A critical study of a Continuing Professional Development Orientation Programme for Educators

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by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the ideas in this study are my original ideas and that all other sources and ideas used in this study have been duly acknowledged

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and my late brother, Enock Sekwati Ntloana, who left this world in 2001, while studying BA (Hons) Psychology at the University of South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the extent to which the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Professional Development (PD) orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators achieved its intended outcomes. The study was conducted with 17 Intermediate Phase educators who attended the NCS PD orientation programme, which was presented by the Department of Education officials. This orientation programme was aimed at ensuring that Intermediate Phase educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to implement the NCS effectively.

The participants in this study are all Intermediate Phase educators in Mpumalanga Province, Nkangala Region. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods in gathering data. Questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis were used as data streams.

The study revealed that the NCS PD orientation programme achieved its intended outcomes but the majority of teachers are still struggling to implement the NCS in line with the requirements of the NCS policy. The research also revealed that the support these educators obtain from the district subject advisors result in these educators developing a dependency syndrome and therefore compromising their professional roles as designers of learning programmes and constructors of knowledge (constructivist approach to teaching and learning).

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DoE	Department of Education
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
IPET	Initial Professional Education of Teachers
LOs	Learning Outcomes
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PD	Professional Development
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TPD	Teacher Professional Development

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1   Introduction

The need for professional development (PD) is incumbent on business, industry and education. Given its importance in education, and in South Africa in particular during this era of curriculum transformation from a content-based to an outcomes-based approach, it follows that the responsibility for providing opportunities for effective professional development is shared by individual educators, educators as members of school staff, the district/regional offices of the departments of education, school governing bodies, non-governmental organisations, teacher unions, Higher Education Institutions, provincial education offices and the Department of Education. However, the responsibility to develop as a 'professional education practitioner' lies with the educator him/herself. It is imperative that educators as professionals take initiative by augmenting and enhancing their own professional development. This could be linked to self-regulated learning.

Unfortunately, educators are caught up at the centre of pressures and changes happening in the education system, which directly impact on their profession and development. They are at the receiving end of this massive education transformation and are expected to adapt very swiftly. In fact, never before in the history of education has the recognition of the importance of professional development been greater, especially in the South African context, where educators are experiencing curriculum change.

According to Calitz (1990), the in-service training of educators aims at their career and professional development. He further observes that every educator is not only entitled to in-service education, but also has a personal obligation with regard to his/her own career development. Educators, individually and collectively, have a responsibility for their own professional development in order to be proficient in implementing a new curriculum, using new technologies and methodologies and to be prepared for new roles as

facilitators, researchers, and developers of learning programmes, assessors and problem solvers.

Ovens (2002:302) supports Calitz's opinion by asserting, "Teachers are, on the whole, poor implementers of other people's ideas. Teacher development therefore is a precondition of curriculum development, and teachers must play a generative role in the development (and implementation) of better curricula". The ability of educators to effectively perform their roles depends on how they are prepared to deal with the changes. It is therefore clear that effective professional development programmes of educators stand at the centre of proposals for reforming, restructuring, and transforming education.

While there is a growing consensus in literature as to how to ensure the quality provision of professional development programmes, there are some notable contradictions regarding the conditions of effective professional development. For example, some researchers such as Dean (1993:7), Guskey (2000:36) and Harris and Anthony (2001:371) suggest that professional development efforts designed to facilitate change must be practitioner specific and focus mainly on day-to-day activities of the classroom. Other researchers such as Hargreaves (2003:170) and Day and Sachs (2004:76) indicate that an emphasis on individuals is detrimental for progress and more systematic or organisational approaches are necessary.

Other contradictory views are that some authors argue that the most effective professional development efforts approach change in a gradual and increasing fashion, not expecting too much at one time. Guskey (2000:74) talks about process variables in this instance where he emphasises that PD activities should be planned, organised, carried out and followed up. Day (1999:4) also supports Guskey (2000) in this regard. Others insist that the broader the scope of a professional development programme, the more effort is required of educators and the greater overall change in teaching style attempted, the more likely the programme is to elicit the enthusiasm of educators and be implemented.

Such varied opinions may cause some confusion to those who are looking for 'one right way'. But just as in teaching, there is no 'one right way' or perfect model for professional development. However, when the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) PD orientation programme was designed, its main purpose was to correct the weakness with which the Curriculum 2005 (C2005) orientation programme for educators, amongst others, was presented. This aspect points to the importance of understanding the context within which professional development programmes are likely to yield effective results without assuming a 'one size-fits-all' approach to PD orientation programmes.

1.2   Problem Statement

In the wake of South Africa's first non-racial elections in 1994, the new Minister of Education launched a national process, which would eradicate the apartheid curriculum of its most offensive racial content and outdated, inaccurate subject matter. The haste with which the state pursued a superficial cleansing of the inherited curriculum did not only entail alterations in the teaching and learning methodologies, but also implicated a major empowerment of the teaching core to enable them to deal with the changes in curriculum.

In 2000, the Department of Education introduced an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), which aimed at moving away from the content-based approach to teaching to an outcomes-based approach. As an approach that is learner-centred, OBE moves from the premises that most learners can achieve high-quality outcomes, given proper teaching, learning resources and time (Kramer 2005:3). Following this major curriculum transformation, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was put in place. The life span of C2005 was shortened by challenges that educators faced in its implementation.

A committee was established to review C2005 and reported lack of preparation by the system to deal with the changes. To be more particular, the report of the C2005 Review Committee highlighted, amongst others, the

following aspects that confounded the implementation of C2005 namely inadequate orientation, training and development of educators, shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005; inadequate recognition of teacher and curriculum development as the core business of education departments; learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms; and policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms (Department of Education 2000).

Following the recommendations of the C2005 Review Committee, a process to write the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) began. The NCS was introduced for the first time in 2004 in the Foundation Phase and in 2005 and 2006 in the Intermediate and Senior Phase respectively. The introduction of the NCS is therefore regarded as a strategy to address the challenges that emanated from the implementation of C2005. The Department of Education initiated the NCS PD orientation programme to empower educators to implement the NCS in their schools.

With this orientation, it was assumed that educators had gained the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with the demands of implementing the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). However, since the introduction of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase, no empirical research has ever been conducted to investigate the extent to which the NCS professional development orientation programme has achieved its intended outcome, namely, to improve educators' ability to implement the NCS at school level.

In 2005, the Department of Education (DoE) commissioned the South African National Tutor Services (SANTS) to evaluate the implementation of the NCS in the Foundation Phase at school level, amongst others, as to whether the Foundation Phase Teachers' orientation programme provided by the DoE had achieved its intended outcomes (DoE 2006). The findings of the report revealed that the implementation of the NCS in the Foundation Phase, despite the NCS PD orientation programme to which the Foundation Phase educators were exposed, did not run smoothly.

Similar case studies in the implementation of National Curriculum had been conducted in New Zealand since 2001 in the project called *Curriculum Stocktake: National School Sampling Study*. The study aimed at investigating how the national curriculum had been implemented within primary and secondary schools. The case studies in primary schools revealed that educators were positive about the resources that the Ministry of Education and their schools had provided to support curriculum implementation. The case studies further revealed that professional development necessitated focusing on the curriculum needs of educators as well as the importance of educators to learn about a new curriculum.

The findings of these case studies are relevant to this study, not only because New Zealand and South Africa use a similar approach to curriculum, but also due to the fact that the findings of the case studies allude to the challenges that led to the failure of C2005, especially that of the development of educators. According to Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model (1994), any evaluation of learning should focus firstly on the reaction of learners, that is what they thought and felt about the training, secondly learning itself, which is the resulting increase in knowledge or capability, thirdly, behaviour, which is the extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation; and finally results, which imply the effects on the environment resulting from the trainee's performance.

The systemic evaluation study of the intermediate phase (DoE 2005) indicates that the majority of Grade 6 learners have not achieved the expected assessment standards in the Learning Outcomes, a result that has serious implications for learning and teaching practices at Grade 7 and beyond. These results also have serious implications for teacher development in the same phase and may not necessarily be an outcome of poor educator orientation in the NCS. Other factors such as the role of parents, availability of resources and learning materials were considered.

Since the implementation of the NCS, there have also been public concerns pertaining to the readiness of educators in the implementation of the new curriculum. Some of these concerns point to poor orientation of educators in the new curriculum, the lack of support from the education departments and policy overload, where educators are expected to implement many policies within a short space of time and without proper orientation.

After having considered the above, it is relevant to state that there could be a gap as to what the policy envisages the Intermediate Phase educator to accomplish and what is happening in reality in an attempt to prepare Intermediate Phase educators through the NCS PD orientation programme to implement the NCS. It is therefore important to engage in a frequent analysis of each professional development programme that the education department is providing to its educators, to make 'checks and balance' of its worthiness and success.

In the light of the above, the researcher has identified a need to investigate the extent to which the Intermediate Phase NCS PD orientation programme reached its intended outcomes.

1.3   Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether the NCS Professional Development orientation programme presented to Intermediate Phase educators, has reached its intended outcomes. This study provides an analysis on two levels. On the one hand, the study provides an analysis of whether learning took place during the NCS PD orientation programme and on the other hand establishes whether educators who underwent this NCS orientation programme implement the NCS in line with the training guidelines.

This analysis of the NCS PD orientation programme in the Intermediate Phase is necessary to determine whether the DoE has achieved its intended goals and if not, identify areas where improvement and development are still needed. The main focus of this study corresponds with the areas raised in the

Ministerial Committee report on C2005 (DoE 2000) that led to the introduction of the NCS, which is regarded as a strategy to address the challenges that emanated from the implementation of C2005. This study will therefore focus and respond to the following questions:

1.4 Key Question

To what extent did the NCS PD orientation programme reach its intended outcomes?

Sub-questions

1.4.1 Do educators use and value the knowledge and skills gained during the NCS PD orientation programme workshops?

1.4.2 What are the educators' perceptions concerning the appropriateness and relevance of the NCS PD orientation programme in relation to their PD needs?

1.4.3 What are the indicators of an effective curriculum PD orientation programme for educators?

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

In recent years, South African educators have been faced with a succession of major innovations covering practically the entire curriculum and every aspect of teaching. Apart from the national initiatives connected with provision of educator support measures, schools are under pressure to take account of computing multicultural and anti-racist education, technology, the integration of learners with special needs in the normal classrooms, implementing outcomes-based assessment, amongst others. Educators will require support in coming to terms with these changes and other developments.

Furthermore, it is now acknowledged that since schools constitute significant concentrations of human and physical resources, those who have

responsibility for their management require appropriate training. All these developments point to the same conclusion: after they have qualified, and regularly throughout their careers, educators will be under pressure, self-imposed or otherwise, to extend and develop the skills required by changing professional circumstances. The speed of recent educational and social change has simply intensified that pressure. This in itself demands that educators should keep up with the latest educational routes through life-long learning.

Hargreaves (2003:436) captures the requirements of a new professionalism, arguing: "To improve schools, one must be prepared to invest in professional development; to improve teachers; their professional development must be set within the context of institutional development."

After the introduction of the NCS, the DoE initiated the NCS PD orientation programme as an important intervention strategy to empower educators to improve their understanding of the new curriculum (NCS) and thereby be in a position to implement the NCS policy with ease. Not only was the NCS PD orientation programme carefully designed to avoid the mistakes of the past, but also presumed to be an informed process that aimed at enhancing and strengthening the skills that educators have already acquired during the C2005 training.

Given the fact that the educators who attended the Intermediate Phase NCS PD orientation programme, were in most cases, the same educators who attended the Foundation Phase one, it could be assumed that a high level of skills acquisition and learning by Intermediate Phase educators had been attained. This could be substantiated by the fact that the same provincial department officials trained these educators in the implementation of NCS in the Foundation Phase, and presented the Intermediate Phase orientation programme.

One would also assume that the officials who trained the Intermediate Phase educators, brought the necessary experience from the Foundation Phase training into the Intermediate Phase NCS orientation programme, which could

have led to a better understanding on the educators' needs and thus, a provision of a more customised orientation programme.

The other assumption that supports this study is that Intermediate Phase educators who attended the NCS PD orientation programme could have been exposed to a more improved orientation programme. This assumption is based on the fact that the officials who presented the orientation programme understand the educators' strengths and weaknesses, since they have been working with these educators since the introduction of OBE in South Africa. Such assumptions could however be misleading if they are not investigated.

Since the implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase four years ago, and having participated in the monitoring of the training of Intermediate Phase educators in the implementation of NCS, the researcher has noticed that no evaluation of the impact of the NCS PD orientation programme was ever carried out. It could, therefore, be misleading to assume that Intermediate Phase educators are able to implement the NCS effectively and are using the skills, knowledge and attitudes that they have gained during the workshops.

The researcher's interest in investigating whether the NCS PD orientation programme has reached its intended outcomes would be of benefit to educators, DoE officials, policy makers and providers of teacher development programmes.

The findings from this research could be used to:
- identify the challenges experienced by educators during the NCS PD orientation programme workshops; which could be used as lessons for future teacher   professional development programmes;
- identify inhibiting effects of the organisational contexts within which professional development takes place;

- create and maintain the organisational environment which encourages effective professional development.

1.6   Key Concepts Used in this Study

1.6.1 Educator

The concept 'educator', as opposed to 'teacher' is used in recent South African education legislation such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996, South African Council for Educators Act (SACE) of 2000, the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) of 1998. The word 'educator', according to the SACE Code of Conduct (1999:9) means "any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional therapy at any school, technical college of education or assists in rendering professional services or performs educational management services or education auxiliary services provided by, or in a department of education and any other person registered with the Council."

For the purpose of this study, the concepts 'educator' and 'teacher' are used interchangeably to refer to all persons who teach at a school despite their professional ranks which includes principals of schools and those who are not yet registered with SACE.

1.6.2 Development

Development is the means by which educators acquire or enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs necessary to create high levels of learning (Mathekga 2004:14). He further cites Rae (1993) as saying, "Development is an overall approach to an individual's or group's improvement and enhancement." He further emphasises that "development can involve a series of training events of various types that lead to a total learning experience that leaves the learner stronger." Development therefore implies a change in a certain specific direction, an upward mobility. It could be linked to improvement of practice, effectiveness and growth. It further alters the professional practices, beliefs and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end (Hargreaves & Fullan 1992:158). That end is the

improvement of student learning. One can also conclude that if employees, educators in this case, are better exposed to development opportunities, the system will be more efficient and effective. Educators could develop themselves through participation in different programmes as individuals and/or groups; either through self-initiated programmes or system-wide programmes.

Dean (1993:7) states that professional development fulfils three functions, viz to:

- provide adequate systems of in-service training;
- provide support for schools that will enable them to fulfil their programmes;
- create context in which educators are enabled to develop their potential.

In addition, Dean (1993:7) mentions that any development aims at promoting the professional growth of educators so that they may teach more effectively and be exposed and respond to change and innovation. If educators are exposed to programmes, which focus on the improvement of management skills, the quality of education provision may be improved. The NCS PD orientation programme was therefore used as a programme that was aimed at improving the skills of intermediate Phase educators in implementing the NCS, thereby enabling them to develop their potential.

Educators are expected to become more informed after every PD programme because as Ovens (2002:302) enumerates, 'development' means "professional learning that is holistic, because it involves many aspects of the teacher's practice and reflection on practice: not only technical and subject knowledge and practical skills, but also values, beliefs, attitudes and awareness."

McCormick and James, as cited in Dean (1993:9), support this assertion that " … effective change depends upon the genuine commitment of those required

to implement it." Educators will readily seek to improve their performance if they regard it as part of their professional accountability, whereas they will resist change that is forced upon them. Of crucial significance in this argument is the notion of feeling a high sense of personal obligation regarding self-development on the part of the educators. It also refers to educators becoming committed to reflect on their current practice and seek improvement as individuals or through a collaborative effort.

In this study, professional development should be understood to include all that is done to improve the capacity of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Terms such as 'staff development', 'in-service training', and 'professional development', which refer to individual development and that of organisational growth, are used interchangeably in this study.

1.6.3 Educator Support

Educators' success in growing professionally is a function not only of their own innovation, awareness and imagination but also of the nature of the schools in which they teach. Therefore, by 'support' the researcher refers to unlocking schools' existing cultures, rethinking, reconceptualising and reassessing the nature of schooling. Weller as cited by Bezzina (2002:69) substantiates 'support' by emphasising the importance of introducing a re-engineering conceptual framework in order to bring about school reform. Re-engineering means bringing about radical improvement, not incremental changes.

