

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **POLICY ISSUES: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate whether classroom management in OBE should be constructivist in nature or whether traditional classroom management practices could be maintained. In seeking appropriate answers for the research questions, this chapter is presented in two parts. In the first part, the theoretical perspectives on OBE are presented. It focuses on issues, among others, such as the historical and philosophical backgrounds, models and critics of OBE, origin and general characteristic features of philosophies underpinning OBE. In the second part, policy issues are explored. Insights on the implementation of Policy: theory and practice, perspectives on political symbolism and critical analysis of C2005, NCS and RNCS policies were explored.

#### **6.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON OBE**

OBE is a system that involves a movement away from a content-based towards outcomes-based approach. Its essence lies in its shift away from typical school practices, where performance is based primarily on covering varying sets of requirements in a fixed period of time (McGhan, 1994:70). OBE is one of the nine principles that underpin the Revised National Curriculum Statement Policy (DoE, 2001a:17; DoE, 2002a:3; DoE, 2002b:9). As policy, it was introduced by South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and bounds all providers of education to implement it. In General and FET phase, it was the task of DoE to develop an OBE based curriculum and C2005 and RCNS is the response to this.

##### **6.2.1 Defining Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)**

OBE is a broad concept and interpreted in many different ways. Informed by the assumption that there is more than one version of the description includes some debates

on the nature and purpose of OBE. Marshall (1994:79) claims that OBE means different things to different people. The concept “base” refers to the “bottom; foundation; the lowest part of anything, especially the part on which something rests or supported (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 1986:65). Inferred in this definition is the assumption that operational elements of OBE systems are relegated or dismissed to lower subordinate roles, serving only as means towards the achievement of predetermined results/outcomes (Malan, 2001:40). The dictionary definition, in terms of educational application, would imply that outcomes constitute the foundation of all learning activities. This implies that curriculum content, teaching methodologies, school timetables and/or teaching-learning resources would have one function only, that is, to ensure that the desired outcomes (learning results) are realised (ibid:40).

Given that OBE comes in varying versions, there is more to OBE than relatively simple dictionary definitions suggest. The term OBE, according to some scholars like King and Evans (1994:13), can be applied to a range of educational reforms, all of which have outcomes as a point of departure. The official definition as in the Government Gazette (1998), (Gazette No. 19640, Notice No1718) sees OBE as a learner-centred, results-orientated approach to education, premised on the expectation that all learners can learn and succeed. It implies that learning institutions have the responsibility to optimise the conditions for success.

For Van Niekerk and Killen (2000:93), OBE can be viewed as a theory of education, as a systematic structure for education or as a classroom practice. Literature (Smith, 1995:24; Towers, 1992:89; Baron & Boschee, 1996:574; Fakier & Waghid, 2004:55) defines OBE as a results driven, competency-based system which describes, in clear terms, what learners are expected to learn, how learning is evidenced. Fakier and Waghid (2004:55) concede that it is a system which is based on the belief that individuals have the capacity to learn, as well as, to demonstrate learning after having completed an educational activity.

The use of the concept “OBE” is much more particular, that it refers specifically to the issues of curriculum, accountability, systematic reform and/or institutional management (Malan, 2002:1). The proliferation of management jargon in Spady’s transformational version suggests that it is no more than an approach to educational management (ibid:41).

### 6.2.2 The concept “Outcomes”

There are multiple views on what “outcomes” are. According to Spady (1994a:18), “outcomes” are high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning context. In a similar view, Kotze (1999:31) sees outcomes as the end products of a learning process. An outcome is not a score or grade, but an end product of a clearly defined process that the learner carries out. Musker (1997:10) defines an outcome as the demonstration in context of learning experience, and capabilities that derive from and underpin that learning experience.

The official definition of the term “outcomes”, according to Government Gazette (1998), (Gazette No. 19640, Notice No1718), implies the end products of a learning process. In outcomes-based education, learners work towards agreed, desired outcomes within a particular context. These state clearly what the learner should be able to demonstrate. Outcomes are of two types: critical and specific.

Government Gazette (2002a:23) and Gazette No. 23406, note that:

*[A] Learning outcome is derived from the critical and developmental outcomes. It is a description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band. A set of learning outcomes should ensure integration and progression in the development of concepts, skills and values through the assessment standards. Learning outcomes do not prescribe content or method.*

### 6.2.3 Basic principles of OBE

Understanding the current emphasis on OBE is fundamental to understanding ideological and philosophical assumptions governing OBE. With this understanding, it will be possible to explore a move from instructionist to constructivist approach in terms of classroom management. According to Killen (1997:26; 2000:vii), the concepts that underpin OBE are not new; many of them are in and out of favour with teachers for the past half-century. OBE proponents consider it as a reform strategy and curriculum model. Malan (2000:26) maintains that OBE offers a dialogue between the learner and the curriculum where the learner interacts with sources of knowledge, reconstructs knowledge, and takes the responsibility for his/her own learning. Thus, the teacher becomes the facilitator instead of acting as the source of information, transferring content to learners.

A large volume of literature (Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72; Spady and Marshall, 1991:67; Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997:7; Gultig *et al.*, 1999:26; Killen, 1997:26; Killen, 2001:2; Naicher, 1999a:47; Malan, 2001:51; <http://www.futurekids.co.za/obe.htm>) suggests that OBE is founded on the following three basic premises:

- All learners can learn and succeed (but not on the same day and in the same way),
- Success breeds success, and
- Schools control conditions of success.

From these basic assumptions/premises, considerable literature (Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72-73; Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:123-124; Malan, 2000:24; Malan, 2001:63-65; Spady, 1994b: 96; Killen, 2001:3; Kudlas, 1994:33; Brandt, 1993:66; Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997:21-22; <http://www.futurekids.co.za/obe.htm>) suggests that the following four essential principles of OBE were developed:

**Clarity of focus** – means that teachers need to establish a clear picture to the learning they want learners to absorb; and learners' success becomes a priority for planning, teaching and assessment;

**Designing back** – requires defining what the system wants all learners to be able to do by the end of the learning experience; and the building blocks for the culminating outcomes essential to the learners’ performance success;

**High expectations** – need time to be used as a flexible resource, not a predefined absolute, in order to cater for learners’ differing learning rates and aptitudes. It aims at getting rid of the bell-shaped curve; and

**Expanded opportunities** – implies that outcomes should present a high level of challenge, for learners, which all should be expected to accomplish eventually and be given credit for their performance at the stage it occurs.

Other points that could be added to the above are philosophical principles suggested by Killen (1997:26; 2001:3) and these are as follows:

- All learners have talent and it is the job of the schools to develop it;
- The role of schools is to find ways for learners to succeed, rather than finding ways for learners to fail;
- Mutual trust drives all good outcomes-based schools;
- Excellence is for every child and not just a few;
- By preparing learners every day for success the next day, the need for correctives will be reduced;
- Learners should collaborate in learning rather than compete;
- As far as possible, no child should be excluded from any activity in a school; and
- A positive attitude is essential.

In South African instance, the general principles of OBE as outlined by Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1999:54) include the following:

- Education is a lifelong process;
- Qualifications reflect competence, not time taken to complete one’s studies;
- OBE is a flexible approach, emphasising integration and transfer of skills and knowledge; and
- Competence is a combination of thinking, doing and attitude, and outcomes can be separated into critical cross-field and specific outcomes.

In the light of the above exposition, OBE, among others, calls for an instructional methodology that will encourage collaboration (cooperation) and integrate outcomes; encourage construction of knowledge through social interaction (social constructivism) and ways for learners to succeed, rather than finding ways for learners to fail.

Having explored the basic principles of OBE, the following section will focus on the models of OBE in practice.

#### **6.2.4 Why so many OBE models?**

According to McNeir (1994:30), there is no single authoritative model of OBE. Malcolm (1999:79) claims that OBE has many meanings and models which vary significantly across the borders, in countries such as Scotland, Australia, Holland, South Africa, USA, etc. Variations in OBE models arise from different choices of outcomes and different management systems to achieve them.

OBE is a complex and a multi-faceted approach to educational provision with wide variation in its implementation (Pretorius, 1998:99). The models vary, depending on the contexts in which they are implemented. According to Malcolm (1999:105), the decisions countries make to develop or reject the basic ideas of OBE, and what models to consider are largely hinged on politics, cultural norms, interest groups, history, the committees and individuals who provide education leadership.

Education in many countries is changing to curricular that emphasises broad competencies and management system that promotes devolution to schools and accountability of schools (Malcolm, 1999:80). Prior to changes, government defined syllabuses and resources (input models) were used. However, a small number opted for outcomes models (specifying what learners should know and be able to do). Among these outcomes approaches, there are significant variations, but whether they are called “*National Curriculum*” (UK and New Zealand), “*OBE*” (USA, Canada, South Africa), or “*National Standards*” (USA), they share some common features and motivation (ibid).

The types of outcomes formulated influence OBE systems according to whether the approach is traditional, transitional or transformational. The approaches to OBE are hierarchically classified according to the kind of performance in the culminating outcomes – in the sense that transformational OBE inevitably subsumes competencies and knowledge, whilst traditional OBE might not (and traditionally does not) address role performances (Malcolm, 1999:86).

The South African version of OBE is aimed at stimulating the minds of young people so that they are able to participate fully in economic and social life. It is intended to ensure that all learners are able to develop and achieve to their maximum ability and are equipped for lifelong learning. (Government Gazette, 2002:21).

### **6.2.5 Models of OBE in practice**

Over the last four decades, three broad models of OBE have become dominant, though it should be recognized that there are variations of these models – traditional, transitional and transformational models. These three broad models are representative of most of the models currently in use, and also represent the broad paradigmatic tensions in the outcomes-based education debate. As Malcolm (1999:79) indicates, the variations in the models of OBE arise from different choices of outcomes and different management systems to achieve them. In addition, teams who are more broadly representative of the community design these outcomes. What the learners are to learn is determined by macro and micro business, government, environmentalists and parents.

