

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT TEAMS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF  
ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES  
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**By-**

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## Abstract

Learner performance in South African schools, especially in the General Education and Training Band is in a crisis. There is a paucity of research on quality assurance of assessment practices in schools. This dissertation was aimed at understanding the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of English first additional language assessment practices in primary schools. The study also aimed to identify and describe good practices of quality assurance of assessment practices in schools and to understand the challenges school assessment teams encounter when quality assuring English first additional assessment practices. The main question was: *What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of English first additional assessment practices?*

An exploratory case study research design was undertaken for this research. The study was carried out at three primary schools in the Tshwane South district of Gauteng Department of Education. The schools were randomly selected using the criteria of geographical location, cluster, quintile and learner performance in ANA 2011. Participants of this research included teachers offering English first additional language and members of school assessment teams and were purposively selected from the three schools. Data was collected through the use of individual interviews and document analysis. In analysing data, thematic content analysis and documents analysis were used. The findings of the research were attributed to the qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise teachers and SAT members possess in English first Additional language teaching and were discussed in details under the cross –case analysis section. On the basis of the findings, recommendations for policy and practice and further research are provided.

**Key words:** Assessment, moderation, quality assurance, English First Additional Language, monitoring, teams, schools, Intermediate Phase, General Education and Training.

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ANAs	Annual National Assessments
ARG	Assessment Reform Group
ASs	Assessment Standards
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CEPD	Centre for Educational Policy Development
CEQ I	Centre for Education Quality Improvement
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DATs	District Assessment Teams
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EEA	Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998)
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
ELT	English Language Teaching
FET	Further Education and Training
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GET	General Education and Training
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education
HoDs	Heads of Department
HOR	House of Representatives
Los	Learning Outcomes
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LEA	Local Education Authorities
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching

MER	Ministry of Education and Research
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NDET	Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training
NPAQ	National Policy on Assessment and Qualification
OBE	Outcome Based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PATs	Provincial Assessment Teams
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PMS	Performance Monitoring System
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACMEQ	Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SASA	South African Schools Act
SATs	School Assessment Teams
SCK	Subject Content Knowledge
SMT	School Management Team
SSE	School Self Evaluation
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TSD	Tshwane South District
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WS	Work Schedule
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of English First Additional Language (EFAL) assessment practices in primary schools in Tshwane South District. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, with two types of assessment, namely assessment *of* learning and assessment *for* learning being crucial in teaching and learning. For quality education to be achieved, quality assurance of assessment practices needs to be conducted.

This chapter discusses the background of the problem, presents the problem statement and the context of the study. The aims and research questions are followed by the methodology used in the dissertation.

#### 1.2 BACKGROUND

The UK Assessment Reform Group (ARG) (2002) has defined assessment as the process of analysing and interpreting evidence collected to enable both the teacher and the learner to know what needs to be done to move forward. Assessment, a continuous planned process of making decisions about learner performance, involves generating and gathering evidence of achievement; evaluating the evidence against the curriculum outcomes; recording the findings of this evaluation; using the information to understand and thereby assist the learner's development; and improving the process of learning and teaching (National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications (NPAQ), 2007, p.5). Assessment should not only be used at the end of the lesson but should also be a continuous practice for learner development purposes (Van Aswegen & Dreyer, 2010). It can be used to determine the progression of each learner through the acquisition of knowledge and a range of competencies and to help learning and increases the level of performance in children (ARG, 2002).

In the South African context, the NPAQ (2007) stipulates that teachers have an obligation to ensure that learners are continuously assessed so as to find out if they are gaining the skills, but the national and provincial departments of education are accountable for the management of the assessment programmes. This means that those who assess and assure the quality of teaching and learning activities should be knowledgeable, committed and dedicated to their assessment and quality assurance practices. Following on from assessment, quality assurance is the process of verification of the results of continuous, internal and external assessment, but the NPAQ (2007) does not clearly stipulate what teachers must do, except to say that moderation should be made on a sample basis at the different levels of the education system and moderation mechanisms should be put in place at school. This leaves teachers making use of their own discretion. However, the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) (1998) clearly states that the Heads of Department (HoDs) in schools must assure the quality of the work of the teachers and learners. Therefore, quality assurance of teaching and learning and, by implication, assessment, which should be carried out optimally with feedback being given timeously, is at the discretion of the schools (NPAQ, 2007).

Policy documents guiding teachers in effectively carrying out their quality assurance of assessment practices have been provided, however there is still a gap in terms of policy and practice. The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), under the NPAQ (2007), has established various structures to facilitate quality assurance of assessment practices at school, district and provincial levels. At school level, School Assessment Teams (SATs) were established, which comprise the school principal, deputy principal, HoDs and selected teachers, depending on the number of learners at the school. The role of this school-level structure is to establish proper mechanisms for carrying out quality assurance and to assist teachers in establishing good assessment practices. The principal assesses and assures the quality of the work of the deputy principal, who in turn assesses and assures the quality of the work of the HoDs, who in turn assess and assure the quality the work of the teachers.

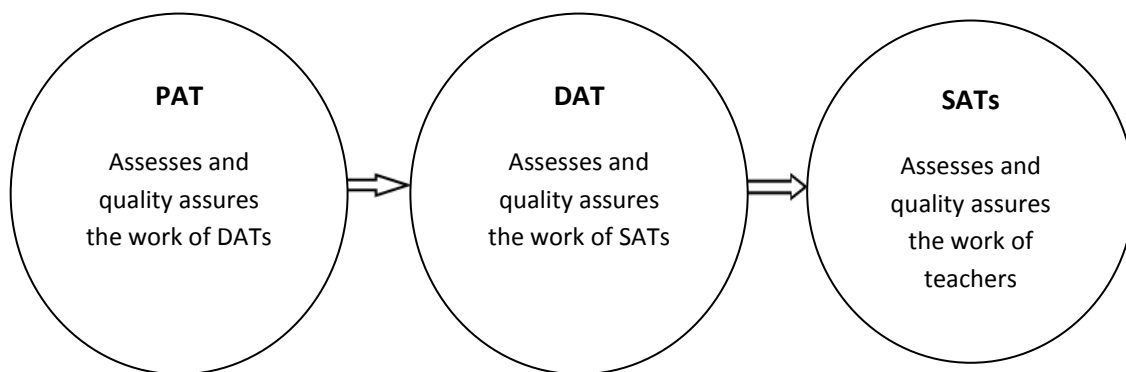
At the district level, District Assessment Teams (DATs) were established, which comprise the assessment advisors from the Foundation, Intermediate, Senior



Phases, that is, the General Education and Training (GET) band, and the Further Education and Training band (FET). The DATs are required to work hand-in-hand with subject advisors in ensuring quality at schools. This structure assesses the work of the SATs.

At provincial level, the assessment advisors from all the districts form the Provincial Assessment Teams (PATs), sometimes visiting schools via the DATs to assess and to quality assure the work of both the teachers and the SATs (NPAQ, 2007). The quality assurance process is shown in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1:** Quality assurance intentions in the GDE



However, although structures are in place it remains unclear how quality assurance of assessment practices themselves should be undertaken within this structure. Thus, this study aims to investigate the role of the SAT in quality assurance of English First Additional Language (EFAL) as a subject area in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 6). EFAL is chosen because it is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in many schools from Grade 4 upwards. However, the performance of learners in terms of external assessments such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA) has, over the years, been low. In addition, this research focuses on the Intermediate Phase because this is a crucial stage when learners have moved from learning- to- read to reading- to- learn, and reading to learn in English, a second or additional language. As Moodley and Heinemann (2004) point out, learners in the Intermediate Phase must be able to read and understand English if they are to succeed at higher levels of education.

### 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In order for teachers to deliver quality teaching, quality assurance measures need to be in place. However, a lack of such practices has been observed in many South African primary schools, indicating a gap between policy and practice (Taylor, 2008). According to a report by Pottas (2005), South Africa has good policies in place but poor implementation, despite guidelines from the Department of Education (DoE) (2002a) and the later Department of Basic Education 2011(a) and two decades of democracy, during which every learner has had the right of access to basic education. The performance of learners in primary schools, when compared to those from other countries, is a matter of concern.

Howie, Venter, Van Studen, Zimmerman, Long, Du Toit and Archer (2007) showed that Grade 4 and 5 South African learners achieved the lowest mean Reading Literacy score of all 45 participating education systems, with Grade 4 achieving 253 (SE=4.6) and Grade 5 302 (SE=5.6), which is less than the international average of 500 (Howie et al., 2008). Howie et.al (2007) also showed that South African learners in Grade 4 achieved 461 (SE=3.7) in comparison to Botswana's 463 and Colombia's 576, which is still below the international average of centre point 500. Grade 5 achieved 421 (SE=7.3) in comparison to Hong Kong's 571 (SE=2.3, the Russian Federation 568 (SE=2.7) and Finland 568 (SE=1.9) (Howie et al., 2008). Monitoring Learner Achievement Project (2005), conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO), also reported on the poor performance of South African learners in the international tests. In Grade 4, for example, learners achieved a mean score of 48.1% in the 1999 international language tests, which was below the 50% average. These low achievements are similar to findings from the Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ III) (2007), which shows low achievement in reading of South African learners in Grade 6, where learners achieved a mean score of 495 (Moloi & Strauss, 2007). In their SACMEQ II (2005) report, Moloi and Strauss (2005) also showed that South African learners perform poorly in Reading and Mathematics, with mean achievement scores of 492 and 486 respectively, compared to an international mean of 550, which were both low in comparison to other participating countries.

National assessments also showed South African learners performed poorly. The systemic evaluations, those conducted by the Department of Education (DoE), the GDE, as well as international bodies, show that learners in South Africa performed poorly when tested for their ability to read and write at age-appropriate levels (DoE, 2008). The DBE (2011b) ANA results listed Grade 3 learners with only 35% in Literacy and 28% in Numeracy, while Grade 6 learners scored 28% in Languages (English) and 30% in Mathematics. In 2012, the performance of learners in ANA was again very low. In Grade 3 Literacy, the average performance was 52% and 41% in Numeracy, whereas in EFAL Grade 6 the average performance was 36%. In 2013, although there was improvement, the performance was still low. In Grade 3 Literacy learners performed at 51% and 53% in Numeracy, whereas Grade 6 EFAL learners achieved 46% (DBE, 2012). Although there was a slight improvement in 2013, the performance was still unsatisfactory.

Language proficiency affects performance in other subjects, as the results of ANA over a three-year period show. Research on factors associated with high school learners' poor performance in mathematics and physical sciences (see Makgato & Mji, 2006) show that a mastery of English language as it is the LoLT, and one of the factors that lead to learners failing them. Although this study focused on secondary schools, the findings may be applicable to learners at the primary schools, where poor performance is associated with inability to read in the LoLT (English) (Heinemann, 2004). This finding has also emerged in a study on the literacy environment in support of voluntary reading conducted by Tiemensma (2010), which shows that learners who perform poorly are mostly those who cannot read properly. Thus, research reveals that achievement is dependent on the ability to understand the language and that the performance of many learners using English second language as the LoLT in South African school is low (Barry, 2004). These findings are confirmed by Mangubhai (2006), who attests that there is a strong correlation between literacy and achievement in primary school learners.

With political transformation of education in South Africa and the introduction of a number of curricular reforms to ensure that all children receive quality education,

learner achievement results should be more promising. However, with such poor results emanating from national, regional and international studies, research must be conducted to investigate possible causes and factors which are affecting the quality of education and education outcomes. One contributor might be the poor quality of the assessment practices undertaken and the monitoring thereof.

Research conducted by Kanjee (2006) on assessment challenges for improving learner performance in South African primary school learners and research by Heugh, Diedericks, Prinsloo and Herbst (2007) on assessment of language and mathematics skills of Grade 8 learners in the Western Cape, reveal that many teachers focus on the wrong levels, failing to set clear instructions in their assessments activities. This has a negative effective on learner performance leading to failure. Poor framing of instructions was also identified in study conducted by the Centre for Education Quality Improvement (CEQI) in collaboration with the National Department of Education Research (CEQI, 2010). These studies revealed that out of ten questions set by teachers to assess learners, nine assess knowledge application, with learners mostly being assessed on one cognitive level, resulting in their experiencing difficulties in answering questions at other cognitive levels, such as higher order ones. This result shows that teachers are not considering the various techniques or strategies which should be in place when assessing learning. It also seems as if there is not an assessment framework being considered when setting assessment tasks. The NCS (2002a) sets out Assessment Standards (ASs), while CAPS (2011a) sets out skills but this policy (NCS) is not being implemented effectively. Kanjee (2006) shows that many assessment tasks do not address the ASs mentioned in the task and that teachers do not understand some of them, hence they frame questions that are not in line with them.

Heugh et al. (2007) found the major weakness identified through diagnostic scoring and coding, which led to poor performance, to be that many of the learners were unable to apply the language and literacy skills learnt in English to other areas of the curriculum. Heugh et al. (2007) further indicate that the learning outcomes and assessment standards in the languages learning area of the curriculum do not adequately provide learners with the appropriate academic

literacy skills required in other areas of the curriculum. Heugh et al. (2007) cited the Language tests LO4 (Writing) as one of the most difficult tasks for learners, because this is where they have to demonstrate their productive competence in language use. It is also the area which best indicates where learners are placed in terms of whether or not they would complete the FET band successfully.

Although Kanjee (2006) found that teachers focus on low cognitive levels, and that teachers do not understand some of the ASs or their application in setting assessment tasks, however, little is known about the challenges facing teachers and members of school assessment teams (SATs) in the quality assurance of assessment practices in schools. One may expect that quality assurance of assessment, if done well, leads to credibility of the teaching and learning programmes, and boosts confidence of teachers, leading to greater performance which then yields positive results by learners. Quality assurance focuses on the improvement in teaching, learning and delivery of knowledge and skills, as well as on the stakeholders' satisfaction with the performance and learning outcomes and education accountability to the public. When assessment results are used for accountability they can inform judgements on the effectiveness of particular teachers, subject departments, schools, local authorities, the government, other institutions, policies, and national education systems as a whole (O'Neill, 2002).

Although a study on school-based assessment conducted by Reyneke, Meyer and Nel (2010) focused on EFAL in the FET band (Grade 10-12), the findings were similar to those of Kanjee (2006) and Heugh et al. (2007), on the issue of workload of teachers, as one of the contributory factors to ineffective assessment by teachers, a similar problem found in the GET band (Grade R - 9). These also showed that progression of teaching and learning, built into Learning Outcomes (LOs) and ASs from one grade to another was a challenge for teachers who found it difficult to apply successfully (Reyneke, Meyer & Nel, 2010).

A gap between policy and practice with regard to quality assurance of assessment practices in schools contributes to poor learner performance. The low performance of South African learners in various national and international assessments can be linked to lack of quality assurance of assessment practices in schools.

## 1.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Prior to democratisation in 1994, provision of education in South Africa was deeply flawed and there were discrepancies in terms of teaching and quality assurance of assessment practices. There was no equity in the funding of education departments, which led to performance reflecting funding because of the availability of resources. For schools to develop quality education they had to charge fees to ensure that the basic materials were purchased. A study on resourcing and inequality conducted by Hendricks (2008) in the Eastern Cape schools revealed that schools with better resources performed better. Well-resourced state schools, with reference to former Model C schools, had functional libraries, and computers with the Internet, enabling learners to perform better. However, some parents could not afford to pay for their children's school fees, which led to them dropping out of school. Fuller and Liang (1999), in their study on the influence of family economy, social demands and ethnicity in South Africa, found that one of the factors affecting learner performance in schools leading to high drop-out rates of learners was poverty. Inglis (2009) highlights family difficulties, such as financial constraints, family support, unemployment and poverty, as contributory factors to learners dropping out.

After the introduction of universal suffrage in 1994, a plethora of laws with regard to education were promulgated, aimed at allowing greater accessibility and equity for all South African learners (Odhav, 2009). The Department of Education (DoE) was then given a massive budget to enable it to address the legacy of the apartheid regime (Kanjee, 2006). It is believed that greater resources help in the improvement of learner performance (Hendricks, 2008), with Frempong and Kanjee (2008) contending that although the government was spending almost 20% of its budget on education there was a long way to go before the inequalities of the country's past would be fully redressed with regards to education.

As indicated in Table 1.1, education is better funded in South Africa than in other African countries, which is in partial compliance with the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) recommendation that 26% of annual budget be allocated.

*The phrase "Model C" refers to state schools which, during the apartheid era in South Africa, had accepted only white learners and highly resourced*

**Table 1.1:** Countries' annual budget on education

Country	% Spending per annual education budget
South Africa	25.8
Swaziland	24.6
Kenya	23.0
Botswana	19.0
Morocco	17.1
Lesotho	17.0
Tunisia	17.0
Burkina Faso	16.8
Nigeria	9.0

Source: UNESCO (2012)

In order to ensure equal government funding for each school in the South African education system, the South African Schools Act (SASA) (1998), and the National Norms and Standards (Government Gazette no.2362 of 1998) created five different categories of schools. The schools were sorted out into quintiles according to their poverty ranking. Nchingila, Kanjee and Frempong (2008) show that quintile 1 and 2 schools are the poorest, are often situated in the deep rural communities and receive more funds. Quintile 3 and 4 are considered moderate, where the level of poverty in those communities is at a less devastating level, thus less funding is allocated to these schools. Nchingila et al. (2008) add that quintile 5 schools are generally those schools in which parents' socio-economic status is considered good. In these communities, it is thought that the majority of parents can afford to pay school fees for their children, which is also applicable to the quintile 4 level schools. Kanjee (2009) explains that a quintile status is calculated according to national census data for the school catchment area. Table 1.2 gives an indication of the allocation of government funds per learner in the per school quintile.

**Table 1.2:** Allocation of government funds per learners in schools with different quintile status

ANNUAL PER-LEARNER ALLOCATION PER SCHOOL QUINTILE							
QUINTILE	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Quintile 1	R738	R775	R807	R855	R901	R943	R1010
Quintile 2	R677	R711	R740	R784	R826	R865	R1010
Quintile 3	R554	R581	R605	R641	R675	R707	R1010
Quintile 4	R369	R388	R404	R428	R451	R472	R505
Quintile 5	R123	R129	R134	R147	R155	R162	R252

Source: Hall (2010, p. 39) in the Department of Education, Norms and Standards, 2010 & Department of Basic Education, 03 December 2013.

Despite massive resource shifts to South African schools and the development of quintiles to ensure appropriate funding per learner, overall results have not improved in the post-apartheid period, as evidenced by Van der Berg (2012) in his study *Apartheid's Enduring Legacy: Inequalities in Education*.

Resource allocation by the DoE to its schools has been queried by academics, especially with regard to learner performance and, more importantly, with improving reading and writing in EFAL in the Intermediate Phase. It is believed that giving public schools more money will lead to better performance by learners, although research conducted by Frempong and Kanjee (2008) have shown that the performances of public schools, as gauged by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), are unrelated to overall per-pupil funding levels. For this study, resource allocation to schools is noted, particularly the category of school (quintile), which is considered an important aspect of this study as it informs the sampling discussed in Chapter 3.



## 1.5 AIMS AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Given the apparent lack of research in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices and the gap between theory and practice in schools, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the role of SAT in quality assurance of assessment practices in primary schools. Research by Kanjee (2006) and Heugh (2007) reveals that teachers struggle to understand forms of assessment, although quality assurance of assessment EFAL practices has not been researched. The NPAQ (2007) clearly stipulates that assessment should be included at all levels of planning and incorporated in teaching and learning. The tasks need to be moderated for quality assurance purposes.

This research is significant because the factors affecting SAT in quality assurance of assessment practices may be a contributory factor to poor curriculum delivery in schools. The findings of the research can be a starting point for better performance of teachers and SATs leading to high performance of learners. The findings of this research may also help in understanding how school assessment teams assure quality of the assessment practices that may benefit assessment practitioners, namely, teachers, HoDs, principal and deputy principals.

Given the problem statement in Section 1.3 and rationale, I pose the following main research question:

### **What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?**

In order to examine how schools quality assure assessment practices, the following sub-question is asked:

- What factors ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?

In order to identify the strategies schools use in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, the following question is posed:

- How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by school assessment teams?

In order to investigate the challenges experienced by school assessment teams in the quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, the following question is posed:

- What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW**

This study is situated in an interpretive paradigm that helps to understand the subjective world of human experience. This study, as it is concerned with understanding and explaining the nature of reality from the participants' perspectives, follows an exploratory case study design with three cases, underperforming, performing and high performing schools. However, the use of an exploratory case study in a few selected schools comes with limitations for the researcher to fully generalize the findings of the research to all schools. As the focus of the study is to present a detailed account of the role of SAT in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in primary schools, an exploratory qualitative case study design is used as the research design. In collecting data for this research, interviews and documents analysis were used and the data was analysed using content analysis. Credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability are strategies to ensure that the results are valid and reliable. Ethical considerations ensure that all protocol was followed for the conduct of this research (see Chapter 3 for a full description).

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION**

After the introduction to the research outlined in this chapter, the next chapter reviews the literature on assessment and quality assurance, both internationally and nationally. These sections lead to the presentation of the conceptual framework and a discussion thereof. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology used in this study. Data collection and analysis of data is presented in Chapter 4, with Chapter 5 presenting the conclusions of the study and offering recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this dissertation was to investigate the role of SAT in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in primary schools. SATs are expected to play a crucial role in promoting and monitoring assessment and quality assurance practices in schools, and this chapter reviews literature on them. Assessment is defined in Section 2.2. Assessment practices internationally and nationally are discussed in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 introduces and defines the concept of quality assurance then discusses strategies used in quality assurance. Section 2.5 discusses quality assurance practices internationally and nationally. The conceptual framework designed and developed for this study is presented and discussed in Section 2.6 with the chapter being concluded in Section 2.7.

#### 2.2 ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the gathering of relevant information that may help the assessor to make decision about the learner (ARG, 2002), whilst in schools it is a process of gathering information about learner performance and helping teachers determine what their students know and can do. It should be a carefully planned activity; integrated in the teaching and learning process and checking learners' understanding of the learning tasks to which they have been subjected (OECD, 2008). According to Black and Wiliam (1998), it can be useful as it provides information that helps both the teachers and learners develop themselves as feedback is given, and make changes in the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. For Guskey (2003) it also helps teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses with regards to curriculum delivery. Thus, assessment should be conducted *for* learning as it is the process of gathering and analysing evidence of learners' performance to help teachers identify areas in which learners are doing well and challenges to learning, which culminates in developing strategies to help them (ARG, 2002). However, assessment *of* learning which is summative in nature, and used to confirm what learners know and can do,

demonstrates whether they have achieved the curriculum outcomes, also needs to be part of the process. What Black and Wiliam (1998) and Guskey (2003) suggest is that as no learning can be effective without assessment it should be incorporated into teaching and learning. All types of assessment need to be carried out, namely, baseline, diagnostic, formative, summative and systemic

### **2.3 CRITERION REFERENCED ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

Assessment practices vary from country to country. In this section, criterion referenced assessment conducted in countries such as Scotland, the Netherlands and Norway are examined, and used as reference points against which to discuss their counterparts in South Africa. Criterion-referenced assessment is used to measure achievement of learning goals set out by the teacher in line with the national assessment standards (Simpson, 1999). As Sliwka (2009) points out, criterion-referenced assessment was developed to ensure that performance of learners in the tasks set for them is in line with clearly defined goals.

In Scotland, the development of a criterion referenced assessment framework has led to increased subject knowledge and craft knowledge about the social context of teaching and learning (Simpson, 1999; Mansell, James & ARG, 2009). The National Education Authority of Scotland sets targets which outline aims for each school (Sliwka, 2009), with clearly stated success criteria that specify the expected impact of each on the life and work of the school, particularly the expected improvements for pupils (Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education {HMIE} (2003)). The use of target setting by the National Education Authority of Scotland was criticised by Simpson (1999), who showed that the focus on results appears to have caused head teachers to pressurise their staff to set 5–14 National Tests before much had been done to enable learners to have that required number of tests and understand what they have learnt. Ten years later, the criticism is supported by Sliwka (2009), who indicated that many head teachers and classroom teachers believe that the national system of target setting for all primary and secondary schools leads to them use summative assessment more often, teaching to the test with the purpose of passing rather than learning. Although results were improving through the use of target setting, it led to the Scottish government to stop collecting national assessments results as teachers were

rehearsing learners to the tests (Mansell, James & ARG, 2009). Although many teachers perceive the use of target setting as encouragement for test/ examination performance, it should not impede the role of formative assessment (Simpson, 1999). Jones (2010) found that teachers believe the target setting process helps them to come to know learners much better and motivates them to work towards the set target, making it a useful tool in assessment. In support of target setting, Jones (2010) argues that it helps pupils to:

- *take more responsibility for learning outcomes;*
- *self-assess/evaluate more effectively;*
- *see the next step/target more clearly;*
- *find motivation to 'get there'; and,*
- *focus on their learning (p. 49).*

Expectations about target setting were raised and have increased the level of giving feedback and discussions with pupils, but despite the benefits of summative assessment to both the teachers and learners, and the target setting component's contribution to more verbal feedback and discussion with pupils, it alone is not a perfect way of teaching and learning.

Simpson (1999) argues that summative assessment should not overshadow formative assessment, which plays a significant role in teaching and learning, and is pivotal in ensuring that learners are developed holistically through informing their learning progression. Black and William (1998) show that it gives opportunities for students to express and apply their understandings of what they have learnt.

Assessment in Norway is also criterion referenced, and in contrast to Scotland is a priority on the national agenda. The stakeholders in education regard the teacher as the most knowledgeable person in the performance of the child. In his study of elementary teachers' beliefs, Raymond (2007) found that although teachers are trained at the universities to be more equipped with Subject Content Knowledge (SCK) of teaching and assessment and are trusted professionals in the development of learners, there are some who do not fully benefit the learners as

expected. Nilsen, Øygarden and Hognestad (2006) assert that it is the teacher's daily assessment in the classroom that is most common in the intermediate forms (11-13 years of age) in Norwegian schools, and is considered to have the greatest effect on promoting learning potential if it is developed in conjunction with the participation of the pupils and with an understanding of their individual needs. There is no national or district examination at this level (MER, 2010), and schools are solely responsible for assessing the performance of students in the primary schools. The lack of national, district and school-based examinations, as pointed out by Ministry of Education and Research (MER, 2010), suggests that formal summative assessment is not the prime focus. In teaching and learning, both summative and formative are crucial and teachers need to strike a balance between the two.

Research shows that classwork and homework are the main tools used in assessing learners. Learners are awarded marks throughout the year for their class work, projects, group work, practical work and homework (MER, 2010), which suggests that assessment of learners is a continuous activity. Studies also show that many teachers are positive about national assessment policies and are relatively well updated on what assessment *for* learning entails (Beate, 2013). Although teachers use different approaches in assessing learners they are happy to be given autonomous control over assessment as it enables them to act as guides or coaches and so engage in fruitful cooperation with the pupils (Beate, 2013).

In the Netherlands, assessment is outcomes-based and is the responsibility of the teachers. According to Kleintjies (2008), a decentralised education policy is followed, giving all schools freedom of making it a point that the education provided is of quality. Monitoring of teachers' work ensures provision of quality education, however, too much autonomy may be detrimental, as research on school effectiveness by Sun, Creemers and De Jong (2007) shows, particularly in test taking. Van der Lubbe (2010) reports that day-to-day monitoring of a learner's progress is carried out and the classroom teacher uses common assessment techniques such as observations, teacher-made tests, performance assessments and portfolio assessment. This suggests that teachers are well equipped in

assessment practices, including the use of both summative and formative assessment. During primary schooling, a pupil monitoring system is conducted twice per year, both summative and diagnostic in nature, to assess or gauge the performance of learners and for early identification of any problems (Van der Lubbe, 2010). A pupil monitoring system contains tests for measuring subjects' skills of language, including decoding and reading comprehension, arithmetic and world orientation (geography, history, biology) (HMIE, 2009). Thus, the system complements the knowledge that the teacher has gathered with day-to-day progress assessments, which then helps in monitoring the progress of the learner. Early identification of problems is indicative of formative assessment in action.

Assessment in South African primary schools is outcomes-based or criterion referenced, which means that it should be based on the outcomes and assessment standards/skills stipulated in the policy documents. Assessment standards are the skills that learners are supposed to acquire at the end of the lesson. In order to do so the NCS (DoE, 2002) and CAPS (2011a) stipulate a variety of forms of assessment that teachers need to use, including projects, assignment, storytelling, oral presentation, and observation. If a learner is good at a skill, for example reading, but is not assessed, he/she could be disadvantaged. In outcomes-based education (OBE), teachers should plan teaching as part of an interactive process as opposed to the traditional way of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. The teacher facilitates the teaching and the learner constructs knowledge. Although the teacher plays a central role in the planning and facilitation of learning, the teaching approach is learner-centred. Learning, and therefore the learner, should always be at the centre of all teaching. Killen (2000) argues that teaching is not teaching unless learners learn. Teachers should continuously gather information about learners' learning through assessment that is integral to teaching and learning. Stiggins (1992) argues that gathering information about learner performance requires the teacher to have a clear understanding of assessment. On the other hand, failure to clearly understand assessment by teachers contributes to poor learner performance. Thus, all teachers must understand the difference between sound and unsound assessments and between various functions of assessment if they are to employ effective assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

There are a number of assessment types which play a role in assessment in South African primary schools, as identified by the DoE (2002a) and DBE (2011a) and discussed below.

### **2.3.1 Baseline assessment**

Baseline assessment refers to the type of assessment conducted at the beginning of the year to enable the teacher to understand the learning level of the learners he/she has in the class. It is a standardised test used to assess a child's abilities and skills, typically conducted by a teacher within the first seven weeks of commencing primary school, enabling teachers to identify a child's potential and to plan lessons and measure progress throughout the year (ARG, 2002). Regarded by Lindsay (1997) as potentially a useful addition to assessment improvements, baseline assessment is regarded by the NCS (DoE, 2002a, p.2) as usually used at the beginning of a phase, grade or learning experience to establish what learners already know. It helps educators with the planning of the learning programme and learning activities, and provides information to help teachers plan effectively to meet children's individual learning needs. Teachers may make use of learners' progress reports of the previous Grade to gauge the performance. However, in his critique of South African education, Taylor (2008) found that baseline assessment was not being conducted in most schools, leading to teachers not knowing learners' prior knowledge, which is very significant in their planning. Instead teachers were teaching and assessing learners on content they knew and leaving out what they did not. This may be one of the factors leading to poor learner performance in South African primary schools.

### **2.3.2 Diagnostic assessment**

Diagnostic assessment is a type of assessment conducted to find out what a learner knows and can do prior to the commencement of a learning programme. It aims to identify a problem so that a solution can be provided (Boston, 2009). Teachers need to identify learning barriers and challenges learners may have, therefore it is important that it be carried out to assist and support learners. The DoE (2002a, p.2) indicates that diagnostic assessment "is similar to formative assessment, but will lead to some form of intervention, remedial action or



programme”. It usually takes place at the start of a school year, term, semester, or teaching unit (Boston, 2009) and is seen as a key tool used by teachers in planning instruction and setting appropriate learning goals. Diagnostic assessment helps to identify a student’s needs, abilities and state of readiness to achieve the goals outlined in the curriculum. The results of diagnostic assessment help teachers determine the needs of individual learners, so that instruction can be personalised and tailored to provide the appropriate next steps for learning (James, 2013). The study on development of formal diagnostic assessment by Richards (2001) revealed that teachers experience difficulties in developing diagnostic assessment questions that can lead to their developing strategies to assist the learners. Richards (2001) found that diagnostic assessment is rarely used in schools, or if so it is not used well.

### **2.3.3 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment, also known as ‘assessment *for* learning’, is the process of gathering and analysing evidence of learners’ performance to help teachers identify learners’ needs and therefore develop strategies to help them perform better. It helps teachers determine what students know and are capable of doing, and provides descriptive feedback to improve learning and inform teaching (ARG, 2002). Formative assessment is aimed at improvement and helps teachers and learners to develop their practices (Black & William, 1998). Thus, it aims at improving teaching and learning by giving teachers direction and enables them to adapt to learners’ needs.

Boston (2009) asserts that formative assessment is assessment *for* learning and involves both teachers and students in continuing dialogue, descriptive feedback, and reflection throughout instruction. The process involves the teachers collecting and analysing evidence about learners’ achievement of the intended goals and objectives which enable them to develop strategies to help them take the next step (Harlen, 2000). It is used to diagnose learning difficulties (James, 2013), which means that students, as the centre of teaching and learning processes, need to be involved in all its steps, as suggested by Black and William (1998). Teachers should ensure that learners are engaged when developing teaching and learning goals, collection of learner evidence and providing feedback on learning.

Bansilal, James and Naidoo (2010), in their study of learners' perceptions of feedback from their teachers, show that learners viewed educator assessment feedback as instrumental in building or breaking their self-confidence. They suggest that teachers should continue giving feedback of their assessment practices to improve learner performance. This is backed up by Black and Wiliam (1998), who recommend that feedback given to the learner should be based on the quality of his/her work and that the feedback should also assist the learner to do better in the next task.

Harlen (2000) argues that involving students in all parts of the formative assessment process is essential for successful learning. Within the concept of formative assessment a role is played by continuous assessment, that is, assessing aspects of learners' language throughout the course then producing a final evaluation result from these assessments. It is a researcher's view that although continuous formative assessment should be in place in schools it seems teachers find it difficult to implement valid and reliable assessments. Vandeyar and Killen (2007) also show that the assessment policies introduced an entirely new set of demands that most teachers found difficult to address.

