

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION.

Chapter Three provided the design of the study. It presented and explained the research method that has been used and why this method has been used. It also explained the sampling method that has been used as well as the data collection methods that have been used in this study.

Chapter Four presents and discusses data that have been collected. The chapter gives a presentation and discussion of issues that are relevant to the research question. I elicited the issues presented in this chapter from the empirical data that I have collected in the manner described in chapter three. The issues presented here relate to the understandings and experiences of teachers in relation to professional support when educational change is taking place.

In presenting the data and discussing issues that arise from the data I either paraphrased what the teachers said or quoted the words of teachers. In such instances where I have used verbatim quotations of the words of teachers, I did not correct the language the teachers used. The verbatim quotations are presented in italics.

Another important aspect that needs to be emphasised here is that the issues presented here interlink with each other. For example when I discuss the issue of attitude to change I will also touch on the issue of the flow of information to and from the various stakeholders involved in the change process. That should not be interpreted as confusion or

a haphazard way of presenting issues, but as a necessary part of the presentation as various issues link with each other.

4.2. TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS AND EXPERIENCES OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE.

4.2.1. Politics and educational policy change.

According to Hartshorne (1999:6), “ education in the modern state is not neutral. The particular political, social and economic context in which education exists is used by the state to achieve progress which it considers to be advantageous or expedient.” This means that politics plays a substantial role in determining what type of education is available in a country at particular times. Hartshorne’s (1996:6) contention above closely relates to that of Vakalisa (2000:14) which says that in South Africa educational reform is occurring within the context of transformation in the political system.” Stonier (1996:17) also adds his voice when he says that “the recent change of government in South Africa has resulted in a shift from an education system driven by the views concomitant with the apartheid political ideology” to a system driven by views concomitant with democracy and participation. The issue of the role of politics in educational transformation is also not lost to teachers. As one respondent said. *“We cannot put aside politics when discussing these issues, in the sense that the government imposed these things, this new system of education”.* (P2:66-67)

The issue that the teacher was highlighting is that change in South African education is intertwined with the political landscape of the country. While the issue of imposing changes carries a negative connotation to it, in that to impose also has the implication of a more

powerful person or personality bringing in something that impacts on others in one way or more, without considering the views of those affected, the respondent's further comments indicate that as far as the issue of the need for educational reform is concerned this should be regarded by teachers as a necessary inconvenience.

Well, because it is politics we can say that those people, those stakeholders, those in high positions looked at different types of education and they realised that this OBE is the best, the one that can suit South African people. If they arrived at that decision having looked at whatever conditions they felt were relevant we cannot say they are wrong. (P2:118-122).

The issue here is that the teachers accept that there was a need for educational reform, and that the decision about the type of reform that was brought to South Africa must have been taken after consideration of all the relevant issues that needed to be considered. However there is an underlying warning of problems that may arise *if those in high positions have not really looked at different types of education and they realised that this OBE is the best, the one that can suit South African people.* This relates to Tulasiewicz's (1980:27) comment when writing about the introduction of the national curriculum in Britain in the 1980's which indicates that "reforms have been perceived as instituted in response to public demand rather than as the result of assessment of the task involved by a professional examination." This comment, and that of the respondent quoted above indicate that the perception that only political considerations have been taken into consideration when reforming education can result when educational change is brought about without consideration of the views of all stakeholders, including those at the operational level. This perception can be

damaging if those who should ensure the success of the change at the operational level regard the change as imposed.

The perception that change has been imposed can lead to the feeling of helplessness on the part of teachers. P2 (155-159) comments in the following manner with regard to this:-

How do I make representations to the Provincial Education Department? Who am I to go and contact the provincial Department of Education? I am just an article, so much that nobody will listen to me.

This is echoed by respondent number three, who said: *We just accept what they say because it is a departmental issue. What can we do?* (P3:20-21).

The teachers are therefore contending that they do not have any way to make their voices heard by the authorities. In other words there is no way for an ordinary teacher to make a contribution, so that the changes that are brought into the education system can include what the teachers have to say. The understanding here is that the changes have been imposed on the teacher. The issue therefore relates to the issue of context.

The teachers also raised this issue of context. They indicated that the Department of Education has not really considered the context in which teachers work when it introduced this outcomes based education at schools. Even those who are supposed to assist them now that OBE has been introduced still do not take context seriously. One respondent said it in the following manner (P3: 14-21):-

One problem these people who are supposed to assist us don't understand is the real situation at schools. In my school, and in many other schools, there is overcrowding. You know what they told us when we told them that our schools are full to the brim? They said that OBE can be implemented even if there are 120 learners in a class. But we just accept what they say because it is a departmental issue. What can we do? (P3:14-21)

When asked whether they (the teachers) requested the people who were workshopping them to explain how OBE can be implemented in a class with 120 learners the respondent said they asked, but the officials just said: *It can. We did not argue with them* (P3:23). Thus according to the respondent the teachers did not get a satisfactory explanation, but felt helpless to argue any further. They felt that they were voiceless.

As indicated in section 2.5.3. educational reforms in India in relation to Operation Blackboard also failed because context was ignored. Operation Blackboard assumed that schools are homogenous in that they assumed the school to be “a well ordered environment,... set in a modern world where there is a place for books..” (Dyer 1996:36). The system also did not make any “concessions to local circumstances” (Dyer 1996:36). This resulted in teachers feeling they were fighting a battle with a government that formulates policies which bear little relation to their situation. In other words the teachers also did not know what they could do to knock sense into the government, to make the government to consider the context in which they work, a situation that the respondents in this study have also indicated. As interviewee number three further contends “*subject advisors just talk but they know nothing about what is happening in class*” (P3:54-55). The sentiments were also echoed by the fourth respondent who also

indicated that *“the OBE facilitators also do not seem to understand what is actually happening in class.” (P4:46-47).*

Educational policies find their final expression in schools and classrooms, and it is therefore important to understand the schools and the classrooms in order to formulate policies that will be practicable. Lack of understanding of the classroom context which may be a result of not having done proper research about the context of schools, or a result of simply ignoring the diversity of contexts, can have a devastating impact on the implementation of policies. As Stein, Smith and Silver (1999:240) indicate, “teachers perform their work within multiple contexts, including schools, districts, communities and states; the values and established procedures of each have an impact on classroom practice. Professional developers must carefully analyze the constraints and alternatives offered by each of these various contexts, ranging from the unwritten cultural norms to explicit regulation and policies. To accomplish this goal, professional developers need to join with administrators and other policy makers to establish alignments among these contexts. Such alignments will bring coherence to teachers’ professional development experiences and will ensure that these experiences are supported by organisational values and operating procedures.”

4.2.2. Informing teachers about educational policy change.

One issue that arose several times during the interviews was the issue of how teachers came to know that educational policy will be changing. This issue arose as the teachers indicated their lack of understanding of the changes and the lack of understanding they perceived in those to whom they look up to inform them about the changes. As Robinson (1994:28-29) says, “change is an integral part of society. Education,

often considered the stabilizing force in society is part of that change. Genuine change occurs in the classroom only when the teacher changes. If the changes are initiated outside the teacher, say by administrators without the teacher's consent, he or she may go through the motions of superficial change, but things will probably remain the same within the classroom." Informing the teacher ensures that the teacher is not caught by surprise by the changes, which also helps to reduce the problem of resistance to change. It also helps to make the teacher look forward to the changes, as he /she will feel that at least he/she matters. When commenting about how the changes were made known to the teachers at schools one respondent commented in the following manner (P1: 188-190):-

From the department they sent circulars; when we read newspapers, through the radio's we got this information. I think this thing started with the National Department of Education. It came through circulars to us.

This indicates that some kind of information campaign was launched by the Department of Education, sending circulars to schools, through newspapers and over the radio. This indicates that an effort was done from the side of the government to make teachers aware that changes were coming. The issue however is whether the advocacy was really effective or achieved the aim of informing teachers well. Respondent number one also indicated the following (P1: 156 – 164):-

With information from the department; today you are getting the newspaper or you get the information that one, two, three is going to be scrapped. It tells you that our department is not (inaudible). It also gives us an impression that this thing will not continue, because there is a lot of this hullabaloo, I mean, these noises

about the system. Before I came to the system in June 1995 there was this PEUP (Primary Education Upgrading Programme). PEUP has been scrapped and now this OBE is having a problem.

What the teacher was indicating is that the teachers are being informed through newspapers, but they are getting mixed messages. Sometimes the message is positive, indicating the virtues of the new system, but sometimes, since there are other people who contributed to newspapers whose views might differ from those of the government, the message might be negative, or not completely positive. Also even if the messages are coming from the government the messages might not be equally enthusiastic about certain aspects of OBE, causing confusion to teachers. They start wondering whether the new policy will be scrapped.

The other problem with the way teachers are informed is that those who are supposed to inform teachers may themselves be ignorant about the changes. The fifth respondent puts it thus (P5: 63-71):-

P5. It is really tough out there. It is very tough, very. Look, it becomes even worse when you meet those people you think will provide you with answers, and you find they are confusing you even further

R. People like...?

P5. Circuit Managers and District Managers. If you ask for help from a person you regard as "the department" and he himself says things that make you wonder whether the department knows what it is doing, what do you feel? Maybe they don't understand what they are saying, the impact it has on us teachers. It leaves us despondent, for we realise we have hit the

roof, and there is nowhere else to go, for a person in such a position is, for us teachers, the department.

The teacher is thus indicating that teachers, on getting information from the media that they do not really understand, go to the officers for help in order for them to get clarity on such issues as they feel affect them and their work. However they end up becoming frustrated and despondent, and with their confusion not cleared, as the officers themselves, to whom the teachers look up for help, are also ignorant, and they say so to teachers. P1 (362-374) puts it this way:-

You know, I went to the district office one day. I was with Mr.T, who is my HOD. I put it to him that we should go to the district office. We were in need of material. We had gone to the circuit office and the circuit office had said they knew nothing about that. Even there they said they knew nothing about that. Only the distributor from Giyani is the one who know about that. We said we want the contact number. If they give us the contact number we would contact him. The person we were talking to just laughed and said: “ Even this OBE of yours, I don’t understand that”. (laughs). You know I was very disappointed because I thought we had gone to the right office and the right person, considering his position. But all of a sudden, you know, the one who was supposed to help us was saying he doesn’t understand. So are you expecting the one who is saying he doesn’t understand to send a troop of soldiers who will help teachers and learners at schools? The one to do that is saying ‘I don’t understand.’ I don’t see him coming to school, visiting schools, because he doesn’t understand’.

The teachers (interviewee number one and interviewee number five) are indicating that it is frustrating not to get help when you go to seek help from the people you think should be able to help you. Interviewee number one takes it even further and says that this is why these people can't even visit schools, because they don't understand the changes. However the respondent also suggests a solution that can assist to make the officers able to assist teachers (P1: 374 – 377):-

“Unless the one who is on top workshops him first so that he can understand. It is then that he will come to us. Otherwise I don't see him coming to schools. Perhaps he is not coming because he does not have information, but I don't know what he is doing to get information so that he can come to us and help us.

The respondent is indicating that those in higher authority in the Department of Education should take it as their responsibility to ensure that those officers with whom teachers are supposed to interact should be knowledgeable about the changes. Thus the teacher is also indicating that the problem of lack of knowledge and understanding does not start from the “*district managers and circuit managers*” as mentioned by (P5:64) but from somewhere higher up, that is, from higher up the echelons of the Department of Education. Another important issue that respondent number one raises is the issue of taking charge of one's own development, for he says” *I don't know what he (the officer at the district office) is doing to get information so that he can come to us and help us.*” (P1:376-377).

This means that the teacher recognises that it is important that one takes charge of one's own development. In other words the district officers should not just sit and mourn their lack of information about the changes, but should go out and find information so that when

teachers come to them in search of information, they should be able to assist the teachers. By going to the officers the teachers are trying to get explanations about the policy changes from those people they know are supposed to provide them with support, and they become frustrated when they find such people also cannot help them.

It is also important to remember that not only should information be sent to newspapers and circulars be sent to schools, but it is also important to note that it is also what information is contained in the newspapers and circulars. As Taylor et al (1997:6) indicate in a study of Australian teachers, “teachers recognise that changes in society demand new educational policies, but what concerns them is the confused way in which policy shifts are explained to teachers who have to implement them and the manner in which teachers have effectively been frozen out of policy making processes.” Thus information that is brought to teachers should be brought to them in a manner that does not confuse them. The information must also be clear so that it does not force teachers to go out to seek assistance from people who themselves may not understand what is happening. One way of doing this would be to include teachers when policies are being made so that their contributions and perspectives can be included as from the beginning of the policy making processes. This implies that channels of communication should also be opened from the bottom up, so that the teacher feels free to communicate his or her feelings to those in higher offices without feeling that he/she will be victimised or looked down upon. This would help to reduce feelings of despondency as indicated by P2 (155-158):-

How do I make representation to the Provincial Education Department? Who am I to go and contact the Provincial

Department of Education? I am just an article, so much that nobody will listen to me. That is the problem.

