

CHAPTER 5

COMPLEXITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a complex and multifaceted process. It deals with education needs of learners, society and the nation at large. Besides, it also focuses on the infrastructure of educational institutions, auxiliary services of educational institutions, auxiliary services such as libraries and psychological services, as well as curriculum development and assessment. In order to deliver education according to the outcomes-based education policy, special attention needs to be paid to curriculum development and assessment. It is the curriculum which embodies all the activities that the learners and the educator must perform to achieve predetermined educational objectives; while assessment serves as a tool to determine whether the learning outcomes have been met. Hence, the focus on curriculum development and assessment as they are pivotal in the implementation of outcomes-based education. Moreover, besides forming the nucleus of outcomes-based education, these are complex and interrelated matters that warrant special attention.

Curriculum construction is a demanding task because it must explain the fundamental activities for achieving envisaged educational objectives. Therefore, the approach for this thesis is to keep the subject as substantial as possible. The principal objective is to explain what should be done to obtain purposeful curricula in relation to their objectives and the requirements for their successful implementation. Thus, the outcomes-based education policy implementation should indeed give effect to the policy objectives.

5.2 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

A curriculum could be described as a statement of the activities to be performed to obtain a specific learning outcome. According to Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:144), the curriculum should consist of –

- ❖ defining broad outcomes;
- ❖ diagnosing learners' needs;
- ❖ formulating learning outcomes;
- ❖ translating learning outcomes into patterns of learning;
- ❖ selecting and organising content and learning experiences; and
- ❖ choosing ways of assessing learning outcomes.

A curriculum consists of descriptions of activities to guide teaching (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:265). Firstly, it consists of a learning area framework, which arranges content in particular patterns, assigns to it learning areas and standard levels, and puts them in sequential form. Secondly, it is made up of the guidelines for programming in the different learning areas at different levels. Thirdly, and lastly, is the lesson plan that the teacher will prepare and present to the class.

Usually curriculum documents are written in broad terms, consequently they do not cater for the specific needs of every category of learners. This makes it imperative for educators to translate curriculum guidelines into specific teaching programmes with full details to enable the educators to perform their daily duties. In fact, each programme should be an interpretation of a learning area indicating how principles have been adapted to suit specific local needs. Stated differently, programmes are lesson plans that guide educators to select learning outcomes, subject matter, teaching strategies and assessment procedures (Zais, 1976:74). It is also worth noting that a programme can be a list of large or small units of work. For example, a four-year course for the

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former, and a section of a subject for the latter. Despite the fact that the details of programmes may be different, structurally they could be similar (Oliva, 1982:47).

As far as outcomes-based education is concerned, programming for outcomes is organising teaching to achieve predetermined results. It, therefore, commences with the formulation of what learners should know, what they should be able to do, and what dispositions, attitudes or values should be displayed at the completion of the programme. With these outcomes serving as guides in the teaching-learning situation, the programme is drawn up in such a way that it enables all learners to have an equal opportunity of success (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:145).

To understand how a curriculum is constructed, it is necessary to discuss initially some of its distinguishing features, which are –

- ❖ definitions;
- ❖ characteristics; and
- ❖ orientations and perspectives.

These three matters are dealt with separately below.

5.2.1 Definitions

For a definition of a curriculum to be of value to educators it must accommodate different values and perspectives, but should not be too prescriptive. If a definition is to be useful, it should be formulated in terms of –

- ❖ issues pertinent to both learners and educators;
- ❖ matters that learners, educators and others recognised as significant role players in education and acceptable to be significant for study and learning; and
- ❖ the manner in which these matters are organised (Marsh, 1997:5).

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Some of the definitions of a curriculum are that it –

- ❖ is an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a learner completes under guidance in a school (Marsh, 1997:5);
- ❖ is specific experiences to be provided by education to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their abilities (Neagley & Evans, 1967:2);
- ❖ is a substantial number of learning experiences, the choice of which is made according to a view or views of what education should be and are offered to the learner by both educators and learning materials (Pope, 1983:14);
- ❖ is the planned composite effort of any school to guide learners to achieve predetermined learning outcomes (Inlow, 1996:7);
- ❖ is a structured series of intended learning outcomes. Curriculum prescribes or at least stipulates the results of instruction (Johnson, 1967:130).

From these definitions it can be deduced that curricula cover a number of values and perspectives. The varying nature of these definitions is indicative of the complex nature of a curriculum. This variety and complexity need to be acknowledged. It is also noteworthy that definitions changed over decades.

According to Posner (1992:10-11) there are five curricula, which are the official, the operational, the hidden, the null, and the extra curricula. These curricula are described as follows –

- ❖ the *official curriculum*, also known as the written curriculum, is documented in scope and sequence charts, guides, course outlines and lists of objectives. Its main objective is to give educators a basis for planning lessons and evaluating learners, and administrators a basis for supervising educators and holding them accountable for their practices and results;

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- ❖ the *operational curriculum* has two aspects, namely the content included and taught by the educator in class and the learning outcomes for which learners are held responsible;
- ❖ the *hidden curriculum* include lessons about sex roles, acceptable behaviour for youth, the distinction between work and play, which identification of learners who can succeed at various kinds of tasks, who has the right to make decisions for whom, and what kinds of knowledge are considered legitimate;
- ❖ the *null curriculum* consists of those subject matters not taught and why they are ignored, for example, parenting; and
- ❖ the *extra curriculum* comprising all those planned experiences outside of the school subjects. It is voluntary by nature and responsive to learners' needs, for example, athletics.

All five categories of curricula play a noteworthy role in the education of learners. Although the official curriculum is the foremost of the five curricula, it is necessary to establish how the others influence it. It is also essential to see how it will be affected by a powerful hidden and extra curricula. For the official curriculum to achieve its intended objectives, it is crucial that educators must be aware of the existence and the influence of other curricula, as well as to strike a balance amongst all five curricula.

5.2.2 Characteristics of a curriculum

Functions to be performed by components of a curriculum are helpful in understanding a phenomenon or object of study. However, characteristics of a curriculum need to be considered as they also help to give insight of a subject of study. According to Marsh (1997:7-8), it is essential to state characteristics of a curriculum, which are –

- ❖ content: which may be depicted in terms of concept maps, topics and themes;
- ❖ purpose: usually categorised as intellectual, social and personal;

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- ❖ organisation: implementation planning based upon scope and sequence;
- ❖ society-oriented: purpose of schooling is always to serve society;
- ❖ learner-centred: the learner is the crucial objective of the curriculum;
- ❖ knowledge-centred: knowledge is the heart of the curriculum;
- ❖ technological orientation: to develop means to achieve specified ends;
- ❖ self-actualisation orientation: individual learners discover and develop their unique identities;
- ❖ social-reconstructionist orientation: schools must be agencies of social change; and
- ❖ academic rationalist: to use and appreciate the ideas and works of the various disciplines.

5.2.3 Curriculum orientations and perspectives

Apart from both definitions and characteristics, a curriculum can be viewed from different perspectives. Pratt (1994:9) identifies four curriculum perspectives, namely –

- ❖ cultural transmission: which emphasises the traditional academic disciplines;
- ❖ social transformation: emphasising political and social change;
- ❖ individual fulfilment: emphasising personal growth, relationships, and self-actualisation; and
- ❖ feminist pedagogy: emphasising an equitable balance among gender-related characteristics and interests.

For the purposes of outcomes-based education policy it is essential to identify the different perspectives to ensure effective implementation. Implementors of a policy should always address the issues provided by the curriculum.

5.2.4 Curriculum organisation

After explaining some of the definitions of a curriculum, its characteristics as well as its orientations or perspectives, it is crucial to describe how it is organised. The word organise means to form as a whole interdependent or co-ordinated parts (Random House, 1984:937). In this context parts refer to elements of the curriculum. As a result curriculum organisation can have various meanings depending on which definition of a curriculum is used and what elements are included.

It is necessary to explain two major forms of curriculum organisation, namely, macro- and micro-levels of organisation; and vertical and horizontal dimensions; as well as basic structures. Thereafter, three well-known approaches to curriculum organisation will be explained, namely top-down approach, bottom-up approach, and project approach. This makes it possible to establish the contribution of each to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Curriculum organisation may be referred to as macro-level or micro-level. The macro-level of curriculum organisation refers to the relations between education levels, such as foundation phase and the intermediate phase, or between educational programmes, such as vocational and general programmes. The micro-level of curriculum organisation refers to relations between particular concepts, facts, or skills within lessons (Posner, 1992:126).

Curriculum organisation may also be described in terms of systematic arrangement of curriculum elements. In this respect two dimensions of organisation are significant; namely, vertical and horizontal dimensions. The curriculum elements can be described as occurring either within the same time frame or subsequent to one another. The first dimension concerns what is taught in conjunction with a particular topic or course. The latter dimension concerns what follows a particular topic or course. It is common

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practice in curricula to place the time line on a vertical axis. The curriculum organisation that describes the correlation or integration of content taught concurrently is termed horizontal organisation. Contrariwise, the aspect of curriculum organisation that describes the sequencing of content is termed vertical organisation (Posner, 1992:127).

Curricula may be organised according to different elements and may be sequenced according to different principles. In order to unpack the assumptions underlying any curriculum organisation, it is necessary to examine it in terms of three contrasting patterns or approaches; namely, top-down approach, bottom-up approach, and project approach.

Simply stated, a top-down approach to curriculum organisation is based on the assumption that the curriculum should be stated around fundamental concepts, themes, or principles, and that from an understanding of these concepts, themes, or principles the learners should develop the ability to derive particular facts and applications. These concepts may be derived from particular disciplines or knowledge. In order to understand the top-down approach to curriculum organisation, it is necessary to identify its major claims about curriculum organisation, which are –

- ❖ epistemological: each discipline is distinct and has its own structure – namely a set of fundamental themes, concepts, or principles, and a mode or inquiry;
- ❖ psychological: the learning process of learners is similar to the inquiry process of scholar engaged in the different frontiers of knowledge;
- ❖ educational purpose: the major objective of education should be an understanding of the structure of each major discipline of knowledge;
- ❖ curriculum: there should be congruence and harmony between the disciplines and the school curriculum. The emphasis should be on studying each discipline in the same manner as scholars conduct inquiry in it; and

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- ❖ curriculum development: scholars of the disciplines should take a leading and prominent role in the process of curriculum development because they are experts in these fields of study (Posner, 1992:157, 158 & 162).

