

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher desires to make readers understand and value the historical development of the South African education system as it applies to education in general and to special education more specifically. The understanding derived from the history of our education, should help one to distinguish between the various approaches and practices towards education. Therefore, one will be able to explain and interpret the processes of transformation and in particular of Outcomes-based Education. It is also important to know and understand the principles on which Outcomes-based Education is based. Finally, based on this understanding, one will be able to describe the nature, structure and process of Outcomes-based Education.

Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher intends to indicate to what extent the restructuring process in South Africa is influenced by both local and international trends. The South African National Council for the Blind draft discussion document (1997:4) pointed out that South Africa does not exist in isolation and that the restructuring process of South African education is greatly influenced by international trends. In a similar way, modern thinking about the education of blind learners is also influenced by international views and developments.

In supporting the previous statement, Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency (2001:45) made the following assertion: “(w)e are in one of the most exciting periods ever known. It is a time for stupendous and radical change.” In addition, the researcher wishes to highlight the importance of an integrated education and training system. The researcher argued in this and other chapters that the education of persons with disabilities was and still is an integral part of the general education system. In addition, the researcher also highlighted the principles, policy and practices of Outcomes-based Education and Training. The education authority has therefore been made aware of the need to ensure the full exercise of their right to education by all South Africans (both black and white).

Finally, the researcher envisages investigating what the responsibilities and obligations of stakeholders towards blind learners receiving Outcomes-based Education in special schools are, and how inclusive the education system should be.

An unknown author stated: “(t)he road to success is always under construction.” This statement holds water in the present situation as the democratically elected government of South Africa was mandated to bring about drastic change, and embarked on a process of both reconstructing and redeveloping, inter alia, the education system, now known as “(O)utcomes-Based Education and Training”.

The considerable knowledge and experience accumulated from different education systems will in various ways enable one to understand why, how and where Outcomes-based Education and Training has originated. Therefore, one should be in a strong position to have a clear and broad picture and refreshed memories of what education used to be and why, and of the unbearably harsh conditions (characterised by segregation, improper schooling facilities, et cetera), in which multitudes of people had to receive education in South Africa. From those references, one will be equipped with knowledge and appropriate skills to make sound judgments, both as to whether one feels change is necessary to redress the imbalances of the past apartheid period or not.

The different education systems put in place by different education authorities and stakeholders should be seen in conjunction with other factors such as:

- ❑ The need to integrate education and training systems;
- ❑ The desire to offer to all South Africans (Black and White, young and old) lifelong learning;
- ❑ The need to offer to all South Africans proper skills for being productive and competent in both the industrial and information ages;
- ❑ The need to guarantee equal access to education and resources as well as educational equity, and the redressing of the imbalances of the past, which played a constructive and meaningful role in the revision of South Africa's education system and the Curriculum.

It is highlighted in *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century* (1999:3) that the Curriculum has to be revised to meet new demands. Regarding this view of "curriculum revision" Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency (2001:45) added the following: "(t)he illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

Are these issues of transformation and reconstruction not challenges and demands? The researcher entirely concurs with Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency (2001:45) when it argues that as patriotic South Africans, hopefully, we want to be the fittest, those who can best adapt and change, those who can obtain the information they need and learn skills quickly. It was further argued that like surfers we must ride the crest of the waves, using our intellect and vitality to take us where we want to go. Rather than trying to resist change, surfers seek harmony with it.

The previously indicated factors and the following systems of education played an instrumental role in the shaping and the revision of our curriculum. They include among others, African Education and People's Education. To be specific, churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, to give but one good example, with its system of "open schools", positively and appropriately played a pivotal and constructive role in the transformation of our education system.

Throughout South African history, fundamental human rights have been denied to people of colour and disability (including blindness), owing to political motivations, ruthlessness, ignorance, indifference, racial intolerance, et cetera. Mohlala (1994:59) relevantly asserted that previously, education was a system based on a racial, sexist and xenophobic ideology.

Correspondingly, Bertram *et al.*, (2000:76) indicated that government schools in the early 1950s were established to teach the Africans to accept their proper place. The government, according to the above-mentioned authors (2000:76), was only interested in instilling respect for Christian values (as understood by them) and for the nation in all learners. The purpose of the schools was largely to mould both Black and White children into apartheid citizens, holding the values appropriate to this society. The education offered to South African learners was a form of social control geared towards reinforcing the government policies of “separate development”. Mohlala (1994:60) took this argument further when he emphasised that education was a way of controlling the hearts and minds of indigenous inhabitants of the country and that it perpetuated White supremacy.

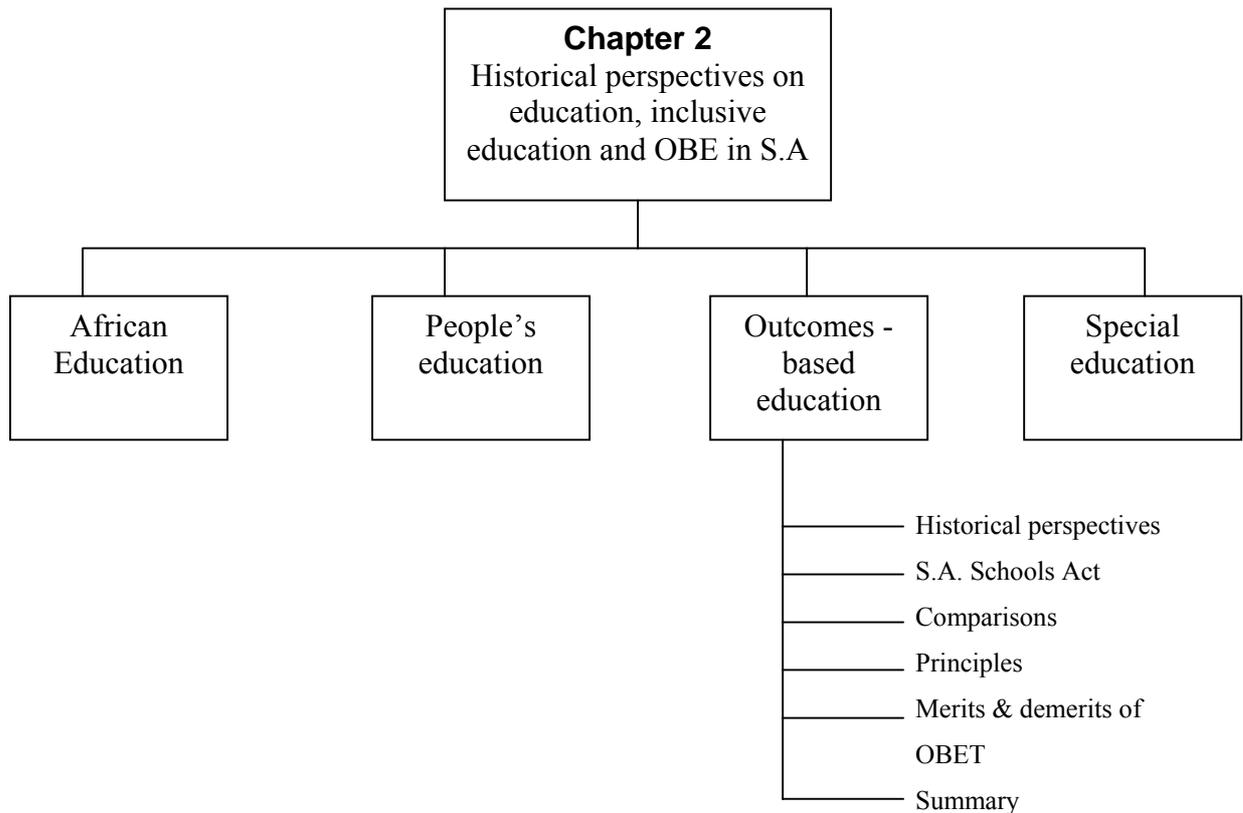
The government spent much more money on White learners and the education resources presented to Black learners were inferior and unequal. As Bertram *et al.*, (2000:76) put it, the curriculum was racist, sexist, Eurocentric, authoritarian, prescriptive, context-blind and discriminatory.

It therefore seems that, as a result of those factors and intentions indicated above, most people, most probably, forgot or ignored the fact that, “(e)very human being, from the richest to the poorest, from the youngest to the oldest, from the most physically fit to the most misshapen, has the inalienable right to existence and to as normal a life as possible under existing circumstances” (Konar 1988:3). Education was, and still will be, a fundamental human right as long as humankind inhabits planet earth. It was not, and never would it be, a privilege.

Therefore, references to these systems endeavour to determine why the current government feels that change as far as the education system is concerned is of the essence. Hopefully, Outcomes-based Education and Training will be crucial in addressing the problems and issues, which emanated from and characterised the systems that preceded it.

Various approaches are capable of helping us to understand and come to terms with the practices of the previous education systems and also the different stages, as well as the treacherous roads, on which all South Africans (Black and White, young and old) have travelled until these groups have safely arrived at the present destination of Outcomes-based Education and Training. The researcher regards these totally oppressive education systems as “a pollution of education” and does not hesitate to term them such. The following are the researcher’s arguments; used as examples to illustrate processes, stages and education systems.

FIGURE 2.1: ILLUSTRATES THE OUTLINE OF ISSUES DEALT WITH IN CHAPTER 2.



