

# Teachers' attitudes towards the amendments in the Design curriculum: a critical overview of the approach and findings of the study

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## Abstract

This article<sup>1</sup> refers to the South African Design teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the 2020 Section 4 amendments of the Design Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The purpose of the article is twofold: first to establish the necessity for *awareness* of the teachers' attitudes towards curriculum changes, especially when they are unexpected and abrupt. Secondly, to demonstrate the importance of *awareness* among educational authorities about the role of transparent discussions on the nature, purpose, and consequences of their relevant decisions before their final implementation. To this end, the article discusses the amendments and their differences to the former curriculum. The role of the Design teachers' positive attitude towards curriculum changes, especially in dealing with challenging pedagogical issues and communicating creative motivation to learners, is critically assessed. Theoretically, the study was guided by *Ubuntu* philosophy and the South African democratic principles while methodologically, based on a qualitative data collection process, the *attitudes* of Design teachers from seven selected schools have been individually examined. In conclusion, the teachers' heterogeneous responses have indicated that their opinions do not reflect the *à priori* governmental acceptance of the amendments.

## Keywords

South African education, Curriculum changes 2020, CAPS FET Design, Design teacher, attitude, Ubuntu.

## Introduction

This study is part of a comprehensive research project on applying Design Thinking (specifically its *process*) in the nationally implemented subject of Design education. In the context of the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*, the focus is on initiating, accepting, and implementing change among involved parties through *collaboration*, which is an essential factor in acknowledging innovation, embracing *change*, developing adjusted *attitudes*, and promoting new skills (Steyn, 2020, p. 338). The subject matter of the thesis was critically analysed and evaluated based on a qualitative case study conducted in the context of South African Design education policy guidelines. During the fieldwork, it was found that the Design teachers' attitudes differed pointedly in response to the new changes in the curriculum. The documenting of the relevant

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<sup>1</sup> The article is based on the PhD thesis by Anriët Van Deventer, under the title: 'Teacher engagement with the process in Design: policies, problems, and visions', submitted at the University of Pretoria in November 2021.

views emphasises the value of this article, which we believe may assist the DBE in being more flexible when applying revisions in future.

### **Contextualisation**

In the democratic South African education system, *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (CAPS) is reviewed and amended every seven years. In addition, the *Design Guidelines for Practical Assessment Tasks* (PAT) are annually reviewed and adopted. Therefore, before the South African government declared the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* as a working document in 2012, many dedicated collaborators had contributed to the goals and vision to achieve the ideals of Design education in South Africa.

With reference to the subject Design in Grade 10 and 11, the CAPS amendment document was published by the *Department of Basic Education* (DBE) as *Arts Subject Quality Improvement* in 2019 and implemented in January 2020. Evidently, in the context of educational changes in the democratic South Africa, the two parties that need to collaborate in decision making and its implementation are the education authorities i.e., DBE and facilitators, the Design teachers. From this point of view, both parties – the government and the Design teachers – have a common interest, the transmission of knowledge for the benefit of the learners. This is reflected in the CAPS document which describes the Design subject as “a creative problem-solving process” that includes the study of design theory and practice. This process involves the following steps: “problem identification, planning, research, innovation, conceptualisation, experimentation, and critical reflection”. Ideally, according to CAPS, “Design equips learners with crucial life skills, such as visual literacy, critical and creative thinking, self-discipline, and leadership”. It also encourages learners to be resourceful and entrepreneurial, to strategise and to be team players.” (DBE, 2011, p. 8).

The article discusses the factors that influence Design teachers’ attitudes towards amendments and changes with the aim:

1. to promote awareness among educational authorities about transparent discussions on the nature, purpose, and consequences of decisions before being implemented.
2. to inspire a positive attitude in Design teachers towards curriculum changes, especially in the context of creative and critical thinking process regarding challenging and motivation issues.

Stemmed from the research are the following questions:

1. What are the Design teachers' attitudes towards curriculum changes?
2. How do Design teachers experience the new curriculum amendments by the DBE?

To this end, we present a review of selected relevant literature that underpins the discussion on this topic followed by the main reasons for the required adjustments to CAPS Design. The theoretical framework, case study design, methodology and a comparative review on prior policy alignments are included. The updated framework of the evaluation programme for Design Grades 10 and 11, divided into groups is also described. Finally, a conclusion drawn from the way DBE has introduced and communicated the Design curriculum changes to the teachers will be presented followed by suggestions for improvements.

## Theoretical Background (Literature Review)

### A comparative overview

Teachers' attitudes towards innovative thinking and changes have been discussed on an international level as well. With reference to Indonesia, Retnawati, Munadi, Arlinwibowo, Wulandari, and Sulistyarningsih (2017, p. 205), having identified certain barriers to teachers' understanding change, recommended that curricula should be amended in consideration of teachers' negative stigma to change. In consideration of individual factors, which may control the mind opening to change, amendments should be indicated with precision and a clear knowledge of new vicissitudes well understood.