When aspects about policy change have not been explained properly other problems of a more practical nature can arise. For example, according to P1 (323-333) teachers don't even have a common understanding about the place of tests and examinations in the new system.

And there is this problem that when they are evaluating (remember it is continuous evaluation), so even when we are going to promote our learners they are not giving test and examinations. But I don't understand that. My understanding is that I must evaluate throughout the year. Still I must give tests, still I must give examinations.

Another practical problem that arises because of poor communication about issues of policy change is the issue of the language of teaching and learning. P1 (33-48):-

...At first we were not actually informed that we could use every language in our lessons. So we were only concentrating on the medium of learning and instruction, English; so it gave us a problem. Most of our learners were not exposed to pre-learning and education, where perhaps the basics of English will be used. So we were experiencing that problem because it would take time explaining in English, and we were stuck on that, because we stick on that like glue. Why? Because we were told we need to transform our education. Basically we thought they are saying English is the most important you know, which should be emphasised, not the content of the lesson. So we were

concentrating on English, in fact the language aspect you see, until you know, this group of subject advisors from the colleges came to our rescue and we started to have some workshops, some clusters, where it was explained that we have eleven languages, eleven official languages in South Africa, so we can use any of them.

What the teacher is saying is that teachers initially were not clearly informed about the issue of the language of teaching and learning, and it therefore caused them problems as their understanding from the little information they had was that they should emphasise English in all learning areas, at the expense of the content of that learning area. They did this in the belief that they were really doing what is required by the educational changes that are taking place in the country.

Another practical aspect of the new education system that teachers felt needed attention was the issue of OBE terminology. They are complex and therefore difficult for teachers to understand. They have replaced the usual terminology that teachers were used to, like you have learning areas instead of subjects and range statements instead of scope. Other terms include phase organisers, performance indicators and even assessment criteria. P2 (28-41) explains it in the following manner:-

The OBE terms are too complicated so much that they become a problem to some people. This is an even bigger problem here with us. Here we've got a very very serious and crucial problem. Number one, teachers who are in this, mostly in primary school, they are not well versed in the language, which is English as such. That is one of the most serious problems. Number two, the terms that are being used in OBE, they are not simple to grab by

the teachers. It becomes something very difficult for them to master these words. Number three, most of them are old teachers. It is long that they have left the colleges. To them, the government is just playing games with their brains. It is not that they don't have an interest; it is that the language is too difficult for them, and also that it is a long time since they were 'learners' in class.

The problem is compounded by the fact that those who are supposed to assist teachers, curriculum advisors, will refer the teachers to policy documents. The policy documents contain the new terms and their explanations, but the language that is used in the policy documents, teachers contend, is still too difficult. In other words, the policy documents complicate issues further as the language is not written at the level of teachers. Teachers end up having different understandings of issues that affect their day to day work, like the issue of whether to give tests or not as mentioned earlier in this section. P4 (33-38) succinctly puts the issue of policy documents into perspective:-

Look, to me policy documents are good for policy makers, not for teachers in the classroom. Teachers need practical ways of assisting their learners to learn and to understand. Policy documents, their phase organisers, critical outcomes, specific outcomes and range statements do not really give any guidance as to what the teacher should actually do in the actual classroom situation. They are a wish list.

What the teacher is saying concurs with what Olson, James and Long (1999:71-72) contend when they say that “policies are intentions perhaps to be seen as script and with stage directions but teachers have to conduct lessons on the classroom stage.” In other words teachers need to be able to understand the policies, the stage

directions, in order to be able to conduct lessons properly. Thus the understandings that teachers have about policies play a vital role in how policies will be enacted in the classroom, and therefore on how learners will experience the changes. As Robinson (1994:29) says, “teachers need to find meaning in change for change to have an effect” in the classroom.

4.2.3. Attitudes to change.

Koekemoer and Olivier (2002:34) commenting about the preparation of student teachers to teach now that OBE has been introduced in South Africa indicate that “problem areas were identified in the schools when practitioners tried to implement OBE, after they had been provided with short in-service workshops by teams of officials from the National Department of Education. Problems emerged because of the interplay of various factors, of which the role of negative beliefs and attitudes towards the specific prescribed teaching approach should not be underestimated.” The problem of attitudes was also one aspect that constantly came up in discussions with teachers. Respondents indicated that there are some teachers with a negative attitude to outcomes based education, which is the manifestation of educational change to the teacher in South Africa. Koekemoer and Olivier (2002:34) found that “these attitudes were to a large extent based on incompetence, ignorance and insufficient exposure of teachers to the recently introduced approaches.” Comments by P2 (173-178) capture the different manifestations of negative attitudes to change:-

Sometimes there are two levels of people when we are at clusters. There are those who have a negative attitude towards this OBE itself. There are those with a negative attitudes towards the facilitators, perhaps because some of them have been taught by

the very same facilitators at colleges of education or even right in the schools. Maybe they were not on good terms. And some taught these facilitators at school, so they will feel that they cannot listen to people they had taught before.

The above comments by P2 (173-178) indicate that negative attitudes manifest themselves in two ways. There can be negative attitudes towards the change itself, and there can also be negative attitudes to those who inform teachers about changes, the curriculum/ subject advisors, who the respondent referred to here as facilitators. Most curriculum advisors in Limpopo Province are seconded officers who have been seconded to district offices because the colleges of education where they used to work have been rationalised and therefore do not exist anymore. This means that one can regard them as being 'additional to the staff establishment' of the province, or in more simpler terms, as being 'in excess' of the staff establishment. The issue then arises that when teachers feel that they don't like what the former lecturers are saying they can regard what these lecturers are saying as something worthless that has been given to these "jobless" people to keep them busy so that they do not spend their days making noise in the offices. In other words the fact that the former lecturers, who are now acting as curriculum/subject advisors have as yet not been placed in any permanent positions in their new stations can have a negative impact on their credibility their power and their authority. The teachers know this. They feel they have real jobs – to teach learners and to produce good results at the end of the year. The former lecturers, some teachers feel, are just being kept at the offices while the government is still deciding what to do with these excess staff in its staff establishment. The new curriculum, which is outcomes based education, is regarded by some teachers as a way of keeping these lecturers busy, while they waste the time of teachers by calling them to

workshops and talking about things *they are not sure of*” as well. (P5:49). Thus negative attitudes to the curriculum advisors can manifest themselves through negative attitudes to the policy changes.

Negative attitudes also come up when younger teachers talk about older teachers. The former lecturers are also relatively young compared to some teachers. They are mostly in their thirties or early forties, while there are some teachers who are in their forties and fifties or even sixties. Many of the seconded former lecturers have been placed or have chosen to move to districts that are closer to their homes. This means they mostly workshop their former classmates, their former students at colleges of education, and their former teachers while they were still at school. Thus as mentioned by P2 (175-178) as quoted above:

..some of them have been taught by the very same facilitators at colleges of education or even right at the schools...And some taught these facilitators at school, so they will feel that they cannot listen to people they had taught before.

As P2 (41-42) says, “*if a facilitator asks them to present something (at the workshops) they will say that the youth is not respecting them.*” In other words they expect the curriculum advisors to regard them with respect to such an extent that the curriculum advisors should not require the older teachers to do anything that concerns the new curriculum.

The problem of negative attitudes to change do not only appear at the workshops but also translate to relations between those with negative attitudes and those who want to change. As P1 (170-176) puts it:-

Another problem we are experiencing is that we've got two groups in schools. We've got the oldies the teachers with twenty-six years experience, thirty years experience. When the circulars come to school for workshops, you will hear them say 'We are old. These young teachers will go and attend the workshop'. When you come back and you intend to workshop them at school, they just sit there. You just talk, and while you are talking some of them do not even take notes. When you ask they say 'we are old'. And it frustrates us who went to the workshop.

The above comment is interesting because it indicates that it is not every older teacher who will be negative to the changes, as some of them will be taking notes when the one who went to the workshop is telling them about what he/she gathered at the workshops. But even those who do not want to change, who have a negative attitude to change still have to go to class. *They go to class because they have learning areas allocated to them. It is a problem.* (P1:178). They go to class, but the question is what do they do in class since they are required to implement the changes they do not even want to know about? Comments by P3 (85-86), who has been in the teaching field for twenty five years indicate what happens to their classes:-

It is difficult, very difficult. Even at this school it is difficult. People at other schools think we are good at this OBE, they think we understand better than they. But we are still using the old style most of us. But we tell other teachers we are enjoying this OBE. It is just keeping up appearances. We have to do this, for this school has a good reputation. But we mostly teach using the old style.

Thus to an outsider changes appear to be taking place while actually the traditional way of doing things continue. This becomes a problem to those who would like to change for they see that the other teachers are not making an effort to understand the new policy and curricula, let alone implement it in the classroom. It is an even bigger problem when the teacher who is positive to the changes is younger for he/she cannot easily confront the ones who are holding the development back. P1 (178-186) comments in this manner:-

It is a problem. In my case it is worse because I am working at a school where I was a pupil. My co-workers were my teachers. So, as a young teacher I have an overload of work because they say 'the young teacher will do that. And this gives me tension because I don't want to disappoint them at the same time. They taught me. At the same time you see I have got to respect them, as they are my elders. To disappoint the old man or the old lady who brought you up is unthinkable, but at the very same time you've got to carry on with the changes. You see, we are dealing with learning here, not only cultural respect. Learners must learn, irrespective of who you are. But the thing is, the old teachers get frustrated, as they are not coping with the changes.

On the one hand P1, who has seven years teaching experience, feels he is compelled to respect the older teachers by sometimes doing their work for them, although this pressurises him a lot. Also he understands their frustration as they find it difficult to cope with the changes. As Koekemoer and Olivier (2002:34) also indicate "the older teachers with years of experience in the school, feel insecure and threatened by the major changes and new challenges in education." The sentiments expressed above by P1 are echoed by P5, who has eight (8) years teaching experience. She says (P5:98-102):-

..with this new system of education, you find that senior teachers don't even want to start with it. They say it is for us, the younger generation. You find, if you are teaching at a school near your home these senior teachers, perhaps all of them, taught you while you were still at school, so you can't be too pushy with them.

P2, who has sixteen (16) years experience in the teaching field but is still relatively young in his early thirties, also adds his voice to this issue, by also giving a sympathetic comment about the older teachers, although he also indicates that they are not ready to change (p2: 37-41):-.

..when we are at the workshops, you'll find older teachers want to join the groups in which the younger teachers dominate. They don't do anything and they just say, 'Do it you boys and girls. Do it you youthful one's'. It is not that they don't have an interest; it is that the language is too difficult for them, and also that it is a long time since they were 'learners' in class.

Thus the issue of the language of policy documents, the language used at workshops, as mentioned earlier arises again. However the younger teachers also feel that it is not just a problem of age that is affecting the older teachers but their attitudes to change as well. They indicate that if one really has the will to understand something one can understand it.

The barrier that confronts those who do not change is their own attitude to change, as P1 (216-224) indicates:-

I think it is a problem of attitude. There are those older teachers I have mentioned. When they say these (changes) are meant for the young teachers, I don't believe that. Look, if an old man like Desmond Tutu is still active and moving abroad, he is old that man. If the former president, Nelson Mandela is still so active and still moving around solving very crucial matters around Africa and internationally, being over eighty years of age, how about the one who is still fifty years of age? So it is an attitude, which needs to be addressed, because even the old system had been taught to us; we took that. We were not born teachers, we were made to be teachers. Even if we need to change we can change.

Some curriculum advisors are also negative to the changes. They are the ones who are the human contact between the policy makers and the teachers. They are negative to the changes because they are not sure about their positions as workers in the department of education, and also because the changes have not been made clear to them. In other words they lack information, and the changes have also not been 'sold' to them. As P2 (130-138) says,

It would have been better if they (the government) had first indoctrinated our facilitators. When they came to us they would not come to us painting it (OBE) black, as some of them are doing now. Because even they, they are not secure. It's odd. How can you use somebody who is not secure? Do you expect such a person to further the aims of such a task you have given him? The government has made a mistake as far as this is concerned. Let us secure these people first.

P2 expands on this issue by saying the following (P2:163-169):-

Firstly the government should do away with this issue of redeployment. Number two, they must do away with this issue of saying retrenchment to these facilitators. Number three, the government should empower these people. Number four, they should give resources to these people so that when they go to their clusters they should have something.

The other thing the government should do is to be firm about the changes. They should indicate clearly that the changes are necessary and are in the best interest of the learners, the teachers and the country. When the government is not firm about the changes, then the teachers may think that it is just another fad, and not exert themselves with regard to the new system. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, P1 (159-164) puts it this way:-

It also gives us an impression that this thing will not continue, because there is a lot of this hullabao, I mean, these noise about the system. Before I came to the system in 1995 there was this PEUP (Primary Education Upgrading Programme). PEUP has been scrapped out and now this OBE is having a problem.