2.2 AFRICAN EDUCATION

What is African education? Why was it put into place? Did it definitely achieve its aims and objectives? Did most people find it interesting, productive, constructive and meaningful? The answers to those and other questions are given in the discussion that follows.

Prior to the 1950s, the education of African children, including blind children, was mainly the responsibility of the churches, through their mission schools. Bertram *et al.*, (2000:76) maintain, “(e)ducation was compulsory for white children.” Therefore, a proper definition for “African Education” would be as follows: African education is the education policy that was prevalent during the rule of the Dutch East India Company and stretched well into the 1940s.

Behr (1978:159) wrote, “(a)lthough sporadic attempts at educating and evangelising the African tribes were made during the rule of the Dutch East India Company, it was not until the first quarter of the 19th century that a concerted effort was embarked upon, resulting in the establishment of a network of mission stations and schools spread over a large part of the Cape Colony and elsewhere. The overseas missionary societies that were involved in this undertaking include the Moravian, the London, the Rhenish, the Wesleyan, the Berlin, the Paris, Evangelical and the Glasgow missions, the Church Missionary Society and the American Board of Missions.”

During that era, South Africa was divided along racial, ethnic and tribal lines. During those days, full citizenship rights were not indiscriminately extended to all Africans. Africans were segregated or marginalised to a large extent, educationally and in other ways, from the dominant society. Some people, in the then government, saw this rather as an appropriate and relevant education system and were only concerned about the growing manifestations of resistance to the existing social order rather than with redressing the educational imbalances. The African education policy only gave rise to a gang spirit. Indiscipline within the schools themselves as a form of defiance of the unwanted education system became the order of the day.

African education (including special schools for blind children) was poorly financed. Behr (1978:159) maintained that state participation in the education of Africans was slow to develop. Until well into the 19th century the missionary societies carried on without any financial help from the government. The government itself made little provision for schools for Non-Whites.

Behr emphasises the above statement when he remarks, “(i)ndeed, ... little was accomplished in regard to the State education for Africans.” Rose (1970:47) alleged that the general character of Bantu Education under the missions was both paternalistic and sporadic in its growth - one of the greatest barriers to the expansion of mission education had been the parsimonious attitude of the subsidising governmental agencies up until 1945. It is further argued in the Report on Education in South Africa (May 2001) that the quality, availability and use of learning support materials were undermined by scarce financial and human resources and that the capacities of the provinces to ensure the provision of adequate training and support for educators in the classroom have suffered because of the shortage of both human and financial resources. As a result, inadequate physical and learning resources had hamstrung implementation in classrooms. That trend, of inadequate human and material resources, still prevails at schools for the blind which have been visited by the researcher.

Beale (1991:33) pointed out that Z.K. Matthews launched a vociferous criticism of the government in the 1950s. Z.K. Matthews “... registered impatience at the pace of African ‘integration’ into the dominant society.” Bertram *et al.*, (2000:76) also indicated that apart from Matthews’ registration of his utter dissatisfaction as far as unequal education was concerned, individuals, and organised movements, were also engaged in registering their utter opposition to unfair and unequal education opportunities. Bertram *et al.* further stated that, “... these ideas were not accepted by everyone in South Africa and there was much contestation and conflict in the area of education...”.

Matthews as a way out from this problem of segregated schooling, proposed the integration of Africans on the selective basis of individual merit, based also on the principle that there were enormous differences in the level of development that the individual African had by and large achieved. Mohlala (1994:28-29), in support of Matthews’ view concerning integration, argued as follows: “(i)t is a truism that Blacks in South Africa will like to see the demise of apartheid education and its replacement by a system of education that will be beneficial to people of all racial and class backgrounds.”

He further argued that South Africa needs an education enterprise that will serve the broader interests of a united and democratically continued society.

Matthews' tough posture on the abolishment of the African education system, was an endeavour to discourage this system as well as to put on record, to both the government of the day and the public at large, his extreme dissatisfaction and belief that segregation in all respects was immoral and should therefore be condemned in the strongest possible way. Matthews was strongly in favour of an education policy or curriculum, which addressed very broad and sophisticated aspects and not one, introduced in the then Transvaal, that was shallow, unsophisticated and less meaningful.

Behr (1978:162) showed how unsatisfactory in the above respects that education system was: “(i)n the Transvaal a new curriculum for African education was introduced in 1915. This curriculum provides, inter alia, moral and religious education, aimed at the cultivation of habits of cleanliness, obedience, punctuality, tidiness, orderliness, self-independence, self-restraint, temperance, chastity, social training aimed at acquainting the Africans with the law of the country, and industrial training adapted to the environment.” Nowhere in this curriculum is the importance of science, mathematics, advanced technology, history, geography, et cetera, indicated.

Blind learners in the past and also at the present moment, according to sources studied during this investigation and also to empirical data gathered by the researcher and discussed in detail in chapter six, did not and still do not enjoy doing life sciences primarily because of the attitudes of their educators and/or lack of adequate resources. The consequences suffered by blind learners then and at the present moment, could also be ascribed to the weaknesses of African education and special schools education in the sense that they are taught by inadequate and inappropriately trained educators, the non-recognition by and non-involvement of their parents in education matters, as well as poverty, inadequate policies and legislations, an inflexible curriculum, inappropriate languages of learning and teaching, inappropriate and inadequate support services, et cetera.

Matthews vehemently opposed racial, ethnical and tribal sanctions. He believed that tribal sanctions propagated unnecessary hatred and the neglect of African needs.

Those essential needs, which according to him were supposed to be satisfied, included and are not limited to:

1. The creation of a healthy and intelligent public opinion. Marcum (1982:116) argued that the creation of such an opinion, provided through progressive and adequate means, would enable every South African inhabitant to obtain the essential minimum of knowledge, skills and values which must be recognised and maintained as of highest priority in the programme for the provision of education.
2. The development of those “habits of industry and persistence in work whether for (the individual himself) or in the service of others” (Kros 1990-1991:33).
3. The need for learning mediation on issues of health and sanitation.
4. The need to enhance “the general development of the character of the people” (Kros 1991:33).

Matthews was a strong and influential force behind integration. He always maintained that a non-integrated education system over utilised the limited available resources. Therefore, equality and integration as far as education was concerned constituted a positive solution to this mammoth problem. This opinion was supported by Marcum (1982:116) who observed, “(t)he demand of equality in education is of special relevance as a result of the restriction of available resources and when the real danger exists that as a consequences of the existing obstruction persons or groups may be denied their rightful share in the benefits that education offers.” The rightful share referred to, should be understood in the context of “distributive justice” as pointed out by Marcum (1982:117).

Marcum (1982:80) remarked that the aftermath of the Soweto unrest of 1976 in which general dissatisfaction with “Black education” figured so prominently, obligated the South African Institute of Race Relations to appoint a committee to examine education in South Africa and to set alternative policy guidelines for the country.

According to Marcum (1982:80-81) this commission believed that a desirable education system “... for South Africa should be based on the following principles:

1. There should be an emphasis upon equality of opportunity (for different geographical areas, sexes, social and ethnic groups), with supplementary location of resources for disadvantaged groups.
2. No form of separation of the various race and language groups into separate educational institutions should be laid down in laws and regulations, and every effort should be made to integrate educational institutions at all levels.
3. The curriculum should stress not only the learning of basic linguistic, mathematical, and scientific concepts and skills, but also the stimulation of a critical scrutiny of society and encouragement in all pupils of an understanding and appreciation of the religions, music, art, literature, and history of other groups within South African society as well as their own.
4. A comprehensive programme of adult education in cultural, political, and vocational fields. Such a programme would definitely ensure that particular attention be given to the establishment and promotion of functional literacy and numeracy programmes for all those adults who do not have these skills.
5. Education for the entire country should fall under a single ministry, and the system of educational decision-making and management should be designed to ensure effective participation of all interested parties at local and regional as well as national levels.
6. Independent (i.e. non-state) educational institutions, often centres of excellence and innovation, should be recognized, subject to state scrutiny in broader terms, to ensure basic compatibility with the spirit of society and the maintenance of acceptable educational standards.”

Matthews advocated liberal government support. He anticipated an elementary education for everyone. Today the constitution of South Africa fully supports his ideas.

The South African Schools' Act No. 108 of 1996 categorically states in (Section 29 (1)) that “... everyone has the right:

1. To further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible” (Department of Education 1999:1).
2. To a basic education, including adult basic education.

As argued by the Department of Education (1999:1) Matthews' dreams seemed to have materialised because the government of the day sees as its obligation the necessity to provide basic education to all learners and is guided by the recognition that a unified education and training system has to be based on equity, on redressing past imbalances and on a progressive raising of the quality of education and training.

The Report *Education in South Africa* (May 2001) maintained, “(t)he demise of apartheid in 1994 was heralded nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights. It offered unique opportunity - and responsibilities - to reconstruct a fragmented and deeply discriminatory education system, and established a unified national system underpinned by democracy, equity, redress, transparency and participation.” However, this social reconstruction, as indicated above, has to be linked to economic development in the context of global economies and internationalisation.

Matthews was deeply disturbed by the fact that the practical needs of the rank and file were not met outside the classroom in adult education programmes and that the government of the day forgot that “... a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time, and that where these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system” (Department of Education 1999:3).