From a comparative point of view, regarding curriculum changes in Zimbabwe, Milondzo & Magongoa (2018) (cited in Chimbunde & Kgari-Masondo, 2020, p. 36) identified challenges in the implementation of Design (subject) as problems related to the teachers' concerns, in terms of "beliefs, attitudes, preparedness, resistance", and unskillfulness. From their viewpoint, Chimbunde & Kgari-Masondo (2020, p. 36), state that teachers are opposed to the changes in general and how they prominently voice their concerns about the challenges experienced when implementing amended curricula. They found that "... countries with centralised curriculum development permit disparities in the interpretation of the curriculum as it is taught in the classroom by teachers who are not consulted". Nonetheless, the Chimbunde and Kgari-Masondo's study (2020, p. 36) reveals that it cannot be assumed that teachers are as resistant to change as previously believed (Gudyanga & Jita, 2018). Based on 54 international sources on teachers' reactions to curricula changes, Janko and Peková (2017, pp. 33-52) argue for successful curriculum changes implementation, teachers' attitudes are crucial determinants and that, depending on their socio-cultural context, may differ.

As for South Africa, Carl (2005, p. 223) emphasises the difficulties of defining teacher engagement in a simple, direct way, as the nature and viewpoint of a teacher's engagement often is determined by one's personal conceptualisation of the curriculum aspects. In addition, the level of the educational authority and the teachers' level differ fundamentally in terms of the macro-curriculum aspect at the national level and the teachers' micro-aspect narrowed at class level. As such, according to Carl (2005, p. 223), the phenomenon has already been widely discussed in the relevant literature such as Connelly & Clandinin, 1984; Imber & Neidt, 1990; Elbaz, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Haberman, 1992; Fullan, 2001 and Carl, 2002. In his study on Arts and Culture teacher's experiences to curriculum changes, Lombard (2012, p. 165) stresses that it is critical for teachers to first acknowledge curriculum changes. This step should take place before focusing on resources and teacher support in terms of "making sense of the novel notion by restructuring existing beliefs and knowledge".

### Nation Building through Education: The Role of *Design*

In the process of building a state-nation in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the correspondent educational projects, and curricula focused on promoting a unifying national consciousness in a homogeneous society in terms of language, religion, and above all a common historical past. In this context, the process of national unification and integration was achieved mainly through political institutions and mainly *education*. These approaches, however, on the one hand have cultivated a strong bond between its members, yet, at the same time, they create a strong

element of separatism and differentiation between “Us” and the “Others”. (Sansaridou-Hendrickx, 2005: 126-142). In the South African context, these factors are inapplicable.

In South Africa, after the fall of the *Apartheid* regime, in 1994 and under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, the country moved into a process of reconciliation and equal civil rights and opportunities. This multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural new-born nation, accurately labelled *Rainbow* nation, had to build, and sustain a collective national identity among its heterogeneous social entities and its members. To this end, the state set in motion all available institutions, private and public, and above all on the educational authorities. For the South Africans, thus, the endeavour has not been easy as numerous challenges and problems continue to complicate the implementation of relevant civil rules, laws, regulations, and curricula. Understandably, to develop a national consciousness in the context of its socio-cultural realities, the educational system has based its teaching and learning approaches on a broader value system than the conventional national principals. Based on the South African Constitution, the CAPS (2011, p.5) infuse the principles and practices of social and environmental justice, human rights, and inclusivity underestimating communication difficulties. However, as Steyn (2019, p. 164) states “the existing multicultural society and the multilingual inclusive system of communication in South Africa impose additional challenges” for proper communication within the framework of educational transformation. In this context, human feelings should be respected especially when the parties involved are communicating through power related positions and roles, in this case, the South African educational system and functions, especially in decision taking processes.

In principle, thus, the reformed curricula promote humanities through democracy. Consequently, educators of Visual Arts and Design, have adopted these principals by integrating them in the practical application of their teaching, as illustrated through *critical thinking and freedom of expression*. This effort for inclusion and awareness in the interaction between “us and the “others” at humanity level is illustrated by the analysis of the data, the relevant interviews, personal and group participation, as well as by the active involvement of the learners through their creative and critical thinking applied in their artworks.

### **Why Ubuntu ideology?**

As for the ideological framework of the study, the *Ubuntu* philosophy is chosen as it reflects the African socio-cultural tradition and moral principles. Translated in English as *Humanity*, Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term which defines the African collective identity, and often justifies Afrocentric views versus colonisation policies. Letseka describes Ubuntu as “normative in that it encapsulates moral norms and virtues such as kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy, and respect and concern for others” (Letseka, 2000, pp. 179–180). Semantically, Ubuntu can be more or less related to “human-kindness” or “being human”, an ideology that encapsulates “the substance of collective ethos” (Odari, 2020). According to Chimbunde and Kgari-Masondo (2020, p. 4), “the *Ubuntu* philosophy is a moral theory and a worldview”, as it speaks to the very essence of being mortal. A moral theory provides a precise framework for why a *certain* action is wrong in a *certain*, relevant socio-cultural and religious moral context. In return, kindness is universal. It can traverse ethnic, social, cultural, and political boundaries through proper communication.

Furthermore, according to Chimbunde and Kgari-Masondo (2020, p. 4), values and education are interconnected. In our view, since human kindness is connected by definition to *Humanity* - from the Latin *Humanitas* meaning “kindness” “human nature”, “culture” and “refinement” (University of Notre Dame Archives, 2021), it should be pedagogically promoted and applied accordingly in human communication. As we weight social values and morals with similar criteria, the *Ubuntu* philosophy is applied in this study as value-driven, incorporating human-kindness to assess human reaction to changes that need to be implemented. In line with the above principles, linking the reality of being human to different attitudes experienced by the Design teachers towards change, might be viewed as a natural human response to modification. If a typical reaction towards change is resistance, then change can be seen as a threat to some, making it difficult to accept it at first.