In short, the bottom-up approach to curriculum organisation advocates that the foremost determinant of learning is the mastery of prerequisite skills. In this respect curriculum development consists in working backward from the intellectual skills desired at the completion of the curriculum by asking the following question: “What does the learner have to be able to do in order to do this?” Answers to a series of this question culminate in a learning hierarchy that include all the objectives that learners must achieve. Teaching proceeds up through this learning hierarchy, from the simplest to the more complex objective. This approach to teaching ensures that relevant lower-order skills are mastered before the learning of the corresponding higher-order skills is undertaken (Gagné, 1970:240).

To understand the bottom-up approach to curriculum organisation, it is necessary to identify its major claims of the approach, which are –

- ❖ epistemological: all complex or general knowledge and skills can be analysed into more specific elements. A repetition of this process may lead to the identification of all basic elements of human knowledge and skills;
- ❖ psychological: people acquire complex or general knowledge and skills from simple or specific elements. It is possible for all learners to learn what schools teach on condition that they are given proper sequencing of objectives, high quality teaching, and sufficient time;
- ❖ educational purpose: the emphasis in education should fall on teaching intellectual skills, rather than facts, and on techniques that allow all learners to learn;
- ❖ curriculum: there must be harmony between the curriculum and the most effective sequences and conditions of learning;

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- ❖ curriculum development: behavioural psychologists should play a leading and prominent role in curriculum development as they possess the necessary expertise (Posner, 1992:165, 166 & 169).

The main difference between the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to curriculum development is the sequence of events. In the case of the former, the starting point is the curriculum and the terminal point is the elements/constituents of a curriculum. The latter commences with the constituents of a curriculum and culminates with the curriculum itself.

According to the project approach to curriculum organisation the curriculum is neither organised around fundamental disciplinary concepts, as in the top-down approach, nor around prerequisite skills, as in the bottom-up approach. On the contrary, the project approach curricula are organised around learner activities, which are planned by both the educator and learners. The project approach embodies experiential perspective. That is, it assumes that learners learn through activities that make it possible for newly acquired skills to be used through direct and personal experience in order to illuminate, reinforce and internalise cognitive learning (Wigginton, 1985:383). In order to understand the project approach to curriculum organisation, it is necessary to identify its major claims, which, according to Posner (1992:175 & 179), are –

- ❖ epistemological: on account of the fact that the scientific method offers a model of the way human beings think, it should be used to structure educational experiences. This method is made up of recurrent cycles of thought-action-reflection. Knowledge which is most valued is social knowledge. An interdisciplinary, experiential, project-centred approach to learning is better poised to allow learners to gain skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to participate fruitfully in a democratic society;
- ❖ psychological: the school should aim at educating the learner holistically. It is human nature to learn by doing. Human beings acquire new skills and attitudes by

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- trying them out in appropriate and relevant situations;
- ❖ educational purpose: education should equip learners to reconstruct or reorganise their experience so that they can contribute to the larger social experience;
 - ❖ curriculum: there should be congruence between the curriculum and learners' interests and developmental needs. Content should be interdisciplinary, based on relevant material, to provide learners with opportunities to apply new learnings in the real world; and
 - ❖ curriculum development: learners and educators should co-operate in curricula development that are relevant to learners' interests and needs. Unlike in the top-down and bottom-up approaches, experts are not needed.

Unlike the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to curriculum development, which explain the process in terms of elements that constitute a curriculum, the project approach advocates that curricula be organised around learners' activities.

Curriculum development is described as a process consisting of many, varied and complex activities to be performed to obtain a specific outcome. Curriculum development activities give guidance to teaching. Moreover, the fact that a curriculum is written in broad terms also confirm that it is a complex and challenging process to implement. Other factors that reveal the nature of curriculum development as a complex process include its definitions, various types of curricula, curriculum perspectives and curriculum organisation. On account of the fact that curriculum development gives guidance to teaching, it can be deduced that curriculum development facilitates the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

5.3 ASSESSMENT

Assessment forms an integral part of teaching, except that in terms of sequence teaching precedes assessment. However, sustained teaching relies on the ability to

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analyse how learners are learning in relation to what they need to accomplish. In this regard Cullingford (1995:150) states that at the end of a lesson one evaluates what took place, and concentrates on what concepts the learners have learned, what knowledge they have acquired and the skills they have displayed. Hence, preparation to teach relies on that critical insight into individual learners' attainments.

As stated earlier, assessment and teaching are both interdependent and intertwined. It is, therefore, noteworthy to state that assessment is not only inevitable in teaching, but also have positive uses. In fact, it is indispensable. It is instrumental in assisting the educator to differentiate between learners, to provide appropriate material for each one. to make sure that the needs of all are catered for, whether learners are gifted in particular subjects, or whether they have learning problems. Each learner needs sustenance and individual help, and each depends on the educator's recognition of this and the diagnosis of what to do about it.

5.3.1 Assessment of outcomes-based learning

The assessment of learning achievement is influenced by the characteristics of a curriculum. In this regard Benkin, Edwards and Kelly (1992:23) state that a curriculum consists of a statement of the step-by-step short term objectives by which education aims to achieve certain ends. To crystallise the aims of the curriculum, assessment must be structured in such a way that it makes these aims achievable. Hence the format, nature and scope of a curriculum have a direct relationship on what will be achieved and assessed (Olivier, 1998:44).

Outcomes-based assessment consists of a series of activities. The purpose of these activities is to obtain both information and evidence about a learner's competence to achieve outcomes. To assess a learner's progress, different ways and techniques are used throughout the learning process. Furthermore, assessment should be regarded as

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part of the learning process because learners who do not meet the criteria should receive feedback and support in order to achieve the required standard. Seen from another angle, the nature and extent of assessment is diagnostic in order to guide, redirect and assure learners of their progress (Olivier, 1998:45).

In terms of outcomes-based education, curriculum design is strongly linked to assessment. Hence, a need exists to implement valid and reliable assessment procedures. Unless assessment is properly aligned with curriculum reform and teaching practices, the envisaged changes in education will not take place. In order for outcomes-based education to realise its intentions, assessment must move from the emphasis on summative assessment as a single event to developmental assessment which is an ongoing process, as explained in paragraph 4.4 *supra*. Thereby assessment will serve as a tool that assists both the learner and the educator in ascertaining learning progress. Moreover, it will help with the development of the learner by identifying learning problems and monitoring the learners' progress. In this regard, and by way of comparison, the Scottish Office Education Department (1991:1 & 12) states that assessment is the means of obtaining information which allows educators, learners, and parents to make informed decisions about learners' progress. It further goes on to state that assessment, as an integral part of teaching and learning, encompasses paying attention to four concerns, which are –

- ❖ clear teaching and learning aims;
- ❖ motivation;
- ❖ previous experience and present abilities; and
- ❖ effective tasks and flexible teaching methods.

Lubisi (1999:12) provides a comprehensive definition of outcomes, which is "... assessment in education can be thought of as occurring whenever one person, in some kind of interaction, direct or indirect, with another is conscious of obtaining and interpreting information about the knowledge and understanding, or abilities and attitudes of that

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other person”.

At this stage it is necessary to look at how the South African Department of Education, which is the chief advocate of outcomes-based education, defines assessment. It describes assessment as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning. Assessment involves four steps, which are –

- ❖ generating and collecting evidence of achievement;
- ❖ evaluating this evidence against the outcomes;
- ❖ recording the findings of this evaluation and using this information to assist the learners' development; and
- ❖ improving the processes of learning and teaching.

Outcomes-based education assessment focuses on the learner's ability to perform a particular task against a fixed criterion which is a nationally agreed upon standard. In the case of Grades 1 to 8, in formal schooling, standards will be expressed in the form of outcomes. Each learner is informed in advance of what skills are required of him/her in order to achieve the standard for any particular task, and is credited independently of other learners' achievement. This implies that there is a shift from a norm-referenced approach to a formative criterion-referenced approach. That is, the focus moves from comparison to the assessment of an individual's performance against predetermined criteria. Therefore, the quality of each performance, irrespective of the performance of others, will be revealed. In this regard the Department of Education and Science of the Welsh Office (1988:7) states that this means that there is also a shift from content measurement to performance assessment. This is in keeping with outcomes-based education policy in South Africa which emphasises learner performance.

Spady (1994:40) made a significant contribution as far as assessment is concerned stating that authentic assessment is virtually identical to criterion validation. That is, to

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assess exactly what the outcome demonstration requires. This form of assessment requires assessors to gather the most accurate and pertinent information possible on a learner's performances and to determine whether that information or evidence matches, meets, or exceeds the criteria that define the essential components of the performance.

Assessment has been explained in general terms. It is now essential to contextualise it in terms of outcomes-based education to determine whether the policy is indeed suitable for implementation. According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2000b) assessment in outcomes-based education is a process of gathering valid and reliable information about the performance of the learner on an ongoing basis, against clearly defined criteria, using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts, recording the findings, reflecting and reporting by giving positive, supportive and motivational feedback to learners, other educators, parents and other stakeholders.

Assessment in outcomes-based education requires the use of tools that appropriately assess learners' achievement and encourage lifelong learning skills. Continuous assessment is considered the most effective method to assess outcomes of learning throughout the system and enable improvements to be made in the teaching and learning process. It must be used to support the learner developmentally and to feed back to teaching and learning and should not be interpreted merely as the accumulation of a series of traditional results (Department of Education, 1998).

It is noteworthy to state the basic criteria for outcomes-based assessment, as –

- ❖ it assists learners to reach their full potential;
- ❖ outcomes-based assessment should be participative, democratic and transparent, involving all stakeholders and based upon criteria which are relevant to learners' needs and have been stated clearly beforehand;

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- ❖ outcomes-based assessment is criterion-referenced;
- ❖ it makes use of self-referencing, that is, comparing the learner's present performance with his/her previous performance;
- ❖ it places less emphasis on norm-referencing;
- ❖ it emphasises performance and not memorisation;
- ❖ it tries to assist learners to apply knowledge gained in real life situations; and
- ❖ it is an integral part of the day-to-day process of teaching and learning.