What has been stated could be achieved through mechanisms that are more focused and intensified at all levels of education. This could be accomplished by moving away from strategies that regard educators as being passive recipients of what is being delivered, to situations that are more individualised and more focused on the needs of specific groups as well as the needs of specific schools. Strategies that assist in combining efforts from various institutions are needed, whether these are traditional short courses, extending

to degree courses, which allow participants to directly address immediate and long-term needs in the school situation.

Support encompasses the need for a greater effort to develop mechanisms that promote networks, which provide opportunities for continued professional growth on a systematic basis. Rather than conditioning teachers to follow mandatory courses/programmes, teachers ought to be encouraged to pursue different, varied forms of learning opportunities wherever these can be sought and be of relevance to an institution.

1.6.4 Empowerment (of educators)

According to Bezzina (2002:63) 'empowerment' means "the acquisition of knowledge that will enable more autonomy, responsibility and self-direction for all those personnel involved in the educational process."

True empowerment leads to increased professionalism as teachers assume responsibility for an involvement in the decision-making process (Bezzina 2002:65). Blasè and Blasè (2001:3) define teacher empowerment as "the opportunity and confidence to act upon one's ideas and to influence the way one performs one's profession."

Educators experience empowerment when they have opportunities to improve their techniques of facilitating learning; when they deepen their knowledge and understanding of the areas they teach; when they adopt a holistic perspective in different school matters beyond their subject matter.

As teachers are in a position to provide leadership in areas such as mentoring, staff development, and in-service training, peer coaching and curriculum development, empowering teachers for such leadership roles will provide them with opportunities for higher levels of need satisfaction and bring valuable expertise to school improvement.

It is against this background that the researcher argues that if the Department of Education (DoE) is optimistic that educators possess leadership qualities, or are willing to learn and commit themselves towards the improvement of education in their schools (teaching in particular) and feel confident that 'educators are hungry for stimulating educational experiences' then the DoE should do its utmost to create opportunities for teacher empowerment to take place. The current and future school reform policies and practices need to reflect such an orientation.

1.6.5 Reflection

While there are varied definitions and as many orientations towards reflective practice – for example, personal, technical, practical and critical – the underlying theme of these definitions is that reflection is an intra-personal process through which personal and professional knowledge can occur (Sikes & Aspinwall as cited by Calderhead & Gates 1993:43). Intra-personal refers to how persons interact within themselves – the inner self. Reflection is regarded as a process and method of informing practice with reason. It is not viewed as being static; implicit in its meaning is action (Schön 1991). It is therefore perceived to be a vehicle for promoting changed behaviours and practices and a means of improving foresight, lessening the chances of taking inappropriate lines of action.

It is against this background that Calderhead and Gates (1993:43) conclude that reflective teaching can be seen as associated with the following:

- looking back in a critical way on what has already taken place;
- building up a body of professional knowledge, related to technical, strategic and ethical aspects of teaching;
- using this body of knowledge in a critical way in new situations;
- widening the range of criteria which will influence the reflective process;
- building up a personal set of criteria as a result of the reflective process.

Reflection could therefore be associated with self-directed learning where educators take the responsibility of their own learning by identifying the professional needs and seek ways of addressing such needs on their own.

1.7   Theoretical Framework based on a Literature Study

The purpose of this study, as indicated earlier in this chapter, is to investigate whether the NCS PD orientation programme presented to Intermediate Phase educators, has reached its intended outcomes. This section of the research is intended to review literature that forms the context and theoretical framework of the researcher's study. As Vithal and Jansen (1997:14) propound, literature should provide what has already been written on the topic and also highlight the gaps or limitations of the literature studied.

The literature study on professional education, in-service training, staff development and many other related issues provides an adequate framework for understanding the significance of the nature and importance of professional development of educators.   In considering existing literature, which relates to professional development, it is meaningful to firstly define the concept 'professional development' relating to teaching.

The literature provides various definitions of professional development. and Loucks-Horsley (1990) as cited in Bezzina (2002:58) define professional development as those "processes that improve the job-related knowledge, skills or attitudes of teachers." On the other hand, Fullan (1991:326) defines professional development as "the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement." By implication professional development depends on a combination of motivation and opportunity to learn and how the educational system is organised structurally and normatively to 'press' for continuous teacher development. Fullan (1991) also argues that successful professional development will depend on initiatives, which reflect the needs of individual teachers.

Guskey (2000:16) supports the above authors and defines professional development as "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students." Therefore, professional development is a process that is intentional, ongoing and systematic (Guskey 2000:16). Guskey's definition moves away from the traditional narrow view that sees special events that are restricted to 3 or 4 days during the school years, graduate courses and policies that require educators to accumulate a certain number of professional development credits each year in order to retain their jobs and their professional certification. In other words, professional development of educators should not be seen as something that educators must endure and get it out of the way. It must provide educators with opportunities to build a school culture of continuous learning.

The above definitions highlight the importance of a well coherent professional development programme for any education system to achieve its goals. The definitions, though not exhaustive, emphasise the importance of 're-engineering' the skills, knowledge and attitudes of educators to cope with developments in the education system. It is also clear from the above definitions that the professional growth of educators reveals itself in a variety of competencies that are improved or activated according to needs.

Daloglu (2004:678) criticises the one-shot workshops that aim to foster mastery of prescribed skills and knowledge. This author stresses the ineffectiveness of professional development programmes that are based on the assumption that educators lack certain skills and knowledge needed by the profession.It is clear from the above that radical orientation programmes conducted in ways that are undemocratic in their consequence, if not their actual intent, could lead to implementation challenges in education especially to educator professional development. Harris and Anthony (2001:371) support this statement when they discourage traditional one-shot workshops that are notoriously unpopular with educators and generally ineffective in

promoting substantive change in their practice. They describe such efforts as 'technical tinkering' and are likely to fail, in part because they 'infantilise' educators and push them into patterns of defensiveness and conservatism.

The current professional development literature advocates a very different approach working from the perspective that educators deserve to be treated as professionals, as active inquirers who are able to direct and take ownership of their own learning. Professional development efforts for educators should therefore be focused, inquiry orientated and sustained over a long period of time. The ability to master and apply certain skills in one's duty, work or job is one of the indications of professional growth. If one no longer has such mastery, it suggests a need for empowerment through a programme designed according to the needs identified. The mastery of these skills could lead to improving the quality of education.

The above discussions emphasise the importance of a constructivist approach to continuing professional development (CPD) of educators, which emphasises that meaning, and learning alike, can be negotiated through cooperative social activity, discourse and debate. The critical point here is that the 'training' programme that educators are exposed to, should take into account adult learning principles which among others emphasise constructing a personal understanding of the environment through a process of interaction, reflection and action. It is against this background that the importance of reflective practice when engaging in CPD activities is affirmed. As put by dialectical constructivists, learning is the interaction between the learner and the environment.

Teachers are expected to research their practices and take actions to improve their practice. This places educators at the centre of their professional development, which is in line with the arguments put by Fullan (1991), Bezzina (2002), Day and Sachs (2004) and Guskey (2000) earlier in this section. It is also clear from these discussions by the above authors that dynamic and responsive models of professional development that meet the needs of educators at different phases, rather than ones which only meet the

needs of the system are necessary features of professional development programmes and initiatives in South Africa's changing curriculum context (Day 1999). Arguably, Day believes in the self-appraisal, self-renewal and professional autonomy of practitioners. He concludes that appraisal should not be regarded as separate from school and individual development planning.

Given the diverse context of the South African schooling system, including educators, professional development programmes cannot succeed if they are something done to educators, if educators are passive recipients instead of active participants. It should however be noted that change comes from inside and educators could make a difference if they are motivated and feel confident to do their work. They need to be convinced that what they learn procures results in their classroom and that it enables them to improve learning.

According to Kabylov (2006:126), the following recommendations should be taken into consideration in the hope that these recommendations may help and compensate for what is lacking in educators' knowledge base and promote their professional development:

- Educator In-Service Training (INSET) programmes should provide refresher or updating opportunities for educators, particularly to familiarise them with modern practices being encouraged in schools.
- Closer attention needs to be paid to educators in rural areas.
- There is a need to prepare educators to play new roles beyond routine classroom teaching.
- Follow-up support should be provided to educators, to help them to institutionalise the strategies learnt from INSET.

What could be deduced from the above recommendations is that a one-size-fits-all approach where rural, farm and urban schools, single and multi-grade class educators; and poorly as well as resourced school educators are

'trained' together, is not an ideal situation for effective professional development programmes. 'Training needs' differ from one school to another, and similarly, from one educator to another. What follows is a brief description of the process emanating from the implementation of the programme being studied.

1.8   Implementation of National Curriculum Statement PD Orientation Programme

It is necessary to provide a background of the implementation of the NCS PD programme for Intermediate Phase educators and what the envisaged results and expectation of this programme were when it began in 2003. When the NCS PD orientation programme was initiated, its main focus was to empower Intermediate Phase educators to cope with the new demands placed on them when the NCS was introduced. See appendix B for a detailed course outline.

The programme was expected to empower educators with skills, which would enable educators to perform managerial, teaching, learning and assessment tasks with ease.   The main focus elements of the NCS PD orientation programme are reflected below. These elements formed the basis of the research in establishing whether the programme reached the outcomes for which it was designed.

NCS ELEMENTS
- Development of Learning Programme (3 year plan)
- Development of Work Schedule (Grade plan)
- Development of Lesson plan
- Principles of NCS
- Outcomes Based Assessment
- Relationship of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards
- Issues of language and how they impact on teaching, learning and assessment
- Collecting evidence of learner performance

- Recording learner performance against Learning Outcomes
- Identifying and addressing barriers to learning
- Management of Curriculum change
- Understanding policies that impact on assessment
- Dealing with diversity in the classroom

The orientation programme followed a participatory model in which participants were expected to develop portfolios of evidence as they proceeded with the training. Educators worked as individuals and as well in groups to complete the activities. In some cases, these activities resembled real-life scenarios, which they might face in their schools. Educators' responses were then put in the (group or individual) portfolios for self-assessment. This model assisted educators in keeping records of the processes that they followed to overcome the challenges that were provided in the activities.

The other equally important element of the NCS orientation programme was the time put aside for the orientation programme. The DoE developed a 12 days training programme for provincial officials to deal with these issues. However, different provinces determined their own length of the orientation time precisely due to availability of resources. Some ranged from 5 days (8 hour day) to staggered afternoon sessions (2 – 4 hours). In Mpumalanga, where this study was conducted, provincial officials who were trained by the National Core Team of Trainers exposed educators to a full five-day orientation period.

1.9   Learning Theories Underpinning the Study

There are many different theories of how people learn. Burns (1995:99) conceives learning as a relatively permanent change of behaviour including both observable activity and internal processes such as thinking, attitudes and emotions. Burns considers that learning might not manifest itself in observable behaviour until some time after the educational programme has

taken place. Burns' conception of learning is relevant to this study since the study is based on investigating whether learning has taken place for educators to implement the NCS in the Intermediate Phase, after they have completed the NCS PD orientation programme. If learning had happened, then it could be said that the orientation programme had reached its intended outcomes.

The theoretical perspective pertaining to this study is grounded on participatory and reflective models on professional development of educators, which are closely linked to a constructivist conception of teacher development. The research encompasses 'andragogy' which explains how adults learn; and experiential learning, which assumes that experience is the foundation of learning, that learners construct their own experiences, that learning is holistic and socially and culturally constructed and that it is influenced by the socio-emotional context in which it occurs (Lyle 2003:298).

Knowles (1990) supports the above statement concerning experiential learning by emphasising that adult learners bring a great deal of experience to the learning environment and they need to be able to see the applications for new learning. This implies that learning should bring about human growth and development in learners. Burns (1995) emphasises the concept of self-directing in adult learning. Self-directed learning is the concept that lies at the heart of andragogy (meaning adults dealing with adult education). It is learner-centred, experience-based, problem orientated and collaborative in the spirit of the humanist approach to learning and education.

Burns (1995) points out to the importance of professional development by reference to the 'petrol tank' view of school education. He emphasises the importance of 'filling the tank full' before the journey and also raises the importance of having service stations along 'the length of the highway of life'. This metaphor indicates the importance of continuing professional development programmes in education. It is not only sufficient for educators to have a good pre-service training to be good educators, but rather, it is more

important to have regular in-service programmes that would keep them up-to-date with the new developments in education.

Andragogy is also important in this study because when dealing with adults, it is important to note that an adult's emotional response can affect learning. Some adults are prone to approach formal educational settings with anxiety and feelings of high or low self-efficacy. Their approach to new learning contexts can be influenced by how they appraise or evaluate the new experience, which in this case, is the NCS.

It is therefore the purpose of this research to explore the validity of andragogy, especially in the areas of adults as self-directed learners and the importance of experience (experiential learning) in learning in relation to the South African context where educators are not involved in the identification of professional development programmes, which are aimed at improving their ability to deliver curriculum. Following the principles of andragogy, the assumption that the researcher has about Intermediate Phase educators is that they are eager to learn and to change and any programme that aims to improve learning, would be supported and is likely to bring positive results.

1.10   Research Design

In this study, the research was carried out with Intermediate Phase educators who attended the NCS PD orientation programme. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in sourcing data from the educators. Data gathering techniques used were questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. Chapter 3 of this study provides more details.

1.11   Sampling

The research was conducted with 18 (3 teachers per school x 6 schools) Intermediate Phase educators in Mpumalanga Province. Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education has three regions namely Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni and Nkangala. The latter was selected for this study.

1.12   Limitation of the Study

The NCS PD orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators took place in 2004 and implementation in 2005. To this end, the following could be pointed out as limitations of this study:

- This study took place two years after the start of the implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase. During this period, educators could have been exposed to a number of intervention programmes, which might have had an impact on the responses.
- The researcher, having been part of the development of the orientation programme, training of provincial officials who trained educators and also having been involved in the monitoring of the training of educators, could have had an impact on the findings of the study.
- Knowledge of respondents that the researcher is a national Department of Education official could have had an impact on the respondents' responses. Some respondents might have responded to impress the researcher or to degrade their trainers.

1.13   Conclusion

Providing educators with opportunities for continued development as they practice their profession is crucial for meaningful change in any education system.   Harris and Anthony (2001:386) note: "Probably nothing within a school has more impact on students in terms of skills development, self-confidence, or classroom behaviour than the personal and professional growth of the teachers."

In order for educators to view themselves as lifelong learners, and as practitioners who actively seek the kinds of professional activities which will promote their own growth in teaching, schools and districts will need to

respond by orchestrating ways for all educators to feel supported, and authentic opportunities for educators to study issues of importance that result in professional development will need to be provided.

The models of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) should be chosen in relation to the specific needs of the educators. It is therefore likely that a permutation of different models will characterise the system, but that its proponents will all be aware of their possible limitations and strengths.

The provision of the NCS PD orientation programme in the Intermediate Phase is a means of bringing significant and meaningful change in how educators internalise the new curriculum. It is therefore imperative that the quality provision of such a programme be monitored and strengthened, as it is important for the achievement of the desired goal namely improved quality of education.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

South Africa, having overthrown apartheid embraced democracy in 1994 and is the continent's most recent 'independent' country, which is still emerging from the phase of policy development. This transition from apartheid to democracy involved massive changes to the education system, some of which could speedily be achieved, others that have yet to reach completion. It should be acknowledged that, on the one hand, there are a number of good and impressive policies in place, which attempt to address the gaps the apartheid education regime created. As Sayed and Jansen (2001:1) enumerate, these policies are widely acknowledged as being 'state of the art'. Despite the good intentions of these policies, on the other hand, achieving change through the system could be difficult if challenges such as lack of resources, structural adjustments and implementation issues are not accounted for.

The most important of these policies, which are relevant to this study, are those that deal with professional development of educators. The need for professional development is important to improve educators' skills, knowledge, and attitudes in implementing the curriculum.   Inevitably, therefore, initiatives intended to effect improvements in education or to revitalise the work of the schools must ultimately focus on the capacity of educators to deliver quality education, as the quality of the educational service provided by a community depends critically on the quality of its educators.

There is a need to re-examine how educators could be best prepared, through teacher professional development programmes, for their difficult task and assisted to accommodate and exploit modifications in their professional circumstances, which derive from educational and social change. It is therefore important to initiate appropriate professional development programmes for educators, relevant to the contemporary educational context.

The analysis of the ideal of the educator as the reflective practitioner committed to the critical monitoring of practice and its improvement through professional development should also be looked into.