Matthews proposed to the then government that for the African education system to improve drastically and in terms of quality, it was better to have better schools than more schools. His uncompromising opposition to African education prompted the Nationalist Government to appoint the Eiselen Commission of Enquiry. It probed, as its major task, Native Education. It was the Eiselen Commission of Enquiry which determined the educational needs of the Africans and, as a result, Bantu Education came into being. Bantu Education was merely an extension of African Education. For this reason, it will not be discussed in detail.

Owing to Bantu Education's ill intentions, largely similar to those of African Education, democratic forces in the 1980s denounced its policy. Bertram *et al.*, (2000:76) pointed out that there was much opposition and conflict, particularly during the 1976 Soweto uprisings when the masses registered their opposition to this education system. He further articulated his view as follows, “(i)n the 1980s and early 1990s those involved in the struggle against apartheid attempted to introduce an “alternative curriculum” such as People's Education but the state curriculum remained the dominant one in schools.” The denunciation of African or Bantu Education by the majority of people prompted the setting up of Commissions of Enquiry whose task was to probe into the causes of the dissatisfaction brought about by the system. As an initial aim, it was hoped that these commissions would come up with amicable solutions and recommendations.

There were different commissions: the De Lange Report, commissioned by the government of the day, the Syncom Report by the business sector and the Buthelezi Report by the chief minister of Kwazulu homeland. All of them forwarded their respective reports in 1991. Different as they were, they more or less concurred with one another in their findings and recommendations that: "... education for blacks be managed for economic growth and that redundant labour be kept at the bantustans" (Nkomo 1990:398).

Education for the disabled in South Africa dates back to the 1880s. The Grimley Institute for the Deaf was begun by six Dominican sisters and later expanded into two schools, one exclusively for White children and the other one for Coloured children. The expansion of the above-mentioned institute led to the provision of education for the differently abled based on racial, ethnic and tribal lines.

For quite a considerable amount of time, the school for Coloured children served all ethnic groups other than White. Behr (1978:197) noted that one hundred years later there were 9 schools for handicapped African children. Those special schools catered for the deaf, visually impaired, cerebral palsied and physically disabled children. That type of education was carried out in accordance with the Bantu Special Education Act, No. 24 of 1964.

However, the best solution to that enormous and difficult problem of desegregated education systems was to introduce a curriculum that is transparent and transformational in nature and character. It had to be a curriculum that enabled all learners, both black and white, to interact with the sources of knowledge by way of problem solving and the discovery of skills, and thus to reconstruct knowledge for themselves (Burden 1999b:24). Burden believes that this type of education will be of great significance (such as problem-solving, investigation, acquisition of competences that are job related, etc.) if it is about gaining understanding rather than absorbing information, as was the day-to-day practice in other education systems.

Grovè and Hauptfleisch (1985:1) suggested that, in order to solve the previously mentioned educational problem, which caused Black people not to be analytical, creative and innovative, ways and means had to be found in helping the learner to build sound foundations for his total development. The researcher is of the view that blind learners should also build sound foundations for their total development, including access or exposure to all learning areas, with great emphasis on life sciences so that they can become active as well as productive citizens of South Africa. Therefore an educator's association with a particular able-bodied or blind learner, will help in equipping that particular learner with a sound foundation for meeting the tasks and challenges of future learning and of life as a whole. Grovè and Hauptfleisch (1985:1) wrote that "(e)xciting, pleasant early learning experiences go with the child when he enters school and on into his whole life-time ahead."

A good education system is generally one that focuses on meeting ever-changing employment needs as well as on encouraging individuals to make meaningful contributions towards their respective societies. Smit (1999:26) observed that education "... strives to educate people so that they are able to live in and are prepared to make their contributions to a ... society."

2.3 PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

What is People's Education? What role did it play in the lives of Africans? Was it meant to be oppressive or was it intended to emancipate Africans educationally? Is its impact, whether negative or positive, still felt today? Are there any lessons and experiences that could be drawn from it as a system, which would help shape the current education system? An attempt is made to answer these as well as other questions that cropped up during the analysis of this education system.

Hislop (1988-1989:78) defined People's Education as "People's education in process," and "People's education in the future." During the mid and late 80s, the slogan that was mostly chanted was "People's education for people's power." Black people adopted this slogan as they realised that there was consistent educational oppression. *Research on Education in South Africa Paper Number Two, Bantu Education as a Reformist Strategy of the South African State* (1988:21), noted that People's Education advocated a totally different system of education in terms of content and organisation.

This was a loud and unequivocal call to eradicate apartheid as well as to transform the education system that was commonly known for its corrupt practices and oppressive methods. It became very clear that as the regime itself provided greater access to education, the Mass Democratic Movement called for the democratisation of education, for transformation of the curriculum and for closer links between education and the wider struggle against apartheid. The education transformation referred to, should be seen in the context of something to be struggled for in the process of national liberation.

In support of the earlier perception discussed above, Mohlala (1994:3) observed that Blacks were tired of being subjected to "... poor living conditions, exposure to inferior and unequal education, exclusion from the economic structures, ... the ... policies of apartheid that get into the hearts and minds of most Black South Africans ... young and old." The author (1994:3) supplemented his argument by stressing the fact that Black South Africans were totally opposed to Bantu Education because they realised that "(s)uch abasement does get in the way of most Blacks, and unconsciously or consciously hinder them from making progress in their lives."

Notably and inevitably so, Hislop (1988-1989:78-80) saw People's Education not as a completed or perfected theory but a process, which was supposed to be beneficial to people of all racial and class backgrounds. It had to be, indeed, an education enterprise that truly served the broad interests of a united and a democratically continued society. This process needed to do its best to equip all South Africans with high quality and very useful knowledge.

Mohlala (1994:30), in relation to what people should be able to perform and achieve after going through that education system, aptly stated, "... whatever future type of education people talk about, it should be able to empower students and the community so that they can see the hidden messages of apartheid education."

As one of its most intriguing, important and relevant features, People's Education endeavoured to make explicit the links between education and political, economic and cultural reproduction. People's Education aimed at enabling people to take charge of their education as well as at empowering them in many ways. Furthermore, it also aimed at providing quality and relevant education to the masses. According to the researcher, quality and relevance in education can be attained if the people, through the curriculum, always and by all possible means strive to develop and promote the intellectual and cognitive abilities essential for personal and citizenship development.

People's Education was similar to Outcomes-based Education and Training. Both approaches are aimed at everyone, including the young and the old, illiterate and literate, working and non-working, the rich and the poor, et cetera. In addition, both systems do not undermine people's inputs but aim to make them the "best of the best".

It is mentioned in Mashamba (1990:52) that "... everyone must be involved in discussions and in making plans for the future. People's Education must come from the people. We must all become involved in the development of People's Education and in the implementation of programmes which will ensure People's Education for people's power."

The researcher understands the term "people" here to be referring to all Black and White South Africans who are not politically, economically, educationally and sexually segregated. Rose (1970:67) saw "people" as all those whose primary objective regarding education was in the first place to develop the individual as a member of society, so that he could take his rightful place within the society to which he belonged. By "people" the researcher refers to all those who do not or never sought to destroy other people's culture because of their dominance. By this term, the researcher finally includes, as well, all those who collectively, consultatively and collaboratively struggled against educational imbalances and sought for a better understanding of education and its relevance. They were people willing to fight against poverty, unemployment and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This was possible because people wanted change and, as such, joined forces specifically for this reason. Mashamba (1990:55-56) commented that South Africans would not have achieved things they would otherwise have imagined impossible if they had not been organised, and if they had not used their collective strength.

People's Education was instrumental in calling for a sudden and rapid change in terms of finance, capacity building, infrastructure and the curricula. Mashamba (1990:58) pointed out, "(i)n People's Education, the struggle for change is a struggle for fundamental, qualitative change, whereby both black education for domestication and white education for domination will be superseded by non-racial and democratic people's education for both national liberation and social emancipation." Furthermore, the struggle for change was vital for the main aim of overturning "... the legacy of apartheid by enabling teachers to change their understandings of what is possible and thereby transform classroom practice ..." (*Report Of The Review Committee on Curriculum 2005*, 31 May 2000).

A qualitative education should be able to arm individuals with the appropriate skills and capabilities necessary for executing tasks in society. It should be an education that really serves the interests of the

individual, the interests of the state, the interests of classes and race, the interests of profit and profit-making institutions, the interests of academic prestige, politics and religion, and, indeed, the interests of the people as a whole and especially the poorest of the poor, who are vulnerable and the most oppressed of the oppressed. It is argued in the Report *Education in South Africa* (May 2001) that all South Africans should have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which would contribute towards improving the quality of life, and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. Therefore, transformation in education is of paramount importance to South Africa's economic prosperity, in order to assist all South Africans, both individually and collectively, to escape the "poverty trap" characterising many South African communities.

People's Education was of strategic importance in demanding and pursuing equal access to and resourcing of education for all in South Africa. Nonetheless, it tried in vain to eliminate racism from textbooks, print and electronic media, teaching and organisations in education. The previous regime, embarked upon a campaign to win the hearts and minds of Blacks. Even though this was rejected on a massive scale by Blacks, the regime continued to perceive this campaign as a key objective; hence its large investment in education and its violent attacks on the student movement, the youth, and the leadership of educational organisations like the NECC.