Assessment is at the centre of outcomes-based education policy. Its focus is to determine whether teaching has achieved predetermined outcomes of learning. Furthermore, it is influenced by the curriculum and requires specific methods of assessment. Apart from that, it takes place continuously, taking into account basic criteria for assessment. Hence, it is obvious from the description of assessment of outcomes-based learning, especially the definition provided by Lubisi (1999:12), that assessment is a complex and sensitive process. Therefore, assessment contributes to the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Now that it has been indicated how the traditional way of assessment, based on content measurement, could be replaced by a system of performance assessment, it is necessary to explore the purpose of assessment.

5.3.2 Purpose of assessment

Assessment is not used for its own sake, but to serve a particular positive and constructive purpose. Its major objective is to reveal to the educator the tasks to be performed in order for learners to progress. It provides the learner with an opportunity to see whether he/she has met the outcomes of the lesson. In this regard the Gauteng Department of Education (2001:9) states that assessment means an appraisal, a review, an evaluation or a measuring up to a situation with the intention of doing

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something constructive about it. Therefore, an assessment can never be haphazard or superficial. On the contrary, it must be systematic and goal-directed.

As argued earlier, according to Cullingford (1995:152-153), there are many different forms and purposes of assessment, for example, formative, diagnostic, summative and evaluative, as explained in paragraph 5.3.1 *supra*. Formative assessment is concerned with recognising and delineating the achievements of the learner so that the educator will know what the learner needs to study next. Diagnostic assessment is concerned with identifying the learner's difficulties and characteristics so that the educator can be in a position to help him/her. Summative assessment is concerned with the overall achievements of the learner judged against predetermined outcomes and by comparing the achievement of the learner with others. Evaluative assessment is concerned with the achievements of a class, or the whole school, to determine the degree of success of a particular part of the curriculum.

The purpose of assessing learners in outcomes-based education is to determine intellectual growth, development and support of the learner. That is, the purpose of assessment is to monitor a learner's progress through an area of learning so that decisions can be made about how best to facilitate further learning in terms of expected knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Information gained with assessment enables the educator to identify learning difficulties, and take remedial action to support learners who experience learning difficulties. For outcomes-based education, the purpose of assessment is not about pass or fail or conditional transfer, but about progression (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a).

Lubisi (1999:15-16) states that assessment serve different purposes. In the main, it serves five purposes, namely –

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- ❖ selection – when a learner wants to go to a university;
- ❖ prediction – to indicate a learner's strength in areas of learning;
- ❖ monitoring – to monitor learners' progress in acquiring taught knowledge, skills and values and to inform teaching;
- ❖ certification – learners are given certificates on completion of qualifications or a programme of learning;
- ❖ grading – learners on successful completion of the requirements for a specific grade move from one grade to another.

To sum up, outcomes-based assessment serves different purposes, such as –

- ❖ identification of learners' needs;
- ❖ planning learning;
- ❖ following learners' progress;
- ❖ diagnosing problems;
- ❖ helping learners improve their work;
- ❖ adjustment of focus and place;
- ❖ providing proof of learners' level of achievement;
- ❖ judgement of the effectiveness of the learning programme; and
- ❖ assessment of the educator's own teaching (*The Teacher*, Sept. 2000).

Thus, in implementing outcomes-based education it is necessary to ensure that teachers as acting implementers should be *au fait* with all aspects of assessment.

Apart from the many ways in which assessment can be undertaken, there are many parties who are interested in it; for example, educators, learners, parents, school managers and employers. Further and higher education institutions are also interested in educational assessment. In this regard the *South Africa Yearbook* (2000/2001:433) states that the process of assessment involves a partnership between educators, learners, parents and education support services.

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Individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in assessment are educators. They use information from assessment to establish learners' current level of performance, to document learners' progress, to plan lessons and to diagnose and remedy learning problems. Learners are affected by assessment because they require feedback on their performance. Feedback gives them encouragement and indicates progress they have made in mastering skills and knowledge. Hence, learners are enabled to improve in areas where they lack the required skills as well as to assist them decide what courses to choose and which careers to consider. Parents are also affected by assessment of their children as they are interested in their progress. This also affords parents the opportunity to decide on what form of support and assistance to give their children. In addition, assessment enables parents to advise their children on which courses to study and which careers to follow (Gauteng Department of Education, 2001:9).

Individuals who are indirectly affected by or who have an interest in learners' assessment are school managers, employers and further and higher education institutions. School managers need educators' assessments in order to keep track of learners' progress in attaining the required levels of knowledge. This information enables school managers to decide to promote or retain learners within a phase, award prizes or impose sanctions. Moreover, information about learners' assessment makes it possible for a school manager to monitor the quality of education in the school, develop the curriculum and to identify appropriate staff training needs. Unlike school managers who use assessment information for remedial and record purposes, employers use information provided by schools to assess learners' suitability for jobs or vocational training programmes. Assessment information useful to employers can also be utilised by further and higher education institutions. These institutions assist learners by planning their learning programmes and admitting them to follow suitable courses (Gauteng Department of Education, 2001:9).

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Assessment is done to serve specific purposes. As seen from the description of purposes of assessment, it is obvious that assessment is a complex and challenging process. Purposes of assessment also indicate how and why outcomes-based education policy is essential. Thus, it can be deduced that purposes of assessment facilitate the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

5.3.3 Principles of assessment

Assessment is so central to teaching and learning that its practice should be guided by principles. The Department of Education (1997:43-47) has identified the following matters as necessary for effective and informative assessment and reporting practice –

- ❖ relevance to the curriculum;
- ❖ integral to teaching and learning;
- ❖ balanced, comprehensive and varied;
- ❖ valid and reliable;
- ❖ fair;
- ❖ engages the learner;
- ❖ values educator's judgement;
- ❖ time-efficient and manageable;
- ❖ recognises individual achievement and progress;
- ❖ involves a whole-school approach;
- ❖ actively involves parents; and
- ❖ conveys meaningful and useful information.

It is essential that the assessment strategies used by the educator in the classroom need to be relevant to the curriculum. That is, it needs to be directly linked to, and reflect, the learning programme outcomes. In this regard, assessment methods are chosen to reflect and provide evidence about the range of knowledge, skills and

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attitudes that cover a learning area. Conclusions reached about the learners' achievement are only valid when based on evidence about the entire range of outcomes (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:88).

Assessment need to form an integral part of teaching and learning. Effective and informative assessment practice involves selecting strategies that are derived from teaching and learning activities. These strategies should provide information to the educator concerning progress and achievement by the learner. In addition, information gained from assessment should be useful to ongoing teaching and learning as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, assessment should provide insight into learners' knowledge and conceptual understanding that may be used to improve teaching and learning in future (Masters & Forster, 1996:21).

Assessment should be balanced, comprehensive and varied in order for it to be helpful to the educator and challenging to learners. Besides, these different strategies of assessment give learners multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge of the contents, their understanding and competence in order to indicate their achievement of the learning programme outcomes (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:89).

Information yielded by assessment need to be recorded and reported. Reporting and recording include learner profiles, basic skills tests, parent and learner interviews, annotations on learners' work, comments in workbook, certificates and awards (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:89).

Assessment strategies should be valid and reliable by being accurate and assessing clearly defined aspects of learner achievement. Therefore, on assessment strategy selected by the educator must accurately assess the degree of competence it is supposed to assess. Reliability, according to Masters and Forster (1996:24), can be enhanced by –

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- ❖ specifying the kinds of evidence to be collected;
- ❖ specifying criteria to be used in assessing learner work;
- ❖ training markers in the use of criteria;
- ❖ providing samples of learners' work and illustrating the assessment criteria;
- ❖ identifying and adjusting differences in the standards applied by different assessors;
and
- ❖ identifying and adjusting differences in the detail of the tasks that learners must attempt.

Valid and reliable assessment strategies are those that reflect the actual intention of teaching and learning activities which are based on the learning programme outcomes. Values and attitudes that are expressed in learning programme outcomes must also be regarded as part and parcel of the learners' learning and should be assessed as such.

Assessment need not only be valid and reliable, but it must also be fair to the learners. Hence, assessment strategies are designed to ensure equal opportunity for success, regardless of a learner's age, gender, physical or other disability, culture, language, socio-economic status or geographic location (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:89).

Assessment focuses on the learners' progress and achievement. Thereto it has to engage the learner in person. Thus, it could be argued that assessment is learner-centred. Ideally, there is a co-operative interaction between educator and learners, and amongst learners themselves. The learning programme outcomes and the assessment process to be used must be made known to learners in advance. Learners have to be involved in the formulation of learning tasks and must actively monitor and reflect their progress and achievement (Duke, 1990:119).

Both educators and learners are involved in assessment. The educator's judgement is crucial in the process of assessment. Consequently, effective assessment practice

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involves educators making judgements on the weight of assessment evidence, and about learners' progress towards the achievement of outcomes. Learners show mastery of outcomes by demonstrating to them repeatedly under different contexts (Duke, 1990:119).

It is crucial that the educator's judgement is reliable. One way of achieving this is to co-operatively develop a shared understanding of the characteristics which constitutes achievement of an outcome. This is done through co-operative programming and discussing samples of learners' work and achievements.

Assessment should not be repeated indefinitely. It is necessary for assessment methods to be convenient to implement by being manageable, easily incorporated into normal classroom activities and capable of providing information that justifies the time and money required. Assessment should, therefore, be time-efficient as well as supporting teaching and learning by providing constructive feedback to the educator and the learner who will respectively undertake further teaching and learning. It is of the utmost importance for educators to carefully plan the timing, frequency and nature of assessment strategies. Effective planning by the educator ensures that assessment and reporting are manageable and maximises the usefulness of the strategies selected.

Assessment is learner-centred and should recognise the individual learner's achievement and progress. It should recognise that learners are individuals who are different and learn at different paces. Therefore it follows that all learners must be given sufficient time to demonstrate achievement.

Assessment and reporting practises should be sensitive to the self-esteem and general well-being of learners by providing honest and constructive feedback. It is of the utmost importance that the educator should discuss learners' achievement with them sympathetically and positively. Otherwise learners could experience ridicule and

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ostracism. In addition, value and attitude outcomes should be regarded as important parts of learning that should be assessed and reported on (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, 1988:14).

Assessment should not be confined to the individual learner within his/her classroom. It should encompass the whole school as an educational institution. Assessment and reporting policy is generally developed for the benefit of the entire school. Therefore, decisions about assessment and reporting cannot be viewed and implemented independently of issues relating to curriculum, class groupings, time tabling, programming and resource allocation (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:90).