One of the characteristics put forward by Kirk (1987:12) around teaching is that 'teaching is a contested' or 'controversial activity'. The author maintains that curriculum proposals "should feed a teacher's personal research and development programme through which he is progressively increasing his understanding of his own work and hence bettering his teaching." By implication, the public have great expectations from educators' development and output, therefore it is expected that educators will yield results and as a result go to great lengths to achieve these expectations.

Educators cannot be left alone in implementing the changes brought about by democracy. Administrators should ensure quality provision of the education system by continuously revitalising its teaching core through quality in-service programmes. Such programmes should be underpinned by reflection, andragogy, differentiated styles of learning and support (Kirk 1987).

This chapter focuses on how the continuing professional development of educators has been conceptualised, adult learning theories supporting continuing professional development, assessing training effectiveness, barriers to effective professional development practices and key considerations in planning an effective professional development programme. A summary is provided at the end.

2.2   Defining the Concept 'Continuing Professional Development'

As indicated in Chapter 1, the literature on professional development provides various definitions of this concept, as referred to below.

Parker, as cited by Bezzina (2002:58) regards professional development as "a process designed to influence positively the knowledge, skills or attitudes of

educators so as to enable them to design instructional programmes to improve student learning." Bezzina (2002:58) defines professional development as "a programme of activities planned and carried out to promote the personal and professional growth of teachers." Any development should bring positive change in individuals and organisations. It should result in new learning, change in behaviour, knowledge and skills.

Day (1999:4) as cited in Day and Sachs (2004:220-1) states the following concerning professional development:

> *Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives.*

Day (1999:4) expands upon this definition by providing a broad overview of the concept by going beyond emphasising a planned programme of activities for personal and professional development of teachers. His definition includes teachers' experiences, reflection and acknowledgement of teachers as change agents, emotional intelligence and good professional thinking. These aspects are very important in achieving successful professional development.

It is clear from the above definitions that professional development aims at improving the educators' growth and thereby increasing their educational competencies. However, the educators' commitment to that growth is equally important. It could also be deduced from the above that professional development is not an incident/event but rather a process enhanced by experiences and could impact on other people's lives positively. It is also clear

from the same definitions that professional development is a means of self-renewal.

One could conclude that professional development is a term used to describe all activities in which educators engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work. This is the researcher's simple description of a hugely complex intellectual and emotional endeavour, which is at the heart of raising and maintaining standards of teaching, learning and achievement in a range of schools, each of which possess their own set of special challenges.

In this study, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is conceptualised using the above definition provided by Day (1999:4). The choice of Day's (1999:4) definition rests on the following reasons:

- It acknowledges the importance of the 'individual' in professional development. This could be regarded as an implication that educators cannot be developed; rather development is an internal commitment, which comes from within.
- It emphasises the importance of collaboration and sharing for effective professional development to occur.
- The definition moves away from a defect approach and advocates for a "growth" approach to professional development and assumes that educators are committed to continuously improve their practice for the delivery of good quality education.
- Day (1999:4) in his explanation of CPD, further alludes to the importance of context in achieving effective CPD. He contends " ... it (CPD) does not take place in a vacuum." By implication, CPD results from the continuous interactions of the individual educator with the context, which implies that CPD cannot be divorced from the educator's area of operation.

Having elaborated on what CPD means, it is important to discuss adult learning theories that are associated with this study, since it involves adult learners.

2.3   Adult Learning Theories Related to the Study

"To be better learners ourselves and to be better facilitators of other people's learning, we need to understand how learning occurs and whether adults learn differently than children do" (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:193). This statement affirms the importance of understanding learning theories in determining the direction of both training and learning. The above therefore confirms the significance of this study in order to provide an understanding of the key principles and issues that are important to determine the success of any form of formal or informal learning, which involve adults. There are several learning theories that are related to adult learning. However, for the purpose of this study, the following three will be explored.

2.3.1 Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning is a model of learning that explains the fact that learning is a deliberate process undertaken by adults with the aim of constructing meaning and transforming understanding in their interaction with the environment (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:273). It therefore tries to clarify the theory of adult learning by emphasising the 'why' and 'how' of adult learning. As a model, self-directed learning takes as its core the independence of adults in experiencing learning. Self-directed learning mainly postulates that adults learn due to the pressures of their social lives.

Adults engage in learning with the view of acquiring skills that will enable them to pursue self-directed learning. Being a self-directing adult means that adult learners can participate in the diagnosis of their learning needs, the planning and implementation of the learning experiences, and the evaluation of those experiences (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:273).

This model implies that adults learn with a particular intention. The goals of self-directed learning is therefore directed to the individual's capacity to work on his/her own (self-directed) and to take responsibility of his/her learning and being proactive, to enable adult learners to understand what informs their needs and to reflect on those issues and the promotion of emancipatory learning and social action. These goals imply that self-directed learning enables adult learners to be freed from social forces by capacitating themselves with all that it takes to face the challenges. It should be the goal of this type of learning to bring about 'change' in the lives of adults, and in educators specifically.

Self-directed learning therefore assumes a humanistic approach/philosophy that emphasises personal autonomy and a free will to make choices. Human beings can control their destiny and are capable of becoming what they are capable of becoming (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:256).

2.3.2   Transformational learning

Transformation is about 'change'. It implies a fundamental change that is necessary to change how we see ourselves and also how we see the world in which we live (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:321). It is the emphasis of this learning theory that education, and consequently learning, shapes people. After undergoing a learning experience, people become different. This implies that learning changes people to be better than they were before. The theory therefore focuses on the cognitive process of learning and how it affects educators.

However, it is also important to understand that 'cognitive' processes alone are not enough to bring about change. Other processes such as the learners' emotions, socio-economic status and political inclinations are important in any changeable situation.

Transformation theory, though, assumes that all educators are at the stage in which they all embrace change and look at the world with new eyes,

regarding situations differently from the old, traditional manner. This process of engaging with the world is aimed at understanding the situation and deciding on an action plan. A person therefore engages in a discourse with the environment to make meaning of the world (Merriam & Caffarella 1999:322).

It should be noted that change is not an easy task, especially if it means moving out of one's comfort zone, in this case moving from the content-based approach to the outcomes-based curriculum. It involves negotiating and renegotiating relationships with the environment and thus making adjustments where possible. This encompasses attesting the current education development in the country that requires educators to develop new competence in curriculum offering. Many educators, who have attended the NCS PD orientation programme, are adult learners who need to negotiate meaning with the education practice and thus adjust to new demands.

Change therefore means creating new meaning within oneself, rather than outside oneself. It takes, as its point of departure, the willingness of the individual to initiate a move. This could mean something more than being only cognitively prepared for the change, but being in a position to willingly commit oneself in facilitating change.

2.3.3 Context-based adult learning

Context-based adult learning advocates a 'hands-on' approach to learning where learners engage in the 'doing' of things themselves rather than only reading about learning. This type of adult learning requires that adult learners should observe how things are done, reflect on their own abilities and negotiate meaning rather than depending on the theoretical definitions of things (Merriam 2001:45).

Context-based adult learning asserts the use of tools such as policies, and guidelines as the determining factors of effective learning. Adult learners should experience the use of tools that form part of their learning as well as

be provided with the opportunities of interacting with the real learning situation. For example, training of educators should ensure that it covers practical aspects necessary for effective implementation of the NCS. The point here is that learning in context pays attention to the interaction and intersection among people, tools and context within a learning situation (Merriam 2001:45).

In essence, context-based learning incorporates the learners' developmental needs, ideas and cultural context into the learning experience. Learning is therefore not only something that happens in the brain but it is to a large extend shaped by other external issues such as 'where' the learning takes place, 'how' it is happening, 'who' facilitates it, and 'which' strategies are used. This perspective alludes to the importance of learning from experienced persons and therefore developing communities of practice, who would share a common sense of purpose and a desire to learn and know what each other know.

Having indicated the necessity of understanding the underpinning principles and importance of adult learning theories in CPD programmes, it is equally important to discuss assessing training effectiveness.

2.4   Assessing Training Effectiveness

Along with the demand for quality professional development comes the need to be accountable. Professional development programmes must be assessed to document their value to the school organisation, individual educator, and ultimately the learners. To ensure the effectiveness of each professional development effort, evaluation must be regarded as an ongoing process that is initiated in the earliest stages of programme planning and continued beyond programme completion. Evaluation of a professional development programme has two important goals, namely to improve the quality of the programme, and to determine its overall effectiveness.

It is often valuable to obtain feedback from participants regarding their experiences of the training programme that they have received, through evaluation. With such evaluation, educators describe their own professional growth and evaluate the programme in meeting their personal and professional goals. Typically, evaluation of a professional development programme is completed at the end of the professional development intervention. This evaluation is usually restricted to the participants' initial reaction to the session content and relevance as well as the effectiveness of the presenter or facilitator. Educators can provide important information concerning the appropriateness of topics and the effectiveness of staff developers.

Professional development programmes should enhance learning, which is the development of people from the inside out – so that they can achieve their own individual potential – what they love and enjoy, what they are most capable of, and strong at doing. People, and educators alike, respond to appropriate learning because they want to; because it benefits and interests them; because it helps them to grow and to develop their natural abilities; to make a difference and to be special (Kirkpatrick 1994).

According to Kirkpatrick's (1994) model of learning and training evaluation, four levels of evaluation should always be followed to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme, namely: reactions, learning, transfer and results. By reactions, Kirkpatrick implies the measurement of how participants in a training programme react to it. It attempts to answer questions regarding the participants' perceptions – Did they like it? Was the material relevant to their work? Kirkpatrick argues that every programme should at least be evaluated at this level to provide for the improvement of the training programme. Although a positive reaction does not guarantee learning, a negative reaction almost certainly reduces its possibility.

Assessing at the level of 'learning' means moving beyond learner satisfaction and attempting to assess to which extent students have advanced in skills,

knowledge or attitude. If possible, participants should take the test or assessment before the training (pre-test) and after the training (post-test) to determine the amount of learning that has occurred.

The third level of evaluation, 'transfer', measures whether the learning programme has changed the learner's behaviour. Evaluation at this level attempts to answer the question: Are the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitude being used in the everyday environment of the learner? (Kirkpatrick 1994). For many trainers, this level represents the truest evaluation of a programme's effectiveness.

The fourth and last level of Kirkpatrick's model, 'results', measures the success of the programme in terms of improved quality. From the organisational perspective, this is the overall reason for a training programme.

The above discussions imply the following concerning the importance of evaluation of any professional development programmes, including the NCS PD orientation programme under scrutiny that:

- evaluation is a vital part of professional development planning and implementation efforts;
- evaluation is implemented during a professional development programme to modify and improve the quality and relevancy of the programme;
- adjustments are made to ensure optimal results;
- evaluation is completed after a professional development programme has been offered to determine the effectiveness of its impact on teacher practice, school improvement, and student improvement;
- an innate part of the evaluation process is the impact of professional growth and development on educators themselves, including the nature of that growth and the changes in their professional lives, roles, and responsibilities.

2.5 The Forms which Professional Development (PD) could take

There are many different forms, which professional development could take. Ling and Mackenzie (2001:87) argue: "Some of these PD forms involve in-house programmes, which are designed within the professional context by personnel who comprise the context. Others draw upon outside expertise in the form of consultants or cooperate ventures with other sectors of the education system or with outside bodies. These forms take different names ranging from in-service, staff development, continuing professional development and teacher development."

The recently published National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NFTED) (DoE 2006:18) also supports Ling and Mackenzie on different forms that professional development could take by applying the following five categories:

- school-led programmes;
- employer driven programmes;
- qualification driven programmes;
- other programmes offered by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), teacher unions, community-based organisations or private companies;
- self-chosen activities.

Although the above forms do not represent all views in the literature of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the importance of the latter in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Intermediate Phase should be emphasised. This could be used as impetus for action research, as one form of professional development, as it is largely informed by the educator's professional needs. The importance of self-initiated forms of professional development is key to the achievement of individual and organisational goals. However, one could indicate that a balance should be maintained between the above-mentioned categories,

especially in the South African context where educators are still grappling with the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

2.6 Models and Practices in Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

To be effective and successful, teacher professional development must be of high quality and relevant to educators' needs. Effective teacher professional development begins with an understanding of teachers' needs and their work environments – schools and classrooms. It then combines a range of techniques to promote learning; provides educators with the support they need; engages school leadership; and makes use of evaluation to increase its impact.

According to the National Staff Development Council (2001), teacher professional development programmes can be divided into the following three broad categories, namely Site-Based which often takes place in schools or resource centres and focuses on the specific, situational problems that individual educators encounter as they try to implement new techniques; Self-Directed, where educators are asked to determine their own professional development goals and select activities that will help them attain these goals and Standardised TPD, which is discussed below.

■ Standardised TPD

Standardised TPD is the most centralised approach, best used to disseminate information and skills among large numbers of educators. It focuses on rapid dissemination of specific skills and content, often via a 'cascade' or 'train-the trainer' approach. This approach involves workshops and training sessions. Standardised models tend to rely on training-based approaches, in which presenters share skills and knowledge with large groups of educators via face-to-face means.

When employed in accordance with best practices, standardised approaches can effectively expose educators to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and

new colleagues. It could also disseminate knowledge and methods of facilitating learning to educators throughout a country or region and visibly demonstrate the commitment of a nation to a particular course of action. Its goal is to disseminate information to the largest number of educators possible, build awareness of best practices and expose educators to new knowledge skills and strategies.

Table 1: Strengths and Limitations of a standardised approach

Strengths	Limitations
One-to-many format facilitates large-scale project	Exclude site-based issues
Introduces a common knowledge base and skills to many participants.	"One-size-fits all" approach excludes contextual issues that may pose barriers to implementation in schools
Broadens educators' knowledge by providing access to new ideas and strategies	Unless it is a series of workshops over a long period of time, the one-shot approach of workshops does not address the long-term, developmental nature of learning
'Pyramid' training structure facilitates large-scale projects and rapid diffusion across systems	Significant diminishment of skills and knowledge in the transfer from champion teacher/trainer to educators
Cost-effective means of distributing discrete sets of knowledge and skills intended to be implemented by all educators (e.g. NCS)	Format does not provide follow-up or support, which is an essential component for success.
	Evaluation and accountability are difficult – classroom-based results only emerge over time, and are outside the workshop structure
	Training facilities may not match school conditions

Source: National Staff Development Council (2001: 23)

The above category (Standardised) Teacher Professional Development takes place in many countries within contexts of increasing governmental interventions for the purpose of 'accountability' and 'peformativity'; and in some contexts of raising standards of teaching where pre-service/Initial

Professional Education of Teachers (IPET) programmes are inadequate to produce a sufficient supply of competent educators.

For any education system to achieve its objectives in the provision of quality education, it should create an advancing structure driven by a richly detailed, morally compelling vision of learners' learning, facilitation of learning, leadership, and professional development. This vision, in turn, should reveal the policies, resources, and programmes required to support it – for instance, district accountability, incentive systems, and collective bargaining agreements that support high performance, annual calendars and daily school schedules that are professional development friendly, and a culture focused on continuous improvement.

These issues are important in achieving a successful PD system in South Africa, where the majority of the educators are still grappling with the understanding of the new curriculum. South Africa cannot expect quality education if educators are not exposed to enabling environments that will make them improve their skills, knowledge and attitudes. The phrase that educators are the primary agents of change cannot be underestimated.

The researcher's understanding of the context of PD from the above discussion and that of the programme under study, namely the NCS PD orientation programme, points to two important aspects: PD programmes should be understood both in its 'temporal' and 'spatial' dimensions/contexts. The 'temporal' dimension, expresses the importance of time and experiences in teacher development. Teacher learning at a certain moment in time can only be properly understood against the background of the educators' earlier experiences on the one hand, and in terms of the educators' expectations about the future, on the other hand. It therefore suffices to say that the expectations of educators and their experiences over time are also crucial in determining whether an educator development programme reached its intended outcomes.

The spatial context refers to the social, organisational and cultural environment educators are working in. This environment includes, but is not limited to policy decisions and structural frameworks schools have to operate in. This environment includes opportunities provided to educators on an ongoing basis, educators given a chance of working together, the presence of shared power and authority, as well as participatory decision making in the workplace and lastly, autonomy and choice for individual members.

Mackenzie (1997) affirms the importance of flexible approaches to professional development that leads to knowledgeability and reflexively self-monitored development. In doing so, he developed what he calls a 'Turbine Approach' to professional development. This approach is explained below.

■ Turbine Approach to Professional Development
This model approaches professional development as interactive involving a dialectical relationship between educators, programmes providers and the school. The model assumes that the empowerment of the educators, which is the central purpose of professional development, is placed at the centre of change (Mackenzie 1997:96).

