of education)];
(b)   such national organisations representing college rectors as the Minister may recognise for this purpose;
(c)   the organised teaching profession;
(d)   such national organisations representing parents as the Minister may recognise for this purpose;
(e)   such national organisations representing students as the Minister may recognise for this purpose;
(f)   such other national stakeholder bodies as the Minister may recognise for this purpose.

The policy shall be determined by the Minister with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance in so far as it involves expenditure from the State Revenue Fund. However, nothing shall limit the discretion of the Minister to consult whomsoever he or she

wishes for advise on the determination of national education policy, but section 6 of the Act provides that legislation on a matter referred to in section 3 shall be introduced in Parliament or, in the case of regulations, be published in the *Government Gazette* only after consultation with the Minister of Education and –

    (a)   the Council [of Education Ministers], in respect of education at education institutions; and

    (b)   all the parties in the Education Labour Relations Council established by section 6 of the *Education Labour Relations Act*, 1993 (Act 146 of 1993), in respect of any matter falling within the objectives of that Act.

Section 7 of Act 27 of 1996 provides that the Minister shall within 21 days after determining policy in terms of section 3 –

    (a)   give notice of such determination in the Gazette and indicate in such notice where the policy instrument issued with regard thereto may be obtained;

    (b)   table the policy instrument referred to in paragraph (a) in Parliament within 21 days after the notice has appeared in the Gazette, if Parliament is then in ordinary session, or, if Parliament is not in ordinary session, within 21 days after the commencement of the first ensuing ordinary session of Parliament.

Thus, it could be deduced that the Minister of Education has to consult broadly established national educational bodies with regard to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy. Educational bodies that the Minister is legally bound to consult on policy issues are: the Council of Education Ministers; national organisations representing college rectors; parents; students; stakeholder bodies; and parties in the Education Labour Relations Council. It is imperative for the Minister to consult these bodies because they are all involved in the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Apart from consulting established national educational bodies, the Act provides that the Minister shall determine the policy instrument and table it in Parliament. Hence, the determination and implementation of outcomes-based education policy was approved

by the Minister. As the Act provides, outcomes-based education policy was tabled in Parliament and approved.

2.8.3 Monitoring and evaluation of education

It is essential to determine whether a public policy is doing what it is supposed to do. To this end monitoring and evaluation are necessary policy processes to be implemented. Hence, the need to monitor and evaluate outcomes-based education policy.

Section 8 of Act 27 of 1996 provides that –

(1) The Minister shall direct that the standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at other specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution and with national education policy, particularly as determined in terms of section 3(3).

(2) Each directive issued in terms of subsection (l) shall comply with the provisions of any law establishing a national qualifications framework, and shall be formulated after consultation with the bodies referred to in section 5(l).

(3) The Department shall undertake the monitoring and evaluation contemplated in subsection (1) by analysis of data gathered by means of education management information systems, or by other suitable means, in co-operation with provincial departments of education.

(4) The Department shall fulfill its responsibilities in terms of subsections (1) to (3) in a reasonable manner, with a view to enhancing professional capacities in monitoring and evaluation throughout the national education system, and assisting the competent authorities by all practical means within the limits of available public resources to raise the standards of education provision and performance.

(5) The Department shall prepare and publish a report on the results of each investigation undertaken in terms of subsection (3) after providing an opportunity for the competent authority concerned to comment, which comment shall be published with the report.

(6) If a report prepared in terms of subsection (5) indicates that the standards of education provision, delivery and performance in a province do not comply with the Constitution or with the policy determined in terms of section 3(3), the Minister shall inform the provincial political head of education concerned and require the submission within 90 days of a plan to remedy the situation.

(7) A plan required by the Minister in terms of subsection (6) shall be prepared by the provincial education department concerned in consultation with the Department, and the Minister shall table the plan in Parliament with his or her comments within 21 days of receipt, if Parliament is then in ordinary session, or, if Parliament is not in ordinary session, within 21 days after the commencement of the first ensuing ordinary session of Parliament.

