



**The Perceptions and Practices of Grade 10 educators in the
implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS)**

BY

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I, Victor Mothebe Phanyane declare that:

**The Perceptions and Practices of Grade 10 educators in the
implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. (NCS)**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

V.M Phanyane

August 2009

Date



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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study about the perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). It is based on interviews with teachers, observations of their lessons, and the analyses of relevant documents.

This study draws on the literature on policy and practice. It seeks to understand how the government's policy intentions and goals regarding curriculum change are translated into practice, on the ground. The research also seeks to understand and explain what teachers think and what they do. It argues that these are critical factors in implementing education reform because they determine the degree to which people at the local level adapt what emanates from the top. Curriculum change is mediated by and through teachers. Their voices have not sufficiently been taken into account in South Africa when policies affecting their work have been formulated and implemented. In addition, the contexts within which teachers work play an important role in their classroom practices and teaching styles. We need to take these contexts into account and tailor our reforms accordingly if we are to effect real change. In particular, we need to pay special attention to the roles played by teacher professional development and collegial collaboration in schools. It is hoped that this research will assist officials at the district level, in fine-tuning policy and supporting teachers in schools under their control.

Interpretive qualitative research tries to understand the meaning people have about their world from their own perspectives and ideas. The study employed a case study design. It was conducted in the Temba/Moretele district, North West. Case studies are intensive investigations of particular groups of individuals, units, or organizations. I used a sample of twelve Grade 10 educators who a) had attended the Curriculum Statement training

course in the district and b) who were implementing it in the second year. These educators worked at 5 of the 33 high schools in the district. Purposeful sampling is based on the idea that the people and events selected for research are chosen because they are interesting and suitable, rather than being representative. The educators were chosen because they enabled me to address the problems about policy and practice I wished to address. I interviewed the teachers, observed their lessons and studied all supporting documents in their files.

Among the emerging findings are:

- Educators embrace the NCS innovations, but they feel that they have not been adequately prepared to implement these reforms.
- Educators indicated that there were no prior consultations with them when NCS was introduced.
- Factors that influence implementation: shortage of the learning and teaching support material; high teacher learner ratios which contribute to the increased workload; too much paperwork.
- Group work as a teaching strategy is over-utilized and has shortcomings.
- Learner performance is low.
- Lesson planning by teachers can be improved.
- Greater teacher collaboration, professional development, and departmental support.

Based on an analysis of these and other findings, policy recommendations will be made.

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LIST OF KEY WORDS

C 2005:	Curriculum 2005
LG:	Learner's Guide
LPG:	Learning Programme Guidelines
LTSM:	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
SAG:	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SF:	Subject Framework
SMT:	School Management Team
TG:	Teacher's Guide
WS:	Work Schedule

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This study is about perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. These were put in context by means of interviews, observations and document analysis. A sample of twelve educators from a total of 33 high schools in the district where the researcher is located, was interviewed for this purpose.

The current version of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) has undergone a number of changes and challenges and all these call for some form of research on its implementation. The NCS has its roots in Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which has an Outcomes-Based Approach (OBE). It is actually the revised version of C2005 that was introduced by the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, as the new form of curriculum in the post-apartheid South Africa. The research question focuses on Grade 10 educators because these educators had a chance to implement NCS for the first time in 2006 and have now completed a three-year cycle of its implementation.

After the introduction of C2005 in 2000, it had to be reviewed and a number of legislative frameworks were put in place to ensure that it was implemented as planned. The Ministry of Education has until now gone through the era of another Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, who served the term of office overseeing the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement with the innovations that this programme brings. However, the terms of office of the three former Ministers of Education were characterized mainly by policy formulations and, at the same time, they had to ensure that that the new curriculum - C2005, later NCS - was implemented.

The defining feature of the term of office of Minister Naledi Pandor has been of accelerated implementation of the National Curriculum Statement, and hence the ministry had an obligation to implement this new form of curriculum. The ministry was held by two Ministers of Education prior to Naledi Pandor taking office and therefore, during her term of office, steps had to be taken to ensure that the pace at which changes in the education system unfolded was accelerated. Her era therefore had to be characterized by tangible changes in schools with teachers using an outcomes-based approach as a teaching strategy in their classrooms. More teacher empowerment programmes and support structures had to be seen to be running fully. The ministry had to devise some approaches to ensure that the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement became a success. There had to be tangible and conspicuous changes that would serve as indications that curriculum changes were in place.