#### **6.2.5.1 Traditional OBE**

Traditional OBE is similar to the old “objectives” approach to education. The emphasis is on knowledge and skills in traditional subjects (Malcolm, 1999:85; Innerst, 1994:13; Brady, 1996:5; Fakier & Waghid, 2004:57). As Fakier and Waghid (2004:57) observe, the focus here is on the mastery of content which puts emphasis on understanding. Essential to this model is the focus on clearly defined “outcomes” but these are narrow

(rather than holistic) and are often not linked to the learner's ability to use this learning in work or life (DoE, 1997c:17). The outcomes are drawn direct from the content of an existing syllabus and enable learners to master small sections of content or discrete skills, and do not give a clear picture of the long-term outcomes. The challenge of this approach is that the culminating demonstration is frequently limited to small segments of instruction which makes each an end in itself while the curriculum content remains unchanged (Pretorius as cited by Fakier & Waghid, 2004:57).

The Traditional OBE does not provide teachers and learners with an understanding of why learning is important. It focuses on recalling content, and does not integrate skills, knowledge and values. According to Evans and King (1994), Traditional OBE typically has exit outcomes reflective of an academically competent graduate (e.g. learners will demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours essential to communicate with words, numbers, visuals, symbols, and sounds). In addition, Furman (1994) asserts that Traditional OBE may produce "major increases" in learner achievement, but "outcomes are synonymous with traditional content-dominated categories that do not relate to real-life demands and living experience".

#### **6.2.5.2 Transitional OBE**

Its roots, according to Fakier and Waghid (2004:57), can be traced back to the early 1980s. It moves away from existing curricula and identifies outcomes which reflect higher order competences that cut across traditional subjects (ibid:57). According to Innerst (1994:13), transitional OBE de-emphasises subject-matter tests and factual recall as indicators of learner success. At the heart of this model is the emphasis on broad competencies such as problem solving and using technology (Malcolm, 1999:85). Pretorius (as quoted by Fakier & Waghid, 2004:57) asserts that the result is outcomes which do the following:

*[Emphasize] broad attitudinal, affective, motivational and relational qualities or orientations as well as critical thinking, effective communication, technological applications, and complex problem solving (my addition).*



In transitional OBE, the exit outcomes based upon “higher-order competencies” replace subject-content mastery as the definition of achievement (Innerst, 1994:13). Spady and Marshall (1991:69) contend that the Transitional OBE lies in the Twilight Zone between the traditional subject-matter curriculum structures and planning processes and the future-role priorities inherent in the Transformational OBE. Further, it focuses on the qualities learners will need to operate competently in society, and begins to look at critical outcomes. The DoE (1997d:18), claims that Transitional OBE emphasises the knowledge, skills and attitudes the society has agreed on for all its citizens and not the existing curriculum. The subject content becomes the vehicle for cultivating such skills as critical thinking, problem solving and effective communication (Innerst, 1994:13).

After identifying the critical outcomes, the teacher uses the existing syllabus to help the learners to achieve competencies. The teacher designs activities that assist learners to achieve the outcomes. Transitional OBE begins with critical outcomes and the syllabus, always asks whether the outcomes have any value in the society, focuses mainly on knowing, doing and feeling required in the learning environment. The Transitional OBE reflects outcomes that focus on higher level processes; e.g. learners will demonstrate their ability to solve a problem (Evans & King, 1994; Furman, 1994). The traditional curriculum is not discarded, but is adapted to serve the goal of achieving the higher level outcomes. In the long term, transitional OBE produces curricular changes as curriculum development efforts are guided by the defined outcomes.

### **6.2.5.3 Transformational OBE**

Spady (as quoted Fakier & Waghid, 2004:57) refers to this form of OBE as the highest form because it demands a radical change to existing structures and operations in schools. Unlike the transitional and traditional approaches, transformational OBE does not acknowledge subjects but focuses rather on role performances in order to meet the demands of society (ibid:57). In Spady and Marshall’s (1991:68) view, it is a collaborative, flexible, trans-disciplinary, Outcomes-based, open-system, empowerment-

orientated approach to schooling. Its main aim is to equip all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientation needed for success after they leave school.

Advocates of Transformational OBE assert that they are people whose thinking is future oriented and visionary (Spady and Marshall, 1991:68). In addition, they are optimistic and oriented to growth and success; embrace, rather than fear, change in education; and are “paradigm pioneers”. Spady (quoted by Malcolm, 1999:86) considers this approach as a high form of OBE because it requires the greatest change to the existing structures and operations in schools and to the learning required for the graduation.

Central to Transformational OBE is the emphasis on “role performances”, for example, authentic life contexts, settings and experiences (Malcolm, 1999:85; Spady, 1994b:94). It has its roots in the future-scanning procedures found in well-designed strategic planning and design models (Spady & Marshall, 1991:69). In addition, it prepares learners for life and work in a rapidly changing society, and produces learners who can contribute to the vision of a transformed society. The critical outcomes list packages of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will make learners function as critical citizens (DoE, 1997c:19). Local districts choose any content and use a wide variety of teaching methods, as long as they develop learners who display the agreed-upon critical outcomes.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:20), transformational OBE is future-oriented, and hopes to create learners who will be able to do as follows:

- involved citizens who will contribute towards improving their own welfare and that of others and the quality of life in their own societies and global environments,
- self-directed achievers who will live and work independently and with responsibility towards achieving goals based on positive values, and
- problem solvers who will be able to anticipate, identify and solve problems using critical skills.

Exit outcomes for transformational OBE describe collective visions of future-oriented graduates, e.g. Quality Producers, who create intellectual, artistic, practical and physical products which reflect originality, high standards, and the use of advanced technologies (Evans & King, 1994). Thus, in the rhetoric of the movement, excellence connects to the types of outcomes that teachers enable their learners to achieve.

Transformational OBE, according to Furman (1994), represents the highest evolution of the OBE concept. In this model, exit outcomes serve as the bottom line for teaching and assessment in every area of study. Defining exit outcomes that are future-driven and designed to equip all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success after they leave school, is the first step in transformational OBE. These exit outcomes then drive the design of the educational programme, including the curriculum, instructional methods, performance indicators and assessment strategies (Furman, 1994).

In the light of the above ideas, it can be deduced that Transformational OBE is context driven, placing high importance on, not only, *why* the learner is learning for the future, but also *where* learning actually occurs. Based on the latter view, learners perform in real-life context. For this reason, research (Malan, 2001:44) suggests the purpose of Transformational OBE as a means to provide labour market with the kind of employees who are globally competitive.

In the following paragraphs, philosophical background of OBE will be explored.

#### **6.2.6 PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF OBE**

The concept of outcomes models and systems are not new. OBE does not have any single historical legacy (Jansen, 1999a:146). However, there is a large body of research suggesting diverse opinions on the origin of OBE. According to Malan (2000:23), outcomes models and systems date back at least to the craft guilds of the Middle Ages. Research (Ramolefe, 2004:17) concurs by claiming that the world is filled with examples of outcomes-based models, and that outcomes-based system goes back to at least 500

years to the craft guilds of the Middle Ages. A significant majority of scholars (Spady, 1994b:81; Spady, 1994b:82; Malan, 2001:41; Towers, 1992:90; Waghid, 2001:127; Killen, 1997:26; Fox, 1996; King & Evans, 1991:73; Brady, 1996:4; Naicher, 1999a:47; Brady, 1996:4) claim that OBE emerged in the late 60s and early 70s in the writings of Bloom and Block. Others (Malcolm, 2001:209; Olivier, 1999:20) perceive OBE as a management strategy from the 1950's notions of "*management by objectives*" and more recent concepts of "*total quality management*".

Considerable literature (Jansen, 1999a:146; Spady, 1994b:82; Fox, 1996; Manno, 1994:4; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:9; Jacobs, 2000:120; Fakier & Waghid, 2004:55; Killen, 2000:vii) suggests that OBE originates from the theories of Benjamin Bloom, James Block, BF Skinner, John Dewey, and Ralph Tyler. In most cases, Benjamin Bloom is stated as the first followed by others. Benjamin Bloom viewed "*good teaching is the teacher's ability to challenge the learner's fixed beliefs*" (Fox, 1996).

King and Evans (in Capper & Jamison, 1993:427) trace the roots of OBE back to that part of the USA education system which has developed over a period of thirty years (1970s – 1990s) and which includes the work of Tyler and Bloom. On the other hand, some authors (Hold, Marzano, Robinett, Garret, Bigton as referenced by Naicher, 1999a:46; Manno, 1994:4; Gultig *et al.*, 1999:23) claim that OBE originates from Spady's ideas and consider him as its architect/founder. For an example, Manno (1994:8) asserts that Spady began to work on the OBE approach in the late 1960s after the release of the Coleman Report. In a different perspective, some authors (Malan, 2000:23; Geysler, 2000:24; Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997:9) maintain that the basic OBE philosophy for curriculum design is firmly rooted in both Tyler's and Wheeler's models.

According to Manno (1994:4), OBE is deep rooted in the philosophy of progressivism, mainly in the thoughts of John Dewey that schools should develop a new social order. Dewey's ideas on education were always practice- and activity-orientated and viewed that education must be thoroughly adjusted to fit the changing demands placed upon the

society. Ozmon and Craver (1999:156) state that many observers equate pragmatism with progressivism and progressivism with John Dewey.

In a philosophical perspective, OBE is grounded in two systematic approaches to instruction, namely Competency-Based Education and Mastery Learning, Criterion Referenced Assessment and Educational Objectives (Towers, 1992:90; Towers, 1994:625; Malan, 2000:22-24; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:9; Killen, 1997:26; King and Evans, 1991:73; Brady, 1996:4; Ramolefe, 2004:17).

Competency-Based Education is a general term applied to instructional and assessment efforts aimed at defining and evaluating learner performance. Mastery Learning is a form of individualized instruction in which learners are allowed the time to master each unit of the curriculum; involves organising instruction, providing learners with regular feedback on their learning progress, (Towers, 1994:1992; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:11). Also, Mastery Learning provides extra challenges for learners who have mastered the material and gives guidance and direction to help learners correct their individual learning difficulties.