It is obvious from the legislation that the Minister is responsible for ensuring that the provision, delivery and performance in the Department of Education as well as provincial departments of education adhere to prescribed standards of monitoring and evaluation. Provincial departments of education as delivery sites of education should be consulted in determining and implementing standards of monitoring and evaluation. The aim is to empower provinces to perform monitoring and evaluation of approved education policies. Hence, it is essential that the implementation of outcomes-based education policy be monitored and evaluated, and reports be prepared and published. In the event that anomalies are detected, remedial measures must be formulated and applied. This will ensure successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

2.8.4 Council of Education Ministers

Section 9 of Act 27 of 1996 provides that the Council of Education Ministers, consisting of –

> (a)   the Minister, who shall be the chairperson;
> (b)   the Deputy Minister of Education, if such Deputy Minister is appointed, who in the absence of the Minister shall be designated by the Minister as chairperson; and
> (c)   every provincial political head of education.

The Director-General of the national Department of Education must attend meetings of the Council in order to report on proceedings, and to advise on any other matter relating to the responsibilities of the Department. The chairpersons of the Portfolio Committee on Education in the National Assembly and the Select Committee on Education in the Senate may attend meetings of the Council.

The purposes and functions of the Council are prescribed by sub-section 9(4) of Act 27 of 1996, as follows –

> (a)   promote a national education policy which takes full account of the policies of the government, the principles contained in section 4, the education interests and

needs of the provinces, and the respective competence of Parliament and the provincial legislatures in terms of section 126 of the Constitution;

(b) share information and views on all aspects of education in the Republic; and

(c) co-ordinate action on matters of mutual interest to the national and provincial governments.

The Council may make rules for the convening of its meetings, the frequency of its meetings, the procedure at its meetings, including the quorum for its meetings, and any other matter it may deem necessary or expedient for the proper performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers.

Thus, it is obvious that the Minister shall hold meetings with the Council of Education Ministers because they are responsible for all matters educational at the provinces. This will ensure that education policy adopted will be uniformly applied throughout the country. Therefore, the Council of Education Ministers is an essential body that will facilitate the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

2.8.5 Heads of Education Departments Committee

Section 10(1) of Act 27 of 1996 provides for the Heads of Education Departments Committee consisting of –

(a) the Director-General, who shall be the chairperson;

(b) the Deputy Directors-General of the Department; and

(c) the heads of the provincial education departments.

Sub-section 10(2) provides for the functions of the Committee as follows –

(a) facilitate the development of a national education system in accordance with the objectives and principles provided for in this Act;

(b) share information and views on national education;

(c) co-ordinate administrative action on matters of mutual interest to the education departments; and

(d) advise the Department on any matter contemplated in sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 in respect of education, or on any other matter relating to the proper func-tioning of the national education system.

Sub-section 10(3) provides that the Committee may establish subcommittees to assist it in the performance of its functions, and –

(a) may appoint persons who are not members of the Committee to be members of a subcommittee: Provided that the organised teaching profession shall be invited to nominate representatives as members of each subcommittee;

(b) designate the chairperson of a subcommittee or direct that the chairperson be appointed by the subcommittee from among its members.

Subsection 10(4) provides that –

(a) meetings of the Committee shall be held at such times and places as the chairperson of the Committee may determine;

(b) the proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalid merely by virtue of the fact that there is a vacancy in the Committee; and

(c) if the chairperson of the Committee is absent from a meeting of the Committee, one of the Deputy Directors-General designated for this purpose by the chairperson shall take the chair at that meeting.

Subsection 10(5) provides that the Committee may draw up rules regarding the procedure at its meetings, including the quorum for its meetings, and any other matter it may deem necessary or expedient for the proper performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers: Provided that not less than four meetings per year shall be held.

The Heads of Education Departments Committee is a co-ordinating mechanism. Its functions and powers are prescribed by the Act. As such it is endowed with the authority to perform its functions and to demand that it is consulted.

2.8.6 Consultative bodies

In a democratic state it is imperative to consult statutory bodies on public policy matters. For this to happen, consultative bodies must be established to give advice in areas of their responsibility. As these bodies are constituted by representatives from all interested parties, they contribute to public policy formulation, implementation,

monitoring and evaluation.