2.4 AN OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REASONS FOR EMBARKING UPON AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

Mashamba (1990:63) commented, "(p)eople's Education thus proposes a process of socialization for a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa which, at the same time, lays a basis for a future education system." According to the researcher's comprehension, that education system highlighted in Mashamba's discussion, is none other than Outcomes-based Education and Training. By the look of things, Outcomes-based Education and Training holds the key to educational transformation and success for the entire country. We are given hope and encouragement by an unknown author when he points out in Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency (2001:35) that "whatever we vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon must inevitably come to pass."

As alluded to under African Education, Behr (1978:156-163) argued that disabled learners in South Africa were introduced to formal education at the "Doofstommen en Blinden Instituut" at Worcester in the Western Cape in 1881. Formal education for the blind started ten years later in 1891 when Mr. J. Besselaar was charged with the responsibility of mediating a class of four blind learners. This section developed and grew into what is today known as Pioneer Institute for the Blind.

The establishment of the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB) in 1929 made the education of blind learners a priority. This organisation played an instrumental role in the past, and still plays a fundamental role at the present moment, in both the support and the development of further schools for this particular group of learners with special education needs.

In the not so distant past, the further support and the development of education as well as other related services for blind learners, in South Africa, was characterised by a slow but steady growth and progress. There are now approximately twenty schools or sections where blind learners receive special education. These schools for the blind or schools with sections for the blind are: Pioneer School for the Blind, Athlone School, Khanyisa School, Efata School for the Deaf and Blind, Zamokuhle School, Arthur Blaxall School, Ethembeni School, Bartimea School, Thiboloha School, Sibonile School for the Blind, SneThemba School (former Katlehong School), Filadelfia Secondary School, Prinshof School, Silindokuhle School, Re-Tlameleng School, Bosele School for the Deaf and Blind, Siloe School, Setotolwane Secondary School, Tshilidzini School for LSEN and Letaba School.

It is highlighted in the South African National Council For The Blind draft discussion document *Education for the Visually Impaired* (1997:9) that some of these schools are well developed and resourced and accommodate relatively large numbers, while others are still in the process of development, have limited enrolment and need some basic resources.

Not all blind learners in South Africa are admitted to separate schools which solely specialise in the education of blind learners. As a result, a number of learners, especially in secondary education (grades 8-12) in the Further Education Training Band have to attend ordinary schools in the mainstream of education. The Department of Education's Policy should therefore, be seen as a system that endeavours to integrate blind learners in the Senior Phase and Further Education and Training Band with sighted learners. Inclusive education further entails providing for blind and visually impaired learners in regular schools in what is known and understood as "the mainstream of education." Therefore, the present research focuses on these learners who are in special schools but who may, because of education transformation, end up in inclusive schools.

In 1994, when most of the previous education systems (homelands, self-governing, White, Indian and Coloured systems) were transformed, so was "special education". This transformation was made possible by the passing of legislation such as the South African Schools Act (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998) and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) and the accompanying White Papers, which provided the basis for the establishment of an inclusive education and training system. All stakeholders put this system in place to ensure and facilitate appropriate expertise and proper representation. Representatives of various communities would further enable advisory bodies to give expert advice and to determine goals and priorities.

It is argued in Education White Paper 6 (2001:27) that inclusive education in South Africa, as in other parts of the world, has been introduced to provide the basis for overcoming the causes and effects of barriers to learning. It therefore, by implication, advocates the admission of blind learners to all education settings, such as designated full-service or mainstream schools and settings.

It is anticipated that the inclusive education policy will encourage the establishment of an effective management, policy, planning and monitoring capacity in the national and provincial Departments of Education. According to the researcher, this policy is a broad one, which should not only serve disabled

learners' educational interests and needs, but also serve as a vehicle to sensitise and conscientise the public regarding disability related issues, advocacy campaigns, and the development of appropriate and necessary capacities and competences. The inclusive education system focuses on and calls for the abolition or revision of all former policies, legislation and structures, that may be necessary to facilitate and enhance the transformation process.

Other factors that cause inclusive education to be considered a relevant education alternative are discussed hereunder. The researcher is of the opinion that inclusive education and schools have the ability to provide a quality mediated learning experience characterised by fully developed education plans in order to improve the quality of all educational activities. This quality education should accommodate, if possible, all disabilities and all learners should contribute and participate actively and meaningfully and also benefit from social, educational and sporting environments. In support of the previous arguments, the Education White Paper 6 (2001) maintains that inclusive education is both adopted and implemented in order to strengthen special schools rather than to abolish them.

Inclusive education takes place in many forms. These forms include:

- ❑ The regular classroom, without the help of experts. In that instance, the classroom or learning area educator handles the problem him or herself.
- ❑ The regular class, but the educator receives support from one or more specialists. Kapp (1991:71) maintained: "(t)he latter could be the special educator who acts in a consulting capacity or the itinerant teacher who advises teachers within a certain geographical area."
- ❑ The regular class, where the learner is only removed from the class for certain periods and is offered additional or supplementary learning mediation activities. In most instances, the resource educator gives to learners individualised mediation or, in small groups, conducts supplementary learning mediation activities. The class educator and the resource educator are expected to work together in order to continue assisting those learners.
- ❑ The special self-contained class, where a specialist educator would teach learners with the same disability in separate but small classes. However, according to Kapp (1991:71), "(c)ertain periods, such as those for music or physical education, are still taken together with the other children."
- ❑ Special schools as separate institutions, where specialised mediation for a particular category of disability is provided. Special residential institutions (often referred to as hostels) give twenty-four hour care to children.

In the researcher's point of view, both inclusive and special education systems have challenges and drawbacks.

These challenges include the following three factors:

A The expansion of access and provision of quality education and support

According to the researcher and to experience, it has been and it will continue to be a challenge to afford access to special schools, and expand that access and provide quality education to other blind learners, because of the expenses that will be incurred. This became evident during the research to schools project, in which the researcher was involved during April to June 2002, in his capacity as the SANCB's Co-

ordinator: Education Services. This project revealed that the government could not run and properly maintain existing schools.

B Necessary physical and material resources

It is, and it will be, challenging to adapt and make physical and material resources readily available to blind learners. At most schools, educators and support staff should be adequately trained in order to be effective and supportive during learning mediation for blind learners. The challenge will therefore be to provide adequately trained educators and support staff and relevant equipment.

C Curriculum

The curriculum for blind learners at special schools comprised only a few subjects: languages and human social sciences. In the researcher's view, both special and inclusive education systems will be faced with a difficult task in making Outcomes-based Education (especially life sciences, mathematics and technology) accessible. Both systems have the responsibility to facilitate and guarantee the provision of unrestricted education which would enable all blind learners, if possible, to access different subject groupings (human social sciences, economic management sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, art subjects and technology related subjects). All subjects have to be accessible so that blind learners can be in a position to make informed career decisions and practise professions.

Furthermore, it was and it is still a challenge for stakeholders and education authorities to understand and come to terms with blind learners' unique needs, which do not warrant being addressed merely as general needs. This group of persons needs Braille, Orientation and Mobility, Activities of daily living, Sensory development, etc. It will be a challenge for inclusive educators to master Braille codes, which is apparently a daunting task to educators at special schools.

Lastly, it will be a challenge to structure inclusive education in such a manner that blind learners would acquire skills to operate assistive devices independently and competently.

The researcher is concerned that in inclusive education, Braille and independence training specialists are not part of this system and it would be advisable that those individuals continuously be involved in all aspects of the education of blind learners. Their knowledge is absolutely instrumental for improving and making education accessible.

It is also the researcher's serious concern that most blind adults who went through the education system, also serving as role models to both blind learners and youth, are not afforded the opportunities to contribute, that could be of immense value in the consideration and implementation of changes in the education system. The same applies to organisations of and for the blind.

However, for both special and inclusive education systems to succeed, all stakeholders should make an effort, be dedicated, have perseverance, be diligent, show love, demonstrate compassion, exercise patience, be both hopeful and trustful, and possess both the ability to handle and an in-depth knowledge of

challenges, needs and concerns, in order to effectively provide access to barrier-free education for blind learners.

2.5 A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Throughout various education systems or programmes, the researcher has noticed various incidents of racism. The African National Congress-led government felt it was just and proper to get rid of them. According to (Bertram *et al.*, 2000; Mohlala 1994; Van Der Horst and McDonald 1997; Rose 1970; Report *Education in South Africa* May 2001 and *Report of the Review Committee On Curriculum* 2005), changing the education approach was essential for giving the youth of today the knowledge and skills essential for the future economic growth of our country. South Africa wanted an education approach that is capable of significantly improving and enhancing the welfare, both materially and psychologically, of the masses of its population. South Africa, just like first world countries, has opted for an education approach that is initiative, innovative, creative, productive and responds directly to the aspirations of the majority of the population. There was, and still is, a need to redress the imbalances of race, gender and disability, both in access to training and in jobs. Locally and internationally, governments are adopting education approaches that have the potential significantly to improve skills, incomes and job satisfaction for their citizens. In essence, the education approach known as Outcomes-based Education and training aims at giving all citizens, young and old, and, in particular, those who were totally denied learning mediation opportunities, unbiased and unrestricted access to education and training situations, so that they can attain qualifications that will allow them to compete successfully and efficiently for jobs on the basis of merit.