At the peak of this model is the decision making body that formulates policies and funds its implementation, in this case the DoE. Accordingly, the DoE's role in professional development is to facilitate the development of educators. This could be achieved by developing the PD programmes that address the needs of individual educators/schools.

The model also emphasises the importance of making available mechanisms that inform educators about a 'menu' of programmes to select from to meet their diverse professional needs. A regular communication and support is also central to this model. Providers of education programmes such as universities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), provincial administrators and educators themselves should work collaboratively to meet the needs identified.

The model further suggests that for any PD programme to be successful individual educators and teams of educators should receive adequate training at appropriate sites outside the school and later the programme providers should bring the programme to the school and assist/support educators in its implementation. This model supports 'spatial' approach to professional development alluded to earlier in this chapter.

Linking this to the provision of the NCS PD orientation programme for educators, it assumes that educators should not be left to their own devices after the orientation programme has been completed. One of the most important aspects of professional development reflected in this model is that of sustenance of the PD activities. The model lists six important points that are key to any PD programme, namely:

- theory;
- demonstration and modelling;
- collaborative teamwork and sharing;
- opportunities to reflect on current practice;
- practice and follow-up opportunities at school;
- feedback and ongoing support at school site provided by PD providers or expert colleagues.

The model calls for a more cohesive relationship between all stakeholders responsible for teacher education and development. The policy on teacher development and education that the DoE released (DoE 2006) with its CPTD system is a good example of this model. As stated earlier, the success of models such as these depend entirely on the commitment of all stakeholder to play their role in its implementation, and to provide educators with sufficient resources needed for its effective implementation.

At the conclusion of the models is the recognition of educator participation in PD programmes. This implies that educators need to be offered incentives to motivate and acknowledge their efforts. This could be in the form of points/ credits, which puts them in the position to be granted better opportunities.

This point is also emphasised in the policy framework for teacher development (DoE 2006).

Figure 1: Adapted diagram of Mackenzie's Turbine Approach (Source: Mackenzie 1997:17)

DOE
Responsible for policy on PD, funding for implementation at provincial level

School's/individual's need identified through (IQMS)

PD programmes selected or developed to meet specific school or individual needs

PD providers circulate information to schools indicating available PD

PD providers, provincial administrators and participating teachers make commitment to goals, expectations and accountability measures

Organisational adjustments to support the PD programmes made

Individual educators

or

Team of educators

or

Whole staff

Commencement of PD programme at appropriate site outside the school

Programme providers bring the programme to the school and commence implementation

Regular sessions over extended period of time

with:

1. theory
2. demonstration and modelling
3. collaborative teamwork & sharing
4. opportunity to reflect on current practice
5. practice and follow-up opportunity at school
6. feedback & ongoing support at school site

Regular communication between PD providers, educators & administrators to monitor progress

Formal recognition of educator participation in PD programmes through Universities

Evaluation of effectiveness following completion of programme involving PD provider school and participants

The above diagram (Figure 1) implies that the needs of educators and that of the school should guide policy-making authorities, when formulating PD programmes. The model reaffirms the notion that different/various educators, and schools alike, will always have different PD needs. Policy-making authorities such as the DoE, (based on 'skills audit' that outlines educators' needs) should develop programmes that support the needs of educators as individuals or as a collective entity with schools. The delivery of such programmes could either happen outside the school or could be brought to the school where teaching and learning occur. The model suggests that for the effective implementation of any PD programme, it should, in its development, focus and address the needs identified by educators themselves rather than adopting a defect model of professional development as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The model further recommends regular sessions over an extended period of time where there is a continuing PD support, reflections, collaboration, and feedback. This process of regular communication between the PD providers, educators and policy-making authorities (DoE) to monitor the quality of the implementation of the programme, the NCS in this case, cannot be overemphasised. There is vast emphasis placed on evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme following its completion, which in essence provides feedback in terms of reflection by either PD providers or participants themselves.

The researcher agrees with Mackenzie's model since it emphasises the importance of commitment of all stakeholders involved in the provision of PD programmes, and in the programme under study in particular, as a requirement for achieving the necessary educational change. Of importance are the individual him/herself, the team of educators the whole staff and the authorities responsible for teacher development and resource provisioning. It would be inappropriate to leave the quality provision of any PD programme to chance, and not ensure that all quality assurance factors for effective PD are adhered to.

However, the fact that South Africa is still a developing country could be a challenge to the effective implementation of this model as it assumes that resources are in abundance to everyone.

2.7   What is an Effective Professional Development Programme?

The test of effective professional development is whether educators come to know more about their subjects/learning areas, their students and their practice, and to make informed use of what they know. This is in line with the third level that was put forward by Kirkpatrick in his four levels of programme evaluation, namely 'transfer'.

Just as effective classroom practices are those that reflect the growing knowledge based on how children learn, effective professional development experiences incorporate best practice from adult learning theories. Adults bring history of previous learning and knowledge to any professional development activity. These past experiences affect their attitudes and beliefs. Teacher professional development is most effective when it incorporates, recognises, and validates these previous experiences. Like children, adults have varying styles of learning. Professional development activities that attend to a variety of learning modalities could be most effective.

Active participation is a key element that must be balanced with the realities of limited time and the need to efficiently convey information. However if policy makers sacrifice to engage participants on a hands-on approach, for a more didactic, telling experience, this might often result in a less effective experience.

Adults are motivated by practical applications and learning that is relevant to their own situations. This is particularly true for educators struggling to juggle the multitude of demands on their time. Any educator professional development programme should be well planned, and set reasonable

expectations and goals for it to be effective. A key factor in ensuring effective TPD is matching appropriate professional development provision to particular professional needs. This 'fit' between the developmental needs of the educator and the selected activity is critically important in ensuring that there is a positive impact at the school and classroom. Where staff development opportunities are poorly conceptualised, insensitive to the concerns of individual participants and make little effort to relate learning experiences to workplace conditions, they make little impact upon educators or their learners (Day & Sachs 2004:294).

A professional development programme for educators needs to be linked to both individual and organisational goals, if both individual and organisational change is to be achieved. There will be regular occasions during the life cycle of organisations and at particular times of national reform when organisational goals will predominate, and times in individual educators' career development when their needs must prevail. This implies that it is plausible that if only individual goals are considered there is a risk that TPD may not result in school improvement, and may run counter to organisational philosophies and objectives; or, if organisational goals totally dominate, educators could become frustrated and less motivated to put TPD into practice.

Although Kirk (1987:47) places the individual educators' needs slightly above the organisational ones, by arguing that "it is the failure by authorities to make available opportunities for PD that leads individual educators to pursue their own PD needs", it should, however, be understood that the importance of a PD programme contains the seeds of two contrasting perspectives on the professional development of educators – one that stresses the needs of institutions and one that concerns the needs and aspirations of individual educators themselves. According to Kirk (1987:46), the first perspective acknowledges that "changes in education which place new demands on educators call for the provision of opportunities which are intended to equip educators with the skills and understandings necessary to implement new developments." In TPD activities of this kind, the impetus for development comes from the institution – the school or the education authority; they are

institutionally driven in the sense that they are intended to make institutions responsive to the needs of the educational system.

When teacher development is aimed instrumentally at hastily achieving a new transformatory curriculum in a context in which many educators have a low base of skills and competencies – and, possibly, different cultural understanding – the only way in which educators appropriate the new curriculum change may be an organisationally driven TPD programme which is then followed by a strong individual drive. Any orientation programme should therefore introduce educators to the basic elements necessary for its implementation and leave the finest details to educators, as individuals or as a collective, to build on the foundation laid.

Systems theorists such as Senge (1990:45) assert that everything in a system is connected to everything else and that a change in any part affects all the other parts and the whole. System thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes; it is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things. By this it implies that the interconnectedness of all parts of the educational enterprise means that classrooms, schools, and the school district are tied together in a web of relationships where decisions and actions in any particular part affect other parts and the system as a whole. Without any knowledge of systems, "the harder you push, the harder the system pushes back. We cannot achieve system change if we do not achieve individual change. By implication, one cannot have one without the other" (Senge 1990:45).

From the above discussion, one could highlight the importance of critical evaluation of the need behind the development of any PD programme. Large scale changes (for example: curriculum) means a change in the approach to teaching which therefore calls for the development and upgrading of skills, knowledge and attitudes of educators in order to cope with change. This type of change needs to be driven by decision-making authorities, and not left to the devices of individual teachers. Although the needs of educators should take priority in PD programmes, system needs are equally important in large-scale changes.

2.8 Key Considerations in Planning Effective TPD programme

Following the contradictions mentioned in chapter 1, on how PD activities should be conducted, it is clear that the provision of PD orientation programmes could take any form depending on the envisaged outcomes that the organisation (DoE) wanted to achieve. Of importance is the fact that when a broader 'scope' in the PD programme is provided, educators become enthusiastic to become life-long learners. This broad approach, which addresses both individual and organisational goals, is also critical in ensuring that the political goals (e.g. cultural integration) are met.

However, it is important to ensure that a balance is maintained lest the 'core business' of education, which is 'empowering' educators in the implementation of the curriculum, could be compromised.

Below is a list of key considerations that Guskey (1998:38) put forward:

- Change is both an individual and organisational process. TPD needs to focus on the classroom level, but also needs to ensure that schools culture and structures support it.
- Plan large-scale change, but do so incrementally to minimise chances of failure.
- Work in teams to help alleviate the fear of change, but make sure that the teams are not too large, as the risk exists that too much time is wasted on meetings rather than action.
- Include procedures for feedback on results, especially information that the new method seems to be working, as change in 'affective' attitudes often follows changes in outcomes that in turn follow from changes in behaviour.
- Provide continuing follow-up, support and pressure, especially during the early phases of implementation when most problems will be encountered. It takes on the job practice and support if new practice is to become habitual.

- Integrate programmes with existing initiatives, to avoid innovation overload.

In a 1989 meta-analysis of existing research and the literature, Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) describe five effective models of staff development and identified the following characteristics of effective professional practice:

- activities are conducted in a school setting and linked to other school wide improvements efforts;
- educators are effectively involved in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities;
- self-instruction is emphasised and a variety of 'differentiated training opportunities' are offered;
- ongoing support and resources are provided;
- training is concrete and includes ongoing feedback; supervised trials and assistance on request.

Joyce and Showers (1995) note that in the 1970s, evaluation of staff development that focused on teaching strategies and curriculum revealed that as few as 10 percent of the participants implemented what they have learnt. In a 1987 synthesis of the research, Showers, Joyce and Bennett examined the conditions necessary to change educators' practice. They proposed a combination of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback and found that sustained practice was a critical element. They argue that for a complex model of teaching, about 25 teaching episodes during which the new strategy is used are necessary before all the conditions of transfer are achieved.

Recently, a report by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory noted that it took 13 -14 months to turn the educators around in a professional development effort that involved changing science educators' instructional approach.

The above research stresses the importance of time to bring about effective change. It is important to consider the importance of time because most of the educators who were exposed to the NCS PD orientation programme are experienced educators who have taught over a long period of time. For them to change needs time. Time put aside for any PD programme to take place is of importance in determining an opportunity for effective learning. The importance of a differentiated model of presentation is also emphasised in the above research.

Senge (1990:34) confirms the importance of time as a resource in TPD. He emphasised that TPD processes take time and must be supported by an ongoing series of connected activities and events.

Professional development is change and, like any change, requires time and should be viewed as a process, not an event. Significant amounts of time must be available during school time whether it be provided by professional development days, early closure or release time. Support from administration and school boards in providing adequate time, resources and personnel, is critical.

Equally, a 'bottom-up' strategy, which places total responsibility for the direction and nature of professional development on educators themselves, would generate involvement of a high order and might be expected to strengthen educators' commitment to their work. However, if such development activity does not take into account institutional problems, it would be of strictly limited institutional value, no matter how richly satisfying it might be in individual cases.

Considering the above perspectives, it is clear that PD is neither something that can be imposed nor something that is spontaneously generated. It can be institutionally activated and having been activated requires institutional support.

It could therefore be concluded that in such models as the 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up', polarisation has no place, and

- neither educator nor manager is concerned to dictate to the other the nature and direction of professional development;
- it is a product of a process of professional discussion, analysis and negotiation.

2.9   The Importance of Reflection in Teacher Professional Development

The success of the implementation of any PD programme (including the one researched) should not be regarded as solely an outcome of favourable conditions outside of the educator himself/herself.

Educators should also engage in continuous self-study/reflection which according to Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) could be seen as a means by which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance, an awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development. In short, one could therefore regard it as a professional development strategy designed to enable professionals to change their behaviour, thereby improving the quality of their performance.

It is therefore based on an assumption that professional growth is as important to the individual as it is to the organisation. While the NCS PD orientation programme may have been designed with the needs of the organisation in mind, reflective practice is a 'bottom-up' approach prompted by the belief that organisational needs are best met by meeting the professionally oriented needs of the individual.

Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) maintain that there is a need for every educator to engage in professional growth opportunities. They maintain that professional growth should be seen as a normal and necessary part of life for all members of the organisation. This belief that all professionals need improvement is also closely linked to the understanding that all professionals experience situations in which they are not as competent as they would like, that all professionals confront problems in their daily work that require new and different strategies.

However, professional development should not necessarily be viewed as a normal and ongoing professional need. It should be focused on addressing identified professional needs that arise during the professional career of members of organisations. This applies to educators as well. The aspect of self-inquiry/reflection, which is related to action research, is imperative in any professional development initiatives and individual educators should use action research as a tool to learn and improve their practice.

When educators are involves in action research, it is practical that this engagement with themselves will make them understand themselves better... As Schön as cited by Osterman and Kottkamp (2004:54) states, "When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his/her own practice, he/she engages in a continuing process of self-education . . . the recognition of error, with its resulting uncertainty, can become a source of discovery rather than an occasion for self defence." Loucks-Horsley (1998:270) supports this idea by saying "shifting to a new paradigm for professional development might start with small steps. Other small steps could include introducing action research"

Kirk (1987:15) supports the above assertion when he emphasises that teaching requires a commitment to professional development. He further maintains that commitment to self-evaluation clearly entails a commitment to professional development since there is no point in subjecting ongoing practice to critical scrutiny unless it is intended to take appropriate action in the light of that scrutiny. In a sense, therefore, self-evaluation and professional development are inseparable. This aspect applies to both

educators and those who support at district, provincial and national level. The effective implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase therefore, is to a certain extent, dependent on the willingness of the Intermediate Phase educators to know themselves, their skills gaps and strengths. This also applies to going an extra mile to work as teams at school level.

2.10   Implications of Reflection to Educators and Policy Developers

Reflection has come to be widely recognised as a critical element in the professional growth of educators. Terms such as 'reflective teaching', inquiry-orientated teacher education', 'teacher as researcher' and 'reflective practitioner' have become quite prolific in discussions of classroom practice and professional development.

It is frequently presumed that reflection is an intrinsically good and desirable aspect of teaching and teacher education, and that educators in becoming more reflective, will in some sense be better educators, though such claims have rarely been subjected to detailed scrutiny. No matter how thorough and systematic initial training may be, it can never anticipate and prepare comprehensively for all the various demands that are to be encountered throughout a teaching career.

Educators, and those departmental officials that support them, need opportunities for professional enrichment, for keeping abreast of developments in knowledge and pedagogy, for revitalising the practice of their profession, and for enhancing and acquiring skills that are thrown into prominence by changes in the social and educational context. Developing this line of thinking, Cumming and his colleagues, as quoted by Kirk (1987:48), maintain: "… in the final analysis, it is the teacher who has to change in ways that are substantially of his own design. He cannot be developed; he is the agent not the object of development intentions."

This implies that reflective teaching offers promise of an alternative conceptualisation that appropriately recognises the thoughtful and professional aspects of educators' work. Even if South Africa were to have an unlimited supply of resources, the effective implementation of the NCS PD orientation programme would not be possible if educators were not committed to improve their own practice. It goes beyond question that if those involved in curriculum implementation, whether being at school or past school level, should start acknowledging the importance of reflection as a tool to guide their practice.

When educators still work in isolation from their colleagues for most of the time, opportunities for the development of practice based upon observation and critique of that practice remain limited, and despite the best efforts of many school leaders to promote collegial cultures, these could almost always be at the level of examining practice itself, not individual practitioners. It is obvious that change starts from within individuals, before it could spread within an organisation. Therefore, knowing one's strengths and weaknesses is important for participation in professional development programmes.

2.11   Barriers to Effective CPD Practices

These are times of considerable promise and challenge for all employed educationists. Raising the quality of education in South Africa is highly dependent on making conditions conducive for this goal. These conditions include among other things, high quality professional development. However, this ideal situation is not always easily achievable.