Nxumalo (2007) reveals that teachers lack understanding of the different forms of assessment and find difficulties in applying these in their practices. Some learners are disadvantaged when they are assessed since some forms of assessment tend to favour a certain type of a learner. These findings are echoed by Pillay (2011), who reported that teachers, when assessing their learners, were not covering all the assessment standards set in the documents, which may be a contributory factor to poor performance of learners as they are not subjected to a variety of forms of assessment. Nxumalo (2007) goes on to reveal that lack of understanding of forms of assessment leads teachers to conduct assessment *of* learning instead of assessment *for* learning. When learners are required to write monthly tests this sets up regular assessment, however, it favours only those learners who are good at tests.

Vandeyar and Killen (2007, p. 3) have identified several common factors about teachers' assessment: (a) *teachers struggle with outcomes-based assessment;* (b) *teachers are not willing to accommodate linguistically and culturally diverse*

*learners; and, (c) teachers tend to have strong, but not necessarily helpful, conceptions of assessment.* The authors suggest that outcomes-based assessment is a mammoth task facing teachers who are not well equipped to carry it out. The point is backed up by Ramsuran (2006), who reported that NCS assessment systems and practices for addressing the learning needs of children have been inadequate because teachers were not properly trained.

Although Nxumalo (2007) and Vandeyar and Killen (2007) have identified the problems teachers have with formative assessment, their research does not reveal what causes the problem. It is important that assessment as a well thought out activity be carefully planned before it is offered, since its aim is to identify areas of improvement which then inform the next phase of teaching (Harlen, 2000). In the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) report, Volmink (2011) report that in most schools, teachers focus on formal written assessments and that other equally important forms are rarely used. Within continuous assessment, a variety of strategies should be used, and in assessing the whole child it must be taken into consideration not only that assessment is written work but also that it allows for practical and oral work (Pillay, 2011).

A study conducted by Kuze (2009) shows that perceptions of SAT members, teachers and learners about what formative assessment is and entails is unclear. This could be the reason it is not effectively implemented in many schools. In their study, Metzler and Woessmann (2010) assert that formative assessment is more time-consuming and so teachers more often rely on summative assessment. However, if the goal of teaching and learning is to improve learner performance then formative assessment needs to be carried out. Kuze (2009) and Metzeler and Woessman (2010) confirm that formative assessment is rarely used by teachers as they found out that it is impeded by certain factors:

- *Lack of knowledge from the teachers' side;*
- *Lack of training and resources;*
- *Unwillingness of learners to study their books;*
- *Traditional ways of teaching;*

- *No cooperation by teachers; and,*
- *Teachers not wanting to accept change (p.168).*

Although Metzeler and Woessman (2010) reported their findings in Germany, their findings are also applicable in South Africa. William (2011, p.51) proposes five key strategies of formative assessment as essential to help pupils progress:

- *Clarifying, sharing, and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success;*
- *Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities, and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning;*
- *Providing feedback that moves learning forward;*
- *Activating learners as instructional resources for one another; and,*
- *Activating learners as the owners of their own learning.*

#### **2.3.4 Summative assessment**

While formative assessment is assessment *for* learning, summative assessment is assessment *of* learning, conducted at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some assessment standards set out in the policies. Boston (2009) defines summative assessment as an assessment that tells how the learner has performed at a particular time, for example, at the end of term or year. It therefore usually results in developing judgement about learner performance and in some cases can involve high stakes for learners. Thus, it encourages target setting. Black and Wiliam (1998) argue that, as a result of using it, teachers concentrate on test and/or examination performance and neglect crucial aspects of learning. When conducting summative assessment or assessment *of* learning the aim is to check whether learning that took part on a particular unit or theme, term, semester, or school year was of quality. However, in many contexts, teachers are unable to set valid and reliable assessments since they focus on summative assessment, as reported by Kanjee (2006), who cited the non-availability of resources in assisting teachers in improving their classroom assessment practices. The inability of teachers to set valid and reliable assessments was also highlighted by Harispad (2004), who found that teachers are unable to effectively

assess learners due to their lack of understanding of policies pertaining to assessment. Harispad (2004) suggests that teachers do not critically and carefully read the assessment policies provided to them, an argument that would find resonance with Pillay (2011), who pointed out that even though teachers are provided with assessment documents they rarely use or know how to use them. This is indicative of non-compliance with assessment policies and leads to poor performance of learners in schools.

### **2.3.5 Systemic evaluation**

Systemic evaluation is an evaluation at national level aimed at the performance of an education system. For it to be conducted effectively the programme to be evaluated requires consistency in collection and analysing information (Bell, 2005), and evaluation of how the education system achieves the goals it set (DoE, 2005), by measuring learners' performance and the context in which they experience learning and teaching. The purpose is to determine whether the intentions and expectations of policy are being realised in practice (DoE, 2008), and it helps the state to know its position in relation to other countries globally. The systemic evaluation report by the DoE (2005) revealed that poor performance of learners in primary schools is associated with the continued scarcity of teaching and learning resources, including good teachers, which pervades many parts of the system, affecting especially Black and poor children. This suggests that availability or non-availability of resources plays a significant role in learner improvement.

The DoE's report aligns with Kanjee (2009), who noted that although there are mechanisms in place to make assessment simpler in South African schools learning and teaching resources available specifically to help teachers improve their assessment practices are insufficient. A study on the systemic evaluation of the education system shows that its effectiveness in producing required outcomes, in particular learner performance, raises doubts. Khosa (2010) suggests that the manner in which learner performance is evaluated by the education system may not be correct, and there are various factors leading to poor learner performance.

### **2.3.6 Summary of assessment**

In summary, assessment is a process of gathering information about learner performance and helping teachers determine what their students know and can do. It is a yardstick to gauge teaching and learning in schools. Without assessment, neither teaching and learning nor learner performance will be easy to measure. In this study, types of assessment that need to be conducted in schools to achieve quality teaching, learning and assessment have been discussed in detail, namely, baseline, diagnosis, formative and summative

## **2.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Quality assurance is a process that ensures that systems and structures are established in the organisation to ensure that the standards stipulated are achieved and maintained (Sieborger & Macintosh, 1998). It seeks to give teachers and managers responsibility to ensure that schools deliver quality education and that they are held accountable for the performance of learners.

Birzea, Cecchini, Harrison, Krek and Spajic-Vrkas (2005) assert that the purpose is to ensure educational improvement and effective performance. They add that accountability is the counterpart of school improvement. Moderation, integral to ensuring quality education and training is a quality assurance activity designed to ensure that assessments are conducted in a consistent, accurate and well-structured manner (Wright & Whittington, 1992). The Assessment Reform Group (2002) shows that when moderation is collaboratively done by a group of professionals, it helps teachers greatly improve their teaching practice. Black and Wiliam (1998) show that moderation has more than a quality assurance function if it affects the planning and implementation of assessment, and consequently teachers' understanding of learning goals and of the criteria indicating progress towards them.

## **2.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES**

There are a number of ways of assuring quality of work, namely moderation and monitoring. The former can be broadly defined as the systematic gathering and interpretation of information to provide management and the main stakeholders

who have the interest of education at heart with information to make decisions (Webster, 2008), whereas the latter, as defined by Wright and Whittington (1992), is a quality assurance activity designed to ensure that assessments are conducted in a consistent, accurate and well-structured manner. Both are discussed in the sub-sections that follow, particularly as they relate to Scotland, the Netherlands, Norway and South Africa.

### **2.5.1 Monitoring**

Monitoring is defined as a process of keeping track of teacher teaching and assessing for the purpose of making developmental decisions by providing feedback to teachers on their teaching progress (Cotton, 1996). Monitoring and inspection, as they are related, are intended to improve standards and quality of education, and should therefore be incorporated into school improvement programme (Wilcox & Gray, 1994). Inspectors have an opportunity to observe classrooms and, thereby, form a better basis for discussing the development of the school with head teachers. Whilst Webster (2008) and Wilcox and Gray (1994) show the importance of monitoring by inspection, it should not be considered as a way of identifying mistakes or highlighting problems, but rather as a way of developing teachers to execute their tasks confidently. Teachers need to be informed about when and how the inspection will take place in order for them to be prepared for the visit. Monitoring can also be performed through self-evaluation, internal evaluation as well as external evaluation, which is related to inspection. Different terminologies for monitoring quality education are used in different countries, as follows.

#### **2.5.1.1 School Self- Evaluation (SSE)**

School Self- Evaluation (SSE) refers to the way schools introspect themselves in relation to the goals outlined by education authorities. It is a school-based evaluation (Scheerens, Glas, Thomas & Thomas, 2003), and can be defined as a school initiative process to identify if the goals and objectives of education have been achieved so that intervention strategies for improvement purpose can be developed (Voogt, 1995; Van Petegem, 2005). SSE requires teachers to work collaboratively, reflect on their practices and review them. It helps teachers

introspect themselves with a purpose of improving their practice as well as learner performance (Risimati, 2007). Self-evaluation is aimed at identifying learners' needs and therefore developing strategies to improve their performance.

In Scotland, schools are expected to undergo a number of formal processes, both internal and external, such as school self-evaluation, improvement planning and inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) as a sign of accountability. Accountability by schools is not limited to the education authority but includes parents and the general public. In his report on the significance of self-evaluation, MacBeath (2005) points out that it is a greedy consumer of time, effort and resources that serves no purpose, unlike the findings of Wilcox and Gray (1994), for whom it is a recipe for effective delivery of services.

In the Netherlands, self-evaluation is one of the instruments constituting the quality policy of a school (Scheerens, Ehren, Slegers & De Leeuw, 2012), with schools obliged to develop school plans and prospectuses. In these documents they are required to describe how quality will be achieved. Every four years, schools are required by law on primary education to develop an annual report, school plan and a school guide which inform parents of those goals and objectives that have been achieved (Scheerens et al., 2012). The study on the significance of data by Schildkamp and Visscher (2010) revealed that although the inspectorate requires schools to describe how they will achieve quality they do not implement quality assurance. This suggests that self-evaluation as an instrument for quality assurance is unable to serve the purpose for which it was designed. Although schools in the Netherlands conduct self-evaluations they are still monitored annually by the Education Inspectorate, along with the quality of school self-evaluations and quality care as a whole. That there is no external teacher appraisal suggests that the level of teacher trust is high. Teachers are individually evaluated and appraised by competent staff members in the school, as well as by members of school boards or the municipality (Scheerens et al., 2003). When inspection is conducted, effective teaching is considered.

In Norway, teachers are regarded as professional experts so there is a strong sense amongst schools of taking responsibility for their own agenda. Although there are no national guidelines schools are expected to conduct self-evaluation,



which means that they have autonomy in conducting self-evaluation. This can be helpful, particularly when teachers are novices. Policies to appraise teachers are developed and carried out at the local or school level (Walker, 2013). While regulations stipulate that school administrations must be the ones conducting teacher appraisal there is neither a law nor criterion guiding teachers to effectively appraise one another (Nusche, Earl, Maxwell & Shewbridge, 2008).

The lack of national performance criteria or reference standards suggests that teacher appraisals are conducted differently, which may mean that in some schools they are somehow compromised. As the employer authorities of teachers, the owners of schools are permitted to develop their own criteria for appraising teachers but only a few have systems in place to appraise the quality of their practice (Nusche et al., 2008). In his study on teacher appraisal, Walker (2013) shows that the lack of mechanisms for teacher appraisals in some schools is a disadvantage. Furthermore, the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2008) showed that of those teachers who were appraised, fewer than 30% indicated that the appraisal contained suggestions for improving certain aspects of their work. The above survey suggests that appraisals without reference points do not improve practice therefore it is of utmost importance that criteria be developed to guide schools in appraising teachers for the benefit of both the appraiser and the appraisee.

In South African schools, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is a quality assurance tool initiated by both the DoE and Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) (2003) to enhance the delivery of quality education. IQMS is informed by schedule 1 of the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No 76 of 1998. In terms of resolution 8 of 2003, an agreement was reached in the ELRC to integrate programmes on quality management which comprised a Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), with the purpose of appraising individual educators to determine areas of strength and weakness and to draw up programmes for individual development (formative evaluation), the Performance Management System (PMS) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). These aimed to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school, including the support provided by the district,

school management, infrastructure and learning resources, as well as the quality of the teaching and learning (system evaluation) (ELRC, 2003).

The introduction of IQMS is aimed at assisting teachers and school managers whilst providing quality education by first developing teachers. The IQMS is celebrated because it was a reaction to the autocratic style of evaluation employed by the external evaluators during the apartheid regime. It was designed to encourage personal and professional growth by first identifying strengths and weaknesses (Mji, 2012). The purpose of IQMS was to ensure that quality teaching and learning, through quality management, would be attained in schools. Thus, the IQMS instrument was meant to be a dependable quality assurance tool to measure and improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, Dhlamini (2009) found that educators and managers viewed IQMS as a means to acquire 1% pay progression and the possible return of the old apartheid systems' inspectorate. Dhlamini (2009) suggested that IQMS was not serving the purpose it was intended to, as did Khosa (2010) in his study on school self-evaluation which showed that most South African schools had a weak internal capacity to conduct self-evaluations, and that high schools rather than primary schools were conducting self-evaluations. The failure of the IQMS to serve its purpose was also reported in the DBE (2011c) IQMS Annual Report, which showed that classroom observations revealed a number of educators did not use appropriate teaching aids, learner participation was minimal, and curriculum support for teachers did not adequately meet their developmental needs. Dhlamini (2009) lists the inefficiency of IQMS as follows:

- *Teachers have difficulty in managing classrooms;*
- *During self-evaluation, teachers score themselves highly;*
- *The management is not convinced by the usage of Personal Growth Plan; and, because they believe an educator should be evaluated by an external person (p.182).*

### **2.5.1.2 Internal evaluation**

In Scottish schools, the subject leader or subject leadership is responsible for the monitoring of teachers' and learners' work Her majesty's Inspectors of Education

(HMIE) (2009). This is a clear indication of the trust the education authorities have in teachers. A subject leader identifies needs in his or her own subject and recognises that these must be considered in relation to the overall needs of the school. Subject leaders evaluate the progress made by teachers with regards to teaching and learning, and towards targets for teachers and learners which then inform future priorities for the subject. (Flecknoe, 2005). This means that internal evaluation is aimed at meeting the targets set for pupils and staff. The subject leadership comprises the knowledgeable teacher in the subject, the deputy headmaster and selected teachers who are also more knowledgeable in the subject. The leadership takes on the role of overseeing the assessment and recording the pupils' progress, observing of lessons, assisting with their planning, teaching, assessment, reporting of the subject, and running assessment agreement trials (Flecknoe, 2005). However, a study on assessment conducted by Sliwka (2009) revealed that although the subject leadership comprises a number of people, most of the work is done by the subject leader. Flecknoe (2005) notes that subject leadership has improved performance of many teachers in schools since its role in terms of achieving learning outcomes for student within their area was clarified and they see their role as having an aspect of promoting or advocating the subject within their school.

Monitoring in primary schools in the Netherlands is the responsibility of the subject co-ordinator, sometimes called a 'middle manager' (Van der Lubbe, 2010). He or she visits teachers in the class, observes a teacher while teaching and offers assistance where needed, moderates learners' formal written work, checks the recording of marks then reports to the head teacher. This is done for accountability purposes. Research on the role of Middle managers conducted in the Netherlands by Bennet, Newton, Woods and Economou (2003) indicates that teachers did not want their work monitored or to be observed while teaching. Observation of teachers in practice is often unwelcomed and is seen as a way of tempering with the day to day teaching (Bennet et al., 2003). The resistance to monitoring was also revealed by Van der Lubbe (2010), who showed that teachers were not comfortable with class visits, although the focus was not on fault finding but rather on improving practice.

The above studies suggest that there is little monitoring of education in Netherland schools due to teacher resistance. Although Bennet et al. (2003) and Van der Lubbe (2007) show that monitoring is often unwelcome, it is vital for it to be carried out for improvement of learning. It needs to be carefully planned, communicated to teachers then implemented.

In contrast, teachers in Norway are highly trusted by the education authorities and are open to feedback on their work. However, there is no tradition of a school leader monitoring the teachers' work in the classroom or pupils' learning processes. Such monitoring, if in place, is not subject to any plan (NDET, 2011), and it is difficult for any school leader to gain access to an area which is regarded as the teacher's autonomous place. When the school leader offers guidance to a teacher it is often in connection with the pupil's case rather than with the learning or teaching (Moller, 2006). However, the OECD's report (2011) indicates that school evaluation is not focused on the quality of teaching and learning, hence using data to improve practice is a challenge to many schools and their owners. Although teachers are trusted professionals, if they are not monitored the level of support may be low, leading to underperformance in their work. It is therefore vital for teachers to be internally or externally monitored for development purposes.

In South Africa, evaluation of quality education is termed 'monitoring and support'. Schools are required to monitor themselves with the direct monitoring of teaching being delegated to the various subject heads and other members of the School Management Team (SMT) who happens to be SAT members. At school level, the members of school management, Heads of Department (HoDs) in particular, are expected to monitor teaching, learning and assessment practices (DoE, 2008). The HoDs are required to visit teachers in their classes and observe them while they teach, providing the necessary support through feedback. However, they must not visit teachers in the class solely to find faults, as the purpose is to support teachers in the areas in which they are struggling. Matoti (2008) discovered that there was inadequate support given to teachers by school managers and district officials in the implementation of the NCS. Beside inadequate support given to teachers by school managers, teachers were also found to be unwilling to be monitored, which could result in them being given

support. This was revealed by Vandeyar and Killen (2007), who indicate that many teachers are unwilling to have someone observing them while teaching, because many think the purpose of observation is not about developing but controlling. Although the support given to teachers by school managers is inadequate, Blasse (2000) shows that academic performance is gained through involvement of all teachers in making decisions about the educational needs of the school.

The principals of schools as SAT members are also required to visit classes, to identify specific problem areas and follow up by discussions between the principal and teacher. Research conducted by Nxumalo (2007) shows that principals are frightened of teacher unions and when they have to observe teachers in practice they do so informally. This is in line with the findings of Haughey and MacElwain (1992), which indicated that most principals “*popped in*” to classrooms for brief periods. Blasse (2000) found in his research on effective instructional leadership that even “*walk-through*” visits, without dialogue and feedback by the principals, have a positive impact on the teachers and encourage motivation, better planning and preparation, focus and innovation.

Research conducted by Nxumalo (2007) in South Africa shows that assessment practices in schools are rarely monitored due to HoDs being overloaded. Similar to the above findings, Ramsuran (2006) found that many teachers failed to implement assessment policies because they were overloaded with work. Torrance (1995) found that teachers struggled with curriculum content coverage due to the wealth of administrative work they were required to do instead of their core business of classroom teaching. However, Boston (2009) reports that those teachers whose work is regularly monitored tend to show better performance. Monitoring of teaching is a two-way process that helps not only the one who is monitored but also the one who is monitoring.

### **2.5.1.3 External monitoring vis-à-vis Inspection**

With regard to inspection as a monitoring strategy, all schools in Scotland are subject to the HMIE, an Executive Agency of Ministers under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998. It plays a key role in promoting improvements in standards, quality and achievement in education. Inspections cover all aspects of school life,

“including the quality of courses at each stage, learning and teaching, formative and summative assessment, student guidance, ethos and relationships within the school and among the school, parents and community, all aspects of management, self-evaluation, staff development and development planning” (Sliwka, 2009, p.29). Wilcox and Gray (1994), in a study of the reactions of primary teachers, head teachers, and inspectors to school inspection in three Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in Britain, reported that both inspectors and school staff agreed that inspection helped in making the school become more effective and able to move to the next step. Whilst Sliwka (2009) and Wilcox and Gray (1994) show a positive side of inspection, careful planning for effective execution needs to be carried out and communicated to the people concerned. The inspection in Scotland has now shifted focus to underperforming schools till its results have been witnessed.

Interestingly, the Netherlands also has an inspection system in place in its education system, with the focus on vigorously checking the assessment practices (Luginbuhl & Webbink, 2009). Teaching, learning and assessment are not just controlling, but also monitoring, and include a two-day visit to a school during which an inspector observes lessons, studies school material, and holds pre-structured interviews with pupils/parents, teachers, and managers (HMIE, 2009). Luginbuhl and Webbink’s study (2009) revealed that school inspections assisted in bettering the performance of schools, and that in the two years following an inspection, test scores increase two to three percent of a standard deviation. More importantly, the more schools are inspected the better they perform and the less they are inspected the worse they perform. Inspections are not to be carried out in isolation of self-evaluations which schools are expected to carry out.

The Inspectorate of Education in the Netherlands is responsible for controlling and evaluating schools. Inspection is informed by the risk analyses and is directed to underperforming schools. “It performs its investigations guided by a number of quality domains, namely, outcomes, teaching and learning, and assessment, and is guided by all regulations with which schools have to comply on the basis of any educational law” (HMIE, 2009, p.11). The investigation begins with a first screening on a limited number of quality domains and ends with a broader

investigation when the risk analysis suggests that quality is insufficient. The Act is explicit on the interventions for failing schools and requires the inspectorate to publish their assessments of schools. Scheerens et.al., (2012) further found that school inspections led to better performance of schools, but although they were a useful tool in improving teaching and learning, teachers were resistant to them. For Bennet et al. (2003), inspection, although termed '*monitoring*', is an indication of lack of trust.

Inspection in Norway schools, in the hands of the Directorate of Education and Training, is not directed at quality of teaching given by teachers as teachers are trusted professionals (NDET, 2011). Inspection focuses on school owners' compliance with statutory obligations, but this compliance does not refer to the entire set of the rules but rather parts of it. The purpose of inspection is to help children and young people obtain the right to equal education with the aims of the legislation (NDET, 2011). In contrast, Moller (2006) shows that the purpose of the inspection visits is not on controlling purpose, but monitoring how teachers deliver the lessons to the learners so that an intervention by the school managers can be brought in if needed. Moller (2006) reports that school visits have resulted in schools achieving their desired goals.

In South Africa, there is currently no inspection; however, in the apartheid era inspection was conducted by the school inspector. The Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) (2000) indicates that inspection was not focused on supporting teachers but on control, and the development of teachers was not a priority as the focus was on finding shortfalls to be reported to the authorities. In his study of quality assurance in pre- and post-apartheid South African Schools, McKenna (2009) shows that teachers did not allow inspectors in their schools since they considered them fault-finders.

Although at present there is no external inspection in South Africa, teachers are still expected to provide quality teaching and assessment. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has established the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) to strengthen accountability systems in education (Volmink, 2011). The unit is charged with the task of ensuring that service delivery in all the levels of the Education Department is not compromised but, more

importantly, to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Volmink, 2011). The NEEDU report by Volmink (2011) presented to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education shows that most principals do not have systems and procedures in place in their schools to monitor curriculum delivery, including controlling classroom practices and monitoring teachers' work.

Although there is no inspection in South Africa, monitoring is conducted externally by Subject Advisors (SAs) who visit schools to monitor and support teachers in the curriculum delivery. When visiting the school, they check teachers' files, learners' informal and formal assessment activities, recording of assessment practices as well as quality assurance practices of the SATs/HoDS. The SATs are also required to undertake classroom visits in which they observe teachers delivering lessons and demonstrate lessons. However, this does not always happen due to teacher union resistance (Nxumalo, 2007). According to Mhlongo (2008), there is no effective monitoring by the district officials due to some union members who deliberately try to fail the Department of Education in the implementation of policies. Although there is teacher union resistance to classroom observation, some teachers are willing to have somebody observe them while teaching as they are aware of the developmental aspect of critical feedback.

Mhlongo (2008) has found that external monitoring of teachers is negatively affected by ineffective communication by the district offices and the schools not receiving communiqués from the district in time. Mhlongo (2008) suggests that communication is a crucial aspect in improving education. Furthermore, the DBE (2011c) has confirmed that the support given by SAs is ineffective, since many are responsible for too many education institutions and as a result cannot provide effective services to them. Although the study by Dilotsohle (2001) found that the support given by district SAs is inadequate, some improvements have been noted. Mhlongo (2008) and Dilotsohle (2001) suggest that communication and teacher support are key factors in educational effectiveness and improvement.

As previously defined, monitoring is a process of keeping track of how teachers are conducting their teaching activities by providing feedback to teachers on their teaching progress. In this study, the researcher used monitoring as a platform on which to discuss the development of the school and the teacher, in particular with



SATs, to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are of quality. Monitoring is not referred to identification of mistakes, but is a developmental process through the feedback that needs to be provided by the SATs. When conducting monitoring, a variety of strategies can be used, for instance, self- evaluation, internal evaluation as well as external evaluation, which all ensure that teaching, learning and assessment is of quality.

## **2.5.2 Moderation**

Moderation is a process in which teachers work towards making judgements that are consistent and comparable, either confirming or adjusting them. It helps in ensuring that teachers' judgments of learners' performance are accurate, reliable, fair, valid and equitable and also strengthens the value of teachers' judgements. It makes judgements in relation to syllabus standards. "Moderation of teachers and learners' work in Scottish schools is rigorous and robust" (Curriculum for Excellence, 2009, p.3). Sliwka (2009) maintains that meticulous and vigorous quality assurance increases the level of confidence in teachers' judgements, and parents and other stakeholders are assured of the recognition given to the learners for achieving the goals they were expected to. Sliwka (2009) suggests that it is through quality assurance that learners' achievement can be qualified and that quality assurance in teaching and learning is a crucial aspect that cannot be ignored. The HMIE (2009) indicates that in primary schools, senior teachers such as head teachers, deputy head teachers and principal teachers moderate sample work. Individual teachers try to avoid bias by ensuring that they mark scripts of learners without names. Although moderation of teachers and learners in Scottish schools is rigorous and robust, the HMIE (2009) found that mechanisms for the effectiveness of quality assurance and moderation were lacking. However, in his study on assessment, Reddy (2003) found that moderation has increased primary teachers' subject knowledge and enhanced their craft knowledge, which suggests that teachers benefit when moderation is conducted.

Moderation in Norwegian schools is the responsibility of the subject leadership Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training (NDET) (2011), which samples learners' work for moderation. Sadler (1998) indicates that teachers have a professional concern to make good judgements that are consistent as part of their

disposition towards fairness and an empathy with students in a desire to help them to learn. Teachers do not want their judgements of students' performance to be unfair. The NDET (2011) indicates that teachers also have departmental meetings in which they discuss planning, teaching and assessment, quality assurance in a coherent way, and pre-marking of learners' work has been carried out to obtain a common understanding on quality and standards and to identify the next step in learning. Teachers also use a variety of strategies to avoid pre-judgement of learners, although they generally mark and grade their pupils' coursework single-handedly (NDET, 2011).

Moderation in South African primary schools is school-based, with the School Assessment Team (SAT), in particular the HoD as the curriculum head is responsible for effective teaching, learning and assessment in the school. In order to ensure effective assessment and quality assurance within the school, the SAT members should assume the role of instructional coaches. School effectiveness studies emphasise the importance of the instructional leadership role, which focuses on alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and standards (Cotton, 2003). If the goal of learning is to improve learner performance and standards-based assessments are used to measure the goal the curriculum, instruction and assessments must all be aligned with the standards (Elmore, 2000).

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the SATs comprise the school principal, deputy principal, HoDs and selected teachers, depending on the number of teachers at the school. Quality assurance of work is carried out by these role-players, with the principal assessing the work of the deputy principal, the deputy-principal the work of the HoDs, and the HoDs the work of the teachers, working in a top-down way. Within the SATs the quality assurance of assessments tasks is the sole responsibility of the HoDs (GDE, 1999). Although, the GDE (1999) and DoE (2008) stipulate that the HoDs must moderate the work of the teachers, other members of SATs, including the deputy-principals, the principal and other teachers, are also responsible for ensuring that quality teaching and learning takes place.

Despite similar aims of the moderation policies by GDE (1999) and DoE (2008), that is, the teachers must continuously assess learners and HoDs and SATs must quality assure the work, there are gaps in the quality assurance of assessment practices. Ramsuran's (2006) study found that formal tasks given to learners are rarely quality assured by the SATs, highlighting a gap between policy and practice. Quality assurance is thus not conducted effectively in many schools. Although Reyneke, Mayer and Nel (2010) show that moderation of assessment practices helps to identify the areas of strength and weaknesses in the tasks given to learners, therefore helping the teacher to put more effort into the areas in which learners struggle and thus address issues, it seemed that quality assurance is less thorough. Ramsuran (2006) and Reyneke et.al. (2010) findings clearly indicate that quality assurance of assessment practices is not effectively practised in South African schools.

Within the schooling system, the DoE (2008) mandates HoDs to pre-moderate and post-moderate teachers' and learners' work. HoDs are expected to pre-moderate the work schedules, lesson plans, assessment plans and formal tasks (GDE, 1999, p.4). Pre-moderation is carried out to ensure that the work given to learners meets the standards set and is policy-compliant. If the work is not of the correct standard, it is to be returned to the concerned teacher to remedy. To show that HoDs have pre-moderated the work they should complete a moderation tool designed by the District Office or the school (see Appendix D). However, in actual practice, pre-moderation of the above tasks by the HoDs is a rare activity, because HoDs claim to be overloaded and do not have time to pre-moderate all the formal tasks. Overload is a contributory factor in quality assurance of assessment practices practically, as most HoDs have a full teaching load (Moodley, personal communication, 6 July, 2011).

Chiriac and Frekedal (2011) indicate that moderation of work improves teaching and learning practice. In the school context, HoDs are required to post-moderate 10% of the marked scripts for quality assurance purposes, before the marks are recorded in the record or mark sheets (DoE, 2008). To ensure that marks are correctly awarded, Tshenko (2005) points out that school-based assessment must be monitored. The HoDs make use of a green pen to moderate, but if the exam is

an external one the moderated scripts are taken to the District Subject Advisor (DSA) for further moderation using an orange pen (GDE, 1999). In practice, however, if the exam is internal, moderation of the scripts by HoDs is rarely conducted. This is in line with reports from Chiriac and Frekedal (2011), who found that managers rarely moderate teachers work due to lack of subject knowledge. In addition, research conducted by Ngobeni (2006) indicates that HoDs are overloaded with work and as a result cannot effectively take on these tasks. Chirac and Frekedal (2011) and Ngobeni (2006) argue that without adequate subject knowledge and having teachers overloaded there will be no effective quality assurance conducted in schools, which could have a negative effect on quality of education provision.

A study conducted by Herselman and Hay (2002) reveals that most school managers have a limited knowledge about the processes of quality assurance. Although this study was conducted in the Eastern Cape and in the Foundation Phase, the findings correspond with quality assurance practices in other parts of the country. Hawes and Stevens (1990) indicate that teachers claim that the main reasons for non-implementation of quality assurance practices at primary schools are:

- *lack of expertise regarding teaching and the management of effective teaching;*
- *uncovered information that becomes an embarrassment to the policymakers;*
- *the large proportion of learners who cannot read the textbooks they are provided with;*
- *large classes with no equipment;*
- *overloaded curriculum with inappropriate learning needs;*
- *only a quarter of the children finish primary school;*
- *spending more per capita on higher education than on primary education;*  
*and,*

- *limited access to pre-schooling and poor grasp of the concept of quality and how to achieve it (Hawes & Stevens, 1990, p.240).*

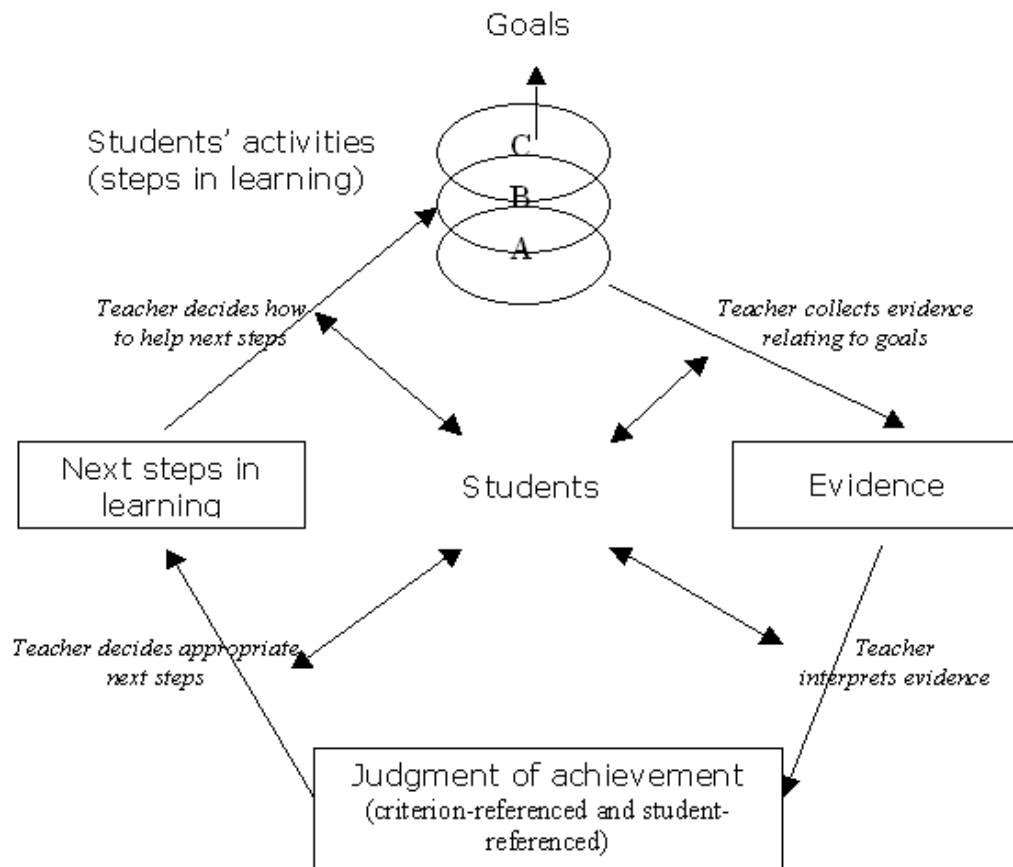
In the quality assurance of EFAL assessment, teachers firstly need to understand curriculum and what is intended. Bucker (2012) points out that good SATs are curriculum experts and are able to mentor young teachers through guidance and modelling. Teachers need to have training of how to implement curriculum by drawing up year plans, assessment plans and recording sheets that are aligned with the assessment plans. Training is needed on how to construct a valid and reliable assessment task. When assessments tools are well developed and carried out effectively, teaching and learning can be improved. Teachers also need to undergo training on how to use assessment results to identify learning gaps (Downey, Steffy, Poston, & English, 2009) as this information can inform the planning of the next step of learning. Finally, the SATs need to understand assessment, its various forms and types and how it should be conducted throughout the year. The DoE (2002) stipulates various forms of assessment that need to be used when assessing learners in EFAL, namely, creative writing, functional writing, response to texts, language usage and investigation.