CHAPTER 2

Section 11 of Act 27 of 1996 provides as follows:

(1)　The Minister may, subject to any applicable law, by regulation establish such bodies as may be necessary to advise him or her on matters contemplated in section 3: Provided that the Minister shall establish-

   (a)　a body to be known as the National Education and Training Council, whose membership shall reflect the main national stakeholders in the national education system, to advise on broad policy and strategy for the development of the national education system and the advancement of an integrated approach to education and training;

   (b)　such other bodies as may be necessary to represent the interests of particular sectors of the education system.

(2)　The composition, qualifications for membership, duties, powers and functions of a body established in terms of subsection (1), and the term of office of its members, shall be as prescribed by regulation: Provided that the bodies referred to in section 5(1)(c), shall be invited to nominate representatives to any such consultative body within their respective spheres of interest.

(3)　Different regulations may be made in respect of different bodies established under subsection (1).

Section 12 of Act 27 of 1996 provides for allowances and remuneration of members of subcommittees and consultative bodies.

[Every] member of a subcommittee or a consultative body, who is not in the full-time employment of the State may, in respect of the services rendered by that member in connection with the affairs of the subcommittee or consultative body, from money appropriated for that purpose by Parliament, be paid such travelling and subsistence and other allowances, as the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, may determine.

Section 13 of Act 27 of 1996 provides for administrative functions of the Council, Committee, and consultative bodies as follows:

(1)　The administrative functions of the Council, Committee and each consultative body shall be performed by officials of the Department [of Education] who are designated by the Director-General for that purpose.

(2)　The Director-General shall in respect of the Council, Committee and each consultative body designate a Secretary under whose direction the other officials shall perform their functions.

Consultative bodies by nature and character are made up of interested stakeholders as well as experts in the relevant area of study. Such an arrangement facilitates public participation, which leads to ownership, in public policy implementation. Thus consultative bodies are instrumental to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

2.8.7 Implementation policies

The Republic of South Africa consists of nine provinces, namely, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Limpopo, North West and Western Cape. Section 104 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), prescribes the legislative authority of the provinces. One of the *Functional Areas of Concurrent National and Provincial Legislative Competence* (listed in Schedule 4 of Act 108 of 1996), is, as quoted before, "Education at all levels, excluding tertiary education". However, as described in the preceding sections of this chapter the provinces will be principal providers of education subject to the directives of Parliament and the relevant state departments.

In terms of the provisions of the Constitution the national Department of Education published the *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools)* as *Government Gazette* (23 406, Vol. 443, May 2002). The *Statement* is in fact published as *nine* separate documents, namely, an *Overview* and "Eight Learning Area Statements" (Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences).

In the first paragraph of the Preface of the *Overview* the Minister of Education explains that "The development of a national curriculum is a major challenge for any nation". Nevertheless, the Revised National Curriculum could be regarded as an *overall (national) fundamental policy* for the application of outcomes-based education for the Republic of South Africa. The policies of the provinces would be subordinate to the

national policies. In the *Review* (p. 10) it is explained that *Outcomes-based Education* regards the *process* of learning as important as the *content* of education. Therefore both the process and the content of education are emphasised by spelling out the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the process.

2.8.8 Outcomes of outcomes-based education

The *critical outcomes* are proclaimed to be the ability 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 showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;

❖ demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation (Department of Education, 2001:17).

The *developmental outcomes* should be learners who are able 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;

❖ develop entrepreneurial opportunities (Department of Education, 2001:17).

For the realisation of its objectives the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* attempts to bring about a democratic vision of the society to be realised by citizens who emerge from the school system.

With the *Learning Area Statements*, the Revised National Curriculum Statement identifies the goals, expectations and outcomes to be achieved with related learning outcomes and assessment standards. The learning outcomes for each *Learning Area* are explained along with assessment standards which should emphasise participatory, learning-centred and activity-based education. Outcomes-based education should stimulate the minds of young people to participate fully in economic and social life. Thereby the learners should be able to develop and achieve to their maximum ability and to practise lifelong learning.