Consequently, from an educational perspective, we used the *Ubuntu* ideology as the main ethical criterion to understand and assess the humanity of the Design teachers in terms of their actual teaching, their theoretical frameworks, personal concepts, beliefs, and emotions. The research has paid special attention to the ability of the teachers to control personal emotions and exercise their pedagogical professionalism by way of objective interpretation of curricula and the application of relevant methods and approaches. Furthermore, Van Veen, Slegers and Van De Ven (2005, p.918), and Van Veen and Slegers (2006) examine how a teacher's professional identity is at risk in the current reform context, as well as how emotions play a role. The *Ubuntu* philosophy which serves as the theoretical framework for this article, is supported by the findings of the scholars above.

### Former SBA versus 2020 amendments

In 2014, with the implementation of CAPS, the subject Design was introduced in the government and private schools as well as in the *Independent Education Board* (IEB). For each subject, the CAPS document, describes, amongst others, the specific aims, time allocation, overview of topics and the weighting, processes, and procedures of the assessment tasks. The *School-Based Assessment* SBA tasks include tests, exams, projects, practical tasks (i.e., preparation, planning, and the making of a product). These tasks refer to the *Design Process* (Topic 1), the *Design Product* (Topic 2) and the *Design in Context* test/exam (Topic 3) (DBE, 2011, pp. 44-45).

The formal assessment tasks before the 2020 amendments, in Table 1, are explained as follows:

- Six formal SBA tasks: three practical tasks, two tests and one examination on theory, completed during the school year weighing 25% of the total mark for Design in Grades 10, 11 and 12 respectively.
- The end-of-year assessment component includes: 1) a Retrospective Exhibition containing the year's three practical tasks and three assignments 2) a written examination and 3) a practical examination (i.e., *process* and a *product*). Collectively, these three parts cover the remaining 75% of both Grades.

**Table 1: Before 2020 amendments: formal assessment, Grades 10 and 11. Source: DBE (2011, p. 45)**

Formal assessments (25%)	Internal end-of-year examination (75%)		
SBA – during year	Retrospective Exhibition	End-of-year examination papers	
25%	25%	25%	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 PATs: 100 x 3</li> <li>• 2 theory tests: 50 x 2</li> <li>• 1 theory examination (mid-year): 100</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibition/presentation of year's work (PATs 1 – 3): 70</li> <li>• 3 assignments (Design in a Business Context): 30</li> </ul>	Written examination Design in Context Grade 10: 2 hours (100) Grade 11: 2½ hours (100)	Practical examination: 24 hours (estimate): 100
<b>Term 1:</b> 1 practical assessment task (50 process + 50 product) + 1 theory test (50)	<b>Term 2:</b> 1 practical assessment task (50 process + 50 product) + 1 theory examination (100)	<b>Term 3:</b> 1 practical assessment task (50 process + 50 product) + 1 theory test (50)	<b>Term 4:</b> 1 examination (2 papers): Paper 1 : Theory (100) + Paper 2: Practical (50 process + 50 product) – done during the 4 <sup>th</sup> term
<i>Promotion mark: Add raw marks and totals of assessment tasks from term 1 to term 3 and convert to 100 + retrospective exhibition and research (100) + paper 1 (100) + paper 2 (100) = Total of 400</i>			



The late Chief Specialist for Arts subjects in the DBE, Manana (2020, p. 5), explained why CAPS Design amendments were necessary:

- to strengthen and improve the quality and effectiveness of assessment as stipulated in CAPS Section 4 for Grades 10 and 11 from January 2020;
- to improve the weighting of marks per topic versus the teaching time spent per topic;
- to determine the marks allocated per topic;
- to address assessment overload;
- to revise and improve the forms of assessment;
- to align the differing policy and layout within the Arts subjects;
- to reduce curriculum overload; and
- to strengthen curriculum coverage.

Comparable to the former SBA tasks above, Table 2 displays an overview of the amended 2020-SBA program for Design Grade 10 and 11. The amendments include: relevant taxonomies regarding cognitive levels, the total number of tasks allocated per term and completed per annum, and the weighting of assessment tasks in terms of time and mark allocations, and lastly, content coverage. The tasks are broken down as follows:

- Five formal SBA tasks: two practical tasks, two tests and one examination on theory, completed during the school year weighing 25% of the total mark for Design in Grades 10, 11 and 12 respectively.
- The end-of-year assessment component includes: 1) a practical assessment task 2) a written theory paper, and 3) a retrospective exhibition of the year's work made up of products made in Terms 1 and 2 (this excludes the process). All three parts cover the remaining 75% of both Grades.