It is important for teachers to be sure that the direction they are taking is not just for the short term. They should be sure that the changes they are embarking on will not be summarily revoked the next day. On the other hand there are those teachers who simply do not want to change. As far as such teachers are concerned P1 (224-235) has the following advice for the authorities, and for those teachers as well:-

It is only that somewhere I can see that the department is not firm on these changes because if they are very serious they would

have to make sure everyone is following the code of this service. If you are saying you are still a teacher, you need to give the service, you must give the service. If you don't want to give the service - if you are telling the learners and the parents (these are the clients, actually) you are telling them that my service, you know, I am no longer able to give my service. Because you cannot sit down and say 'I am old I cannot give the service' and our kids are there for you, and you are saying you are old. What is that? Somebody who is saying he is old he must step down and sit down. If a parent and says 'look, I was going through my child's books and I found that only three classworks have been written, can you say 'It is because I am old?' You can't say that. At the end of the month you are getting paid. So that's why I am saying it's an attitude.

4.2.4. The implementation of curriculum change.

According to Burke (1997:61) one factor that contributed to the success of the CTC project in Papua New Guinea (Section 2.5) was the fact that it was realised early on that “it was important that the stakeholders were involved in all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation and had a sense of joint ownership of the project. It was also important that the stakeholders recognised the need for interdependence and complementarities as a basis to staff development and institutional strengthening. This provided the ethos and modus operandi for shared responsibility of the vision, planning, processes, outcomes and the continuing development of individuals and institutions”. As Olson James and Long (1999:74) also comment, “reform processes which did not enter into dialogue with teachers were the less successful as a consequence.” Meyer (1997:17) also indicates a similar dimension by saying that “educational change is more likely

to succeed if people recognise the need for proposed changes and if change is perceived as having the potential of making life easier, rather than adding to teachers' workload." It is thus important that in implementing the changes, teachers do not feel that the changes are being imposed upon them, but that they feel part of the process of implementation.

The discussions in section 4.2.3. above indicate that the respondents agreed that educational change is necessary in South Africa, However the issue of the changes having been imposed also arose, although the atmosphere was that of goodwill to the changes and the hope for success. The issue that concerned teachers was not the issue regarding the need for change, but issues relating to the implementation of the changes. As P2 (66-68) says, *the government imposed these things, this new system of education. The government should equip everyone, starting with the facilitator.*

However, despite the fact that the teacher feels hard done by because the changes were imposed, he expects that the government will ensure that the imposed changes will be implemented properly so as to ensure the understanding of the changes on the part of teachers and the curriculum advisors. The teacher feels that the changes need to be supported as indicated below (P2:118-124):-

Well, because it is politics one can say that these people, those stakeholders, those in high positions looked at different types of education and they realised that this OBE is the best, the one that can suit South African people. If they arrived at that decision having looked at whatever conditions they felt were relevant, we cannot say they are wrong. We just have to have that confidence

that they knew what they were doing, that the vision that they have is the one that we can also support.

This does not mean that teachers find the changes, manifested in outcomes based education, easy. Teachers indicated that they find OBE difficult. However although there are those with a negative attitude to the changes as indicated earlier in this chapter, I found that the issue that prompted much negativity was the lack of understanding of the changes which pointed to the issue of implementation. As P3 (105-106) indicates, teachers have difficulty in understanding OBE. *Older teachers find it more difficult. The younger generations struggle to make it work.* To indicate the readiness of the teachers to learn, to support the changes despite the difficulties associated with these problems, P3 (106-110) suggests a solution that could help older teachers understand the changes, although it is a rather long term solution:-

Perhaps what they should do is to make colleges accept new student teachers, then teach them three years on OBE teaching. Perhaps when they come to schools at the end of their training they will be more knowledgeable. We will see from them what needs to be done, a sort of cross-pollination.

The main issue that arose however with regard to the implementation of changes was the issue of consultation. Teachers indicated that the ordinary teacher was not consulted when the changes were conceived, nor was the teacher consulted when the implementation was done. In other words the ordinary teacher was not part of the process when the policy was conceived and when the way the implementation was to be done was mapped out. The process did not even consider the diverse contexts in which teachers teach, but like those who implemented

Operation Blackboard in India, assumed that “...the teaching force is a homogenous body” (Dyer 1996:36) and that whatever changes were bought in will be equally implementable for all schools and all teachers. As P2 (58-61) contends,

There was no consultation with teachers before implementation. Maybe they consulted high up there with other highly positioned people. But I doubt if they ever sought the opinion of the ordinary teacher.

Another issue related to the lack of consultation is the issue of piloting. Brause (2000:107) talking about piloting during the research process, indicates that there are many advantages to doing a pilot:- “You get a rehearsal to see how you will perform, confirmation that the process will work, and an opportunity to revise your procedures as needed.” Even during implementation a pilot would indicate to the stakeholders concerned what is possible, what needs adjustment, and what is not possible. In other words the limits of the process could be identified and adjustments made. P3 (61-67) commented about piloting in the following manner:-

They should have piloted first. Perhaps choose about ten schools throughout each province, pilot for some years and check results first. The piloting that was done with this OBE was started in July. In this district they chose School T. for the pilot. Then the following year it was implemented throughout all schools. When did they check the results of the pilot? I don't think they even intended to pilot. They just wanted to appear to be piloting, maybe to be able to write in their reports that they have piloted.

P3 (67-73) further indicates an issue that he feels is closely related to the lack of piloting and the lack of reflecting on the results of the pilot:-

Worse still when learners come into the next grade you find the teachers have as yet not even attended even these two day workshops. What happens between the reopening of the school and the time teachers attend a workshop? So a month or two passes before the teacher gets to the workshops. And what does the teacher do in the meantime? You just do what you are used to?

The above indicates problems with the professional support teachers receive, an aspect that I wish to explore more of in the next section.

4.3. TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS AND EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

4.3.1. Workshops for teachers

As indicated above, some teachers have to start implementing the changes without having attended any workshop concerning the changes. In other words it is possible for a workshop about outcomes based education for a particular grade to be conducted a few weeks or even months into the year, when that grade should have implemented OBE from the beginning of the year. The respondents indicated that it was not just the fact that some teachers find they have to implement the changes without having received any guidance that is the problem, but the workshops themselves have shortcomings.

The issue that emerged strongly was the duration of the workshops. Teachers indicated that the workshops were of a short duration, usually two days. They indicated that two days were not enough for a teacher to understand the changes and to learn the skills that are necessary to implement the required changes. In the two day workshops teachers are required to understand the rationale behind the changes, the principles of the new education system, and the skills required to implement the new system in the classroom. In other words the two day workshop includes advocacy and skills training, including the skills required for teaching or facilitating OBE in the classroom as well as assessment skills. According to Farrant (1997:56) in order for change to succeed it is important to have “adequate/sufficient preparation of the teacher to ensure that teachers who will be involved and the facilities at their disposal will be capable of meeting these demands placed upon them.” As Huberman and Miles (1984:123) also indicate, “large-scale, change bearing innovations lived or died by the amount and quality of assistance that their users received.” Brady (1996:13) concurs and says that “outcomes based education will founder if there is not appropriate high quality staff development and the provision of support.” As mentioned already in this section, the respondents indicated that the workshops they were attending were of too short a duration for them to change their thinking and their practice. As P2 (72) indicated, “*these two days workshops are too short.*” P3 (10-12) adds another voice:-

Two days only? And you are expected to go back to school and use this new approach! We have used our old ways for many years, then suddenly after just a two days workshop I must change. I don't think so.

It is not only the number of days that is a problem, but the length of time that teachers spend at the workshop per day. This is what P4 (63-65) indicates:-

But the workshop was of too short a duration for anyone to understand all the things that were being dealt with. The workshops run only for two days and last only for about three to four hours. They commence at 12 o'clock.

After these two days, three to four hours workshops the teachers are expected to go and implement the changes, yet as the comments of teachers indicate the teachers find that this makes it very difficult for them to be successful. It is not just that the workshops are of two days and last only a few hours, but that in those two hours the teachers are expected to change their thinking, to change the way they have been doing things for the whole of their teaching lives, and therefore to be effective practitioners of the new way of doing things. In other words the workshops deal with too many issues in such a short space of time, something teachers indicate is difficult for them to cope with. As P4 (66-67) indicates, the workshops “*deal with far too many issues relating to this new curriculum in this short space of time.*” P2 (5-11) also adds another voice when talking about a workshop that teachers attended:-

When was it? Last year in February if I am not mistaken. The first day we were told about OBE, something to do with terms like phase organisers, specific outcomes and range statements. The second day they said they were teaching us how to prepare an OBE lesson. We were even told to draw up our lesson preparations in each group. You see, they divided us into groups.

Did we understand a thing? Of course not. Two days only? And you are expected to go back to school and use this new approach!

Thus teachers indicate that it becomes difficult for them to deal with all the issues that they are required to deal with at a workshop of such a duration, as the workshops “*deal with too many issues relating to this new curriculum in this short space of time.*” (P4 (66-67). P5 (53-62) has good advice for those who organise and conduct workshops for teachers:-

When they organise workshops, these workshops must focus only on one thing or aspect at a time, say evaluation, and deal with this thoroughly. Then they can move to the next aspect, and then to the following one. In this way, perhaps those who teach at workshops will become more clear in what they are doing. The workshops should be more focused. This dealing with things in a haphazard way is not helpful at all. Instead of assisting, it confuses. And you go out of the workshops not knowing exactly why you were there in the first place. You don't know what you have gained, and you don't even know what the presenter was trying to say.

In other words the respondent is indicating the lack of focus that is apparent at the workshops. When there is no focus teachers find it difficult to follow what is happening at the workshops. They would like to understand the changes and to change their practice, but they find it difficult because they are expected to deal with the rationale for the changes, the principles of outcomes based education, the terminology of outcomes based education, issues relating to classroom implementation like lesson preparation, and assessment, all within the space of a two days three to four hours workshop. The respondent

therefore advises that it would have been better if the workshops focused on one or two aspects at a time so that teachers can reflect on what they have learnt before they get to the next workshop. Each of a series of workshops would therefore build on the other one. Of course there is the problem that time is not limitless so much that if the workshops were organised to deal with one aspect of changes at each workshop, then there would be no time for teaching as teachers would be constantly out of class. What is required is that issues that closely relate to each other should be dealt with together. Some issues, like the issue of assessment will be more complex than others, and so require more extended time. The bottom line is that a realistic organisation and focusing of workshops will make it easier for teachers to understand what is happening at workshops, and to bring to life in the classroom what they have learnt at the workshops.

Another issue closely related to the above is the issue of the size of the workshops. As P4 (56-61) aptly indicates:-

Perhaps workshops should be organised according to clusters of a few schools, or at the most per circuit, but never for the whole district at once. At whole district workshops you find that there are too many teachers there. I thought we were more than a than a hundred of us in the last workshop. At such a large gathering of people, some teachers become afraid or even shy to talk.

P2 (98-103) concurs and says the following:-

You see, in my opinion, these new changes do not have an impact because of one thing. We are called to the former Venda College of Education (Veco) (which is the site most often used for workshops in Thohoyandou District) , being so many of us. You

see, meeting a teacher I last saw ten years back. We start catching up on our personal issues.

Whole district workshops present problems of control, as there will be a large number of teachers at one place. Because there are too many teachers at such a workshop some teachers may not pay attention to what the curriculum advisor is doing or saying, but rather catch up on gossip, and other personal issues. P2 therefore recommends something similar to what P4 (56-61) recommends as indicated above. P2 (102-109) indicates the following:-

But if the subject advisor comes straight to the school, and say I have come for LLC, grade 4 or 5 or whatever class as it may be, we can work the whole (inaudible), perhaps a week. You can even take the whole cluster if spending the whole week at one school may be too time consuming. You take the whole cluster, which is mostly four or five schools, you have it in one school. Today we are at this school, with one class at this school. the next day we can move to another school, and spend the day with a class at that school. We spend the whole week together, the teacher and the facilitator.