Outcomes-based education aims at the development of a high level of knowledge and skills for all.

2.8.9 Monitoring directives

Section 8 of Act 27 of 1996 provides that the Minister of Education shall direct that the standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic of South Africa be monitored and evaluated annually or other specified intervals to assess whether the provisions of the Constitution Act 108 of 1996 and the national education policy are being observed. The results of the monitoring activities must be published. Where necessary the provincial authorities must be directed to take remedial activities.

2.8.10 Outcomes-based education: South Africa's choice

(a) *Status of outcomes-based education in South Africa*

Pursuant to the objective of introducing a system of education based on democratic principles to meet the needs of the Republic of South Africa, it was decided to introduce outcomes-based education. This decision necessitated that debates on outcomes-based education and training should be held throughout the country. All compulsory teaching and learning, from Grade 1 to Grade 9, should be outcomes-based by the year 2003. Unfortunately, not all the required processes had been put in place to implement as planned this paradigm shift in education and training. However, a number of structures, guidelines and criteria had been formulated to pave the way for implementation. In this regard nine identifiable steps had been constructed in an attempt to introduce outcomes-based education in South Africa (Malan, 1997:18).

The first step was taken in 1995 by the government. A task team was appointed by the Minister of Education to write a discussion document on the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework. The task team produced the document *Lifelong Learning Through a National Qualifications Framework* in 1996. One of the major recommendations of the task team was that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) had to be appointed. Its appointment took place in March 1997. This body's composition was made up of the major stakeholders in education and training. SAQA's main brief was to develop and maintain a national qualifications framework for South Africa (Louw & Du Toit, 2000:14).

The second step is made up of the first set of tasks for SAQA. First and foremost SAQA had to develop critical cross-field outcomes. According to SAQA (1995:6) these outcomes had to be more suitable to meet the needs of the country. Consequently the outcomes had to direct teaching and learning in all the grades and in all subjects or courses. According to SAQA (in Malan, 1997), the critical cross-field outcomes had to be related to the learner's ability to –

❖ identify and solve problems through critical and creative thinking;

❖ teamwork by individuals, groups, organisations and communities;

❖ develop and maintain self-discipline;

❖ collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

❖ communicate effectively, orally and in writing;

❖ make use of knowledge gained from science and technology in order to improve the environment and to promote health of fellow-citizens; and

❖ to demonstrate an understanding that nature is made up of interrelated and inter-twined systems.

Apart from the afore-mentioned envisaged competencies which learners must demonstrate, SAQA recommended that all programmes of learning as well as all teaching and learning practices must have identifiable distinguishing features which make learners aware of the importance of:

❖ exploring and thinking more effectively about different techniques of learning;

❖ participation as responsible and accountable citizens nationally and internationally;

❖ being conscious of culture and appreciative of a wide range of social contexts; and

❖ education and training and utilizing career and entrepreneurial opportunities that emanate therefrom (Louw & Du Toit, 2000:15).

The third step is focusing on the identification of fields of learning. In the case of school learning and teaching the fields became known as areas of learning. It is from these areas of learning that the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes had to be acquired by the learners. In the General Education and Training Band of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), eight areas of learning are identified (Republic of South Africa, 1998:6).

The eight areas of learning should constitute the core of the General Education and Training Band. Learners in this Band had to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to achieve the prescribed outcomes (Malan, 1997:19).

Fields of learning could differ from band to band. For instance, in the Higher Education and Training Band subject disciplines and or career fields would be used to contextualise outcomes. Modules which integrate theory and practice in education and training are more suitable as vehicles of teaching and learning in the Further Education and Training Band (Musker, 1997:81).

The fourth step concerns the identification and formulation of specific outcomes for each learning area. Specific outcomes serve to describe demonstrable knowledge, skills and attitudes displayed by learners during assessment.   Hereafter follows some examples of specific outcomes for different areas of learning.