Morrow (1989:170), in supporting the aforesaid reasons for curriculum change, reported that society at large needed first to develop a vision of a desirable outcome, and then think out how schools could be used to achieve that outcome. He (1989:170) added that the phrase “education for the future” is appropriate here. Morrow (1989:170) further asserted that the desirable outcome was a vision of an ideal society, which is a kind of package, specifiable in advance, of the kind of society one wanted to achieve. Education reform, in one way or another, is both a true and a positive result of the demands of both the local and the international economy and society, which have placed mankind in the middle of the information age. As such, the complex and technologically dominated, multi-cultural and constantly changing world demands far better learning mediation results from all educational institutions than they have ever produced. Spady (1994:28) indicated that Outcomes-based Education and Training has the inherent potential to meet these demands.

It is also an indisputable truth that our technological age educational system embodies and perpetuates patterns of practice that prevent or impede many learners from learning successfully. The education emphasis which previously concentrated on the means, when and how of educational programmes, has negatively influenced and seriously (but not irreparably) damaged schools and education, because schools compromised on these issues. Outcomes-based Education and Training has capabilities to revise and redirect both organisational priorities and patterns.

Spady (1994:28) concurred with other authors who reported on the auspicious impact of Outcomes-based Education and also reported that Outcomes-based Education and Training shared many philosophies and approaches which are instrumental for redefining organisational purpose, processes and effectiveness in the corporate world. Hence, the principle of total quality management, reengineering the organisation, systemic change, corporate excellence, and a range of other organisational improvement approaches were all compatible with the philosophy inherent in OBE which stated that “all can learn and succeed,” that one should “create the conditions for all to succeed,” and aim at “continuous improvement”.

It is strongly believed by advocates of this approach that when authentically implemented in a consistent and systematic fashion, it could live up to its inherent potential, thus fostering major improvements in learners’ learning mediation and staff effectiveness in schools of all kinds. Outcomes-based Education and Training, as an approach, is capable of going beyond the vague symbols, labels and scores used as indicators of learners’ learning mediation and achievement. Outcomes-based Education and Training focuses more on the documentation and substance of what the learner has in reality learned and experienced during Mediated Learning Experiences and can properly do. The value of this system is evident because it is capable of giving educators, parents/guardians, institutions of learning and likely employers a much more accurate picture of learners’ capabilities.

Of pivotal importance too, education is renewed in order to both promote and guarantee the most balanced view of it, that is by actively and diligently developing learners’ critical thinking powers and their problem-solving abilities. All learners should receive adequate education characterised by equal financing, resourcing, better qualified as well as more competent staff, and better learning mediation facilities. In South Africa, the renewal of education is also instrumental for integrating the segmented education departments, which operated along racial, ethnical, political and tribal lines.

2.5.1 WHAT IS OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING?

OBET/OBE is an acronym for “Outcomes-based education and training.” According to Spady (1994:2) Outcomes-based Education and Training implies making unambiguous statements about the values and attitudes that are being promoted as learners engage in learning mediation processes.

Outcomes-based Education and Training, as an approach, expects of all learners (able-bodied or disabled) and, in particular in this case, blind learners, through the assistance, dedication, motivation and commitment of educators, to achieve certain outcomes during learning mediation. Outcomes should be understood as clear learning mediation results that educators expect from learners, requiring that learners must effectively, sufficiently and competently demonstrate these at the end of significant and comprehensive learning mediation experiences. Outcomes are not in any way values, beliefs, attitudes, or psychological states of mind. Outcomes are rather what learners could in the true sense do with the acquired knowledge or learnt skills. Clearly, they are practical applications of what has been acquired or learnt.

To support the previous statement, Spady (1994:2) states that outcomes are actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully. Education should, as advised by Spady (1994:3), be based on outcomes. This implies that people should be able to define, decide, organise, structure, focus and operate “... what the system does according to some constituent standard or principle.”

2.5.2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF OUTCOMES

When working through documents covering the extent of outcomes and OBE it becomes clear that outcomes embrace various ideas and functions.

Content focus outcomes:

Content focus outcomes base the classification of outcomes on the disciplines, subject areas, or the content they represent. Examples where content focus outcomes, generally speaking, are used include the areas of mathematics, life sciences, economics, accounting, history, geography, reading, writing, spelling, et cetera.

Time-referenced outcomes:

Entail that outcomes should be classified according to the time blocks to which they are linked. The following are a few examples of time-referenced outcomes: elementary school outcomes, middle school outcomes, semester outcomes, Craft Guilds of the Middle Ages, Apprenticeship Training in the Skilled Trades, Personnel Training in Business, Professional Licensing, Military Training Programmes, Fire-Fighting Programmes, Scouting Merit Badges, Karate Instruction, Scuba Instruction, Flight Schools, Ski Schools, One-room Schools, houses, “Alternative High Schools and Parenting”, short, middle and long-term outcomes, and grade-level outcomes.

Curriculum scope outcomes:

According to Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997) these are classified according to the scope of the curriculum segment/s to which they are linked. Examples of these outcomes are lesson, unit and programme outcomes.

Jurisdictional domain outcomes:

Entail the classification of outcomes on the basis of the organisational jurisdiction that both defines them and effectively uses them for accountability or reporting purposes. Examples of such outcomes include state, district, regional, provincial and departmental outcomes.

Competence complexity outcomes:

Could take place and as well be directed by the nature, character, scope and the complexity of the competence that should be employed during their performance. Examples of these outcomes include discrete skills, complex unstructured tasks, and complex role performances.

Operational function outcomes:

Are outcomes classified according to the function/s they serve within a design framework. Examples of these outcomes include culminating, enabling and discrete outcomes.

2.5.3 THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The origin of Outcomes-based Education and Training as an educational approach can be traced back to and also associated with the following approaches:

2.5.4 EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

This approach is the brainchild of Tyler ([s.a.] [s.p.]). The curriculum that Tyler both envisaged and anticipated, identified a number of key issues which both developers of curricula and educators have to seriously consider when developing curricula and planning various forms of instruction. This is to say that, as a ground rule, education should be the main purpose. Furthermore, education should possess content. Education that is purposeful and has content, should also be both well organised and well implemented in order for all learners to be able to acquire knowledge that they can practically use in their day to day activities. Finally, educators should from time to time evaluate and revise both the curricula and learning mediation planning in order to bring about both drastic and meaningful change and improvements if need be.

Bloom ([s.a.] [s.p.]) added some aspects to what Tyler had initially proposed, which include learning progressing from simple to complex, that is knowledge through understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

2.5.5 COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

This approach emerged towards the end of the 1960s in the United States of America ([s.a.] [s.p.]). People from all walks of life, lacked confidence in and exhibited strong reservations about an education that was not geared for preparing learners for life after school. The concerned public advocated that learners be equipped with skills, which would be instrumental in a working world.

According to the American public, competency-based education was required to focus on an integration of outcomes, goals, Mediated Learning Experiences, and, above all, assessment devices. The disadvantage of this educational approach is that education "... was in practice often merely reduced to a testing and remedial programme" (Van Der Horst and McDonald 1997:10).

It is further reported by Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:10) that the lack of consensus on what were considered essential "competences" led to a debacle in that movement and what it stood for. The term

“competences” possesses meanings ranging from: survival or life skills, basic skills, psychomotor skills, professional and vocational skills, intellectual skills, to both interpersonal and personal skills.

On the other hand, Voorhees (2001:9-10) noted that with regard to competency-based education there are multiple definitions of student learning outcomes, objectives and skills. In Voorhees’ quest to eliminate confusion, he adopted the following as the definition of competency-based education. According to his view, a competency is “(a) combination of skills, abilities and knowledge needed to perform a specific task”. He went further, noting that the term performance-based learning was commonly used in this volume as a framework for learning systems that seek to document that a learner has attained a given competency or a set of competences.

Voorhees (2001:9-10) suggested that a pyramid of competences that embraces the following rungs/aspects, which are interrelated, should be acquired by all learners in order for them to be both competent and productive members of society.

Traits and characteristics:

Traits and characteristics constitute the foundation for learning and depict the innate makeup of individuals, on which further experiences could be built. Further, differences in traits and characteristics help explain why people pursue different learning experiences and acquire different levels and kinds of skills, abilities, and knowledge.

Skills, abilities and knowledge:

This is the second rung of the ladder/pyramid. Skills, abilities and knowledge are developed through learning experiences, and are broadly defined to include, among other things, work and participation in community affairs. Therefore, competences are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities and knowledge interact to perform learning bundles.

Demonstrations:

These are the results of applying competences. At this level, performance-based learning could be assessed. The bundling and unbundling of competences drive competency-based initiatives. The most daunting task, however, is to determine competences that could be bundled together to provide and produce different types of learners with the optimal combination of skills, abilities and knowledge needed to perform various tasks.

According to the researcher’s point of view, both competency-based education and Outcomes-based education have the same advantages and similarities. Because in both systems, learning can be described and measured in ways that everybody can understand, competences or outcomes permit the learner to return to one or more competences that have not been mastered or outcomes that have not been attained in a learning process, “... rather than facing the unwelcome prospect of repeating one or more traditional courses” (Voorhees 2001:11).