While there is variation in the way scholars of professional development define, cluster and label the factors that are ideal to contribute effective professional development, and while there are some contradictions in the available professional literature concerning 'what is best', the differences should not deter concerted efforts to design and implement professional development opportunities of high standard. Considering 'what is best' can be

enriched by considering why professional development sometimes fails. Following is a list of factors that could be barriers for effective PD of educators in South Africa (Adapted from Fullan 1991:316 and Bezzina 1988:15-17). However it should be noted that the list is not exhaustive.

- inadequate funds are available to support the available courses;
- TPD opportunities are frequently available to only a small number ofeducators;
- insufficient and inappropriate follow-up procedures are used to determine the relevance and productivity of the TPD training programmes;
- currently, TPD activities are far removed from the schools. TPD has rarely, taken place in schools or classrooms, and even more rarely occurred concurrently with learner learning. For many, the 'best opportunities' were those held off-site at a convenient and comfortable location, far from the distraction of learners;
- action research as a tool to improve good quality practice is often not considered in the selection and design of the course content of TPD activities. That being the case, they rarely address individual needs and concerns;
- most of the TPD activities are characterised by minimal, if it ever happens, infrequent follow-up. As a result, no feedback is provided to practicing educators. Sayed as cited by Day and Sachs (2004:169) argues that effective TPD requires sustained monitoring and evaluation;
- the majority of programmes involve educators from many different schools and/or school districts, but there is no recognition of the differential impact of positive and negative factors within the system to which they must return. The aims of training a large number of teachers in the shortest possible time are probably incompatible with the aim of producing and supporting innovative teachers equipped to act as change agents.

Considering the list of factors mentioned above, it is clear that provision of resources, whether encompassing financial, human or time resources, is a cornerstone of the challenges, which could lead to failure. Where there is a lack of funding for basic education, for example, TPD is readily displaced as a priority area, and is more likely to be narrowly targeted.

This is illustrated in the following comment from a study conducted in Malawi by Kunje and Chimombo, as cited by Day and Sachs (2004: 170) that "opportunities for in-service training for teachers and tutors arise only as a means of orienting them to new syllabuses or curricula… There is also lack of professional development ethos at the school level."

The barriers mentioned above are not 'unfamiliar' to the implementation of curriculum changes in developing countries such as South Africa. What is currently happening in most developing states is irregular short period orientation workshops which do not necessarily bring effective change in the system. If PD is not done correctly, educators do not benefit as much as they should and thus it would not serve the purpose for which it was designed.

2.12   Conclusion

It has become apparent that professional development provides a means to enhance the status of teachers by empowering them to become advocates for their profession as well as becoming articulate about what it is they do. It is clear from the above discussion of TPD that there is no 'one right way' for the provision of TPD. It is also clear from the literature research that the quality of the nation's schools depends on the quality of the nation's educators and differences in educator capability can compromise the quality of teaching and learning in the country.

The importance of well coordinated, needs-focused TPD has been emphasised. Unfortunately, high quality educators do not simply materialise or come ready made. For effective TPD to take shape, consideration must be

given to time and resources to support professional development initiatives. It goes beyond question that for change to occur, educators need support and incentives for participating in ongoing professional development. However, incentives should not be seen as a key driver to professional development.

It has also been highlighted in this chapter that one of the first tasks for professional development may be to facilitate the development of educators' ability to engage in critical reflection. The researcher's deduction emanating from this chapter is that professional development cannot be perceived as being an event or periodic action/activity to address only system-wide training needs and fails to provide sufficient time to plan, learn, and reflect on new strategies and practices grounded in the context and content of the reality of educators' classrooms.

The development of the policy on teacher education and development, which was finalised in 2006, would be utilized as a corrective measure to the challenges of TPD in South Africa, especially in terms of how the NCS intervention programmes for educators should be provided for in achieving quality teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the methodological structure, that is, how data was collected to establish whether the NCS PD orientation programme reached its outcomes. This chapter also provides a discussion of the research design, data collection strategies and procedures that were followed when conducting the study. A brief discussion of the limitation of the methodology and design will also be focused on.

3.2   Research Design

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:31) define research design as "the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer a research question". The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including 'when', from 'whom', and under 'what' conditions the data will be obtained. In other words, research design indicates how the research is set up: what happens to the subject and what methods of data collection are used. Mouton (1996:107) supports McMillan and Schumacher by asserting that a research design "is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem".

In this study, the research was carried out with Intermediate Phase educators who attended the NCS PD orientation programme. The study took place during January – March 2008. The selected educators were visited at their schools for the distribution of questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The researcher conducted this study under friendly and relaxed conditions since the researcher has a good rapport with the schools from which respondents were selected. The researcher was once a subject advisor in the district where this study was conducted.

3.3   Methodology

Research methodology, as defined by Hart (1998:28) is "a system of methods and rules to facilitate the collection and analysis of data."   It provides the starting point for choosing an approach made up of theories, ideas, concepts and definitions of the topic. It is against this background that one could argue that research techniques, therefore, constitutes an application of methodology.

Mouton and Muller (1997:2) define methodology as "logic of social inquiry." It is a systematic approach to research, which involves a clear preference for certain methods and techniques within the framework of specific epistemological and ontological assumptions. The authors further make a distinction between methodology, methods and techniques. They contend that whereas methods and techniques refer to research tools such as surveys, case studies and experiments, methodology refers to the logic or underlying principles that are presupposed in the usage of such methods and techniques. Methodology could therefore be divided into two main approaches namely quantitative and qualitative.

The nature of this study is best suited to the qualitative approach as the researcher is interested in the in-depth study of a single 'case' which is a NCS professional development orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:35) assert: "Traditional qualitative research is also distinguished by using a case study design, in which a single 'case' is studied in depth. This could be an individual, one group of students, a school, a programme, or a concept."

With its particularistic nature, case study focuses on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study within a particular context. Merriam (1998:39) cites Guba and Lincoln concluding that case study is the best reporting form for evaluations. According to Guba and Lincoln, case study is best because it provides thick description, is grounded, is holistic, and lifelike,

simplifies data to be considered by the reader and can communicate tacit knowledge.

In the light of the above, a case study is relevant to this research since the objective here is to determine whether this programme, namely, NCS PD orientation programme has reached its outcomes. The specificity of focus in a case study makes it an especially good design for this study because the problem of this research is a practical one, which pertains to the puzzling occurrences arising from the everyday curriculum practice in our schools.

However, the researcher has chosen to use a combined method approach. The decision to use the combined methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) is applied by the selection of data gathering techniques that the researcher has used in this study, namely questionnaires (quantitative instrument), interviews (qualitative) and document analysis. The data collection tools used in assisted in drawing data that enabled the researcher to find relevant responses to the questions that were posed at the beginning of this study.

3.4   Data Gathering Methods

Data gathering methods used were:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Document analysis

Below is a detailed discussion of each method.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

In surveys, two major instruments are used, namely questionnaires and/or interviews. The major advantages of questionnaires are that they permit a wide coverage of distribution at a minimum expense in terms of both time and

money. Besides being cost effective, questionnaires are also easy to respond to, without any intimidation and thus no training of subjects is required.

On the contrary, there are also disadvantages associated with the use of questionnaires. The following are some of the disadvantages as outlined by Ndlala (2001:10):

- Low return rate and sometimes no returns.
- A possibility of misinterpretations of questions due to poor formulation.
- Difficulty to interpret subjects' responses.
- Difficulty to check whether the subjects understand the questions.
- Possible response bias.

For the purpose of this study, questionnaires (Appendix C) were sent to educators who are currently teaching Intermediate Phase classes and have been exposed to the National Curriculum Statement PD orientation programme, which was conducted by the departmental officials. The purpose of this data source is to determine participants' experiences concerning the success of the NCS PD orientation programme that they attended and to establish the extent to which the programme reached its intended outcomes.

Structured items were included in the questionnaire, which required participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed in each case. These items covered professional relevance of the NCS professional development orientation programme presented to educators, its impact on educators' understanding of the NCS and what the educators' perceptions are regarding the success of the programme, especially taking into account its purpose.

The questionnaire also provided a table with a list of NCS items, which formed the core content of the programme. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they:

- expected the item to be included in the orientation programme;

- learned when that item was presented to them;
- regard that item as useful in the implementation of the NCS.

Respondents were expected to respond by indicating a 'Yes' or 'No' to the above questions. They were further asked to indicate, on a scale of 1-6, the extent to which they implement each of the 16 NCS items. A descriptive legend for the scale was provided in the questionnaire. The challenges that the researcher encountered with this instrument are discussed in the following chapter.

3.4.2 Interviews

The interview involves direct interaction between individuals, and this interaction has both advantages and disadvantages. The following are some of the advantages outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:250):

- An interview as a method is flexible and adaptable.
- It can be applied notwithstanding respondents' problematic situations as well as dealing with various types of persons such as those who are illiterate or too young to read and write.
- Responses can be probed, followed up, clarified, and elaborated upon to achieve specific accurate responses.
- High response rate.
- The interviewer has an opportunity to motivate the respondent.

As opposed to the above, the following could also be said regarding the disadvantages of this method:

- It has a potential for subjectivity and bias.
- It is time consuming and could be costly.
- The respondents may be uncomfortable in the interview and unwilling to report true feelings.
- The interviewer may ask leading questions to support a particular point of view.

It is therefore imperative that the researcher, as the interviewer, should guard against the above-mentioned aspects by being neutral.

The insights, ideas, beliefs and attitudes of participants on the NCS professional development orientation programme are regarded as essential so as to determine the success of the orientation programme. The different social and cultural backgrounds as well as life experiences of each educator mean that each will have his/her own experiences and perceptions of the orientation programme.

During the interview, during which semi-structured open-ended questions were asked (Appendix D), the researcher was able to follow-up on gaps and other issues that needed further clarity from the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with the sample that responded to the questionnaire. Such a follow-up is important to validate participants' responses thereby avoiding possible response bias that could have happened when the questionnaires had been completed and returned to the researcher.

It took the researcher approximately 10 days to complete interviews with the respondents. Interviews were held with respondents at their schools and the principal's office was used for this purpose. Each interview took approximately one hour. Respondents were first made aware of the purpose of the interview, the questions that would be asked and that the discussions would be treated as confidential.

A voice-recorder was used during the interview. As McMillan and Schumacher (1993:432) assert that "tape recording the interview ensures completeness of the verbal interaction and provides material for reliability checks." After completion of the interviews schedule the researcher transcribed the recordings and compiled notes, which formed the basis for data analyses. Respondents were allowed to respond in the language that they were comfortable with hence most of them preferred to use Setswana.

3.4.3 Document analyses

Using documentary materials as data is not much different from using interviews or observations. Glaser and Strauss as cited in Merriam (1998:120) compare fieldwork with library research by saying "When someone stands in the library stacks, he is, metaphorically, surrounded by voices begging to be heard. In these publications, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, and describe events or scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork."

According to Mertens (1998: 324), the qualitative researcher uses documents to obtain the necessary background of the situation and insights into dynamics of everyday functioning. Documents are an objective data source and represent an independent level of data. In this case, unlike with interviews, a researcher relies on what he sees. The researcher found this method appropriate to support the questionnaires and interviews since it would present evidence of the extent of the NCS implementation in the Intermediate phase. Properly developed plans (work schedule, learning programmes and lesson plans), which include diverse elements of the NCS and its principles, would imply that respondents achieved the outcomes of the orientation programme and are therefore able to implement the NCS as a result.

It was therefore appropriate for the validation of the findings of this study to analyse documents relevant to this study, which would either affirm or reject what the respondents had answered in the questionnaires. Materials relevant for this inquiry were lesson plans, work schedules, learning programmes and educator portfolios. These documents would determine whether educators adhere to the implementation guidelines as provided during the orientation sessions. Adherence to such guidelines in these documents could indicate understanding of the policy imperatives that are crucial in the implementation of the NCS.

The authenticity of these documents was thoroughly checked when presented to the researcher. Since these documents are important in determining

whether the NCS is correctly implemented at school level, and thereby reflecting on the success of the orientation programme, the researcher asked questions of clarity where necessary when these documents were submitted.

3.5   Sampling

The research was conducted in six schools with 18 (3 teachers per school x 6 schools) Intermediate Phase educators in the Nkangala Region – Mpumalanga Province. Four of the selected schools are located in Nokaneng Circuit while two are in Mmametlhake Circuit. The distance between the schools in Nokaneng Circuit falls within the radius of 1km with the shortest distance of 50m between two of the selected four schools. Mpumalanga Provincial Department of Education has three regions namely Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni and Nkangala.

The latter region was selected for this study due to its proximity to the researcher, which would make it easier to meet with the respondents when follow-up is necessary.   The schools were selected using the 'cluster' sampling method where schools from one district are considered for the study. However, in this study, two circuits were selected from one district.

A purposive sampling was used to select the number of respondents. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight into the subject being researched and therefore must select a sample where the most can be learned. Patton, cited by Merriam (1998:61) asserts that: "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research." Selection of educators who participated in the orientation programme would therefore provide information, which gave answers to the questions asked.

3.6   Validity and Reliability in the Research Design and Methodology

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:223) define validity as "a judgment of the appropriateness of a measure for specific inferences or decisions that result from the scores generated." In order words, it is a situation specific concept that is concerned with whether what one is measuring is what one really intends to measure. In this study, the following validity strategies were implemented to ensure that the methodology and data source instruments accurately measure what the researcher intended to measure.

◼ Content Related Evidence

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:224) explain this strategy as the extent to which the content of a test is judged to be representative of some appropriate domain of content. In this study, the researcher meticulously ensured that the questions that were asked are developed from the core content and outcomes of the NCS PD orientation programme. In this way, the items in the questionnaire measures predetermined content by establishing whether participants understood and implement what they have learned during the orientation programme.

◼ Criterion Related Evidence

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:224) indicate that the strategy addresses the question of the efficacy with which the scores on an instrument predict scores on a well-specified, predetermined criterion. In this case, the specification of the criteria used is based on professional judgment of the researcher. The researcher developed a legend based on the items of the core content and guidelines provided in the training manuals of the NCS PD orientation programme in developing the questionnaires and in analyzing the submitted documents.

Four point and six point-scales, with level descriptors, were used in different sections of the questionnaire where the researcher deemed it necessary. Such a decision to apply varied scores was the researcher's professional

judgment, which was based on the level of details required in each section of the questionnaire.

Reliability in quantitative research refers to the consistency of the instrument and test administration in the study. In qualitative research, it refers to the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, data recording, data analysis and interpretation of participants' meaning from the data (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:385). In this study, reliability in data collection was ensured to reduce threats to reliability by using the following strategies:

■ Verbatim Accounts

This refers to verbatim accounts of conversations with participants, transcripts from recordings and direct quotes from documents used by the researcher. In this study, comments from respondents were recorded verbatim. However, it should be noted that in the event where a language other than English was used, the researcher translated the quotes into English.

■ Participants Review

In this case, the researcher asked participants to check and modify any misrepresentation of meanings derived from the interview data. To comply with this requirement, respondents were given an opportunity to review the transcripts of the interview and indicate whether what has been captured is what they meant.

■ Discrepant Data

This is when data presented vary from the emerging pattern of events. Since documents were used as a data source, discrepant data was reported where respondents indicated in their interviews and interaction with the researcher, that they do not encounter challenges in the NCS implementation due to the orientation programme whereas the documents at hand indicate otherwise.

3.7   Ethical Issues

Ethics in research plays an important role in research planning and the execution thereof.   Ethics could be regarded as the moral principles that offers behavioural expectations concerning the most correct conduct towards participants. In this study, two ethical considerations were complied with, namely, ethical consideration in data collection and analysis and in writing this research.

In the former consideration, the researcher requested approval from the Nkangala Regional office to conduct this study with educators in this region. However, it needs to be put on record that after numerous occasions of seeking approval from the Regional Manager, no approval letter was received from the authorities to grant the researcher approval to visit the schools. The researcher resorted to the circuit manager who verbally granted the researcher approval to visit the schools. The consent of the participants was communicated orally and in written form.   Letters were attached to the questionnaires, which the researcher personally distributed to schools and to the affected educators. These educators were briefed about the purpose of the study, the time needed to complete the questionnaire; the need to conduct interviews with them and that documents would be needed to support the questionnaire and the interview. Language used in the questionnaire was not offensive.

Regarding the ethics in writing this mini dissertation, consideration was given to the fact that the research remains neutral and unbiased, especially due to the fact that the researcher participated in the development of the NCS PD orientation programme at national level, participated in the training of officials who later trained the Intermediate Phase educators and monitored the training of these educators.   The words and language in this document are neither offensive nor biased against persons in terms of their age, sexual orientation, gender and race. All quotations from other sources have been acknowledged accordingly.