Areas of learning	Specific Outcomes
Language, Literacy and Communication	Learners must show a critical awareness of language usage.
Human and Social Sciences	Learners must demonstrate a critical understanding of how South Africa Society has changed and developed.
Technology	Learners must apply a range of technological knowledge and skills ethically and responsibly.
Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences	Learners must use mathematical language to communicate mathematical ideas, concepts, generalisations and thought processes.
Natural Sciences	Learners must be able to apply scientific knowledge and skills in innovative ways.
Arts and Culture	Learners must reflect on and engage critically with arts experience and works.
Economic and Management Sciences	Learners must demonstrate managerial expertise and administrative proficiency.
Life Orientation	Learners must understand and accept themselves as unique and worthwhile human beings.

(Malan, 1997:20)

67

The fifth step involves the formulation of assessment criteria, range statements and application of performance indicators. The components of this step need explanation. Firstly, assessment criteria must indicate in general terms the observable processes and products which demonstrate learners' achievements. Secondly, range statement relate to the scope and level of complexity expected from learners at different stages of learning and teaching. These statements serve as motivations or explain assessment criteria used in evaluation of learners. Thirdly, and lastly, performance indicators should provide detailed information with respect to the matters which will show that a learner has acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes that will declare him/ her to be competent. In other words, performance indicators serve to ascertain whether a learner has acquired enough skills, knowledge and values to enable him/her to move from one NQF level to another (Musker, 1997:82).

Step six requires curriculum developers at all three spheres of government to develop learning programmes or syllabi. These learning programmes will be focused on specific outcomes and will thus be critical outcomes. In addition, the learning programmes will be underpinned by the intentions identified by SAQA (Malan, 1997:22).

Steps seven to nine take place at the institutional and classroom level. Educators formulate their own lesson objectives and draw up their own institutional programmes and lesson plans. Educators have to assess learners to find out whether they have attained stated learning outcomes or not. In order to make sure that there is uniformity with respect to learning programmes and the provision of learning at institutional level, SAQA appoints quality assurance bodies. The main responsibility of these bodies is to monitor teaching and learning and to conduct and supervise assessment at places of teaching and learning (Malan, 1997:22).

After ascertaining the status of outcomes-based education in South Africa, it is necessary to describe the provisions of the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995). This Act serves as the legal framework within which outcomes-based education must function.

(b) *South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995)*

The major purpose of the South African Qualifications Authority is to provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualification Framework (NQF). Before explaining the establishment of SAQA, it is necessary to know why the NQF was developed.

(i)   *Establishing the National Qualifications Framework*

In order to come to understand the National Qualifications Framework and its con-comitant objectives, clarification of the concept qualifications framework is crucial.

In general, the term *framework* is commonly used to describe conceptual frames of reference. In the context of education and training, the qualifications framework refers to the requirements for obtaining qualifications with outlined procedures and stipulated rules for assessment.   In addition, the framework may include descriptions of standards, course credits and course offerings.   It could also prescribe learning pathways and indicate learning providers (Musker, 1997:85).

Briefly the aim of a national qualifications framework is to provide standardisation and resultant portability of credits and qualifications. Standardisation, on which national qualifications frameworks are based, is premised on the notion that standards should be nationally prescribed. Be that as it may, the means used to achieve the standards could be determined locally, regionally or institutionally. In practice, the national qualifications authority would prescribe the learning outcomes, while the education provider would decide on how to enable the learners to attain the standards (Republic of South Africa, 1997:39).

There is no universal qualifications framework and each country will have to devise its own with appropriate distinguishing features. In this respect it should be borne in mind

69

that the main aim of a qualifications framework is to standardise qualifications described in terms of unit standards, arranged in a logical, step-by-step sequence of complexity of the competences described.

South Africa, like many other countries, adopted a national qualifications framework and an outcomes-based education system to effect transformation. Consequently the government established the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to ensure effective change in education through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Republic of South Africa, 1997:5). The structure of the NQF is explained in Table 2.1.