Both competences and outcomes provide learners with a clear map and the navigational tools which are essential for moving expeditiously towards the envisaged goals. In an ideal world, competences and

outcomes would logically and clearly build on other competences/outcomes. Competency-based education and Outcomes-based education enable time horizons to become more manageable, yet provide flexible learning situations, processes and activities to learners regardless of their pace and style of learning.

2.5.6 COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING

According to Kinsley (2002 [s.p.]) community service learning is a combination of Freire, Tyler and Taba's theories. It is closely related to competency-based education. According to various authors, the acquisition of various skills amounts to nothing if those skills do not benefit the entire community. The use of different methods such as reading, writing, observation, research, problem solving, discussion, graphs, art, music, drama, et cetera, should, encourage community interaction.

In reality, programmes have to be identified and appropriately planned by those who participate in them, and be based on real needs. Kinsley (2002 [s.p.]) indicated that Freire, who is the proponent of the community development theory, believed that the most successful programmes emanated from the grassroots level with input from all constituencies involved.

This type of education has the following advantages:

Service experiences could be used to teach basic skills and apply research as well as help learners develop the social and personal skills, which are crucial for understanding the concept of community. According to Kinsley (2002 [s.p.]) service experiences enhance educators' understanding of community service learning as a process and as a learning mediation strategy. Integration of service experiences affects how mediation of learning takes place and could be viewed as a learning mediation strategy to enhance educational reform. Such experiences give learners opportunities to develop a sense of community by "... experiencing community within their classrooms, school, neighborhood and city".

Kinsley (2002 [s.p.]) further asserted that service experiences expose learners to a variety of learning situations because they are involved in active and cooperative learning, problem-solving, multicultural experiences, and offer ways for all learners to participate, which is a key to the development of young people.

MASTERY LEARNING

This is an approach that enables learners to focus strictly on learning goals. It is capable of making learners realise that it is of high value and cardinal importance to learn and that outcomes are achievable. Through mastery learning, the ability of learners is improved significantly. Mastery learning simply means that: "... if the proper conditions can be provided, 90-95% of learners can actually master most objectives" (Van Der Horst and McDonald 1997:11).

The mastery learning concept moved away from the notion that learners merely have more or less potential, and, therefore, achieve more or fewer learning mediation successes. Mastery Learning expected and compelled education providers to provide the most suitable, pleasant and propitious conditions for effective

learning mediation. Mastery Learning always strove to ensure that all learners are granted ample opportunities in order to be successful at most learning mediation activities, by providing an appropriate learning mediation environment (specifically adapted for blind learners), learning mediation materials (adapted for blind learners), and back-up guidance.

Outcomes-based Education and Training in the researcher's view has used aspects of each of the Educational Objectives, Competency-based Education, Community-service Learning and Mastery Learning approaches as its point of departure.

Outcomes-based Education and Training curriculums takes, according to Bertram *et al.*, (2000:283), different forms. These authors (2000:283) argued that most countries have stayed with government-defined syllabuses and resources (inputs models) while a small number of countries have opted for outcomes models (specifying what students should know and be able to do). Among the outcomes approaches there are significant variations.

Some countries, the United States of America, Canada and South Africa, do offer Outcomes-based Education and Training. In the United States of America, it is also referred to as National Standards. Profiles (an Outcomes-based approach), as it is called, was also introduced in Australian schools in 1990s. In the United Kingdom and New Zealand it is often referred to as the National Curriculum.

All these education approaches share some common features, motivations and ambitions. Further examples of these education approaches are resource based learning, the Target Oriented Curriculum implemented in schools in Hong Kong in 1997, et cetera.

As a result, the "(S)outh African curriculum reflects the needs of the country and its people. It is called Curriculum 2005 and uses an Outcomes-based approach. While designed for South Africa, it is nevertheless compatible with curricula in other countries" (Liberty Independent Newspaper [s.a.] [s.p]).

2.5.7 MAJOR REASONS BEHIND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

How did it come about that the government of the day dissolved the old education system and resorted to the implementation of the new system of Outcomes-based Education and Training? The reasons are manifold. These, and other factors discussed above, contributed to the renewal of our education system.

The present government surely wanted nothing else than to facilitate as well as to fast-track educational change. In addition, the government was eager and determined to totally eliminate the legacy of the past education systems which history has been discussed in this chapter, where it became apparent that their curricula have perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and have emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood.

Botha (2002:362) contended that all facets of education were arranged according to the dictates of the system of apartheid, so this meant that people of the different race groups were provided for in terms of their racial identities. Malcolm (2000:10) commented that by contrast, Outcomes-based Education in South Africa was introduced, in part, to loosen up a system that was seen to be too rigid (with its syllabuses, textbooks, exams and inspectors), and too divided (as a result of the background of apartheid). Roles were generally distinct and narrowly defined: this is what a teacher does, this is what a principal does, this is what a learner does to fit into bureaucratic structures and management. Principals, teachers and learners worked more as technicians than critical professionals. Delegation and avoidance of responsibility were common.

According to Malcolm (2000:11) Outcomes-based Education had to be implemented because of having the capacity to provide the tighter structures and accountability sought by many countries, and also greater freedom for learner-centred education. The provision of capacity is made possible by this system being able to prescribe a single set of outcomes for all schools (defined loosely enough to allow local variations), and then devolve to all schools the responsibilities for achieving these outcomes. Malcolm emphasised that the success of the strategy lies in defining outcomes with the right balance of freedom and control, providing appropriate systems of accountability, and building schools' capacities in curriculum design and management.

In addition, Botha (2002:362) maintained that the implementation of Outcomes-based Education is a way to root out apartheid education and to create a new vision of empowered citizens for the future South Africa. The new system should ensure that crisis in the education system is eliminated. As an instrument of reform, Outcomes-based Education promises to improve the quality of education in South Africa by guaranteeing success for all; developing ownership by means of decentralised curriculum development; empowering learners in a learner-centred ethos; and making schools responsible and accountable in their quest to ensure success and effectiveness.

As noted by Botha (2002:362), “(t)he formulated outcomes of the model underscore the above aspects and emphasize the development of critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative and future-oriented citizens ... Outcomes-based Education, without a shadow of a doubt, constitutes a radical break with the previous education approaches ... of South Africa of earlier.”

Despite Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani (2002:179) agreeing in principle with all the factors stated by both Botha and Malcolm as leading to the implementation of Outcomes-based Education, they in addition view the introduction of Outcomes-based Education as being of immense value in the sense that it endeavours to:

- Align schoolwork with workplace, social and political goals;
- Emphasise experiential and cooperative learning;
- Pursue the value of diversity in the area of race, gender and culture;
- Develop citizens who are imaginative, being able to manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- Help them to work effectively with others in a team, group, organisation and community;
- Assist them to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

- ❑ Guide them to use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;
- ❑ Encourage them to understand that the world is a set of related systems.

Furthermore, it became necessary as a matter of urgency to implement this curriculum so that, as suggested by Tiley (1997:1), the educator would no longer be merely the one-who-teaches, but also the one who is himself or herself taught in dialogue with the learners, who in turn while being taught, also teach. According to Tiley (1997:1), both the educator and the learners “... become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.”

The same author (1997:2) added that theory without practice is sterile, while practice without theory is blind. This is exactly how the old system used to function.

If one changed or endeavoured by every means to change one’s way of doing something, this way of doing something would also rapidly and remarkably change. However, for change to be successful, all of us should be in a position to know and appreciate what we are doing, to (more than before) love what we are doing, and fervently believe in what we are doing.

Tiley (1997) pointed out the above-mentioned aspects as being critical for a proper and essential change. For this to happen, he suggested that people should start by changing how they think, arrange the classroom, plan, use educational materials, books, resources, and stationery. Furthermore, educators should assess learners, ask questions, consult and collaborate with other educators, and manage the classroom.

The implementation of this programme would help both educators and learners to change a great deal regarding what they (educators) should mediate and learners should learn. In the past, planning for each week was based on and centred around what the scheme of work, school’s year programme or syllabus prescribed. Now, educators need to consider, and also reconsider if necessary, which specific learning mediation activities will most certainly provide and facilitate the most adequate and richest opportunities for each learner to satisfactorily progress at his or her own pace. Botha (2002:362) put this well by holding that the implementation of Outcomes-based education is a means to emancipate learners and teachers from a content-based mode of operation, but is also a response to international trends in educational development.

The Government of National Unity led by the African National Congress found it to be of significance that: “(t)he curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society” (Senior Phase Policy Document 1999:7). This new curriculum is founded on four pillars as indicated by Tiley (1997): assessment, planning, implementation and reflection.

Due to the country’s past history, and to a great extent its legacy of inequality, the government took a tough, uncompromising but fair decision to deploy its resources according to the principle of equality and fairness so that those resources might be utilised especially to provide and promote essentially the same quality of learning mediation opportunities for all citizens. For all these envisaged plans and educational programme

(Outcomes-based Education and Training) to materialise and to be protected, the South African Schools Act was passed.