3.8   Limitations of the Research Methodology

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the methods used to collect data in this study have disadvantages. In this study, 18 questionnaires were distributed to schools and given to individual educators on site. However, the researcher experienced the following with regard to questionnaires:

- Low return rate and sometimes no returns.
- Misinterpretations of questions.
- Difficulty to interpret subject's responses.
- Participants not responding to all questions.
- Possible response bias.

With regard to interviews and document analysis, similar challenges were experienced where some respondents were uncomfortable in the interview especially when questions were asked in English. This led to the researcher code switching where necessary. In the event of documents submitted, some of the documents were not clear, some incomplete whereas in some instances respondents were not willing to share the documents with the researcher.

3.9   Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology and research design that this study followed are discussed. It is made clear that both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were followed. Different methods such as questionnaires, interviews and documents were used to gather data from the participants. This chapter further outlines how validity and reliability requirements were adhered to.

It is also mentioned in this chapter that the challenges associated with these methods of data gathering were also experienced in this study, however minimal. These challenges did not impact negatively on the validity and reliability of data gathered.

CHAPTER 4: FEEDBACK FROM RESPONDENTS

4.1   Introduction

The previous chapter reveals how the research was designed and the methods of data gathering that the researcher followed to gain relevant information from the respondents. Three data sources were used to establish the extent to which the NCS PD orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators reached its intended outcomes. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the feedback received from participants. This data is organised in such a manner that it responds to the three sub-questions asked in chapter one. It should also be mentioned that on average, only 17 respondents returned the questionnaire and not all respondents answered all the questions.

4.2   Questionnaire

The questionnaire addressed the following issues:

4.2.1 Educators' perceptions on the appropriateness and relevance of the
                   NCS PD orientation programme

At the beginning of this study, the researcher points out the intention to investigate the extent to which the NCS PD orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators reached its intended outcomes. In this case, the correct implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate phase would assume that the outcomes of the orientation programme, which could be summarised as enabling educators to effectively implement the NCS in the Intermediate phase, were reached. In order to adequately respond to the key question, the respondents were asked to:

- indicate the extent to which they feel they have learned from the orientation programme;

- indicate the extent to which they confirmed that they have implemented what they have learned during the orientation programme;
- indicate what they have not learned what they needed or expected to earn during the orientation programme.

4.2.1.1 The extent to which the respondents feel they have learned   from the   orientation programme

A data source that was used to gather information on the above matter was a questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate using a six point-scale whether they:

- have learned a lot – 6
- have learned enough to function on their own – 5
- need follow-up to function – 4
- need support to function – 3
- learned but cannot implement of their own accord – 2
- did not learn at all – 1

The table below (Table 2) provides a summary of how the 17 respondents indicated the extent to which they feel they have learned.

Table 2: The extent to which the respondents feel they have learned

Learned a lot' ─ 6	Learned enough to function on my own" ─ 5	"Need follow-up to function"─ 4	Need support to function ─ 3	Learned but cannot implement on my own ─ 2	Did not learn ─ 1
0	6	6	5	0	0
0%	35.29 %	35.29%	29.42%	0%	0%

The above table reveals that of the seventeen (17) respondents to this question, twelve (12) educators which makes 70.58% of the total sample of respondents allocated themselves scores between 4 and 6. Of these 12

educators, six (6) indicated a need for a follow-up to function and the other six (6) indicated that they feel they have learned enough to function on their own.

4.2.1.2 The extent to which they confirmed that they have implemented what they have learned during the orientation programme

Some of the disadvantages of questionnaires put forward by Ndlala (2001: 10) are the difficulty to check whether the subjects understand the questions and possible response bias. On the issue of indicating the extent to which they confirmed that they have implemented what they have learned during the orientation programme, the researcher wanted to establish whether respondents are self-confident, that they do what they are expected to do and whether they implement the NCS in line with the requirements as stipulated in the policy and guideline documents provided during the orientation programme.

The respondents' responses were scrutinized separately from data recorded during interviews and documents analysis processes to avoid premature formulation of opinions by the researcher. The same legend and scores as in table 2 were used in this case. The following responses were recorded (table 3):

Table 3: Extent of confirmation of implementation

Learned a lot' — 6	Learned enough to function on my own" — 5	"Need follow-up to function" — 4	Need support to function — 3	Learned but cannot implement on my own — 2	Did not learn — 1
1	6	8	2	0	0
5.88%	35.29 %	47.07%	11.76%	0%	0%

The above table concurs with data in table 2 in terms of how respondents feel they have implemented what they have learned, with fifteen (15) respondents higher percentage (88.24%) allocating to themselves scores between 4 and 6, which is indicative of the top half of the scale. The data further suggest that

only a small percentage of respondents cannot implement what they have learned without getting support. These educators comprise 11.76% of the total sample of the respondents to this question.

4.2.1.3 Indication of what respondents have not learned what they needed or expected to learn during the orientation programme

Properly planned orientation programmes have outcomes that are shared with participants at the start of the programme. This is also the case with participants regarding their own expectations about the programme that they are attending. As indicated in chapter 1 about self-directed learning, adults engage in learning with the view of acquiring skills that will enable them to pursue their 'dreams' throughout their lives, thereby making them worthier people. In this case, educators would implement the NCS more appropriately due to knowledge and skills acquired during the orientation programme. The following responses were received from eleven (11) participants. Some of the responses were the same from more than one respondent.

- We needed more details on learning programmes and assessment standards.
- Assessment and recording, including unpacking of assessment standards and linking them with the Learning Outcomes were not sufficiently done.
- Learning programmes and clustering of assessment standards.
- Assessment standards and assessment techniques, more clarity is needed.
- Assessment of activities.
- Dealing with learners with barriers to learning.
- Development of activities from learning outcomes and assessment standards.
- How to record learner performance and the development of standardised tools thereto.
- Development of rubrics for assessment.
- Choice of relevant activities to address learning outcomes.

Respondents further pointed out, under the heading 'any other comments; that they would have wished that the NCS PD orientation programme could have taken place earlier in the year, preferably during the first quarter of the year in order to assist them with the planning processes. The other comment received indicated that some of the departmental officials who conducted the orientation programme needed training themselves since they lacked insight in some of the issues.

4.2.2 Evaluation of achievement of key outcomes of the orientation programme

As indicated in chapter 1, the NCS PD orientation programme for Intermediate Phase educators aimed at advancing the skills, knowledge and attitudes of the Intermediate Phase educators in the implementation of the NCS. It is also pointed out in chapter 1 the reasons that led to the revision of C2005 into the NCS. Without repeating these issues, it is imperative to point out that proper teacher preparation is one of the key reasons for this process.

In the light of the above, the NCS PD orientation programme was planned in such a way that it would address the concerns that led to the failure of C2005. In order to achieve this, 16 items that constituted the core content of the orientation programme, from which most of the outcomes were developed, were identified and orientation activities and learning outcomes developed around them. Thirteen (13) items were used to evaluate the extent of achievement of the key outcomes of the orientation programme in this study. Participants were asked to respond to the questions by indicating with a 'Yes' or 'No' whether they:

- expected the items listed in the table below to be included in the orientation programme;
- whether they have learned from the presentation thereof ;
- whether the item was useful in implementing the NCS;

- using a scale of 1 - 6, indicate the extent at which they have implemented the item in their teaching. The following legend was applied in this instance.

  1 - Never implement

  2 - Seldom implement

  3 - Only implement when supported

  4 - Implement sometimes

  5 - Not fully implement (just implement)

  6 - Implement fully

Table 4 provides a summary of how participants responded. As indicated in the introductory paragraph of this chapter, not all respondents answered all questions. As a result, the total number of respondents (n) for each item varies. Despite this inconsistency of responses, the researcher chose to record the responses as they were received.

The numbers that appear under the heading 'NCS ITEMS' in the table (table 4) stand for the following items:

  1 - Development of Learning Programme (3 year plan)

  2 -Development of Work Schedule (Grade plan)

  3 - Development of Lesson plan

  4 - Principles of NCS

  5 - Outcomes-Based Assessment

  6 - Relationship of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards

  7 - Issues of language and how they impact on teaching, learning and assessment

  8 - Collecting evidence of learner performance

  9 - Recording learner performance against learning outcomes

  10 - Identifying and addressing barriers to learning

11 - Management of curriculum change

12 - Understanding policies that impact on assessment

13 - Dealing with diversity in the classroom

Table 4: Evaluation of achievement of key outcomes

NCS ITEMS	Expected	Learned	Usefulness in implementing NCS	Extent of Implementation (scale 1 – 6)					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Yes: **14** No: **00**	Yes:**14** No: **00**	Yes: **14** No: **00**	0	0	1	5	7	1
2	Yes: **13** No: **00**	Yes:**13** No: **00**	Yes: **13** No: **00**	0	0	2	3	6	2
3	Yes: **13** No: **00**	Yes:**13** No: **00**	Yes: **13** No: **00**	0	0	1	6	5	1
4	Yes: **12** No: **01**	Yes:**10** No: **03**	Yes: **11** No: **02**	0	0	2	10	1	0
5	Yes: **13** No: **00**	Yes:**12** No: **01**	Yes: **13** No: **00**	0	0	2	10	1	0
6	Yes: **13** No: **00**	Yes:**12** No: **01**	Yes: **12** No: **01**	0	0	2	9	2	0
7	Yes: **13** No: **02**	Yes:**15** No: **00**	Yes: **14** No: **01**	0	1	3	6	5	0
8	Yes: **13** No: **02**	Yes:**15** No: **00**	Yes: **15** No: **00**	0	0	2	7	5	1
9	Yes: **14** No: **00**	Yes: **14** No: **00**	Yes: **14** No: **00**	0	0	4	3	6	1
10	Yes: **13** No: **03**	Yes:**12** No: **04**	Yes: **15** No: **01**	0	0	11	4	1	0
11	Yes: **12** No: **02**	Yes:**13** No: **01**	Yes: **13** No: **01**	0	0	4	6	4	0
12	Yes: **13** No: **00**	Yes:**13** No: **00**	Yes: **13** No: **00**	0	0	4	6	2	1
13	Yes: **10** No: **03**	Yes:**11** No: **02**	Yes: **12** No: **01**	1	0	4	7	1	0

The above table indicates how respondents responded to different items of the orientation programme. It should be noted that however important these items are for implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase, some respondents did not perceive it as such. The table above also shows an interesting spread of numbers per item in terms of the extent of implementation. In the two extremes, namely 'never implement (1)' and 'fully implement (6)' there are a low number of scores in all items. The items that are rated low regarding the confirmation of the extent of implementation are: 'Identifying and addressing barriers to learning', 'understanding policies that impact on assessment' and 'dealing with diversity in the classroom'. The analysis of the above data is dealt with in chapter 4.

4.2.3 Presentation of the orientation programme

In addition to the above information, respondents were asked to respond as to how they perceived the presentation of the orientation programme. Under this heading, participants were required to indicate by placing an 'X', in the appropriate 'scoring box', which most closely represents their perception about the way the orientation programme was presented. Participants were required to indicate whether:

- the programme was stimulating or boring;
- they had good discussions or limited discussions;
- the orientation programme was well conducted or poorly conducted;
- it was demanding or undemanding, challenging or patronizing;
- it was a good use of time or poor use of time;
- it had good level of activities or poor level of activities.

The purpose of this information is to assess how participants in the orientation programme reacted to what was presented to them and how it was perceived which in essence could have had a bearing in the achievement of the outcomes of the orientation programme. It attempted to answer questions regarding the participants' perceptions – whether they liked it or not.

The majority of participants indicated positive responses in all the afore-mentioned items. Some participants expressed the following comments about the presentation of the orientation programme:

- "*District officials should always support teachers*"
- "*Monitoring should be regularly done*"
- "*More time for training is needed*"
- "*The programme was very helpful*"
- "*I have gained a lot from other educators*"
- "*The programme was well presented*"
- "*Regular workshops should be held, follow-ups are needed and schools must form clusters to support one another*"

4.2.4   Participants' understanding of the content

This category of questions aimed at checking whether the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitude are being used in the everyday environment of the participants. The data instruments used in this case were the questionnaire and interviews: From the questionnaire, respondents indicated that that they understood the content, and thus could implement it on their own. However, some made the following remarks in the space provided for comments:

- "*Subject Advisors should spend more time addressing and   explaining learning outcomes and assessment standards and help educators to design relevant learning programmes and work schedules*"
- "*Language used in the orientation programme is sometimes tricky to understand*"
- "*Full training programme of three to six months is needed to master the curriculum*"
- "*More time is needed for workshops*"
- "*Group discussions were helpful, especially in clusters*"
- "*Congestion of information should be avoided at all costs*"

- *"Using a full day for a workshop will be fruitful with items prioritised and discussed at length"*
- "*A five day training to cover 5 priority areas could have helped with emphasis on learning programmes, work schedule, lesson plan and practical examples on the development of activities and tasks, and recording"*

Interviews were then held with the same participants, who had completed the questionnaire, to comply with the validity testing of this research.

4.3   Interviews

Interviews were held with educators from the selected six schools. Seventeen educators were available to be interviewed. Individual interviews were conducted. Three educators per school (who had completed the questionnaire) were interviewed as a follow-up to their responses to the questionnaire. Semi-structured questions covering the following areas were asked.

- Participants' understanding of planning requirements.
- Their understanding in dealing with diversity and differentiation.
- Staff development issues.
- Understanding policies and the use thereof.
- Managing assessment, including issues such as the development of school assessment programmes and record keeping.
- Any challenges they are faced with during the implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase.

Below is a description of how respondents responded to some of the questions asked by the researcher.

4.3.1 Participants' understanding of planning requirements

Participants were asked how the NCS orientation programme helped them to do their planning in accordance with the NCS policy, taking into account the requirements for the development of learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans.

In response to the above question, participants indicated that the NCS orientation programme assisted in providing basic knowledge and skills in planning their work. All respondents said that, at the moment, they do not encounter any challenge in the planning of the learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans. This data was recorded as is without looking at the documents submitted for analysis.

The researcher further prompted respondents on the frequency of their meetings, as staff; in the development of the 2007 work schedules for their grades and who participated in these meetings.

Various responses were recorded from the respondents, ranging from:

- "a*t the end of the year, in preparation for next year"*
- *"work schedules are done by the subject advisors so that we could have similar plans for the circuit"*

All respondents indicated that only learning area educators are involved in the development of the work schedule. One educator went to the extent of saying, *"Once developed (work schedule), we do not change it, we use it over and over again. Only lesson plans could be changed, but work schedules of learning areas remain the same."*

Asked about how they deal with integration of learning outcomes (LOs) across the learning Areas, since it appeared that they do not involve educators of other learning areas when developing work schedules, the respondents said:

- "*It happens simultaneously, I really do not consider it as an integral part of my planning. No, I do not include it in my planning*"

- "*I take it upon myself to refer to other Learning Area Statement documents to see how my learning area LOs link with other learning areas. Yes, I integrate across the learning areas*" – (same school with the above respondent).

- "*No integration across the learning areas in my learning area because we work individually as learning area teachers*"

- Other respondents indicated that the subject advisors in their various learning areas provide ready-made work schedules with integration included in their plans.

4.3.1.1 Lesson planning

All respondents indicated that the orientation programme assisted them in ensuring that they understood the steps in the development of a lesson plan. They all indicated that they do not have any problem in this area of planning, since work schedules provide a foundation for lesson plans. The duration of their lesson plans varied from one week to three months plans. Exemplars of lesson plans and work schedules that some respondents submitted as evidence are attached at appendix F.

4.3. 1.2 Learning programme development

All respondents indicated that they do not have time to sit together and develop school specific learning programmes. "*We have been doing it all along, but now subject advisors do it for us*" – one respondent replied.

All respondents confirmed that they learned how to develop a learning programme during orientation sessions but they are now doing it differently through the help of subject advisors. "*Common planning in this area is the way to go and it assist us because we help one another during cluster meetings*" – one respondent emphasised.

All respondents were asked what contributed to their improvement in planning and all spoke of the intervention and support they received from the subject advisors in the various learning areas. Their comments could be summarised as follows:

> *"We attribute this to a combination of the orientation programme and CIs (that is Curriculum Implementors/subject Advisors). Cluster meetings are also helpful since we share ideas as Learning Area educators during cluster meetings."*

The researcher noted the emphasis on the importance that the respondents had attributed on the involvement of subject advisors and cluster meetings in enabling them to implement the NCS.