CHAPTER 2

TABLE 2.1: THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAME-WORK

NQF Level	Band	Types of Qualifications and Certificates	Locations of Learning for Units and Qualifications		
8	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates Further research degrees	Tertiary/Research/Professional institutions		
7		Higher degrees Professional qualifications	Tertiary/Research/Professional institutions		
6		First degrees Higher diplomas	Universities/Technikons/Colleges/ Private institutions/Professional institutions		
5		Diplomas Occupational certificates	Universities/Technikons/Colleges/ Private institutions/Professional institutions/Workplace, etc.		
4	**Further Education and Training Certificate**				
3	Further Education and Training Band	School/College/Trade certificates Mix of units from all	Formal high schools (private & state schools)	Technical/ Community/ Police/ Nursing/ Private colleges	RDP & labour market schemes/ Industry training boards/ Unions/ Workplace, etc.
2		School/College/Trade certificates Mix of units from all			
1	**General Education and Training Certificate**				
	General Education and Training Band	Grade 9/Std 7 ABET Level 4 (10 years)	Formal schools (urban/rural/ farm/special schools)	Occupational/ Work-based training/ RDP/ Labour market schemes/ Upliftment programmes/ Community programmes	NGOs/ Churches/ Night schools/ ABET programmes/ Private providers/ Industry train-ing boards/ Union/ Workplace, etc.
		Grade 7/Std 5 ABET Level 3 (8 years)			
		Grade 5/Std 3 ABET Level 2 (6 years)			
		Grade 3/Std 1 ABET Level 1 (3 years)			
		1 Year Reception			

(Source: Malan, 1997:5-6)

The implementation of the National Qualifications Framework boils down to the creation of a data bank which is kept up to date by the South African Qualifications Authority. Information with respect to the requirements for national qualifications at any level of the NQF is stored in this data bank. According to Gawe (1999:23), information in the data bank could include –

❖ lists of subjects, modules, topics or courses which can be offered to obtain a specific qualification;
❖ rules regulating combination of subjects required for specific qualifications;
❖ learning outcomes to be met before a specific qualification can be awarded;
❖ descriptions of types of assessment to determine proficiency;
❖ descriptions of criteria with respect to performance and assessment which must be satisfied by the learners at all NQF levels for qualifications to be validated by SAQA.

Descriptions of criteria which must be satisfied before a qualification can be awarded are both specific and flexible. On satisfying a specific learning outcome or group of learning outcomes, learners are given credits. This enables learners to accumulate credits from learning institutions as well as at the workplace. If learners have gathered sufficient credits, they may apply for a qualification at a specific NQF level. Learners also have the advantage of deciding for themselves where, when and what to study. On failing to obtain credits on qualifications, learners will be given the necessary support to succeed (Malan, 1997:7). Another major advantage of the NQF is that it enables learners to apply for assessment of the skills, knowledge and understandings they have gained in life without any formal education and training. If successful, learners will be awarded credits concomitant with their competence. This is what is referred to as recognition of prior learning (RPL) in NQF terminology (Gawe, 1999:22-23).

Lastly, it is necessary to summarise the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework, which are to –

❖ create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;

❖ facilitate access to, mobility and progression within the education system and career paths;

❖ improve the standard of teaching and learning;

❖ address problems created by the old system of education and employability of learners on completion; and

❖ contribute to the human resources development and economic development of the country (*South African Qualifications Authority Act*, Act 58 of 1995, 1995:2).

From the afore-mentioned description and explanation of the NQF, it is clear that there must be a body to administer it. Therefore, the South African Qualifications Authority has been charged with that responsibility as also referred to in paragraph 2.8.10(b)(i).

It could be stated that outcomes-based education policy is not applied in a vacuum. It operates within the context of the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), and other relevant legislation. Thus, this Act contributes to the implementation of outcomes-based education.