To sum up, moderation as previously defined is a process in which teachers work towards making judgements that are consistent and comparable, either confirming or adjusting them. Moderation in this study has been used to highlight its significance in improving teaching, learning and assessment in schools. In this study, moderation practices of different countries, in particular Scotland, Norway and the Netherlands, which use criterion referenced assessment, were discussed in relation to South Africa, to learn more about how they use moderation to improve teaching, learning and assessment.

## **2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

This study, investigating the role of SAT to facilitate quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, is guided by a theory of assessment for learning advanced by the specialists in this field such as Harlen (2000) and Black and Wiliam (1998), and draws on the original model of assessment for learning by a cycle of events proposed by Harlen (2000) (see Figure 2.1 below):

**Figure 2.1:** Assessment for learning as a cycle of events (Harlen 2000, p.20)



The primary aim of assessment *for* learning is to support learners (students in the model) in their learning. The model in figure 2.1 depicting assessment for learning consists of a number of components, namely, goal-setting, collecting of evidence, making judgement on the achievement. The next steps to take in order to inform further learning are discussed in sections that follow.

### 2.6.1. Goal-setting

In figure 2.1, the role of the teacher is vital to ensure that goals of the activity are developed. For learners to understand the purposes of activities, teachers need to develop strategies of communicating goals and standards of quality (see A, B and C). Harlen (2000) further shows that when learners have the goals in mind and know what is expected of them in terms of quality in their work, they are able to perform the learning tasks on their own without waiting for the teacher to tell them what to do. This suggests that learning goals need to be communicated to learners. In addition, Sadler (1989) and Black and Wiliam (1998) point out that

learners need to know, understand and own the goals of learning for them to assess their own work. Oberthur (2010) indicates that teachers also need to own these goals for effective performance. DuFour and Berkey (1995) show that clearly defined goals, related to learning and assessment, help teachers provide descriptive feedback to learners and provide learners with concrete information on how to improve.

However, if goals are not set or communicated, learners may not see the importance of engaging themselves in the activity. Cummins and Davidson (2007) also argue that when goals of learning are not communicated this contributes to poor performance by learners, especially when working with English Language Teaching (ELT). In her study, Masitsa (2005) shows that effective school managers remind educators and learners regularly about the goals their schools have set with regard to academic performance and assist them in working towards their attainment. In general, the above authors, Cummins and Davidson (2007) and Masitsa (2005), point out the significance of goal-setting and communication as a recipe for success in teaching and learning.

### **2.6.2. The role of the teacher**

The role of the teacher includes observing the learners while learning, then examining their activities as evidence of learning. The teacher collects this evidence and interprets it in relation to the set goal of learning, enabling him or her to make a judgement based on the progress made by the learners. According to Harlen (2004), the judgement of an individual learner's work is based not only on the goals achievable through the activity but also on such things as recent progress and the effort of the learner. This means it is learner-referenced as well as criterion-referenced, and so assists in making a decision on what is to be done in the next steps. This step requires the teacher to know the goal of the activity so that the decision made should be in line with the purpose of developing the learner. Harlen (2004) further indicates that a key factor in bringing learners into the picture is to share with them the goals of their activities. Furthermore, Black and Wiliam (1998) assert that goals of learning enable learners know what is required of them. As the purpose of assessment *for* learning is to assist the student to perform better, so is the decision made in this step. Once the decision

on how to help the learner has been taken and implemented, the next step of gathering information through checking and observing learner's activities continues and becomes cyclical.

However, in interpreting the evidence, judging the evidence and deciding on the next step, it is crucial for the teacher to have knowledge and experience in the teaching of the subject. "The teachers are expected to have sound knowledge of their subject areas so as to be able to select appropriate and adequate material for the planning of lesson notes, effective delivery of lessons, proper monitoring and evaluation of learners' performance, providing regular feedback on learners' performance, improvisation of instructional materials, adequate keeping of records and appropriate discipline of learners" (Ayeni, 2010, p.36).

### **2.6.3. The role of learners**

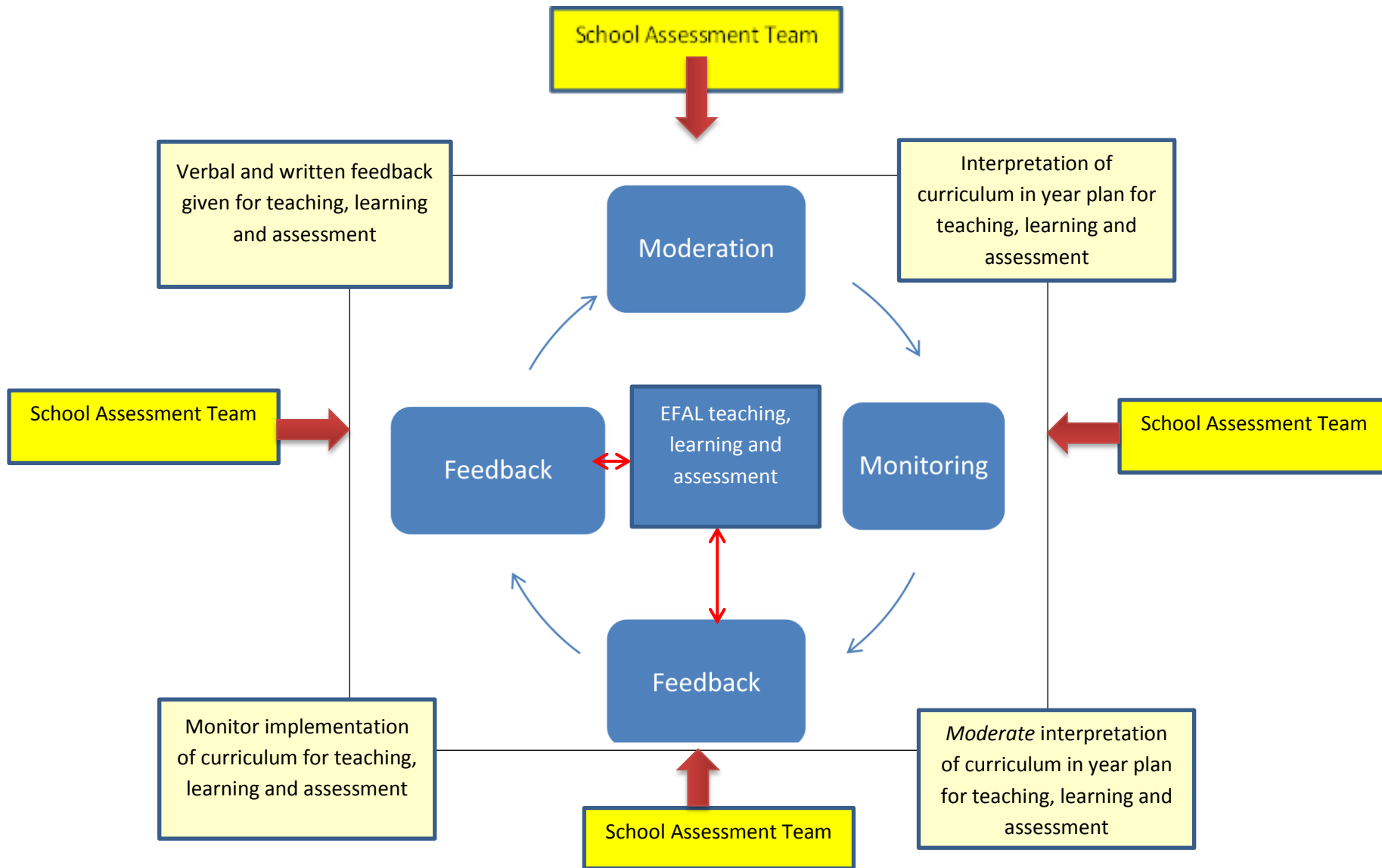
In the assessment *for* learning, learners have a role to play in all the steps. They must be involved in the collection of evidence, interpretation of it and also in the decision to be made in the next step. Harlen (2004) found out that involving learners in self-assessment puts them in a position to know what they need to do as the next step in their learning, whilst James (2013) emphasises the importance of assessment *for* learning as a way of moving from a system of teachers giving students feedback to one in which they monitor themselves. Harlen (2004) further indicates that through participating in the decision-making, learners understand what they need to do and will be committed to making the effort required to further their learning.

### **2.6.4 Developing Conceptual Framework for the study**

Harlen's model of assessment *for* learning was taken into account and adapted for use in this study to create a conceptual framework to underpin an investigation into the role that school assessment teams play in the quality assurance of assessment in English First Additional Language:



**Figure 2.2:** Model for the quality assurance of the assessment of English First Additional Language practices informed by Harlen (2004).



The model has been adapted and developed to be aligned with the aims of the research. Quality assurance is the cornerstone for improvement, and without it for teaching, learning and assessment practices, teachers may not know where to improve. Strategies for quality assurance must be clearly explained for the institutions to understand and ensure that standards and quality of work are achieved and maintained (Freedman, 1994). Quality assurance is about feedback, particularly as constructive feedback also has a profound influence on learners and teachers' motivation and self-esteem (Black & Wiliam, 2007). It is not about compliance with control mechanisms of the inspectorates, but should be part of teaching and learning and the focus should be on development of teachers. The model in Figure 2.2, depicting quality assurance of EFAL, consists of a number of components, such as the role of SATs in teaching, learning and assessment, which takes into account the intended, implemented and attained curriculum, moderation, monitoring and feedback of teaching, learning and assessment, as discussed below.

#### **2.6.4.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment of English First Additional Language**

The NSC and CAPS outline the content that teachers need to teach learners at each grade level at school. Effective teaching requires the teacher to have subject-content knowledge. The teacher' subject-content knowledge needs to be coupled with pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986). Teaching requires the teacher to have both Subject Content Knowledge (SCK) and Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK), the latter also known as '*craft knowledge*' and comprising integrated knowledge that represents teachers' accumulated wisdom with respect to their teaching practice: pedagogy, students, subject matter, and the curriculum (Shulman, 1986, p.39). In order to equip learners with knowledge and skills outlined by the curriculum, teachers indeed need to have a deeper knowledge of the subject and a variety of methods to impart knowledge to students so that they can be in a position to create and attach meaning and relate to one another.

Learning takes place when the teacher clearly explains the objective of the lesson and involves learners throughout the lesson by asking questions. Harlen (2000) explains that learners learn well when the outcomes of learning are explained. Teachers' SCK and PCK play a pivotal role in the learning of the child. Clewell and Campbell (2004) state that English language learners learn well when they have qualified staff who have the passion and conviction to make a difference in their lives and have access to quality curriculum and instruction that prepares them for college and the workplace.

With regards to assessment, a variety of policies have been promulgated to ensure the delivery of quality education. The National Policy on Assessment (NPA) (2011d), NPAQ (2007), and NCS (DoE, 2002) assessment guidelines were designed to enable teachers "to equip themselves with knowledge and skills of assessment so that they develop an authentic assessment system that is congruent with OBE in general and the NCS and CAPS in particular" (NPAQ, 2007, p.5). The NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d) state that assessment should be incorporated into teaching and learning and included at all levels of planning. This means that teachers must continuously assess learners but be aware of the various strategies that could be used to assess both summatively and formatively.

The DoE (2008, p.26) stipulates that "assessment of learners should focus on the Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs) of each of the eight Learning Areas, which were Languages, Mathematics, Life Orientation, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences and Arts and Culture". However; the original eight LAs have been reduced to six and are no longer called Learning Areas but 'subjects', namely: Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics, Life Skills, Natural Science and Technology and Social Sciences. This study will focus on Languages, particularly the assessment of English as a First Additional Language (EFAL).

Intended curriculum refers to the policies and guidelines that outline what teachers need to teach and what learners need to learn in a particular grade (Van den Akker, 2003). The intended curriculum in EFAL broadly incorporates listening and speaking activities, reading and viewing activities, writing, thinking and reasoning and language structure

and use (grammar). By the end of the year all the language skills should have been included in the teaching process. Teachers are required to submit an annual formal programme of assessment that shows all the language skills to the Subject Head and Assessment Team of the school in order to draw up a school assessment plan (DoE, 2005, p.6). Living up to its aim of regulating school-based assessment (SBA) and the recording and reporting of learner performance, policy prescribes a Programme of Assessment for the GET band (DoE, 2005, p.15-16). The suggested Programme of Assessment for EFAL in the GET band provides for eight formal tasks to be formally assessed (DoE, 2008, p.15), which means that two formal tasks per term must be performed. The Subject Assessment Guidelines for Languages considers the formal Programme of Assessment and informal daily assessment as comprising Continuous Assessment (CASS), which makes up 75% of the total mark for the year, whereas the end-of-year examination mark counts 25% in the Intermediate Phase. Marks are not externally moderated in this phase, but rather internally by the SAT.

However, with major changes in curriculum, a new policy, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (2011a), has been implemented in the Intermediate Phase. It is being implemented from 2013 in the Intermediate Phase, as a new policy which clarifies and simplifies assessment for teachers in schools. Within each subject, assessment tasks have been stated in the CAPS, every one of which teachers need to administer having been specified, as well as the allocation of marks. If the task is a creative one the length has also been specified. In the NCS, it was not clear whether learners had to write examinations or not, so teachers had to use their own discretion, whereas within CAPS, assessment of learners requires that examinations be written twice, that is, mid-year and end of the year. The National Policy on Assessment (NPA) (2011d) outlines how assessment should be conducted, for example, stipulating that CASS counts for 75% of the year mark with the examinations making up the remaining 25%. With regard to examinations which are school based, it is clear how many papers are to be written and which aspects are to be included for assessment in each paper (CAPS, 2011a). Furthermore, National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) outlines the processes and procedures of promotion and retaining of learners in each Phase.

Teaching, learning and assessment is the responsibility of the Learning Area educator. Teachers, thus, should be aware that teaching and learning is inextricably linked, and so should plan their lessons with various types of assessment in mind, continuously assessing what they have taught to inform further teaching. Teachers, according to the NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d) need to use baseline, formative, summative and diagnostic types, as well as a variety of assessment strategies, but with the implementation of CAPS as a new assessment policy it is hoped that assessment will be more rigorously conducted. The NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d) further stipulate that of reading should be made continuously and not just once. Reading aloud must be included in formal assessment, which will help the teacher to know learners' progress in reading and they must be asked questions based on the texts they have read, and to retell the story to establish if they have understood it.

Assessment of EFAL is similar in approach and methodology, the only difference being the emphasis on the learning outcomes. Whereas in home languages, reading and writing are emphasised, in EFAL speaking and listening are the focus (DoE, 2002b). Although the emphasis is supposed to be more on listening and speaking (spoken language), it is rarely followed. Although speaking and listening is emphasised in EFAL assessment, other forms of assessment must not be neglected. A variety of forms of assessment in EFAL, for example, creative writing, functional writing, spoken language, response to text and investigation, must be used. Assessment of creative and functional writing requires teachers to give detailed feedback to enable learners to improve their writing skills.

The study by Vandeyar and Killen (2007) revealed that teachers were found to use traditional tests summatively, citing that the tests relate directly to the syllabus and that teachers use the marks to confirm what they already knew about their learners. This causes teachers to focus on teaching to the test instead of equipping learners with knowledge that can help them to become critical thinkers and apply that knowledge in different situations. Teachers need to avoid relying on tests only as the best way to assess. It is important for learners to be looked at holistically and for their assessment to be based on competencies (Fautley, 2008). In assessing learners, informal and

formal assessment may be used. Informal assessment is a daily monitoring of learners' progress involving observations, discussions, practical demonstrations, and informal classroom interactions in which self and peer assessments are encouraged (DoE, 2002a, p.41). Formal assessments include tests, examinations, practical tasks, projects, oral presentations, demonstrations, performances, essays, participation in oral tasks, and written tasks in which teacher assessment plays a pivotal role in the form of feedback.

Both oral and written activities are informally and formally assessed. In assessing oral activities, namely, listening, speaking and reading, teachers need to choose a suitable form of assessment such as observation, and design a rubric for that activity, whereas in assessing written activities like grammar, writing tests, examinations, assignments as forms of assessment may be used and learners can assess themselves or the work of others. Assessment of written work focuses on the learner's ability to convey meaning, as well as how correctly they have written, for example, correct language structure and use, spelling and punctuation (DoE, 2002b). For assessment to be effectively implemented, all skills need to be emphasised and assessed. Without assessment, teachers will be unable to determine the next step to assist the learners. Therefore, it is vital for the teachers to understand various forms and functions of each form of assessment, as Vandeyar and Killen (2007) have found out that teachers do not understand the variety of forms of assessment. This suggests that assessment and therefore quality assurance practices are ineffectively carried out.

The studies on school effectiveness show that effective teachers ensure that all learners are given enough and equal time to show an understanding of what they have learnt and make sure that the students are provided with feedback to improve themselves and offer remedial teaching when necessary. Lezotte (2001) states that in effective schools, teachers endeavour to measure pupils' progress on a regular basis to improve learner performance as well as behaviour, notwithstanding the improvement of the curriculum as a whole. Furthermore, Johnson (1997) found that effective schools have high expectations which emphasise teacher excellence, collaboration, and mentoring of students so that they obtain mastery of school's essential curriculum. Johnson (1997)

and Lezoitte (2001) suggest that for schools to be effective, teachers need to be instructional coaches and able to improve instruction.

#### **2.6.4.2 The Role of School Assessment Teams in Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

Education is a societal priority, therefore any activity learnt in schools should be based on societal principles. Teaching, learning and assessment should follow a curriculum planned by educational system and authorities as assessment is incorporated into teaching and learning (NPAQ, 2007). Assessment is a yardstick with which to gauge whether the intended curriculum has been implemented successfully and that the achievement of the learners is reflected in what they have attained. This means that assessment can be done formatively or summatively and/or with integration of both. Formal assessment helps teachers to know how well learners are progressing in a grade and a particular subject (DBE, 2010). Formal assessment tasks, which tend to be summative, are recorded and used to determine whether learners should be promoted to the next grade. This means that the aim of assessment is to find out if students are progressing or not and to certify that learners have the skills or not that are developed in a particular grade.

As research by Nxumalo (2007) and Vandeyar and Killen (2007) has identified gaps in assessment practices by teachers, where teachers have little understanding of assessment and tend to use one type of questioning in their assessment as such, it is vital that the assessment tasks given to learners are quality assured by the school assessment teams before and after being given to learners. However, Van den Akker (2003) has recommended that the curriculum be considered on three levels: the *intended*, the *implemented* and the *attained*. The role of the SAT is to ensure that teaching and learning activities and assessment practices meet the standards outlined in the policies of the department. Quality assurance of the teaching and learning should then be effected through monitoring to ensure that the outputs are of expected quality.

## 2.7 CURRICULUM

Curriculum refers to the specified content designed by the education authorities to be taught by teachers with the aim of meeting or achieving societal needs (Van den Akker, 2003). Curriculum is looked at from three different viewpoints, as discussed in the next sections.

### 2.7.1 Intended curriculum

The intended curriculum refers to the knowledge and skills that the education system wants learners of a particular grade within a subject to learn. Van den Akker (2003, p. 7) refers to it as “an ideal vision, that is, rationale or basic philosophy, aims and objectives and content underlying a curriculum”. In South Africa, the intended curriculum is designed at macro level and/or ratified by the provincial education departments. The DoE (2002) stipulates the learning outcomes and the assessment standards/skills that learners need to attain at the end of each grade and phase, however, the policy does not stipulate in detail the content that needs to be covered to achieve a particular learning outcome. In the newly implemented CAPS, content to be learnt and the weeks that the content needs to be covered have been specified, which is an improvement on the previous policy.

Van den Akker (2003, p. 7) recommends that the components which guide the planning of student learning be addressed, namely: “rationale, aims and objectives, content, learning activities, teacher role, materials and resources, grouping, location, time and assessment”. This is in line with policy which outlines the roles to be played by teachers in the intended curriculum. SATs need to ensure that teachers develop Work Schedule, Lesson Plans and a Programme of Assessment (with dates and timeframes) for the year for his/her subject. In addition, analysis of the results of the performance of all learners from the previous year should be used to inform teaching, learning and assessment for the year by developing Subject Improvement Strategies. All plans (Work Schedule, Lessons Plans and Assessment Tasks) are submitted to the HoD for moderation, verification and approval on time (GDE, 1999).



With regard to quality assurance of EFAL, the SAT must ensure that the intended curriculum is put in place so that learners are not deprived of their right to learn. It is the duty of an individual teacher to plan properly. Teachers should make sure that they have work schedules, lesson plans and other resources readily available when they have to teach effectively. Informal and formal assessment activities must also be planned in advance, with formal ones written in the assessment programmes. It is the responsibility of the SAT to see that teachers go to class and teach. In his State of the Nation Address (03 June 2009), President Zuma indicated that teachers should be in school, in class, on time, teaching, with no neglect of duty and no abuse of pupils, and that children be in class, on time, learning, be respectful of their teachers and each other, and do their homework. Although the call has been made, the high rate of teacher absenteeism is still prevalent affecting learner performance in schools. This has also been attested to by the study of Ntuta and Schurink (2010), who showed that teacher absenteeism is high in male dominated schools, with a consequent negative impact on learner performance.

### **2.7.2 Implementation of the curriculum**

The implemented curriculum refers to the teaching, learning and assessment of the content designed by educational authorities. The implemented curriculum shows how the educational system should be organised to facilitate this learning, what is actually taught, who teaches this and what is taught (Reddy, 2003). Curriculum implementation happens at micro-levels. The implemented curriculum pertains to practices and activities taking place in schools and in the classrooms (Reddy, 2003), to ensure that the visions, aims and goals specified in the intended curriculum are implemented (Zimmerman, 2010), however, it is determined by the interpretations of individual teachers based on their subject knowledge and expertise. Curriculum implementation requires the schools to have learning activities, teachers as implementers, teaching and learning aids and other resources. The successful implementation of the intended curriculum in schools is often the responsibility of the schools and of the teachers (Van den Akker, 2003). Although curriculum implementation depends on individual teachers' interpretations, the SAT, the HoD in particular as the subject head needs to assist

teachers to plan and implement it effectively. To ensure effective implementation of the curriculum in schools, some measures of quality assurance need to be put in place. This means that schools should have quality assurance strategies in place to enable them to achieve quality. SATs must moderate teachers' work, including assessment practices (DoE, 2005). Although schools do not have qualified assessors and moderators, they need to ensure that the available teachers are developed to quality assure the work of teachers for improvement purposes. Quality assurance of work supports teachers and builds expertise and capacity in the delivery of teaching and learning.

To ensure quality assurance takes place during curriculum implementation, teachers should be monitored. Hadfield (2009) points out that monitoring teaching and learning helps in resolving issues that may arise along the way. Hadfield (2009) further highlights that monitoring curriculum implementation assists in directing teaching methods and content of programmes. In the EFAL curriculum, the SAT needs to assist teachers in the planning and implementing process by continuous monitoring. Careful planning of the content in EFAL is a critical aspect for successful implementation. In order for the curriculum to be implemented, the SATs need to ensure that teachers have resources and forms of support readily prepared (GDE, 1999). They need to ensure that teachers have useful and relevant work schedules, lesson plans, programmes of assessment, recording sheets and textbooks. Researches show that there is a correlation between resource provisioning and learner performance.

### **2.7.3 Attained curriculum**

The attained curriculum refers to what learners have learned and how they apply it (Reddy, 2003). It relates to students achievement and is seen as a learning experience perceived by learners evidenced by the learning outcomes (Van den Akker, 2003). Students learn what has been prescribed for them by the education authorities (Zimmerman, 2010), and the attained curriculum is the main focus of curriculum design. The content that has been taught and evaluated is considered part of curriculum attainment (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). To find out what learners have learnt they need

to be assessed. The duty of the SATs in this regard is to ensure that assessment and quality assurance of assessment practices is carried out. They are operational in overseeing all formal and informal assessment procedures at the school in compliance with national and provincial policies (GDE, 1999).

To ensure that EFAL curriculum is attained, the HoD as the subject head is responsible for quality assurance of assessment and so should have knowledge of the subject. In their study, Metzler and Woessmann (2010) report that teacher subject knowledge is an ingredient of student achievement, and that subject knowledge is a key factor in curriculum attainment. Student achievement in EFAL is dependent on a teacher's subject knowledge and commitment.

The goal of the SATs is to develop a new school assessment policy (GDE, 1999), and implement and monitor the implementation of a school assessment policy as well as evaluate the policy on a continuing basis, where necessary making revisions. They need to ensure that teachers assess all learners regularly throughout the year, according to the Programme of Assessment, and keep a mark book, record book or mark schedule of the learners for SBA tasks based on the National Protocol on Assessment. Participation in subject meetings at school, cluster and district level is a responsibility of the SATs, who are also involved in ensuring that evidence gained about learner attainment through SBA is used to inform further teaching activities and remediation, as well as ensuring that learners submit their work (GDE, 2005).

#### **2.7.4 The role of SATs: Moderation**

Moderation, as defined in section 2.5.2, is a process in which teachers work towards making judgements that are consistent and comparable, either confirming or adjusting them Reddy (2003). Moderation is one of a number of strategies which helps to achieve quality in the assessment practices in schools. (DoE, 2008). Moderation in EFAL requires the HoD to moderate the work schedules, lesson plans and learners' workbooks, comprising informal and formal tasks, recording sheets as well as result analysis (GDE, 1999). Its primary purpose is to ensure that the assessment of learners during a particular assessment event is valid, reliable, fair and consistent. Moderation

should be conducted to identify and address weaknesses in assessment and staff competence in this area. Scherman (2008) argues that moderation in assessment is an important tool to ensure that quality standards for the process and outputs are maintained. The DoE (2002) mandates the school managers to pre-moderate the task before they are given to learners to ensure quality and requires the school managers to pre- and post-moderate the tasks given to learners to ensure that they are objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient, and are in alignment with the curriculum.

The GDE (2005) stipulates that School-Based Assessment Teams should ensure that assessment tasks in accordance with specifications and standards set by Subject Assessment Guidelines are within the scope of critical knowledge and skills being assessed, and in accord with cognitive levels. Furthermore, SATs must ensure that the assessment tasks do not contain any features that might disadvantage or offend a candidate or groups of candidates. They must also ensure that instructions in the assessment activities are clear and free of ambiguity. They must ensure consistency regarding standards in the internal assessment processes within the school and ensure their implementation in line with national policies (GDE, 2005). GDE (2013) further stipulates that the SAT should ensure that pre-moderation of formal tasks before they are administered to the learners is regularly undertaken. GDE (2013) further outlines that the SAT should ensure that moderation (re-marking) of a sample of high, middle and low performers of all teachers teaching the subject in the grade be carried out. Post-moderation should be conducted to ensure that corrective feedback has been provided. Teachers should be checked for transferring marks from the learner as evidence onto working mark sheets (record sheet) (GDE, 2013).

Reyneke et.al. (2010) argue that moderation helps teachers to increase the dependability of the assessment information they gather. The SAT must ensure that all moderation is aimed at producing a SBA assessment results that are valid, fair and reliable (GDE, 2013). Gipps (1994, p.141) indicates that validity in quality assurance refers to *appropriateness and correctness of the tasks*. It indicates whether the assessment task assesses what it claims to assess. To ensure validity in the assessment tasks, moderation by a knowledgeable person or a person with expertise in

that particular subject should be undertaken. Therefore, the SATs should have subject knowledge when moderating the subject. The school managers, in particular the HoD, ensure that the tasks given to learners are appropriate in terms of the content, age, grade and language usage. Fairness means that assessment “should not disadvantage any learner on the grounds of race, gender, learning barriers, age, employment status or social background” (GDE, 2005, p.41). Furthermore, the GDE (2005) stipulates that assessment tasks not contain any feature that might disadvantage or offend a candidate or groups of candidates. Reliability refers to the consistency of the assessors’ judgements whereby different ones can agree about the same performance and the same performance would be similarly made by the same assessor on different occasions (GDE, 2005). The lack of reliability in assessment threatens its validity, leading to misinterpretation (Stobart, 2009).

### **2.7.5 The role of SATs: Monitoring**

As previously defined, monitoring is a process of keeping track of teacher teaching and assessing for the purpose of making developmental decisions by providing feedback to teachers on their teaching progress. The purpose of monitoring is to see to it that quality education is provided to learners. According to Glickman (1990), monitoring helps teachers identify areas for improvement as its sole purpose is on improvement of classroom instruction, which includes teaching, learning and assessment process. The role of SATs is to ensure that the intended curriculum is implemented through continuous monitoring. The study by Du Four and Berkey (1995) shows that teachers who are monitored tend to show greater enthusiasm in meeting the needs of their learners. It is the duty of the HoD, together with SAT members, to see that assessment and quality assurance of teaching and learning are carried out in their schools. The DoE (1998) requires that SATs monitor teaching and learning activities in schools, perhaps through classroom observation (class visits) and checking of teachers’ and learners’ work.

The HoD as part of the SAT should observe the teacher while teaching and collect evidence of assessment of the learners. Feedback from these procedures may be a

pre-arranged meeting between the teacher and the member of the SAT, mainly the HoD. Masitsa (2005) explains that effective school management monitors the progress of each task. In EFAL, the DoE (1998, p.115) requires school management *to check lesson plans, work schedules, assessment plans, recording of marks, and learners' books* to ensure that quality education is provided. The SAT is required to check the quantity and quality against the assessment standards stipulated in the NCS (2002) and CAPS (2011a) policy documents of work given to learners, and then to pre-moderate, moderate and post-moderate the formal tasks given to learners.

The purpose of monitoring in schools should focus on supporting teachers throughout the year. Teacher support is a crucial element of learner improvement (Blasse, 2000). Matoti (2008) asserts that for teachers to effectively achieve their goals they need to be supported by their managers. When teachers execute their duties, support in the form of resource provision, on-site training and coaching is needed. Blasse (2000, p.14) holds the view that *“teachers who are supported in their endeavour to deliver quality education are likely to go the extra mile.”* A study conducted by Masitsa (2005) shows that managers who provide resources to their teachers enable them to perform their duties effectively. The duty of instructional managers is to ensure that the documents are distributed to the relevant teachers and the content is clearly understood and effectively used (McCurdy, 1989). Masitsa (2005) argues that the principals of effective schools should ensure that they manage, understand and use resources within their disposal. McCurdy (1989) concurs that effective schools ensure that educators and learners respect time, and that there are adequate resources such as learning materials, appropriate facilities and skilled support personnel, as these will enhance teaching and learning, thus contributing to a positive school culture. McCurdy (1989) further indicates that adequate facilities and resources and their proper management create a positive environment in which teaching and learning can take place.

#### **2.7.6 The role of SATs: Feedback**

In order for SATs to give feedback they must moderate and monitor the work of teachers. They need to analyse the information they gather about the work of the

teachers to enable them give developmental feedback to teachers and also to assist them in future planning. Hatfield (2009) explains the ability of the SAT to interpret and analyse data is the most important thing about feedback. The HoD should analyse the results of the performance of teachers to inform teaching, learning and assessment by developing Subject Improvement Strategies (GDE, 1999).

Effective managers give feedback after assessing/monitoring the tasks (Fautley, 2008). Constructive feedback helps teachers realise what they can do to improve their practice and it assists them in doing so (Butler, 1987). Giving feedback to learners and teachers involves more than simply telling them what it is that they are doing right or wrong; feedback involves a dialogue between the teacher and learners (Fautley, 2008). This implies that the SAT needs to ensure that a mutual relationship is created to facilitate the process. In quality assurance practices, giving feedback needs personalising and individualising so that the teachers and students know where they need to improve, what they need to improve and, most importantly, how to go about making the improvement. The practitioner needs to know that quality assurance is not just identifying errors, but it is developmental process (Nicol, 2010) which feeds into the teaching and learning process.