**Table 2: 2020 amendments: formal assessment, Grades 10 and 11. Source: Manana (2020, p. 12)**

GRADE 10 AND 11 FORMAL ASSESSMENT FOR DESIGN			
SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT (Internal) 25% 150 Marks + 200 Marks + 50 Marks= 400 converted to 100 Marks (SBA)			TERM 4
TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
TASK 1 THEORY TEST 50 Marks	TASK 3 THEORY EXAM 100 Marks	TASK 5 THEORY TEST 50 Marks	TASK 7.1 END-OF-YEAR EXAM P1. THEORY EXAM 100 Marks
12.5%	25%	12.5%	50%
TASK 2 PRACTICAL PROCESS Topic 1 100 Marks	TASK 4 PRACTICAL PROCESS Topic 1 100 Marks	TASK 7.2.1 END-OF-YEAR EXAM P2 PROCESS (50)	TASK 7.2.2 END-OF-YEAR EXAM P2 PRODUCT (50)
25%	25%	25%	25%
TERM MARK: 150	TERM MARK: 200	TERM MARK: 50	EXAM MARK: 200
 			
TASK 6 PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT TASK (PAT) (Continuous assessment from Term 1 – Term 3)			
TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
PRODUCT 1 Topic 2 100 Marks	PRODUCT 2 Topic 2 100 Marks	PAT EXHIBITION PROCESS (assessed in term 4)	PAT: EXHIBITION 100 MARKS Process & exhibition (50)
25%	25%	internally assessed Product 1 + 2 (50)	
100 Marks (SBA) + 100 Marks (PAT) + 200 Marks (EXAM) = 400 TOTAL Marks			

In summary, amended SBA contains one task less. The practical projects completed in Term 1 and Term 2 are recorded as part of the SBA mark while the products are only reflected at year end. Therefore, the *Design Product* is recorded as part of the PAT mark but calculated only at the end of the year. The Term 3 practical task has fallen away and has been replaced by the *Design Process* of Term 4’s practical examination. The *Process* component is completed in Term 3, but the mark is recorded as part of the examination mark, i.e., in Term 4 (Manana, 2020, p.5).

**CAPS Design changes versus attitudes?**

The term “change” and its synonyms alteration, modification, reworking, revision of the *state quo* is conditioned. As for “attitude”, among others, it refers to “frame of mind”, “outlook”, “review”, “reaction”, “standpoint”, “opinion”, meaning different perspectives<sup>2</sup>. In the context of our research, an *attitude* is considered as an internal individual behavioural response to an inclination to *reply* positively or to be hostile to external variables in a person’s life (for a definition, see Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005, p. 209). In our opinion, in a *dialectic* discourse between *thesis (status quo)* and *antithesis (change)* any amendment (change) is progressive and usually evokes mixed feelings towards a proposed improvement. In their discussion on the theory of dialectics, Baxter & Braithwaite (2010, 48-66) argue that for a positive attitude and agreement a constructive discourse between partners is essential.

<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster, 2020

Nonetheless, an attitude implies also a critical sense and approach. Opposing *change*, in general, is a human reaction deriving from fear of the unknown which is a natural human reaction. Therefore, the fear to lose the comfort of what one knows, causes resistance to change (Issah, 2018, p. 1). In the case of CAPS Design, most teachers have indicated they know the existing curriculum as they have worked out everything according to their understanding of the document policy. *An attitude* then conveys a logically subjective *reaction to change*, whether positive or negative, which directly impacts on the acceptance or not of the new amendments and *changes* towards the 2020 CAPS Design document. To better understand the Design teachers' attitudes towards change, we present an overview of the causes of challenges.

### Causes of challenges

The likelihood of numerous challenges emerging worldwide, due to implementing any new curriculum changes or reforms to established systems has stimulated great interest in academic spheres, accelerating research in curriculum changes and implementation thereof (Geisinger, 2016, p. 245). In line with this, Steyn (2020, p. 338) refers explicitly to the "lack of recognition and progress of art at all levels of the modern education system". That 'lack' has been referred to, discussed, and attributed to the "serious 'neglect' and incapacity of the educators themselves to demonstrate art achievements on an 'empirical' level". Thus, Steyn's (2020) observation might explain the 'neglect' of South African Design teachers and the lack of opportunities for their voices to be heard and their inputs to be effectively implemented. Finally, Chimbunde and Kgari-Masondo (2021, p. 2) noticed in their literature that the main challenge was the ongoing *top-down approach* in the planning, design, and changes to the curriculum. This point further emphasises the need to involve as many stakeholders as possible, including Design teachers, whose contributions and inputs may fill the gaps and concerns when changes are to be made.

### Research methodology

In the context of *Ubuntu* and its application in the real world, events are examined with a more detailed search into African humanness and interdependence between the individual (the One) and the community (the Others) (Mabovula, 2011, p. 40).. In the collective African worldview, individuals are intrinsically entrenched in a system of social and interdependent interactions and never considered as solitary individuals (Sefotho (2018), cited in Ngozswana, 2019, p. 295). This shared experience of life facilitates the interaction between individual and environment. As a result, the environment functions as a defining attribute of individuals (Anderson, Reder & Simon, 1996).

According to Yin (2009, p. 15, as cited by Arnell, 2014, p. 13), "case study researchers focus on the how and why of a research", as they allow for a more in-depth exploration of real-life occurrences in their current context. This pragmatic contextualisation of the subject matter is essential both for the observer and the observed participants. Based on a purposeful sample, our case study consisted of eight Design teachers offering the Design subject in Grades 10-12 at high schools in the Gauteng province, South Africa. For our purposeful sampling, the eight Design teachers' attitudes were individually examined and critically assessed. The rationale for the choice of this sample was threefold: a) to avoid a sample being altered to interviews with strongly pre-conceived ideas, b) to interview participants with vast Design teaching experience, and c) to interview participants from schools belonging to a different ranking category. To this end, the case study's bounded context was set as follows: experienced Grades 10-12 Design



teachers; schools’ ranking categorised into high, mid, or low performing groups. These rankings were based on the past five years’ National Senior Certificate (Grade 12) Design results. To ensure anonymity, the selected teachers’ identities remained anonymous and participant codes (T1, T2, T3, etcetera.) were used.