What P2 is indicating is that rather than have large gatherings of teachers, it is better to go to clusters of schools, and workshop them at the schools. This avoids the problems associated with large gathering of teachers as indicated above, but also adds another dimension, which will be explored more in later sections but warrant mention here. It is the issue of providing support in the actual contexts in which teachers teach. As the respondent indicates, visiting one school at a time to provide a workshop would be time consuming and impractical. But if the curriculum advisor takes four or five schools at

a time who deal with one learning area, and workshops then within their cluster, it would be possible for the curriculum advisor to visit all the schools within the cluster if he/she so wishes, and workshop them within their cluster. At the same time he/she will also be able to get into the class with teachers and actually, together with the teachers, do practically, what has been indicated theoretically. Also, the teachers can move as a cohort of teachers of one learning area and get to familiarise themselves with conditions at other schools within their cluster, something that can help them when they discuss issues that affect their classroom practices during their cluster meetings. This will help to avoid what Claxton (1989:34) says regarding teachers: "It is still much more common than not for teachers to feel somewhat threatened on the odd occasion when they are being watched". Fullan (1991:118) adds another voice when by commenting that "the cellular organisation of schools means that teachers struggle with their problems and anxieties privately, spending most of their time physically apart from their colleagues." If the curriculum advisor does what P2 indicates, he/she will have, within the one week, dealt with the various aspects of outcomes based education in a more organised and focused way, interacted with the teachers within their contexts, helped teachers understand each other's contexts, and built relationships between himself / herself and the teachers as well as assisted teachers with their own relationships. P2 (109-116) adds something that is also important that will be a result of this more focused way of dealing with issues of change affecting teachers:-

Then the facilitator can tell us when he or she will come back and make a follow up on the progress. This is important because there should always be a leader who checks on whether things are going on as desired or not. I mean if there are people like me who believe that the main idea is to assist the development of the

learner, at the end, it is not that we should hurt each other. The facilitator should visit us. Visiting us does not mean fighting us, but assisting us. We can then discuss both our successes and our failures, so that the subject advisor can help us. That is my main idea so far.

P2 feels that this is a very important aspect of supporting teachers that he ends this part of the discussion by saying: “*That is my main idea so far:*”. I concur with the respondent, in that I contend that it is pointless to take teachers to workshops, tell them about the changes, explain the terminology of outcomes based education and even go as far as dealing with issues of assessment if there will be no follow up on the workshop. More so going to a cluster of teachers and working with them over an extended period, allowing them time to try out the new ideas and then having regular visits with them at their actual sites of practice is more beneficial than calling them to a two days three hours workshops and letting them lose on the learners without ever trying to find out what their problems are as they desperately try to make the changes practicable in the classroom.

4.3.2. In-School Support.

The need for change is appreciated by teachers, but it is the manner in which the changes are being brought to teachers that brings concern to the teachers. As P4 (11-21) indicates,

This new curriculum has been brought in. Everybody should welcome it. The old system was bad. It was skewed against the majority of the population of South Africa. But the way these changes are being given to us leaves much to be desired. Look, we appreciated that there are people training us, people

attempting to make OBE understandable to us. We started to implement OBE in grade 7 in January of 2000. Yet apart from the two day workshop that took place late last year, nobody had called us or come to us to assist us during our first steps. The other workshop took place towards the end of May. This means that we started to implement without anybody coming to us to show us how to go about the new curriculum. We had received theoretical training, but none had come to class to demonstrate the actual teaching of OBE.

The issue of practical in-school and in-class support as opposed to theoretical training that deals with explanations of terminology, explanations of what an outcomes based education lesson plan should look like and be conducted, and explanations of what outcomes based assessment should be like, teachers need actual hands on practical support within their classrooms. Curriculum advisors do not want to practice what they tell teachers is practicable. As P4 (23-30) indicates,

In our circuit we hold our workshops in a hall that is situated at a school. Once I asked our facilitators to assist us properly. I told them: "We are holding a workshop at a school here. There are learners here. How about if you our facilitators from the district office were to take one class and present an activity to actual learners for us to observe?" I didn't say that to be rude but because I thought that it would let them show us as teachers that this fearsome something we think is not palatable is actually workable.

P 3 also indicates the same problem (P3:14-20):-

One problem these people who are supposed to assist us don't understand is the real situation at schools. In my school, and in many other schools, there is overcrowding. We raised this issue at the In-service Centre. You see, I am fortunate to have been one of the teachers who went to be trained at the In-service Centre. You know what they told us when we told them that our classes are full to the brim? They said OBE can be implemented even if there are 120 learners in a class.

When asked whether those who were training them explained how this can be achieved, P3 replied in the following manner (P3:23-25, 52-53):-

They just said it can. We did not argue with them. You see when you ask them to do what they were saying practically they don't do it. They don't want to do it with real kids'.

Teachers demanded that 'kids' be brought to the centre, but the lecturers refused.

A similar comment is made by P4 (32-37) when talking about the request to curriculum advisors to take a class and demonstrate practically the theory they were giving to the teachers:-

Actually they refused, giving what I would call flimsy excuses. The bottom line is that it is very easy to say anything and plan anything on paper, but implementing may not be that easy. We teachers want real hands on support about our day to day activities in the real situation, and not in a simulated situation like

a workshop. We would rather be given support where we spend time most and thus within the context of the class.

The point the teachers are making is that those who are supposed to provide them with professional support, the curriculum advisors, prefer to meet teachers at workshops where there will be only teachers and themselves. In this kind of situation the curriculum advisors will tell teachers what they are expected to do when they go back to school without really showing how what they are saying can be practicable with real learners.

In other words the holding of workshops in a situation where there are no learners and the refusal to bring in learners or to go to a class where there are learners ensured that curriculum advisors remained theoretical. Teachers therefore start doubting the abilities of the curriculum advisors. They start assuming that the curriculum advisors refuse to be practical because they cannot be practical as they do not understand what they are bringing to teachers. Moreover teachers also doubt the honesty of the curriculum advisors, that they are refusing to be practical because they know that what they are preaching is not practicable.

Just as teachers need to relearn their practice, so will those who provide them with professional support need to relearn their craft, which, according to teachers, has mainly been to conduct courses and workshops. In other words teachers accept that change has to take place, and that they, the teachers, need to change the way they do things. However the teachers also expect those who provide them with support, the curriculum advisors, to also change their craft. They do not say that courses and workshops are wrong, but that when they

only receive workshop and course based support, it is not enough. As already indicated P4 (14-21) comments about this in this manner.

Look, we appreciated that there are people training us, people attempting to make OBE understandable to us...yet apart from the two day workshop that took place late last year, nobody had called us or come to us to assist during our first steps....We had received theoretical training, but none had come to class to demonstrate the actual teaching of OBE.

Teachers appreciate being supported, being helped in their attempt to understand the changes and to change their classroom practice, but they expect something more than just courses and workshops; something more than just *theoretical training*.

Teachers expect the curriculum advisors, those who provide them with professional support to get into the classroom (P2:25-56)

...So that the facilitator does not only flow with the book. The facilitator is someone who can come up with some new methods. If his/ her ideas are fruitful, let the facilitator come up with those ideas. This gives an advantage to me as a teacher so that I can start thinking deeply, extend and broaden my thoughts and mind. In this way in the end we might arrive at a method that is new to education.

The teacher is saying that if curriculum advisors believe in what they preach, they will not find it a problem to come to class. Going to class with a teacher also helps the teacher to realize that the ideas that curriculum advisors are coming up with at the workshops are *fruitful*. The teacher also starts coming up with his/ her own ideas, to think of

other ways to complement what the curriculum advisors are saying. Teachers are not saying that curriculum advisors know everything but that if they meet with teachers in their contexts, collaborate with them in practical ways, they can together help each other and become innovative. As P2 (56-60) continues:-

Facilitators, the subject advisors, should also come to cluster meetings. You see, clusters are very good. They should not be allowed to die. What is important is that the facilitators should not just keep away and leave clusters to teachers alone. The facilitators should come and assist us. Not to say that they know everything. But if they fumble on one aspect and we as teachers fumble on another, we fumble together, and in this way we might find a way to success.

P2 continues and gives a detailed description of how the curriculum advisors can give in-school and in-class support to teacher which warrants being quoted in full (P2 85-110):-

Personally I do not have a problem with subject advisors visiting schools and talking to us as teachers. Perhaps coming to the school firstly working with the teachers, not working with learners. When we are in this process, it is then that we can go to a particular class of learners, so that the facilitators can set an example themselves. Or they may not set an example themselves as such, for it might look like the teachers want to criticize the facilitators. Rather they take a class, and we go together in the class trying out ideas in the class. In other words teaching together, co-teaching. When we are in class the facilitator will assist me if I seem to be not doing well enough, showing me different ways of doing things. Working with learners. This will

build up the confidence of the teacher, so that the teacher may develop a love for the changes in the education of South Africa, for the OBE. The facilitator should therefore not come to the school for just one day. Facilitators should spend several days at school. ..You can even take the whole cluster if spending the whole week at one school may be time consuming. You take the whole cluster, which is mostly four or five schools, you have it in one school. Today we are at this school, with one class at this school; the next day we can move to another school and spend the day with a class at that school. We spend the whole week together, the teachers and the facilitator. The facilitator can tell us when he/she will come back and make a follow up on the progress. This is important because there should always be a leader who checks on whether things are going on as desired or not.... Visiting us does not mean fighting us. We can then discuss both our successes and our failures, so that the subject advisor can help us. That is my main idea so far.

Thus teachers expect to be assisted in class, apart from the workshops and courses they attend. They are not saying workshops and courses should be done away with but that such should be accompanied by actual classroom assistance. Even the in-school and in-class help should not be a once off thing; there should be follow up. The curriculum advisors should from time to time visit schools and clusters. The teachers will feel that someone out there cares about them and wants to help them, rather than just leave them to fumble alone. As Giles (1998:413) says, “the provision of ongoing support” is important.

The provision of support to teachers also rests on understanding what the problems of teachers really are. In other words, before one can

decide on providing support, one needs to know that someone needs support, and what kind of support that individual needs. In order to do this one needs to find out what the individual already knows and build on that. As Taylor (1993:66) argues, “when an individual comes into an organization, he brings with him certain basic knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes which are of value to the organisation. However the organisation has specific needs in this regard, and no individual coming into a company is ever perfect for the organisation’s requirements. Therefore the organisation has to put certain knowledge, skills etc, into the individual. This must be done, of course, within the constraints of the individual’s potential, and take into account, to as great an extent as possible, his own aspirations.” Teachers also come into teaching with some kind of training, which has given them certain skills and knowledge for the purpose of performing their duties at school. Change however sometimes overtakes their training, skills and knowledge, and without continuous improvement and updating of their skills and knowledge, the teachers would soon find themselves obsolete. Thus, according to Steyn and Van Wyk (1999:42), “there is, therefore, a great need for teachers to be trained to meet the challenges of a new political dispensation and a restructured education system.”

Thus, while it is important that teachers need to be retrained in certain aspects of their craft, one should not assume that teachers are empty, and all one needs is to fill them up with new knowledge and skills. They have been in teaching for some years, some for just a few years, others for more than twenty or thirty years. As Swann and Brown (1997:91) indicate, “curriculum initiatives show extraordinarily modest levels of pedagogical implementation, in part because curriculum innovators have failed to start where teachers are”. Vakalisa (2000:20) concurs and says that “it is very important that

the new curriculum should consider the available knowledge base and teaching skills among the teachers who are to be changed with its implementation”. P3 (98-99) also indicates similar sentiments:-

OBE should not have thrown away the old. We should have retained the old, at least some of it.

Retaining some of the old would make teachers have a starting point, something to build on. However, as teachers indicate, curriculum advisors, because of their lack of understanding of what teachers face in class, simply ignored this and expected the educators to simply throw away all they had been doing all those years. This, as already indicated in earlier sections, becomes even more difficult for older teacher who have been doing things in a certain way for, for example twenty or more year who are suddenly expected to discard their way of doing things and adopt the new. The CTC Project in Papua New Guinea succeeded because it was realised early on that opportunities needed to be provided for parties concerned to be brought forward in a problematic way, and, as Burke et al (1997:42) says, “for deliberation and potential transformation rather than one which simply posed one view of the world of teaching and invalidated another.” When teachers find the new difficult when what they are used to has been invalidated or been disregarded they become frustrated and start thinking that things were better before the changes came in. As P3 (25-28) says.

... if I were to choose between this new thing and the old, I would choose the old. With this new thing the learners can't even read or write. Some even reach grade 4 without being able to write their names. With the old one, even the not so old PEUP, they could read and write.

As the discussion continues, P3 (102-115) becomes even more stronger in his arguments:-

If somebody were to say 'expel teachers who don't understand OBE' many in this school would go... Many of us don't understand it. Older teachers find it difficult. The younger generations struggle to make it work... You see, our learners know nothing. We know nothing. Facilitators know nothing. How could we lead each other anywhere fruitful... We can't follow the new for we don't know it. Maybe OBE should go. Perhaps they should iron out its problems first before bringing it back to schools. If these problems can't be sorted out, then let OBE die.

When teachers do not receive relevant support they start thinking that the change itself is wrong. P3's school even called subject advisors to assist the teachers with issues of outcomes based education assessment (P3:31-35):-

We called our subject advisors. They came. We spoke. We told them our problems. They promised to come back. They never came back. They didn't even bother to send a message why they are not coming back to us. So what we as teachers assume is that they couldn't answer our questions; they couldn't deal with the issues we raised. So they rather chose to stay away.