Assessment should allow for parents to be actively involved. Spady and Schlebush (1999:110-112) spell out clearly the role to be played by parents. Firstly, parent and educator should share the function of having to guide, inspire, and ask the right questions related to a learner's educational progress. That is, to mediate and facilitate learning by stepping aside to allow the learner to manage learning himself/herself. Secondly, parents should avoid making comparisons as it is destructive to the self-images of children. That is, both parents and educators should know and appreciate each child's worth. Thirdly, parents should note and appreciate their children's progress. Outcomes-based education advocates that each child is scored in terms of his/her progress towards a fixed set of outcomes. Therefore, what parents have to do is to look for their own child's learning profile in terms of what progress the child has made. Fourthly, parents should avoid doing their children's homework. The parent is doing his/her child no favour by completing tasks and doing the major share of his/her child's homework. This is very essential because the educator must understand how to map a progress plan for each child and needs to know what the child can really do himself/herself. Fifthly, parents need to communicate with the educator if he/she is worried about the child's work. Besides, schools are now being asked to enrol the parent as co-tutor or mentor, especially where the child will particularly need more time

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on some units of learning. And lastly, parents need to support, nurture, take interest, stimulate, help to develop coping skills and, gradually, give freedom to their children. It should be obvious that in evaluating the success of outcomes-based education attention should be paid to various issues. It is insufficient to merely evaluate the learner's progress, parents and teachers should also be involved. Thus, assessment of the policy should be extensive.

Last, but not least, assessment should convey meaningful and useful information. Assessment information about a learner is useful to different people for various purposes. People involved are learners, educators, parents, school managers and employers. At the school level assessment information may be used at an individual level, class, grade or school. This information is helpful if it indicates both the strengths and weaknesses of the learner. Hence, it can be used for remedial purposes and for school improvement programmes (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:90).

The contents of a report must acknowledge that learners can demonstrate progress and achievement of outcomes across stages as well as within stages. Reporting should also take into account the expectations of the community and system requirements, particularly information about standards that will enable parents to know their children's progress. In this regard the *South Africa Yearbook* (2000/2001:433) states that learners who fail to meet expected levels of performance at the end of the academic year, in exceptional cases, may be allowed to repeat that year. However, the school will take such a decision in consultation with the learner's parents.

All assessment practices should comply with the basic principles of effective and informative assessment. Progress made by learners and their achievements can be reported by comparing learners' work against a standards framework of learning programme outcomes, comparing their prior and current learning achievements with those of other learners. Reporting can be done by means of various methods. It is,

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therefore, necessary for schools and parents to ascertain which methods of reporting will have both meaningful and useful information.

The Gauteng Department of Education (2000/2001:10-12) summarises the basic principles of assessment as follows –

- ❖ every assessment should have a clear focus;
- ❖ every assessment should have a clear purpose;
- ❖ the focus and purpose of an assessment determine the best method to use;
- ❖ assessment activities should match the desired learning outcomes;
- ❖ assessment should concentrate on selected learning outcomes;
- ❖ assessment should be built into the process of teaching and learning from the start;
and
- ❖ the more realistic and authentic an assessment activity is, the more likely it is to produce accurate and reliable information.

Principles of assessment serve as a guide on how to assess learners. It is not only learners who must be assessed, but also the educator's effectiveness of teaching, the curriculum, and the school need to be assessed. It is not only a challenging task to assess, but also a complex process. Therefore, principles of assessment, which indicate how complex assessment is, contribute to the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Understanding the principles of assessment, necessitate also an understanding of developmental assessment, which may be seen as a road map of the process of assessment.

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5.3.4 Developmental assessment

Developmental assessment is described as the process of monitoring a learner's progress through an area of learning. This process affords the educator an opportunity to find ways and means of giving the learner the necessary support, assistance and guidance. Stated differently, developmental assessment assists the educator to find best ways to facilitate further learning (Masters & Forster, 1996:1). In addition, according to the South African Institute for Distance Education and the National Department of Education (1997:4), it has a developmental and monitoring function.

The table below is an illustration of how content measurement, which is a traditional form of assessment, differs from performance assessment, which is an outcomes-based education assessment.

TABLE 5.1: The shift from content measurement to performance assessment

From content measurement	To performance assessment
Behavioural approach to learning and assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accumulation of isolated facts and skills. ● Assessment activity separate from instruction. ● Assessment of discrete, isolated knowledge and skills. 	Cognitive approach to learning and assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application and use of knowledge. ● Assessment integrated with teaching and learning. ● Integrated and cross-disciplinary assessment.
Paper-pencil assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Textbook-based knowledge. ● Academic exercises. ● Implicit criteria. 	Authentic assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of knowledge in real-life contexts. ● Meaningful tasks. ● Public criteria for assessment.
Single occasion assessment	Portfolios: samples over time
Single attribute assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolated knowledge or discrete skills. 	Multi-dimensional assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge, abilities, thinking processes, metacognition and affects.
Major emphasis on individual assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learners assessed individually with much secrecy surrounding tests. 	Group assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative learning and products.

(Source: Master & Forester, 1996:1)

From the table above, it is clear that the focus of assessment has shifted from notions of passing or failing to the concept of ongoing growth. This point of view is shared in the *South Africa Yearbook* (2000/2001:433) stating that learners with learning problems need not automatically repeat a year. They could be advanced to the next grade and receive additional support in a particular learning programme. Moreover, the emphasis is on learners' developing skills, knowledge and understanding unlike in the past where the learner's performance was compared to that of others.

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The developmental assessment process is analogous to the learner's physical development. That is, at regular intervals, an estimate is made of the learner's position on a developmental continuum. Changes that are discovered in terms of the movement of the location of the learner in the continuum provide measures of growth over time. According to Masters and Forster (1996:1) this is done by casing progress maps which describe the nature of development or progress made in an area of learning. The progress map provides a frame of reference for monitoring learner development and include a description of skills, understanding and knowledge in the order in which they develop. Hence, they form a picture of what it means to improve an area of learning. In fact, this picture forms the first step in implementing developmental assessment.

The order of learning outcomes on a progress map reflects a natural developmental order; for example, learners develop an understanding that spoken language can be represented by writing before they understand meaning of written words. The first step in developmental assessment is, according to Van Rensburg (in Pretorius, 1999:84), to obtain an estimate of a learner's current location on the progress map as a guide to the kinds of learning experiences likely to be most useful at that stage in the learner's learning as well as serving as a basis for monitoring development over a period of time.

The diagram below represents an example of a progress map in language teaching.

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	Reading	Writing	Viewing	Speaking	Listening
5					
4		■	■	■	■
3	■				
2					
1					

(Source: Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:84)

The second step in implementing developmental assessment is collecting evidence. The aim of this step is to estimate the learner's location on a progress map. Evidence is gathered from records of observations. The larger the number of observations, the more likelihood of the correctness of the learner's level of attainment. For these observations to be useful they need to be relevant with regard to the evidence about the area of learning to be assessed, and the learning outcomes identified on a progress map (Masters & Forster, 1996:3). In order for learners to perform to their utmost best when observed, it is crucial that to them the context be meaningful as well as interesting. This is in keeping with the principle of relevance to the life-world of the learner.

Important aspects of collecting evidence are the educator's judgements and systematic reporting of evidence. This can take various and varied forms, for example, day-to-day observations made by the educator. In addition to the educator's observations, information about learner's progress can be obtained from assignments, projects, presentations, portfolio entries, classroom exercises and tests. These records can indicate

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whether the learner has attained predetermined outcomes, or can represent more detailed analysis of the learner's level of comprehension of certain areas of learning.

The third step in developmental assessment is the use of collected evidence to draw conclusions about the learner's present position on the progress map. According to Masters and Forster (1996:5) the estimate of the learner's progress must reflect –

- ❖ validity;
- ❖ reliability; and
- ❖ objectivity.

For observations to be valid they must provide evidence about the full range of outcomes in a particular learning area. In addition, evidence must be an adequate and fair reflection of the learner's abilities. As stated earlier, assessment must be free of bias, such as proficiency in the language of instruction, cultural background or gender. For assessment to be reliable, there is a need to ensure that a comprehensive amount of information is assessed (Masters & Forster, 1996:5).

Developmental assessment, which is an aspect of outcomes-based education policy, as explained, is a complex process. Be that as it may, it is an essential element in the implementation of outcomes-based education policy. This is evidenced in the three steps in implementing developmental assessment, which are: develop a progress map; collect evidence; and draw conclusions.

Closely related to developmental assessment are assessment methods.

5.3.5 Assessment methods

Assessment is undertaken for different purposes. It is the purpose of assessment which determines the particular assessment technique to be used. No single assessment

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method is suitable for all assessment purposes. This is the case because learners differ and they need appropriate assessment methods to indicate personal performance levels. Hence the need to assess classwork analytically in relation to content as well as skills, concepts, language proficiency and attitudes (South African Institute for Distance Education and the National Department of Education, 1997:17).

To estimate the learning progress of learners on a progress map, a variety of assessment methods must be used. The methods are described briefly hereunder.

- ❖ *Portfolio assessment* is described as an intentional, purposeful strategy and specific collection of learners' work (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:86).
- ❖ *Performance assessment* is described as the assessment of a learner's performance as he/she demonstrates performance to the assessor (Simosko & Associates, 1988:32).
- ❖ *Projects* are described as activities that are undertaken over a specific period of time and it involves both the collection and analysis of data (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:87).
- ❖ *Product assessment* refers to the assessment of products such as drawings, paintings, sculptures, items of food, articles made of wood, metal, plastic or ceramics made by learners in specific learning areas (Simosko & Associates, 1988:32).
- ❖ *Paper and pen assessment* normally takes place at a specific time under controlled conditions and include short answers, essays and multiple-choice questions (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:87).
- ❖ *Observation sheets* are valuable instruments of assessment in which learners record what they observed about a specific unit of a learning area (Department of Education, 1997:33).

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- ❖ *Journals* are also used for assessment purposes and must reflect a learner's learning and clarify meaning following the teaching of a unit of work (Department of Education, 1997:33).
- ❖ *Assessment of prior learning* should be done by making use of valid and reliable assessment procedures to determine knowledge gained by the learner informally for the purpose of placement in formal education grades, as well as facilitating mobility of learners between the formal and informal education sectors (Department of Education, 1997:33-34).
- ❖ *Diagnostic assessment* identifies the weaknesses and strengths of the knowledge of the learner in the previously taught learning units (Cullingford, 1995:154).
- ❖ *Self-assessment* enables learners to appraise their own work in order to value and appreciate their own effort (Van Rensburg, in Pretorius, 1999:88).
- ❖ *Peer assessment* refers to other learners assessing a learner's work, especially in group projects and oral presentations (Department of Education, 1997:30).