In giving feedback after moderation and monitoring, the SAT gives written, qualitative comments to the teacher in terms of the following:

- *quality of the assessment task (level of difficulty/appropriateness to grade and context of learner);*
- *the quality of the marking process;*
- *the appropriateness of the task to the grade;*
- *the learning outcome and assessment standard;*
- *the appropriateness of the task with respect to cognitive level abilities; and,*
- *the appropriateness of the task with respect to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG), Work Schedule (WS), and the correctness of the memoranda/rubric/checklist (DoE, 2005, p.16).*

When feedback is given to learners or teachers, it helps them in a number of ways, namely:

- *helps clarify what good performance is;*
- *facilitates the development of self-esteem;*
- *delivers high quality information to learners and teachers about their learning and teaching;*
- *encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning;*
- *encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem;*
- *provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance; and,*
- *provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching (Nicol, 2010, p.18).*

In EFAL, giving feedback enables learners and teachers to understand how to move forward. Rewriting a piece of work after guidance in the form of feedback makes it easy for the writer to produce a better text. SATs who do not give feedback fall short in showing teachers where and how to improve their practice. Harlen (2000) indicates that feedback to the teacher is needed so that he or she can decide on the appropriate next steps and the action needed that will help the learners, and that feedback to learners is an important factor in improving teaching and learning if it involves them in the process of deciding what the next steps should be, so that they are not passive recipients of the teachers' judgements of their work. Black and Wiliam (1998) assert that feedback, whether top-down or bottom-up, supports teachers and works at improving practice.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the concepts of assessment and quality assurance have been defined and discussed. Types of assessments used in the school sector, namely, baseline, diagnostic, formative, summative and systematic were also presented. A variety of ways of quality assurance, such as monitoring and moderation were discussed, taking a look



at both international and national assessment and quality assurance practices. Harlen's (2000) model of assessment for learning was presented and each aspect was explained. The conceptual framework drawing on Harlen's (2000) model of assessment for learning and adapted for the study provides the lens for investigating the role of the SAT in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. This adapted model for quality assurance was then unpacked and discussed. In discussing the model, the role of SAT in teaching, learning and assessment, moderation, monitoring and feedback giving was outlined.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the exploratory case study research design and methods utilised to assist in identifying the role of School Assessment Teams (SATs) in quality assurance of English First Additional Language (EFAL) assessment practices in primary schools. The interpretivist research paradigm is presented in section 3.2, while an exploratory qualitative case study design used in this study is discussed in section 3.3. Research methods comprising research sites and participants are presented in sub-section 3.4.1, data collection strategies in sub-section 3.4.2, data collection process in 3.4.3, research procedures in 3.4.4 while data analysis and methodological norms incorporating credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are discussed in sub-sections 3.4.5 and 3.4.6 respectively. Measures taken to adhere to research ethics are described in section 3.5. Finally, the conclusion, summing up the content of the chapter, is presented in section 3.6

#### 3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

There are numerous ways of understanding the nature of reality, but interpretivists believe it lies in the exchanging of ideas between the knower and the known (Neumann, 2006). This research is situated in the interpretivist paradigm because the researcher wanted to interpret and understand how SATs assure the quality of assessment practices in schools. Neumann (2006) indicates that an interpretivist researcher aims to understand how people attach meaning to things they experience in their daily life. Interpretivist paradigm is an approach which helps them interpret and experience the world around them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003), making it relevant to this research as the subjective experience of role-players in schools with regard to quality assurance of assessment practices is sought. Interpretivism presumes that the environment people find themselves in contributes to shaping the understanding of life

(Jansen, 2003). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that people involved as participants or respondents in an inquiry construct their own reality.

To go as a researcher into the schools where quality assurance of assessment practices are conducted helped the researcher to better understand how quality assurance is conducted, since opportunities were offered to look into their documents, discuss with staff and identify the challenges that they encounter with regards to the EFAL assessment practices. The researcher understood that contact with reality is only possible through social construction and, as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) show, interpretivist researchers believe that reality is understood through language, consciousness and shared meaning. Therefore, it was vital for the researcher to go to schools to have direct contact and conversation with ‘*street bureaucrats*’.<sup>1</sup> In this case, the researcher sought to understand what the participants knew, understood and implemented in terms of quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices.

### 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purpose of answering the main research question: *What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?* This main research question was operationalised with three sub-questions:

- What factors ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?

In answering this question, document analysis, for example, policy documents from the Department of Education (DoE) and school-based ones were analysed.

- How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by School Assessment Teams?

In answering this question, documents were analysed and interviews with teachers and SAT members conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “street bureaucrats” refers to people working for a particular organisation who are responsible for the implementation of the policies of that organisation.

- What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?

This question was answered through the interviews conducted amongst teachers and SAT members.

The study used an exploratory case study design as the purpose was to identify the role of SATs in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. An exploratory qualitative case study follows a design that assists in getting a detailed description of the case under investigation. Using an exploratory qualitative case study gave the researcher an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding about the role of SATs in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in primary schools. Merriam (1998) shows that an exploratory case study design is appropriate when the purpose of investigation is to obtain a deep understanding of a programme and indicates that researchers choose it because they are interested in discernment, finding and explanation rather than testing supposition. Similarly, Denscombe (1998) explains that the case study approach is appropriate when the intention of the researcher is to have a deeper understanding of the case under study, which is the case for this research. For Yin (2003), case studies are relevant when the researcher wants to answer the “*how*” or “*why*” questions, when he or she has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomena within a real-life context. Yin (2003) asserts that the lessons from a case study are intended to be generalizable. It was hoped that in this study, with the use of a case study design, the researcher could make analytical generalisations about the findings. The use of multiple sources of data collection, a process of triangulation, enabled the researcher to make generalisations from the findings.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODS**

This sub-section discusses the research sites and participants, data collection strategies, data collection process, research procedures, data analysis and methodological norms of the study.

### 3.4.1 Research sites and participants

Purposive sampling is a sampling wherein the researcher selects cases with a specific purpose in mind (Neumann, 2006). Researchers ensure that the sample they select is representative of the population under study and they rely on their own experience and or previous research findings to select cases for analysis (Welman & Kruger, 1999). In this study purposive sampling, also referred to as non-probability sampling, was used, based on a belief that the participants chosen would add the most value to the study. It was considered appropriate because English teachers as well as SAT members (the HoDs included) were the ones who, on a day-to-day basis were involved with quality assurance of assessment. It entailed the deliberate selection of schools based on learner performance in the 2011 Annual National Assessments (ANA), geographical location, quintiles, and cluster.

The participants were geographically representative, that is, they were purposively chosen from the three different clusters in the Tshwane South District. A cluster is a geographical grouping of schools and in this district each cluster has an average number of 30 schools, with Cluster 1 (City and Centurion) having 27, cluster 2 (Atteridgeville) 33 and 35 in cluster 3 (Mamelodi). Tshwane South District was chosen because it has schools from both city and townships and it was accessible to the researcher. Out of the 95 primary schools in Tshwane South District (TSD), a total of three - one from each of the three clusters - were chosen. The schools were chosen in terms of the performance of their learners in the 2011 Annual National Assessment (ANA), that is, all schools with learners who had achieved less than 30% and those who have achieved more than 70% in EFAL in all the three grades (Grades 4 – 6). Performance of learners was used as it is the primary goal of teaching, learning and assessment. Within the chosen three schools, a total of 12 respondents were included in the study, that is, from each school three teachers and SAT member(s) from each school, with the SAT counted as one participant. SAT members comprised the HoD for languages at the phase and teachers. Teachers from SAT were chosen because they were the ones working with assessment and quality assurance on a daily basis and were also EFAL teachers. HoDs, as members of the SMT for languages, were chosen

because they were in charge of managing curriculum implementation at schools and responsible for quality assurance. One post-level one EFAL teacher per phase (those who were not occupying promotional posts), that is, a Grade 4, 5 and 6 teacher from each school was also chosen. Post-level one teachers were selected on the basis of teaching EFAL in the Intermediate Phase and because they were involved in the daily assessment of learners. SAT members were selected on the basis of their involvement in the quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices at this phase. The following are descriptions of the chosen schools:

**School A**, from Cluster 1, was situated in a suburban area and recorded high learner performance (above 70%) in 2011 ANA. School A is a Quintile 5 school with an annual per-learner allocation of R162. The school comprised Grades 1 to 7 and it had over 1,000 learners, the majority of whom were Black, followed by Whites, Coloureds and Indians. There were also some international learners. Most learners came from well-to-do families, with parents who were literate and educated. Parents were charged school fees and resources were readily available. The school had more than 40 teachers, many of whom were Whites with a few Blacks and Coloureds. Teachers were appointed and paid by the state, however some were appointed and paid by School Governing Body (SGB).

**School B**, from Cluster 2, was situated in a Black township and recorded average learner performance (between 30% and 70%) in 2011 ANA. School B was a Quintile 3 school with an annual per-learner allocation of R707. The school consisted of Grade R to 7 and had approximately 1,500 learners, all Black but many from neighbouring countries such as Mozambique or Zimbabwe. The majority of learners were from low socio-economic backgrounds, with parents who were illiterate. There were no school fees paid and the school received funding from the government. Although it had many learners, the teacher learner ratio of 1:40 was low. All 37 teachers appointed and paid by the state were Black.

**School C**, in Cluster 3, was also situated in a Black township and recorded low learner performance in 2011 ANA, that is less than 30% in EFAL in all the Intermediate Phase

classes. School C was a Quintile 1 school with an annual per-learner allocation of R943. It comprised Grade R to 7 with a learner enrolment of approximately 800. All learners were Black, however there were many learners from Mozambique and a few from other neighbouring countries. The majority of learners were from poverty-stricken families and many were orphans receiving social grants from the government. This school was a non-fee paying school and received funding from the government. All 21 teachers at the school were Black, appointed and paid by the state.

The total number of the participants sampled for the study was 12, of whom nine were post-level 1 teachers, two HoDs and one deputy-principal who had only been appointed to the position. 10 of the participants were female teachers and two males. All the participants were teaching EFAL at the time of the study. Some of the HoDs were not teaching EFAL but had at some stage taught the subject.

Merriam (1998) points out that researchers choose purposive sampling because they want to understand the case under study in detail and to do that they select a sample from which the most can be learned. Table 3.1 indicates the purposive sampling for this study.

**Table 3.1:** Outline of purposive sample target for study

PURPOSIVE SAMPLE TARGET FOR STUDY					
School	Geographical location	Cluster	quintile	Performance	Number of participants
<b>A</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	The average performance of learners in the 2011 ANA is <b>above 70%</b> .	Three Post-level 1 teachers, one HoD and two teachers representing SAT (SAT is counted as one participant)
<b>B</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	The average performance of learners in the 2011 ANA is <b>between</b>	Three Post-level 1 teachers, one HoD and two teachers representing SAT (SAT is counted as

				<b>30% and 70%.</b>	one participant)
<b>C</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	The average performance of learners in the 2011 ANA is <b>below 30%</b> .	Three Post-level 1 teachers, one HoD and two teachers representing SAT (SAT is counted as one participant)

The ages of the participants ranged between 24 and 58. Participants came from different racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In **School A**, the ages of the participants ranged between 30 and 58. In **School B**, the ages ranged between 35 and 56, whereas in **School C**, they ranged between 30 and 45.

The teaching experience of EFAL of the participants in **School A** was between two and 35 years. In **School B**, the EFAL teaching experience ranged between two and 21 years whereas in **School C** it ranged between two months and 13 years.

The HoD for **School A** had taught English Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) for all of her teaching career (more than 35 years) and headed the learning area for more than ten years in both the Intermediate and Senior Phases. The HoD for **School B** had 13 years' experience as an HoD for the Intermediate Phase and had just been appointed as a deputy principal of the school. He first worked for eight years in another school in the same position. The HoD for **School C** had two years' experience as HoD for languages specifically. According to the Educators Employment Act (EEA) (1998), HoDs must have a minimum of five years of teaching experience, however, the policy does not say anything regarding experience of teaching the subject. In primary schools, HoDs are responsible for many subjects, not just the subjects in which he/she has majored (DoE, 2001).

Two participants from **School A** were English Home Language speakers whereas the other two were not. Two participants had qualifications for English, although not EFAL per se. In **School B**, English was the first additional language of all the participants and no teachers had a qualification to teach EFAL, except for one who had taken EFAL as a compulsory course during studies. No one had furthered in it but in **School C** English



was all participants' additional language and no one had majored in it. However, all of the 12 participants have furthered their studies in Educational Management. One teacher had furthered her studies in remedial teaching. A teacher who is qualified to teach should hold a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement for teaching and should have knowledge of the subject they intend to teach (Glatthorn, Jones & Bullock, 2005). The lack of competency of teaching the subject due to lack of capacity or skills or required qualifications can serve as one of the major causes of poor performance of learners (DoE, 2001, p.74). Table 3.2 (below) outlines the demographics of participants.

**Table 3.2:** Participants' demographics details

Part-icipant	School	Sex	Age	Post level	Grade-level teaching	Qualifications related to the subject	Experience in teaching EFAL (yrs)
1	<b>A</b>	Female	30+	1	6	BA English	8
2		Female	35+	1	5	STD	14
3		Female	30+	1	4	SPTD	5
4		Female	55+	2	All	BA English	35
1	<b>B</b>	Female	35+	1	6	SDT	6
2		Male	40+	1	5 & 6	STD	2
3		Female	50+	1	4	SPTD	20
4		Male	45+	3	6	BA degree	21
1	<b>C</b>	Female	40+	2	4	BA ed. (Hon)	13
2		Female	35+	1	5	SPTD	10
3		Female	45+	1	6	B.PEAD	15
4		Female	30+	1	4	HDE	2 months

Legend: Post level 1 =Teacher who is not on promotional post; Post level 2 = Head of Department; Post level 3 = Deputy Principal; BA = Bachelor of Arts; B.PEAD = Bachelor of pedagogics; STD = Secondary Teachers Diploma; SPTD = Senior Primary Teachers Diploma; HDE =Higher Diploma in Education.

### 3.4.2 Data collection strategies

Document analysis and individual interviewing were the data collection strategies used because the researcher wished to determine whether there was a match between what

was outlined in their documents policy and data from the interviews. Table 3.3 shows the research questions with their relevant data collection instruments.

**Table 3.3:** Research questions and related data collection instruments

RESEARCH QUESTIONS			
	<b>What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Participants</b>
1	What factors affecting quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?	Document analysis (Departmental and school-based policies)  Interviews	Teachers, HoDs SATs  Teachers, HoDs SATs
2	How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by School Assessment Teams?	Interviews  Document analysis	Teachers, HoDs SATs
3	What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?	Document analysis  Interviews	Teachers, HoDs SATs Teachers, HoDs SATs

In response to the question “*What factors affecting quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?*” the researcher wished to identify factors affecting teachers in conducting quality assurance as per policy requirement. In answering this question, individual interviews, focus groups with SAT members and document analysis were held. Interviews and focused groups were conducted to hear from participants themselves the factors affecting them during quality assurance, while document

analysis such as departmental policies and school-based ones were analysed to identify the gap between policy prescriptions and practice.

In response to the question “*How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by school assessment teams?*” the researcher wished to ascertain the alignment with policy recommendations for assessment of EFAL, such as the number of tasks outlined in the assessment programmes, type of tasks given, the recording of marks provided by the DoE/DBE, and the quality of tasks. A thorough investigation of the policy documents, NCS assessment guidelines, NPQA (2007), CAPS (2011a) and NPA (2011d) gave the researcher an understanding of what to look for when an analysis of policy documents was made at schools. This investigation also helped to determine what was effective in terms of assessment practices. To assist with the planning and recording of assessment the DoE/DBE provide templates or exemplars which teachers need to use to plan assessment tasks and record their learners’ performance. In quality assurance, the SATs also have forms that have to be completed. These include exemplars of monitoring and moderation tools (see Appendix A). These four instruments or exemplars became the tools for analysis of the documents.

Developing an understanding of the policy documents and what to expect in the schools led to the development of an interview schedule for each of the participants, that is, teachers, and SATs comprising HoDs and teachers.

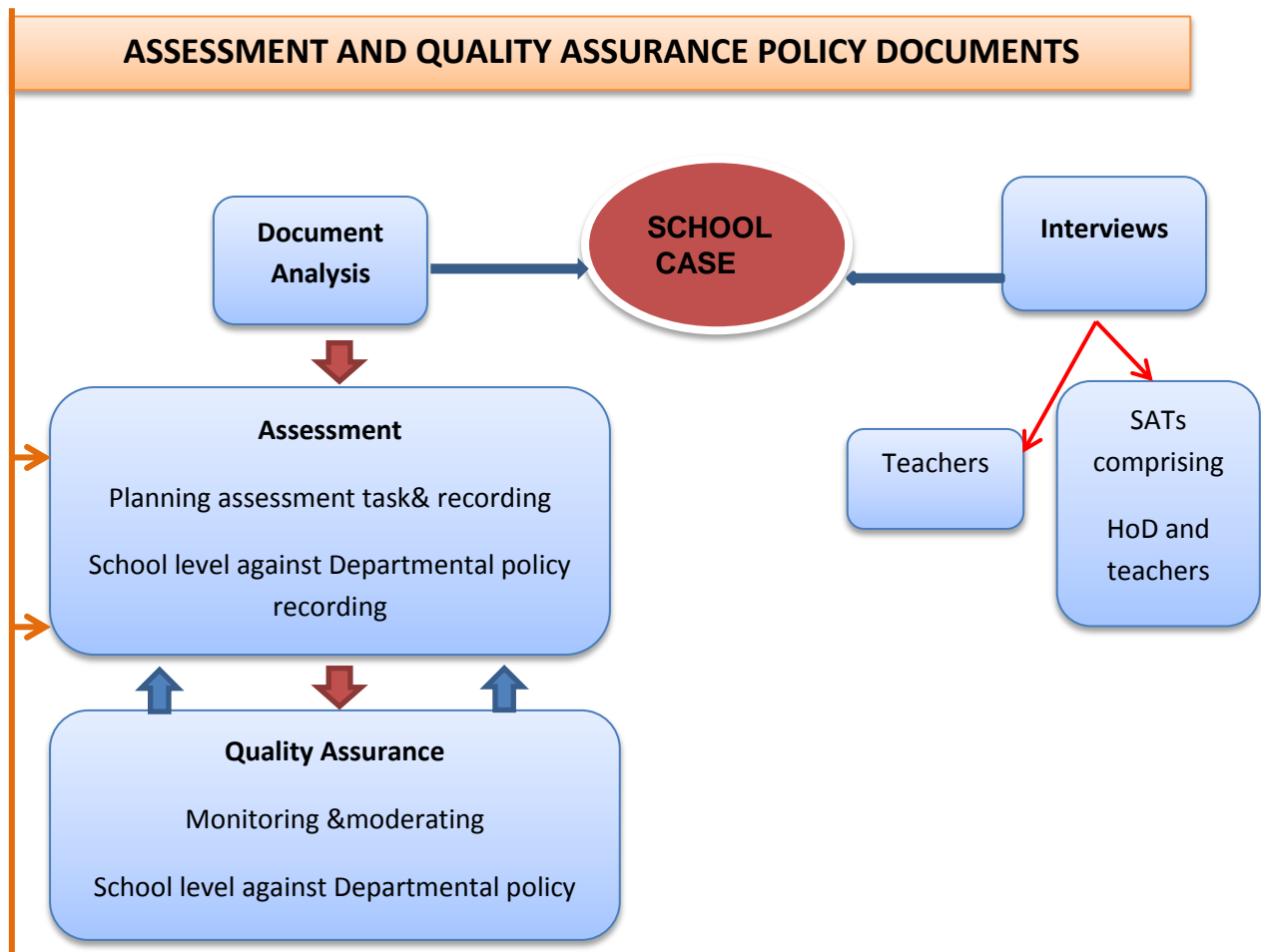
With regard to the question “*What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?*” the focus was to identify the challenges participants encountered when their work was quality assured or when they assured the quality of each other’s work. Interviews and document analysis were also used to answer the question, which helped the researcher identify the causes of inadequate quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in school, to be analysed in Chapter 4.

### 3.4.3 Data collection

In collecting data for this research, document and interviews were used. Document collection strategies consisted of carefully reading and examining of six assessment and quality assurance documents. Apart from documents analysis, individual interviews were conducted with sampled participants because the researcher wished to gather data that would answer the research questions. Interviews are recognised as knowledge and conversation generated between human beings in which views are exchanged between two or more people on a subject of mutual interest. They play an important part in the lives of people and are used to access what is in and on the interviewee's mind that cannot be directly observed (Greenfield, 2002).

The researcher made use of interviews to collect data to provide an opportunity to interact with the participants, querying and questioning them. The purpose of the interview was to find out how SATs assure quality of assessment practices and what challenges teachers experience in doing so. It was also to identify effective quality assurance practices in schools. The same questions were used for different participants to discover different perceptions (see interview questions in Appendix B). Patton (2002) argues that well-structured questions and probes produce in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Similarly, Bryman (1988) explains that when conducting interviews, the interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise which gives the interviewer the opportunity of following up on the respondents' interests or concerns. Figure 3.4 shows how data were collected.

**Figure 3.4:** Case study data collection processes



### 3.4.4 Research procedures

In collecting the data the researcher firstly gathered and analysed all the relevant documents pertaining to teaching and learning, assessment and quality assurance. The researcher then evaluated the criteria used in the monitoring and moderation of quality teaching and learning in the schools and also examined learners' performance in EFAL making use of the recording plans. Examining the feedback given to teachers when monitoring and moderating work was also conducted. During monitoring and moderation, aspects of the SATs were also looked at, as well as the types of activities which were moderated. This was to find out how effective teaching and learning is

ensured and to gain further insights into the implementation of quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in these schools.

Secondly, the researcher visited teachers at their schools and interviewed and recorded each individually making use of a recorder tape. All the interviews were conducted after school hours to avoid disturbing teachers whilst teaching learners. The interview content was based on tracking the processes presented in the conceptual framework and how these processes manifest in the schools (see Section 2.6; see also figure 2.1. Using interviews enabled the researcher to identify the concerns and challenges teachers have in assessment and quality assurance of English First Additional Language.

The researcher also conducted a focus group interview with the SAT members, that is, a "carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Keuger, 1988, p.18). A focus group requires the gathering of information from members of a group that is well constituted and clearly defined (Rennekamp & Nall, 2004). The focus group interview was conducted to enable the researcher to obtain multiple perspectives about quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. In each school, the SAT comprising the HoD and one or two teachers, who also offered EFAL were interviewed. However, in school B, the HoD had just been promoted to the deputy principal position and was interviewed as there was no HoD appointed. From focus group interviews emerged insights into problems and challenges from a range of participants, with each giving their own perspective. In addition, comments from one participant may prompt another to build on what has already been discussed and thus more information is gained (Keuger, 1998).

#### **3.4.5 Data analysis**

Macintyre (2000) states data obtained from different sources need to be analysed during data analysis. The researcher must now study it all and pull meaning from the different records of evidence to identify constructs such as themes, incidences, patterns and trends. This is the critically important step in providing an explanation of what occurred rather than merely descriptions. Documents and interview transcripts were carefully analysed.

### 3.4.5.1 Document analysis

For this study, teachers' and SATs' assessment and quality assurance documents were analysed. Documents such as recording and assessment tools used in the schools as well as monitoring and moderation tools provided by teachers were analysed to see if they were aligned with the exemplars or templates provided in the policy documents. Assessment plans are documents outlining the assessment tasks with mark allocation given to learners, whilst recording sheets are instruments used to record learners' marks. Monitoring tools are instruments used to capture data when monitoring of assessment is undertaken. Moderation tools are instruments used to collect data during moderation of work. Assessment guidelines are documents provided by the DBE to guide teachers on assessment practice. Moderation instruments are the templates provided by the department to serve as a format teachers can follow in developing school-based moderation tools. The analysis of documents was to establish categories so that the data derived from them could be systematically analysed, confirmatory evidence of the information obtained from interviews provided. The analysis of school-based assessment and quality assurance documents helped the researcher create the categories to elucidate the role of SATs in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. Table 3.5) shows the specific documents analysed and the purpose for analysing them.

**Table 3.5:** Assessment and quality assurance tools

Document analysed	Purpose of analysis
Assessment plans	To see how teachers plan their formal assessment activities.
Recording sheets	To see how learners perform in EFAL.
Monitoring tools	To see what SMTs/SATs examine when monitoring teachers' work.
Moderation tools	To see what SMTs/SATs examine when moderating teachers' work.

Document analysed	Purpose of analysis
Assessment Guidelines	To see if teachers follow the guidelines outlined in the policy.
GDE Moderation Instrument	To see the alignment of school-based ones with the Departmental ones.

Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate that documents and records might be useful in giving the researcher the understanding of how the participants operate on a day-to-day basis. The researcher requested access to teachers' assessment plans and their recording tools as well as school quality assurance documents, such as the monitoring and moderation tools, as described in Table 3.5.

### 3.4.5.2 Interview analysis

To ensure that each transcript was carefully read, descriptive or thematic content analysis was used. Descriptive or thematic content analysis is defined by Anderson (2007) as a descriptive presentation of qualitative data. This was because the researcher wished to identify the most significant patterns in the responses of the participants and also to convey the complexity of the situation in schools in terms of quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. As Denscombe (1998) notes, descriptive analysis focuses on meanings or patterns of behaviour, descriptions of events or people. For Ary, Jacobs and Razviah (2002) such analysis involves recognizing and picking out the most important parts and patterns by carefully reading the data several times. Making use of thematic content analysis helped the researcher identify patterns or themes of a similar nature.

Data were first coded when analysing the interview transcripts. Three sets of transcripts, that is, one from each school comprising three individual teacher interviews and SAT members, were analysed. The analysis of interview data was done to enable the researcher to establish codes. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.41) show that "codes usually are attached to 'chunks' of varying size, as words, phrases, sentences or whole



paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting”. The purpose of coding was to reduce the data into smaller pieces so that the researcher could more easily retrieve it when required. Open coding, in which the researcher read the data to locate themes was initially carried out. Analysis of data was performed to obtain information relevant to the research questions.

As the data was collected, the researcher also analysed it (Merriam, 1998). As Merriam (2002) describes, data analysis is a continuous process involving reflection, analytic questions, and memos throughout the study. Secondly, the researcher read the first interview transcripts, carefully jotting down notes and comments to classify under themes and categories. Carefully examining the data helped to create order from the array of concepts and ideas the researcher had extracted from the participants. As the researcher read the data a number of times, sub-themes were also identified which were then linked to the appropriate theme. Thirdly, the researcher revisited the interview transcripts and documents collected and grouped the notes and comments that went together. This was done to ensure that the categories identified reflected the purpose of the research. The information obtained as a result of analysis was then compared to the literature using an iterative approach.

### **3.4.6 Methodological norms**

Neuman (2006, p. 462) defines validity as “truth” and reliability as “consistency”. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that in a qualitative research project, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability need to be taken into consideration. To ensure that the results of the study are valid and reliable, it needed to be credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable.

#### **3.4.6.1 Credibility**

In making the findings of this research credible, the researcher conducted member checking whereby analysis of data received from the respondents was undertaken and returned to the participants to verify that the researcher had understood in the way they had presented it during the interviews. Mertens (1998) indicates that credibility can be accomplished through summarising at the end of an interview what has been said and

checking the correctness of the researcher's understanding with participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that checks relating to accuracy of the data can bolster a study's credibility. The researcher also sought the help of a competent peer, colleagues and academics to read the data and the findings and help where needed. The help from a peer, colleagues and academics led to the researcher refine some of the statements, as Shenton (2004) indicated that the fresh perspectives challenged the researcher's assumptions and led to refinement.

#### **3.4.6.2 Transferability**

In making the findings of this study transferable, the study was conducted in three different contexts representative of the many in South Africa, Gauteng in particular, namely, suburban and township schools. Transferability is defined by Ary et al. (2002) as the way of making the findings of a qualitative study more appropriate and generalizable to other contexts or groups. Although the findings of this research were from three schools in the Tshwane South District in Gauteng, they may be transferred to other schools in the province because of the similarities of the settings and contexts. Merriam (1998) and Ary et.al. (2002) write that in external validity the findings of one research can be generalised to other contexts.

#### **3.4.6.3 Dependability**

Dependability is equated with reliability (Mertens, 1998), defined by Ary et al. (2002, p.243) as the extent to which consistency of variations can be traced or explained. The researcher firstly kept an audit trail of the data and analysis to identify common themes. Cohen et al. (2003) write that audit trails enable the researcher to address the issue of dependability of results. Researchers in qualitative research are aware that contexts are not the same and they expect variations in their studies.

Secondly, the researcher used multiple sources of data as a method of triangulation, for example, to analyse the documents for quality teaching and learning. This was also to check whether criteria used, feedback provided, and tasks given to learners enhance teaching and learning in schools and so are dependable for quality teaching and learning. Thirdly, the researcher interviewed post-level one teachers individually, who

on a daily basis were engaged with assessment of learners. This was to ensure that the findings were valid, as Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that the inclusion of multiple cases is a useful way of enhancing the external validity or generalisability of the findings. Finally, the SATs members, comprising HoDs and teacher(s), who were curriculum managers or subject specialists at school level and who were responsible for quality assurance of the teachers and learners' work were interviewed together. This saved time.

#### **3.4.6.4 Confirmability**

The concept of confirmability requires the researcher to apply judgement in a fair manner by eliminating biases. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that the most important criterion in ensuring confirmability is the researcher's admission of his or her own predispositions. Confirmability refers to the neutrality or objectivity of the researcher in data analysis and transcription. Ary et al. (2002) write that qualitative researchers need to avoid biases of their findings, hence they make sure that they are objective and take a neutral stance. In ensuring confirmability, the researcher made it a point that the data collected was checked several times and so avoided describing things that did not happen. Merriam (1998) asserts that researchers show confirmability by writing up the procedures for checking and rechecking data throughout the study. Continuous reflection of data collection and analysis was required to avoid biases.

Linked to the above, reflexivity was another strategy to ensure that the findings were valid, defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.181) as "*a rigorous self-scrutiny by the researcher throughout the entire research processes.*" The researcher continually critiqued progress by asking questions that were objective and did not show any elements of bias. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) explain that asking oneself objective questions is a helpful way of eliminating biases. Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that research in the social constructivist paradigm calls on researchers to take responsibility for their own positioning, similar to systematic practice.

### 3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

In adhering to ethical strictures, firstly, the researcher applied for an ethical clearance certificate from the University, which was duly received (see Appendix C). The researcher then requested permission to conduct research in primary schools from the GDE, which was also granted (see Appendix D). Consent letters were then sent to school principals inviting them to participate in the study, seeking their permission to interview their teachers about their quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, and requesting access to the documentation related to assessment and quality assurance. After the requests were accepted, the researcher wrote invitation letters with the accompanying consent forms for the participants, namely: teachers and SATs comprising HoDs and teachers (see Appendix E). The researcher distributed these letters to all the schools for which principals had given permission to interview teachers. After receiving confirmation from teachers of their willingness to participate in the research, the researcher developed an interview schedule with questions in line with the main research question: *What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of English First Additional Language (EFAL) assessment practices?*

Secondly, the researcher made sure that the participants were informed about the purpose of the research by letters containing consent forms. They were also informed about the people who would read the research report so that they could make an informed decision to participate or not. Glesne (2006) asserts that research participants must have sufficient information to make informed decisions. The participants were made aware that participation was voluntary and withdrawal was acceptable at any time prior to reporting without recrimination. The researcher also made sure that participants were treated with respect in all the stages of the research. Individuals should be treated “fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice, regardless of age, race, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant difference” (British Educational Research Association, 2011, p.3). The respondents were also assured about their confidentiality in that pseudonyms were used in the reporting of the data.

Although the study was conducted in a district to which the researcher was not attached, and the position in the DoE was not disclosed, some participants knew the researcher and this might have had some biases in the collection of data. However, the researcher explained the purpose of the study, putting aside work issues to eliminate biases.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher has described the interpretivist paradigm used in the study. Exploratory case study research design for this study has been described and shown how it was applied to the study. The research methods outlining the research sites and participants, data collection strategies, data collection processes, research procedures, data analysis and methodological norms were discussed in detail. The factors influencing the choice of sampling were thoroughly discussed under the research sites and participants. The data collection strategies, namely, document analysis and individual and focus interviews were also thoroughly discussed. How the research conducted was discussed under research procedure. Document and thematic content analysis (interview) as strategies for analysing data for the study were also discussed in detail under document analysis sub-section. Methodological norms incorporating credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to make the research valid and reliable were also discussed in detail. This chapter concluded by confirming adherence to guidelines on research ethics.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE ROLE OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT TEAMS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to systematically present the findings informed by the interviews in the schools as well as from analysis of the supporting documents. The research question: **What is the role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?** was addressed with data collected from teachers, as those involved in the day-to-day teaching and assessment of EFAL, the Heads of Departments (HoDs) for languages as those responsible for quality assurance practices in their schools, and the School Assessment Teams (SATs), as those who work hand-in-hand with the HoDs in assessment and quality assurance of assessment practices.

In preparation to answer the sub-question: *What factors ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL at school level?* The literature was presented in Chapter 2. In answering the sub-question: *How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by school assessment teams?* The following themes emerged, namely: intended curriculum, implemented curriculum and attained curriculum. Under these themes the findings are analysed in this chapter for each school. The sub-question: *What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?* was answered by cross-case analysis. The schools were categorised as School A (high performing), School B (average performing) and School C (underperforming).