Teachers want curriculum advisors to provide them with assistance that is relevant to their situations, to their schools and learners. Support that is based only on workshops without considering the teachers context is not appropriate. This problem was also indicated as one of the causes of the failure of Operation Blackboard in India (as discussed in chapter 2). As Dyer (1996:33) says about Operation

Blackboard, “ teachers reported that the training was difficult to follow, its content did not seem relevant to their problems, and often teachers could not remember how to manipulate the items. Since ‘trained’ teachers had not understood the training well and could not see its relevance to their situation they had not passed, it on to the second teacher.” P5 (53-62) also comments in the following manner:-

The Department of Education must first find out what the problems are that the schools have before they organise workshops or visit schools. When they organise workshops, these workshops must focus only on one thing or aspect at a time, say evaluation, and deal with this thoroughly

Then they can move to the next aspect, and then to the following one. In this way perhaps those who teach at workshops will become more clear in what they are doing. The workshops should be more focused. This dealing with things in a haphazard way is not helpful at all. Instead of assisting, it confuses. And you go out of the workshops not knowing exactly why you were there in the first place. You don't know what you have gained, and you don't even know what the presenter was trying to say.

Thus it is important to find out what is the real situation at schools. It is also important to talk to teachers themselves to find out where they are and then design, together with the teachers, a way of taking them from where they are to the desired position. Whether one intends to organise a workshop or course for teachers, or to provide in-school and in-class support, one should always take teachers along. Although teachers accept that they are employed by the department of education, that change is necessary since the country has also faced changes in the political sphere, they also expect to be recognised and not just be assumed to follow what has been decided upon without

consultation with them or without them making any input. If teachers make an input they would assist curriculum advisors to design courses and organise workshops that are focused and do not confuse and frustrate teachers. Teachers will come out of their encounters with curriculum advisors, whether at workshops, clusters, or schools, having gained something.

To conclude this section of the report, I shall use the words that P 5 used to conclude the discussions I held with her. (P5:102-120):-

My final and parting words could just be summed up this way:- there is a need to do correct things at the correct time and at the correct places. What is happening now is that incorrect things are happening at incorrect times and incorrect places. This reminds me of what I heard over the radio , on Phalaphala FM's Ndevhetsini programme. They were talking about relief efforts reaching the village of Lambani after devastation that resulted from the floods of February to March 2000. A man they interviewed said something that I think I can still recall almost verbatim today:- 'We have received relief' for sure, but the people who brought the relief did not cross over and come to our village to really understand what kind of relief we really needed. They have brought us food, which is not bad, but it is not food that we desperately need. We have enough food within the village to survive. What we really need is access to other areas beyond Lambani and also shelter for those whose houses, homes, have fallen. Our bridges have been swept away, and roads have dongas; houses have fallen and that is the kind of help we desperately need. But the relief people did not bother to really cross over and see and hear what we really need, they just stood across the river and decided they were going to provide us with

food relief, which is actually not our priority (although food is welcome)'. The lesson from this is the following:- before providing assistance talk to the recipients of the assistance before actually providing the assistance so as to know what their needs actually are.

4.3.3. Teacher collaboration.

According to Burke (1997:41), the CTC project of Papua New Guinea had certain principles which laid a foundation for its success. These principles underpinned the ethos and modus operandi of the project and included, according to Burke et al (1997:41) “collegiality, co-ordination and supportive (intra and inter college) networking.” In other words, teachers should also be able to support each other. As already mentioned in the previous sections, teachers would like their clusters to be strengthened so that they can interact with neighbouring schools. They expect curriculum advisors to visit such cluster meetings. They even recommended that teachers from one cluster can move from one school to another practicing various aspects of outcomes based education, and in this way understand each other’s contexts of work. This would therefore ensure that teachers at one school do not struggle with their problems and anxieties privately.

Teachers, irrespective of the school at which they are stationed, will also be able to share, observe and discuss each other’s work, therefore creating some kind of commonality in their teaching culture.

Teachers also need support within the school. However this seems not to be forthcoming. Younger teachers expect older teachers to guide them. Teachers of a lower rank expect heads of department and principals to be knowledgeable about the changes so that they can be

able to support them. This means that the younger teachers and the other teachers expect older teachers, heads of department and principals to be their pillars of support, yet this, they indicate, is not forthcoming. As P1 (245-250) says,

Another thing is the question of our heads of department at schools. Those guys are being paid for nothing, I'm telling you. Since I came into the system in 1995, there was not a single minute in which a subject head came to me and said 'I need your work, I want to see one, two, three'. Never a single day did a subject head come to me and say 'I've got this suggestion to better our service.'

P5 (3-10) concurs :-

Well, I think there is a lot that needs to be done at school. You see, teachers really need assistance, but it is really the principals that need to be targeted. You know why? Because principals do not know their jobs. You see, these principals are there at schools. They need to be workshopped in management skills. And these HOD posts that have been created, they do not help schools at all. You see, these HOD's are there at schools, but in name only. They otherwise don't do anything. It is like they are not there; they provide no leadership, and they, like the principals, don't seem to have any management skills.

What the teachers are indicating is that they look up to their heads of department and principals, but the heads of department and principals are not supportive. The teachers can't go to the heads of department for their usual work, let alone the new changes, for they are not helpful. This, combined with the fact that even at the

workshops the teachers find that the curriculum advisors are not very helpful as they too may not be able to answer some of the questions teachers ask with regard to the changes, makes the teachers to become frustrated. As P1 (85-101) says,

Some other time you feel that eh, I'm tired, I cannot go to the class, you are frustrated, you don't know where to go for information because when we go to our HOD's they say we don't have information. Some other time when you go to the clusters and these workshops, even those who are facilitating they are saying we don't have the right information. You see now the teacher is in a very awkward situation. You see the teacher is approaching the HOD and the HOD is saying 'I don't have information'. All right there is a workshop scheduled for this day or that day. When we go there those who are facilitating who are giving us information who are supposed to make us change from that behaviour, the old system, they also are saying we don't have that information. You see, you tend to be frustrated and confused. What follows there is anger, that when you go back you are angry, sometimes you even lose your temper, you tell the kids that even there from the workshops we got nothing. And, how will the young kids appreciate what the teacher is doing? You are telling them I am hopeless' you see. Even the facilitators at the workshops are telling us they are hopeless. When you go to class you are telling the kids you are hopeless. What type of learning is going to be given, the service to be rendered? There is no trust anymore between the teacher and the learners because the teacher has told the learners he is hopeless.

The teacher's frustration and anger at not being able to find assistance from those he/ she looks up upon can end up reflecting in his /her

work. The teachers end up disadvantaging learners, and the learners too become frustrated with teachers who do not seem to know what they are supposed to do in class. In other words the lack of support triggers a chain reaction that even affects the learners. As P4 (49-50) indicates, *If I do not understand this OBE thing, how do you expect my learners to understand as well.*

Teachers however also indicate that it is not only the heads of department and principals that are not supportive, but also the older teachers, and sometimes their own peers. In other words teachers not only expect support from those amongst them who have official titles like heads of department and principals, they also expect to be supported by those amongst them who have been in the teaching field for more years than them. P5 (28-35) puts it this way:-

You see, what is worse is that we junior teachers don't even have support within the schools. There is this new way of doing things that is being advocated. If you go to a senior teacher and say here is a new way of doing things, an innovative way that will make the class more lively, you know what he will say? 'Young lady, these new things are for you, we are old and we will go on doing things the way we used to. You can't expect me to adopt these new methods now.' Worse still they are not there for you. Even the HOD's and the principal, they just leave you to go to class. No guidance at all.

So, the older teachers, like the heads of department and the principals, also do not wish to be of assistance to the younger teachers. They also do not want to learn the new ways of teaching, and push the responsibility of adapting to the changes to the younger teachers. However, as already mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter this

is a problem of attitude, and also a problem that arises in the older teachers because they find outcomes based education terminology and issues totally new to them, and therefore difficult. As P3, an older teacher himself says, (P3:97), *OBE should not have thrown away the old. We should have retained the old, at least some of it.* What the teacher is saying is that he has been in the field of teaching for twenty five years, and to be told today after he has been teaching for so many years that all that he has been doing is wrong is not helpful to him. In other words he is saying that older teachers have certain experiences that can be useful for the new system. These experiences should be harnessed and used positively. This can help to make older teachers feel more comfortable with the changes, and not be intimidated so much that they don't even want to attend workshops that are meant to clarify the very same issues that they find difficult. The new system and its terminology may be difficult for older teachers, but if it is brought to them in a way that makes them feel that they are part of the whole rather than that part that is just being tolerated as it has reached its 'sell by date,' they may become more receptive to the changes. As P1 (250-270) mentions,

That is why I say if the department is very serious, they should come, meet the principals, meet the HOD's; give them that capacity, that motivation that they must work with us as teachers. They must identify problems in these areas. How can we solve them? If perhaps the government can do that, I can see the difference. When the subject advisors come, they are not coming to assess teachers as such. They will come, they will meet with the HOD's. They will come and tell the subject head that they need one, two, three, because he is the one who is working at that school, at the site. It means that the subject advisor will need to build that relationship between him and the teachers. To build

that relationship it means that we will work together. He is not just going to come to teachers and say I have come up with this thing, all of us need to follow this. No. We will sit down with him, say, 'Guys, I am having a suggestion. I have identified one, two, three while I m trying to compile information from you teachers. How can we solve this, because I have identified this problem? We sit down and we solve the problem....You see we sit down and come up with mechanisms and strategies, you see. I think if we start there, there is no one who will complain. Everyone will be part of the discussion. But if someone is coming to impose, we will have a problem. Problems start there. And if subject advisors come and say they want one, two, three, it will cause problems. We must know that we are moving in this direction and these are the principles, these are the codes, these are the rules. I think everyone would be very comfortable.

What is needed therefore is that all the people, the stakeholders involved in ensuring that changes become effective in the school should collaborate. The teachers must collaborate with their peers; the older teachers must be supportive of the younger teachers and the heads of department and principals must also be there when they are needed. Curriculum advisors should not impose but get to schools to understand what the teachers find difficult, what their problems are. Even when they have an innovative way of working in the class that they would like teachers to know or learn, they should sit down with teachers and negotiate around the issue so that every teacher, young and old feels part of the whole. According to Burke, Elliot, Lucas and Stewart (1997:61), the CTC Project in Papua New Guinea became a success when it was realised that it was important that the stakeholders should be "involved in all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation and had a sense of joint ownership of

the project. It was also important that the stakeholders recognised the need for interdependence and complementarities as a basis to staff development and institutional strengthening. This provided the ethos and modus operandi for shared responsibility of the vision, planning, processes, outcomes and the continuing development of individuals and institutions.” On the other hand Dyer (1996:37) attributes the failure of Operation Blackboard in India to “the centralised bureaucratic administration of education, which maintains a large establishment but fails to attend to those central to its functioning. Everything that teachers have to do is laid down by a higher authority, which does not consult teachers on any issues however teachers might be affected, and makes no concessions to local circumstances. The system does not treat the teacher as a professional educator with his or her own initiative, but as a government employee who teaches.” Involving teachers meaningfully throughout the process will help to destroy negative attitudes that can be very destructive even where teachers are inclined to collaborate. P1 (274-285), talks about a collaborative relationship he has with another teacher at his school:-

I don't know whether it is because we grew up together, we played together, we understand each other. But our collaboration is very good. I'm eager to learn from him, and he is eager to learn from me. We work together very closely every time. I still remember recently when we were issuing learner's quarterly report cards to the parents. I teach grades 5 and 7 and he teaches grade 7. Because we teach the same classes we sat together when we were issuing those report cards, simply because we want to see the parents and talk to them while we are issuing report cards. While he is busy talking to a parent if I've got some inputs I will give the inputs because I know the child. Our relationship is very good. But understand, we are a very big staff,

a staff of twenty four. You see now. There is also an attitude between. You see, while we say 'guys how if we work in this way', someone will say 'I cannot do that. That's an attitude. It is subtracting from our service.

4.3.4. Support from parents.

According to Taylor et al (1997:2), “public policies in education exist in order to ensure that education occurs in the public interest.” When parents see the benefits of education policies and institutions. That is why Steyn and Van Wyk (1999:42) also say that “a relationship of trust and interdependency should be encouraged between the community and the school, so that the community may take ownership of and help to resolve school problems.” Schools should therefore create opportunities for parents and other community members to be involved in the affairs of the schools. Strategies should also be devised for parental and community involvement. Members of the community should also be invited to participate meaningfully in school affairs. “In so doing,” according to Steyn and Van Wyk (1999:42), “community members will also develop an appreciation for the complexity of the teacher’s work and the problems often encountered in schools.” P1 (382-385) indicates why it is important for the community to be keenly aware of the issues that teachers face:-

At one stage I nearly suggested, but I didn't. It came to my mind that we must have these School Governing Bodies to attend workshops (about the changes that are taking place in education) for them to get first hand information. When they come to us and say, 'Is the service going on?' they must have the information that there is something wrong in the office because the other day they will come and say, 'You are not giving the right

service. Why? Simply because we are not getting information. We are supposed to get that information from our offices but we are not getting it.