Though there are numerous reasons behind the implementation of Outcomes-based education, the researcher believes that those discussed in this section most encapsulate the general thinking behind the introduction of this system in South Africa.

2.5.8 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT NO. 108 OF 1997

What role did the South African Schools Act play in the implementation of the Outcomes-based Education and Training programme?

In order to answer this question, we should acquaint ourselves with the provisions of this Act.

In the researcher's opinion, the Act regards the education of all South Africans of all racial groups to be crucial for future growth and development, and above all, for the upliftment of its entire population. This simply means that a good education system should indisputably produce the skills our industrialising economy needs, the society we so much want, and the most responsible citizens upon which our new democracy will depend.

It is stated in *Sowetan* (April-May 1997:1), that the South African Schools' Act, which came into effect on January 1, 1997, consigns to history the sub-standard and unequal schooling of South Africa's apartheid past, and creates "... a single school system in which people can work together to improve education quality and ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to learn."

As a result of this desire, people in different sectors and communities were consulted about and collaborated in shaping this new education system. By involving all stakeholders, South Africa performed a commendable task. Spady (1994:3) commented that: "... outcome design and development deliberately ... engage a community's key constituents and stakeholder groups. With the future of all students at stake, no one group should have the privilege or carry the responsibility for unilaterally determining this critical process."

People involved in the shaping of this education system included: parents, learners, educators, organisations interested in education and members of the community at large. This extensive research achieved, as the *Sowetan* (April-May 1997) put it, many "firsts", all of them being the foundations of the desired democracy.

For the first time schooling became compulsory between the ages of six and 15. For the first time all learners would have equal access to all schools. For the first time the rights of learners, parents and educators are protected. For the first time true representatives, in the form of School Governing Bodies (replacing school committees), are introduced in the governance of schools.

For the first time provincial education authorities, as an obligation, would admit young people with special education needs (for inclusion) to ordinary public schools, "... where this is reasonably practicable, and provide suitable educational support services for them. Physical facilities at public schools must be made accessible to disabled learners" (*Sowetan* April-May 1997:1).

2.5.9 THE MAJOR AIMS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT

This Act aims at the following:

1. Helping people learn how to make sound, compassionate judgments in a changing world.
2. Enabling people to make informed decisions, to challenge policies, to adjust and adapt to change, and to apply the acquired knowledge.
3. Developing people's skills, confidence and competency.
4. Making education better, more accessible, more reconstructive, more transformative, more efficient, more effective, more worth providing, more worth investing (in all respects) in it, more applicable, more worth learning, more equal (in all respects), more empowering, more enabling, more inclusive, more relevant and meaningful, more practical and more just.
5. Creating a single non-discriminatory society, which would strive to promote and cater for the economic, social, spiritual and political needs, interests, demands, and aspirations of our country.

This should be possible if all citizens involve themselves in protecting and advancing our diverse cultures and languages. Education should inculcate in learners skills to uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators. Through education, the South African society should promote the acceptance of responsibility for schools, in partnership with the state.

The Act further aims at building a unified future, by creating a single, unified schools system co-ordinated by the national Department of Education and run by the 9 provincial departments.

To curb divisions, racism and ethnicity, Tiley (1997:3) advises that the education and training system should undergo change so that it can provide the full range of learning needs. Education should develop learners' strengths, empowering and enabling them to participate effectively, actively, fruitfully, meaningfully, productively and critically in the learning mediation process. Tiley (1997:3) further maintained that the education and training system should be structured and function in such a way that it is able to accommodate a diversity of learner needs.

Public schools are divided into ordinary schools and special education schools, and are again subdivided into schools on public property and those on private property. To enhance transparency and efficiency in the schools' governance, School Governing Bodies, where in some instances learners from grade 8 upwards might represent or be represented by fellow learners in this structure, will now replace committees. The new education system will strive to create a culture of learning and teaching, especially at devastated black

schools. It will be expected of the culture of learning mediation to inculcate into learners discipline, application, determination to succeed, diligence, et cetera, in its quest for improving education at all levels.

What the researcher finds to be exciting about this Act is that it makes provision for the education of learners with special education needs. As a prerequisite, stipulated in this Act, schools should take every possible step to make their learning mediation facilities accessible to the disabled community. In situations where learners cannot be properly catered for in ordinary public schools, special schools still exist for this purpose.

2.5.10 COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF HISTORICAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS

According to Spady (1994:6) the main differences between Outcomes-based Education and Training and historical systems fall into four key areas, which as noted above are in the curriculum, learning mediation strategies, assessments and performance standards. As he puts it, an “(o)utcomes-based system builds everything on a clearly defined framework of exit outcomes.”

Historical education systems placed emphasis on aims and objectives, while Outcomes-based Education and Training places its emphasis on Outcomes based Education. The former were prescriptive, while Outcomes-based Education and Training is descriptive. Spady (1994:6) asserted that “... traditional systems already have a largely predefined curriculum structure with an assessment and credentialing system in place. They usually are not structured around clearly defined outcomes expected of all students. By and large, curriculum and assessment systems are treated as ends in themselves.”

According to educators who were present at the Outcomes-based Education and Training workshop held at Tshilidzini School for Learners with Special Education Needs from 19-21 March 2001, historical education systems had many Departments of Education, while Outcomes-based Education and Training has one national Department and 9 provincial Departments. Historical systems focused largely on content, while Outcomes-based Education and Training focuses mostly on skills. Educators in the traditional systems transmitted much of the knowledge to pupils; whereas in Outcomes-based Education and Training learners construct their own knowledge and practise acquired skills. This stimulates and encourages, to a large extent, creativity and critical thinking. In the historical systems, educators took the responsibility for learning mediation, while in Outcomes-based Education and Training learners share responsibility for their learning mediation.

Tiley (1997:4) emphasised the importance of this advantage by referring to the following two crucial outcomes:

1. Learners work effectively with others in a team, group, organization and community.
2. Learners organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.

To support this point Tiley (1997:4) advised that in order to practise these skills learners need to sit so that they can talk to and work with each other in groups. This could be regarded as cooperative learning in the making.

In traditional education systems, assessment was normally done at the end of a section of work, while in Outcomes-based Education and Training it is suggested that assessment is ongoing, in order to establish and to respond to each learner's day-to-day needs. In order to support this thought, Spady (1994:6) indicated that in Outcomes-based Education and Training assessment should be viewed as a flexible and alterable means for accomplishing clearly defined learning "ends".

In the traditional education systems, tests and examinations were used to compare, place and grade pupils, while in Outcomes-based Education and Training, learners are assessed in a variety of ways and different situations. Spady (1994:6) pointed out that the traditional systems operated around comparative/competitive approach standards, linked to a predetermined "curve" or quota of possible success. Furthermore, Outcomes-based Education and Training is effective in emphasising co-operation, supplemented by mutual support to learners.

Historical education systems divided learning mediation into fixed subjects and fixed periods of time, while in Outcomes-based Education and Training learning mediation is integrated and time is used flexibly. In traditional education systems, time defined most system features. In other words, time used to be an inflexible constraint for both educators and learners. In most instances, both the schedule and the calendar controlled the learner's learning mediation and the learner's success.

Traditional education systems were characterised by passive learners, while active learners characterise Outcomes-based Education and Training. Tiley (1997:6) supported this argument as follows: "(i)f learners, even very young learners, have an opportunity to take charge of their own learning, follow their own interests and work with others, they become more committed to the learning process." According to Behr 1978; Marcum 1982; Rose 1970 and Mohlala 1994 historical education systems were meant for domestication and domination, while Outcomes-based Education and Training is meant for liberation and empowerment.

In the traditional education environment, learners were textbook or worksheet bound, while Outcomes-based Education and Training is learner centred. Traditional systems expected of educators to be responsible for learning mediation, while Outcomes-based Education and Training expects of educators to be facilitators, to use group work and a variety of resources. In the traditional education systems, motivation depended on the personality of the educator, while in Outcomes-based Education and Training learners take charge of their learning mediation, and are motivated by constant feedback and affirmation. In traditional education systems political topics were forbidden in class discussions while in Outcomes-based Education and Training controversial topics, to enhance critical thinking and ability to reason, are pursued. Finally Outcomes-based Education treats all languages equally as languages of instruction including sign language.

2.5.11 THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING APPROACH IS BASED

The Outcomes-based Education and Training approach is predominantly based on the active involvement of all learners in the learning mediation process. The second most important principle is that: what is taught should be flexible, so that learning mediation will be relevant to learners and will always meet their learning mediation needs.

In addition, learners should continually be encouraged to critically think for themselves and above all, be creative problem-solvers. Carin and Sund (1989:105) stated the following: “(i)f you want your students to be problem solvers, learn ... and do things for themselves, you must give them practice in all of these things. The more they solve problems ... the greater will be the chances that transfer of training will find its way into new situations.”

All learners should be accorded both equal and ample opportunities to make progress at their own pace. By so doing, all learners will be granted expanded opportunities rather than constrained opportunities. Learners have to be constantly made aware of, as well as to know in advance, what they are working towards and, in reality, what is expected of them. Malcolm (2000:15) noted that outcomes have to be defined with sufficient generality so that they will enable learner-centred education – a curriculum that is matched to the experiences and contexts of learners in a particular school and location – but precisely enough so that learners throughout the country can properly claim that they have achieved the same outcomes.