In Guskey *et al.*'s (as quoted by Malan, 2000:23) view, Mastery Learning was initially introduced to provide intervention programmes for learners with mild disabilities and those who were at risk in traditional settings. In addition, the applicability and the value of Mastery Learning provide learners at all levels with similar individualized assistance. For Guskey and Towers (in Ramolefe, 2004:13):

*[Mastery] learning is an instructional process; it involves organising instruction, providing learners with regular feedback on their learning process, giving guidance and direction to help learners correct individual learning difficulties, and providing extra challenges for learners who have mastered the material. [my insertion]*

The mastery process operates on the proposition that almost every learner can learn the basic skills and knowledge that is the core of the school curriculum, when the instruction

is of good quality and appropriate for him (her) and when he (she) spends adequate time in learning (Fakier & Waghid, 2004:55). The assumption here is that ability (intelligence) does not set a cap on the amount that a learner can learn, but rather on the time needed to master the material (Capper & Jamison as quoted by Fakier & Waghid, 2004:55).

Mastery Learning is an integral part of OBE. Hence, understanding the principles of Mastery Learning is fundamental to understanding OBE. Criterion Referenced Assessment and Educational Objectives deal with testing in which learners' scores or results are compared to a set standard or performance. In essence, criterion referenced assessment measures the mastery of very specific objectives (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:12). Educational Objectives include the taxonomies such as Bloom's that provide teachers with frameworks according to which objectives could be used for instructional use and especially for assessment (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:12). The inference drawn from the views presented above is that Competency-Based Education, Mastery Learning, Criterion Referenced Assessment and Educational Objectives constitute the theoretical foundation of OBE. Central in the OBE idea is the integration of the four approaches.

Not all OBE models are created equal. Every education model/system has a theoretical basis. Quite often, many education models are underpinned by more than one philosophy. In the case of the South African OBE, literature (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:203-205; Claassen, 1998a:34; Arjun, 1998:23; Meyer, 2001:6; Geyser, 2000:32-35; Malcolm, 1999:87-106; Monteith & Weldon, 1999:66) suggests that the model is based on four philosophical assumptions, namely, behaviourism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism.

Some scholars (Malcolm, 1999:90-95; Morrow, 1999:40) claim that OBE models in the USA developed from mastery learning, behaviourism, logical positivism and content-based curriculum. In the case of Australia, the models support theories of post-modernism, constructivism and organic approaches in the classroom, but also allow behaviourist, teacher-centred approaches (Malcolm, 1999:98; Morrow, 1999:40). In the

light of these, OBE functions completely different from one model to the other, making comparison between and among countries difficult.

With reference to South Africa, Malcolm (1999:102) contends that the General Framework of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) is similar to the Ontario one – having similarities in eight learning areas and critical outcomes (communicating, problem-solving, critical thinking, environmental and social responsibility, etc.). In learning area frameworks, only levels are defined, namely, Foundation Phase (grades R-3), Intermediate Phase (grades 4-6) and Senior Phase (grades 7-9).

In the following paragraph, the focus will be on the origin and general characteristic features of philosophies underpinning OBE

### **6.3 ORIGIN AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF PHILOSOPHIES UNDERPINNING OBE**

A considerable literature (Moll, 2001:6; Messerschmidt, 2003: 107; Mackrory, 2000: 13; Malcolm, 1999: 103; Arjun, 1998: 25) suggests that, from a philosophical perspective, OBE learning assumes constructivism. Contrary to this claim, it was earlier indicated that literature (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:203-205; Claassen, 1998a:34; Arjun, 1998:23; Meyer, 2001:6; Geyser, 2000:32-35; Malcolm, 1999:87-106; Monteith & Weldon, 1999:66) suggests that the South African version of OBE is a hybrid, based on four philosophical assumptions, namely, behaviourism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism. This ingrained tension of views cannot easily be reconciled or swept over. In the following paragraphs, the characteristic features of: pragmatism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and behaviourism will be explored and analysed using Table 2.3 (Matrix of Paradigmatic Value Systems).

### 6.3.1 Pragmatism

The concept “pragmatism” is derived from the Greek noun “*pragma*” meaning “works or deeds” (Steyn *et al.*, 1986:101; Landman *et al.*, 1990:74; De Vries, 1986:135). Pragmatism, is also referred to as experimentalism, is based on change, process and relativity (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:35; Akinpelu, 1995:143). As Ornstein and Levin (1999:98) put it, it is a philosophy that (1) judges the validity of ideas by their consequences in action; and (2) encourages us to seek out the processes and do the things that work best to help us achieve desirable ends. On the other hand, Audi (1996:638) sees it as philosophy that stresses the relation of theory to praxis and takes the continuity of experience and nature as revealed through the outcome of directed action as the starting point.

Pragmatism, according to Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:205), came into being as a reaction against ideals and idealism, which cannot be implemented practically. Its roots can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosopher, such as Protagoras of Abdera (485-415BC), who rejected the existence of the absolute truth. Protagoras held that true ideas must be verifiable in practice (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1989:116; De Vries, 1986:135). This school of thought searches for a philosophy which bestows dignity and grandeur upon the struggle of human life (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1989:116).

Pragmatism is underpinned by a number of viewpoints. Dewey and the pragmatists believed that education is a necessity of life. For Dewey, education’s sole purpose is to contribute to the social growth of individuals (Ornstein & Levine, 1999:138; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:83; De Vries, 1986:139); and it renews people so that they can face the problems encountered through their interaction with the environment (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:150). Dewey considered schools as neutral institutions that could serve the ends of either freedom or repression and authority (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:83).

At the heart of pragmatism is the assumption that, through experience, one continuously creates reality. The pragmatic view of reality is that one’s reality is what one experiences



– nothing exists beyond his experience (Steyn *et al.*, 1986:101). For the pragmatists, eternal, absolute and perfect reality does not exist (Steyn *et al.*, 1986:101; Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1989:116; Landman *et al.*, 1990:74; Ornstein & Levin, 1999:398; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:35; De Vries, 1986:136; Akinpelu, 1995: 146; Geysler, 2000:34).

A number of views about pragmatic knowledge and truth exist. Central to this school of thought, is the notion that knowledge and truth are in the constant process of change – they are not fixed constructs (Steyn *et al.*, 1986:101; Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1989:116; Landman *et al.*, 1990:74; Ornstein & Levin, 1999:399; Akinpelu, 1995: 146; Kelly, 1989:33). The pragmatic view of knowledge and truth assumes that knowledge is dependent upon its usefulness and serviceableness. According to Steyn *et al.* (1986:101), access to knowledge can only be obtained by means of experimental approach, and experimental approach is the only epistemological method.

Pragmatists view human experience as the true means of discovering truth. As Engelbrecht *et al.* (1989:116) point, pragmatism sees truth as relative to every situation and, therefore, relative to everyone who accepts it. Literature (Steyn *et al.*, 1986:101; Ornstein & Levin, 1999:398; Akinpelu, 1995:146; De Vries, 1986:139) suggests that truth is man-made and consists of the workability of ideas; it does not possess any intrinsic value; and exist for man's sake.

In the light of these, pragmatism belongs to the emerging paradigm. It does not recognise permanent reality; it assumes that knowledge is tentative and subject to revision; and views knowledge and truth as evolving and a social construct. In essence, truth is neither absolute nor of divine origin; it is man-made and can be corrected by further future evidence. Thus, the truth of a thought is proved by the practice to which it leads.

### **6.3.2 Social reconstructionism**

Literature (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:179; Ornstein & Levin, 1999:403; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:56; Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204; Geysler, 2000:33) suggests that social

reconstructionism is rooted in pragmatism and it is aimed at reconstructing the society. However, it is underpinned by a number of assumptions. According to Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:204), it operates from the assumption that the existing social structures strive to maintain the present position of power or the *status quo*.

Like other philosophies, social reconstructionism is underpinned by a number of assumptions. Among other things, social reconstructionism operates from the assumption that no universal, objective, final truths or values exist (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204; Geysers, 2000:33). In this school of thought, knowledge and values are not regarded as being universal and final; and, it believes in moral relativism. Moral relativism is a constructivist view that allows for plurality of moral facts and truths (Audi, 1996:243).

In Ornstein and Hunkins' (1998:50) view, the reconstructionist philosophy is based on early socialistic and utopian ideas of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This philosophy, according to Ozmon and Craver (1999:176), contains two major premises: (1) society is in need of constant reconstruction or change; and (2) such social change involves both a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing the society. Further, reconstructionist philosophy on the whole is strongly inclined towards utopian thinking. Reconstructionists have a penchant for utopian thinking which manifests itself in the desire for an ideal world, free of anger, strife and inhumanity (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:179:184).

Social reconstructionism argues that human kind has reached a serious cultural crisis of global dimensions; and holds that if schools continue to reflect traditional concepts and values, they will transmit social ills – exploitation, war, violence – that are symptoms of our cultural crisis (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:407; Geysers, 2000:33). Ozmon and Craver (1999:178) posit that social reconstructionists advocated that education should reconstruct the society by integrating new technological and scientific developments with those parts of the culture that remain viable.

For the reconstructionists, education's overriding goal is to create a world order in which people control their own destiny by applying their practical intelligence (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:407; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998:51). Furthermore, in identifying social problems, this school of thought advocates that teachers should lead their learners on a searching examination of culture and society, both domestically and globally. For our own survival, Ornstein and Levin (1999:408) assert that the social reconstructionists believe that we must become social engineers, plotting our future and then using our scientific and technological expertise to reach the defined goals.

In education, the idea of learning as a process is widely accepted; learners do not passively receive information, but instead actively construct knowledge as they strive to make sense of their worlds (Geysler, 2000:33; Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204). The learning theories of social constructivists emphasise the aspects, such as, the supporting role of the teacher as facilitator in the learning process, cooperative learning, and the importance of learning in an authentic or real-life context (Hamilton & Ghatala and Good & Brophy as quoted by Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204). The official document on OBE (DOE, 1997a) acknowledges that teachers are perceived as facilitators and not as authoritarian sources of knowledge. Furthermore, it states that learners should be empowered to become involved in the construction of their own meaning and knowledge.