In the light of the new reforms that the Department of Education has introduced, research has to identify and examine ways in which teachers implement the envisaged changes. Consequently, this must play a significant role in trying to improve classroom practices and the implementation of the curriculum. Numerous cases at hand indicate that, when curriculum changes are introduced, there will be accompanying challenges.

We should note that curriculum implementation is a complex venture for any government and for any education system. Hence, the introduction of NCS as the new form of curriculum has to draw vital lessons as indicated by Kraak and Young (2001, p.4), who caution about curriculum implementation and allude to the complexity of its implementation when they state:

The problems of implementation are not necessarily an indication of the failures of South Africa's first democratic government or even that the original vision was wrong. Implementation of changes in a system with deep historical divisions and low levels of capacity is inevitably a slow process when compared to the relatively easy task of designing new policies. It is a process in which experience of practice has to be drawn on to continuously interrogate the original vision, not to reject it.

Baker and Wiseman (2005, p.4) noted that “once made, educational policies do not necessarily drive local change.” The implied change at the local level is the focus of this research, which intends to understand educators’ perceptions and practices. Richardson’s (1998, p.1) observation that “in general, reform has failed to get to implementation, so getting to implementation is important,” highlights the difficulty and problematic nature of policy implementation. Hence, this research focuses on the practices of educators, right where implementation has to take place. The challenges that are faced when curriculum must be implemented form the starting point of this study. This study therefore acknowledges that the gist of any form of curriculum change is to get to the basic level where the actual process of implementation must unfold.

One critical observation in the KwaZulu-Natal study on secondary school educators and the problems of curriculum implementation is presented in Rangraje et al (2005), “a neat separation of policy formulation and implementation is not as clear cut as when faced with realities of the classroom.” The implication is that there must be an interface between policy formulation and curriculum implementation in order to bridge the apparent gap

between these two phenomena. The point therefore is that the need for structures that would assist educators to adjust to the practical situation in class is inevitable.

However, upon the introduction of OBE in South Africa, Jansen and Christie (1999, p.54) contend that: “not a single official interviewed in the National Department of Education believed that OBE would work introduced that soon.” This indicated some pessimism within the echelons of the Department that underscores the fact that implementation of curriculum could be quite messy. The reflections of the education officials who are indicated in this study presented the picture that curriculum innovations face challenges which, when not properly addressed, may actually stifle the implementation process.

A noteworthy question is raised by Rogan (2007, p.8) in an attempt to draw attention to the challenges that face curriculum implementation in South Africa and Outcomes-Based Education: “Will the ‘harvest’ be bountiful as anticipated?” The question was raised in the light of the intricacies that the new curriculum in this country faces. Quite importantly, it is worth noting that: “educational change cannot be achieved simply by producing curriculum statements” (Murphy, 2004, p.256).

It appears important to note that, according to Yael Shalem (2003, p.30), when arguing as to whether we have a theory of change and arguing for accountability from change models in the education system, she indicates that “curriculum processes should not underestimate the complexity and unevenness in which change processes are experienced by individual teachers.” Of course, this study acknowledges the legitimacy of the argument that educators might have different experiences about NCS implementation. This, therefore, forms the basis of this research in exploring these “individual experiences” by educators.

The implementation of the NCS presents an opportunity to examine the salient features of these curriculum innovations by taking a closer look at the challenges that accompany curriculum innovations.

We also need to note that in a study on the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education in the Western Cape, Le Grange and Reddy (2000, p.25) revealed that “it may be naïve to believe that the shift from policy into practice is a simple process.” This emerged because of policy militating against change due to ignorance of realities that prevail in the classroom. The defining feature of this study was about reviewing whether there was a need for the alignment of what policy (OBE) states versus how it (OBE) should be practised. The focus of this study is in line with the points that Le Grange and Reddy (2000) raise in that the alignment of policy with practice is reflected by examining the practices by educators and their perceptions of the NCS. By focusing on these two aspects, an indication of whether policy dictates are in line with what happens in the classroom has to emerge from this study.

Observations on curriculum theory and development in the United States of America raised by Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003, p.434), indicate that “the potential for fostering a vital interplay between curriculum theory and curriculum practice is key to advancing the field of curriculum studies.” Narrowing the gap between the two and ensuring some form of synergy would seem to ease the efforts of implementation. It is therefore important to note that the focus of this study – practices and perceptions of educators – presents a possible mechanism for bridging the gap between curriculum theory and curriculum practice. By presenting educator perceptions and their practices as the central point of NCS innovations, the study is in agreement with the literature that suggests that policy prescriptions must

address classroom realities – practices that prevail in the classrooms. The starting point for policy innovations therefore must be how these innovations would have to occur in the classrooms. It follows that what teachers do in class and how they go about their classroom activities should inform policy, and not the other way around.