The various methods utilised to assess the outcomes, indicate the extensive nature of the practicalities and complexities of policy implementation. It also clearly illustrates the need to ensure that policy implementors should be prepared extensively in outcomes-based education policy to guarantee that the policy is implemented in its fullest extent.

Another form of assessment which is continuous assessment is described hereafter. It is described separately as it is a major distinguishing feature of outcomes-based education policy.

5.3.6 Continuous assessment

At the heart of outcomes-based education is continuous assessment. This approach to assessment makes it possible for assessment to achieve its purpose. According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2001:99), the most common purposes of assessment can be grouped into four categories, which are:

- ❖ Baseline assessment, which aims at finding out how much learners know about a unit of work. This will enable the educator to know at what level to start teaching learners.
- ❖ Formative assessment, which aims at determining how learners are coping with a learning programme. The main purpose of this form of assessment is for the educator to give learners feedback while the lesson is in progress.

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- ❖ Diagnostic assessment, as stated above, aims at identifying problems that learners encounter in teaching and learning. This test creates opportunities for the educator to adapt lessons to address learners' needs.
- ❖ Summative assessment aims at determining learners' progress over a certain period of time or a particular section of work. It enables the educator to give a summary of learners' progress.

During any well-planned series of lessons, the educator will probably assess all the purposes of assessment using the aforementioned methods. Baseline assessment is employed at the beginning of a series of lessons. Thereafter formative assessment is used at key stages during presentation of lessons. Hereafter the educator may apply diagnostic assessment when learners experience difficulties. At the end of presenting the whole series of lessons, the educator makes use of summative assessment. The sequence in which these four forms of assessment follow each other, during and after each main section of work, is called the cycle of continuous assessment (Gauteng Department of Education, 2001:99).

Continuous assessment creates numerous opportunities for learners to be assessed during the presentation of lessons and at the end of a unit of study. This is in keeping with the theory of outcomes-based education which advocates that every learner has the potential to succeed. Hence, it is obvious that continuous assessment, which is a complex process, contributes to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

On account of the central role played by continuous assessment in teaching and learning, it is necessary to explain its features.

5.3.7 Features of continuous assessment

The focus for assessing outcomes-based education involves concentrating less on whether a learner has passed or failed, but more on what outcomes the learner has achieved and in which areas further support or enrichment is required. Continuous assessment does not mean giving written tests and examinations more often. On the contrary, it requires ongoing monitoring and assessment of learner performance throughout the school year in everyday conditions. In outcomes-based assessment the focus is clear, that is, the progress towards outcomes, and a clearer purpose, which is, to help the learner (*The Teacher*, October 2002).

Some of the distinguishing features of outcomes-based continuous assessment, according to Flanagan (1998:74-75), are the following:

- ❖ It occurs during the learning process, in everyday conditions.
- ❖ Its main function is to help both the learner and the learning process.
- ❖ It makes room for teachers to use any planned learning experience to assess learners' achievement and progress.
- ❖ It makes more use of criterion referencing than norm referencing.
- ❖ It is transparent as learners know in advance the criterion against which they are assessed.
- ❖ It is diagnostic as it enables the teacher to monitor strengths and to address the weaknesses of the learner.
- ❖ It makes it possible for teachers to pace learners and to provide enrichment for fast learners.

Assessment is the final step in a teaching-learning situation. Even in outcomes-based learning assessment is at the tail end of all teaching-learning activities. That is, assessment can be rightly regarded as the conclusion of outcomes-based learning (Flanagan, 1998:75).

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Also important is an understanding of the following, which will be explained in subsequent paragraphs:

- ❖ criteria/assessment standards
- ❖ criterion referencing and norm referencing
- ❖ why, what, when, who and how to assess
- ❖ how to record and report assessment
- ❖ some features of continuous assessment

The distinguishing features of continuous assessment indicate that outcomes-based education is learner-centred and is also a complex process. Learners are provided with the necessary assistance to ensure that they achieve learning objectives. Therefore, just like continuous assessment, its distinguishing features also contribute to the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

5.3.8 Criteria/assessment standards

Learners' performance of given tasks is measured against agreed criteria. These criteria serve as indicators of evidence of achievement the educator have to search for in terms of the outcomes. According to Arends (1994:211), the agreed criteria that the learner is expected to meet in order to achieve stated outcomes include the following:

- ❖ collection of relevant information;
- ❖ collection of accurate information;
- ❖ interact critically with different sources of information; and
- ❖ organise a report in a logical way.

At this stage it is necessary to describe what an assessment standard is. According to the Department of Education (2001:22) assessment standard is the level at which

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learners should demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and ways of demonstrating the achievement. It continues that assessment standards are grade specific and show how conceptual progression will occur in the learning area. Over and above that assessment standards embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve learning outcomes.

Before the learner embarks on a given activity or series of activities, the criteria should be explained clearly to him or her. This will assist the learner to understand what the focus of assessment will be. Furthermore, this will also help the learner to set targets and check his or her performance. Another advantage of this exercise is that it makes the assessment process transparent (*The Teacher*, Sept. 2000).

Assessment standards, which emphasise the collection of relevant and accurate information as well as critical interaction with different sources of information, assist in maintaining quality in assessing learners. Quality assurance, which is a complex process, is one of the objectives of outcomes-based education policy. Thus, it can be deduced that assessment standards facilitate the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

After explaining assessment standards, it is necessary to indicate various forms of assessment, which are, criterion referencing and norm referencing.

5.3.9 Criterion referencing and norm referencing

Criterion referencing is assessment using outcomes and related criteria. It involves informing learners in advance about what will be assessed. In addition learners are told by their educator which criteria they have met and which they still need to work on. It is vital that the educator show the learners their achievements and shortcomings, he or she should do so in a constructive and positive manner. This is in fact regarded as the heart of outcomes-based assessment (*The Teacher*, Sept. 2000).

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According to Cullingford (1995:143) criterion-referenced assessment is system-based on the quality of work produced by a learner without regard to how it compares with other learners' work. What serves as criteria for assessment are the set of achievements the educator would expect of a learner. However, regardless of its quality and quantity, whatever the learner has achieved is recognised. Jacobsen, Eggen and Kauchak (1999:314) state that criterion-referenced assessment are evaluations based on the extent to which learners have reached a preselected standard.

Norm referencing is different from criterion referencing. The former, in essence, involves ranking learners' performance from the highest in class to the lowest. In other words, the performance of each learner is judged against the performance of his or her agreed criteria (*The Teacher*, Sept. 2000).

According to Cullingford (1995:153) norm-referencing assessment is based on the principle of comparing learners with one another, putting them in rank order so that the grade a pupil receives depends on how he/she compares with others. For instance, a learner might have done well, but if all others in class have done better he/she will be at the bottom. Jacobsen, Eggen and Kauchak (1999:314) concur with Cullingford when they state that when decisions are made about learners' progress and grades are assigned based on how they compare to other learners, the evaluation is norm-referenced. Criterion referencing and norm referencing emphasise that learners must be informed in advance about issues to be assessed and ranking learners' performance from the highest to the lowest. In this regard, the focus is on fairness, honesty and respect for learners. Undoubtedly, this is a complex process. Therefore, criterion referencing and norm referencing, just like assessment standards, ensures that quality control measures are in place in implementing outcomes-based education policy.

It is necessary for educators to know why they assess, what to assess, when to assess, who assesses and how to assess.

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(a) *Issues to be assessed*

The learner's performance and competence as he/she progresses towards achieving specific and critical outcomes are assessed. Here the educator is guided by the assessment criteria, range statements and performance indicators as evidence that learners have progressed. It is crucial that the results selected for assessment need to be clearly measurable and assessable. In addition, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to be assessed must be clearly stated (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a).

Briefly stated, the educator must know the issues to be assessed. Outcomes-based assessment dictates that after obtaining the purpose of assessment the educator needs to develop some focus on issues to be assessed (Lubisi, 1999:19).

(b) *Timing of assessment*

Continuous assessment provides an answer to this question. That is, assessment should be done on an ongoing basis. On account of the fact that learners learn at different rates and use different learning styles, they may not be assessed at the same time and in the same way (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a). In this regard the Gauteng Department of Education and Vista University (2002:96) concur when they state that assessment can occur at the end of a unit, module, term, year, phase or grade, which is summative. Continuous assessment occurs throughout a learning process. It is explained that assessment may take place at the beginning of a new learning experience as baseline assessment or at any moment of need for diagnostic purposes.

(c) *Persons responsible for assessment*

Although the educator has overall responsibility for the assessment of learners, others who may assess learners' performance and achievement are the learners, parents, the

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District Assessment Team, the School Assessment Team, occupational therapists, speech therapists and psychologists. It is of importance that in this partnership of assessment the learner's right to confidentiality should be ensured. Moreover, parents or guardians and education support personnel form a crucial support system necessary to make assessment as effective as possible (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a).

(d) *Methods of assessment*

The major determining factor of methods of assessment to be used is the purpose of assessment. An assessment level is any indicator that the educator uses when assessing and is appropriate to the method of assessment. The educator uses special methods to enable learners in many ways to demonstrate their performance evidence (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a).

The following are the methods of assessment –

- ❖ written assignments;
- ❖ portfolios;
- ❖ observations sheets;
- ❖ journals;
- ❖ rubrics and assignment grids;
- ❖ cassettes;
- ❖ worksheets;
- ❖ question papers (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a).

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2000a) the following are techniques of assessment –

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- ❖ project work;
- ❖ role-play;
- ❖ panel discussion;
- ❖ poster;
- ❖ presentations and demonstrations;
- ❖ debates;
- ❖ construction and design;
- ❖ drawings, graphs and maps.

Although methods are categorised into different groups, they must not be used rigidly as separate and unrelated components. This will depend on what the educator finds to be appropriate. Therefore, it is essential to know what to assess, which will facilitate the decision on how to assess (Lubisi, 1999:19).