Reconstructionism has implications for the classroom teacher. Since reconstructionists see schools as agencies that will create a new social order (Geysler, 2000:33), they do not define education in exclusively academic terms (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:410). Instead, reconstructionist teachers encourage learners to diagnose the major problems confronting human beings on the planet Earth: pollution, environment, warfare, famine, terrorism, violence and the spread of epidemic diseases such as AIDS (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:410). Also, the role of teachers, according to Ornstein and Levin (1999:410), is to encourage learners to share their cultural heritage and to build knowledge base incorporating the contributions of many diverse ethnic, racial and language groups. Through this process, reconstructionist teachers stress the use of democratic procedures (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:410).

Against the above background, social reconstructionism fits through the lens of the emerging paradigm. At the heart of this philosophy is the assumption that no universal, objective, final truths or values exist. It sees knowledge as a social construct and emphasises the aspects, such as, the supporting role of the teacher as facilitator in the learning process, cooperative learning and the importance of learning in an authentic or real-life context.

### **6.3.3 Critical theory**

Critical theory is often linked to neo-Marxism and postmodernism as it is aimed at raising consciousness about critical issues (Neuman, 1997:73; Ozmon & Craver, 1999:327; Ornstein & Levin, 1999:403; Gibson, 1986:7; Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204). Geysler (2000:34) posit that the key focus areas in the philosophy critical theory are the change and emancipation of societies and individuals from being regulated and indoctrinated towards being and questioning.

According to Carr (2000:208), the concept “critical theory” has a two fold meaning. It is used to refer to a “school of thought”. The “school of thought” with which critical theory is associated, is commonly referred to as “the Frankfurt School”. The concept “critical theory” was probably first applied to the work of Frankfurt school (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:327; Gibson, 1986:21; Huckle, 1993; Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204). The second meaning of the concept “critical theory” – which also simultaneously includes, as perhaps the major instance, the work of those associated with the Frankfurt School – is one which resonates with a particular process of critique, the origins of which owe multiple allegiances (Carr, 2000:209). At one and the same time it also refers to self-conscious critique that is aimed at change and emancipation through enlightenment and does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions (Geuss, 1981; Giroux, 1983).

Critical theory has a number of assumptions. Among others, as Ornstein and Levin, 1999:417) point, critical theory sees the school as a place where different groups are in conflict over the curriculum. For example, civil rights, environmentalists, feminists,

counterculture, basic education, etc. Critical theorists argue that many structures in contemporary society, including educational institutions, are used by powerful groups to control those who lack power (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:417). Furthermore, the power holders seek to impose their knowledge, beliefs and values on those who lack economic and political power; and the power holders in the corporate capitalist sector dominate political process and the media. On the basis of their critique, critical theorists advocate a reform agenda to empower those who lack control over their own lives and destinies (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:147; Gibson, 1986:5).

Critical theory involves both critique and reform. As a critique, it examines the issues of control of educational institutions and control (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:417). At the heart of critical theory, lie four fundamental questions: (1) *Who makes policies that govern the school?* (2) *Who controls the school?* (3) *Who determines the ethical, social and economic goals of education?* and (4) *Who sets the curriculum?* Once this question is answered, according to Ornstein and Levin (1999:417), critical theorists turn to the motivations behind this control.

Critical theorists argue that the conventional curriculum has been dominated by Eurocentric, white male perspective that is contaminated by racism, sexism and imperialism (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:418). Rejecting perennialist argument that the curriculum must feature the classics of Western civilisation, critical theorists see these classics as period pieces that legitimise the cultural dominance of one group over another (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:418). For them, the curriculum needs to be deconstructed or taken apart, and then reconceptualised to include different cultural experiences and perspectives, especially those neglected in the past by the dominant power structures (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:418).

Ornstein and Levin (1999:418) assert that critical theorists believe that all children and adolescents must attend school, but they want schools to become liberating rather than indoctrinating agencies. They (critical theorists) contend that schools have been and continue to be controlled by dominant groups that impose their version of knowledge as

means of social control; and propose that schools be transformed into “democratic spheres” where young people become conscious of the need to create a more equitable society for all people (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:419; Gibson, 1986:5).

For critical theorists, teachers, like learners, need to be empowered so that they can use methods that open students to social alternatives rather than mirroring the *status quo* (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:418; Gibson, 1986:5). They attack mechanisms such as standardised testing teacher competency assessment, and top-down administration-controlled schools as disempowering teachers. Like other philosophies, critical theory has implications for today’s classroom teacher. Among others, Ornstein and Levin (1999:420) assert that critical theorists want teachers to examine ideologies that connect education to wider social and political issues. In emphasising cultural diversity, critical theorists would lead learners on knowledge explorations that begin with their own unique multicultural experiences (Ornstein & Levin, 1999:420).

Critical theory has distinctive features about truth and knowledge. According to Carr (2000:214), the founding members of the Frankfurt School embraced the Hegelian foundation of dialectics, they did, however, reject his claims to absolute truth, preferring a historical contextual interpretation. Truth was a mediated truth, and part of that mediation was the historical period (Carr, 2000:214). Part of that “truth” also came from the ideologies that were distributed through a “culture industry” and yet another part was to be found in the material reality of those needs, desires and wants that bear the inscription of history. That is, history is to be found as “second nature” in those concepts and views of the world that make the most dominating aspects of the social order appear to be immune from historical socio-political development (Giroux, 1983: 32).

The focus of critical theory, according to Carr (200:211), is simply not to mirror “reality” as it is, which is what traditional theory seeks to do, but to change it – the goal of critical theory is “the emancipation of human beings from the circumstances that enslave them”. It is noted that critical theory aims to produce a particular form of knowledge that seeks to realize an emancipatory interest, specifically through a critique of consciousness and

ideology. It separates itself from both functionalist/objective and interpretive/ practical sciences through a critical epistemology that rejects the self-evident nature of reality and acknowledges the various ways in which reality is distorted (Carr, 2000:209).

Critical theory has dialectic and historical aspects. For the Frankfurt School, as Carr (2000:214) observes, critical theory and dialectic optic was needed to unmask forms of psychological and social domination and simultaneously engender liberation. Further, for the Frankfurt School, to embrace the critical theory's attention to the issue of dialectics is to embrace a perspective that draws attention to the social totality and our mediated existence (Carr, 2005:214). This school of thought holds that no aspect of our life world can be understood in isolation - life world has both a synchronic and diachronic features. The synchronic aspect, according to Carr (2005:214), is that we are drawn to consider the interrelationship of components of a society within a totality. In addition, the diachronic aspect is that we are drawn to consider a historical dimension of society. Geuss (1981:22), in similar vein, notes that one of the senses in which the critical theory is said by its proponents to be dialectical (and hence superior to its rivals) is just in that it explicitly connects questions about the "inherent" truth or falsity of a form of consciousness with questions about history, origin and function in society.

In the background of the above, critical theory seems to be an approach that offers guides to human action that aim to produce enlightenment and are inherently emancipatory; and offers a form of knowledge that is multidimensional, avoiding the reduction of knowledge to linear, quantitative-empirical perspectives. Also, it rejects claims to absolute truth and functionalist/objective knowledge. In essence, it sees knowledge as a historical, dialectical and a social product. Therefore, it is compatible to the emerging paradigm.

#### **6.3.4 Behaviourism**

Literature (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:203; Geyser, 2000:32) suggests that the philosophy of behaviourism has a strong psychological bias, focusing on external human behaviour,

which can be observed. As Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203) put it, it is a philosophy which deliberately breaks away from the previous interpretations which explain human behaviour as driven by deep-seated internal motives such as power, fear, anger, sex, love, etc.

The principles of behaviourism and the techniques for behavioural engineering go back to at least Pavlov and Watson, but Skinner pioneered their implementation in many fields of contemporary life (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:222; Bargh & Ferguson, 2000:926; Barnes-Holmes, 2003:146). Ozmon and Craver (1999:222) posit that Skinner saw behaviourism extending to politics, economics and other social organisations; and he strongly championed it as an educational method that is more practical than any other. The primary aims of behaviourist techniques is to change behaviour and point it in more desirable directions (ibid:224).

Behaviourism is constituted by a number of assumptions. For the behaviourist, among other things, human behaviour is overt, observable and measurable (Brennan, 1991:327; Geysler, 2000:32; Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:203). In addition to this, is a belief that measurable and observable behaviour is informed by the stimuli from the environment. As Ozmon and Craver (1999:223) notes, behaviourists view the learner to be an organism who is already highly programmed before coming to school. This programming is accomplished by, among others, influences, parents, peers, siblings and television. For Skinner, one reason why people have trouble making decisions is that the programmings they have received on morality have been contradictory – parent often say one thing and do another (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:223). Against this background, Skinner wanted to replace erratic and haphazard conditioning that most people receive with something systematic and meaningful (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:223).

Skinner drew distinction between education and conditioning. He did not believe that the mind is free to begin with. Whatever kinds of critical judgements or acceptance of ideas learners make, are already predicated on ideas with which they have been previously conditioned (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:223). Although many behaviourists use positive and



negative methods of reinforcing behaviour, Skinner advocated positive reinforcement (Ozmon & Craver, 1999:224; Barnes-Holmes, 2003:149).

Behaviourism finds its paradigmatic home in the mechanistic worldview. It sees human behaviour as overt, observable and measurable construct; and assumes the existence of absolute truth and objective knowledge. Embedded in it, among others, is a linear cause-effect and unidirectional interaction, explained by deductive reasoning. Thus, behaviourism fits through the lens of the scientific paradigm.

In the light of the preceding paragraphs on pragmatism, social reconstruction and critical theory, there appears to be apparent contradiction in the underlying principles rendering the claim that OBE include these elements unbearable. In essence each of these approaches, requires the need to change the classroom management practices – it is only in the case of behaviourism that such a change would not be required.