Literature raises complexity and identifies it as one key aspect of curriculum implementation. This then poses a challenge which research must face and study its nuances. Research therefore needs to dig deep in an attempt to understand and unravel this point that literature flags. One area where this understanding can be sought, as implied by literature, is at the level of implementation. This study is therefore conducted in the light of what Harris (2005, p.255) highlights as the need for an “adequate empirical basis on which claims about curriculum rest.”

A significant observation about C2005 and curriculum changes in South Africa by Rogan (2007, p.110) laments, “one striking feature of implementation of C2005 was the mismatch between the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.” What may be inferred from this observation is that the way in which we go about implementing the changes that innovations envisage can be quite different from the actual policy that spells out how these very changes must unfold.

1.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach is interpretive in the sense that educators were given the opportunity to indicate what their perceptions were and what their practices were in their own contexts as they implemented the National Curriculum Statement. The understanding

was that multiple realities about the same phenomenon existed, and it is important to find out what these realities entail.

One point that was raised in the above arguments is the “unevenness” in which educators experience curriculum changes. So, to get the sense of how educators feel and say about these, their interpretations and the meanings that they raised, formed the central point of this research. The interpretive approach was therefore identified as the ideal approach to be employed in soliciting the interpretations of educators. It therefore made sense to use this approach, since the above arguments would appear to appeal for research to cover the basic level of implementation – classroom and educators – and engage educators who have to present their views about the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. From these arguments, one gathers that in order to bring about the synergy between what educators do and say, in relation to curriculum implementation, the sensible route to take is to engage the very educators and let them voice their views. This research therefore attempted to respond to the appeal that literature raises – engaging educators.

According to Cohen et al (2007), interpretive researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. What educators said about how they experienced the National Curriculum Statement was understood from what educators themselves had to say. Their individual practices in their classrooms were understood with respect to how they unfolded in their respective environments.

Potter (2002) indicates that it is the belief that the researcher should try to see the situation from the point of view of those who are being studied. Educators therefore had the opportunity to air their views, their interpretations on what NCS entailed, and how it was

implemented in accordance with what they thought. The research envisaged the kinds of interpretations that educators had.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that as an interpretive inquirer, one must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in language and the actions of social actors. It must therefore be noted that the clarification of what teachers' views were through their interaction with the researcher was the route that this research adopted. Much of what the teachers did within their settings as they implemented the National Curriculum Statements guided this research.

1.3 THE RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION

As an educator for a period of fifteen years and during that period, the researcher went through the changes that came about as a result of the Outcomes-Based Education when it was introduced by the department. Personal observations are that, whenever there are new policy changes in curriculum, teachers experience some uncertainties, have concerns and sometimes have some objections. It must be noted that all of these reactions either have a positive or negative effect on how teachers execute their daily duties in relation to these changes. Nevertheless, they continue to introduce these changes in their unique ways whilst grappling with the very changes.

The researcher's interest in this topic is also sparked by his current job as a curriculum implementer, which entails monitoring and supporting educators on matters that relate to the implementation of curriculum. In the process of this work, there are educators who raise concerns about what they think with regard to this new curriculum. Amongst the concerns that they raise are their capacity to implement the changes, the nature of support

that they get from the education department and how they generally interact amongst themselves on curriculum matters. This therefore requires that a broad understanding of salient and pertinent matters around what educators do and say about curriculum reforms. The researcher therefore needed to get a feel for how educators experienced the new curriculum on which he has to provide professional support and monitoring.

Such a study would therefore assist the researcher's office in getting a broad overview about the experiences of educators in relation to the new changes on NCS. The findings of this research may present fresh insights, with the possibility that these may have far-reaching positive effects on the type of support that his office is giving to educators. In essence, this would assist in reshaping measures that are used when supporting and monitoring educators.

The advantage of the researcher's involvement in the research project was that he was in a position to get first-hand information and feedback from the interviews and observations that were conducted as this helped to feed directly into the job that he is doing. Hence, doing the actual fieldwork enabled him to gather the raw data that forms the core of his actual job. On the one hand, his involvement in the study might have tainted the actual practices by educators – feedback that needed to be solicited from educators because some feedback might have been “an act” as opposed to their real practices and perceptions. This would have been due the fact that there was a stage when he had to monitor and support some of these educators. So, some of them might have presented him with the feedback which they viewed as the data that he was looking for.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to conduct research on what Grade 10 teachers say about the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. Their views are central to this study, that is their perceptions on the changes that have been brought about by NCS innovations.