#### 4.2 INTENDED CURRICULUM

As the first of the main themes emerge, the intended curriculum refers to the content developed by the Department of Education (DoE) for learners to learn and know in a particular year and grade (Reddy, 2003). Teaching, learning and assessment require teachers, as the *'street bureaucrats'*, to know and understand the knowledge and skills

in the subject they are teaching, and thus to have both Subject Content Knowledge (SCK) and Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK). Shulman (1986) explains that in equipping learners with knowledge and skills outlined by the intended curriculum, teachers need to have deep understanding of the subject matter. They can thus help students “develop their understanding of the subject and therefore create meaning of what they learn about” (Shulman, 1986, p.43).

#### 4.2.1 Assessment goals at school

In trying to find out how the intended curriculum was taken and interpreted by teachers for each grade level, *teachers were asked to discuss their assessment goals for their grade*. This was asked to find out how teachers, HoDs and SATs know and understand what the curriculum intends to achieve with regard to teaching, learning and assessment of EFAL. In response to this question, there were mixed reactions, however, it emerged that most participants intended to progress and to see improvement in learner performance throughout the year using assessment not only to assess learning but also to inform it.

In **School A**, for example, Participant A1, qualified in teaching English with eight years’ experience in teaching the subject, said: “*I would love all my learners achieve level 4, that is 70% and above*”. Although she further indicated her wish to take all learners to level 4 she realised that it was not really a simple task but she was enthusiastic to see it happening. She was zealous in ensuring that learners achieved higher scores in her assessment tasks:

*I’m hoping to get the Grade 6 go through to Grade 7 with all having achieved level four or three, so that in the next grade and high school they should be able to understand questions, summarise stories, they should be able to do it ... (PA 1, 1: 8, 9.9).*

A similar response was expressed by Participant A2, who had 14 years’ experience in teaching EFAL: “*I assessed all the skills to check if there is development in these language skills*” (PA2, 2:10,11:14). She was also determined to see her learners improving in their learning: “*Learners must demonstrate that they can use the language in writing, reading, speaking and listening*”. (PA2, 2:15, 10:12). Both Participants had a

common goal of ensuring that learner improvement was achieved in teaching, learning and assessment. The response of Participant A2 is in line with NCS (2000) which emphasises that all the six learning outcomes (LOs), namely: listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and language structure and use, must be taught and assessed. Furthermore, the DoE (2002) outlines that assessment must also be made practically and not only just as written work. From the above response by Participant A2 it is evident that policy compliance was being heeded.

At the same school, Participant A4, HoD and member of the SAT with more than 35 years of teaching English, in both Home and First Additional levels, was asked to outline the assessment goals of EFAL in her phase. She indicated that assessment was made to improve teaching and learning by indicating that *their goal was to analyse assessment results so that they can identify problem areas and implement action plans (PA4, 4:15.; 13: 16)*. This was evident when the analysis and interpretation of the documents, such as the annual teaching and assessment plans, were conducted.

Minutes of the meetings by SATs and analysis of promotion marks (see Appendices F and G respectively) were obtained and analysed. It was evident that the school pinpointed challenges and recommended adjustments where necessary, in order to maintain sound academic standards and improve learner performance. This was substantiated by comments made on the recording sheets and the intervention strategies that were developed after result analysis. Downey, Steffy, Poston, and English (2009) indicate that teachers need to be trained to be able to identify learning challenges as this information is vital in informing the planning of the next step of learning.

In **School B**, the responses of the participants were quite different, as little effort was made to prepare learners for assessment. Therefore improving performance was done. This was evident by the response of Participant B2, who had two years' experience in teaching EFAL, indicated that *she assessed learners in EFAL, to promote or retain them (PB2, 2:9,10:10)*. Although Participant B2 went on to explain that her goal of assessing learners was to find out the areas in which her learners were struggling, so that she could help them to improve, it was not evident how she did this. In addition, Participant



B1 said that assessment of learners was not focused on improving teaching, learning or assessment, but rather that *assessment of EFAL is aimed at checking if learners understand English (PB1, 1:143, 5:9)*. Analysis of documents, such as assessment plans and annual teaching plans, also revealed that assessment of learners was not goal-orientated, since many of the documents produced, for example, moderation and monitoring tools were not filled in. The few copies of minutes found were from meetings of the SAT as far back as 2009, which suggests that learner improvement was not a primary focus in assessment. Nor was there mention of result analysis either by the HoD or any member of SAT in School B, which suggests that there were no strategies to diagnose learner difficulties at the school.

In **School C**, interpretation of the curriculum with regards to teaching, learning and assessment with reference to the goals of assessment was met with a mixture of responses that showed the assessment of learners was not focused on learner improvement in this school either. This was evidenced by the responses of Participant C4, who had 13 years EFAL teaching experience and was an HoD who said that *assessment of EFAL in the Intermediate phase in Grade 4 was more on checking whether learners can use additional language for communication (PC4, 1:14, 06:07)*. However, Participant C3, with 15 years of EFAL teaching experience, painted a different picture with regards to the goal of assessment, saying that assessment of languages was primarily to determine whether learners could read and write (PC3, 3:5). She further highlighted the importance of assessment of all language skills as a crucial aspect in assessment: *“In assessing a language the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing must be taken heed of. You can’t assess one and leave out others ...” (PC3, 3: 8, 10:10)*.

Although the responses of participants in School C showed similar knowledge of assessment there were no documents produced, which suggests that assessment of learners was not administered in line with a year plan and assessment plan. Lack of documents in School C suggests that interpretation of the curriculum with regards to goals of assessment was not in place and learner improvement was not a major focus.

In comparison with **School A**, a well performing school, **Schools B** and **C** did not show how they prepared learners for assessment and did not have any evidence of learner result analysis. Furthermore, the participants did not show how assessment was integrated in the teaching and learning as policy required. From the above responses by participants in **Schools B** and **C**, it can be deduced that assessment was not a well-thought activity. Nxumalo (2007) and Vandeyar and Killen (2007) have identified gaps in assessment practices by teachers, reflecting little understanding of assessment and a tendency to use one type of questioning in their assessment. Scherman (2008) points out that the capturing of information for record keeping for its own sake should be avoided. Rather, it should be informative and used to evaluate learner activities, set targets, diagnose learner difficulties and monitor learner progress. In **School B**, there was evidence of SAT meetings taking place at the school, although their minutes were old, not properly arranged and handwritten rather than typed. However, when the SAT members of **School B** were asked what they used the data for they all mentioned progression, retention and improvement of learning, but could not suggest how to improve learning. Document analysis in **School B** also confirmed that data was not being used for improving practice since not one of the tools produced was filled in.

#### 4.2.2 How assessment goals are set at school

Participants were asked to tell *how they set assessment goals in their schools*, to which there were different responses, some that goals for assessment were developed whereas some were not. In **School A**, all participants indicated that goals for assessment are set and communicated to learners before they sit the tasks. Participant A1 from **School A**, for example, said *“I prepare learners for the task ahead and break down mark allocation so that learners should know where each mark comes from”* (PA1, 1:23, 21:23). This is in line with the DoE Assessment Guidelines (2002) which emphasise that assessment should be transparent. She further indicated that she *generally takes the children through each activity so that they know what to expect in the formal assessment* (PA1, 1:18, 21:23). The DoE Assessment Guidelines (2002) outline that assessment criteria should be made known to learners before the activity is performed, which is the practice engaged by Participant A1. In addition to Participant

A1's response with regard to goal setting, Participant A2 indicated that a theme was used for a period of four weeks, "*We have a theme for every four weeks and we use it in all the skills*" (PA2, 2:17, 25:25). The setting and communication of goals is in line with Harlen (2000), who shows that it is the duty of the teacher to communicate goals of learning and quality standards. Similarly, Sadler (1989) and Black and Wiliam (1998) point out that achievement of learning goals by learners is dependent upon the understanding and ownership of those goals. From the above response, it was evident that assessment goals were developed for learner improvement

In **School B**, it was established that assessment goals were developed and communicated, although it sounds a difficult task for teachers to do. Participant B3, a teacher with 20 years' EFAL teaching experience, showed that assessment activities were discussed beforehand and learners are then encouraged to go and study hard (PB1, 1:166, 23:25), which also aligns well with the DoE Assessment Guidelines' (2002) stipulation that assessment criteria be transparent: "*I talk to them about any activity that they are to do. I encourage them to go and study hard to pass ...*" (PB3, 3:24, 166:168).

However, some responses showed that teachers find it difficult to set assessment goals in **School B**. Participant B2 did not have any response to the question, even though it was repeated several times, which may suggest that there was no setting of goals of assessment. The non-setting of goals confirms Cummins and Davidson's (2007) finding that when goals of learning are not communicated there is poorer performance by learners, especially when working with English Language Teaching (ELT).

In **School C**, there was a common response with regards to the setting of assessment goals. One participant, who was also a member of the SAT, indicated that goals varied for individual learners, "*you can't just set the same goals for all the learners; you need to know your learners*" (PC4, 4:189, 19:21). Interestingly, Participant C4, an HoD, explained that she encouraged her teachers primarily to make diagnostic analyses of learners to determine the type of learners in their classes (PC4, 4:19). The significance of knowing learners when goal setting was also attested to by Participant C3, who conducted baseline assessment at the beginning of the year to determine learners' level of knowledge:

*Well, I don't set goals before I know my learners. When I receive learners from Grade 5 in the beginning of the year, I conduct baseline assessment. I give them a test that I normally develop, the test is a sort of aptitude one. In this test I include most of the work done in Grade 5 to check their level of knowledge. I mark the test and the performance of learners then tell me the type of learners I am having. Then I set the goals ... (PC3, 3:19, 24:24).*

The assessment of learners at the beginning of the year by participants in **School C** was in line with NPAQ (2007), which stipulates that baseline and diagnostic assessments be made to identify and diagnose learners' abilities and levels so that plans can be developed.

In summary, it is expected that teachers know and understand the intended curriculum (DoE; 2005). They were asked to say how they developed the goals of assessment and discuss how these were communicated to learners. The responses of some teachers in the three schools led to a general conclusion that the intended curriculum is understood differently by teachers, leading to effective and ineffective curriculum implementation and therefore low and high learner performance (see Section 4.2).

### **4.3 Implemented Curriculum**

In this section, moderation and monitoring of assessment practices are discussed, the former being the process that ensures the appropriate standards set by the education authorities are achieved, whilst the latter constitute the systematic process of gathering, interpreting and using information to help know the progress of the programme toward achieving its goals.

#### **4.3.1 Moderation of assessment practices**

In finding out how teachers implement the curriculum, a number of questions were posed regarding quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken in schools and to identify challenges experienced by teachers and SATs. The questions were designed to find out how teaching, learning and assessment, moderation, monitoring and feedback were implemented in schools, and to identify *the skills needed*

to effectively quality assure EFAL assessment practices. In responding, all the participants from different schools had a common view, citing SCK and PCK, qualifications in the subject and communication skills as prerequisites.

**In School A**, Participant A1, who had taught English in Grade 6 for 8 years said that to implement the curriculum and quality assure EFAL assessment practices effectively a person needs to have “*experience in the teaching of the subject, qualified for the subject, have managerial experience to guide teachers*” (PA1, 1:64, 68:69, 39:40 ). She added: “*To quality assure English, you need to know the subject. You need to have taught it like Mrs. X, she knows it very well*” (PA1, 1:66, 68:68).

The significance of qualifications and experience in teaching, learning and quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices was echoed by other participants. Participant A2 from **School A**, who also had many years of teaching English in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases, said that “*A person who quality assures must have taught or must be teaching English*” (PA2, 2: 61, 64:66). Participant A2 further highlighted the importance of furthering studies in the subject as there are continuing changes: “*We need somebody who reads a lot, who cannot be behind things*” (PA2, 2:63, 64:64). This clearly demonstrates that to make an impact on teaching, learning and assessment one should keep oneself abreast of new developments and innovations.

Participant A4, the HoD at **School A**, had much experience in the teaching fraternity and had taught in many countries, English Home and First Additional Languages. She emphasised the significance of subject knowledge and experience. Shulman (1986) has indicated that in order to equip learners with knowledge and skills the teacher must have both SCK and PCK. Participant A4 spoke of the role that the experience plays in quality teaching, learning and assurance of assessment:

*Experience provides a sound frame of reference which enables the teachers to understand and recognise learners’ needs more easily. Experience also teaches one what works and what does not; eventually you build up a set of skills and these can be passed on to other educators ... (PA4, 4:6, 44:45, 66:67, 69:70,).*

In **School B**, experience, subject knowledge and qualifications were also seen as significant skills in effective quality assurance of assessment practices. Participant B3, who had 20 years' experience in teaching EFAL to all grades in the Intermediate Phase and in a number of schools, indicated that "*Teaching can be boring if you don't know the content of the subject you are teaching*" (PB3, 3:36, 39:40). Although experience, subject knowledge and qualifications were cited as the most necessary skills in the implementation of the curriculum, when looking at the participant demographics it was evident that many teachers in this school did not have necessary qualifications to teach English. This lack of necessary qualifications can be linked with poor performance of learners at the school.

In **School C**, knowledge of the subject and *qualifications*<sup>2</sup> were also cited as necessary skills to effectively implement the curriculum and assure the quality of EFAL assessment practices. However, none of the teachers at the school possessed these skills since no one had a qualification to teach English. This could be associated with the low performance of the school, as reported by Metzler and Woessmann (2010), for whom subject knowledge plays a significant role in student achievement.

The significance of qualifications and subject knowledge in curriculum implementation and quality assurance of assessment, in particular, is supported by Glatthorn, Jones and Bullock (2005), who emphasize that a teacher should have a bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement for teaching and should have knowledge of the subject he or she intends teaching. Ayeni (2010) asserts that teachers are expected to have sound knowledge of their subjects so that it will be easier for them to plan the lesson and assessment activities, teach and monitor the progress of learners and provide them with constructive feedback.

The NPAQ (2007) requires that assessment tasks be pre-moderated before they are given to learners to ensure that they are objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient, and post-moderation of the assessment tasks must also be conducted (NPAQ, 2007). Circular 12 of 1999 mandates that SATs moderate work schedules, lesson plans,

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<sup>2</sup> Qualifications – an official record showing that you have finished a training course or have the necessary skills.

assessment plans and formal assessment tasks (GDE, 1999). In order to find out how moderation was undertaken in schools, teachers were asked to explain *how their EFAL assessment practices were quality assured*. The responses demonstrated a number of different levels of commitment and accountability to the process of moderation of teachers' EFAL assessment practices.

In **School A**, all the participants including the HoD, showed that moderation receives much attention by the HoD. Participant A1, for example, indicated that *the HoD goes through each and every activity, question by question and then writes her a report (PA1, 1:86, 72:73)*. Furthermore, Participant A1 explained that the HoD gave a verbal and written report of her findings and asked the teacher concerned to sign the report which she then emailed to the teacher for her records. The effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms by the HoD was echoed by Participant A2: *"I am not a language teacher but through her feedback I am better now"* (PA2, 2:98, 135:136). Although the interviews were conducted with individual participants, Participant A4, (the HoD) also attested to the effectiveness of moderation practices she was employing at the school: *"I ensure that book control is done once per term. Class visits are also done once or twice a year, depending on the need ..."* (PA4, 4:48, 72:73, 93:94).

According to the NPAQ (2007), HoDs are required to moderate learners' formal assessment tasks and teachers' formal assessment activities, lesson plans, work schedules and mark recording on the recording sheets and cards. When analysing the moderation tool to validate the interview data in **School A**, it was evident that moderation of assessment tasks was carried out in line with policy prescriptions. The book control used as a moderation tool showed that teachers' lesson plans, work schedules and formal activities given to learners were moderated, which is in line with EEA (1998) stipulations (see Appendix H). The interview responses and the analysis of the moderation instrument in **School A** showed that moderation practices were in line with policy prescriptions and were being effectively carried out.

In addition to the interview data analysis, assessment plans of **School A** were obtained and analysed to see how teachers planned their assessment activities. The assessment plans for each Grade were specified with two tasks per term and three activities per

task. Although there were no specific dates for each assessment, months were specified. Every assessment activity in the assessment plan was ticked to show that the work had been done (see Appendix I). More importantly, it was evident that the assessment plan was followed to the letter. The assessment plans were also pasted on the first page of learners' exercise books for parental and learner perusal and some were signed by parents, thus illustrating that both learners and parents were aware of the assessment goals for examinations. It was established that the assessment plans of **School A** were in line with the ones recommended in the NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d) with all criteria outlined in the Assessment Guidelines (2002, 2011). The moderation tool used by the HoD also showed that assessment plans, work schedule and lesson plans had been moderated. It was further established that the moderation tools used in the school were also in line with the ones stipulated in the NPAQ (2007), NPA (2011d) and Assessment Guidelines (2002a).

The recording sheets of **School A** were analysed to check how learners performed and whether the recording sheets were in line with policy. All the recording sheets in the Intermediate Phase listed the names of the learners, the date of the assessment tasks, forms of assessment, assessment standards, both percentage and rating codes and a brief comment (see Appendix J). Beside the comprehensive recording sheets used by **School A**, there were rubrics for specific language aspects such as orals, functional and creative writing. It was then established that many learners in both school-based and external assessment performed extremely well and that the recording sheets were similar to the template provided in the Assessment guidelines. Many learners in both the school-based and external assessments (Annual National Assessment, 2011) achieved at level 3 and 4 (achieved and outstanding), which can be positively associated with the quality assurance of assessment practices in the school.

In **School B**, there were conflicting views with regards to moderation by both the HoD and the SAT. During the interviews, some participants indicated that moderation was not regularly carried out. Participant B2, who was qualified and had two years' experience in teaching EFAL, explained that the HoD did moderate her work but not as regularly as she had expected (PB2, 2:38, 176:178 ). Participant B2 indicated that the



HoD was not moderating teachers' work because of lack of time and the availability of *coaches*<sup>3</sup> who did almost everything that was supposed to be done by her (HoD). This was evident when Participant B1 said: *"We submit the work to her, she completes the tool and then she calls you and gives the feedback, but she does not do it regularly. I think it's because of time and that most of the things are now done by the coach ..."* (PB1, 1: 92, 123, 126, 193: 194).

Similarly, Participant B3, who had 20 years of English teaching experience but was less qualified in terms of only having Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma, from **School B** confirmed the shortfall at her school: *"No work is quality assured; you can't say that when your work is ticked or crossed, it is quality assured"* (PB3, 3:46, 106:111).

Participant B3 rightly viewed moderation as a way of checking alignment of practices with standards outlined in the policies of the Department of Education. She said that *"Assurance has to do with asserting that the work complies with the standards set out in the policy"* (PB3, 3:47,49:49 ), which is what is expected of quality assuring, in line with the NPAQ (2007) stipulation that moderation ensures set standards are achieved.

In analysing the pre- and post-moderation instruments from **School B**, they were well developed in line with guidelines stipulated by NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d). Even though Participant B3 indicated that the HoD only ticked the instrument when monitoring, there was no evidence of either ticking or filling in of the instruments. However, this suggests that the instruments in **School B** were developed for policy compliance purposes and were not being used to ensure quality of the teaching and learning of EFAL. The non-completion of the moderation instruments was also evident in the interview data, which confirmed that moderation in **School B** was not effectively carried out. Herselman and Hay (2002) found that most school managers have a limited knowledge of the processes of quality assurance. Although NPAQ (2007), NPA (2011d) and circular 12 of 1999 require the curriculum heads (HoDs and SATs) to pre- and post-moderate the tasks given to learners to ensure that the tasks are objective, valid, fair,

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<sup>3</sup> A coach - a qualified teacher appointed by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in collaboration with GDE to assist teachers in the implementation of the GPLMS programme. The coach is also called a critical friend of a teacher.

manageable and time-efficient, it was evident that policy with regards to moderation was not being complied with in **School B**, as there was no evidence of moderation. As a result of lack of moderation of work which could improve teaching and learning practice, the teaching and learning process was compromised (Chiriac & Frekedal, 2011).

In addition to analysing moderation instruments, assessment plans of **School B** were analysed to examine how teachers planned assessment activities. The study revealed that there were no school-based assessment plans other than the ones developed by the Gauteng Primary Literacy Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) personnel to outline the tasks and activities that teachers would do. The GPLMS was a strategy developed by GDE to assist schools that performed below 50% in the 2008 systematic evaluation. The assessment plans had many activities per task, and were in line with Assessment Guidelines (2002a, 2011d), that is, two tasks per term, and marks for each activity were allocated. Analysing the assessment plans and comparing them with the recording sheets it was again revealed that assessment plans were not closely followed as there were some activities in the assessment plan which had not been performed.

The recording sheets of **School B** were also analysed to determine how learners performed in EFAL and whether the recording sheets were policy compliant. It was established that there were no school-based recording sheets except the ones from GPLMS programme. They listed the names of the learners, the term, tasks and lesson, task number, activity value or marks, activity date, rating code and teacher comments. They were aligned to CAPS. No recording sheet used in the school before it was placed on the GPLMS programme was evident. Surprisingly, many learners in the school-based assessments obtained over 50%, but in the external assessment, Annual National Assessments (ANA) written in 2011 they obtained below 50%. This suggests that the school-based assessments were of a low standard, because when learners were exposed to external assessment they performed very poorly.

In **School C**, there were also conflicting views with regard to moderation of teachers' work. Participant C1 indicated that moderation at her school was carried out, whereas Participant C4 who was an HoD, also responsible for moderation, indicated that

moderation of teachers' work was not an easy task since a programme by the GDE which had 'everything' in place was being followed:

*I don't know what to do because with GPLMS, you can't tamper with because everything is well prepared. I really want to do something but I feel I will be disorganising teachers because the coach tells them not to use other resources except the lesson plans and the posters ... (PC4, 4:243, 106:113).*

The response by the HoD illustrates the findings of Hawes and Stevens (1990) that teachers claim the main reasons for non-implementation of quality assurance practices at primary schools to be the lack of expertise regarding teaching and the management of effective teaching. It suggests that the HoD was not doing her job as stipulated in the NPAQ (2007), namely that moderation to ensure quality teaching in schools needs to be regularly conducted.

Documents which **School C** used for moderation could not be provided. Although Participant C1 indicated that quality assurance of assessment was done in **School C**, there was no evidence in terms of the moderation instruments. Neither the teachers nor the SAT members had the moderation instruments. Although there were no moderation instruments in **School C**, the assessment plans from GPLMS programme were available. Although the GPLMS assessment programmes were available, it seems that they were rarely used. The assessment plans were the same as the ones used by **School B**. Even though the ones the school used before it was placed under GPLMS were requested, the school could not produce them. There were many activities per task that learners needed to perform. Having analysed and compared them with the recording sheets, it was established that the assessment plans were not closely followed as some of the activities in them were not done, indicating that teaching, learning and assessment were compromised and that this could be one of the reasons the school was underperforming.

In **School C**, the recording sheets from the GPLMS programme were also analysed to investigate the performance of learners. As with **School B**, all the marks were recorded. Learner performance in the school-based assessment was also at an average of 50%

whereas the ANA written in 2011 showed many learners obtaining less than 30%. This result suggests that school-based assessments that were not moderated were of a low standard, resulting in learners being exposed when sitting external assessments. It was established that the recording sheets were policy-compliant since all the criteria recommended in the NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d) had been met.

The participants were further asked to identify *the effective quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices found at their respective schools*. All the participants from the three schools had a variety of response with regards to the quality assurance of assessment practices by their respective HoDs or members of SAT.

In **School A**, all the participants indicated that their work was thoroughly checked. Participant A1, for example, indicated that the HoD read her work carefully and corrected any mistake found. She said: *“There is no way she can’t find the mistakes that you have written, especially with grammar”* (PA1, 1:101, 73:75). This reveals the level of commitment and subject knowledge by the HoD in ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment was of quality. Furthermore, Participant A1 explained that the HoD had much knowledge about language usage and conventions and, as a result, she was a helpful manager at the school. This was confirmed by Participant A3 who indicated that *“The HoD is a grammar expert who picks up any language error, whether by the teacher or the learner”* (PA3, 3:73, 102:104). The significance of subject knowledge in the implementation of the curriculum was highlighted by Matoti (2008), when indicating that subject knowledge plays a pivotal role in quality assessment.

The participants in **School A** also indicated that result analysis was one of the things that helped their school perform better, as they used the analysis to plan for the next step. Participant A4, for example, indicated that *“Our goal of quality assurance is to analyse assessment results so that we can identify problem areas and implement action plans and pre- and post-moderation helps us to achieve the goal”* (PA4, 4:15, 18:18). The analysis of results is in line with the DBE ANA report (2011) which emphasises that schools must analyse learner performance so that they develop improvement plans and as such work on improving the teaching and learning in their schools.

In **School B**, only Participant B2 was able to identify effective quality assurance of assessment practices found in the school. Participant B2 said “*I am pleased by critical reading done by the HoD when my work was quality assured, she checks our work thoroughly*” (PB3, 3:81, 87:92). She said that the HoD read everything and corrected the mistakes that she had made. Participant B3 also explained that the SAT and HoD checked learners’ books which, according to her, was a practice introduced by the previous principal who had retired. Although Participant B3 indicated that her HoD read and corrected mistakes and also checked learners’ books, this aspect was not evident when analysing the documents since most of them were not filled in.

In **School C**, none of the participants identified any effective quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in their school during the interview process. This was revealed when Participant C1 said “*The HoD used to moderate learners’ work but she no longer does it*” (PC1, 1:49, 52:53). The reason for this was not provided, nor was there a response from other participants with regards to quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, suggesting that it was not done. The study established that there was no effective quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices found at the school, since a number of documents requested were not produced.

In summary, the moderation of assessment practices requires teachers to have subject knowledge, experience and qualifications for the subject. In finding out if the HoDs and SAT members have the necessary competencies, teachers were asked to identify the skills a good HoD should possess, to discuss how their assessment practices were moderated and to identify the effective quality assurance of EFAL assessment practice found at their schools. In response to the above questions, it was evident that teachers knew the attributes a good HoD should possess. Qualifications, subject knowledge, experience, communication skills were cited as attributes to a good HoD, meaning that teachers expect their HoDs to possess those skills for their better performance.

#### **4.3.2 Monitoring of Assessment practices**

Monitoring, as defined in section 4.3, is purported to support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. Glickman (1990) asserts helps teachers to improve

their teaching styles and methodologies as its primary focus is on improvement of practice. At school level, the HoDs who are curriculum heads of the school and also members of SAT are expected to monitor teaching, learning and assessment practices (NPAQ, 2007). The EEA (1998) mandates the HoD monitor and supports teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. Circular 12 of 1999 outlines monitoring of teaching and learning and assessment as one of the duties of SATs in schools. In order to find out how monitoring of teachers in the implementation of the curriculum was conducted, teachers were asked to *explain how their HoDs monitored their work*.

#### **4.3.2.1 How HoDs monitor teachers' work**

In **School A**, participants showed that the HoD monitors their work on a regular basis. Participant A2 who was teaching EFAL in the Intermediate Phase for the third year indicated that the HoD visited her in her class to see how she teaches. Participant A3 also indicated how the HoD monitors her work by saying that "*The HoD comes to the class and observes how I present the lesson plan and guides me if she finds something not okay*" (PA3, 3:27, 84:89).

Analysis of the monitoring instruments was conducted to validate the interview data. It was established that two instruments were used to monitor curriculum implementation, namely classroom observation and book control. The classroom observation instrument is used to check lesson preparation and presentation, learner participation, activities given and feedback by the internal monitor (see Appendix K). The book control instrument (see Appendix H) checks the teacher file, quantity and quality of learners' work, and alignment of work with assessment plan, whilst making general comments. When carefully comparing the monitoring instruments and the interview data it was revealed that monitoring of teachers was evident. This is in line with Cotton (2003), who notes that successful school management ensures that there are systematic procedures for monitoring student progress at both school and classroom levels. The EEA (1998) stipulates that HoDs must conduct classroom observation to support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum.

**In School B**, the responses of all participants except Participant B3 suggest that monitoring was not carried out and if so it was ineffective. Participant B1 reported: “*In the past HoD used to visit teachers in the class and observe them teaching, but these days it was not done*” (PB3, 3:176, 33:44). However, Participant B2 (*smiling*) said that the HoD did what she was employed to do, that was “*Class visits and teaching*” (PB2, 2:33, 62:64). This led to the researcher making deductions that monitoring was not effectively carried out as there was no elaboration on how the HoD monitored teachers other than to say there were class visits.

The following monitoring instruments from **School B** were obtained and analysed, namely class visit report, learner workbook monitoring tool, monitoring instrument for teacher’s file, class visit monitoring tool, and school monitoring tool for GPLMS (see Appendix L). The class visit report covered, amongst other aspects, the learning environment, assessment, expanded opportunity/intervention, classroom practice and files. When the teachers and members of SAT were asked how the tool was used they were unable to give a proper explanation, except to say that it had been designed by the principal who was not present during the interview. This suggests that there was a lack of on-site training and communication at the school, since the principal had developed a good monitoring tool but teachers could not understand how to use it. As a result it had no effect on improving or ensuring the quality of teaching and learning.

The learner workbook monitoring tool (see Appendix M) checks the learner’s work, reading opportunities and Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC). Even though the school was placed under GPLMS, there was no evidence of the tool having been used. The monitoring instrument for teacher’s file (see Appendix N) checks the teacher file and learner books, with a section for general remarks and recommendations provided. Although the relevant documents were available, none of the instruments were completed. The school monitoring tool for the GPLMS (see Appendix L) checks the availability of GPLMS materials, implementation of the programme, assessment, coaching and monitoring, and also has a section for general comments. None of the tools was filled in and when the HoD, who had just been appointed as the deputy-principal, was asked why it was not filled in. The participant said it had just been

provided by the subject advisor from the district office. The non-completion of the documents suggests that monitoring had not been done. A concern is raised that there was no understanding of the tools, hence they had not been used, which may also be linked to poor performance of the school in both internal and external assessment. It was also revealed that no monitoring had been carried out, although GDE circular no. 11/2013 stipulates that the work schedules, lesson plans, assessment plans and formal tasks must be monitored.

In **School C**, monitoring of teachers was said to have stopped since the introduction of the GPLMS programme. This was illustrated when Participant C1 stated: *“I know since we had the coach<sup>1</sup>, she [HoD] does not demand anything from us. The coach is the one who observes us while teaching ...”* (PC1, 1:122, 123:123).

Participant C2 also confirmed that monitoring of teachers was not carried out at the school by indicating that ‘everything’ was left in the hands of the coach: *“She is the one who checks our work”* (PC2, 32, 52:53).

The non-monitoring of teachers in **School C** was also evident in the non-availability of monitoring instruments. It was acting contrary to EEA (1998) stipulations that require the HoDs who are SAT members to monitor teaching and learning activities in schools, and NPAQ (2007). The actions with regard to monitoring of teachers’ work were also contrary to Masitsa’s (2005) description of an effective school as one that monitors progress of each assessment task. Furthermore, the practices of School C confirmed the findings reported by Volmink (2011) in the NEEDU report to the Portfolio committee on Basic Education, showing that most schools do not have systems and procedures in place to monitor curriculum delivery, including controlling classroom practices, or teachers’ work.

#### **4.3.2.2 Support by SATs and HoDs to teachers**

Participants were asked to explain how their SATs and HoDs supported them in EFAL assessment practices. This question was asked to ensure that the intended curriculum was being effectively implemented. The responses of all the participants were similar, showing that their HoDs did monitor them, making use of monitoring tools to capture



information. They all indicated that HoDs filled in the monitoring tool when they submitted their work and gave them feedback orally and in writing. However, when analysing the documents produced there was a gap in theory and practice in certain schools.

In **School A**, all participants seemed content with the level of support received from their HoD, for instance, Participant A2 said that most of the time the HoD came to her and asked if she had any problems related to teaching, learning and assessment. Participant A2 also highlighted the significant role the HoD was playing in her professional development, when she indicated that “*She regularly visited me in the class and observed how I deliver the lesson*” (PA2, 2:44, 47:47). The level of motivation and support by the HoD was further explained by Participant A2: “*We follow the management plan when submitting our work. When I submit my work to her, she calls me and talk to me; she just keeps on encouraging and motivating me ...*” (PA2, 2:73, 48:53).

The level of support received and appreciated by the teachers in **School A** was also evident when Participant A1 said that “*The HoD helped in many things in the school and she was ready to support me any time I needed support*” (PA1, 1:44, 47:47). Subject knowledge in teacher support was cited as a strong point of the HoD for effectively supporting teachers in their work. It was evident when Participant A1 indicated that “*The HoD has a huge knowledge about the subject and the language itself*” (PA1, 1:56, 81:82.). Participant A1 showed that the HoD had much experience in the teaching of the subject, which enabled her to effectively support teachers: “*She knows her job very well and maybe because English is her home language and she has been teaching it for over thirty five years*” (PA1, 1:54, 55:55). Subject knowledge in the teaching of the subject is recorded by Metzler and Woessmann (2010) as playing a significant role in student achievement.