4.3.2 Staff development issues in support of the NCS implementation

Respondents were asked about the frequency of their meetings as staff to support each other and share ideas regarding curricula issues, as continuation and reinforcement of what they have learned during the NCS orientation programme. Three educators interviewed in each school that the researcher visited each gave an answer different from the other interviewees from the same school. Answers ranged from 'once a week' to 'twice a quarter' and 'when the need arises'. There was no situation where two educators from the same school gave the same answers. One of the respondents said:

> *"Due to time constraints, we do not have such sessions in the intermediate phase, maybe in the foundation phase because they break early. It is not easy to know what the other person is doing, especially that we follow learning area teaching."*

This view was shared by a number of respondents, others indicating transport as a limiting factor to meet after school hours for teacher development.

4.3.3 Understanding policies and the use thereof

Respondents were asked whether they understood policies that dealt with assessment of learners who experience diverse educational needs (Inclusive Education Policy) and language policy; and how they implemented these policies in their teaching and learning environment. All respondents affirmed a good understanding of all policies that were presented to them during the NCS orientation programme. However, the challenge comes with the implementation of these policies in the classroom. For example, when asked about how they deal with diversity in their classes, all respondents indicated that they do not have time and resources to deal with learners who experience learning problems. Some also mentioned that this area is a specialized area for which they were not trained.

Respondents were also asked how they address the principle of expanded opportunities to learners who perform at various levels; some respondents confirmed that they attend to learners who need more time after school. Others, who said they do not have time to meet with these learners after school, mentioned that they give 'fast learners' extra work to find time to give attention to those who are 'slow'. In the case where such comments were made, the researcher asked for evidence of differentiated plans prepared for different learners (e.g. Lesson plans or activities for various learners) and no evidence was provided in this regard. One responded said explicitly:

> "*There is really a problem in our schools. However, we try to accommodate them in our teaching and give them special attention after school. We also ensure that the pace of the learner is taken into account.*"

Another one said:

> "*We do not have any mechanism in place to deal with such learners. Individual teachers try to assist when they are confronted with such problems. No remedial class. There is a structure called School Based Support Team (SBST), whereto severe cases are referred.*"

Another educator, who was asked about how she planned for differentiated teaching and learning, surprisingly said:

> "*I do not have such learners. No, I do not plan differently.*"

Respondents were asked how they deal with learner retention in the Intermediate Phase. All respondents could not provide a clear answer except making reference to the Assessment Policy of 1998, which indicates that there must be reasonable motivation for such action to be done. One respondent said:

> "District officials want proof for why learners 'fail', as a result you don't just do it. You must have records of meetings with the parents, intervention programmes you followed and many more, so you can't ...".

This educator was also asked to rate herself regarding the implementation of the NCS according to the required standards, using a rating scale of 1 – 10

('1' being 'not at all' and '10' being 'excellent'), she said:

> "It's a fifty-fifty. There are things that I still do not understand."

When she was asked to elaborate, she referred to the template that they use for lesson planning and said:

> "I don't know why they talk about 'teacher activities'. Is this curriculum teacher or learner oriented? This template is confusing."

All respondents were also asked whether they confirm that all is well in the implementation of NCS, taking into account the policies on assessment. Six respondents gave positive responses and attributed these to the support of subject advisors and the availability of assessment guidelines in particular. One educator, who could not provide a clear answer said:

> "Learners cope, though I cannot confirm whether it is a qualitative or quantitative achievement."

The other educator pointed to the need for resources such as computers to develop assessment rubrics for different assessment activities by saying:
"Development of rubrics is still a challenge in assessment, and I think it is the case with most educators in my school."

The last question asked to all respondents was to indicate their level of confidence in implementing what they have learned and whether they are experiencing any inhibiting effects to implement the curriculum as they would have wished. Four (two from the same school) indicated that they are positive that they are doing the right thing. Of the four, two provided exemplars of their preparations as evidence of work done in their school. Analysis thereof is done under document analysis.

The other respondents referred to a combination of contextual issues such as overcrowding and lack of resources (including time) as factors that limit implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase. More often, the contributions made by sources external to the school (subject advisors' intervention) were mentioned as having contributed more positively than the orientation programme itself.

4.4   Document Analysis

During the interviews, respondents were asked to provide evidence of the implementation of the NCS by submission of relevant documents. More often, very few educators were willing to provide such evidence. In some instances, the researcher asked for the previous years' documents and respondents could not provide any. However, some schools provided exemplars of learning programme, work schedules and lesson plans, which are provided as appendices. Analysis thereof follows.

4.4.1 Lesson plans
The lesson plans that were submitted for analysis have all components/elements needed in the development of the lesson plan. Such elements/components include:

- name of Learning Area;
- duration of the lesson;
- Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards,

- Integration;
- Teachers and Learner activities; and
- expanded opportunities.

However, the content of the lesson plans differed from one lesson plan to another. For example, under integration, one lesson plan (Lesson plan 1 – School A) only indicated names of learning areas integrated with the taught learning area (EMS and Maths) whereas the other (Lesson plan 4 – School B) provided information regarding learning outcomes and assessment standards integrated with the taught learning area. The quality and detail of the content of the two lesson plans also differs. Under activities, the following was written in Lesson plan 1 – School A:

- They tell stories e.g. about the jackal and the lion, the man-eater etc.
- Enjoy listening to their colleagues.
- They happily write the stories they were told by their mothers and grannies

Under educator activities, the following is recorded:

- Ask learners to talk about any story they read about.
- Rectifies the sentence construction, logic and audibility.
- Ask the learners to then write their stories in their classwork books

Looking at the activities and taking into account that the learning outcome of the lesson is 'Listening', it goes beyond doubt that the educator does not understand lesson planning well. The educator indicates under learner activities that learners would write about what they heard from people who are not part of the lesson namely their mothers and grannies. This activity does not 'gel' with the LO of the lesson since the educator would not be able to ask questions, as indicated under forms of assessment, since the stories were not told in the classroom.

The lesson plan indicates that the educator would not achieve the LO because learners in this case are not asked any questions to assess their listening skills. The LO could have been 'speaking' instead since learners 'tell' stories and are assisted with sentence construction as they speak

Lesson plan B provides better details and there is a high level of alignment of activities for learners and the educator. The time allocation for the activities is acceptable as compared to the other one where the lesson is planned for 2 days, but very few activities are planned for that period.

One of the major differences identified in the provided documents (lesson plans), is information regarding assessment. One lesson plan (Lesson plan 4 – School B) provided in full detail of forms of assessment, resources to be used in each activity, time per activity in hours, and what the educator has planned for expanded opportunities, whereas in the other Lesson plan 1 – School A, such information was either not provided or are provided without understanding. In Lesson plan 1 – School A, nothing has been recorded about expanded opportunities.

4.4.2 Work schedules

Three exemplars of work schedules were received from respondents, two from one school and all for different learning areas and grades. The two work schedules from the schools are not written the same way and the contents are not of the same quality. In one work schedule (Grade 4: Social Sciences – School B), information regarding resources required, forms of assessment, and integration is missing whereas that of School C covers all components as outlined in the guideline attached at appendix E. This lack of uniformity in planning by educators who attended the same orientation programme, and who indicated in the interview and questionnaire that they do not experience challenges in planning, depicts an area of concern in terms of what is exactly the case in schools.

4.4.3 Learning programme

One examplar of a learning programme was given to the researcher. This exemplar contained only Grade 5 information for a specific learning area namely English (1st Additional Language). This learning programme was compiled for English Learning Areas within a phase (Intermediate Phase). There is, however, no evidence of integration across the learning areas in the provided learning programme. Since a learning programme should provide a phase long information (grades 4 – 6), the submitted one could not assist the researcher in analysing whether the respondent understands how to develop a complete learning programme. Respondents were also asked about the school assessment programmes. None of them could either indicate their involvement in the developing of such programmes or provide exemplars thereof.

4.5   Trainer evaluation

Respondents were asked to indicate their perceptions about the officials who 'trained' them during the NCS PD orientation programme. The success of a training programme is a result of a combination of factors, including how well the facilitator related with the participants. Participants were to provide their own assessment of trainers/facilitators on knowledge of subject, organisation of sessions, obvious preparation, and responsiveness to groups, style and delivery and producing a good learning climate. On average, most respondents mentioned that they were happy with the facilitators, except regarding issues raised earlier in this chapter where other participants pointed out that some of the facilitators did not have sufficient insight on other issues.

4.6   Balance of programme

This category of questions aimed at establishing participants' perceptions about the length of the programme, its sequencing, pacing, effectiveness of activities, time given to them for discussions and activities and the amount of time that they would have wished. Most of the participants (12 of the sixteen

who responded to the length of the programme) indicated that the programme was too short.

4.7   Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher elaborates on the responses that he received from respondents from the six schools that participated in this study. The researcher also mentions that three data instruments were used to collect the aforementioned data, namely questionnaires, interviews and documents related to this study. It is also made clear that not all respondents responded to all questions on the questionnaire and that most of the respondents could not provide the document required for this study as evidence of their implementation of the NCS as a result of the NCS PD orientation programme that they had attended.

This chapter also provides verbatim responses as captured in the voice recorder that was used during interviews. In some cases, the researcher used his own words where the respondent answered in a language other than English. In the following chapter, an analysis of these responses is done. The researcher will also provide his findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED SAMPLE OF DATA

5.1   Introduction

The previous chapter focuses on the three data instruments that were used to gather data, which could assist the researcher to arrive at a particular conclusion regarding the extent to which the NCS PD orientation programme reached its intended outcomes. In that chapter, the researcher's focus is on the questions that were asked during the study and the type of responses received from the questionnaires and interviews and the quality of information contained in the documents that were received from the respondents.

This chapter also focuses on data analysis and subsequent interpretation. Data analysis could be explained as making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen et al 2007:431). The researcher chose to follow three approaches to data analysis. The first approach, namely analysis by people, is where the responses across 17 individuals who completed the questionnaires and who were interviewed were looked at to compare individual responses and issues that they have raised in this study. Davies (2007:191) supports this approach by indicating that the aim of qualitative research is to explore individual or situational perspectives and gain an in-depth understanding of personal feelings and experience.

The second approach used for data analysis is the presentation of data that are relevant to a particular issue. With this approach, the derivation of the issue for which data are gathered is clarified. The third approach to data analysis that was followed in this case is the use of all the relevant data from various data streams (interviews, questionnaire and documentary data), which were used to provide a collective answer to a research question. This enables patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data

types to be explored conveniently and clearly. These approaches are not used in any specific order in the chapter.

5.2 Educators' perceptions on the appropriateness and relevance of the NCS PD orientation programme

The instrument used for this data stream was the questionnaire. This data was chosen to enable the researcher to follow Krippendorp's (2004: 48 – 53) approaches as cited in Cohen et al (2007: 483) where he suggests that the researcher should develop frequencies from data gathered by extrapolations (which means creating trends, patterns and differences), standards (making evaluations and judgments) and linguistic re-presentations. As part of statistical analysis of data, the following approaches were also employed, namely factor analysis (grouping of responses), tabulation (of frequencies and percentages) and graphical representations.

In response to the above issue, most of the respondents indicated that the orientation outcomes were reached and that they are confident that they could implement the NCS in the Intermediate Phase. From this data stream, the scores allocated by respondents to the evaluation of achievement of key objective show that a small number, that is 5 respondents (approximately 29.42 %) of the 17 respondents are not confident that they could implement the NCS on their own, but would need support (Table 2).

This response indicates a positive feedback in terms of the educators' perceptions on the appropriateness and relevance of the orientation programme that they have attended. The researcher's analysis of table 3 in chapter 4 is that more educators still need follow-up to effectively implement the NCS. The data in table 3 are congruent with that in table 2 although in table 3, the data shows that there is a reduction in confidence from respondents in terms of implementation of the NCS. In this table, 8 respondents (47% compared to 35. 29 % in table 2) indicated that they

needed follow-up to function. This trend of inconsistency in terms of the responses to the related questions is also evinced by data in the two tables (2 & 3) regarding indicator # 6 (learned a lot). In table 2, there are no respondents who showed that they have learned a lot, but in table 2, 1 respondent (5.88%) showed that they have learned a lot to effectively implement the NCS. The graph below provides a summary of the respondents' ratings in terms of a) the extent to which educators felt they have learned and b) the extent to which they confirmed they have implemented what they have learned.

Graph 1:Evaluation of training and learning
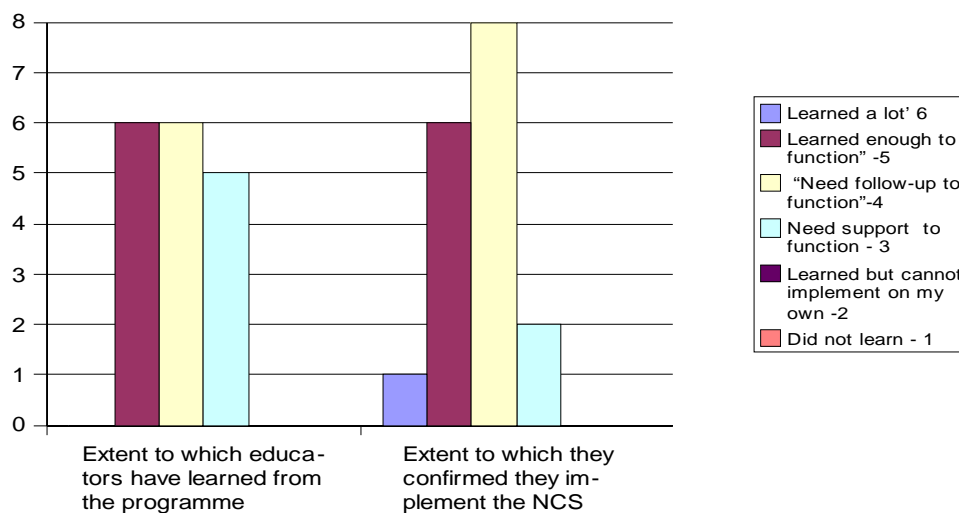
The graph indicates consistency in terms of the number of respondents who maintained that they learned enough to function, which is 6 respondents (35.29%) in both cases (extent to which educators have learned from the programme and extent to which they confirmed they implemented the NCS); also with regard to those who indicated that they did not learn, which is 0 (0%) and those who pointed out that they learned but cannot implement on their own, which is also 0 (0%). The differences are seen in terms of those who need follow-up, who need support and who learned a lot in both cases, namely the extent to which educators have learned from the programme and the extent to which they confirmed they implemented the NCS.

5.3   Evaluation of Achievement of Orientation Outcomes

The graph below depicts the respondents' responses on how they rated themselves in the way they think the outcomes of the orientation programme were reached in the three key areas, namely learning programme, work schedule and lesson plan development. This data came from the questionnaire.

Graph 2: Planning
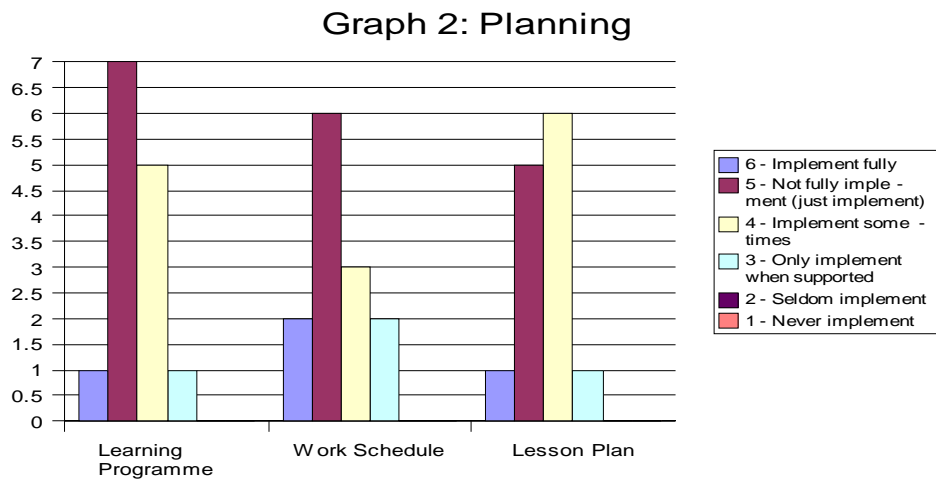
The graph shows lack of consistency in terms of the 6 indicators used to establish whether educators implement the NCS as a result of the orientation programme that they have attended. It is interesting to note that 7 educators (50% of the population) indicated that they do not fully implement the learning programme, and 5 of the remaining 7 (which is 35.71%) showing that they 'implement it sometimes'. The same pattern is seen in the implementation of both the work schedule and the lesson plans. The pattern between the development of the learning programme and the lesson plan is almost similar.