2.5.12 THE MERITS AND DEMERITS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING

All programmes or systems, despite any popularity, efficiency and effectiveness, possess both merits and demerits. The same applies to Outcomes-based Education and Training. Its merits and demerits include but are not limited to the following:

MERITS

Outcomes-based Education and Training strictly demands of all educators to plan carefully by making preparations with a very clear purpose in mind. As a result of this, the learning mediation outcomes should guide the educator’s content and selection of material as well as his or her strategic planning. Learners are constantly made aware of what is expected of them and why, and are always able to measure their achievement or failure. Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:14) pointed out that self-assessment was thus an integral part of a successful Outcomes-based Educational programme. Schools could, as a matter of fact, accurately monitor the learners’ progress in terms of specific learning attainments.

Outcomes-based Education and Training emphasises creativity. Therefore, learners’ initiative, ideas and participation contribute to the promotion and maintenance of a healthy instruction and learning mediation

environment. The programme takes all learners on board (from the most gifted to the least gifted), and all learn according to their own pace and level of functioning. In other words, Outcomes-based Education and Training provides all learners with ample opportunities to achieve to the level of their individual potential.

Battistin (December 1998:3) observed, “(t)he most basic premise of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) states that all students are capable of learning and can achieve high levels of competency when teachers delineate their expectations. When this is done, students feel they are participants in classroom decisions and tend to be more supportive of all aspects of the class.”

Outcomes-based Education and Training enhances proper and effective management as well as strategic planning for anticipated outcomes. Furthermore, Outcomes-based Education and Training is, in the true sense of the word, people-driven. That is to say, all stakeholders have a cardinal role to play in this curriculum. Its success and failure lies in the hands of all people. All could contribute positively towards its improvement, effectiveness and implementation.

Outcomes-based Education provides the learner with much greater instructional support because learners are helped along the way to properly master content, concepts, skills and habits of mind. Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:15) stated, “(i)f learners have not mastered these sufficiently, they will be guided to try again and again until they succeed.” This is the kind of support all learners greatly need and deserve in any education programme.

It endeavours to eliminate permanent failure, for good; that is, any learner who has not yet achieved the required standard will be granted more and more opportunities to do so. It further reduces memorisation to a great extent and encourages a deeper understanding of the content.

In Outcomes-based Education and Training both educators and learners become cooperative partners who take equal responsibility for successful learning mediation outcomes. Outcomes-based Education and Training’s objectives are clearly defined. This makes it easier for both learners and educators to carefully aim at and attain them. Outcomes-based Education and Training also offers learners a wide range of choices and opinions. This, of course, enables them to perform at higher levels of competency.

Learners are given opportunities to either gain from others or benefit others as well, and rapidly build a hierarchy of learning mediation skills, which are instrumental for Outcomes-based Education and Training. Evaluation by both peers and educators is ongoing. This means that as soon as the learner exhibits a problem, this will be noticed. The learner will be helped as early as possible and lagging behind might be curbed. In Outcomes-based Education and Training, the time allowed for learning mediation is varied according to the needs of each learner and the complexity of the task. Learners are always given many opportunities to work with the ²core and ³alternative curriculum. Finally, as a result of this, all learners are assured the opportunity for personal success.

² Core curriculum comprises all learning areas on blind in the revised National Curriculum statements.

The researcher believes that the new education system has the potential to both transform and liberate. It is colour blind. It should treat all people equally, and, most importantly, all learners could start to think about the same expectations, ambitions and aspirations. All people would be equally empowered.

DEMERITS

As far as disadvantages are concerned, Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:16) commented, “(t)he effectiveness of OBE depends mainly not on the underlying principles of the approach, but rather on the teacher’s ability to implement such an approach since it requires hard work, a lot of planning and sensitivity to the learning process.” Lack of adequate resources makes it extremely difficult for Outcomes-based Education and Training to be easily and effectively implemented. In most instances, educators feel they are not properly given in-service training. That is, the time allowed for in-service training is not sufficient. Some educators who attended the Outcomes-based Education and Training workshop held at Tshilidzini school for Learners with Special Education Needs (on 19-21 March: 2001) argued that facilitators were not sure about, and were less competent concerning, Outcomes-based Education and Training with reference to learners with disabilities. When confronted with the fact that they were not delivering the Outcomes-based Education and Training “goods”, the response of the facilitators was: “We are learning and getting used to Outcomes-based Education and Training like any other person in South Africa. Remember, it’s like driving a manual car while you were used to an automatic one. During the first days, you make a lot of driving mistakes. When time goes by, you improve and drive with ease and confidence. We shall definitely improve and deliver the goods as you expect of us.”

Neither learners nor educators are sure whether they are approaching the learning mediation of Outcomes-based Education and Training as intended. Outcomes-based Education and Training is characterised by vaguely worded outcomes which cause most educators to retain the status quo (content-driven learning mediation) and in fact, these vaguely worded outcomes do not contribute to raising learners’ achievements or success. Educators are not always able to correctly translate the vaguely worded outcomes into practical learning mediation activities with specific content.

As a general criticism of Outcomes-based Education and Training, the outcomes which define what all learners should master, often indicate behaviours and beliefs that are vaguely worded and largely associated with emotions (attitudes of mind and values). Many of these outcomes, as Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:16), put it: “... do not focus on core academic content. A sound content base is naturally always a prerequisite for critical thinking and problem solving which have been indicated as the heart of Outcome-based Education and Curriculum 2005.”

The other problem prevalent in Outcomes-based Education and Training is the fact that when the government prescribes outcomes that include values and attitudes, it should in fact, take on a parallel responsibility to allow parents to exercise their parental right by choosing amongst a wide range of

³ Alternative/expanded curriculum is composed of subjects that are specific and important to blind learners such as Braille, O & M, ADL (activities of daily living) etc.

schooling opinions. Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:17) warned, “(i)f this is not the case ... a backlash against the Outcomes-based approach can develop, and parents might not agree with the attitudes and values forced upon them by the government and its schools.”

Furthermore, other critics of Outcomes-based Education and Training strongly believe that schools using an approach based on Outcomes-based Education will need to lower their standard to the least common denominator since not all learners have the same potential to learn according to the same high standards. Most people, justifiably so, fear that Outcomes-based Education and Training would hold back the gifted learners and that slower learners would hinder class progress. In essence, this means that, if all learners are expected to achieve the same outcomes, there will obviously be a tendency to lower standards, as all learners do not have the same potential, do not work equally hard, and are in no way whatsoever equally motivated to learn. For Outcomes-based Education and Training to be successful, there should, as a matter of urgency, be a balanced grading system for educational outcomes, which have to be integrated into the learning mediation process. In other words, those learners who are slow should be required to work towards achieving learning mediation outcomes at a relatively minimum level of competency, whilst those with far greater potential would need to work at an accelerated and higher level of complexity.

The implementation of Outcomes-based Education and Training is costly. Educators need to receive in-service training, curricula have to be revised, new assessment criteria and procedures developed, learning mediation support material acquired, et cetera. All these steps encompass financial implications. Can our country, which needs to use much money in terms of the reconstruction and development programme, afford to maintain this costly new system? Whether this is possible or impossible, remains to be seen.

2.5.13 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter extensively covered the educational programmes implemented by the previous government, political organisations and religious structures. Those educational programmes included: a discussion of African education, People’s education, inclusive education policy and perspectives on Outcomes-based Education and Training.

The complex problems of those programmes have given us what we are today proud of, namely Outcomes-based Education and Training. We have indeed come to terms with what the South African Schools Act No. 108 stipulates regarding education, learning mediation and the effective running of institutions in our beloved democratic country. It is very pleasing to take note of the fact that for the first time schools will not produce large numbers of unskilled people, but highly skilled, productive, efficient, competent and determined South Africans, all equal before the law.

Though our society has not yet arrived at a point where it could boastfully claim that segregation is totally eradicated, we are slowly but surely getting there. There are South African men and women, black and white, who are eager and committed to bring about change. These men and women should be commended for this bold step.

The South African community should encourage and whole-heartedly support this type of venture. We dare not fail. To do so would jeopardise the entire education programme and the country itself. Konar (1988) has assured one that given the right kind and degree of professional help, the potential of many persons is both real and realisable. South African citizens should, through Outcomes-based Education and Training, also cause the potential of the young and the old, literate or illiterate, rich and poor, able bodied or differently able, et cetera, to be real and realisable.

Through Outcomes-based Education and Training, all citizens of our country should strive to develop in all spheres of life thus making all her people well equipped and empowered so that they can satisfy their current needs and the needs of their country. Much research needs to be done, however, before we will be able to say that there really is an opportunity for a visually impaired child to develop into a person who could lead a dignified life through the constructive role played by Outcomes-based Education and Training.

Maguvhe in his unpublished paper written in (1997a: 15) observed, “(t)his should be a major challenge to us ... that we have to roll up our sleeves and intensify our efforts to provide the services and programs to meet the day to day needs.... Those who are educated, those who are able, those who have interest, those who are touched, those who always think about others, should emancipate the voiceless, illiterate and oppressed.” The researcher hopes that the present government, through its Outcomes-based Education and Training programme, will see this as not too daunting a task. If there is the will, there will surely be a way.