What P1 is indicating is that if parents knew that teachers attended workshops where they came out without being sure of what they are supposed to do in the classrooms, they would not put the whole blame of the problems they notice in the learning of the children at the door of teachers. They would appreciate the fact that even those from whom teachers are supposed to get information are themselves not well informed. P1 (398-405) indicates how issues can become complicated if changes are not properly explained to all stakeholders:-

When the new government came in they abolished corporal punishment but they did not bring in an alternative for teachers. So teachers can't beat the children, which is good. But they also don't have an alternative. Learners know they can't be forced to learn. Parents, many of whom are not educated, they come to school and say, 'beat the children; beat them'; without realizing they are violating the constitution. So it seems the changes were brought to the schools but the parents were not properly informed.

If parents knew that beating a child even as a punishment for not doing school work is a criminal offence, they wouldn't, according to P1, urge teachers to beat school children. This leaves P1 to conclude that the changes were not properly explained to the parents. When parents are properly informed about issues, it can be very beneficial to the schools. (P410-420):-

I will give you an example from my school. I am fortunate I teach at a school where I started my schooling. In 1989 I completed my matric. When I came to the school to teach in June 1995 when I got a job there I found I was teaching in the very same dilapidated classes in which we killed snakes way back when I was still a primary school learner. I went to the principal and said, 'lets do something about these classes'. He said, 'the parents of this place are poor'. I said, 'I am a parent too who stays in this area. I know the parents here can do something for they love their children.' After a long talk and a meeting with teachers, a parents' meeting was called. Today there are nine new decent classes and a security fence, all of it being the work of the parents. They contributed money and volunteered to work to assist the builders of the classes. It is amazing what people can do if things are properly explained to them, and when they come to understand the changes.

Parents can similarly also contribute to the acquisition of teaching-learning materials. But it is not only as far as physical resources are concerned that parental involvement is important, but also as far as issues concerning the actual classroom situation are concerned. As indicated already, P1 suggests that School Governing Bodies should attend outcomes based education workshops so that they realise that teachers are not getting full information about the changes. As P1 himself admits, in the areas within the Thohoyandou District, many parents are not educated, so to explain the intricacies of outcomes based education would not be effective. Even where parents are educated, the details of outcomes based education would not be necessary. What is needed is information sessions, some kind of roadshow, an advocacy campaign where the need for changes is explained to parents, and the issues around the kind of work learners

will bring home and the help they will need from parents, guardians, brothers and sisters with regard to their homework, is explained. In other words, even if the parents are not educated, if their children are going to school, they will bring homework home. So it is important for parents to know that the learners will need time to do an increased school work load, which may involve doing some research and asking parents questions that may seem awkward to them. All parents, guardians, and siblings will be required to be more involved in the work of the school going children. A proper advocacy campaign will prepare all the stakeholders for the changes, and make learners, parents and teachers appreciate each other's roles in education (P1: 57-73):-

But there are some good things I experienced from that situation because I realised that there are some learners who are very eager to learn, who will attentively listen and try by all means to do what you are expecting from them. And then again, this message went well to the parents, to some of their parents. They started to help the learners. Before, it was the teacher giving information and parents relying on the teacher. When we informed them that things are changing and you need to come as close as you can to your kids, then we joined hands. We started to see parents coming to our school, asking. Most of our activities we give to learners and tell them that they should get assistance from their parents and their elder brothers and sisters. When they get stuck they come to school, they come and ask us. This is new to us. Most of the parents appreciated the fact that learning now is no more centred on the teacher, it is centred on the children. They started to appreciate the results of learning activities because they realised that their kids are coming up with this information and the teachers are saying this is correct. You see,

they started to appreciate and respect their kids, and as teachers in the classroom we started to appreciate what we are seeing from our learners.

4.3.5. Other issues of concern to teachers

4.3.5.1. Teaching learning material

Teachers indicate that the availability of teaching-learning material is a very important factor in their bid to make outcomes based education a success in the classroom. As P1 (22-23) indicates, *the first problem that we [teachers] experienced was materials*. In spite of the fact that the material may not have been supplied, teachers are still expected to implement the changes in class. That is why P4 (42-45) comments in the following manner:-

...there are no learner support materials, let alone educator support materials. How are we expected to implement this OBE we do not even understand when we also do not have the necessary support materials? I am very frustrated...And I can tell you now that I am not the only one who has this dilemma.

The problem of material is a problem that was also crucial for educational reforms in India as discussed in Chapter Two with regard to Operation Blackboard. Material that was delivered to school was not relevant to what the teachers had to do. Also, the material was not delivered in time, so by the time it came some of the teachers had forgotten how to use the materials. Some material would therefore just remain in the boxes in which they were delivered since the teachers did not use them. Even the trainers who were training teachers about the education changes did not make it easy for teachers to use the materials. As Dyer (1996:35) says, "in the camps, teacher trainers

tried to persist with the unsuitable PMOST – Operation Blackboard material, since they did not feel they had the autonomy to adapt it to local circumstances.” The respondents in this study also indicated similar problems as far as material is concerned. As P1 (102-103) indicates, *the department is not giving the right material in time*. So, teachers have to wait. When the material is delivered they might not be enough for all learners and for all learning areas. Also they might not be what the teachers need for their learners. As P1 (197 –200) further indicates.

We [the teachers] have said that we do not have materials, and the department has promised that they will provide the materials. But what they are giving us is exercise books, but textbooks have not been delivered.

Where textbooks have been delivered but are not enough for all learners or do not cover all learning areas it becomes a problem as the teachers need to devise means of assisting learners. They have resorted to photocopying parts of the books so that they can be going on with lessons. Where not a single book exists in a school, they have gone to other schools to borrow books, often one copy, from which they photocopy sections they can be using while awaiting their own supplies to arrive at their schools. However, some schools do receive material, yet do not know what to do with the material or otherwise simply do not use the material (P3 : 118-123):-

Schools don't have enough material. At this school though we have been fortunate as far as Technology is concerned, for we were a Technology pilot school and they brought boxes and boxes of Technology equipment. I haven't seen many of them in use though, but at least we have been. But other schools don't. They

can't buy because Technology equipment can be very expensive, too expensive for parents even to afford.

However some teachers have realised that they cannot just wait for the government to deliver material. Also, they cannot always be going to parents to ask them to buy material, as material for teaching and learning can be expensive. So they have resorted to creating some material for themselves. (P1: 105-109).

At times, you know, eh, eh, eh, 'I sit down and say 'I can do nothing about this.' Until I meet with a friend...I've got Mr N., who is my friend at school. We sat down and said 'We cannot sit all day, let us create something'. It is then that we started to take newspapers, magazines. We just try something, to just come up with something, which can help our kids.

P5 (13-25) concurs and indicates the value of developing the skills of teachers as far as material development is concerned.

Well, the teacher also needs support in the classroom. I would say the teacher needs support with regard to developing material for the class, for his lessons. You see, many teachers rely on their text book for their lessons. We teachers were taught at various places, some at colleges of education, and others at universities, both local and further a field from Thohoyandou. We come to school with our methods and skills that we learnt there. Some of us have not improved a bit. We are stuck into those methods and skills from yesteryear. A teacher needs to be resourceful, to do more than rely on the textbook. The teacher must do some extra material development, material that is his or her own to bring to the class. Material that has a personal stamp on them. The

teacher has to make his/her lesson unique to himself or herself. He should feel that he owns the lesson. To do that he must develop his own material to supplement the textbook. So, I think teachers need to be given skills of material development.

4.3.5.2. Commitment and accountability

The issue of commitment to work is closely related to the issue of attitude to changes that has already been discussed, but I discuss it separately here because with it comes another aspect which teachers mentioned several times, but which is controversial. It is also an issue which relates to accountability. This is the issue of inspection. Inspection caused problems in South Africa so much that teachers refused to allow inspectors to inspect the work that teachers do. Often teachers even refused to allow inspectors into school premises, and even chased the inspectors who insisted to get into the schools out of the school premises. As Blauw (1998:12) indicates, “in the 1980’s progressive teachers began to target inspectors and authoritation principals as instruments of state education policy. Progressive teachers’ organisation embarked on a defiance campaign in which school inspectors and many principals were expelled from schools.” When teachers did this they were not actually fighting against inspectors, but the issue was an issue of the authoritarian methods used by the inspectors and some principals. The result however has been that for years inspectors have not visited schools to check on teachers’ work, and some principals are afraid to ask for work from teachers.

The issues of commitment and accountability came up both in relation to the government and to teachers. According to P1 (224 –225)

the department is not firm on these changes, because if they are very serious they would have to make sure everyone is following the code of this service. What the teacher was indicating was that some teachers do not want to do their work, that they are simply lazy and do not commit themselves to the changes. Yet, the government, which came up with the changes, which *imposed these things, this new system of education (P2:73)* is not doing anything about the lack of commitment to work of teachers. These people do not want to go to the workshops, and simply go on doing things the way they used to do them before the changes were mooted. Even where they have no choice but to follow the new curriculum, they still continue to be lazy. As P1 (315-321) indicates,

You can find that one activity is being given the whole month. One activity being given the whole month! And there is this problem that when we are evaluating (remember it is continuous assessment) so even when we are going to promote our learners they are not giving tests and examinations. You see, that activity is going to promote a learner. One to three activities throughout the year. And the department is not visiting schools.

P1 (338-343) continues and says the following:-

There are teachers who are ready to change and there are teachers who are hard to change. They are hard, very hard. They don't want to change.... They will sit down and relax and say we will give this activity at the end of the year. 'No one is coming to evaluate what I'm giving, so I will give promote or retain.' I mean he will just choose who is promoted and who is retained.

The respondent expects the department of education to regard this as a serious shortcoming within the system. The department should devise means to overcome this problem. Yet P1 (346-348) indicates that the department is doing nothing about this, and is instead aggravating the problem:-

Our schedules are sent to the circuit office. When schedules are sent to the circuit office, what I have realised is that they only put their stamp and they return them to the schools. They do nothing else.

So that means that the teacher who has just given one activity or two for the whole year will 'get away with murder'. The government officers, who have not visited the school throughout the year, will have just approved what they have not even gone through. This perception is there in the respondent because he sees that no changes will have been made to the schedules, no adjustments at all. The principals and heads of departments at school, as already indicated earlier in this chapter, do not do anything about this problem. P3 (132-138) comments about this issue in the following manner:-

One problem I would have forgotten is the issue of inspection. Inspectors don't come to schools anymore. They should come. When you know someone will check your work, you exert yourself more. Even principals don't check teachers work anymore. If inspection comes back there would be more seriousness. Whether the teacher is absent or comes to school late, nobody says anything anymore.

This, indicates that the respondent feels that no one is committed to the work of the schools anymore, from the teacher, to the principal,

even up to the level of government officers. As a result accountability suffers. What the respondents were indicating is that schools and teachers should not be left on their own, to just do things as they wish without anyone showing some authority. The issue is that teachers feel abandoned and let down by the department in that where officers should exercise their authority they are not doing so. P4 (82-93) adds another voice in the following manner:-

As for the subject advisors, they have hardly visited our school. I think we need such help continuously. The department seems to have just dumped us at schools and forgotten us, otherwise they would have been visiting us from time to time. I always wonder what they think we are doing. If I plant a seed don't I go and see if the maize is growing well? The department has abandoned its overseer role. They should come to our schools and see whether we are doing our work well or not. In fact, let me use the unpopular word:- they should come and inspect our work. If they are employers I think they have the right to know what is happening in the schools, in our classes. They should inspect our work. This is the only word I can use, any other doesn't really say it as it should be done.

The respondents are indicating that the government should also realise that it has the responsibility to ensure that schools are functioning well. This should not just end up at the provision of physical resources such as books, furniture and classrooms. It should go beyond this and even beyond the holding of workshops and courses. Officials should also visit schools on a continuous basis, to offer assistance to teachers and even to indicate, where necessary, which way to go in order to have functioning schools that are successful. However, as already indicated teachers are not just

blaming the department and saying officers are not doing their work; they realise too that there are some in their ranks who show *laziness* (P4:96). There are also those who simply don't want to change, and also those who simply don't want to co-operate with other teachers and with departmental officers like curriculum advisors. As P5 (75-93) indicates:-

Teachers sometimes don't want to say that they have problems. You see these people, the SST's once came to our school, and they were serious, those guys, but the teachers did not really co-operate. Teachers said they (the teachers) had things that they really didn't have. They also said they knew things that they really did not know. Maybe the department should sometimes visit schools without announcing. If you employ a person, don't you go and see whether he is doing the job according to the manner he is supposed to do it? This department employs teachers, so it is the employer yet it does not go to schools to see whether the teachers are doing their jobs or not. Does the employer have to tell the employee or rather ask for permission from the employee in order to visit the work site? What is happening out there at schools is shameful. If you ask a teacher to show you what he did last week, or even yesterday, maybe he/she will just point and point at parts of the textbook. Teachers don't prepare. When they come to school they just take their textbooks and go to class, maybe remember where he/she ended up the previous day by having marked on the textbook. If you see a teacher going to class with a piece of paper, say a page, it is a page that he/she just scribbled that day and that page will be thrown away the moment he / she leaves the classroom.