The data also reflects that very few educators (1.5 at average) either 'do not implement', 'seldom implement' or 'implement only when supported'. This data also provides positive feedback about the orientation programme since it implies that educators could implement what they have learned. The fact that on average, only 1.5 educators implement the NCS fully raises concern. The fact that there is a consistent decline in the number of educators in the top

half (4-6) of the graph, in terms of the development of learning programme and the lesson plan, also raises questions about the level of confidence in the implementation of the NCS.

5.4 Application of relevant policies

The implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase does not only depend on the ability of educators to plan for teaching, learning and assessment. It also relies on the educators' ability to understand and implement different policies that are integral to quality teaching and learning. Some of these policies are central to the principles of OBE and NCS, for example the policy on inclusion, language and assessment to name a few.

The graph below provides a picture of the level of educators' confidence in the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA), addressing barriers to learning, collecting evidence of learner performance (recording) and how they deal with diversity in their classrooms. These elements are also the key in establishing whether the NCS PD programme has reached its intended outcomes since these areas were also identified as areas, which led to poor implementation of C2005 because educators were not well prepared to deal with these areas. The graph below provides an analysis of how respondents rated themselves in terms of implementation thereof.

Graph 3: Policy implementation
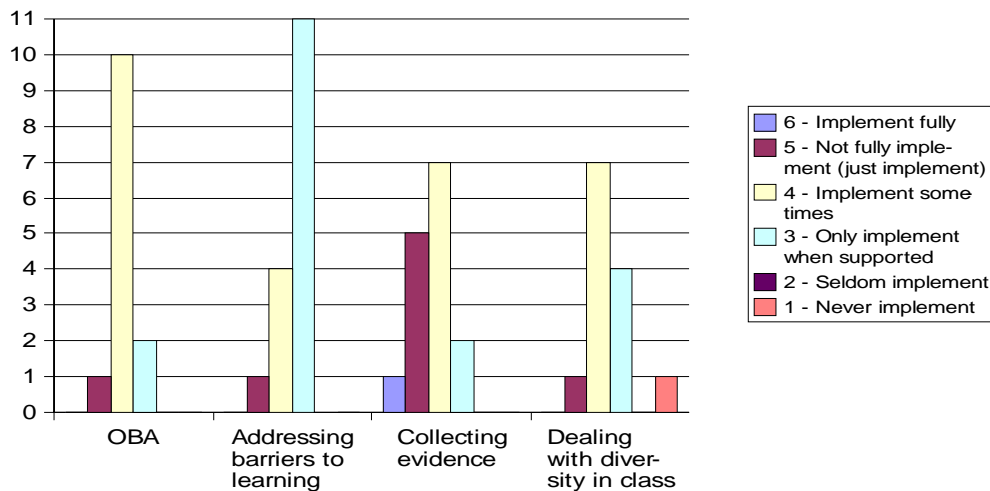
The graph shows that no educator indicated that he/she 'never' and 'seldom' implement' the four items, which were part of the NCS PD orientation programme except one in dealing with diversity in the classroom. What is also evident from the graph is the number of educators who indicated that they only implement a policy on dealing with barriers to learning when supported. It is clear from this graph that most educators are not consistent in terms of the implementation of the above items and this is shown by the fact that the majority of educators indicated that they 'implement sometimes'.

There are more educators in this category ('never' and 'seldom' implement the four items) than in others. This could be interpreted as a lack of confidence in educators to fully implement the NCS since at average, only 1 educator (approximately 1.78%) across the four items indicated that he/she can 'fully implement' the items and 8 educators (14.28%) cannot 'f*ully implement'* but rather '*just implemen*t' the items. The above data raises concern especially when compared to data depicted in graph 2 where most educators' confidence of implementation seems to gradually fade.

The data from the above graphs indicate lack of consistency in terms of the level of respondents' confidence. To be precise, there are fewer respondents who indicated that they fully implement what they have learned during the NCS PD orientation programme.

With regard to the presentation of the orientation programme, it became clear that most of the items, which the respondents expected to be included in the orientation programme, were addressed. Fourteen (82%) of the seventeen participants rated themselves between 4 and 5 (achieved and fully achieved) when responding to whether their personal objectives were achieved or not. These objectives related to the achievement of the outcomes of the orientation programme. These participants also found the NCS PD orientation programme interesting. However, there was a slight concern in terms of the time allocated for activities and the orientation programme as a whole.

The participants indicated that the NCS PD orientation programme provided them with a good understanding of the NCS content, although more emphasis on planning processes seemed to be an issue, which needed more attention. Another aspect in which the respondents rated themselves low pertains to the balance of the programme. Sixteen participants (89% of the total target) indicated that more time would have been ideal for the orientation programme, especially in cases where the programme was conducted after school hours.

5.5   Extent of application of what they have learned

During interviews, the respondents were optimistic that they learned a lot from the NCS orientation programme but emphasised the importance of the continued support that they receive from the subject advisors. The interviews reflected a slightly different picture as revealed in the questionnaires due to the request by the researcher to be provided with the supporting documents. It is clear from the data gathered that respondents do understand what is expected of them but sometimes do not adhere to the policy stipulations. The interviews indicate that in five schools planning is done randomly without following any guidelines as stipulated in the policy and only one school follows the policy.

From this data stream, it also became clear that participants understood other elements of the orientation programme such as identifying and addressing barriers to learning but this element seems to be the least implemented in all schools visited. While all respondents confirmed that they participate in staff development programmes, there were contradictory statements, especially from teachers in the same school, as to how and when this was carried out.

Differentiation in teaching and learning is the concept that the respondents were least familiar with. While they claim to take care of the needs of different learners, as their teaching is learner paced, they could not give account of how they ensure that learners are assessed at their appropriate levels.

All respondents confirmed that they keep learner profiles, which give account of the learner's performance and general record in terms of health and family background. This document (learner profile) was sometimes confused with the learner portfolio. Learner portfolio is a document that is kept by educators to record the overall performance of the learner across the grades. It also contains information of the learners work in all learning areas taught and the learning outcomes that were achieved, partially achieved and those that were not achieved. It therefore provides information about the development of the learner, including the learner's strengths and weaknesses.

While the learner profile is also an important document to be kept by teachers, it seems to be kept only for compliance, not as an instrument that could be used to inform other teachers of the general background of the learner. Portfolios of learners' work were not mentioned as one of the documents that they (respondents) keep to monitor learner performance.

From the researcher's interaction with the respondents, it became clear that they understand the relationship between LOs and assessment standards and could easily develop activities. Reporting learner performance and recording of the latter is also done although some of them confirmed that it is not done as often as it should be. Generally, it became evident from the

interviews that the respondents understand what is supposed to be done, but due to other factors such as lack of resources, lack of co-operation among staff members and the support provided by subject advisors, they do not take an initiative to be self-directed learners.

It was evident from the interview by the constant mention of the help that they obtain from the subject advisors that their role (educators) as designers of learning programmes is gradually ignored. Further, this confirms that the constructivist approach to learning, which is closely related to andragogy is not applied.

5.6   Documentary Evidence

The analysis of documentary sources is a major method of social research, and one which many qualitative researchers regard as meaningful and appropriate in the context of their research strategy. Although using visual or documentary methods can provide or count as evidence, it should also be noted that literal 'readings' of such data and documents should not extend to treating them as though they are direct representations or reflections of 'reality' or straightforward 'factual records' (Mason 2002:107-108)

In this study, the type of documentary evidence used is data generated by respondents in the form of texts, documents and written records. This data forms part of the requirements that educators need to have in place in order to effectively implement the NCS. The availability of such documents enabled the researcher to make judgments on the educators' level of understanding and their ability to plan and implement the NCS correctly. The researcher used these documents as 'hard' or legitimate evidence, alongside information received though interviews and questionnaires.

During the visit to schools, few respondents were prepared to share their work with the researcher. From the few documents (see Appendices F) that were given to the researcher, and from what some of the respondents said about

the development thereof, especially learning programmes and work schedules, it was not surprising to get differently structured documents from these educators. The need to prepare for teaching is well understood and appreciated by respondents and efforts to do so are made. On the contrary, most respondents could hardly provide the necessary documents.

Some of the documents lack important information that is key to the implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase. Examples of such information are the assessment components of the activity, expanded opportunities for learners and integration (though not a policy issue but rather a management issue that could make teaching easier). In appendix E, a page from the orientation programme facilitators' manual is attached to outline the requirements for planning as was stipulated during the NCS PD orientation programme for the Intermediate Phase educators.

5.7 Findings of the Study

Guskey (2000:122) asserts that there are three important reasons for gathering evidence on participants' learning as a result of a professional development experience. The first is that such evidence validates the relationship between what was intended and what was achieved; secondly that these data are a primary indicator of the effectiveness of a professional development programme experience and lastly, the collection of information on participants' learning is that such evidence is vital to implementation.

Data gathered from this study points to the following concerning the purpose of this study, namely to investigate whether the NCS PD orientation programme presented to Intermediate Phase educators reached its intended outcomes.

In terms of whether educators use and value the knowledge and skills gained during the NCS PD orientation programme, the study reveals that educators use and value what they have learned. The majority of respondents, as

depicted in table 3 and Graphs 1 - 3, indicated that they use this information but with support from their cluster colleagues and the district subject advisors. On average, only 6.46 (38%) of the respondents were confident that they could implement what they have learned on their own and 10.54 (62%) indicated a need for support.

This finding is supported by the outcome of data received during interviews and document analysis where it became evident that efforts to implement the NCS are taken although there are still gaps identified in doing what is entailed in the policy, especially regarding to planning, implementing differentiated teaching, learning and assessment and identifying and addressing barriers to learning.

In terms of the perceptions of the respondents regarding the appropriateness and relevance of the NCS PD orientation programme to their needs, the majority of respondents indicated that their expectations of the orientation were achieved. This is indicative of the fact that the orientation programme's outcomes on the appropriateness and relevance of the programme were reached.

Table 3 also provides more detail about respondents' perception of the items presented to them. On average, 1 respondent (3.5%) indicated that some of the elements, namely identifying and addressing barriers to learning (1), dealing with diversity (2), curriculum management (1), Language issues (1), relationship between LOs and assessment standards (1) and principles of NCS, were not appropriate and relevant to the orientation programme. It is pleasing to have such an insignificant number off the total number of respondents (17) having this perception.

The study also pointed out that respondents were in favour of a longer orientation programme. Although most of them have gained from the programme, it was clear from the feedback of one respondent (who seemed to have echoed the concern of most other respondents) that training which took place after school hours did not benefit them. All respondents who commented on the amount of time they would have liked to be given to the

orientation programme indicated a minimum of 5 days and a maximum of 3 months.

On the issue of what respondents would regard as the effective indicators of the orientation programme, they mentioned the importance of support, and emphasised the need for more coordinated cluster support groups as well as the provision of resources. The study revealed that a continuous, school-based support has contributed to the current level of understanding and implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase.

The interventions of subject advisors have played a role in the implementation of the NCS and are appreciated by all respondents. They, however, appear to have created a dependency syndrome on the part of the educators since planning is done by the subject advisors for educators. Such plans do not consider the educators' own school contexts and are sometimes difficult to implement, if they (educators) cannot customise them. These interventions supersede the NCS PD orientation programme in terms of empowering educators to implement the NCS. On its own, the NCS PD orientation programme could not have reached its intended outcomes without this support.

One of the most critical findings of this study is the lack of common and standardised procedures on how planning, especially lesson plans, are developed in different learning areas. This seems to create unnecessary challenges especially to educators who are teaching different learning areas within the same phase or across the phases.

Evidence received from the submitted documents (lesson plans, work schedule and learning programme) indicates that educators are still ambivalent about what is to be included in their planning. Such ambivalence could be interpreted as a lack of knowledge since very important aspects were excluded in the lesson plans that were given to the researcher. Lack of willingness by most educators to share their plans with the researcher was also indicative of poor record keeping. It suffices to say there is still much to

be done for educators to be in a position in which they could take responsibility for being learning programme developers.

Although most of the educators confirmed their understanding of assessment and different methods employed and applied, it was obvious from the interviews that such an understanding could not be substantiated by any documentary proof.

The researcher found that a number of educators could not relate to the concept of differentiated learning and teaching. Educators expressed concern that there is little or no provision for learners who have learning barriers. Some respondents were truthful about not factoring any measures to address this issue while others indicated that dealing with such learners is more of an individual situation, which is implemented when time affords.

Lack of teamwork amongst educators was evident from the data streams. This makes it difficult to embark on co-operative learning, which could assist educators of the same school to address the gaps in the implementation of the NCS. However, the support provided by cluster meetings is of help especially where educators of the same grades meet to discuss and share ideas on curriculum issues.

5.8 Recommendations

Guskey (2000:149) asserts that many improvement efforts in education fail simply as they are unclear or misleading about the kind of organisational support required for change. As a result, educators end up trying to implement innovations that they do not fully understand in organisations that do not fully support their efforts. The findings in this study indicate that to a greater extent, educators depend on district officials in the implementation of what they have learned during the NCS PD orientation programme. This could, in the long run, result in educators implementing what they do not fully understand.

Based on this finding, it is recommended that district officials (subject advisors) who are responsible for providing support should minimise their undue prescription of what 'all' educators should do to make their own work easier. They should rather support educators' initiatives and guide where gaps are identified.

Unless individual learning and organisational change are addressed simultaneously and support one another, the gains made in one area may be cancelled by continuing problems in the other (Sparks and Hirsh 1997). This point is put forward to address the identified lack of commonality as to how educators within the same organisation (school) implement the NCS, although they have attended the same orientation programme and are being supported by the same district officials. It is this uncoordinated learning and support that calls for a coordination between educators themselves at school level and between district official themselves and between district officials and educators in the implementation of the NCS. Sending different messages could cancel the good foundation that the orientation programme has already put in place.

A well-coordinated cluster system should be encouraged within and across education circuits. Attending of cluster meetings by educators from different learning areas should be compulsory.

The system (schools) should consider adding professional development hours to the school day as a way of ensuring a compulsory school development programme to enhance the implementation of the NCS in the Intermediate Phase and across other phases. By so doing, this would reduce varied practices by individual educators within the same school in the implementation of the NCS, as revealed in this study.

Fundamental to all change and improvement efforts is the provision of necessary resources. Targeting resources to areas of little consequence for teaching and learning or spreading resources so thin that they have no effect hinders even the most thoughtfully conceived improvement efforts. This study reveals that identification and addressing barriers to learning, as part of

inclusion in education, has been ignored due to little or thinly spread resources to deal with this crucial aspect of the curriculum. Teaching is a specialised profession and therefore it requires specialised human resources for areas, which needs special knowledge and skills. It is therefore worth recommending that this area be looked into and supported to the maximum possible level.

Educators have been left to be referees and players in the teaching and learning environment. It is sometimes difficult to some educators to reveal their weaknesses in front of their peers during staff development meetings, if and when such meetings take place. As the study reveals, there is no monitoring and support by senior educators in the schools under study. To this end, it would be ideal for educators to develop trust amongst themselves and start sharing their professional challenges to the benefit of the system. Self-reflection is an important element of improvement in the professional life of an educator.

5.9   Conclusion

It is always hoped that participants' reaction to a professional development experience will be positive but determining whether the NCS PD orientation programme is responsible for the improvement in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the participants is a challenging task. However, one could confirm that it has provided the necessary foundation for this improvement. Professional development should do more than simply make participants feel good (Guskey 2000:121). It should be a learning experience for all who are involved and therefore bring the anticipated changes in the lives of participants.

This study concludes that when educators are confronted with a professional development programme that meets their needs, they easily identify with it. It is also worth concluding that the NCS PD orientation programme, supported

by on-the-job professional development intervention programmes, has reached its intended outcomes, which is to orientate educators in the NCS in the Intermediate Phase. This study also indicates that most of the educators emerged satisfied with the orientation programme since all aspects that they expected to be orientated on were presented as part of the orientation content.

The findings of this study support the literature reviewed regarding what could be considered as an effective CPD programme. Participants have alluded to the continued, ongoing and well thought of follow-ups of the NCS orientation programme as the most important element that facilitated better understanding and improved implementation.

As indicated in chapter 2, educators as adult learners, show more commitment in what they believe to be a worthwhile exercise. A high level of commitment post the orientation period, through collegial and cluster meetings are evidence to this. Although there are positive indications of the outcome of the NCS PD orientation programme, it should be mentioned that a lot still need to be done to achieve a full level of implementation.

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APPENDICES

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