#### **6.4 CRITICS OF OBE**

Central to understanding issues relating to the implementation of OBE in the South African context, it essential to give an overview relating to critics. This study acknowledges that every new idea or approach is not necessarily another paradigm and every change in mind-set is not a “paradigm shift”. Though South African outcomes-based curriculum (C2005, RNCS, and NCS) is a hybrid from various philosophical groundings, but whether or not this represent a major “paradigm shift”, this study maintains that a hybrid cannot constitute a paradigm shift and that the claims that it is, is false – or a clear indication of political symbolism.

OBE has received a fair deal of criticism since its introduction to schools in countries such as the United States of America and Australia during the eighties (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:16). In the South African context, its critics range across racial and ideological spectrum. According to Jansen (1999c:11), the criticism OBE covered much wider issues than those encountered in the United States of America. These include:

ideological and philosophical assumptions governing OBE; implementation contexts of OBE and the need to establish adequate resourcing strategies if OBE is to work; and the equity consequences of OBE with the likelihood of it succeeding in white privileged schools and further disempowering those working in black, marginalised schools.

The OBE approach is considered by some to be a drastic change from the traditional perspective to learning, while others see it as a superficial system which is not much different from the traditional education and training (Meyer, 2001:1). Geysers (2000:23) states that critics object to the idea that OBE is a radical “paradigm shift”; and others see little or no change and insist that “this is how we have been teaching all along”. The central idea of the argument is that OBE does not have the depth and magnitude to constitute a “paradigm shift”.

In the South African context, some of the criticisms listed include the following:

- Arjun (1998:25) sees no major “paradigm shift” associated with the new curriculum – curriculum planners are still opting for Tyler’s “means-end” paradigm;
- Malan’s (2000:24) concern is: “Does replacing the previous system with an OBE approach represents a *paradigm shift*? Are OBE and its philosophy and practice so different that being promoted as educational paradigm being warranted?”;
- Bellis (2000:10) poses the question “Is it not rather that old practice is dressed up in new, politically correct language?”;
- Malan (2000:28) perceives OBE as an approach firmly rooted in the past educational approaches, and does not represent a “paradigm shift” as advocated by its proponents;
- Waghid (2001:128) sees no sufficient changes in education in South Africa “based on the fact that OBE is trapped in an instrumentally justifiable view of education”;
- Arjun (1998:25) claims that the curriculum actually displays technocratic characteristics that are similar to the old order, the dominant paradigm, not the logic of the new, emergent paradigm;

- Innerst (1994:10) contends that critics equate OBE with “mastery learning” in which teachers teach until every learner has learned the concept and passed the test on it; and
- OBE will fail, not because politicians and bureaucrats are misinformed about the conditions of the South African schooling, but because the policy is driven by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life (Jansen, 1999a: 147; Jansen, 1998). In addition, it will undermine the already fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms of the new South Africa (ibid.).

Contrary to these arguments, those claiming that OBE is indeed a “*paradigm shift*” argue that the essence of OBE lies in its shift away from typical school practices where performance is based primarily on varying sets of requirements in a fixed period of time (McGhan, 1994:70; Mohlakwana, 2002:1). The shift is towards learning rather than teaching; to provide experience rather than information; move from normative, paper-based examinations towards outcomes-based assessment as reflected in National Standards (Meyer, 2001:1). In detailed tables of comparison of the old and new curricula – focusing on basic principles, methodology and assessment, Geysers (2000:26-30) claims as follows:

- the shift can be seen in terms of learning, time allocation, the roles of the teacher and the learner, standards, and entire structure of education;
- the shift from content, the teacher, and what and how the learner learns; and
- the shift from norm-referenced assessment to criterion-referenced assessment, single attribute assessment to multi-dimensional assessment.

## **6.5 INSIGHTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY: THEORY AND PRACTICE**

The issues surrounding the dilemma of translating educational policies into classrooms, as Hariparsad (2004:12) notes, are not new. The problem and complexity of implementing policies were first described in the early 1970s by Jeffrey Pressman and

Aaron Wildavsky who, in their investigation on the complexities of policy implementation, found that implementers did not always do as they were told, nor did they always act to maximise the policy objectives, but “responded in what often seemed quite idiosyncratic, frustratingly unpredictable, if not downright resistant ways” (ibid:12). Thus, there is a gap between the view of policy makers and implementers.

Understanding policy implementation is essential to this study for the purposes of implementing OBE policy successfully. According to Smith (2001:ii), educational policy for educational change only becomes a reality once it is implemented at micro (classroom) level. In addition, the teachers are indeed role-key players in this implementation phase and are unfortunately, more often than not, the silent voices in this process, ignored and discounted in this stage of educational change. Despite the growing literature on educational change, relatively little has been done on the experiences of primary school teachers and policy change in the context of developing countries such as South Africa (Smith, 2001:ii).

Implementation of policy is more complex than policy development (Molale, 2004:34). Mokhaba (2005:112) concurs with Molale (2004:34) when he states that policy implementation is a much more demanding task than policy formulation – there are more impediments blocking intended actions by the government than there are to materialise results. Research (Molale, 2004:34) on South African education policies, indicates that policy practitioners (teachers) often find themselves operating in different contexts from the policy makers (bureaucrats). In most cases, teachers are under-resourced, poorly skilled and do not share the same meaning with the policy makers.

O’Connell (1999:21) notes that any policy, if it is to be of more than symbolic value, must be supported by a realistic implementation plan. Failure to do this, particularly in the case of a large scale, critical innovation like major curriculum changes, will almost certainly ensure the failure of the project (ibid:21). Bak (1999:6) states that policy is made at national level, often with very little consideration of local conditions. In addition, unless policy resonates with what teachers are doing, the policy is unlikely to achieve its

goals. Bak's (1999:4) view, in terms of policy formation and implementation is as follows:

- the best policy puts minimum resources;
- the best policy sets clear objectives about what we want to achieve and why; and
- policies must be clear, understandable and accessible.

Policy implementation does not take place in a vacuum (Molale, 2004:34). As Mokhaba (2005:129) observes, policies are implemented under specific political, social, economic and legal setting. The process under which a policy is implemented may impact positively or negatively. Hence, the contextuality of policy implementation is an important factor to be studied for policy implementation (ibid:129). Research (More, 2004:ii) states that Policy implementation became one of the most difficult challenges South Africa had to contend with. Furthermore, it necessitated the development of the capacity of the state and its people to implement policy.

Allington's (2002:12) findings on studies of policy implementation, suggest that few policies are faithfully implemented. He uses the concept of "policy collision" to describe contrary mandates produced by the policy. Another view of policy implementation, according to Mokhaba (2005:114), is based on the top-down approach (for example, cascade model) and the bottom up approach. The bottom-up approach is the reaction to the top-down approach. It studied the weaknesses and proposed the alternatives to eradicate the shortcomings (Mokhaba, 2005:114). This approach, according to Brynard and Erasmus (1995:169), holds that policy implementers, because of their location, are in a better position to propose modification of policies to suite the need of their local needs. Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. Mokhaba (2005:114) claims that these approaches to policy implementation reveal that they are not mutually exclusive – both provide useful insight into policy implementation. Therefore, the identification and utilization of the strengths of both approaches could lead to an improved policy implementation (Mokhaba, 2005:114).

The line of demarcation between policy development and implementation creates a top down conception of the policy process. As Mokoena (2005:158) states, in the policy process the teachers are seen as receivers and implementers of the policies, which is a way of thinking adopted when following a linear approach. This study holds that, declaring and generating curriculum policy is not the same thing as achieving it; and declared policies without the fundamentals of educational support leads to more confusion. Also, policies must be understandable, clear and accessible – OBE policy should make sense to the teacher. Thus, policy makers need to acknowledge that implementing what they view as best practices, do not necessarily lead to development, competence and commitment which are important in the policy implementation (Mokoena, 2005:158).

Hariparsad's (2004:10) research reviewed a considerable number studies, both from the developing and developed countries. Many of these studies claim that policy reforms designed to improve the quality of schooling are more rhetorical than substantive in their impact in classrooms and schools, thus exposing dissonance between policy intention and policy outcome at the level of practice. These findings suggest that policy is not self-executing. Also, in South Africa, a similar trend with education policies emerged. Jansen (2002:199) states that:

*[Despite] unprecedented investments in policy making and policy production ... in South Africa, there appears to be very little change in the daily routines in the classrooms of the nation. [my insertion]*

Darling-Hammond (as quoted by Molale, 2004:101) contends that policy is not so much implemented (as planned) as it is re-invented at each level of the system. Furthermore, what ultimately happens in schools and classrooms is less related to the intentions of the policy makers than to leadership and motivations that operate in local context. In the light of this contention, socio-political framework will be employed as lens through which implementation of OBE will be explored. The use of socio-political framework is hinged on several factors. Policies are not only socially oriented, they are also the products of the

political systems; and they involve a contested field of power or influence to allocate resources (Molale, 2004:101).

A significant number of explanations for the policy gaps exist in both local and international literature. In the South African case, Jansen (2001b; 2001d) attributes the construct of “political symbolism” to the failure of educational policies as a direct result of over-investment of the state in political symbolism rather than in its practical implementation. According to Sayed (2001a:189), such (symbolic) policies signal and provide images of the desired educational outcomes and focus on “frameworks” rather than specific content of educational policies.

Political patterns have unfortunate implications for both the design and the implementation of educational policies (Lucen, 2003:32). Therefore, there exists a serious problem between policy makers (bureaucrats) and policy implementers (teachers) because, in many instances, implementers are expected to implement policies which they were not party to their formulation. Hariparsad (2004:21) states that:

*[Our] own tendency as policy advisors and policy makers is to overshoot noble goals with too many simultaneously announced rapid fire policy change and forget how to implement these. [my insertion]*

From a post-modern organisational perspective, the school is seen as an organisation within the symbolic frame. Symbolic frame, according to Theron (1996:66), differs significantly from traditional organisational theories of rationality, certainty and linearity. Bolman and Deal (as cited by Theron, 1996:66) assert that it is helpful in understanding the dynamics of the educational organisations; and based on unconventional assumptions about the nature of organisations and human behaviour. Among others, symbolic frame assumes that the most important aspect of any event is *not* what happened, but “what it means”; events as meanings are loosely coupled; and are faced with uncertainties and ambiguity, human beings create “symbols” to resolve confusion, increase predictability, and provide direction. Thus, symbolic frame could be held accountable to

“implementation slippage of the educational policy in schools” – whether or not the policy is implementable does not count most, but what it means or symbolises.

