TEACHING TOWARDS OUTCOMES AND ITS EFFECT ON ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN A LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATIONS CLASSROOM

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research documented in this report was to consider the tensions that exist between a change in curriculum policy and the resultant methodological and assessment practices. An input-process-output model (Shavelson and Taylor, 1999) was used to identify the elements of the educational system pertinent to the study. These were identified as: policy as an input and teaching methodology and learning and assessment as the process of the educational system. Thereafter a single-respondent case study was selected to focus the purpose of the research by considering how the perceptions, understanding and experience of the changed curriculum policy of teaching towards outcomes has affected the nature and purpose of assessment, as viewed by an educator teaching at Grade 9 level in the General Education and Training (GET) band.

An educator teaching at Grade 9 level in an Independent secondary school in South Africa was selected as the single-respondent case study. The study was defined as an instrumental case study operating within the Interpretive paradigm. An educator teaching at the Grade 9 level was selected as a result of Grade 9 becoming a possible exit point in education as well as being the final year of the senior phase of the GET band. For this reason, the impact of a changed curriculum is felt most acutely at this point due to the implementation of the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs). In addition, an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) teaching methodology as well as an Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) methodology is required at this level because of the portfolio of evidence that is required to be gathered for each learner in Grade 9.

The study is referred to as policy-orientated as it seeks to understand educational change by examining an educational model of provision and operation without the intention to generalise the results. The results indicate that
the change in curriculum policy does not necessarily alter teaching methodology. However, in the instance of this research, teaching methodology and assessment, relating to the respondent's teaching process, are linked and can be seen as aspects of the learning process. Lastly, the research does not clarify to what extent assessment methodology influences the outcome of learning; however, it does seem that assessment impacts on the learning process.

Key words:

assessment; curriculum reform; education system; knowledge; Outcomes-Based Education; policy; skills; teaching methodology; teaching style; teaching practice.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ABSTRACT

I

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

III

## LIST OF TABLES

VII

## LIST OF FIGURES

VIII

## CHAPTER ONE

1

1. Introduction to the Study
1.1 Overview
1.2 The Background and Context of the Inquiry
  1.2.1 A Changing Curriculum
  1.2.2 A Paradigm Shift in Assessment
1.3 Problem Statement
1.4 The Research Question
1.5 Rationale of the Inquiry
1.6 Conceptual Framework Underpinning the Investigation
1.7 Research Strategies Used for the Study
1.8 Limitations of the Study
1.9 Conclusion
1.10 Outline of the Report

## CHAPTER TWO

21

2. Inputs and Processes in an OBE System
2.1 Introduction
2.2 Inputs into the Education System
  2.2.1 Principles Informing Curriculum pre 1994
  2.2.2 Background to the Implementation of OBE in South Africa
  2.2.3 Principles Informing Curriculum post 1994
  2.2.4 Implementation of C2005
  2.2.5 Policy Implementation in the late 1990s
2.3 Processes in the Educational System
  2.3.1 Assessment as a Process and a Practice
  2.3.2 Assessment Prior to OBE
  2.3.3 Assessment: C2005 to the Revised National Curriculum Statements
  2.3.4 The Relationship between Curriculum and Knowledge
  2.3.5 The Relationship between Curriculum and Assessment
  2.3.6 The Role of outcomes
  2.3.7 The Relationship between Outcomes and Assessment
  2.3.8 Why quality assurance has been developed
2.4 Conclusion
## CHAPTER FIVE

5 Summary of the Main Findings, Recommendations and Implications of the Study

5.1 Synopsis of Results 122

5.2 Summary of the Research 125

5.3 Discussion 128
  5.3.1 Methodological Reflection 129
  5.3.2 Substantive Reflection 130
  5.3.3 Scientific Reflection 133

5.4 Recommendations 134
  5.4.1 Policy and Practice 134
  5.4.2 Further Research and Developmental Work 136

## REFERENCES

APPENDIX A – ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS 147

APPENDIX B – OBSERVATIONS 150

APPENDIX C – RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 158

APPENDIX D – RESPONDENT AND LEARNER INTERVIEW SCHEDULES 163

APPENDIX E – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS 171
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Criteria for the creation of categories</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Coding system explaining the factors impacting on teaching practice as a result of educational policy.</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Coding system explaining the factors impacting on the teaching environment.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Coding system explaining the factors influencing the teaching process.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Coding system explaining the factors influencing the learning process.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Coding system explaining the factors influencing assessment practices.</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Conceptual Framework applicable to this study 74
Figure 4.2: Policy and the relationship between its subcategories 79
Figure 4.3: Environment and the relationship between its subcategories 88
Figure 4.4: Teaching and the relationship between its subcategories 97
Figure 4.5: Learning and the relationship between its subcategories 103
Figure 4.6: Assessment and the relationship between its subcategories 110