(ii)   *Establishment of the South African Qualifications Authority*

The South African Qualifications Authority was established as a juristic person by the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995). In terms of this Act, the composition of SAQA is as follows:

❖ Chairperson

❖ Executive officer

❖ Persons recommended to the Minister and appointed by him/her as members:

☞ one nominated by the Director-General of Education;

☞ one nominated by provincial MECs;

☞ one nominated by the Director-General of Labour;

☞ one nominated by the National Training Board;

☞ one nominated by labour unions;

☞ two nominated by organised business;

☞ one nominated by the Committee of University Principals;

☞ one nominated by the Committee of Technikon Principals;

☞ one representing Rectors of Colleges of Education;

☞ one representing Rectors of Technical Colleges;

☞ one representing colleges other than colleges of education and technical colleges;

☞ one representing ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training);

☞ one representing the early childhood development sector;

☞ two nominated by teachers' unions;

☞ two nominated by lecturers and trainers;

☞ one member nominated by the special education needs sector;

☞ at most six members appointed by the Minister;

☞ at most two members co-opted by SAQA and appointed by the Minister.

Any institution without specific functions will be superfluous. This appears not to be the case with SAQA. It has well-defined functions in terms of section 5 of the *South African Qualifications Authority Act* , 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), which are dealt with below.

(iii) *Functions of the South African Qualifications Authority*

Section 5 of the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), empowers SAQA to perform the following functions –

- ❖ oversee the development of the National Qualifications Framework;

- ❖ formulate and publish policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications as well as accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications;

- ❖ be responsible for the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, including the following tasks –

  - ☞ registration or accreditation of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications as well as bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications;

  - ☞ registration of national standards and qualifications;

  - ☞ ensuring that affected bodies comply with accreditation provisions;

  - ☞ ensuring that standards and registered qualifications satisfy international standards;

  - ☞ advising the Minister of Education on matters affecting the registration of standards and qualifications;

  - ☞ control of and accounting for the finances of the Authority;

- ❖ the Authority is responsible for the achievement of the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework as well as the execution of the functions of the Authority.

The afore-mentioned functions are crucial for the Authority to fulfil its mandate. These functions are not only necessary, but are at the heart of the Authority. They serve as a means to achieve its stated objectives. Hence, the need to observe them and to improve them when necessary.

(iv) *Powers of the South African Qualifications Authority*

Section 7 of the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), empowers SAQA to –

❖ establish committees and appoint non-members of the Authority to these committees;

❖ appoint the chairperson of every committee it has established;

❖ dissolve or reconstitute a committee;

❖ delegate some of its powers but still be accountable to the Minister of Education. It may also withdraw its delegated authority;

❖ accept, reject or amend the decision of its committees;

❖ resolve disputes relating to the performance of its functions;

❖ acquire assets or dispose of unwanted assets;

❖ initiate research to enhance the performance of its functions;

❖ perform any other function delegated to it by the Minister of Education (*South African Qualifications Authority Act*, Act 58 of 1995, 1995:6 & 8).

A closer look at the *South African Qualifications Authority Act*, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995), indicates the necessity of a legal framework within which education and training must take place. Outcomes-based education is introduced, controlled and evaluated according to the parameters set by the Act.

2.9   CONCLUSION

The chapter commences with motivation for the introduction of the outcomes-based education policy. Prior to the introduction of Bantu Education, the quality of education which was provided by the state and missionaries was of a high standard. Quality of education offered to the blacks deteriorated subsequent to the introduction of the Bantu Education policy.

In keeping with the democrating principles as enshrined in the Constitution, and the demands of globalization, South Africa introduced the outcomes-based education policy. Definitions of outcomes-based education indicate a radical departure from the traditional approach of teaching and learning. This led to the change of educators from

teaching to facilitating, and of learners from passive recipients of knowledge to researchers and independent thinkers. Compared to the traditional approach of teaching and learning, outcomes-based education has advantages making it relevant to the South African economic, technical and international needs.

Policy directives that govern the introduction and implementation of outcomes-based education are explained. All the policy directives encourage public participation in educational matters. As service delivery of education takes place at the provincial sphere of government, co-operation between the national and provincial departments of education is encouraged. Hence, uniform standards of monitoring and evaluation are applied throughout the country. This ensures that outcomes-based education policy is uniformly implemented in South Africa.

The next chapter deals with public policy and policy analysis. As the theme of the thesis is on implementation of outcomes-based education policy, it is prudent to explain public policy and policy analysis. To illustrate this statement, a description of public policy and policy analysis ensues.