Research (Laauwen, 2004:23) states that several postulations why policies do not get off the ground or are subject to “implementation slippage” exist in the literature. These postulations break away from the traditional view that policy fails simply because there are no resources. To sum up, OBE is a political symbol to demonstrate curriculum reform which was a priority in 1994.

## **6.6 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF C2005, NCS AND RNCS POLICIES**

In this analysis, C2005, NCS and RNCS Policies using a “political symbolist” lens were explored. Understanding the weaknesses of educational policy and practice is necessary to enhance the understanding of the long-term implications and effects of political symbolism. In Motala’s (2001:240) view, such understanding is important because it:

*concerns questions about the value of learning in the formation and transformation of societies. It would enable analysts to evaluate whether the stated objectives of national policy and constitution of the country itself are being achieved in practice.*

The discrepancy policy and practice seems to be a recurring theme in education policy attention in the literature (Molale, 2004:1). In addition, too often policy-makers and politicians are focused on the desired outcomes of educational change but neglect the contextual factors that influence implementation. In South Africa, much attention has been focused on policy formulation without indicating how to translate such policies into measurable outcomes (Molale, 2004:1). Welton (2001:179) notes that at grassroots level, there is a greater familiarity with the jargon of transformation than practical understanding of what it means and how it can be implemented.

As in many developing countries, curriculum reform in South Africa has resulted in several structural and policy tensions within the system (Cross *et al.*, 2002:172). These



tensions, among others, include vision *vis-à-vis* the countries realities; symbolism *vis-à-vis* mass expectation; the curriculum framework *vis-à-vis* applicability, conditions of implementation and actual practice in schools; expected outcomes *vis-à-vis* capacity of teachers to translate them into reality; and budget concerns *vis-à-vis* commitment to values such as equity, redress and massification (Cross *et al.*, 2002:172).

Cross *et al.* (2002:172) contend that since the establishment of the new political dispensation, the South African government has placed emphasis on the introduction of policies and mechanisms aimed at redressing the legacy of a racially and ethnically fragmented, dysfunctional and unequal education system inherited from apartheid. Within this schooling system, the most significant of these was a radical departure from apartheid education through an outcomes-based curriculum (Cross *et al.*, 2002:171).

An analysis of official documents (DoE, 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1997e; 1997f; 2000c; 2000d; 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b; 2003a; 2004) on OBE suggests that although learner-centred (constructivist) teaching is emphasised, there is currently a conspicuous absence of classroom management strategies that will address the teachers' needs in order to ensure successful implementation of a constructivist curriculum. However, DoE (2002a:19) only states that teachers should have an understanding of how people learn and of learning models such as Experimental Learning, Constructivism, Multiple Intelligences and other models.

DoE (2000c:16) focuses on classroom management. The policy seems to assume that teachers are familiar with constructivist philosophy. Given that almost all teachers have been trained and taught in, a traditional context, very few are adequately equipped for the reality of constructivist teaching and classroom management. It is, therefore, of crucial importance that teachers in the OBE environment should acquaint and equip themselves with knowledge, skills and competencies compatible with constructivist classroom management - required to facilitate optimal learning.

With reference to the planning and classroom management, there seems to be a missing link – documents give very little, if any, or no conceptually key features of classroom management in a constructivist learning. The DoE (2002a:7) only states that each teacher is responsible for drawing up his/her own plans for what will happen in his/her classroom during each period of the day. In the same vein, DoE (2003:4) highlights that teachers will prepare their own lesson plans to support teaching, learning and assessment in their particular classroom. The two statements lack that substance or feature of managing learners constructing own knowledge. This implies that most teachers still rely on traditional ways of managing classrooms.

Official documents (DoE, 2001a; DoE, 2002b) seem not to be addressing classroom management within a constructivist environment. They appear to assume a simple logic between policy and practice, i.e. policy moves logically and naturally from intention to realisation. The policy appears to have little, if any, practical guidelines on leadership roles of the teacher in a constructivist classroom. Though the policy is not prescriptive, it does not provide clear constructivist guidelines on basic classroom management.

DoE (2003a:1) contends that curriculum and teacher development theories in recent years have focused on the role of the teacher and specialists in the development and implementation of effective teaching, learning and assessment practices and materials. In the RNCS Grades R-9 (school), mention has been made that these will now be called Teacher's Guide for the Development learning programmes (ibid:1). Even though DoE (2002a:7) states that there is no single correct way of drawing up plans for the classroom as all teachers have personal preferences; what works for one person may not work for others; the documents give roles of teachers that lack essential and characteristic features of constructivist and/or contingency management approach. It leaves more discretion to the teacher. Thus, it assumes that teachers are conversant with the constructivist philosophy.

RNCS documents (DoE, 2000c; 2000d; 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b; 2003a) suggest that OBE classrooms should be inclusive. This implies a significant change in both teacher

roles and the traditional ways in which classrooms were managed. DoE (2002a:9) holds that effective management of this diversity is a critical element of teaching because this helps to make this diversity an asset and resource for learning. In addition, this according to DoE (2002a:9), necessitates teachers to plan for: diversity in learning styles; managing the pace of learning; differences in levels of achievement and development; cultural and language diversity; gender diversity.

DoE (2001a; 2002b) seems to overstress largely symbolism paying little and/or no attention to implementation issues (see chapter 4 and chapter 2 respectively), specifically at classroom level. According to the RNCS policy (DoE, 2001a:18), the envisaged teachers should be socially and politically critical and responsible, professionally competent and in touch with current developments in his/her area of expertise. In addition, they should be open to views held by learners and other peers and should subscribe to the notion of lifelong learners.

According to Malan (2001:200), Curriculum 2005 is informed by a vision of unity, justice and prosperity. From a policy context, it is largely invested on political symbolism, paying little insufficient attention to issues of implementation (Sayed, 2001a:189; Sayed, 2001b:252; Jansen, 1999a:154; Jansen, 1999d:89; Jansen, 2001:272; Jansen, 2001c:13; Jansen, 2001d:47). Malan (2001:211) asserts that the features of the South African OBE (transformational) policy are concerned with systematic transformation rather than with curriculum development. In addition, it places more emphasis on personal and social development than on cognitive development. Similarly, Jansen (1999a:147) holds that this policy is being driven by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life.

Fundamental to this study, is an assumption that OBE classroom management should move towards constructivist policy guidelines. There is need to establish guidelines that will place constructivism at the centre of the development of teaching and learning policy for South African schools. The study proposes for leadership roles that will effect the shift in terms of classroom management from instructionist to constructivist paradigm.

Many thinkers and teachers, both ancient and modern, have asserted that our thoughts create reality (Belvel & Jordan, 2002:4). This study holds that the shift from instructionalist to constructivist paradigm; and the inconsistency between the RNCS policy symbolism and philosophical principles of constructivism will be problematic, unless classroom management policies are rethought within constructivist principles.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

OBE is a hybrid from various philosophical groundings, namely behaviourism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism; and finds itself stretched in the two competing paradigms. On one hand, behaviourism seems to fit through the lens of the scientific paradigm - seeing human behaviour as an overt, observable and measurable construct; and assuming the existence of absolute truth and objective knowledge. On the other hand, social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism appear to be compatible with the emerging worldview. Central to these philosophies, among other things, is the rejection of the existence of the absolute truth and objective knowledge. Knowledge is seen as an historical, dialectical and a social product. In essence, the philosophies and the roles of the teacher in outcomes-based classroom call for a dramatic shift in classroom focus, away from the transmission model of teaching toward one that is much more complex and interactive. Therefore, a hybrid classroom management approach is apposite.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This aim of this study is to conceptually interrogate the notion of constructivist classroom management and investigate how classroom management within a constructivist mode differs from traditional classroom management within an instructionist approach. The current problem is that constructivist classroom management is required to support the implementation of OBE and, thus, should have been included in the training of classroom teachers if success with OBE implementation is to be achieved. In this study, a conceptual analysis based on the analysis done and the reflection on the data it is posited that classroom management within a constructivist setting needs to move from traditional to contingency classroom management approach has been presented.

**Chapter 1** provides the introduction and motivation, problem statement, aims of the study, research methodology employed, credibility and authenticity, clarification of key concept and plan of the thesis.

**Chapter 2** focuses on the research methodology. This study is qualitative, non-empirical and analytical in nature. It made use of literature reviews/conceptual historical analysis, conceptual analysis and hermeneutics as research strategies. A typology of non-empirical questions recommended by Babbie and Mouton (2001:77), Huysamen (1995:154-9) conceptual analysis steps, and Wilsonian concept analysis were used to examine and distinguish between the defining attributes of the concepts “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist classroom management*” and their relevant attributes. Given that Wilsonian model has limitations, conceptual cartography was employed to facilitate an in-depth conceptual analysis instructionist and constructivist classroom management. In this study, the Matrix of Paradigmatic Value Systems was used as a tool/lens to categorise “*instructionist classroom management*” and “*constructivist*

classroom management” in terms of their paradigmatic roots. Credibility and authenticity, in this study, was achieved through crystallisation instead of triangulation

**Chapter 3** is devoted to conceptualising instructionist classroom management and the historical and analytical perspectives on traditional/ instructionist classroom management. It commences with the definitions of the concepts: instructionist, classroom, management and classroom management, followed by historical and analytical perspectives on traditional classroom management. Organisational analytical perspectives on instructionist/traditional classroom management are explained.

Attention is also paid to the nature and the essence of instructionist/traditional classroom management, where the origins and characteristic features of traditional/instructionist classroom management; views on traditional (instructionist) teaching and learning; and leadership roles of the teacher in instructionist setting are explored. This chapter concludes by investigating the philosophical approaches to classroom management; classroom management theories; and models of classroom management.