As stated earlier under section 5.3.6, continuous assessment is a cornerstone of outcomes-based education policy. Continuous assessment necessitate the need to utilise different methods of assessment, otherwise assessment will be monotonous and stereotyped. Other essential factors of assessment are issues to be assessed, timing of assessment and persons responsible for assessment. These factors make it possible for assessment to achieve its objective and also indicate that assessment is a complex process. Therefore, collectively, issues to be assessed, timing of assessment, persons responsible for assessment and methods of assessment contribute to the successful implementation of outcomes-based education.

5.3.10 How to record and report

There are various methods of recording and reporting, However, each of them selected for particular circumstances should be simple, clear and meticulous. According to Flanagan (1998:79-80), the selected record should have the following distinguishing features –

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- ❖ reliable indicators of learners' strengths and weaknesses;
- ❖ comprehensive enough to reflect learners' progress;
- ❖ continuous;
- ❖ clear description of the learning that has occurred;
- ❖ indicate learners' strengths and weaknesses for parents and subsequent teachers;
- ❖ compel teachers to be accountable to learners, parents and the wider community.

Thus, it could be stated that policy implementation should be evaluated within a broad context. The objectives of policy are normally wider than may appear in a policy statement, e.g. an Act of Parliament. Therefore, in some cases, for example, in outcomes-based education even parents should be involved in establishing the effectiveness of the particular policy.

Concerning recording of assessment the Gauteng Department of Education (2000a) states that –

- ❖ the success of continuous assessment depends on sound and meticulous methods of recording a learner's achievement over a period of time;
- ❖ observation sheets should be used to record evidence of learner's progress towards achieving outcomes. The data collected should be the educator's observations as well as the learner's work;
- ❖ the educator should use performance indicators, expected levels of performance or progress maps to show the learner's progress towards achieving the specific outcomes and critical outcomes;
- ❖ records used to capture assessment information should be –
 - ❖ uncomplicated and easily interpreted by the educator and others;
 - ❖ flexible enough to accommodate the addition and deletion of information if need be;
 - ❖ genuine, factual indications of learners' strengths and areas of support needed;

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- ✧ comprehensive enough to demonstrate learner progress;
- ✧ ongoing and continuous;
- ✧ helpful in the reporting process;
- ✧ readily accessible; and
- ✧ kept in a secure place to protect the confidentiality of the learner's progression;
- ❖ for each learner a minimum of two records per term must be kept for each learning programme. These are summative records based on all the various day to day information on performance records that have been gathered. Moreover, the records will assist the educator in making valid and reliable judgements and reports about each learner's performance progress as well as areas in which the learner needs to improve and requires support;
- ❖ a learner profile should replace all previous cumulative record documents that have been used before by learning site or schools, for example cumulative record card;
- ❖ the learner profile must include the following information about the learner –
 - ✧ personal information;
 - ✧ school attendance history;
 - ✧ physical condition/medical history;
 - ✧ participation in extramural activities;
 - ✧ achievements;
 - ✧ emotional and social development;
 - ✧ parental involvement;
 - ✧ areas in which support is needed;
 - ✧ special support given;
 - ✧ general remarks;
 - ✧ summative end of year overall report on the progress of the learner in each learning programme;
 - ✧ sample of learner's work in each learning programme; and
 - ✧ the promotion records of each school year.

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Concerning the reporting of the learner's achievement, the Gauteng Department of Education (2000a) maintains that –

- ❖ reporting is an essential and multifaceted process which provides information to serve the following purposes –
 - ❖ describing and detailing the learning that has taken place and the complexity of the learning achieved by the learner;
 - ❖ outlining for subsequent educators learner's strengths and weaknesses that need support;
 - ❖ enabling parents and guardians to participate in the learning process of their children;
 - ❖ making educators more accountable to learners, parents, the education system and the wider community;
- ❖ reporting can be done by an oral presentation, written summation which is either formal or informal, brief notes, impromptu or planned and stated in general or specific terms;
- ❖ in exceptional cases, a learner may be retained in the same grade. In such an event, the school management, the grade educator and the parents or guardians are required to motivate in writing using form GDE 450c (Motivation to retain a learner in the same grade the following year);
- ❖ a progression schedule for each grade must be submitted to the District Education Co-ordinator at the District Office by the end of each year. Report cards may only be completed and issued once the District Office has signed the progression schedule;
- ❖ three categories are used to report on the progress of learners, which are –
 - ❖ learners showing satisfactory progress;
 - ❖ learners who must receive additional report the following year;
 - ❖ retained learners;

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- ❖ report cards are used – one report per term on the learner's progress must be sent to the parents or guardians;
- ❖ when preparing reports the following points must be remembered –
 - ❖ comments must be specific and impartial as well as relevant and accurate;
 - ❖ focus on the known and avoid speculation;
 - ❖ acknowledge all growth made by the learner;
 - ❖ distinguish between the learner and his/her work;
 - ❖ use accumulated assessment records, which should be comprehensive, detailed, chronological and within reach at all times;
 - ❖ respect the confidentiality of the learner's assessment records.

Understanding the various and varied forms of assessment in outcomes-based education makes it possible to critique it, as well as indicating the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to teaching and learning. However, the major advantage to be derived from the critique of outcomes-based education is to strive for successful implementation of an education policy. It is aimed at improving the lives of individuals, committees and society. Therefore, outcomes-based education has to be evaluated within a societal context as well.

Recording and reporting learners' achievements is an essential responsibility of the educator. Various methods are utilised to record and report learners' achievement – which implies that records are used to capture assessment information. These records should be simple, factual, comprehensive, confidential and accessible. Apart from keeping assessment information, records should also reflect learners' personal information, school attendance history as well as medical history. It is thus obvious that recording learners' achievement is a demanding and complex process.

Reporting learners' achievement is an essential and multifaceted process. There are three categories used to report learners' progress. Points to remember when preparing learners' achievement reports indicated that it is also a complex process.

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Thus, it can be deduced that recording and reporting learners' achievement is a complex process. Moreover, the process also indicate whether learners have achieved learning outcomes or not. Therefore, recording and reporting learners' progress is an essential component of the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

5.4 CRITIQUE OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

It is a truism that nothing is totally good nor totally bad. In everything there is something useful or beneficial that can be derived from it. In some instances, it is not only how good an object is, but how it is being utilised that counts. The same applies to an education policy. No matter how good or noble its intentions may be, how it is being implemented is important. Therefore, the positive and negative aspects of outcomes-based education as well as its implementation require further explanation.

The introduction of outcomes-based education is based on a political consideration. Its nature and character reveals that it can serve as a vehicle to democratise a society or country, or to bring about other political and social developments. The need for such a system of education for the Republic of South Africa was acutely experienced during and after 1994. Outcomes-based education was preferred as a new education system because it could facilitate the implementation of the bill of rights as enshrined in the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)*, was explained in paragraph 2.2 *supra*.

A closer look at the definition of outcomes-based education indicates that outcomes form the basis of all educational activities was explained in paragraph 2.3 *supra*. Outcomes serve as pointers or road signs that show the direction of a state, town or city or village. Hence they are of crucial importance to direct the teaching activities and to indicate the required standard to be achieved by learners. In other words, outcomes must make the teaching-learning situation to be goal-directed, focussed, purposeful and business-like.

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Since outcomes are central to all education activities, they should characterise all facets of an education system including qualifications, curricula, assessment of learners, structures and institutions, finances and other relevant resources. To confirm the dominant role to be played by outcomes in outcomes-based education Spady (1994:36) states that the outcomes-based paradigm is defined, focussed, and organised around exit outcomes. He continues that the exit outcomes should culminate in demonstrations of learning simultaneously serving as the focal point, mission, fundamental purpose, top priority, bottom line, and starting point for everything else that will happen in the education system.

It should be borne in mind that there is no unanimity about what outcomes-based education is. In this regard O'Neil (1994:6) states that even within the camps of proponents as well as opponents there is no unanimity about outcomes-based education. This view is also expressed by Lombard (1997) stating that Curriculum 2005 means different things to different people.

The aforementioned lack of agreement about the definition of outcomes-based education makes its implementation difficult. The fact that the outcomes to which both the teacher and the learner must strive is seen differently at different schools, could culminate in striving to achieve diverse objectives. In this respect O'Neil (1994:7) states that the different interpretations of outcomes-based education could explain why amongst those who support an outcomes-driven education system, sharp divisions occur over what it should look like.

Outcomes-based education views knowledge to be open to modification and changeable, as explained in paragraph 2.3 *supra*. It is conceded that knowledge must be acceptable and meaningful to learners. It must also be relevant to the everyday lives of learners and useful to them. This will encourage learners to appreciate the serviceability of knowledge and lures them to acquire more.

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Another distinguishing feature of knowledge is that it remains in a state of flux. As research comes up with novelties and recommendations, old knowledge may be changed, modified or discarded. In addition, technology is changing rapidly. In order to cope with the technological and social changes, knowledge will have to change to remain in step with technology. Hence outcomes-based education's view of knowledge as ever changing is correct, realistic, and prepares learners for the real world, real problems, and the world of work.

Like all other discoveries or inventions, outcomes-based education is rooted in change, innovation and progress. Its roots come from educational objectives, competency-based education, mastery learning and criterion-referenced assessment, as explained in paragraph 2.4 *supra*. In short, outcomes-based education is propelled by four different factors. From an academic point of view this state of affairs is enriching and serves as a sound support base. However, each factor has its own unique origin and has the potential to give outcomes-based education unique characteristics. In practice, this foundation has the potential of making implementation of outcomes-based education policy difficult. For instance, the proponents of educational objectives recommend that teachers should always take into account key issues such as educational purpose, content, organisation and evaluation.

In the case of competency-based education the emphasis is on teaching learners actual skills which they would need in the world of work. The aim of competency-based education is therefore to focus on the integration of outcomes, instructional experiences and assessment devices. Mastering learning focuses on the guiding actions the teacher is expected to perform. His/her responsibility is to create an enabling environment for learners to learn. In compliance with this mandate the teacher must provide more time for learning, use different media and diagnose missing prerequisite knowledge.

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Last, but not least, criterion-referenced assessment dictates that the foremost task of the teacher is to assess. Here the teacher evaluates learners with a given standard against which they are continuously assessed.

From the aforementioned brief descriptions of the roles played by teaching according to the imperatives of the four roots of outcomes-based education, it is clear that the foci areas differ. In some instances divergent. Since these four foci areas have been melted in one big pot, namely, outcomes-based education, its implementation is bound to be interpreted differently. This may breed an education system that is incoherent and inconsistent.