When carefully analysing **School A**'s classroom observation and book control monitoring instruments, it was evident that the HoD supported and encouraged teachers. In one of the book control instruments, the HoD commented: “*... thank you for high standard of work. Small aspects that need to be addressed will be discussed with*

*you. However, you are doing an excellent job and your contribution is highly appreciated*” (see Appendix H). The monitoring practices employed by the HoD in **School A** were in line with the EEA (76 of 1998) in that members of SATs, HoDs in particular, should regularly make classroom visits. Also, the GDE (Circular no. 11/2013) states that members of SATs must co-ordinate and monitor assessment. The importance of teacher monitoring is also emphasised by Boston (2009), who reported that teachers whose work is regularly monitored tend to show better performance.

In **School B**, the responses of the participants show that teacher support by the HoD was at a minimal level. Participant B1, for example, said that when he submitted the work to the HoD she completed the tool then invited him for feedback, “...*but she does not do it regularly*” (PB1, 1:38, 44:44). However, Participant B1 had a reason for the HoD not effectively supporting teachers: “*I think it’s because of time and that most of the things are now done by the coach, which illustrates the challenge faced by the HoD*” (PB1, 1:196, 78:79).

Participant B4, who had just been promoted to the post of deputy principal and had 21 years’ experience in teaching EFAL, was unable to provide evidence of what was carried out except to indicate that the HoD (referring to himself) was supportive and had regular meetings with teachers about any new development. When comparing the strategies used by the HoDs there was little evidence of motivating and encouraging teachers in **School B**, since the monitoring tools were not filled in at all, and there was no mention by the participants of the HoD possessing the necessary subject knowledge as in **School A**.

In **School B**, a number of monitoring instruments were analysed, such as the class visit report, learner workbook monitoring tool, monitoring instrument for teacher’s file, class visit monitoring tool, and school monitoring tool for GPLMS, with a number of factors leading to low level of teacher support identified. Firstly, it was revealed that planning at implementation level was just symbolism, because none of the monitoring instruments were filled in. Secondly, planning of assessment and quality assurance was done for compliance, not for the purposes of school effectiveness or improvement, because monitoring instruments were developed but not filled in. Thirdly, there was a mismatch

between theory and practice because when teachers were interviewed, all except one indicated that monitoring was carried out, whereas the documents revealed a different picture. This ties in with Pillay's (2011) finding that even though teachers are provided with assessment documents they rarely use or know how to use them.

In **School C**, the responses of the participants showed that teacher support by the HoD was minimal, as was evident when Participant C1, with 10 years' experience in teaching EFAL indicated that the HoD was supposed to help them but instead "...*she was always helping the principal since there was no deputy principal at the school*" (PC1, 1:59, 36:39), which suggests that curriculum implementation was somehow compromised. The low level of support to teachers by the HoD was echoed by Participant C3: "*The support is there, because the HoD together with the principal often have meetings with us*" (PC3, 3: 56, 36:41).

The minimal teacher support by HoD was confirmed by the lack of monitoring instruments found in **School C**. Although they were requested many times, only the record book (see Appendix O) was shown, in which the HoD recorded the names of the teachers who had submitted their work for monitoring the number of activities given to learners. Apparently it was used for compliance purposes by the HoD but it did not help teachers because they were not given feedback after their work was monitored. Although the EEA (1998) requires school management to monitor lesson plans, work schedules, assessment plans, recording of marks, and learners' books to ensure that quality education is provided, it is evident that in school C the policy was not complied with. Comparing **School A** and **B** with **C**, it can be generally concluded that in **School C** the teacher support and therefore curriculum implementation were of a low standard, since there was little evidence of monitoring tools being used at the school.

Participants were asked to *explain how they were supported by their respective SAT members and HoDs to ensure quality teaching, learning and quality assurance of assessment practices*. It was established that teacher support was lacking in **Schools B** and **C**. Participant B2 indicated that "*The HoD (referring to the newly appointed deputy principal) just ticks the monitoring tool*" (PB1, 1:46, 47:47), which does not amount to quality assurance. Although Participant B1 claimed that the HoD just ticked the

monitoring and moderation instrument there was no evidence of such when document analysis was conducted, since no single monitoring or moderation instrument was filled in. The lack of teacher support by the SAT and HoD in **School B** may suggest that low learner performance was the result of this.

In **School C**, the level of teacher support was also revealed as a factor hindering quality teaching, learning and quality assurance of assessment practices. This was evident when Participant C1 indicated that “*The HoD was supposed to be working closely with us, but most of the time she was assisting the principal as there was no deputy-principal at this school*” (PC1, 1:59, 36:39). This clearly reveals that teachers did not receive the support they needed, since most of the HoD’s time was spent on assisting with managerial rather than professional duties. Nor was there evidence of SAT members supporting teachers. GDE circular 12 of 1999 emphasises the role of teacher support by SAT members, but it was evident that they acted contrary to the circular since there were no monitoring or moderation tools produced for analysis.

In summing up, monitoring of assessment practices is expected to be done for improvement of classroom teaching and learning. Monitoring by SATs and HoDs should provide assistance to teachers in their endeavour to deliver quality education. In finding out how monitoring of assessment practices was conducted, teachers were asked to explain how their HoDs monitored their work and how their SATs and HoDs supported them. The response of teachers to the questions show that their HoDs did so but the level and kinds of support differed from school to school, leading to poor implementation of the curriculum and therefore poor learner performance in some schools (see Section 4.3).

#### **4.4 ATTAINED CURRICULUM**

Challenges affecting curriculum attainment are broadly discussed in this section in terms of learners’ (4.4.1) resources (4.4.2), time (4.4.3), HoD overload (4.4.4), non-compliance by teachers (4.4.5) and feedback (4.5.6).

The attained curriculum as defined in chapter 2 section 2.7.3 is measured by learner performance in school-based and external assessments. The Department of Basic

Education (DBE) introduced ANA in 2008 as a diagnostic evaluation to identify problems affecting learner performance and to gauge learner performance. In most schools, school-based assessment yields positive results but when those learners are subjected to external assessments the performance is low. The ANA results are the DBE's gauge to measure how schools perform systematically.

In **School A**, there was correlation between the school-based assessment results and the 2011 ANA results. When analysing the 2012 half-yearly examination recording sheets, many learners obtained over 60%, which was above the 56% grade average. The 2011 ANA results in the Intermediate Phase showed average learner performance of 60% in Grade 4, 74% in Grade 5 and 71% in Grade 6.

However, in **School B**, there was a large gap in terms of learner performance between school-based and external assessments. In the former, learners performed very well but poorly in ANA, which suggests that the assessment was not standardised. The average learner performance in ANA 2011 was less than 50% in all the grades, with Grade 6 performing at an average of 30%. However, with school-based assessment, many learners seem to be doing well, achieving above 50%.

In **School C**, the learner performance in school-based assessment was average, that is, at 50%. Although the school based results used in this study are for 2012, they confirm the result of ANA 2011, which was written in February 2012. The school-based assessment results for 2012 half-yearly showed many learners performing between 40% and 60%, whereas the average learner performance in 2011 ANA in all the three Grades was less than 30%. Although the researcher wanted to see the quality of the assessment tasks they were not available and no term 1 results were available.

In analysing documents collected from schools, the following were carefully scrutinised: monitoring and moderation instruments, assessment plans and recording sheets. This was to validate the findings emerging from the interviews.

Participants were also asked to *highlight challenges experienced when quality assuring of EFAL assessment practices was done in their respective schools*. The question was also posed to the teachers, HoDs and SATs members to identify challenges when

teachers' work is quality assured. In responding to the question, participants had a number of related challenges they encountered when they assessed and assured quality of the work of learners and teachers.

#### 4.4.1 Challenges affecting learners and the attained curriculum

In this sub-section the following themes are considered: learners (4.4.1.1) and learners' attitude towards learning (4.4.1.2).

##### **4.4.1.1 Assessment challenges relating to learners with different abilities**

In **School A**, which is a high performing school, it emerged from the interviews that time and learning ability were the main challenges affecting quality teaching and assurance of assessment practices. Learner ability relates to the learners who had learning barriers, especially low learner abilities. Participant A1, who was teaching Grade 6, indicated the challenge she had with slow learners in her class who took time to finish their work, "*They are very slow in everything. When they write, they take time to finish*" (PA1, 1:63,116:119). The inability to deal with learners with learning difficulties has also been attested to in previous studies about learner performance which show that it is not easy for educators work with them, thus negatively impacting on the implementation of the curriculum (see Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). Although the DoE (2005) in South Africa has issued policy on inclusive education for all learners to be taught in ordinary schools, it remains difficult for teachers to cater for them. It has been acknowledged that learners come into classrooms with a range of barriers, and schools need to accommodate them and support all learners. However, with a variety of challenges in the school system itself, schools and teachers have not been trained to deal with this, resulting in a failed school system. Although Schools **A** and **C** indicated learner ability affecting quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, **School B** revealed learner absenteeism as a factor affecting the quality of teaching, learning and assurance of assessment practices. This was evident when Participant B3 said that

*Sometimes the HoD will ask you to submit the list of learners and she chooses the learner who does not come to school or who does not write the work given. It becomes*

*a problem because to me it looks like I am not doing my job. We have a high rate of absenteeism at this school, more especially boys on Fridays ... (PB3, 3:116, 126:128).*

#### **4.4.1.2 Learners' attitude towards learning**

In **School C**, participants indicated the challenge of attitude of learners to learn. Participant C1, for example, indicated that her learners were not serious with their studies and this affected her negatively: *"I once had a visit by English facilitator who then requested for a list of learners and then chose one of the learners who did not even have books which left me humiliated"* (PC1, 1:129, 139:142). The issue of learner attitude was echoed by Participant C3: *"Our learners do not bother themselves, they do not want to study"* (PC3, 3:308).

#### **4.4.2 Resources**

Participants were asked to *explain if non-availability of resources had an impact on their quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices*. In response to the question, all participants from School A indicated that availability of resources contributed to a greater extent to effective quality assurance of assessment practices. All participants from **School A** expressed that non-availability of resources was not an issue at their school as it was well-resourced. This was evident when Participant A1 indicated that: *"I do not scratch my head when it comes to resources because everything is provided for"* (PA1, 1:147, 110:119, 94:97). Participant A1 also highlighted the significant role played by school principal in ensuring that resources were available: *"She is a hard worker, she goes out looking for donations and our school is well resourced"* (PA1, 1:148, 150:150).

The non-availability of resources in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices was echoed by Participant A2, who had not felt the need to complain about lack of resources since she arrived at the school, as it was well-resourced. The duty of the SAT as managers is to provide resources to enable teachers to perform their duties effectively McCurdy (1989). Effective school management ensures provision of resources such as teaching and learning materials, non-teaching personnel and other useful resources to enhance teaching and learning in their schools. As McCurdy (1989)

stated, a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning is created when resources are provided, managed and properly used.

In contrast, **School B** participants pointed out that unavailability of resources was common in their schools, all reporting the negative impact it was having with regards to quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices at their school. Participant B1 told learners that: *“On Friday they would do reading aloud and gave them criteria to follow and then was disappointed when she found that there were no papers and the ink to make copies of the rubrics”* (PB1, 1:250, 172:179 ). The non-availability of resources confirms the findings of research in South Africa that lack of resources impedes teacher effectiveness in the delivery of the curriculum (McCurdy, 1989). It is believed that adequate resources are essential for quality education and institutions should aim to secure at least the basic resources that will help them meet their goals (Scherman, 2008). Although there are many studies indicating that non-availability of resources has a negative impact on teaching and learning, in **School B** the study revealed it was associated with poor leadership and management at school level, which then affects teaching, learning and assessment. This was evident when Participant B2 said that: *“the resources need to be made available, but with the way the money is used, it becomes a problem. I think people are enriching themselves with school money, instead of directing it where it is aimed at”* ... (PB2, 2:124, 127:127).

In **School C**, participants indicated a variety of factors leading to unavailability of resources affecting quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. Participant C3, for example, cited theft of property by community members and late receiving of money (as the school was a non-fee paying one) from the DoE as the internal and external factors affecting quality assurance of assessment practices. The theft of property was also identified by Participant C3, *“Computers were stolen and they were not found, and it made it difficult for teachers to type, they had to use their own computers at home to do the work”* (PC3, 3:142:145). Participant C2 highlighted the late receiving of money from the DoE as a contributory factor in the non-availability of resources leading to quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices being negatively affected *“...we don’t get the money in time and because of that we suffer”* (PC2, 2:152, 157:157 ). Although the DoE



was used as a scapegoat for the non-availability of resources, it was revealed that the level of commitment was low. This was seen by the lack of non-availability of moderation and monitoring tools requested, with Participant B2 of **School B** indicating that for much of the time they improvised to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment were carried out.

#### 4.4.3 Time

The study also established that the time factor was a challenge in ensuring quality teaching, learning and quality assurance of assessment practices in all the schools. In **School A**, teachers reported that they were required to be in school, in class teaching for seven hours, which seems sufficient time to cover the curriculum and is in line with policy (see NCS and CAPS). Participant A1 explained that she sometimes found teaching and assessing compromised due to time pressurising her, “*You need to cover all the activities but there is no time*” (PA1, 1:114, 115:115). Participant A3 also highlighted the issue of time affecting quality teaching, learning and assurance of EFAL assessment practices: “*I had to mark learners’ work and I do not have time to do that*” (PA3:65:65). Although there is no specified time for marking it is expected that teachers quickly mark the learners’ tasks immediately they finish writing. Participant A4 also shared the frustrations of lack of time, particularly as she had professional and managerial duties to carry out at the same time, resulting in quality assurance being compromised. The time factor as a challenge to effective teaching was confirmed by English (2000), when outlining the challenges facing English teachers teaching English as a foreign language in Britain. The teachers did not have enough time for planning, teaching and assessing, marking and recording, or for remedial teaching due to the congested curriculum. Although the study was based in Britain, his findings are similar to those from South African education contexts.

In **School B**, the time factor as a negative factor affecting quality assurance of assessment practice was also cited. Although the EEA (1998) shows that HoDs have fewer number of teaching periods it seemed that they still did not have time to balance their professional and managerial duties. This was evident when Participant B1 indicated that her HoD (referring to the newly appointed deputy-principal) did not have

enough time to assure quality of assessment EFAL practices as he had to do most of the managerial duties (PB1, 1:186, 188:188). However, with Participant B1, the time factor was also a result of poor planning at school level which then reflects poor management and leadership. This was revealed when she said that when they submit work to the HoD, “...but we do not get it back on time because of congested assessment plans we had” (PB1, 1:195, 212:217).

In **School C**, the time factor was also said to be negatively affecting teaching, learning and quality assurance of assessment practices. Participant C4 (an HoD) said that the HoDs had no time to do the work effectively because there was no time for it, “We are always busy, you are a teacher, a parent, a principal, it’s tough” (PC4, 4:248, 121:125). This confirmed the research by Brante (2007), which shows that teacher work is increasing in complexity and intensity. Participant C4 further highlighted the significance of time affecting teaching learning and quality assure assessment practices by saying that “Time constraints are always a challenge as I have many other demands on my time as well” (PC4, 4: 248).

#### 4.4.4. HoD Overload

The **overload factor** was also identified as a challenge negatively affecting teaching, learning and quality assurance of assessment in all the three selected schools. All the participants in all the schools shared the same sentiments with regards to overload on the part of HoD. In **School A**, it was established that the HoD was also overloaded when she said that “I wanted to have time concentrating on teaching and learning but I do not get that opportunity since I have to look at managerial matters” ... (PA4, 4:63, 184:186).

In **School B**, Participant B3 pointed out overloading of the HoD as one of the negative factors affecting quality assurance of assessment practices. This was shown when she said that “The teachers submit tasks to the HoD before learners can write and he is one for that matter - I think he is overloaded” (PB3, 3:184, 188:188 ). Although Participant B3 indicated that her HoD was overloaded it was not clear how since there was little evidence of him supporting teachers with quality assuring assessment practices, and all

the documents provided for analysis were blank. Participant B3 indicated that the SAT helped the HoD in assuring quality of assessment practices, however, it was not established how the SAT helped the HoD in executing his job. This suggests that members of SAT in **School B** were not doing their work as stipulated in circular 12 of 1999 which outlines the duties of the SAT.

In **School C**, the overload factor was not raised as all participants agreed that most of the work that was supposed to be done by the HoD was done by the coaches. This is contrary to the EEA (1998), which outlines the duties to be performed by each teacher in his/her position at school. However, some participants indicated that they were overloaded with work, making it difficult for them to effectively quality teach and assure assessment practices. Participant C3, for example, said that she missed lessons as she was occupied with multiple positions in her school, *“I am a sports organiser, side steward and member of the SGB, most of the times I am not at school”* (PC3, 3:122, 248:250). This kind of practice is contrary to the state of the nation’s address by President Jacob Zuma (2009), when he said that every teacher should be in class, on time teaching for seven hours.

Several studies in South Africa have confirmed that overloaded teachers are ineffective in their execution of their responsibilities. For instance, Nxumalo (2007) revealed that assessment practices in schools are rarely monitored due to HoDs being overloaded, whilst Ramsuran (2006) and Torrance (1995) also found that overload is one of the contributory factors leading to teachers not complying with assessment policies resulting in them ineffectively assessing learners. Ngobeni (2006) found that HoDs are overloaded with work and as a result cannot effectively take on quality assurance tasks.

#### **4.4.5 Non-compliance by teachers**

Non-compliance by teachers was also cited as one of the factors affecting quality assurance in Schools **B** and **C**. Although participants in **School B** did not raise it as an issue affecting quality assurance in their school, Participant B4 (the deputy-principal) did. In his response, the deputy principal who had just moved from HoD position showed his frustration, evident when he said that he used to have a plan which he gave

to teachers: “*The plan was very clear but you would receive excuses*” (PB4:124: 126). Participant B4 was also frustrated by the excuses teachers usually gave when he wanted to check their work: “*The day when somebody would have to submit the work to be moderated, he would come to you and say his work is not ready, although you reminded them a week before ...*” (PB4, 4:46: 76:78, 126: 133, 213:215).

Non-compliance with policy by teachers was said to be fuelled by teacher union resistance, as they unnecessarily protected teachers even when they failed to perform their duties. This was indicated when one of the SAT members in **School B** said that it was difficult to get files from teachers: “*They place ahead union matters over learners’ rights to education*” (PB4, 4:133, 177:178).

In **School C**, Participant C3, a SAT member, also indicated that although there was a policy which required the question papers to be submitted for moderation purpose two days before the task was to be performed, teachers did not submit on time. This was evident when Participant C3 said: “*We have a policy at this school which says that the question papers must be submitted two days before the task is written, but you will find that they submit the very same day the task is to be done and they will push you to moderate it ...*” (PC3, 3:73, 76:76).

The matter of non-compliance was echoed by Participant C4 who boldly indicated that *some teachers do not bother to give learners work that is not moderated* (PC4 4:245, 253:257). This is contrary to the NPAQ (2007), which requires every teacher to submit a work schedule, lesson plans and formal assessment activities to the HoD and SAT for quality assurance purpose before implementation. Furthermore, the DoE (2005, p.6) stipulates that teachers draw up and submit subject assessment plans each year to the head of the subject and SAT of the school in order to complete a school assessment plan. Although the NPAQ (2007) mandates teachers to submit their work to HoD, they do not comply which compromises the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. In his study Nxumalo (2007) further found that teachers do not comply with departmental policies due to teacher union resistance.

#### 4.4.6 Feedback

Giving feedback after monitoring and moderation is a crucial aspect of improving teacher and learner performance in schools. Without it, teaching, learning and assessment, as well as quality assurance of assessment practices will not be improved. Harlen (2000) indicates that feedback to the teachers helps them improve their teaching practices so that they can in turn help learners perform better in their studies. Circular 12 of 1999 indicates that SATs must give feedback of monitoring and moderation processes to teachers to improve their practice. The feedback may be verbal or written, but should enable the teacher to decide on the next step (Harlen, 2000).

In finding out how feedback of monitoring and moderation assists teachers in the implementation of the curriculum, participants were asked to explain how *the feedback from their respective SATs with specific reference to HoD helps them in their assessment practices*. This question was asked to identify the level of support they required. It was aimed at finding out if the feedback by HoDs given to teachers assisted them in improving their assessment practices. Again, it transpired that all participants valued feedback significantly for the improvement of their teaching and assessment practices.

**In School A**, it emerged that feedback provided by their respective SATs and HoDs helped teachers to improve practice. Participant A1, for example, indicated that the comments given by the HoD made her a better teacher: *“My language is also improved on a day to day basis because of the HoD’s positive and encouraging feedback”* (PA1, 1:135, 98:100). This is in line with Matoti (2008), who argued that for teachers to effectively achieve their goals they must be supported by their managers. It was evident that the level of support in the form of feedback was helping the teacher to move forward. Hattie (2003) confirmed that feedback must identify clear actions that individuals can take to make further learning progress. The significance of constructive feedback given by the HoD in **School A** was confirmed by Participant A2, who confidently indicated that feedback helped her greatly: *“I’m not a language teacher but through her feedback I am better now. I know what to do when I go to class. I have developed confidence through her feedback”* (PA2, 2: 98, 135:136).

Constructive feedback helps teachers realise what they can do to improve their practice and helps them in doing so (Butler, 1987). Blasse (2000) holds the view that teachers who are supported in their endeavour to deliver quality education are likely to make an extra effort.

In analysing the completed monitoring and moderation instruments, it was evident that the feedback given to teachers was motivating and helpful, for example, “*Thank you for high standard of work. Small aspects that need to be addressed will be discussed with you. However, you are doing an excellent job and your contribution is highly appreciated*”. It was established that teachers were motivated by comments that helped them think about their work and this effects improvement. Motivation of teachers through feedback aligns with Blasse’s (2000) view that giving praise for good practice is a recipe for boosting the morale of teachers, leading to them having more innovative ideas as they would have been motivated and recognised for their hard efforts.

**In School B**, it was revealed that minimal feedback was given to teachers, as evident when Participant B2 said that “*I don’t think ticking and crossing amount to quality assurance, maybe I still need some lecturing*” (PB2, 2:79, 80:80). Although Participant B2 reported that the instruments were ticked when analysing the documents, there was no evidence of the instrument being ticked or filled in. It was revealed that there was no monitoring or moderation taking place in **School B**, hence no feedback. This is contrary to Black and Wiliam (1998), who assert that feedback, whether top down or bottom up, supports teachers and works to improve practice. Guskey (2003) writes that good feedback helps clarify what good performance is measured in terms of goals, criteria and expected standards. Feedback helps in teacher self-reflection, leading to improvement of practices which then leads to high learner performance. It also helps in gaining confidence and changing attitudes towards the work and assists in shaping new direction (Guskey, 2003).

**In School C**, participants said that feedback given to them was useful and motivating. Participant C1, for example, explained that “*The feedback makes me a better teacher*

*because most of what my HoD writes is not negative, but developmental” (PC1, 1: 90, 95:101).* Participants C2 and C3 did not respond to the question, which may suggest that feedback given to them by their SATs or HoD was not useful or it was at all not given. Although Participant C1 indicated that the feedback given to her by the HoD was helpful and motivating, when wanting to analyse what was written in the instruments no documents were provided. This suggests that monitoring and moderation were not done in School C, contradicting the NPAQ (2007) and EEA (1998), which both emphasise the significance of moderation and monitoring and thereafter giving both oral and written feedback.

In conclusion, curriculum attainment needs proper planning of teaching plans, lessons plans, assessment plans, recording sheets and provisioning of resources. In this subsection, teachers were asked to highlight challenges experienced when assuring quality of EFAL assessment practices in their respective schools. The factors impeding attainment of the curriculum, namely learner inability, resources, time, HoD overload, non-compliance by teachers and the significance of feedback were identified and discussed. The above factors are the common ones identified in this study, but it does not suggest that there are no other factors hindering quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, such as late receipt of money from the Department of Basic Education and embezzlement of school funds, showing bad management.

#### **4.5 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS**

The study, conducted with three schools in the Gauteng North area has revealed a number of good practices and challenges of quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices leading to possible high and low learner performance. Amongst the issues identified were quality of English First Additional Language teachers, expertise of the HoD, compliance with policy, teacher support, transparency of assessment, data/result analysis, availability of resources, subject knowledge, multi-tasks of teachers, time, quality of monitoring and moderation, HoD overloaded, challenges with learners, the power of teacher-union resistance, lack of parental resources and lack of resources. These can be generalised to other schools in the Tshwane District of the GDE, as well

as countrywide. The findings were presented per school but the sections below discuss aspects of good practice employed by the schools.

#### **4.5.1 Quality of English First Additional Language teachers**

Educational as well as professional qualifications are one of the requirements for appointment to a teaching position. Teachers are required to have majored in the subject that they teach. According to Glatthorn et al. (2005), a qualified teacher should hold a minimum qualification of bachelor degree. It is expected of teachers that they continually develop professionally so that they are attuned to changes in curricula and remain at the forefront of what is happening in education. Thus, they are equipped to add value to the lives of the children.

The study revealed that schools that are performing well in English First Additional Language (see ANA report) had teachers who were qualified to teach English and had, through their years of teaching, developed experience (see the teacher profile in Chapter 3) in the teaching, assessment and quality assurance of English first additional language. In **School A**, two teachers had majored in English, which can be generalised to effective teaching, whereas in other schools sampled in this study had teachers teaching English but who had no qualifications in English. The issue of qualifications confirms the findings of Clewell and Campbell (2004) who stated that English language learners learn well when they have qualified staff who have the passion and conviction to make a difference in their lives and have access to quality curriculum and instruction that prepares them for college and the workplace. In **School B** and **C**, none of the teachers had qualifications for teaching English (see teacher profile in Chapter 3). The low learner performance in **Schools B** and **C** can be attributed to lack of qualifications in English teaching by teachers.

#### **4.5.2 Expertise of the HoD**

Experience in the teaching of a subject is a crucial component in ensuring high learner performance. The study revealed that schools which do well in English First Additional Language have teachers who are continuously supported by the HoD who has the necessary expertise. According to EEA (1998), the HoD, appointed to this special



position, should be qualified in the subject(s) for which they are appointed, have the necessary expertise and should have taught for at least five years to enable them to conduct the monitoring and moderation of assessment. In **School A**, for example, which is a well-performing one, teacher support by the SAT, the HoD in particular, was said to be outstanding because of her subject knowledge, expertise and qualification in the subject. The issue of high learner performance due to teachers' subject knowledge, expertise and qualification was confirmed by the findings of many studies (see Clewell & Campbell, 2004; Blasse, 2000; Metzler & Woessmann, 2010). In **Schools B** and **C**, which are middle and underperforming respectively, the HoDs had experience in teaching EFAL, however neither had qualifications for teaching English, which could mean that they were lacking some knowledge of assessing and assuring quality of English.

#### **4.5.3 Compliance with policy**

It is expected that teachers work within the policy framework as devised by the DoE. Although they can be innovative, policy compliance is a prerequisite to avoid conflicting knowledge imparted to the learners. Teachers are therefore required to plan and execute their tasks in line with NCS/CAPS which form part of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, and which represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools, comprising the following:

- a) *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects*
- b) *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*
- c) *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12.*

The study has established that schools that are doing well comply with the above policies. In **School A**, monitoring and moderation practices conducted by the SAT were also in line with policy prescriptions. The teachers' work schedule, lesson plans and formal assessment activities were regularly moderated making use of book controls and the classroom observation tool. This was in line with the GDE (1999), which stipulates

that moderation in EFAL requires the HoD to moderate the work schedules, lesson plans, learners' workbooks comprising informal and formal tasks, recording sheets as well as result analysis. In **School B**, policy knowledge was evident; however practice was not effective leading to a theory-practice gap (see Section 4.4.5). In **School C**, the school was characterised by poor management as there was no evidence of knowledge and implementation of the policy. The theory-practice gap and lack of policy knowledge in **Schools B** and **C** can be associated with poor quality of monitoring, which is the major contributor to learner poor performance.

#### 4.5.4 Support of teachers by SAT

Teacher support is a crucial element in ensuring the learners perform well. Teachers who are supported by their SATs put more effort into the teaching and learning and assessment in their subject (see Blasse, 2000). It is the duty of SATs to ensure that teachers are supported to enable them to effectively implement the intended curriculum. The study revealed that teachers, who are well supported by their respective SATS, HoD in particular, are effective in teaching, learning and assessment. The SATs employ a number of strategies in supporting teachers. Firstly, In **School A**, the management plan showing the dates for submission of teacher files and learner workbooks to SAT was developed. Participant A1 said that "*Teachers submit their work according to that plan and the HoD checks the work and give the report*" (see Section 4.3.1). The issue of management plan was echoed by Participant A2, who said that "*The school had a management plan which informed them when it comes to submitting the work*" (see Section 4.3.2). This confirms the findings of a number of studies that teacher support plays a significant role in delivering of quality education (see Matoti, 2008; Du Four & Berkey, 1995).

The SAT of **School A** regularly meets and discusses issues affecting quality teaching as well as quality assurance of assessment practices. This was explained when the HoD indicated that she conducted school-based workshops in which she trained teachers on certain issues, for example, picking up on many problems such as developing a well-balanced question paper. This is in line with the findings of research in England by Guskey (2002), who reported that continuing teacher development, such

as school-based workshops, are instrumental factors in ensuring that teachers effectively implement the intended curriculum. Although the study by Guskey (2002) was conducted in England it can be argued that school based workshops play a significant role in teacher development as challenges at school level are immediately dealt with. In neither **Schools B** nor **C** was there mention of on-site training by either the HoD or any SAT members, which implies that teachers might not be supported to effectively carry out their duties.

#### 4.5.5 Transparency of assessment

The NPAQ (2007) stipulates that assessment should be transparent so that learners and teachers have a clear understanding of what the expectations are for any assessment task and what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes being assessed.

This study established that in **School A**, where learners performed better, assessment criteria identified (see intended curriculum in Section 4.2) were communicated to learners and their parents. Parents were also involved in the children's learning. In **School A**, it was established by both the interview and document analysis that learners were prepared for formal assessment prior to its being conducted. This was evident when all participants indicated that they helped learners to achieve at level 4 by taking them for each activity before they could do it (see Section 4.2). It was also established that assessment goals and how marks were allocated were also clearly communicated to learners. In **School B**, a better performing one, assessment criteria, although not by all teachers, were communicated to learners before sitting for the task. Communication of assessment goals helps both the teacher and learner understand the purpose of each activity resulting in high learner performance as outlined in various studies (see Masitsa, 2005 & Harlen, 2000). Although the assessment criteria were said to be communicated in **School C**, no evidence was visible in the form of documentation.

#### 4.5.6 Data/result analysis to inform learning

Analysis of results helps to confirm what the learners have achieved and the level at which they are performing. In addition, it assists in identifying the areas of difficulties so

that a strategy to improve practice is developed. In analysing learner results, the focus should be on bettering learner performance (Wayman, 2005).

The study established that the learner results of both internal and external assessments are analysed to inform learning. In **School A**, Participant A4, who was the HoD, collected learner results from English teachers and analysed them. The analysis of data/results was evident when examining documents produced and it was revealed that learner performance results were analysed (see Section 4.3.1). The issue of result analysis as discussed in Chapter 2 to improve practice was emphasised by a number of studies and policies (see Downey, Steffy, Poston & English, 2009; GDE, 1995; 2005). In **Schools B** and **C** there was no evidence of result analysis being carried out, perhaps because there was no planning for improvement as stipulated by GDE (1995, 2005).

#### 4.5.7 Availability of resources

Resource availability enhances teaching and learning, as seen in a variety of studies which show that resources play a significant role in quality teaching, learning and assessment (see GDE, 1999; Masitsa, 2005). In **School A**, the study revealed that resources are not a challenge as teachers have access to many and varied resources, as reported by Participants A1 and A2, who showed that they did not experience any resource shortages [see Section 4.4(b)].

All the above themes, namely: quality of English First Additional Language teachers, expertise of the HoD, compliance with policy, teacher support, transparency of assessment, data/results analysis and the availability of resources emerge predominantly from research conducted in **School A**, but these good practices were not evident in **Schools B** or **C**. Only transparency of assessment was evident in **School B**.

A number of challenges affecting teaching, learning and assessment in schools, also emerged from the study, as discussed below:

#### 4.5.8 Subject knowledge

Teacher's subject knowledge plays a significant role in the implementation of the curriculum (Metzler & Woessmann, 2010) which implies that subject knowledge and

teacher experience are key factors in curriculum attainment. The study revealed that all the participants in **Schools B** and **C** had no qualifications to teach English and this can be linked to low learner performance at the school. In **School B**, Participant B2 was very aware of the problem that would arise when a person who has not majored in English is appointed to a post above those who are qualified for that language (see Section 4.3.1). This was explained when Participant B2 said that a *person who has never majored in English does not have confidence in that subject, let alone the knowledge of the content (SCK) as well as pedagogical content knowledge*. This finding confirms Metzler and Woessmann's (2010) argument that student achievement is dependent on teacher's subject knowledge and commitment. The lack of subject knowledge in quality assuring assessment practices was also identified by a variety of studies (see Herselman & Hay, 2002).

#### **4.5.9 Multi-tasking of teachers**

Teachers have many tasks to perform, such as to teach the learners, make sure that they are safe at school, teach them human relations and subject them to disciplinary measures if necessary. The study revealed that teachers were also involved in many extra-curricular activities, which affect their core business of classroom teaching. A number of participants highlighted a concern about doing things that ultimately cause backlogs in the teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

In **School B**, Participant B1 explained that even though the HoD worked hard she was expected to participate in many activities. This often meant that her work of monitoring and moderation of teaching and learning was compromised and the expectations of the Department of Education were not met. This was illustrated when Participant B1 said that the HoD executed managerial duties and at the same time performed professional duties (see Section 4.3.2). The multi-tasking contributed greatly to the HoD not doing her work effectively.