**Chapter 4** deals with an analysis of studies conducted on instructionist and constructivist classroom management. On the one hand, articles were selected to analyse as case. Within these articles, studies conducted on instructionist classroom management, in both developed and developing countries ranging from 1980 to 2005, into classroom management practices were used. In this study, thirty articles were reviewed. Of these thirty articles, fifteen have been used, to illustrate the trends in terms of the methodology and their findings.

On the other hand, regarding constructivist classroom management, fifty articles, ranging from 1980 to 2005, from both local and international literature, dealing with aspects of classroom management in constructivist teaching and learning situation, were reviewed. Of these fifty articles, twenty-eight have been used to demonstrate the trends in terms of the research focus, methodology and findings.

**Chapter 5** explores the conceptual analysis of constructivist classroom management. It starts with the definition of constructivism, followed by the historical background of constructivism; philosophical background of constructivism; constructivist assumptions on knowledge and the mostly accepted models/theories of constructivism. Also in this chapter, theories compatible with the constructivist thinking; characteristic features of constructivist classroom management; organisational perspectives on contingency viewpoint; the roles of the teacher in constructivist classroom management; and constructivist ideas about teaching and learning are explored. This chapter concludes by examining the practical implications of a constructivist epistemology for teaching and the insights from constructivist classroom management.

**Chapter 6** is devoted to policy issues – theory and practice. The focus in this chapter is on the theoretical perspectives on OBE, philosophical background and models of OBE; origin and general characteristic features of philosophies underpinning OBE; insights on the implementation of Policy: theory and practice; and the critical analysis of C2005, NCS and RNCS Policies.

## **7.2 FINDINGS**

Instructionist classroom management was conceptualised from a historical and modernist organizational perspective. In a modernist framework, the nature of knowledge is universal, objective and fixed (independent of the knower) and is grounded on the theoretical tradition behaviourism. At philosophical level, traditional teaching and learning are, among others, informed and guided by objectivistic/modernistic and/or behaviourist principles and John Locke's ideas. From the literature it emerged that the teacher's role is directive and rooted in authority; and is not limited to imparting (transferring) knowledge, but passes on the values, beliefs and norms of the society. In this tradition, teaching and learning are informed and guided by the scientific paradigm.

From an organisational perspective, this study investigated the origins and characteristic features of traditional/instructionist classroom management. Literature suggests a

considerable number of distinguishing attributes. Among others, educational management, which informs and guides instructionist classroom management, is rooted in positivist, objectivistic/modernistic and/or behaviourist and *Christian*-orientated philosophy. In addition, it emerged that the nature and the structure of traditional classroom management seem to be rooted in the mechanistic/scientific worldview.

In this tradition, the school is seen as a machine and the classroom as a part of the “machine bureaucracy”; the teacher is seen as a supervisor and the learner as a worker. Also, this tradition uses external examinations as quality measuring tools, and employs ranking of learners’ performance and competition. At school level, authority is hierarchically transmitted. Also, the patriarchal and hierarchical social pattern is maintained by systems of command and control at all levels of the hierarchy. Discipline and authority, in this school of thought, are informed and guided by ontic laws

The first finding is that the characteristic features of the instructionist classroom management are compatible to the scientific paradigm.

In the analysis of the empirical studies, within the chosen texts in both instructionist and classroom management, the focus was on: *what context within which the study was undertaken; what was the purpose of the study; what was the situation investigated (including the type of classroom management practices used); and what did they find and do the findings suggest an alternative approach to classroom management.*

A considerable volume of research on instructionist classroom management exists, focusing on a variety of aspects. Emerging from the analysis, most of the studies conducted in the instructionist classroom management have a number characteristic features. Among others, these studies are quantitative in nature and are located in the positivist framework, i.e., in survey, questionnaires and field and/or laboratory experiments samples used.



Other outstanding characteristic features are that of variables (dependent and independent variables) and the hypotheses (expressing a casual relationship or cause-effect relationship between the variables; expressed as a prediction or an expected future outcome; and logically linked to the research question and falsifiable. On the other hand, in these studies, human behaviour is a quantifiable construct – it has reduced people to numbers and deals with abstract laws or formulas. In survey and experimental traditional management studies, inferential and descriptive statistics were used where results are presented in terms of numbers, graphs and charts.

In general, a significant number of studies done on traditional classroom management are mechanistic in nature. Among others, these studies are characterised by linear cause-effect and unidirectional interaction, explained by deductive reasoning; and sometimes referred to as explanatory research.

Other studies (Doyle, 1980; Richardson & Fallona, 2001; Glasser, 1993; Evertson, 1994; Sandholtz, 1990; Kameenui & Darch, 1995), though conducted in the scientific paradigm, broke away from the quantitative framework and used qualitative methodologies such as, case study, observations, action research and content analysis. The findings from these studies are indicative of a move towards the emerging paradigm as an evolutionary process rather than a discontinuous jump (mutation) to a new paradigm. For example, these studies suggest that effective classroom management requires: (1) extensive knowledge of what is likely to happen in classrooms; (2) ability to process a large amount of information rapidly; and (3) skill in carrying out effective actions over a long period of time; Leading, rather than bossing, creates classrooms in which learners, not only do competent work, but also begin to do quality work; and (3) The use the technology to enhance learner motivation, interest and learning.

<p>The second finding is that a significant number of studies conducted on instructionist classroom management seems to be compatible to the scientific paradigm.</p>
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Research on constructivist classroom management covers a variety of aspects in different cultural settings within the organisational framework. However, a number of common characteristic features exists in research conducted in constructivist classroom management. Among others, they are largely qualitative in nature and adopted dialogical research methods. The most distinguishing paradigmatic features in these studies are that they used small samples; were conducted in a natural setting; dealt with generalising theories and generalised from one setting to another; used rich and subjective data, and had low credibility and trustworthiness in terms of the findings. Also, these studies are holistic in nature; they deal with non-linear relationships and mutual causality; and see relationship between entities as fluid, systematic and integrative orders.

Kruger's (2003) study yielded interesting findings supportive or justifying the changing roles of the stakeholders in the classroom. For example, the results suggest that management systems and learner roles should support instructional systems and learner roles should be clearly articulated in the planning process for instruction taking into account learners' roles emphasised in social constructivist classroom.

The third finding is that a majority of the studies conducted in constructivist classroom management appears to fit through the lens of the emerging paradigm.

These conceptual understandings could be juxtaposed with the insights gained from the analysis of constructivism. In conceptually analysing "constructivism"; its historical background, philosophical foundations, assumptions on knowledge and constructivist models and theories characteristic features of constructivist classroom management were illuminated. In addition, the roles of the teacher in constructivist classroom management and the manner in which constructivist classrooms are managed were explored.

A conceptual analysis of the concept "constructivism" suggests a number of characteristic features. Among others, it includes a process whereby the learner constructs his/her own understanding, reality and knowledge of the world he/she lives in, through reflection of his/her experiences and through his/her interactions with the environment. This school of

thought sees as a compendium of concepts and actions that one has found to be successful, given the purposes one had in mind. According to Murphy (1997a) *knowledge* and *reality* do not have an objective or absolute value or, at least, that we have no way of knowing this reality. Also, knowledge does not represent some absolute or ultimate truth, but are simply the most viable interpretation of the experimental world. Where meaning is seen as rooted in, and indexed by experience, insights on constructivism suggest that knowledge is socially constructed through interaction with the environment. Learning is not purely an internal process, nor a passive shaping of behaviours, but it is a social construct that is mediated by language via social discourse.

From an organisational perspective, an attempt to explore attributes that inform and guide constructivist classroom management was made. Emerging from the literature, a number of characteristic features exists in constructivist classroom management. Among others, it is informed and guided by contingency theories. In this tradition, the concept “classroom management” is fluid – it takes the shape of the container; and is approached from a holistic view – it moves away from the mechanistic approach, and linear cause-effect and unidirectional interaction. Insights from contingency approach suggest that different situations require different practices and allow the use of other viewpoints separately or in combination to deal with various classroom management problems.

Constructivist classroom management, among others, emphasises situational variables, rejects a notion that a particular viewpoint, (e.g. traditional or behavioural or systems), as a one size fits all management approach; and is characterised by holistic and artistic features, discrete units, hierarchical orders, mutual causation, with multi-causal factors, and explained by deductive, inductive and integrative reasoning.

Seen against the background that most teachers were trained in the traditional approach to classroom management, the emerging paradigm poses significant challenges to teachers to equip themselves with new knowledge and skills for classroom management, especially the teacher’s management roles, approach to teaching, learning, etc. This is even more vital if teachers were to accept the fact that learners have to be more actively

involved than in a traditional classroom - they share ideas, ask questions, discuss concepts, and revise their ideas and misconceptions. In Jonassen's (1996) view, activities in such teaching and learning settings involve collaboration, with occasional competition among learners.

The forth finding is that constructivist classroom management is informed and guided by contingency theories. Situational variables determine management approach, leadership style, and more specifically leadership, roles of the teacher in constructivist classroom management practice.

Based on the conceptual analysis undertaken on instructionist and constructivist classroom management, I then proceeded to interrogate the current OBE policy in South Africa by focusing on aspects, such as theoretical perspectives on OBE, philosophical background and models of OBE; origin and general characteristic features of philosophies underpinning OBE; insights on the implementation of Policy: theory and practice; and the critical analysis of C2005, NCS and RNCS Policies.

Emerging from the literature, OBE appears to be a broad concept. According to Malcolm (1999:79), it has many meanings and models which vary significantly across the borders, in countries such as Scotland, Australia, Holland, South Africa, USA, etc. It is founded on three basic premises: all learners can learn and succeed (but not on the same day and in the same way), success breeds success, and schools control conditions of success. McNeir (1994:30) asserts that there is no single authoritative model of OBE. There are the models of OBE in practice – traditional, transitional and transformational models. In Malcolm's (1999:79) view, the variations in the models of OBE arise from the different choices of outcomes, and different management systems to achieve them. It also emerged from the literature that OBE originates from the theories of Benjamin Bloom, James Block, BF Skinner, John Dewey, and Ralph Tyler. In a philosophical perspective, OBE is grounded in two systematic approaches to instruction, namely Competency-Based Education and Mastery Learning, Criterion Referenced Assessment and Educational Objectives

The South African version of OBE is a hybrid, based on four philosophical assumptions, namely, behaviourism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism. It finds itself stretched between the two conflicting paradigms. The analysis of the paradigmatic characteristic features of: pragmatism, social reconstructionism, critical theory and behaviourism clearly revealed a tension and a contradiction that spawns a system that, in essence, tries to straddle to irreconcilable alternatives, nullifying any claim that it constitutes a paradigm shift (see Table 2.3: Matrix of Paradigmatic Value Systems).