The above should not be construed to mean that the respondents are saying that they would like the old discredited system of inspection to be brought back. What I notice is that the teachers are simply frustrated at being left on their own without anybody showing any seriousness about the work teachers do. In other words teachers want to see commitment to work from the side of the department of education as well. They realise that there are some amongst them who are not committed to their work, who show laziness, and who also indicate a lack of discipline. It is because of this reason that they would like to see the government show some firmness. In short they would like to be involved and to be consulted about issues. They would like to be part of the change process from conception to implementation. They would also like to be assisted in improving their skills so that they can do things on their own. But they also do not want a 'laissez faire' situation, a situation of anarchy, where no rules apply at all. As P3 (136-139) laments:-

Whether the teacher is absent or comes to school late, nobody says anything anymore. There is no order anymore. Officers are scared of organisations. Learners discipline has deteriorated. You can't apply corporal punishment, and there are no viable alternatives. So, lazy learners go on being lazy.

When teachers are not committed to their work, when they constantly arrive late at work, or simply absent themselves from work, then this situation can spill over to learners, and their discipline deteriorates to such an extent that even their own parents cannot be called upon to assist the teachers in disciplining them. As P4 (67-73) indicates,

But moving back to the schools, I think the department does not understand what is happening at schools. You see, there is also

lack of discipline with learners. The parents are very co-operative in the community where I work. They contributed money to build a block of five classrooms and a hall at the school. Some parents even volunteer to come to school and clean the school yard. But when it comes to children, what can the parents do? Some children are way beyond the abilities of parents to handle.

The parents also realise that they cannot deal with the disciplinary problems of their children, and they expect the teachers to do this for them. So the teachers and the parents end up expecting something similar from each other, with teachers feeling that the parents are expecting too much from them, but simultaneously realising that some *children are way beyond the abilities of parents to handle.* (P4:72-73). When parents realise they cannot handle the problems of their children they then expect the teachers to do this, sometimes expecting teachers to even do things teachers know they are not supposed to do. (P1: 405-409):-

The teacher knows he cannot beat the kids; the learners do not have discipline; the parents say 'beat them;' the teacher knows the learners know they shouldn't and cannot be beaten. It is a problem, for if the teacher tries to force the learners to learn they become your enemy. They can be violent. So the teacher just lets wrong things go on in order to protect himself.

Of course, learners discipline does not have to be maintained through corporal punishment alone. What the teachers are indicating is just that when they do not get support from parents and from the department, and when the department of education does not exercise its authority, then the situation at schools can deteriorate to near

anarchy. So, everyone should be committed to their duties, from the parents, the learners, the teachers and the government.

4.4. SUMMARY AND FURTHER PROGRAMME

This chapter, chapter 4, has presented and discussed the data collected. The key issues that have been raised include the issue that teachers need to be more involved when changes are brought into the education system if those changes are going to affect the way they do things. This also helps to overcome negative attitudes that some teachers may have with regard to the changes. Teachers are not against change (although a few amongst them may be negative to the changes) but what they feel is that the changes should be implemented in a manner that takes teachers along, rather than leave teachers grappling with the changes without anyone visiting them at their actual sites to assist and to get their own side of the story. They indicate that the contexts of schools are not exactly the same, even if the schools are within a few kilometres of each other, hence the importance of visiting each school so as to support those teachers at their schools with the problems that may manifest themselves either similarly or differently from the next school. The issue of collaboration amongst teachers is also related to this in that teachers need not work in isolation, but collaborate both within and beyond their schools, so that they can understand their problems better and put the changes into proper perspective. Teachers also talk of the need to be dedicated to work, both on the part of learners and teachers, and also on the part of principals and the government. The parents of the learners should also be ready to assist, so that the schools can become functioning centres of education.

Chapter five will discuss the significance of this study for South Africa. It will also indicate the implications of this study for South African education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter four presented and discussed the data collected from the respondents, who as pointed out in chapter three, are teachers who teach at schools in Thohoyandou District. This chapter, Chapter Five, the final chapter of this work, discusses the significance and implications of this study to South Africa and to South African education. The issues discussed in this chapter arise mainly from the views of the teachers as expressed in Chapter Four. The teachers are the subject of this research and therefore what is indicated in this chapter should closely relate to what they expressed and also to what they suggested.

5.2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY FOR SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

This study was conducted in Thohoyandou District, within Region 3, the far northern region of Limpopo Province. The respondents in this study are teachers who teach classes ranging from grade 4 to grade 7, which is the General Education and Training Band of the South African education system. As indicated in Chapter 3, (see 3.2.3; 3.4) a qualitative study does not intend to generalise, but calls upon the reader to examine the report and from what he/she reads, take what he/she feels is applicable to his/her own situation and use it. For this reason I conducted this study within a particular locality, amongst a particular group of teachers and not all teachers found within the particular locality or area of study, which is Thohoyandou District. However other teachers within Limpopo Province shall have

experienced professional support in a similar way. I say this because the cascade model used for disseminating information in South Africa, for example, will be similar, with trainers from the national Department of Education training provincial trainers, who in turn train regional and district trainers, who in turn train teachers. Contexts however differ, with provinces and districts adapting to their own contexts in relation to physical and financial resources as well as the quality and availability of human resources. It is for this reason that it was important to study within a particular district interacting with particular teachers, so that I could get into the depth of experiences of these teachers. I made no attempt to generalise, as the applicability of the issues to various contexts was something I left for the reader to do.

The readers for whom this research will bear significance include the student of comparative education, educational management and policy studies, who will benefit from this study through understanding issues relating to the management and provision of professional support as raised in this study. The teacher himself or herself will also benefit in that teachers within Thohoyandou District, within Limpopo Province and beyond, will have a feeling of relief to realise that their experiences which may or may not mirror the experiences of the respondents here have been regarded as significant enough to warrant a study at this level.

Both young and older teachers will benefit from this study because they can realise what expectations each generation has on the other, and can in that way devise means of being more understanding and helpful to each other. The same goes for heads of department and principals, who will do well to study this report and improve on their services to their colleagues who look up to them within their schools.

When you conduct a study with teachers about issues that are significant to them, you always have the feeling that they expect you to be able to influence the powers that be so as to improve their lot. I did not promise them this, except that I assured the respondents that I will express their views in my study.

As a consequence I also expect another reader who will find this study to be particularly useful to be the curriculum / subject advisor. The curriculum advisor is the officer generally charged with the task of workshopping teachers and training them on the various aspects of educational and curriculum change. The curriculum advisor is the individual charged with providing professional support from the side of government. From this study curriculum advisors from within the area of study and beyond will be able to note what they can improve upon, and what they can maintain in their quest to assist teachers.

This study is also expected to have particular significance to policy makers within government and also those who have the power to make decisions regarding the implementation of educational policy changes and other changes that impact upon the work of teachers. When teachers indicate their experiences, and what they would rather be the kind of support they receive, it should be significant to policy makers because teachers are the ones who bring policy into practice in the classroom.

I argue about the significance of this study because from this study, from the discussions with the respondents, the following conclusions can be made:-

- (i) Teachers understand change in education to mean that the education system cannot remain static as everything else around

it changes. They realise that change in education means that the way they do their work will differ from the way they used to do their work. However they expect the change to retain some of what they are used to. They expect to be made aware of the rationale for change as well as the intent of the change. This concurs with what Martin, Russ and Bishop (2000) found in their study in Lesotho, as well as what Steyn and Van Wyk (1999) found with regard to black teachers perceptions about job satisfaction (see 2.2.3.). They also expect to be able to influence policy change; so much that change does not only impact on their context, but that the context must also impact on the changes. In other words they expect change to be brought about in recognition of social, political and economic realities. They also realise that the ideal world might be holding promise, but the real world should be part of the change process.

- (ii) Teachers understand curriculum change, in the context of the present South African situation, to mean the changes relating to the introduction of outcomes based education. They regard their interpretation of the curriculum to bear significance on the success of the curriculum in the classroom. This is supported by what Fullan (1997), Barnes, Briton and Torbe (1990), Hargreaves (1995) and Clark (1995) say in their studies. They expect the change to consider the present situation of teachers, and to start from there and move on to the new curriculum. They would like to have their views considered in the drafting of new curricula.
- (iii) Teachers understand professional support to be the support they as teachers need to have as they grapple with the changes in policy and curriculum that impact on their day to day work in the classroom. Professional support to teachers includes aspects

such as the conduct of workshops and courses, piloting of a new curriculum, school and classroom visits, as well as support from colleagues within the school and outside of the school and from heads of department, principals and parents. (see 4.3)

- (iv) Teachers expect to receive support from district officers, in particular, curriculum advisors. They therefore expect that curriculum advisors, circuit managers and district managers will be knowledgeable about the changes in the curriculum. They expect curriculum advisors to be particularly in touch with the changes so that they can be able to talk to teachers about the changes and answer questions that teachers ask. This they indicate, will ensure that district officers have a positive attitude to changes. That can help to reduce negative attitudes to changes, both on the part of officers and teachers (see sections 4.2.2., 4.2.3).
- (v) Teachers also expect to be supported by their colleagues, their heads of department and their principals (see section 4.3.3). Younger teachers expect the older teachers to assist them as they have more experience in the field of teaching. Older teachers expect the younger teachers to be more amenable to the changes, and therefore to be able to help them out where they (the older teachers) find their experience is not relevant anymore. Those teachers who are not heads of department and principals expect these two categories of teachers to understand the changes better, so that they can call upon them to assist if and when the need arises. As of the present, teachers feel that heads of department and principals are ignorant of the changes and therefore do not give satisfactory support to teachers.

- (vi) An aspect that the teachers emphasised was the issue of support that emphasises practice. In other words teachers expect to be supported in practical authentic situations rather than through theoretical knowledge only. They do not discard theory, but they expect it to be accompanied by practical demonstration in an actual classroom situation (see section 4.3.2). They therefore expect curriculum advisors to come to their schools and give them support as they grapple with the new curriculum in class.

- (vii) Teachers feel that the support they get through workshops is not enough (see section 4.3.1). They attend two to three day workshops that last for three hours, and they are then expected to be knowledgeable enough to teach the new curriculum. They indicate that this is asking too much from the teacher, and therefore this contributes to their lack of understanding of the new curriculum. They indicate that workshops are too large, when they are whole district workshops and this leads to some teachers being too shy to ask questions when there are so many people.

- (viii) Teachers expect thorough piloting to be done when a new curriculum is introduced (see section 4.2.4). Teachers indicate that the piloting that was done when the new curriculum was introduced did not allow for reflection on the results of the pilot, as the piloting was done to end at the end of the year when the following January that grade will be introducing the new curriculum throughout the country. The conclusion they make is that the piloting was done just for the sake of being seen to be piloting, that is, for the sake of legitimating policy, rather than as a serious attempt to remedy the shortcomings of the new curriculum. This observation is supported by the observation

made in relation to the piloting of Operation Blackboard in India (Dyer, 1996).

- (ix) Teachers also expect that when a new curriculum is introduced the language used must be of a level that the teachers can understand. They also expect that new terminology should not be introduced just for the sake of introducing new terms, but because it is relevant and necessary, and can make the new curriculum more understandable.
- (x) Teachers expect material to be supplied in time, to be enough for all learning areas and for all learners. They also urge each other to be resourceful, so as to produce some material by themselves from newspapers and other day to day articles that may not be expensive to acquire. In other words, teachers recognise that they too need to take charge of their own development, and to make attempts to improve themselves and their own situations rather than just wait for government to do everything for them (see sections 4.3.3; 4.3.5.1).
- (xi) Teachers expect to be taken seriously, and their opinions to be reflected in subsequent encounters with those who provide support. They want to see changes in the practice of, for example, curriculum advisors as a result of their inputs (see section 4.3.2).
- (xii) Related to item (xi) above, teachers also expect their opinions to be taken seriously by policy makers and therefore also planners. They prefer to be consulted properly, as ordinary teachers, in order for them to voice what they regard as necessary so that it can be reflected in policy.

- (xiii) Teachers also expect policy makers to realise that South Africa is a diverse country. Some schools have first world conditions, while others are poor, lack the amenities of water and electricity, do not have enough desks, let alone study material. Teachers expect policy makers to be aware of this, and to require implementation having considered the various diverse situations or contexts that exist in the country that may have an influence on how educational policy change can be implemented in the country. Ignoring context led to the failure of Operation Blackboard (Dyer, 1996; also see section 2.5.3.4).