Their perceptions are subsequently juxtaposed with their practices in class as to how do they practically go about implementing this new curriculum. This process should assist these educators to reflect on their individual perceptions and practices in relation to how the new curriculum is implemented.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this research may be used by those who formulate education policies, such as the NCS, in gaining insight into practicalities of such policies. This study therefore hopes to shed some light about actual classroom practices, especially in the South African context. The data from this study may further assist in presenting a contextualized perspective to policy makers on curriculum implementation. The study can therefore serve as a source from which vital information that pertains to policy can be gained. Some of this information may be used in fine-tuning educational policies, especially for officials in district offices, as this will be research that pertains to educators in their local contexts.

The findings would therefore reflect on what educators say and do. A discussion of observations during the study would give an overview of how educators go about implementing the NCS. These would then augment the available literature in relation to curriculum implementation. It is hoped that this research would help policy makers to give attention to arguments that are raised with the aim of enhancing curriculum innovations.

It is expected that this research will contribute to the expansion of the knowledge base on curriculum implementation. Hence, knowledge about educators' practices in their various unique contexts will be made available by this research. This will therefore serve as a possible resource from which good practices can be identified and possibly be transferred to the innovations that the education system is experiencing.

The outcome of this study is therefore expected to contextualize educators' practices and perceptions, and can play a significant role in assisting those who design policies and those who support and monitor educators to design measures that would facilitate educators' practices at schools.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

When taking into account the number of educators that are in the thirty-three high schools in the Temba/Moretele district and compare that with the research sample of twelve educators, the indication is that a much bigger sample might have yielded results that would have been much more reliable, or different.

It must be noted that some of the educators who took part in this research at some stage received support and monitoring by the researcher. This might have affected the type of

responses that were given during the interviews, the data that was collected during the observations as well as the data from the documents that were analyzed.

In an attempt to compensate for these limitations, three data-gathering techniques were used: interviews, observations and analysis of documents. Data from these sources provided complementary measures on the data from individual sources. So triangulation was utilized as a validating measure in an attempt to address these limitations.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

1.8.1 Chapter 1: Introductory Orientation

The chapter presents the research problem by stating the research topic and research question. Subsequently, the background on the implementation of curriculum with specific reference to Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the National Curriculum Statement is given.

1.8.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

An overview of the findings in the literature with regard to the research is given. Both the South African literature and the international literature are cited in the discussions. Furthermore, an argument as to how literature relates to the research question is presented.

1.8.3 Chapter 3: Methodology

The research methodology that was used in the research is discussed. The research approach, that is the interpretive approach, is discussed and an argument on how it relates to the research is presented. The purposeful sampling procedure is discussed, as well as case study as the research design that was used. The choice of semi-structured interviews,

semi-structured observations and document analysis is elaborated. The procedure to ensure the validation of the research findings and enhancement of reliability is discussed. Ethical considerations are also presented.

1.8.4 Chapter 4: Findings

The findings of the research are discussed and excerpts from the findings are cited in the discussions. This is done by means of quotes, descriptions and the impressions that the researcher formed about the data.

1.8.5 Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

The overall findings of the research are presented and the recommendations of the research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum implementation, as with any other system, has a number of variables that play a significant role in determining its success or its failure. The comments below deliberate on some of these variables as they emerge from literature. Furthermore, these are presented as keystones for curriculum innovations.

The discussions that follow should be understood in the light of Swanepoel's (2008) assertion that education systems worldwide tend not to fully make use of educators as professional resources in initiating, planning and implementing school change. It is contended that this finding should serve as a call or an appeal for curriculum changes to involve educators as partners who have to contribute whenever such changes must be introduced.

Furthermore, the discussions raise arguments that attempt to respond to one crucial question posed by Fullan (2001, p.70): "what types of things would have to change if an innovation or reform has to be fully implemented?" The points raised under each sub-heading below attempt to present what literature suggests around possible changes which may have to occur, as one way of responding to what commentators may refer to as either a question or a concern, as raised by Fullan. Such an approach is adopted in view of Evan's (2001) observation for curriculum developers that research implementation has provided few clues of what specific factors may influence adaptation or adoption of programmes at local level. This study therefore presents and interrogates the following factors as they

impact on curriculum innovations: actions and practices of educators; educators at the epicentre of curriculum changes; perceptions and beliefs of educators; exclusion of teachers' voices; and professional development and collaboration amongst educators. These emerging factors are presented as possible key areas related to the research question, which may have to change as a measure that would help to align policy changes with policy practices. Therefore, this study suggests these factors as possible clues that play a significant role in influencing the changes that educators have to engage in when innovations are introduced.