Social reconstructionism, critical theory and pragmatism fit through the lens of the emerging paradigm. For example, pragmatism does not recognise permanent reality; it assumes that knowledge is tentative and subject to revision; and views knowledge and truth as evolving and a social construct; social reconstructionism fits through the lens of the emerging paradigm – it holds that no universal, objective, final truths or values exist; and sees knowledge as a social construct and emphasises the aspects, such as, the supporting role of the teacher as facilitator in the learning process, cooperative learning, and the importance of learning in an authentic or real-life context. Also, critical theory rejects claims to absolute truth and functionalist/objective knowledge; and sees knowledge as a historical, dialectical and a social product. In contrast, behaviourism is fit through the lens of the scientific worldview. It sees human behaviour as an overt, observable and measurable construct; and assumes the existence of absolute truth and objective knowledge.

The fifth finding is that the South African version of OBE is a hybrid from four philosophical assumptions (behaviourism, pragmatism, social reconstructionism, critical theory) and finds itself stretched between the two conflicting paradigms.

In this study, OBE was analysed using “political symbolist” as lens to explore C2005, NCS and RNCS Policies. Official documents (DoE, 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1997e; 1997f; 2000c; 2000d; 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b; 2003a; 2004) on OBE revealed that a significant gap exists between the theory and practice in terms of policy formulation and

policy implementation processes, more specifically, in classroom management – the policies do not address implementation issues at classroom level.

The sixth finding is that in the C2005, NCS seem to give little if any or no classroom management strategies that will address the teacher’s needs in order to ensure successful implementation of a constructivist curriculum.

### **7.3 REFLECTIONS**

On reflecting about this research, it became clear to me that OBE in South Africa is a hybrid from various philosophical groundings; and that classroom management can be seen as belonging to two conflicting paradigms, namely, scientific and emergent worldviews. On the surface, basic management principles such as, planning, organising, leading and control, appears to be similar, but this is a myth. Planning, seen from its traditional defining terms, approach classroom management as a step-by-step process under control and directed by the teacher. Such an approach is too limited and may restrict the degree to which learners become collaborators in the teaching and learning situation. Planning should thus, be substituted by strategising in which the teacher allows flexibility and fluidity that opens opportunities for collaboration without relinquishing to a situation where an “everything goes” approach could override quality lessons. Strategising focuses on developing a range of strategies that could be utilized in the classroom, to support and enhance effective teaching and learning. It is responsive to the emergent needs of learners in the classroom, but remains strongly focused on the outcomes to be achieved. In this sense, it calls on the teacher to use his/her knowledge and skills to assess the situation and facilitate the teaching and learning in a responsive manner.

In constructivist classroom management, organising as a management function, focuses on issues of group work and collaborate learning. In Van der Horst and McDonald’s (1997:86) view, the new methods for organising must not only focus on the learner outcomes, but should also accommodate the diversity of learners and settings. Given that

managerial and instructional functions are the sides of the same coin, instructional task associated with cooperative group calls for behaviour on the part of the learners that are different from the behaviour required for working alone to learn a new skill.

Control moves to accountability (where learners become part of the development of class rules and partners in ensuring order and discipline). Successful classrooms, as Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:86) observe, generally have an organisation and management plan, developed ahead of time by the teacher, communicated to the learners at the start of the school year, and maintained consistently throughout the year. In these classrooms, efficient routines and procedures are clearly and consistently followed, the teacher and the learners clearly understand expectations about the learner behaviour, and rules and procedures are enforced and reinforced. In accomplishing this, the teachers must know what their management plan will be, teach it to the learner, and watch over them until they have learnt and accepted the system (ibid:97).

Evaluation moves to ongoing assessment and feedback as a strategy to ensure continuous improvement and the facilitation of the construction of new knowledge. The approach to continuous assessment, in Nakabugo and Siebörger's (2005:288) view, requires that decisions on a learner's progress be based on an ongoing formative assessment, associated with the helpful feedback on how a learner tackles various learning tasks rather than on results of a single end-of-session test or examination. In addition, it should not focus on what the learners have achieved, but should also be used to support and increase learners' learning.

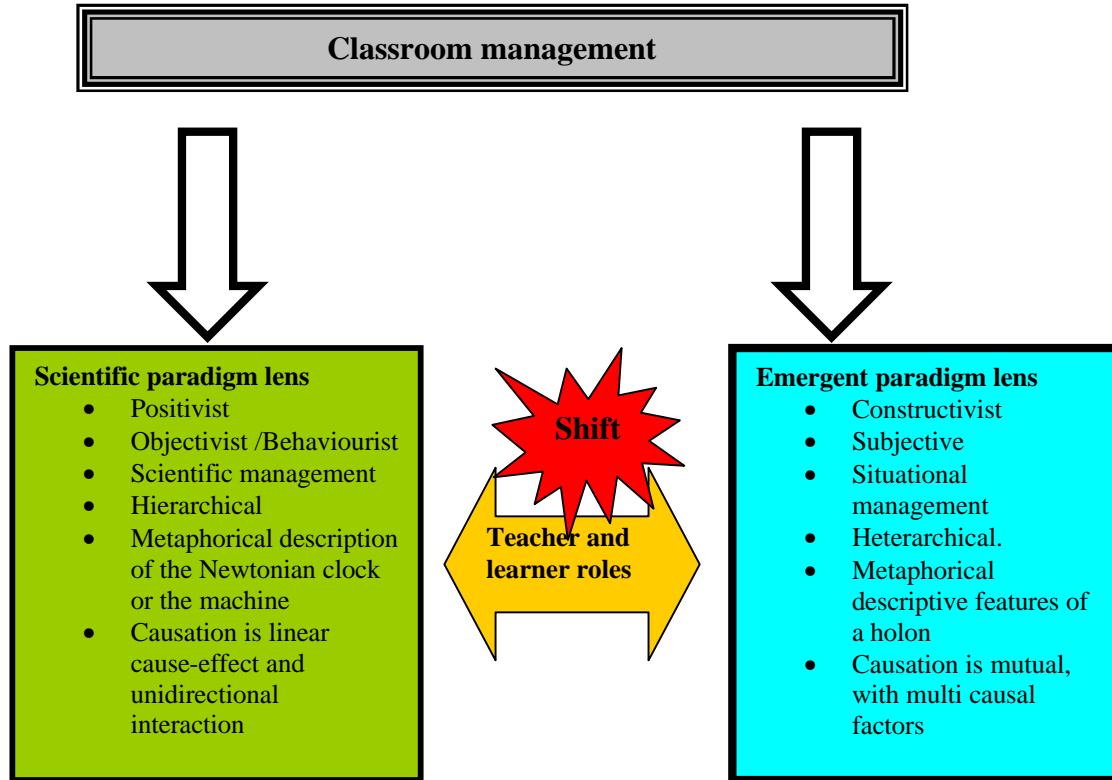
Given that modernist assumptions on which traditional classroom management is based do no longer hold in constructivist classroom management, this study proposes rethinking a set of principles compatible to the emergent paradigm. Against the contingency theory background, this study sees classroom management as a fluid and malleable construct – it should be flexible to fit context. This study, holds that classroom management, specifically in constructivist setting, should be underpinned by theories supporting the post-modern philosophy.

In terms of the diagram below, the move from instructionist to constructivist classroom management, with reference to planning organising, control and evaluation, calls for the new set of principles. This new set of principles should be informed and guided by the contingency theory; be situational (contextual) in order to accommodate a diversity of learners from different cultural backgrounds, and be subjective and holistic in nature. Also, these principles should not only support the construction of knowledge in the constructivist setting, but should also promote a feeling of individual accountability, face-to-face interaction and a feeling of positive interdependence in cooperative groups.

Classroom management belongs to scientific and the emerging worldviews. Figure 7.1 on the next page illustrates the difference between instructionist and constructivist classroom management.



**Figure 7.1** Difference between instructionist and constructivist classroom management



There seems to be a policy and practice discrepancy. According to the critical analysis done on RNCS and C2005 policy, even though its originators label this shift as a “paradigm shift”, it appears that they assumed that scientific management is applicable or compatible to the constructivist setting. Thus, for the successful implementation of OBE in South African schools, this study holds that new management principles, with conceptually key features to the emerging paradigm, be developed.

## 7.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research study has noteworthy implications for social researchers, teachers, principals and policy makers. There is need to open a dialogue on the concept of constructivist classroom management in its broadest sense, for the purposes of acquiring theoretical (philosophical) and practical understanding, informed and guided by research. Further, research is required to investigate new innovative ways of training teachers on constructivist classroom management. Also, there is a need to explore the effect and impact of political symbolism on classroom practice, especially in the previously disadvantaged schools. In the form of action research, teachers need to be involved in various management aspects, among others, such as, assessment, learner-behaviour, discipline, and programme design in constructivist setting.

## 7.5 CONCLUSION

Constructivism appears to have a significant number of implications for classroom management, more specifically to the roles of the teacher in outcomes-based classroom. Among other things, it calls for a dramatic shift in classroom focus, away from the transmission model of teaching toward one that is much more complex and interactive. Also, the implementation process demands the management function of the teachers, principals, district officials and policy formulators coupled with their leadership style, consistent with the emergent paradigm.

As Wyssusek *et al.* (2000:3) observe, many of the modernist assumptions on which traditional classroom management is based, do no longer hold in our world today and this led philosophers to questioning modern issues using a different paradigm. This requires that classroom management in a constructivist setting, be approached from a situational approach perspective. Thus, a new set of principles is apposite.