For the purposes of this article, a mixed-method approach, i.e., quantitative, and qualitative methods were used. Open-ended, semi-structured questions were created for the interviews. The data was collected through interviews and an open-coding process was used to identify the dynamics of the participants’ *attitudes* towards actual *change* effected by the CAPS amendments. Based on triangulation approach, the data was analysed in three sets: each participant was initially interviewed, then a follow-up questionnaire was distributed, and the CAPS document was analysed. Moreover, credibility can be achieved through persistent data triangulation (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2014, p. 8). Through the use of open-ended questions, data collection tools are also trustworthy and valid. The methodological accuracy and appropriateness of the qualitative research are referred to as trustworthy, validated by content analysis findings (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002:224). Furthermore, quality assurance measures credibility and trustworthiness.

The questionnaire comprised eight questions (See Table 3) which were sub-divided into three categories, and according to the nature of the theme. The theme, *Behaviour and Emotions* was broken up into four sub-themes and identified as follows: (a) General approach to attitude and change, (b) Announcement of change, (c) Feeling about the CAPS changes, and (d) Attitudes towards changes.

The questionnaire in Table 3 were divided into three parts. Part A (Q1-3) related specifically to the Grade 10 and 11 amendments of Section 4 of the Design CAPS and the teachers’ feelings towards how the DBE projected these changes. Part B (Q4-6) concerned the Design teachers’ attitudes and feelings towards these changes and how the selected teachers generally dealt with change in their lives. The last category, Part C (Q7-9), was structured in a way to measure the teachers’ attitudes and tolerance to change, i.e., according to the 4-point Likert scale. The last question allowed teachers to voice their opinions on the relevant subject matter.

**Table 3: Interview questions and questionnaire. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS				
1.	How do you feel about <i>how</i> the CAPS Design 11 changes were announced and implementation by the DBE?			
2.	Do you understand and feel empowered towards the changes that must take place? Explain.			
3.	How do you feel about Grade 11 CAPS Design changes implemented in Term 1, 2020? 3.1 Pro’s 3.2 Con’s			
4.	How do you feel <i>overall in your life</i> about change?			
5.	Please describe your attitude towards the latest changes to CAPS Design.			
6.	Indicate your attitude scale [ <i>Cross out</i> ]:			
	Negative – Furious	Don’t know - Difficult to adjust to the changes	Medium - Change is good but needs some more review	Positive – Much- needed change

7.	Indicate your change tolerant scale [Cross out]:				
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>No tolerance to Change</td> <td>Little tolerance but accept change</td> <td>Medium tolerance to change</td> <td>High tolerant to change</td> </tr> </table>	No tolerance to Change	Little tolerance but accept change	Medium tolerance to change	High tolerant to change
No tolerance to Change	Little tolerance but accept change	Medium tolerance to change	High tolerant to change		
8.	Any general comments or feedback regarding <i>change and attitude</i> ?				

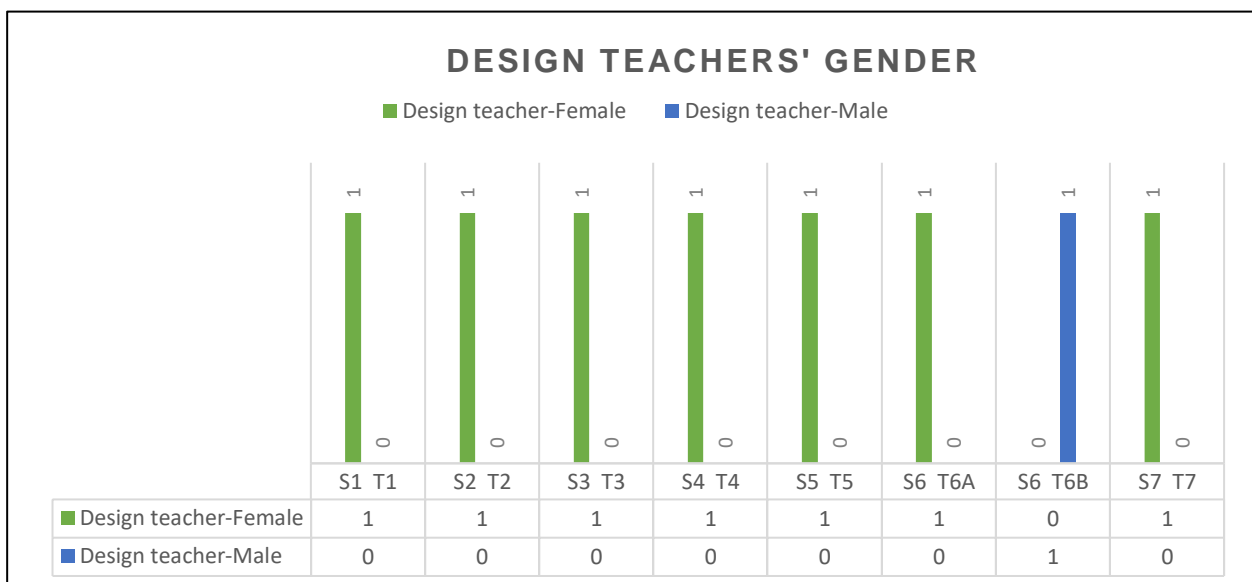
In addition, the recorded Zoom interviews were transcribed, allowing for our interpretation and confirmation, as well as clarifying questions that arose from the initial interviews.