Characteristics of outcomes-based education, which describe its nature and character, could also influence its implementation, as described in paragraph 2.5 *supra*. A deeper understanding and a thorough knowledge of these characteristics could contribute towards the implementation of this education policy. It is necessary to know whether these characteristics are coherent, divergent or a mixture of the two. If the characteristics are divergent it will confuse the implementers.

The four major characteristics of outcomes-based education indicate a changed role of the teacher and new expectations for the learners, as explained in Chapter 4 *supra*. Outcomes-based education indicates clusters of performance roles that are essential to almost all of the major roles learners will face on completing schooling. In this regard Spady (1994:21-22) states that learners must eventually be implementers and performers, problem finders and solvers, planners and designers, creators and producers, learners and thinkers, listeners and communicators, teachers and mentors, supporters and contributors, team members and partners, and leaders and organisers. Learners' expectations are discussed briefly hereafter.

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As implementers and performers, learners in the real work environment are expected to apply basic and advanced ideas, information, skills, tools and technology. They have to come to grips with demands of situations they find themselves in and use available resources properly to get things done.

As problem finders and solvers, learners – after completing schooling – must be able to anticipate, explore, analyse, and solve problems. They should undertake the aforementioned activities after examining underlying causes from different angles and formulate appropriate solutions. Learners will demonstrate achievement of learning objectives by performing the following activities:

- ❖ As planners and designers, learners – after schooling – must be able to develop effective methods and strategies to solve problems.
- ❖ As creators and producers, learners – after schooling – must come up with innovative ways of doing things. In addition, they must be able to formulate workable and original products or processes which will transform the material and immaterial environments positively.
- ❖ As learners and thinkers, learners – after schooling – must be in possession of appropriate cognitive skills and strategies which will enable them to translate new information and experiences into sound action. In addition, they must be able to use the knowledge and strategies they have acquired successfully to assimilate, analyse and synthesise new experiences.
- ❖ As listeners and communicators, learners – after schooling in the world of work – must be able to grasp and express ideas, information, intention, feeling and concern for people in understandable and appreciative ways. Furthermore, they must be able to comprehend and use words, pictures, gestures, deeds, styles, symbols and mannerisms to receive and convey thoughts.

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- ❖ As teachers and mentors, learners – on completion of schooling – should be able to enthuse and enhance the thinking, skills, performance and motivation of their charges through explanations, counselling and example. Besides, they must be able to impart information, perspectives and skills to their charges.
- ❖ As supporters and contributors, learners – after schooling – must be able and prepared to invest time and resources to improve the quality of life of their fellow-citizens.
- ❖ As team members and partners, learners – after schooling – must be in possession of a spirit of collegiality to work co-operatively with others to seek agreements on goals, procedures, responsibilities and rewards. At all times they should guard against personal aggrandisement and aim at accomplishing mutual aims or excelling as individuals.
- ❖ Last, but not least, as leaders and organisers, learners must as workers be able to initiate, co-ordinate and facilitate the accomplishments of collective tasks. This can be done by defining intended results, determining how the tasks might be accomplished, anticipating impediments, and enlisting and supporting the participation of others to achieve common or shared goals.

Preparing learners for these ten life performance roles is a huge and demanding task. It calls for, what Spady (1994:22) describes as, a major expansion of the school's vision and priorities. In order to provide this level of learning, there must be a major shift of how teaching has been going on in the classroom. This, in turn, calls for transformation of teacher training education in particular and change of the system of education in general. In other words, implementation of outcomes-based education implies the overhauling of the entire education system. This suggests that all personnel of the Department of Education, both academic and administrative, should be trained purposefully.

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Taking the ten life performance roles into account, learners stand to benefit significantly from learning experiences and capabilities associated with these roles. Though demanding, the learning environments that continuously involve learners in all these ten roles are possible to conceive, design and implement. In this regard, Spady (1994:22) states that the key to success is to continually engage learners in both individual and team activities that explore important issues, use multiple media and technologies, create products that embody the results of learners' explorations. In other words, with the combination of ingenuity and imagination, the implementation of the outcomes-based education, as embodied in the ten roles, is practicable and possible.

A closer look at the ten life performance roles of learners clearly show that they proclaim the major advantages of outcomes-based education; namely that the purpose of outcomes-based education dictates that learners' performance be based on covering different sets of requirement in varying periods of time. According to McGhan (1994: 70) outcomes-based education, amongst others, has the following advantages:

- ❖ Eliminate failure.
- ❖ Eliminate compromised standards.
- ❖ Reduce rote learning, absorption of miscellaneous facts, and slavish adherence to procedural knowledge.
- ❖ Increase learners' ability to appreciate and deal with realistic situations like those that will engage them later in life.
- ❖ Eliminate tracking because all learners are to achieve the same outcomes, although at different times.

Advantages of outcomes-based education and replies to key questions that outcomes-based educators ask, as explained in paragraph 2.6 *supra*, revolve around the fact that it envisage clearly stated outcomes. This helps teachers in both preparation and

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teaching. The outcomes in both exercises serve as guiding stars by helping the teacher to be focused and relevant. From the learners' side, they know in advance what is expected from them. Thereby they will be able to measure their achievement. That is, outcomes-based education assists learners to develop self-assessment skills, which is a forerunner to self-discipline. Furthermore, it enables schools to monitor fairly accurately the learners' progress. In short, according to Haack (1994:34-35) outcomes have three important functions, which are that they

- ❖ provide clear direction to guide the actions of teachers;
- ❖ convey to the community what is expected from learners and the role to be played by it in education; and
- ❖ contribute to making schools autonomous.

It could be argued that outcomes-based education involves much more than simply introducing a new educational approach. It requires a novel consideration of a variety of related issues. This once again illustrates the need to carefully consider the total environment within which a policy initiative is evaluated. Outcomes-based education is only one of the facets of a society's efforts to improve its living conditions.

In any teaching-learning situation the role of the teacher occupies a special position. No matter how advanced technology can be used sophisticatedly, it will never ever replace the teacher. Hence, key questions the teacher have to ask himself or herself are necessary. They help the teacher to prepare thoroughly, improve the teaching strategies, create an environment that is conducive to learning. In short, these questions are essential to the purposeful implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

The advantages of outcomes-based education serve to motivate strongly the implementation of outcomes-based education. Although the process of implementation is

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demanding, involved and expensive in terms of the benefits/spinoffs, it will be a worthwhile exercise. Therefore, everything possible should be done for the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy. All factors that could contribute to the successful implementation of the policy should be identified and responded to appropriately. On the other hand, all impediments should be singled out and turned into strengths rather than problems.

Closely linked to the key questions teachers have to ask themselves when implementing outcomes-based education policy, as well as the advantages of outcomes-based education, is the type of outcomes-based education chosen by the South African government. The South African government introduced transformational outcomes-based education, as described in paragraph 2.7 *supra*. Its main aim was to use education to prepare citizens to participate meaningfully in a new democratic social order and to participate as equal partners in the global economy. This made it imperative for education to equip learners with skills, knowledge and values that will enable them to be useful citizens in a democratic society. From an economic point of view, outcomes-based education is in a much better position to turn out learners who will contribute to the economic development of the country and who can participate in the global economy. These expectations of outcomes-based education policy make its successful implementation an unquestionable necessity. It has to be successfully implemented because the stakes are high. Nevertheless, implementation, especially of this country-wide magnitude, is a demanding task. It needs well-thought out planned education and training of all stakeholders concerned and the necessary financial resources to take it off the ground and to keep it going.

One of the major attractive constituent elements of transformational outcomes-based education is what is called recognition of prior learning. The need to introduce this component of outcomes-based education was felt after it was established that persons who held several or certain jobs were still regarded as unskilled. Recognition of prior

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learning, according to Gawe (1999:22), aims at affirming these individuals. According to Harris (1999:38), recognition of prior learning has three significant components; namely, informally acquired knowledge and on learning from experience, articulation and credit transfer.

Taking into account the quality, quantity and level of knowledge that the learner brings to school is valuable. In fact, it is in keeping with one of the basic principles of teaching, namely, from the known to the unknown. In this regard, Harris (1999:42) states that recognition of prior learning should be seen as a social practice because it could promote development of knowledgeable practice. That is, people are encouraged to value what they have learned on their own and to appreciate its relevance to formal teaching and learning. Lockett (1999:69) concurs with the aforementioned arguing that recognition of prior learning is based on the premise that people learn both inside and outside formal learning structures. Kistan (2002:170) also confirms the beneficial role played by recognition of prior learning when he states that it places the challenge to create a balance of what institutions do against what is happening in reality. Therefore, the implementation of outcomes-based education contributes to the self-esteem of individuals as each has unique and useful characteristics to contribute to the teaching-learning situation.

The other two components of recognition of prior learning, namely, articulation and credit transfer, have also brought about improvement in the education system. This practice increases learners' mobility from one institution to another; even from one type of institution to another. Knowledge is valued for its own sake, regardless of the source from which it comes. In addition credits gained from one institution are accepted by another institution and could reduce the period of study for which the learner has registered. Recognition of prior learning has major benefits for the learner, it reduces time of study for a qualification gained in everyday life and the world of work. In this regard Michelson (1999:99-100) states that socially useful knowledge is created and

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utilised not only by institutions such as universities and technikons, but also in socially useful human activities. Therefore, the implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy guarantees that knowledge gained from formal as well as informal education is useful for the benefit of the country.

Pursuant to the main aim of changing the social order of South Africa through education, Parliament passed the *South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995* (Act 58 of 1995), as explained in paragraph 2.8 *supra*. The Act prescribes a national qualifications framework. In turn, the national qualifications framework provides standardisation and the concomitant portability of credits and qualifications. This indicates that the implementation of outcomes-based education is to a certain extent legally controlled. Hence, outcomes-based education, when implemented, in specific areas, needs to be determined in terms of the provisions of section 5 of the Act. That is, the successful implementation of the outcomes-based education as a policy, as depends on the correct implementation of other policies, such as the *South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995* (Act 58 of 1995). This dependency may prove to be an obstacle that needs to be overcome to pave the way for successful implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy.