In **School C**, teachers not only had to multi-task but often valuable teaching time was lost in the day as these tasks took the teachers away from school. This was evident when Participants C3 listed a number of activities for which she was responsible and

which led her to compromise teaching time (see Section 4.3.4). The multi-tasking of teachers confirms the findings of the research by Brante (2007) that teacher work is increasing in complexity and intensity.

#### 4.5.10 Time

Time allocation, as stipulated in the policy documents, should ensure good quality teaching and learning. A teacher requires time to prepare for the lessons, assessment activities and time for extra-curricular activities. The study has revealed that in **Schools A and B** time constraints affect quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Although they find time constraints to be a factor affecting teaching, learning and assessment, **School C** did not find it a challenge. Although School C did not mention time constraints it does not suggest that it does not contribute to poor quality assurance of assessment practices. Perhaps this was one of many constraints that they were not explicitly aware of it. In **School A**, Participant A1 indicated that she had time constraints with curriculum coverage. The issue of time was also emphasised by the Participant A4, the HoD, who said that time constraints were always a challenge as she had many other things to do (see Section 4.4.4). In **School B**, Participant B1 mentioned time constraints as having a direct bearing on quality teaching, learning and assessment. She indicated that the HoD was not regularly assuring quality of the work of teachers due to lack of time.

#### 4.5.11 The quality of monitoring and moderation

Quality monitoring and moderation is a recipe for successful implementation of the curriculum. Effective monitoring helps teachers to improve their classroom instruction, which includes teaching, learning and assessment process (Glickman, 1990), whilst moderation ensures that the assessment of learners is valid, reliable, fair and consistent. Without monitoring and moderation, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment may be compromised.

Monitoring and moderation process are outlined in various policies and Departmental circulars, and schools are expected to comply to ensure the quality of teaching and learning. The study established that moderation and monitoring were ineffectively carried out in **Schools B and C**. Although the instruments were developed in **School B**,

there was no indication of them being used (see Section 4.3.2). It seems that the documents were developed for compliance purposes and not considered important for learner improvement.

Secondly, support given to teachers was minimal, as evident by the lack of monitoring and moderation of teachers' work schedules, lesson plans and assessment plans as well as assessment tasks. Although there were contradictions of responses by participants it was revealed that monitoring in the two schools was not undertaken. In **School B**, Participant B3 reported that the HoD had not notified them of the process of monitoring and moderation, which implies that monitoring and moderation were not performed (see Section 4.3.1). Similarly, Participant B1 said that the HoD used to visit and observe teachers while teaching (see Section 4.3.1). This may imply that although the HoD was conducting classroom observations, full support of the teachers with the core of monitoring and moderation was not being attended to. This would mean that monitoring and moderation was ineffective.

In **School C**, there were contradictory responses by the participants, however most showed that monitoring and moderation practices at the school were not being carried out. Both Participants C1 and C2 indicated that the HoD was no longer monitoring but the coach has taken over the roles of checking all the work. There were no documents developed for the processes, leading to the conclusion that moderation and monitoring was not performed. The practices in Schools **B** and **C** confirmed the findings of the study by Ramsuran (2006) that formal tasks given to learners are rarely quality assured by the SATs, highlighting a gap between policy and practice which could compromise the quality of learning. The case of **Schools B** and **C** is a reflection of many schools in similar contexts and settings.

#### **4.5.12 HoD overloaded**

The many curriculum changes introduced into the education system since 1994 have left teachers overloaded which impacts on the effective implementation of the curriculum. The study has established that not only were teachers overloaded but also HoDs had to take on professional and managerial duties in addition to their teaching

duties. In **Schools A** and **C**, it has emerged that HoDs were overloaded with duties as they had to perform both managerial and professional duties at the same time. Participant A2 said that teachers submitted tasks to the HoD before learners could write and suggested that the work was too much for her. In highlighting the issue of overloaded HoD, Participant C3 said that the HoD was spending much of her time helping with managerial duties instead of supporting them (see Section 4.3.2).

The issue of overloaded HoD is a confirmation of the findings by a number of studies finding that HoDs are overloaded with work and, as a result, they cannot effectively take on quality assurance tasks (see Nxumalo, 2007; Ngobeni, 2006). Ramsuran (2006) also found that that overload is one of the contributory factors leading to teachers not complying with assessment policies, resulting in them ineffectively assessing learners. In a personal communication with Moodley, (March 16, 2011), teacher overload was also cited as a contributory factor in quality assurance of assessment practices practically as most HoDs have a full teaching load (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2).

#### **4.5.13 Challenges with learners**

Many learners have learning barriers and as a result struggle to comprehend certain aspects while learning. Learning challenges, such as lack of motivation, absenteeism and poor English language proficiency are common in learners and teachers find it difficult to conduct differentiated teaching resulting in learners receiving little support and attention to their needs. According to the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the education system must ensure that the different needs of learners are met.

The study revealed that learner inability due to lack of motivation from learners has an effect on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all the schools. This was revealed by a number of participants. In **School A**, Participant A1 said that the learners were not serious about their work and when they were given it to do, they only did it for the sake of compliance (see Section 4.4.1). The lack of motivation from learners was echoed by some participants in **Schools B** and **C**. This was evident when Participant B3 from **School B** was asked about the challenges she had with EFAL assessment practices, replying that she enjoyed her work being quality assured but at the same time



was disappointed by the learners who did not take their education seriously (see Section 4.3.1). In **School C**, Participant C1 said that when the English facilitator monitored the implementation of the curriculum he chose a learner who did not come to school and she (the teacher) was humiliated when he (the facilitator) chose that learner (see Section 4.4.1). This confirms the findings of the research by Metzler and Woessmann (2010) that formative assessment is impeded by factors such as unwillingness of learners to study their books.

Poor learner achievement as a result of absenteeism was cited in **School B**. Participant B3 said that many learners did not come to school and this contributed to their poor performance (see Section 4.4.1). Although **Schools A** and **C** did not mention learner absenteeism as a factor impeding quality assurance of assessment practices, it did not mean that they were not affected, merely that it was seen as a serious issue of concern in their schools.

The inability of learners to speak and use English language proficiently was mentioned by Participant B3, who said that the learners did not understand English and teachers were forced to code switch while teaching. Although **School C** did not raise the issue of language proficiency, it can be argued that it does have an effect since the majority of learners came from homes in which literacy was not well developed, either in their home language or in English, and many parents were illiterate. The inability of learners to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts is a challenge to quality assurance as teachers cannot understand what learners are trying to say (see Hawes & Stevens, 1990; Barry, 2004). However, in School A, it seems that learners do not struggle with the language

#### **4.5.14 The power of teacher union resistance**

Teacher unions are empowered by legislation to protect and develop their members. They are expected to play a supportive role in the implementation of the curriculum by ensuring that their members are well informed and capacitated. However, in this study it has emerged that teacher unions fail the Department of Education in the implementation of its policies in **School B**. Although teacher union resistance was common in **School**

**B**, in **Schools A** and **C** it did not have an effect. In **School B** it was reported that monitoring by HoD was not performed. This was revealed when Participant B1 said that “*With teacher unions, you may be thought as a sell-out*”. The issue of teacher union resistance confirms the findings of studies that reported that teacher unions are failing to support the Department of Education in the implementation of its policies (see Nxumalo, 2007; Mhlongo, 2008).

#### **4.5.15 Lack of parental support**

Parental support in children’s education is vital. For children to be good learners, they need assistance from their parents or guardians. The study’s findings are supported by various studies which show that parental support and involvement in the education of children plays a pivotal role (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). In **School B**, the issue of lack of parental support was cited a number of times as having a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning process. Participant B3 said that it was the main challenge to the education of their children, and even when called to the school they did not keep the appointment. In **School C**, lack of parental support was not cited meaning that it was not a major contributor affecting quality assurance of assessment practices. In **School A**, parental support was said to be high and it seems that parental involvement in their children’s education was leading to good learner performance.

#### **4.5.16 Lack of resources**

In order for the intended curriculum to be effectively implemented, teachers need a variety of resources. The GDE (1999) stipulates that teachers need to be provided with resources to enable them execute their job. This study revealed that in **Schools B** and **C**, the lack of resources contributed to the ineffective implementation of the intended curriculum. Participant B3 testified that teachers mostly ran short of the basic necessities to effectively implement the intended curriculum (see Section 4.4.2). In **School C**, Participant C3 said that they did not have resources as a result of theft. The contribution of lack of resources to ineffective delivery of teaching, learning and assessment, and therefore to poor learner performance, has been cited by a number of findings (see DoE, 2005; Hendricks, 2008; Kanjee, 2009). Kanjee (2009) reported that

although there are major changes in simplifying assessment in South African schools there are still limited teaching and learning resources available to specifically assist teachers in improving their classroom assessment practices.

All the above challenges, namely Subject knowledge, multi-task teachers, time, the quality of monitoring and moderation, HoD overloaded, learner inability, the power of the teacher union resistance, lack of parental support and lack of resources, emerged predominantly from research conducted in **Schools B** and **C**. These challenges, except time constraints, learner inability and HoD overload, were not evident in **School A**.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the findings of the study in the three selected schools, by school. Firstly, interview data of the participants of each school was analysed. Secondly, documents of participants from **Schools A** and **B** were analysed to validate interview data. No document was analysed in **School C** since none was available even though they were requested a number of times (see Chapters 3 & 4 Section 4.3.1). In **School A**, the documents and the interview data were in line with the policies of the department. In **Schools B** and **C**, the practices were somehow contrary with the provision of the policy. There were a number of effective quality assurances of EFAL assessment practices as well as challenges in each school hampering effective quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices which have been presented in 4.5 above. The good practices identified, namely quality of English First Additional Language teachers, expertise of the HoD, compliance with policy, teacher support, transparency of assessment, data/results analysis and the availability of resources in **School A** were discussed in section 4.5.1 to 4.5.7. The challenges, namely subject knowledge, multi-task teachers, time, the quality of monitoring and moderation, HoD overloaded, learner inability, the power of the teacher union resistance, lack of parental support and lack of resources experienced by schools in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices were also discussed, in section 4.5.8 to 4.5.16.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted to investigate the role of School Assessment Teams (SATs) in the quality assurance of English First Additional Language (EFAL) assessment practices in primary schools in Tshwane South District. This chapter is a summary of the research in section 5.2. The findings of the research per specific question are discussed in section 5.3. Section 5.4 discusses the reflections on my conceptual framework and section 5.5 presents the reflections on my research design and methods. The limitations of the study are presented in section 5.6, with the conclusions and recommendations of the study in sections 5.7 and 5.8 respectively.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

After the dawn of democratic government in 1994, many new policies pertaining to teaching, learning and assessment were introduced, aimed at delivery of quality education in schools. The GDE, under the NPAQ (2007), established various structures to facilitate quality assurance of assessment practices at school, district and provincial levels. The introduction of SATs was aimed at improving assessment practices in schools.

Underpinning the study was a review of the literature (see chapter 2) which focused on assessment and quality assurance strategies for English First Additional Language (EFAL). The types of assessment which are needed before, during and after the implementation of the curriculum for improving learner performance, namely, baseline, formative, summative, diagnostic and systemic were discussed in detail, and quality assurance strategies in South Africa and other international countries such as Scotland, the Netherlands and Norway investigated. As the study was guided by a model for *assessment for learning*, the original model using a cycle of events by Harlen (2000) was adapted and discussed in detail. The conceptual framework of the study (see Section 2.6.1), drawing on the literature, was developed and helped guide the research.

The study followed an exploratory case study design (see chapter 3) which was deemed appropriate as the objective was to develop insight, discovery and interpretation of the phenomenon under study. This research aimed to investigate the role of SATs in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in primary schools in Tshwane South District. The main research question: **What is the role of School Assessment Teams in the quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?** was operationalised into the following sub-questions, to help guide the study:

- What factors ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?
- How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by school assessment teams?
- What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?

To answer the above questions, schools and teachers for this study were purposively selected, based on geographical location, cluster, quintile and learner performance in the 2011 ANA results (see Section 3.4.1). Documents such as moderation and monitoring tools, assessment plans and recording sheets, from each of the three sampled schools in a particular district in Gauteng North were collected and analysed, aligning them with policy requirements (see Section 3.4.5.1). Interviews were then conducted with individual teachers and SATs to validate document analysis (see Section 3.4.4). The interviews helped in getting direct information from the people who on a day-to-day basis were involved in teaching, learning and quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

In this section, the findings for each of the research questions are discussed:

### **5.3.1 What factors ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment at school level?**

In answering the above question, document analysis and interviews with teachers and SAT members were conducted. In some cases, it emerged that the documents did not tally with the interview data or with policy requirements whereas in some instances the document analysis confirmed the interview data. The following factors emerged in the study, namely, quality of English First Additional Language teachers, expertise of the HoD, compliance with policy, teacher support, transparency of assessment, results analysis, and availability of resources. Below is the brief discussion of the factors which ensure quality assurance practices for EFAL assessment.

#### ***Quality of English First Additional Language teachers***

The teaching, assessing and quality assurance of English First Additional Language requires teachers and SAT members to have subject and pedagogical knowledge, subject qualifications and experience in teaching the subject. The study has established that subject content knowledge and qualifications, coupled with experience, play a significant role in teaching, assessment and quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, and therefore learner performance (see Section 4.5.1).

#### ***Expertise of the HoD***

The quality assurance of assessment practices requires the HoD to have experience in teaching the subject. Expertise developed through their years of teaching the subject assists in the teaching, assessment and quality assurance of EFAL. The study revealed that expertise of the HoD is a contributory factor in teacher support resulting in schools performing well in EFAL (see Section 4.5.2).

#### ***Compliance with policy***

The NPAQ (2007) prescribes that learners' work books be moderated on a quarterly basis, teachers' files be monitored, lesson plans be moderated before teaching and learning takes place, formal assessment tasks be moderated before they are done by learners, marking of formal assessment tasks be moderated and teacher observation be

conducted as a form of monitoring the implementation of the curriculum. Monitoring and moderation is a recipe for school effectiveness and improvement. The study has established that schools that do well comply with the policy prescriptions (see Section 4.5.3).

### ***Teacher support***

Teachers need to be supported in order to effectively carry out their duties. The SATs were established to provide support to teachers with regards to assessment and quality assurance. The study has established that teachers who are supported by their HoDs and members of the SAT effectively implement the curriculum leading to high learner performance (see Section 4.5.4).

### ***Transparency of assessment***

The NPAQ (2007) stipulates that assessment should be fair and transparent. Teachers are expected to communicate assessment goals and criteria to learners. The study has revealed that schools that perform well not only communicate assessment goals to learners but also inform the parents (see Section 4.5.5).

### ***Result analysis to inform learning***

Teachers are expected to look carefully at learners' performance and therefore identify the areas in which learners performed well, in addition to areas in which they experienced difficulties. This will help teachers to make better planning. The study has established that schools that perform well have a practice of analysing learner results to improve learner performance (see Section 4.5.6).

### ***Availability of resources***

Resource availability plays a significant role in the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. Availability of resources without the knowledge of how to use them does not serve much purpose. The study has established that schools with resource availability and teachers who know how to use them have better learner performance

(see Section 4.5.7). Conversely, lack of resources contributes greatly to poor performance (see Section 4.5.16).

### **5.3.2 How is quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices undertaken by school assessment teams?**

In answering the questions, interviews and documents analysis were conducted. The following documents, namely, assessment programmes, monitoring and moderation instruments, recording sheets, assessment guidelines and GDE moderation instruments were carefully analysed (see Chapter 3, Table 3.5). Assessment plans were analysed to determine whether teachers planned their formal assessment activities in line with policy prescriptions. Recording sheets were analysed to see how marks were recorded, how learners performed and how marks were moderated and analysed. Monitoring and moderation instruments were looked at to see how HoDs and SATs monitored and moderated teachers' work and whether their practices were in line with policy. In analysing the above documents, the following findings are discussed in brief.

#### ***Assessment programme***

Teachers are expected to draw up assessment plans of their subjects, then SATs draw up a school assessment plan from all the subject assessment plans. The study has established that schools that perform well develop the assessment plans in line with assessment guidelines, communicate them to learners and parents, and the schools follow the subject assessment plans (see Appendix I).

#### ***Monitoring and moderation instruments***

Schools are expected to develop their own monitoring and moderation tools or make use of the ones provided by their respective districts. The study has established that schools that do well in learner performance continuously monitor and moderate teachers' work in line with policy recommendations. However, on the other hand, schools that perform poorly do not monitor or moderate teachers' work (see 4.3.1 – 4.3.2).

#### ***Recording sheets***



Although there is no policy stipulating how long a teacher should take to record learner marks in the recording sheets, it is expected that immediately on finishing marking, recording be done and the recording sheets be in line with the assessment plan. The study has revealed that schools that perform well record learner marks immediately after marking, with teachers analysing the results and developing strategies for bettering performance (see 4.4.5).

### ***Assessment guidelines and GDE moderation instruments***

The assessment guidelines and GDE moderation instruments are provided to teachers and they remain guidelines. Teachers are free to develop theirs based on the need of the school. The study has revealed that schools that do better follow the assessment guidelines when developing their assessment and moderation tools, and follow them.

### **5.3.3 What are the challenges experienced in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices by school assessment teams?**

In answering this question, interviews with teachers and members of SATs were conducted. A number of common challenges affecting quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices were identified, as follows.

#### ***Subject knowledge***

Subject knowledge in the implementation of the curriculum by teachers is a crucial aspect. In order to teach EFAL, teachers are expected to have knowledge and qualifications for English. The study has established that schools that do not perform well have teachers who do not have an appropriate qualification and therefore less subject knowledge for teaching English (see Section 4.5.8).

#### ***Multi-tasking of teachers***

The core business of teaching is the delivery of curriculum in the classroom, however, as learning at school involves not only content, teachers are expected to perform other duties which takes much of their time. The study has revealed that teachers were

involved in many extra-curricular activities, thus affecting their core business of classroom teaching (see Section 4.5.9).

### ***Time constraints***

Policy prescribes the amount of time teachers, HoDs, deputy principals and principals are expected to spend on teaching. Although teachers follow the time outlined in the policy, the study has established that HoDs do not have time as they are expected to execute professional duties and at the same time managerial duties (see Section 4.9.10).

### ***Quality of monitoring and moderation***

Delivery of quality education requires quality monitoring and moderation by the HoDs together with SATs. Monitoring and moderation helps in school effectiveness and improvement. The study has revealed that schools that perform poorly do not have monitoring or moderation mechanisms in place (see Section 4.9.11).

### ***HoD overload***

Teacher overload as a result of the overloaded curriculum impacting on the implementation of the intended curriculum has been noted in many studies. However, this study has established that not only teachers were overloaded, but also HoDs, in taking on professional and managerial duties in addition to their teaching duties (see Section 4.9.12).

### ***Challenges with learners***

Learners in schools have different learning styles, needs and challenges. Teachers are expected to help these learners perform well, however, this study has revealed that teachers struggle in teaching learners with learner inability due to lack of motivation, which then contributes negatively to their performance (see Section 4.9.13.).

### ***The power of teacher union resistance***

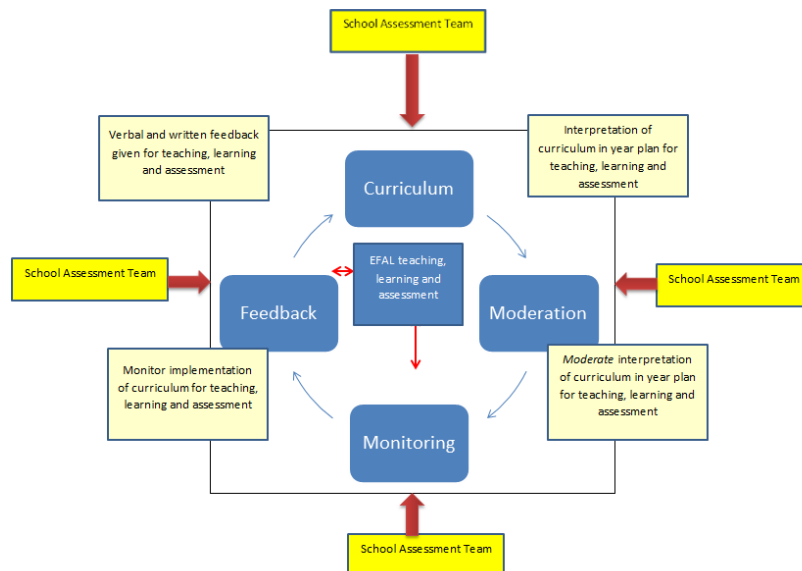
Teachers are permitted by law to join any teacher union of their choice, however, they are not allowed to neglect their duties on the basis of union matters. The study has established that teacher unions in some schools fail the Department of Basic Education in the implementation of its policies (see Section 4.9.14).

### ***Parental support***

Parents are expected to support teachers by making sure that their children are at school every day and on time, that they do homework, provide resources when requested and monitor their school progress. The study has established that schools that do not perform well have learners who are not supported by their parents, whereas those whose parents do support them perform well (see Section 4.9.15)

## **5.4 REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**Figure 5.1:** Model for the quality assurance of the assessment of English First Additional Language assessment practices.



The conceptual framework was developed and revised based upon the literature, the final version of which was developed to summarise alternative quality assurance

procedure as developed and implemented in the study and found to be a valid quality assurance strategy for SATs. This framework provided a lens for viewing the research and it was useful in guiding data selection, collection and analyses. There was also a meaningful interpretation of data throughout the framework and the alignment of study with the conclusions was also evident. The framework was helpful in investigating the roles SATs are required to play in curriculum, moderation, monitoring and feedback, as I managed to establish factors affecting SATs in the above aspects. The framework also enabled me to note limitations of the study as well as potential opportunities for future research. Although this conceptual framework was derived from practice in quality assurance of EFAL assessment, it is a much wider and more profound framework that can be applied to any other subject assessment situation. The conceptual framework also helped me to rearrange the content of and structure of my research, which was adapted to respond to the changing focus of the chapters. The conceptual framework served its purpose as it helped me to organise my thinking and complete my investigation successfully. Those conditions for verification of a conceptual framework were interrogated within the research (Mason & Waywood, 1996).

Although the framework yielded positive results, a number of difficulties were experienced. The dissertation presents the conceptual framework in an orderly and sequentially manner, however, when it comes to real usage of it, it was not followed as it is. Each of the aspects was revised many times and adjustments made as the learning journey was continued. The focus of the study in the four roles played by the SATS, namely, curriculum, moderation, monitoring and feedback, resulted in some such as moderation and monitoring receiving more emphasis than the others. Furthermore, it was not possible for me to gain in-depth insights into quality assurance practices due to the time allocated for data collection. The outcomes were also affected by the limitations of the study discussed in section 5.5 below.

Most of the findings of this study, as discussed in 5.3, confirm the findings of studies by other researchers conducted more than a decade ago (see Vandeyar & Killen, 2000; Clewell & Campbell, 2004; Matoti, 2008; Du Fur & Barkey 1995, Harselman & Hay, 2002). The situation does not change much at schools although the curriculum has

changed twice during the past 20 years. All the recommendations and findings from researchers remain on the shelves and do not go to schools. Although most of the findings confirm those of other studies, there are some that do not address the conceptual framework, for example, challenges with learners and parental involvement. However, there is always room for improvement. If I have to re-develop the conceptual framework, the model should have learners at the centre, because the primary reason for quality assurance is about learner improvement and most of the findings reflected on learners.

## **5.5 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

The use of an exploratory case study design was seen as appropriate for this research as it enabled me to meet with the participants in their workplace, where the problems of quality assurance existed. It confirmed Merriam's (1998) claim that it is useful for the researcher to use an exploratory case study when the aim of the study is to gain understanding of the case under investigation. The use of interviews in the collection of data helped extend understanding of assessment and quality assurance practices as it enabled me to interact with teachers and make follow-up questions when needed. Patton (2002) confirmed that interviews provide an opportunity for the interviewer to probe interesting areas that arise. In collecting data, I used a recording device borrowed from the University, which functioned very well.

The use of purposive sampling was also advantageous as I was able to select the schools based on learner performance, as there were many in the same category of performance, namely, those that achieved above 70%, between 30% and 70% and below 30% in ANA 2011. However, I would have liked to have more than one school for each category, to gather more data. The use of purposive sampling was appropriate as it also enabled me to select teachers who managed to provide me with the data needed. The advantage confirmed Neumann's (2006) argument that the researcher selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. However, if I were to conduct this study again I would include school principals, as they are the overseers of the schools.

In analysing the documents, both school and departmental, my knowledge was extended as some were new to me. In this study, there were many lessons I learnt. Earlier research had also identified HoD overload as a negative factor affecting them in the execution of their duties (see Nxumalo, 2007; Ngobeni, 2006; Ramsuran, 2008). Firstly, interviewing HoDs was informative as it enabled me to understand their frustrations, concerns and difficulties in their positions. Secondly, as a Subject Advisor I assumed that I knew better than teachers. However, I came to learn that the challenges the HoDs faced seemed unsurmountable. That some were class teachers, subject teachers, curriculum heads and extra-curricular heads informed me of the burden they carried. Although there were a number of advantages and lesson learnt in this study, a number of limitations were also present, as described below.

My initial planning was to interview teachers from two schools from each cluster, namely, one better and one lesser performing school; however, because of the large number of participants I would have had, I used only three primary schools out of more than 95, that is, one from each cluster. This may not have been representative of the whole district. The schools were chosen because of the performance of learners in the 2011 ANA, which might not be the only ones better or less-well performing. For example, in the cluster, only one performing or less well-performing school was chosen and the school chosen might not have been a good indicator of the performance of the cluster.

In one of the schools the interview was postponed twice and when it was eventually conducted the participants were very busy, so it was conducted hastily, leaving the participants with insufficient time to concentrate and so possibly compromising the data, and allowing bias to creep in. That one participant had only two months' teaching experience could be a limitation in itself, because the participant was unfamiliar with developments in the education system. Furthermore, the focused group interviewed consisted of two or three members instead of seven to 10, which could mean that the data collected was insufficient.

In School C, monitoring and moderation tools, although requested a number of times, were not provided, leading me to proceed with the interviews without them. This may

have compromised the research findings because had the documents been provided the findings would have been different. Again, the SAT members interviewed were not properly constituted as per policy. The GDE (1999) stipulates that the SAT should comprise the school principal, the deputy principal, HoDs and selected teachers, depending on the number of teachers at the school. In all the schools, principals were not part of the SAT. The non-availability of principals and deputy principals could also have served as a limitation because they were the overseers of school effectiveness and improvement.

In transcribing and analysing the data, I used Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS). However, while busy using the programme, it failed to operate, leading me to conduct it manually, which was time-consuming.

## 5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn based on the evidence from my dissertation.

- **There is a gap between policy and practice in the quality assurance of EFAL practices**

The NCS (2002), NPAQ (2007) and CAPS (2011a) prescribe that lesson plans developed by teachers and formal tasks be moderated before teaching and assessment take place. However, in this study it emerged that there was a gap between policy and practice, as evident in the knowledge of NSC and CAPS teachers against their inability to put it into practice. In one school, there were no documents produced, implying that they were not developed, whereas in other schools there were many monitoring and moderation instruments developed but not utilised, which runs contrary to the NCS and CAPS. The non-utilisation of documents confirms the findings of the study by Taylor (2008), who reported that although teachers are being provided with documents there remains a gap in terms of practice (see Section 1.3). The documents produced, for example, monitoring tools in which the HoD listed the names of teachers who submitted their files and learners' work, were not helpful to teachers as they were not given feedback (see Chapter 4 Section 4.3 and Appendix O). This failure attests to Harlen

(2000) who reported that, without feedback, teaching, learning and assessment, as well as quality assurance of assessment practices will not be improved.

- **Teaching First Additional Language English at primary school requires appropriate qualifications and experience**

In order to teach EFAL in primary schools, teachers need to have appropriate qualifications. They should be proficient in English Language so that they can effectively deliver teaching and learning. The study revealed that having professional qualifications is a contributory factor in effective implementation of the intended curriculum. In School A, where teachers had qualifications for teaching English Language it was evident that learner performance was high. In School B and C, where none of the SATs members possessed English qualifications, the learner results were low (see Chapter 4 Section 4.5.1). To have qualifications for English teaching serves as an added advantage in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices. Most teachers offering English in the two schools School B and C do not have qualifications to teach it, and this lack of qualifications to teach English FAL can be generalised to other schools in similar settings and contexts in the province and the country as a whole. The issue of lack of qualifications in teaching confirms the findings of the study by Clewell and Campbell (2004), that English language learners learn well when they have qualified staff.

- **SATs need to be composed of teachers with appropriate/high levels of subject content knowledge**

Although it is generally assumed that principals and teachers at schools have been appointed and have subject content knowledge, in Schools B and C most members of the SAT did not. For SATs to effectively function they need to be composed of teachers with subject content knowledge as opposed to current practices whereby composition is done according to position, that is, members of management being the members of SAT. In School A, which is a performing one, the SAT was composed of a highly qualified, experienced HoD and teachers who also had content knowledge, qualifications as well as experience in English and other subjects (see participants' demographics in Chapter 3). The significance of subject content knowledge in ensuring



quality teaching, learning and assessment is confirmed by a number of studies (see Section 4.5.2).

- **The role SATs play in monitoring and moderation influences learner performance**

When SATs are effective in monitoring and moderation of teaching, learning and assessment practices, it leads to high learner achievement. SATs are effective in environments with well-functioning management structures, high academic expectations and high achievement. The converse is also true.

In School A, where monitoring and moderation strategies were in place and being implemented, learners scored highly in both internal and external assessments. However, the opposite was the case where there were no monitoring or moderation strategies in place, as in School C, where learner performance was low, although in the internal assessments the learners seemed to be performing well, albeit poorly in the external assessments (see Chapter 4 Section 4.3). The lack of monitoring and moderation confirms NEEDU's (2011) findings that most principals do not have systems or procedures in place in their schools to monitor curriculum delivery, including controlling classroom practices and monitoring teachers' work (DBE, 2011e, also see Section 2.5.1.3).

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has exposed a gap in the quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices, evident in the minimal literature found during my research. Most of the literature available on English speaks not about quality assurance but rather assessment only.

### **Policy and Practice**

- **The role of SATs needs to be made clear and communicated effectively to the schools.**

Communication of the roles to workers improves organisational performance. This study has revealed that the role of SAT is unclear to many teachers, or limited to the

development of school assessment plan. Currently, many SAT members do not know their role, hence quality assurance is not being effectively conducted. The non-quality assurance of assessment has been confirmed by the studies (see Harispad, 2004 & Pillay, 2011). If the SAT structure has to function effectively it is recommended that the role and responsibilities of SATs be made clear and communicated to the schools.

- **Quality assurance expertise is needed at district level**

For organisations to achieve its goals, they must employ people with expertise. Currently, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in conjunction with provincial Departments of Education have quality assurance directorates, however these directorates are not doing enough to offer the guidance and support teachers require to effectively assure quality assessment practices. Districts which are expected to provide direct support to schools do not have personnel with the expertise to offer support in quality assurance. At the moment, subject advisors in collaboration with assessment facilitators are the ones performing quality assurance, but some are not specialists. Furthermore, there is no line of communication with regards to quality assurance. The national and provincial Departments' quality assurance experts visit the schools without the district officials, as there are none responsible for it. Therefore, it is recommended that personnel with expertise in quality assurance be appointed to each district and work hand-in-hand with assessment facilitators, as well as liaise with the province on quality assurance matters to assist schools in quality assurance practices.

- **There is a need for intensive training of principals, SATs and teachers on how to conduct quality assurance**

For better performance leading to achievement of organisational goals, training of staff is required. Presently, training of SATs and teachers on quality assurance has been less thoroughly conducted. As training on conducting assessment is a continuous process, in order to equip teachers with knowledge and skills of quality assurance, intensive training needs to be conducted. Many SATs and teachers lack the knowledge of quality assurance, as confirmed by the lack of moderation in Schools B and C. This confirms the findings of studies by various researchers who reported that teachers do

not moderate their work due to lack of quality assurance knowledge (see Harispad, 2004).

- **External moderation should be undertaken in the Intermediate Phase**

Moderation ensures that standards set by the Departments of Education are met. According to NPAQ (2007) and NPA (2011d), schools are required to conduct internal moderation, however these policies are silent with regards to external moderation. In the FET, Grade 12 in particular, external moderation by Subject Advisors is carried out and learner performance has improved. It is recommended that external moderation in the Intermediate Phase, especially in Grade 6 as it is the exit point to Senior Phase, be carried out by Subject Advisors who would have been equipped with moderation techniques and strategies. This will ensure credibility of marks awarded at school level.

- **There is a need to strengthen accountability of the school managers**

Accountability is the responsibility of every manager, required by law to be accountable for everything happening at their respective schools. Although there are many promulgations of policies in relation to assessment and quality assurance, it has emerged that implementation of these policies is not being effected. No individual is held accountable for failing to implement the policies of the Department. In some cases, non-compliance with policy, such as failing to submit work, has been noted, and when the school manager tries to take action against the teacher concerned, he/she becomes the one with problems. Teachers are accustomed to non-compliance, knowing that teacher union will be protective.