**Participant demographics Biographical information**

Details about the teachers’ qualifications, age, gender, years of experience in teaching the subject Design, and whether they had received any specific training on the practical implementation of the design process. The information gathered from this section was used to build profiles in the context of the participating Design teachers. Design teachers’ gender is as follows: seven females and one male teacher (Table 4). This represents female dominance in Design education.

In addition, for the credibility of the research, the factual information, similarities and differences in terms of empirical knowledge and teaching strategies are divided into the following three categories and displayed in the graphs below: 1. *Design teachers’ gender*, 2. *Design teachers’ age and the length of their teaching experience*, and 3. *Design teachers’ qualifications*:

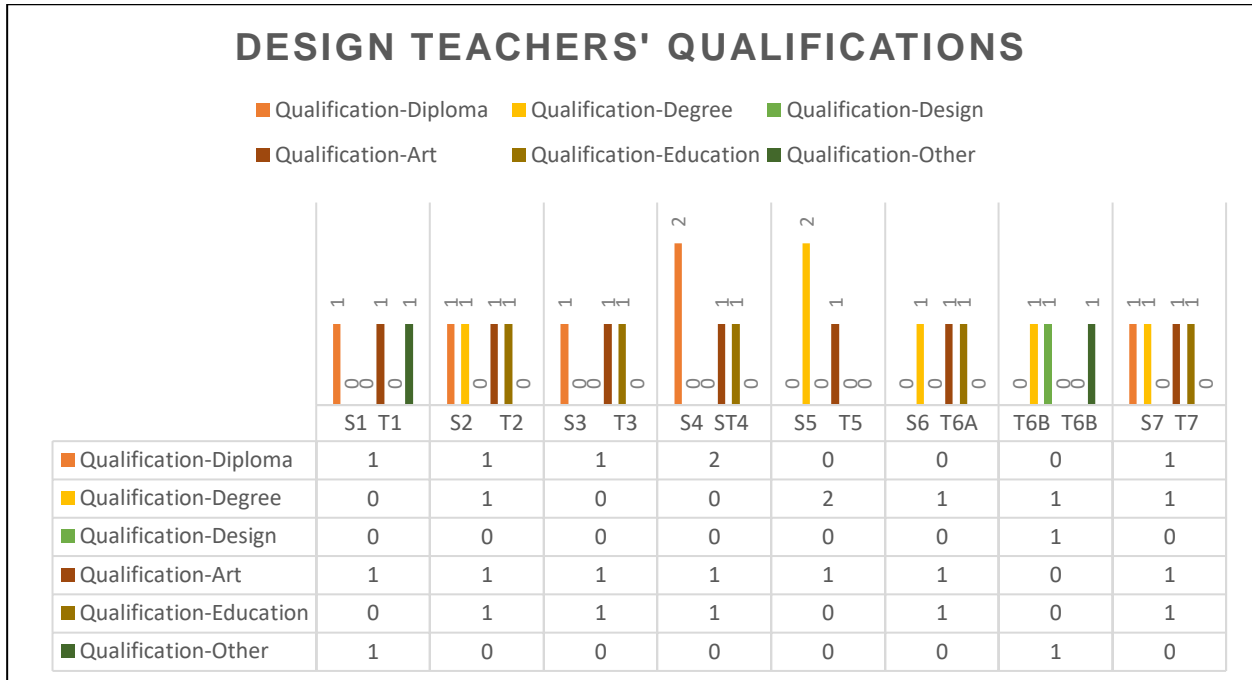
**Table 4: Design teachers’ gender. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**



With reference to the Design teachers’ qualifications (Table 5), it is noteworthy that only one teacher, T6B (male), has a Design qualification accompanied by other complementary technical subjects and a different qualification that is not Design related. Five teachers, T2, T5, T6A, T6B and T7 (females and one male), have a related Arts degree, and three teachers, T1, T3 and T4

(females), have an Arts Diploma. In addition, T4 and T5 both have post-graduate Arts or education qualifications.