It is imperative to note that the actual implementation of outcomes-based education will take place in the classroom where teaching practices, strategies and methods are used as vehicles to deliver outcomes-based education to learners. Essential factors that facilitate the implementation of outcomes-based education are –

- ❖ reflective teaching practice;
- ❖ today's multicultural classrooms;
- ❖ possible outcomes of learning;
- ❖ curriculum organisation; and
- ❖ lesson planning and preparation.

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From the above, it is clear that the implementation of outcomes-based education touches on all spheres of the education system. Not only teachers and learners are affected by it, but other stakeholders, such as administrators, support staff, parents, authors of textbooks and prescribed books, and employers are affected as well. This shows that the implementation of outcomes-based education is a comprehensive operation which has a bearing on all aspects of the entire education system. In terms of the breadth and depth of change, the implementation of outcomes-based education is demanding and will prove to be a slow series of interrelated processes in order to make an impact on all sectors of the education system.

To illustrate the aforementioned factors, the changed roles of teachers and learners will be examined. This is explained under teaching strategies and teaching methods, lesson planning and preparation, and how to teach outcomes-based education as described in paragraph 4.5 *supra*.

Outcomes-based education calls for a preference of teaching strategies and teaching methods. In some instances, particular aspects of a teaching method are emphasised as it is in keeping with the dictates of outcomes-based education. In the case of a teaching strategy, which is a plan of action for teaching activities, the aim is to meet predetermined objectives.

Some of the well-known teaching strategies are –

- ❖ inductive and deductive teaching;
- ❖ co-operative learning; and
- ❖ problem solving.

Both inductive and deductive teaching strategies, though very old, are still used in today's classrooms in which outcomes-based education is practised, as explained in

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paragraph 4.5.1 *supra*. The two strategies lend themselves to the dictates of the imperatives of outcomes-based education, which are: the teacher sets out outcomes which must be met by all learners, learners need to be active in the teaching-learning situation, and the teacher's role is that of a facilitator in the teaching-learning situation.

Not only do these teaching strategies enhance the level of learners' participation in class, but also instills in them a sense of responsibility to seek information and to come to appropriate conclusions on facts at their disposal. This indicates that the implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy calls for the different set of rules for teaching and learning.

Co-operative learning, as a teaching strategy, calls for a group of learners to participate meaningfully, to interact with one another and to develop co-operative group skills, as explained in paragraph 4.5.2 *supra*. This teaching strategy creates a unique opportunity for learners from different cultural groups to work co-operatively together. In the process they will learn to appreciate one another's culture and by so doing develop the spirit of cultural tolerance and appreciation of diversity. These are qualities that are needed by all citizens in a multicultural democratic society. Therefore, the implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy directive will contribute positively to bringing about a new democratic social order in South Africa.

Problem solving as a teaching strategy is helpful for learners to select appropriate information, to analyse it, to interpret it and to apply it in solving real life problems, as described in paragraph 4.5.3 *supra*. Seen from another viewpoint, problem solving gives learners an opportunity to put into practical use what they have learned. Teaching and learning is not only confined to gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but to use this information for the good of mankind. Knowledge gained may be used to create new things, to improve the economy to manufacture goods, to improve technology, to advance theoretical basis for any field of study and to improve teaching and learning itself. It may, therefore, follow that problem solving gives

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learners practical skills to participate meaningfully as productive citizens. Through it, learners are encouraged and guided to become producers and not only consumers. It ushers them into a real world, wherein each day comes with its own unique problems and challenges. Learners are prepared through the application of the problem solving teaching strategy, to provide answers to questions, to give solutions to problems and to suggest better ways of confronting obstacles and to turn them into opportunities. Hence, outcomes-based education through its recommended problem solving teaching strategy gives learners the skills of survival, the skills of invention, the skills of giving meaning to information, and the skills of making the world a better place to live in. Therefore, the implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy will contribute positively to improve the standard of living of South Africans, which is one of the major objectives of the democratic government.

Another important distinguishing feature of outcomes-based education is assessment, as described in paragraph 5.3 *supra*. This is so because performance assessment, according to Marzano (1994:44), provides information about learners' abilities to analyse and apply information. He further states that the traditional forms of assessment used forced-choice response formats such as multi-choice, fill-in-the-blank spaces and true or false, which assessed only learners' recall or recognition of information.

According to Marzano (1994:44), there are several reasons for making use of performance assessment, because it –

- ❖ provides clear guidelines to learners about teacher expectations;
- ❖ reflects real life challenges;
- ❖ makes effective use of teacher judgement;
- ❖ makes room for learners' difference in style and interests; and
- ❖ is more engaging than other forms of assessment.

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In addition to the reasons provided by Marzano for performance-based assessment, Guskey (1994:51) mentions two major factors that have intensified the interest in this form of assessment, which are that –

- ❖ research findings have compelled teachers to admit that learning is a complex process and that diverse means are needed to assess learning fully and fairly; and
- ❖ teachers have recognised the limitations of assessment systems that relied on multiple-choice and standardised achievement tests.

Assessment should contribute to improvement of teaching and learning. Performance assessment should, therefore, provide what Jamentz (1994:55) calls information that influences what learners are taught, how they are taught, and what schools do to support learning. In order to make sure that performance assessment serves instruction, Jamentz (1994:56-57) states that there are four key practices which will contribute to improve teaching and learning –

- ❖ articulating standards and assessment design;
- ❖ building teachers' capacity to use assessment to improve teaching;
- ❖ building learners' capacity to use assessment to improve their learning; and
- ❖ monitoring to gauge their impact on teaching and learning.

As teachers employ performance assessment, they are faced with a number of challenges, which, according to Baker (1994:58), are:

- ❖ Which forms of assessment are most useful for which educational purposes?
- ❖ That challenging the fundamental beliefs and instructional practices of teachers is much more difficult than assessment itself.
- ❖ By raising the stakes for the use of performance assessments simultaneously calls for the need for judging of the quality of assessments.

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Performance assessment is a radical departure from the traditional forms of assessment. It calls for new ways of assessing learners' performance, it calls for new strategies of assessment and demands that teachers must be realistic and practical. Furthermore, it dictates that the teacher is personally best able to assess his/her learners. For performance-based assessments to be helpful to the teaching-learning situation, according to Guskey (1994:51 and 53), teachers must be provided with requisite time, resources, and training opportunities. That is, for the implementation of outcomes-based education, teachers must be reliable and dependable assessors for whose preparation time, money, and education and training is needed. This also calls for money to be made available for retraining teachers and to buy appropriate resources that will promote the implementation of outcomes-based education.

Religion has its own view regarding outcomes-based education. Christians have some reservations about some aspects of outcomes-based education. In this regard, Burrton (1994:73) states that outcomes-based education is unacceptable to traditionalist Christians.

Outcomes-based education promote the observance of democratic principles and values, views all forms of religion as equal. Christians maintain that Christianity is the only true religion. This view was in vogue particularly prior to the adoption of the new *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996). In fact, Christianity was so highly regarded that it was even taught at schools, public and private. However, it was decided that there should be freedom of religion. This makes some Christians uncomfortable, for they regard this exercise, according to Burrton (1994:73), as a threat to the eternal well-being of their children. He continues to oppose the relegation of Christianity to the same level as other religions because they regard it as inculcation of universalism. Hence, the implementation of outcomes-based education must take into account the way Christians feel about putting all forms of religion on par. Otherwise, Christians, who are in the majority in South Africa, will oppose, openly or through passive resistance, outcomes-based education. The result

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could be that the benefit of the implementation of outcomes-based education as a policy not be optimally realised.

Advocates or proponents of outcomes-based education are surprised by the criticism levelled against it by some Christians. According to Zitterkopf (1996:76), various church reports and related media reveal that they are outcomes-based. He gives an example of a church strategic plan, which includes a purpose statement, a statement of beliefs as well as the desired impact of it on its congregation and the community. Within the strategic plan, goals, outcomes are formulated which are in keeping with its purpose and doctrine. This indicates that structurally, or administratively, a church makes use of outcomes-based education principles. However, the spiritual component of the church treats outcomes-based education with caution and suspicion. Thus, the implementation of outcomes-based education could be opposed by missionary schools or schools that are established by particular proponents within the Christian religious grouping. To counteract challenges posed by Christianity to the implementation of outcomes-based education, Fritz (1994) calls for a more balanced approach in order not to discard the worthwhile reforms that come with it. In other words, the implementation of outcomes-based education should be done in such a way that it accommodates and addresses the concerns raised by Christians.

Jones (1994:16-17) states that he and his colleagues are convinced that traditional studies are not rich enough to portray the changes that the outcomes-based education system may inspire. They challenge researchers to come up with new evaluation methodologies that may capture excitement and change brought about by outcomes-based education. This view is also held by Slavin (1994:14) when he states that no studies directly compare students in outcomes-based education classes or schools to students in similar control schools.

Outcomes-based education, as an education policy, has affected the entire system of education in South Africa. This fact is confirmed by Killen (2001:6) when he stated that

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outcomes-based education be viewed from three different ways; namely, as a theory of education, or as a systematic structure for education, or as classroom practice.

The critique of outcomes-based education demonstrates that it is a complex, multi-faceted and multipurpose exercise. It also reveals that the policy brought about drastic change in curriculum development as well as how learners are assessed. As assessment is closely related to teaching and learning, outcomes-based education policy also introduced new methods of teaching and learning. Criticism aims at identification of strengths and weaknesses of a public policy with the aim of improving its impact. Therefore, the critique of outcomes-based education policy contributes to its successful implementation.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Curriculum development encapsulates various and varied activities to be performed, such as defining, formulating and translating outcomes into patterns of learning. Issues that the curriculum addresses are not only of a practical nature, but are also theoretical; for instance, curriculum orientations and perspective. Thus, it can be concluded that curriculum development is a complex process, and facilitates the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Assessment, according to outcomes-based education policy, forms part of teaching and learning. Moreover, principles of assessment govern its implementation. In addition, there are different methods used to assess learners' performance continuously. Therefore, assessment is a complex process which contributes to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

Public policies are formulated to serve a specific societal need. It may be provision of essential services such as education, water, electricity and public transport. Or it may have to do with the promotion of good health such as the prohibition of smoking in

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public places. As a result of their utilitarian value, it is imperative to do the utmost to enhance the chances of successful public policy implementation. One way of increasing the chances of successful policy implementation is to employ a policy implementation model. The model serves as a crucial technique of producing products or services within the shortest possible time cost-effectively. Hence, the next chapter, Chapter 6, proposes a public policy implementation model for outcomes-based education.