5.3. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY FOR SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

As indicated in Chapters One and Two, South Africa has been going through a process of educational change. The introduction of outcomes based education in 1998 ushered in the beginning of the new era of educational change within South African schools. This meant that teachers had to change the way they conducted their lessons, as the new requirements for a proper lesson differed from what they were used to. Not only did they have to change the way in which they planned and conducted their lessons, but also the manner in which they assessed and reported on learner performance. Therefore the relationship between the teacher, the learner and the parents was also affected.

Educational policy change and curriculum change has its final realisation with the classroom teacher. This is why when change that will impact on classroom practice takes place it is necessary to support

teachers, to start where teachers are, and to implement the changes with teachers fully involved, rather than to impose the changes on the teachers. A new curriculum is going to be implemented in South Africa in 2004. This is a revised version of the present outcomes based education. This New Curriculum Statement is a result of the recommendations of the Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 which was handed to the National Minister of Education in 2000. This means that teachers will be faced with another change in their classrooms as from 2004. However they should be better prepared for the new changes since it will still be outcomes based education, with some of the problems associated with the present version, like the complex terminology, having been reduced to a lesser level. However teachers will still need to be supported so as to avoid the problems associated with the present curriculum which warranted the institution of a commission to examine what could have gone wrong with the implementation of the curriculum introduced in 1998.

This study I have conducted will play a role in the provision of support during the implementation of the New Curriculum Statement. Teachers have a need to be provided with relevant, timely and appropriate support during times of change. This study will play a role in assisting all involved in the process of change, from conception, through design, to implementation. It is therefore necessary for me to now indicate further implications of this study for the provision of professional support for teachers through several recommendations:-

- (i) Teachers are important stakeholders in the implementation of curriculum change. The coming in of the outcomes based education approach has meant that teachers have to unlearn their old practices and start with the new ways of teaching. This

is not easy, and therefore the provision of professional support for teachers should be intensified. This is supported by Dyer (1996); Giles (1998; Burke, Elliot, Lucas and Stewart (1997) and Fullan (1997).

- (ii) It is also important to reassure teachers that their repertoire of knowledge is not being regarded as obsolete, but that the new approach is coming in to improve them so that they can transform their teaching (see sections 4.3.3.; 2.5.2.3). This will eliminate the feeling that some teachers, particularly older teachers, have, that they are being deskilled, that all that they have gathered as teachers before the changes were introduced is irrelevant.
- (iii) It is important for district officers, in particular curriculum advisors, to be well versed in the changes in curriculum. This will give them confidence, and eliminate the suspicion that teachers have regarding the abilities of curriculum advisors. Teachers will also have confidence in the curriculum advisors, and take them more seriously.
- (iv) The above implies that from the top down, the cascade model should be improved. Those who design the policy and the curriculum should understand what they are doing and what they actually expect to be done. Those who are at a higher level in this cascade model of provision of support should be sure that they understand what they are doing before they even consider cascading it to the lower levels. The stages in the cascade should also be reduced, so that those who cascade to teachers do not get information that may have already been watered down due to the many levels in the cascade.

- (v) There should also be channels of communication opened up (see sections 4.2.1; 4.2.2). The cascade model of training should not emphasize only the pouring down of information to the lower levels. Proper and visible channels of communication should also be opened up for information to flow from the top down and from the bottom up and in particular for searches for clarity to rise from the bottom up. The present cascade model blocks off communication from the bottom up. A teacher attends a workshop, goes to class, can't implement what was taught at the workshop, and just feels frustrated at school as the principal is also not knowledgeable, and the curriculum advisor rarely, if ever, visits. Even in the rare chance that he/she gets a chance to ask a curriculum advisor, the curriculum advisor can't give the teacher an answer because he/she asked his/her trainer a similar question and was given no answer. Also, it is difficult for the district curriculum advisor to go to a provincial trainer and enquire, since there are no clear channels of communication set up between them. This lack of communication is a shortcoming of the cascade model as presently practiced in South Africa, and should be improved or South Africa will just continue coming up with what will be hailed as great transformation ideas in education that will fail at implementation.
- (vi) Curriculum advisors should actually practice what they preach and get into class and demonstrate that the new curriculum can be implemented. This should be done in actual classrooms with learners who are what the teacher actually meets daily. Bringing in a videocassette from another school elicits in the teacher suspicions that the situation is a simulated one (see section 4.3.2). Getting into class to demonstrate what can be done does

not mean that the curriculum advisor should become the teacher of the class. It only means that the teacher realizes that what is actually being said is practicable and gives him / her confidence that he/she can do it as well.

- (vii) Setting the agenda for support should be done with proper consultation with teachers. Teachers know best what they need, they also know best what their learners need, and therefore bringing a complete package for teachers to just take is not only unfair to the teacher but also defeats the purpose of support, which is to empower teachers to take charge of their teaching with confidence, and also take charge of their further development without fear of failure. Setting the agenda together, and the emphasis on sustainability contributed immensely to the success of the CTC Project in Papua New Guinea (see section 2.5.2.6) as Burke, Elliot, Lucas and Stewart (1997) indicate. On the other hand the authoritarian top down approach that was used in relation to Operation Blackboard in India (Dyer, 1996) contributed to the failure of Operation Blackboard (see section 2.5.3.4).
- (viii) Proper piloting of curriculum changes has to be done. Not only should it give time for teachers to make their inputs, but it should also give time for policy makers to, together with teachers, make amendments where necessary as a result of the pilot. Piloting should be taken as a time to find out some of the problems that can be encountered during the coming implementation, so that remedies and adjustments could be worked into the policies and the implementation. Giving a period of, say a year, between the time of the pilot and the time of actual implementation in the rest of the schools can provide

enough time for reflection. As Brause (2000:107) indicates, “there are many advantages to conducting a pilot study. You get a rehearsal to see how you will perform; confirmation that the process will work; and an opportunity to revise your procedures as needed.”

- (ix) The timing of the professional support is also important. Bringing in support at a time that teachers regard as inappropriate also defeats the success of the support. To train teachers on the implementation of outcomes based education in a certain grade when the year has already started is self-defeating (see sections 4.2.4; 4.3.1). This lack of time consciousness is not good for teachers who will then have to attend a two hour, two or three day workshop and then be expected to implement the day after the workshop ends. Training should be done in good time, preferably starting in the previous year, and then repeated early in the year, followed by meaningful visits to schools to monitor actual implementation.
- (x) Flowing from the above, the various calls for inspection are actually calls for the Department of Education officials to be more visible at schools (see section 4.3.5.2). Therefore it is important for curriculum advisors to regularly visit schools, so that teachers should feel that the Department of Education takes them seriously and is not leaving them alone out there in the educational jungle. This also helps curriculum advisors to become aware of the diversity of contexts of schools, and to therefore be able to provide support accordingly.
- (xi) Teachers should also not just wait for support to be brought to them, but should set up conditions that are conducive to helping

them. They should organise themselves, and co-operate with each other, form collegial communities of schools and teachers. They should also organise support or actively seek for support, either within their schools or from outside (see sections 4.3.3.; 4.3.5.1; 4.3.5.2).

5.4. FINAL COMMENTS

South Africa is still grappling with educational transformation. Curriculum transformation at schools is still continuing. There is a new Curriculum Statement that has been released in 2001. This new Curriculum Statement is also based on outcomes based education. What is important to remember is that whatever changes the country brings to the school curriculum it is teachers that will have to see to it that they are implemented in the classroom. The teachers' perceptions of the change, as well as their interpretation and their actual experiences in the classroom as well as with the providers of support will determine how they implement the changes in the classroom.

Within the same institution there can be contradictory and contesting forces in relation to educational change. This contestation and contradiction is manifested in this study in the expectations that each generation of teachers has on each other. Some teachers regard the years of experience of a teacher as meaning that that teacher has met many different and difficult happenings in education that such experience serves as something to ease the dealing with further changes in the educational field. Other teachers regard youth, and therefore fewer years in the teaching field as meaning greater receptiveness and adaptation to change. What is significant about this contradiction is that it is not the older teachers who claim to have more experience and therefore can work better with the changes. It is

the younger teachers who expect the more experienced teachers, to support them. The older teachers on the other hand feel disempowered by the new changes and therefore expect the younger teachers to be the ones to work on the changed system and for the older teachers to maintain the status quo (see section 4.3.3).

Educational change can therefore be contested within the very same micro context. This constestation due to contradictory expectations can have devastating implications for educational change implementation. For professional support, the question therefore becomes: Who supports who in this micro context of educational change implementation?.

The contradictions and contestations indicated above play themselves out in outcomes based educational change in South Africa. The deskilling of teachers is a reality for some. There are teachers who feel that outcomes based education deskills them and leaves them without any skills after their many years of teaching using the traditional methods of teaching.

The question therefore is the following: Does outcomes based education actually deskill the teachers or does it merely expect the teachers to use their skills in a different way? ‘ My contention in this study has been that outcomes based education does not deskill teachers but it requires of them to make a mental change so as to use their skills in a profitable way for the changed curriculum. The skills and knowledge that teachers have gathered in the years before outcomes based education are not contradictory to the skills and knowledge that are required of teachers in order to ensure the success of outcomes based education, but are complementary (see section 4.3.3). What has made those apparent contradictory situations so

pronounced has been the use in outcomes based education in South Africa of terminology that did not make the practice clear to the ordinary teacher. Teachers therefore do not necessarily need to be re-skilled, but to be supported in redirecting their skills positively towards outcomes based education teaching.

My conceptual framework for the interpretation of the data was based on the interpretative / constructivist paradigm, which looks at reality as socially constructed (see Mertens, 1998; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Burns and Grove, 1993) (also see section 3.3.). Reality for the individual is constructed in relation to the context in which the individual finds himself or herself. Contexts differ, and since contexts are not the same, so the experiences of people also differ in relation to their different contexts. Therefore in order to understand the experiences of teachers in relation to educational change, to outcomes based education and to professional support it is necessary to understand the various contexts in which they function. These are the realities that individuals within particular contexts form as they experience the events or happenings in their contexts, that may not be the same with those of the next context, e.g. the experiences of teachers within one district or school as related to those of teachers in another district or school. There is therefore the macro context, e.g. the district as compared to the micro-context, which may be the school.

Within each context there are also certain experiences and therefore certain realities, that I call the intra-context realities. What I mean is that within each context, even the micro context, the realities that each individual holds may not be the same. (see Mertens, 1998; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993). For example in this study it has been indicated that younger teachers

expect the older teachers to have more ability to deal with changes and to fall back on their many years experience in teaching to be able to assist the teachers with less years experience in dealing with educational change and outcomes based education. To younger teachers the older teachers are simply not being ingenuous enough to call on their experience. On the other hand the older teachers complain that the changes are too difficult for them and expect the younger teachers to be more able to deal with the changes. This is a contradiction of expectations and realities. While both generations acknowledge their inability to deal properly with the changes, they attribute their difficulties to different realities that they face and have faced. The intra-context reality is therefore mediated by the expectations, perceptions, and experience of the individual.

Thus teachers within the same context may have different conceptions about educational change and professional support. There are multiple mental constructions about educational change and professional support amongst teachers. These multiple constructions about educational change and professional support may contradict each other, or be in conflict with each other. This study has indicated that teachers have called for the providers of support not only to go to schools, but also to get into class so as to get the feel of the classroom realities that teachers face. In other words, teachers call for providers of support to interact with teachers in the real situation, and not in simulated places like workshops. This is therefore a call for a more personal interactive mode of professional support provision. This more personal, interactive mode of professional support provision will allow for the realization of multiple perspectives that teachers have about educational change and professional support. The juxtaposition of conflicting ideas in the more personal interactive approach will allow for the reconsideration of ideas, methods and positions as the

provision of professional support progresses, so as to infuse more complementarity. This is supported by the views expressed by Stein, Smith and Silver (1999:238-239) with regard to the new paradigm of teacher assistance that is emerging in the USA, which is “based on an honest assessment of the depth of relearning required of teachers and an honest assessment of what has not worked in the past.”. (see section 2.5.1.). Comments by Burke, Elliot, Lucas and Stewart (1997) with regard to the need for interdependence and complementarities as a basis for staff development also support this position (see section 2.5.2.6).

To conclude, one could use the words of Harley, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay (2000 : 300):- “For real change then, what teachers need is not impersonal policy directives implemented from above with overtones of authority and control, but localized, conceptualized, even personalized, developmental support and assistance in the everyday business of teaching. And what this requires is policy that is sensitive to contextual diversity being implemented at local community level by those most in touch with local conditions. Delivery and implementation plans therefore depend crucially on strong links between national and provincial departments and schools, and clearly defined levels of responsibility and authority within and between these institutions.”