**Table 5: Design teachers' qualifications. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**



**Table 6: A comparison of Design teachers' age and the length of their teaching experience. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**

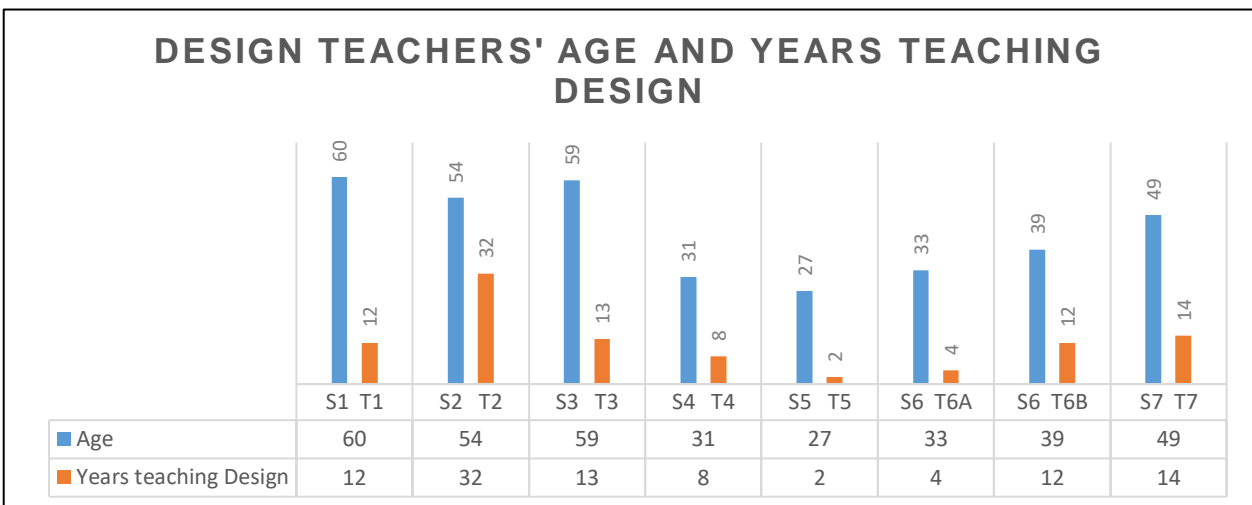


Table 6 compares the Design teachers' ages to the length of their Design teaching experiences (in years). These ages are included to reflect the age groups which are currently employed as Design teachers. Three Design teachers (T1, T2 & T3) are represented in the 50-60 years category, and T7 falls between 40-50 years. Three Design teachers (T4, T6A & T6B) stand for 30-40 years. Lastly, T5 falls into the age group 20-30 years. This puts half of the Design teachers (T1, T2, T3 & T7) above the age of 40, whereas the other half are young and upcoming teachers in the specialised field (T4, T5, T6A & T6B). Then, compared to the years of teaching, T2 stands out with 32 years of experience. Notably, although T1 is the oldest, their years of teaching

Design corresponds with T3, T6B, and T7 (younger in age), all of which have between 12-14 years of teaching experience. Lastly, T4, T5 and T6A, the youngest participants, have between 2-8 years of Design teaching experience. Hence, the comparison between the Design teachers' ages and their years of experience is not directly proportional to their age.

**Table 7: Attitude scale. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**

Negative – Furious	Don't know – Difficult to adjust to the changes	Medium – Change is good but needs some more review	Positive – Much needed change
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The selected Design teachers were mostly positive about the new curriculum amendments, implemented in 2020. However, measuring teachers' attitudes towards the amendments using the 'attitude scale' (Table 7) indicated that four Design teachers were less positive as they felt that although change was good, it needed some more review. The remaining four teachers' attitudes were favourable towards a more drastic change.

**Table 8: Change tolerance scale. Source: Anriët Van Deventer**

No tolerance to change	Little tolerance but accept change	Medium tolerance to change	High tolerance to change
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When measuring the Design teachers' open-mindedness to change, findings showed that only two Design teachers indicated their **tolerance to change** was 'high', in other words, positive. Six Design teachers demonstrated their **tolerance** as 'medium' (average/general) to change (Table 8). However, the four Design teachers that indicated that **change is good** (see Table 7) felt that curriculum changes needed more review. The remainder of the Design teachers (four) specified their **attitude as positive** and said the amendments to the curriculum were much needed.

### Assumptions

The following assumptions about the participants were considered in this article:

1. The aim of using a single case study was to gather results that represents the real situation and the problem of the subject matter. Therefore, it is assumed that the selected eight Design teachers represented the voices of most teachers of Design education practice.
2. The selected participants had a professional level of Design teaching expertise and could successfully navigate the amendments to the curriculum.
3. It was believed that the selected participants would be truthful in their responses to the interview questions. Therefore, it was expected and believed that participants' responses to the interview questions would be honest.

### Findings

The findings of this article are divided into the following four themes: (a) General approach to attitude and change, (b) Announcement of change, (c) Feeling about the CAPS changes, and (d) Attitudes towards changes.

*Design teachers' attitudes to change in their lives in general:*

The study's findings revealed that most Design teachers felt positive in general towards change, as it is needed for growth and progress. It has been established that most of the Design teachers were accepting the amendments to the curriculum: T1 stated that *"change is necessary and inevitable"*, and T2 said: *"I am not afraid of change if it is viable and meaningful"*. T3 appeared to be more cautious and specified that *"I'm sort of in a midway – it depends on the change"*. T5 granted change as *"...sometimes good, and I adapt easily to difficult situations and change"*.

*Design teachers indicated dismay in how the DBE announced the changes to the curriculum*

For certain Design teachers, the way forward should be for the DBE to conduct proper engagement through discourses with the teachers as responsible educators and role-players in curriculum development for the teaching and learning progress. In support of the *Ubuntu* ideology as value-driven criterium, to evoke positive reaction to changes, they need to be pre-discussed, understood and amended before implemented.