- **The process of the appointments of HoDs should be reviewed**

Appointment of teachers in schools is governed by the EEA (1998) and is based on the possession of teaching qualifications. However, the appointment of HoDs is based on qualifications and the number of years in teaching. The HoDs are appointed to lead the phase not the subject, unlike in FET. As a result, many HoDs find themselves in a situation where they are not knowledgeable about certain subjects, so learner performance is low. Currently, some schools internally appoint a Subject Head with

expertise, skills and knowledge. However, as time passes, the subject head, if not remunerated, finds it difficult to continue working, particularly if other HoDs at the school are doing the same job and being paid. As English is a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) it is recommended that the HoD posts specifically for English or languages be created at school level. This will also motivate teachers to further their studies in English Language Teaching therefore increasing their subject knowledge, knowing that more posts will be created and therefore promoted.

### **Further research**

- Further research into the quality assurance of assessment practices should include the role of subject advisors, since they assist teachers effectively in quality assurance of assessment practices. There are many studies nationally and internationally on the role of SMTs and teachers in curriculum implementation, but only a few about subject advisors. Subject advisors play a critical role in supporting teachers in schools, therefore it is recommended that more studies on their role in quality assurance be conducted. This would also establish other factors affecting or promoting quality assurance in schools.
- Further research on quality assurance of assessment practices is recommended as the limited studies are only on assessment. There are a few studies on quality assurance practices in South Africa and internationally, especially in the GET band, but those available are not subject-specific.
- It is recommended that a study of the quality assurance of assessment be extended to subjects other than EFAL, to discover other factors leading to non-compliance and lack of quality assurance. In the Intermediate Phase, learners are required to pass English, either as FAL or Home Language, Mathematics and three of the content subjects. It is recommended that quality assurance studies, especially in Mathematics, which the majority of learners fail, be conducted to establish factors leading to lack of quality assurance.

- It is further recommended that more research into EFAL be carried out since it is the LOLT in many schools in South Africa. Currently such studies are limited, especially in the Intermediate Phase.

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## Appendix A: Departmental Monitoring and moderation tools



**GAUTENG PROVINCE**  
Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
TSHWANE NORTH  
REPORT – GET (INTERMEDIATE)

NAME OF SUBJECT: **ENGLISH**

Name of school		<b>Circuit</b>		Date:		
		<b>Cluster</b>				
Telephone:				Fax number:		
E-Mail:				EMIS:		
ESSP	YES	NO		GPLMS		
ESSP General Supervisor	Name, Initials			Number of Homework Supervisors		
	Cellphone No.					
ESSP Punctuality of Supervisor	YES	NO		YES	NO	
Minutes of meetings with the Educational staff and Principal	YES	NO		YES	NO	

	INITIALS AND SURNAME		CELL			
PRINCIPAL						
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL						
HOD						
<b>KEY</b>						
	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>90-100</b>	Full compliance / meet with expectations			
	<b>AMBER</b>	<b>60-89</b>	Partial compliance / satisfactory expectations			
	<b>RED</b>	<b>0 - 59</b>	No compliance / below expectations			
SUBJECT TEACHERS INITIALS AND SURNAME		CELL NO.	PLANNING	CONTENT COVER-AGE	WRITTEN WORK	
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

6				
---	--	--	--	--

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>SUPPSSUPPORT GIVEN:SOSUPPRT GIVEN: SSUPPSUS</b>

SUBJECT FILE	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>			Comments / Recommendations
	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	
1. INDEX				
2. CAPS Policy				
3. NPPPPR Policy				
4. National Protocol for Assessment				
5. School Subject Policy				
6. Composite Time-table (Prescribed contact time)				
7. Class Time-table				
8. Personal Time-table				
9. Circulars and District Memoranda				
10. Minutes of Subject Meetings				
11. Evidence of monitoring and support (Principal/Deputy Principal/HOD)				

ASSESSMENT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> / No <input type="checkbox"/>			Comments / Recommendations
	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	
12. Subject Assessment Programme				
13. Prescribed number of Formal Assessment Tasks				
14. Various Forms of Assessment used in the Tasks				
15. Appropriate Assessment Tools for each Task				
16. Moderation of Formal				



Assessment					
17. Recording /Mark sheets					
18. List of Retainees					
19. Completed Support Forms					
20. SUBJECT SPECIFICS					
<i>EXAMPLE: STUDY AREAS IN LIFE SKILLS</i>				Comments / Recommendations	
<i>Listening &amp; Speaking</i>					
<i>Language structure &amp; conventions</i> <i>Reading &amp; viewing</i> <i>Writing &amp; Presenting</i>					
LESSON PLAN	Comments / Recommendations		Content coverage		
Grade 4					
Grade 6					
Grade 6					
LEARNERS' WORKBOOKS (WRITTEN WORK)				Comments / Recommendations	
Grade 4					
Grade 5					
Grade 6					

LTSM
FEEDBACK FROM THE HOD / TEACHERS:
COMMENTS/ REMARKS

SIGNATURES OF TEACHERS	NAME & SIGNATURE OF HOD	NAME & SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL	NAME OF ADVISOR SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT
			D. CHAVALALA
			083 365 2527

## Appendix B: Interview schedule

### Questions to the teachers

1. Tell me, what are the assessment goals for EFAL in your grade?
2. How are the assessment goals set?
3. How are the assessment goals communicated to learners?
4. Tell me how does the HoD support you in EFAL assessment practices?
5. What kind of skills is needed to quality assure EFAL assessment practices?
6. How are your EFAL assessment practices quality assured?
7. What do you think is done well when your EFAL assessment practices are quality assured?
8. What challenges do you encounter when your EFAL assessment practices are quality assured?
9. How are the findings of quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices communicated to you?
10. How does the feedback from the HoD help in EFAL assessment practices?
11. How often are your EFAL assessment practices quality assured?
12. How does the availability or non-availability of resources affect quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?

### Questions to HoD/ SAT

1. What does a good HoD in EFAL need?
2. What are the assessment goals in the IP at your school?
3. How are the goals of assessment set?

4. How are the goals communicated to teachers and learners?
5. How do you ensure that the goals are achieved?
6. How do you quality assure assessment practices?
7. What works well when you quality assure assessment practices?
8. What challenges do you encounter when quality assuring assessment practices?
9. How do you communicate to teachers, the findings of your quality assurance of EFAL practices?
10. How often do you quality EFAL assessment practices?
11. How do you collect data of your quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?
12. How does the availability or non-availability of resources affect your quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices?

## Appendix C: Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education  
Ethics Committee  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Dear Mr. Chavala,

REFERENCE: SM 12/06/06

Your application was carefully considered and the final decision of the Ethics Committee is:

Your application is approved on the following conditions:

1. Please forward the letter of permission to the GDE to the Ethics Committee. Although the GDE has already given permission for the research, the Ethics Committee has to determine if all the relevant information about the research was disclosed to the GDE.

This letter serves as notification that you may continue with your research. You do not have to re-submit an application. The above-mentioned issues can be addressed in consultation with your supervisor who will take final responsibility. Please note that this is **not a clearance certificate**. Upon completion of your research you need to submit the following documentation to the Ethics Committee:

1. Integrated Declarations form that you adhered to conditions stipulated in this letter – Form DC8

**Please Note:**

- **Any amendment to this conditionally approved protocol needs to be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review prior to data collection. Non-compliance implies that approval will be null and void.**
- **Final data collection protocols and supporting evidence (e.g.: questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules) have to be submitted to the Ethics Committee before they are used for data collection.**
- **On receipt of the above-mentioned documents you will be issued a clearance certificate. Please quote the reference number SM 12/06/06 in any communication with the Ethics Committee.**

Best wishes,

Prof. Liesel Ebersohn  
Chair: Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Education

## Appendix D: Letter from GDE granting permission



**education**  
Department of Education  
GAUTENG PROVINCE

For administrative use:  
Reference no. D2013/31

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	04 May 2012
Validity of Researcher	04 May 2012 to 30 September 2012
Name of Researcher:	Chavalala D
Address of Researcher:	House no 178 E Giyani 0826
Telephone Number:	015 812 3834/012 543 1094/083 385 2527
Fax Number:	012 543 1094/015 812 3834
Email address:	deschavalala@gmail.com
Research Topic:	The role of school management in quality assurance of English first additional language assessment practices in primary schools.
Number and type of schools:	6 primary schools
Districts/HD	Tshwane South

**Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's consent must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's must be approached separately, one in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research**

67 Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001  
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2008, Tel: 011 300 0000  
Email: [Louis.Mokhele@education.gov.za](mailto:Louis.Mokhele@education.gov.za)  
Website: [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

*Louis Mokhele*

## Appendix E: Concert forms

### APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW YOU REGARDING YOUR ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES AT YOUR SCHOOL

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr \_\_\_\_\_(Teacher/HoD)

I hereby wish to seek your permission to interview you on the following topic: The role of School Assessment Teams in quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices in primary schools. The aim of the research is to explore factors affecting quality assurance of assessment practices in English First Additional Language; challenges facing teachers and school assessment teams.

In South Africa, we have little research to aid in our understanding of why our teachers and school assessment teams are experiencing such difficulties in quality assurance of assessment practices.

#### ***What are the factors affecting quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices at school level?***

Should you decide to participate in this research; the following research activities will be required of you:

1. Participation in a one-to-one conversational interview lasting approximately 30 minutes in which your ideas about the factors affecting quality assurance of EFAL assessment practices and challenges facing you, your teachers and the rest of school management are discussed.
2. The interviews will not take place during formal teaching and learning time. The research results, in the form of a thesis, will be used to meet the requirements for a Masters degree in Assessment and Quality Assurance at the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria. The thesis will therefore become public domain for the scrutiny of examiners and the academic community. The findings may as such be used for publication in academic journals and for presentation at academic conferences or to

non-governmental organisations involved in reading development initiatives and to the Department of Education.

I will follow the University of Pretoria's research ethics regulations and will use the information for the purposes of this study only. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation at any stage during the research process, prior to the reporting of the findings for the project. You will also have the opportunity to review the findings prior to publication and will be able to provide advice on the accuracy of this information.

It is important to note that your name and the name of your school will be withheld in the reporting of the data. No information shared will be disclosed to members of staff at your school in a way that will allow them to identify contributions you may make to the research. As such, confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed. If you accept this invitation to participate in the research, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent.

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Furthermore, to collect research data it is sometimes necessary to use a digital camera, voice or video recorder so that no important information is lost before it can be captured and reported. Again, these recordings will only be used for the purpose of this research and not for any other purposes. If you agree to the use of such devices during the research process, please sign the second acknowledgement of your consent to the use of these recorders below:

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Should you have any questions about the research and/ or the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.



**DESMOND CHAVALALA Contact details:**

**Cell: 083 365 2527**

**Email: [deschavalala@gmail.com](mailto:deschavalala@gmail.com)**

## Appendix F: Minutes of the meeting of School A

### Minutes of the SAT Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 14 August 2012 in Room 12 at 7:00

Present: Dr. Mrs. Mrs. Mrs.  
Mrs. Miss Mrs. Mrs.  
Mr

1. Everyone was welcomed to the meeting.
2. Apologies:
3. Matters arising from previous minutes:
  - 3.1 Although at a previous SAT Meeting it was decided that team-leaders would compile the graphs and do the statistics for the grade, the decision was reviewed after an Intersen Phase Meeting during which it was suggested that Miss could do the graphs since she already has the information on computer for District Statistics. In future, Miss will do the graphs and the subject heads (Intersen Phase) and team leaders (Foundation Phase) will do the analysis. A meeting was held with all staff on Tuesday 31 July at 7:00 to provide some guidelines in respect of analysis.
4. Matters discussed:
  - 4.1 Possible retentions will have to be presented before the end of this term. Possible Dates in the District Management Plan are Monday 17 September and Tuesday 18 September. Final details to follow. Identification of possible retentions has already taken place at SBT level.
  - 4.2 Dates were set for the following:  
Discussion of learners on the Possible Retention List will take place on the following dates:

Gr 1 and 2:	Monday 3 September 2012	Mrs
Gr 3:	Wednesday 5 September 2012	Mrs
Gr 4 and 5:	Monday 3 September 2012	Mrs
Gr 6 and 7:	Monday 3 September 2012	Mrs

Meetings with Parent/signatures to be finalized by the time learners are discussed.

The Possible Retention Schedules must be handed in for typing on or before Monday 10 September 2012.
  - 4.3 Analysis of Term 2 results was discussed.
  - 4.4 Pre-and Post-moderation dates will be set in the new management plan for Term 4.
  - 4.5 ANA results may not be used for calculation of term marks. The results must be analysed per question. Action Plans must be compiled for 2013. It is important for grades to do the "mock ANA" tests before the real ones so that learners will understand the type of questions being asked. ANA tests must be marked within 3 days following the test.

## Appendix G: Analysis of promotion marks of School A

PRIMARY SCHOOL (DISTRICT 4)	ANALYSIS OF PROMOTION MARKS – 2011
<p>The statistics obtained from the end-of-year promotion marks were turned into graphs to facilitate analysis. The analysis serves to establish <i>standard of work, pin-point challenges and recommend adjustments where necessary, in order to maintain sound academic standards at Brooklyn Primary.</i></p>	
<b>Grade 4 - 2011</b>	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN GRADE: 102</b>	
<b>English:</b>	<p>The graph spikes at Level 3, with the majority of learners achieving in this range.</p> <p>53 learners achieved more than 50%; 39 learners achieved below 50%, of which 4 were below 35%.</p>
<b>Mathematics:</b>	<p>The graph spikes at Level 3, .</p> <p>50 learners achieved more than 50%; 42 learners achieved less than 50% of which 11 were below 35%.</p>
<b>Overall totals:</b>	<p>Of a possible 918 results, 524 were above 50% and 294 below.</p> <p>58 results were below 35% (This is cause for concern).</p>
<b>Observations:</b>	<p>It must be noted that the Performance Levels are extremely broad. The levels are therefore slightly misleading when trying to establish exact levels of achievement.</p> <p>All learning area graphs spike at Level 3 which represents the 50 – 69% range. Achievement in this range is satisfactory since it is representative of the average population group and thereby indicates that, broadly speaking, assessment of Grade 4 learners can be considered valid. However, it is concerning to note that increasingly, learners are achieving in the below average range (below 50%) in most learning areas. The general indication is that Bloom's Taxonomy is possibly not being implemented at all, or only partially, in the setting of assessment tasks.</p> <p>What is concerning is a comparison between learners achieving at Level 2 and at Level 4. The Level 2 spike is higher than that of Level 4 in most, but not all, learning areas.</p> <p>When comparing the Maths and English graphs, an anomaly can be noticed in the relatively high number of children that achieved Level 4 in Maths (19 learners) by comparison to the few (only 9) who obtained Level 4 in English. A comparison of the other levels is more balanced but in terms of relativity, the graphs should be less equal for results to be considered entirely valid. Learners need to be able to utilize cognitive language efficiently in order to grasp mathematical concepts and the graphs should illustrate the relative correlation.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The structure of the Performance Levels lends itself to producing an unbalanced graph. In reading this report, educators must consider these observations in the context of the Performance Levels and approach the re-structuring of assessment sensibly. Correct implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy would alleviate the problem to some degree.</p> <p>It is recommended that educators implement Bloom's Taxonomy more carefully. It is also necessary to grade the level of difficulty of questions in tests/exams and other assessment activities so that all levels of ability are accommodated. Questions requiring higher order thinking skills and cognitive use of language in formulating and writing answers are of utmost importance. As the foundation year of Intermediate Phase, activities requiring use of higher order skills should be introduced and developed, in a structured manner, during the course of Grade 4.</p> <p>This analysis does not suggest that educators are failing in providing the necessary structures but merely tries to identify possible factors that need to be taken into account when planning future learning programmes.</p>

The statistics obtained from the end-of-year promotion marks were turned into graphs to facilitate analysis. The analysis serves to establish standard of work, pin-point challenges and recommend adjustments where necessary, in order to maintain sound academic standards at Brooklyn Primary.

### **Grade 5 - 2011**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN GRADE: 109**

- English:** The graph spikes at Level 3, with 48 learners achieving in this range and 39 in Level 2.  
 59 Learners achieved more than 50%; 50 Learners achieved below 50%, of which 12 achieved below 35%.
- Mathematics:** The graph spikes at Level 1, with 35 learners of learners achieving in this range. This is closely followed by a spike at Level 2, representing 32 learners.  
 42 Learners achieved more than 50%; 67 learners achieved less than 50% of which 35 were below 35%.
- Overall totals:** Of a possible 980 results, 470 are above 50% and 510 below.  
 115 results are below 35% (This is cause for concern).
- Observations:** It must be noted that the Performance Levels are extremely broad. The levels are therefore slightly misleading when trying to establish exact levels of achievement.
- The spikes for the various learning areas mostly fluctuate between Levels 2 and 3. Achievement in Level 3 is satisfactory since it is representative of the average population group and thereby indicates that, broadly speaking, assessment can be considered valid. However, it is concerning that the Level 2 spike is, in three learning areas, especially in the Life Orientation and Natural Sciences learning areas. The general indication is that Bloom's Taxonomy is possibly not being implemented at all, or only partially, in the setting of assessment tasks.
- The poor achievement in Mathematics is disappointing and cause for great concern. Remedial actions need to be considered.
- The graph for English also paints a bleak picture with almost an equal number of learners achieving in Levels 2 & 3, as in Levels 3 & 4.
- Note:** The structure of the Performance Levels lends itself to producing an unbalanced graph. In reading this report, educators must consider these observations in the context of the Performance Levels and approach the restructuring of assessment sensibly. Correct implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy would alleviate the problem to some degree.

It is recommended that educators implement Bloom's Taxonomy more carefully. It is also necessary to grade the level of difficulty of questions in tests/exams and other assessment activities so that all abilities are accommodated. Questions requiring higher order thinking skills and cognitive use of language in formulating and writing answers are of utmost importance. As the middle year of Intermediate Phase, Grade 5 should, in a structured manner, further build on foundations established in Grade 4. This analysis does not suggest that educators are failing in providing the necessary structures but merely tries to identify possible factors that need to be taken into account when planning future learning programmes.

PRIMARY SCHOOL (DISTRICT 4)

ANALYSIS OF PROMOTION MARKS – 2011

The statistics obtained from the end-of-year promotion marks were turned into graphs to facilitate analysis. *The analysis serves to establish standard of work, pin-point challenges and recommend adjustments where necessary, in order to maintain sound academic standards at Brooklyn Primary.*

**Grade 6 – 2011**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN GRADE: 87**

**English** — The graph spikes at Level 3 (50–69%) . . . . .  
 59 learners achieved more than 50%. 28 learners achieved below 50%, of which 3 were below 35%.

**Mathematics:** The graph spikes almost equally at Levels 2 (35–49%) and 3 (50–69%) . . . . .  
 40 Learners achieved more than 50%; 47 learners achieved less than 50% of which 13 were below 35%.

**Overall totals:** Of a possible 782 results, 504 are above 50% and 278 below.  
 47 results are below 34% (This is cause for concern).

**Observations:** It must be noted that the Performance Levels are extremely broad. The levels are therefore slightly misleading when trying to establish exact levels of achievement.

All learning area graphs, except for Maths, spike at Level 3 which represents the 50 – 69% range. Achievement in this range is satisfactory since it is representative of the average population group and thereby indicates that, broadly speaking, assessment of Grade 6 learners can be considered valid. However, it is concerning that the Level 2 bar is, in at least two learning areas, almost as high as the Level 3 bar. For Maths, the Level 2 bar exceeds the Level 3 bar, by one. This reveals an increasing tendency towards poor performance by learners.

The Level 3 spike for LO, as well as EMS, is exceedingly high and is possibly inflated.

Most graphs reflect an increasing tendency towards poor performance.

The general indication is that Bloom's Taxonomy is possibly not being implemented at all, or only partially, in the setting of some assessment tasks.

When comparing the Maths and English graphs, it must be noted that the graphs accurately reflect the correlation that normally exists between the ability to operate on a cognitive level (which uses language) in order to grasp and conceptualise Mathematics.

**Note:** The structure of the Performance Levels lends itself to producing an unbalanced graph. In reading this report, educators must consider these observations in the context of the Performance Levels and approach the restructuring of assessment sensibly. Correct implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy would alleviate the problem to some degree.

It is recommended that educators implement Bloom's Taxonomy more carefully. It is also necessary to grade the level of difficulty of questions in tests/exams and other assessment activities so that all abilities are accommodated. Questions requiring higher order thinking skills and cognitive use of language in formulating and writing answers are of utmost importance. As the final year of Intermediate Phase, Grade 6 should, in a structured manner, further build on foundations established in Grade 5 and at the same time, prepare learners for Senior Phase where learners are increasingly expected to perform at a more abstract level of thinking and formulating. *This analysis does not suggest that educators are falling in providing the necessary structures but merely tries to identify possible factors that need to be taken into account when planning future learning programmes.*

Appendix H: Book control of School A

22/09 2014 12 21 FAX

001

BOOK CONTROL REPORT			
NAME OF EDUCATOR: <u>MISS</u>		GRADE <u>5</u>	
LEARNING AREA: <u>ENGLISH</u>		DATE <u>21-08-2012</u>	
		YES	NO
<b>APPEARANCE OF BOOKS</b>			
• Books are covered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Teachers' names appear on books		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Name of school appears on cover		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Details indicated		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Year indicated		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Assessment Plan included in front of book		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Quarterly</u>
3 = Exceeds required standard    2 = Meets required standard    1 = Does not meet required standard			
		3	2
<b>ASSESSMENT TASKS</b>		1	COMMENT
• Number of tasks		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Quality of activities		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Quality of learners' work		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Neatness of learners' work		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Marking of work by educator		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Quality of rubrics		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>Where relevant</u>
<b>GENERAL COMMENTS:</b> <u>Thank you for a high standard of work. Small aspects that need to be addressed will be discussed with you. However, you are doing an excellent job and your contribution is highly appreciated.</u>			
Signature of Learning Area Co-ordinator		Date: <u>21/08/2012</u>	
Signature of Educator		Date: <u>23/08/2012</u>	
Signature of Headmaster		Date: <u>23/08/2012</u>	

## Appendix I: Assessment Plan of School A

<b>ENGLISH - GR 6 ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME</b>				
<b>Baseline Assessment:</b>	Done in the first two weeks of the term, to establish the level of performance of each learner. This will aid the teacher to organise learners in same-ability groups for reading and oral activities. Remediation and support strategies will be planned afterwards.			
<b>Informal Assessment:</b>	Is the daily monitoring of learners' progress. This is done through observations, discussions, practical demonstrations, learner-teacher conferences and informal classroom interactions. This provides feedback to learners and is not recorded on a mark sheet.			
<b>Formal Assessment:</b>	Formal assessment tasks are carried out during the course of the year. Two assessment tasks each term consist of smaller activities dealing with specific skills. Formal examinations during the second and fourth terms consisting of two / three papers. Seven ass tasks make up 75% of the promotion mark and end-of-year examination 25%.			
<b>Requirements:</b>	Formal assessment must cater for a range of cognitive levels. The pass rate for English First Additional Language is level 3 = 40%.			
<b>FIRST TERM</b>		<b>ASSESSMENT TASK 1 – THEME 1 and 2</b>		
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Assessment Tools:</b>	<b>Activities:</b>	
			<b>Mark</b>	
01-21	Listening and Speaking: ✓	Memorandum	Listens to and speaks about a story.	15
01-24	Reading aloud: ✓	Rubric	Reads a prepared text aloud	10
01-31	Languages structures and conventions in context: ✓	Memorandum	Language structures and conventions in context	15
01-31	Reading comprehension: ✓	Memorandum	Reading comprehension of a story / social text.	20
02-16	Independent reading: ✓	Rubric	Reflects on stories / text read independently.	10
02-15	Writing and presenting: ✓	Rubric	Writes three paragraphs based on theme of the story.	30
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>FIRST TERM</b>		<b>ASSESSMENT TASK 2 – THEME 3 and 4</b>		
02-26	Listening and Speaking: ✓	Memorandum and rubric	Listens to and gives instructions/describes a process/performs a poem or song with oral comprehension.	20
02-20	Reading Comprehension: ✓	Memorandum	Reading comprehension of an information text / poem / song.	30
03-04	Languages structures and conventions in context: ✓	Memorandum	Language structures and conventions in context.	20
03-11	Writing and presenting: ✓	Rubric	Writes a description of a simple process / definition of a person / object.	30
			<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>100</b>
Parent/ Guardian: _____		Date out: 2012.01-14		

## Appendix J: Recording sheet of School A

ENGLISH - FAL		Gr 6 L															
		ASSESSMENT TASK 1							ASSESSMENT TASK 2								
DATE:	ASSESSMENT TASKS	Listening & Speaking	Reading Aloud	Language Structures	Reading Comprehension	Independent Reading	Writing & Presenting	TOTAL ASS TASK 1	Listening & Speaking	Reading Comprehension	Language Structures	Writing & Presenting	TOTAL ASS TASK 2	TOTAL ASS TASK 1	TOTAL FIRST TERM		
ACTIVITIES:	FIRST TERM	15	10	15	20	10	30	100	20	30	20	30	100	100	100		
1		14	7	14	15	9	15	74	16	23	15	17	71	74	72		
2		11	7	13	15	7	22	75	16	21	17	20	74	75	74		
3		10	5	13	14	6	18	66	16	15	16	19	65	66	65		
4		12	8	13	16	6	18	73	17	22	18	23	78	73	75		
5		9	4	9	14	2	14	52	17	22	14	10	63	52	57		
6		9	3	2	14	1	9	38	18	7	7	3	35	38	36		
7		10	6	10	9	4	14	53	13	14	11	16	54	53	53		
8		13	7	12	16	6	17	71	17	19	17	21	74	71	72		
9		14	8	15	19	10	21	87	19	23	18	23	83	87	85		
10		10	7	14	13	5	23	72	15	20	17	19	71	72	71		
11		7	3	5	13	5	11	45	13	10	14	7	44	45	44		
12		8	4	4	13	2	14	45	13	11	9	10	43	45	44		
13		9	5	14	14	8	15	65	16	19	15	16	66	65	65		
14		8	3	9	12	5	12	49	13	9	9	5	36	49	42		
15		9	6	9	13	6	11	54	12	12	14	14	52	54	53		
16		7	4	9	9	3	11	43	8	8	15	5	36	43	39		
17		10	6	11	16	7	14	64	16	15	15	18	64	64	64		
18		12	7	15	16	9	26	85	18	22	20	21	81	85	83		
19		9	5	7	15	6	14	56	13	13	8	11	45	56	50		
20		12	4	5	15	5	14	55	15	19	15	6	55	55	55		
21		11	8	15	16	6	20	76	17	15	18	21	71	76	73		
22		12	7	13	16	6	21	75	17	19	16	23	75	75	75		
23		10	5	8	15	6	14	58	15	18	12	17	62	58	60		
24		10	6	8	16	5	14	57	17	22	15	12	66	57	61		
25		10	7	11	16	7	18	69	18	21	13	17	69	69	69		
26		10	4	13	16	7	11	61	17	14	16	5	52	61	56		
27		10	5	10	15	3	14	57	14	21	11	15	61	57	59		
28		8	7	5	16	5	15	56	17	10	15	17	59	56	57		
29		14	8	15	16	9	24	86	18	25	19	25	87	86	86		
<b>CLASS AVERAGE</b>															<b>61,9</b>		



## Appendix K: Classroom observation tool of School A

### CLASS VISIT REPORT

EDUCATOR:		LEARNING AREA			
GRADE:		DATE:			
SUPERVISOR:		RANK:			
<b>KEY</b>					
1 = Excellent level of competency		2 = Good level of competency		3 = Average level of competency	
3 = Average level of competency		4 = Below minimum level of competency			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>COMMENT</b>
<b>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>					
Classroom planning/management					
Wall display					
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>					
Assessment Plan					
Presentation and recording of marks					
<b>EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY/INTERVENTION</b>					
Correctors/Administration					
Remedial/Administration					
450 Support Forms/Administration					
<b>CLASSROOM PRACTICE</b>					
Year Plan					
Planning and preparation					
Worksheets/Activities (quality & quantity)					
Quality and quantity of learners' work					
Neatness					
Portfolios					
Marking and control of work					
<b>FILES</b>					
Learning Area File					
Preparation File					
Assessment File					
<b>GENERAL</b>					
<b>COMMENTS</b>					
<b>EDUCATOR</b>		<b>HOD</b>		<b>PRINCIPAL</b>	
Date:		Date:		Date:	

# Appendix L: Monitoring instruments of School B

## PRIMARY MONITORING INSTRUMENT

Learning Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Form of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. File arrangement

Criteria	Yes/No	Comments
<b>Policy documents</b> Are the following documents available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCS Policy document</li> <li>• Assessment Guidelines</li> <li>• National Policy on Assessment and Qualification</li> <li>• Subject School Policy</li> </ul>		
<b>Work schedule</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the work schedule cover all the necessary aspects? (E.g. content to be taught, terms, weeks, resources, etc.)</li> </ul>		
<b>Lesson plan(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the lesson plans in line with the work schedule</li> </ul>		
<b>Assessment Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the assessment Programme have all the tasks prescribed in the policy?</li> <li>• Are the marks for each task allocated?</li> </ul>		
<b>Formal tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are formal tasks with their memos and/or rubrics available?</li> </ul>		
<b>Recording sheets</b> Are learners' marks recorded in? Are the marks converted to percentage (if necessary)?		

### 2. Classroom Observation

Criteria	Yes/No	Comments
<b>Lesson Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the lesson plan for the content taught available?</li> <li>• Is the lesson plan followed?</li> <li>• Are the resources used as stipulated?</li> </ul>		

# Appendix L: Monitoring instruments of School B

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

### LEARNER WORKBOOK MONITORING TOOL

EDUCATOR: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

LEARNING AREA: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

The following learners books were controlled

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. _____ CLASS. _____ | 4. _____ CLASS. _____ |
| 2. _____ CLASS. _____ | 5. _____ CLASS. _____ |
| 3. _____ CLASS. _____ | 6. _____ CLASS. _____ |

#### A. LEARNER'S WORK

	YES	NO
Has learners been assessed according to minimum numbers of activities		
Has the work been controlled accurately by educators		
Are corrections or constructive positive comments given		
Task correlation with teachers' file		
Are formal assessment tasks clearly indicated		
Is there correlation between activities and LO \$ AS's		
Is there educators signature and date		
Evidence of remedial work and expanded opportunities		
Is the learners work book clearly identif able with an effective label cover		
Has the learner date his/her work		

#### B. READING OPPORTUNITIES

	1	2	3	4
Learners read texts appropriate to the specific Learning Area on a regular basis				
Do they read daily in classroom	1	2	3	4
Do they get reading to do at home	1	2	3	4
Reading aloud in classroom	1	2	3	4
Do they practice speed reading	1	2	3	4
Can the learner read with affection and understanding	1	2	3	4

#### C. FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING CAMPAIGN (Mathematics & Languages, Grade 4-5)

	1	2	3	4
Milestones incorporated into planning				
Assessment tasks for Language & Mathematics adapted to prescribed FETC assessment tasks	1	2	3	4
Adheres to time-frames for reading	1	2	3	4
Adheres to time-frames for mental Maths	1	2	3	4

SMT: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix N: Monitoring instrument for teacher's file of School B

### PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOL MONITORING INSTRUMENT GDE : TSHWANE SOUTH D4 TEACHER'S FILE

LEARNING AREA : \_\_\_\_\_  
 GRADE : \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEACHER : \_\_\_\_\_  
 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT : \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEPUTY PRINCIPAL : \_\_\_\_\_

LEVEL	DESCRIPTOR
1	Not Achieved
2	Elementary Achieved
3	Adequate Achievement
4	Outstanding Achievement

MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING AREA BY THE TEACHER						
DOCUMENTATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE TEACHER					COMMENTS	
TEACHER'S FILE						
1	Personal Time Table	1	2	3	4	
2	Work Schedule (Annual)	1	2	3	4	
3	Lesson Plans (Daily or Weekly)	1	2	3	4	
4	Assessment Plan (Annual)	1	2	3	4	
5	Record Sheets (Containing Marks for each Formal Task)	1	2	3	4	
6	List of Textbook/s and other Resources used	1	2	3	4	
7	Evidence of Intervention for learners experiencing barriers in learning (eg. 450 Forms)	1	2	3	4	
8	Assessment Tasks in Teacher's File	1	2	3	4	
9	- Number of Assessment Tasks as prescribed	1	2	3	4	
10	- Tasks correlate with Annual Assessment Plan	1	2	3	4	
11	- Steady work tempo for SBA through the year	1	2	3	4	

Appendix O: Record book of School C

HOD: RINLANGE M.O  
SUBJECT: ENGLISH

NAME OF TEACHER	GRADE	TERM 1		TERM 2		TERM 3		TERM 4	
		INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
1. NGCENE T.S	4C	07	02	11	02	09			
	6C	12	02	12	02	11	01		
2. ZULU X.A.A	4A	13	02	14	02	10	01		
	4B	16	02	14	02	11	01		
3. MABHELE N.P	5C	15	02	13	02	07	01		
	6A	08	02	06	02	04	02		
4. SHONGWE M.T	6B	09	02	05	02	04	02		
	5AB	10	02	08	02	06			
	5B	09	02	07	02	06			