For example, T2 asserted that: *"[DBE] wanted to avoid double-dipping, but this does not seem to be a successful approach"*. T3 received the amended document late and said: *"[the amendments] could have been discussed with us a little bit more by the department"*. T5, a novice teacher, felt that: *"the changes of CAPS Grade 11 hadn't affected me a great deal as I had just started my career"*. On the other hand, T6A, T6B and T7 were very positive about how the changes were introduced and stated they had a lot of support (*"subject facilitators provided further support"*).

*The following are the condensed findings from Design teachers' points of view regarding their feelings towards the amendments to the curriculum.*

The study's findings revealed that most Design teachers, taking into consideration 'pro et contra', felt that changes to CAPS were most needed and welcomed. T1 said: *"I have an understanding of the changes as they have come to me"*. T5 postulated: *"at least the [learners] have more time to work on their portfolios and do the developmental drawings and preparation work more thoroughly"*. However, T2 stated: *"the contrary is not thoroughly thought through – change for the sake of change"*.

*The teachers' attitudes of acceptance of the implemented changes to the curriculum as anticipated*

The findings showed that the teachers felt that curriculum amendments were needed. The findings also established that the authors anticipated that the modifications to the curriculum would be accepted by Design teachers. Therefore, they had no choice but to implement the amendments and continue teaching the new expectations of the implementation. The teachers 'voices' are significant and should be noted. In support, Van Veen and Slegers (2006, p. 86, cited in Eisner, 2000, p. 347) stresses that *"Teachers need 'to feel a part of, if not in control of, the improvement process"*. Furthermore, these findings indicate that there has been a demand for new approaches to accommodate teachers' sentiments towards CAPS amendments. The Design teachers' statements below demonstrated that they expect early consultation before changes are made and scheduled for the curriculum's implementation. T2 emphasised *"the latest changes in CAPS Design [for me] are not very meaningful. The outcomes won't be better, and I do not see this improving Design and Design knowledge at all"*. T4 indicated these

*“changes do place less pressure on the [teacher], which in the long run does benefit not only the learners in many ways but also the educators’ way of teaching and the quality of teaching that the learners will receive”*. Furthermore, T5 voiced that *“the latest amendments to Design CAPS are most probably going to differ from school to school; for example, I am ahead with my theory work thanks to online learning”*.

Lastly, the findings of the relevant study have demonstrated that the Design teachers’ ‘age group’ did not play a role in determining their attitudes to change. Participants appear to believe they have a role to perform outside of the classroom in terms of the curriculum, but feel that their voices ‘are not heard’. Similarly, Fullan and Hargreaves (1992), Carl (1994), Fullan (2001) and Kirk and Macdonald (2001) expressed the opinion that teachers felt they were constricted to the classroom and should be given opportunities to involve teachers in curriculum development. Hence, the Design teachers accepted the changes, and stressed that their opinions towards change are important and should not be ignored.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and the analysis of this study:

- The DBE should engage directly with Design teachers as primary stakeholders for inputs into future amendments and broadening the curriculum.
- The research established that the attitudes of Design teachers are often affected by the perceived (Design teachers) insensitive attitude of the DBE.
- The study pointed out that amendments to the curriculum were necessary as it brings forth a more balanced curriculum and offers protection for overload.
- Additionally, the revisions support Design teachers in teaching learners in the extra time available. For example, by allowing teachers to fill these gaps in the curriculum, such as concentrating on alternative methodologies.
- Finally, the curriculum changes have been designed and structured to contribute significantly to supplementing curriculum overload with more time to complete tasks.
- In answering the second research question: *How do Design teachers experience the new curriculum amendments by the DBE*, it will be noteworthy to observe consulting, input, and cooperation more inclusively. As we saw in the introduction, it directly affects Design teachers being left out, mainly where their voices should be heard. *What are the Design teachers’ attitudes towards curriculum changes?*

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to analyse the Design teachers’ attitudes towards the implementation of the formal modifications to the CAPS Design curriculum and assess the effect of their viewpoints on their teaching approaches. The selected Design teachers were optimistic about the 2020 Design Grade 10 and 11 curriculum changes and prepared to move beyond the identified negativity. As the authors engaged with Design teachers on various levels, their assumption is to report on the facts and make authorities aware of the experiences of those implementing the changes at the grassroots level.

With reference to the conventional way the educational system of a homogeneous national consciousness is built and promoted, the research has acknowledged the difficulties in unifying nationally, under common goals, the highly diverse in terms of language, culture, traditions,

value-systems within the South African society. As a solution, it highlighted the need to identify globally recognised human values and integrate them in the decision-making and implementation processes in the South African educational system. In line with this, the article has portrayed the importance of the stakeholders' voices and those of the Design teachers to be heard and coordinated in terms of ideas, suggestions, proposals, and different viewpoints. In the framework of the *Ubuntu* socio-political ideology respected in South Africa, the study has demonstrated that implementing changes can lead to reliable positive outcomes, provided the interested parties are well-aware of the involved challenges and relevant problems. Proper knowledge and awareness, we believe, can be inspirational and motivational forces, both crucial factors in teaching and learning critical and creative thinking in Design.

The article encourages us to reconsider what comprises the inclusiveness of all stakeholders when new amendments are planned, proposed and implemented. Even if the government has worked with subject specialists, the new amendments are incomplete, acceptable or not, and partly satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is possible to construct and maintain the collaboration of different stakeholders.

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