Perhaps Botha's (2002, p.370) allusion regarding the complications that beset Outcome-Based Education as a new approach to our curriculum must be noted, when he made the following observation: "The new curriculum contains elements of almost every innovation that has been tried in the education field." Maybe the question that needs to be responded to is what new components the National Curriculum Statement should have in order to be implemented in accordance with its objectives. The significance of these findings is that they provided this research with pointers to focus on – identifying specific areas that serve as challenges in educators' perceptions and practices when implementing the National Curriculum Statement. However, a counter-argument may indicate that the findings of Botha's (2002) research were based on OBE, which is an approach to teaching - teaching strategy rather than curriculum itself. However, the practices of educators as captured in the research question would in one way or the other encompass teaching strategies.

What follows below is an attempt to bring to light the arguments that literature is presenting with regard to curriculum innovations.

2.2 ACTIONS AND PRACTICES OF EDUCATORS

On this issue Van Veen and Slegers (2006) in their research on six Dutch secondary schools in the Netherlands concluded that the manner in which teachers react to educational reforms is largely determined by whether teachers perceive their professional identities as being reinforced by reforms.” This determines not only what teachers think about reforms. The implications of reforms for the daily practices of teachers should be more carefully considered and explored. This research therefore seeks to understand these practices which entail classroom practices as further research as is suggested by Van Veen and Slegers (2006).

When indicating the nature of actions and practices of educators, Flores (2005), among others, poses the central question: how do educators act in context? This is one aspect raised by Kirk and MacDonald (2003) as obdurate practicalities of the teachers’ work. The study by Flores (2005) on changes in elementary school curriculum in Portugal points to the uncertainty and tension between educator actions in class and curriculum expectations. The key question as to why educators alter curriculum during the change process was not adequately explored and explained in that research. Hence, the interest of this study is to disclose the kind of practices that educators engage in in their individual contexts. There are educators’ practices that are dictated upon by specific contexts wherein educators are located. It is therefore the interest of this study to understand the nature of these practices in such instances.

According to Blignaut (2007), educational change often falters due to glossing over unique particularities within which it has to be realized. On this basis, one can make a plausible inference that implementation cannot pretend that contextual realities have no bearing on

changes that must take place. It is therefore crucial that a study of this nature focuses on what educators do – practices they engage in, in their individual classrooms. Elsewhere in this study, these practices by educators are taken a step further by also focusing on their relationships or impact on perceptions that are held by educators. The point is that, as it will be argued in parts of this study, it becomes quite difficult to divorce what educators do – their practices, from what they think – their perceptions.

The evidence relating to Target Oriented Curriculum in Hong Kong as observed by Morris (2002) must therefore be noted. Morris pointed out that innovations were symbolically adopted by teachers but had little impact on classroom practices. The inference in this case is that educators may succumb to envisaged changes and on the contrary engage in practices that are not necessarily in line with those changes. The crux of the argument is that educators' practices may therefore be interpreted as being a hindrance to innovations, in that their actions may be seen not to be in line with curriculum innovations. The synergy that must exist between the envisaged changes and the teacher practices therefore poses a challenge for curriculum innovations. This research suggests educators' practices as a possible focus area that may help to bring about the synergy that is alluded to.

Accordingly, Brian et al (2006), when observing educators in the United Kingdom, concluded that National Curriculum was not as much being 'implemented' in schools as being 'recreated', not so much 'reproduced' as 'produced.' What they suggest is that the practices that educators engage in while implementing curriculum can have profound effects on implementation, be that negative or positive. So, the National Curriculum Statement cannot be absolved from the observations that these authors made. One critical point apparent in what these authors say is that, more often than not, teachers tend to adopt

a more practical stance in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. What is important, therefore, is to understand how teachers effect changes in the intended curriculum and what prompts them to act in this manner. This will assist in reflecting on the nature of such practices while implementing curriculum.

One South African study by Sebela et al (2004) that focused on teachers becoming reflective practitioners in their daily teachings concluded that teachers who have taught for a number of years often resort to their old ways rather than continuing with new strategies. The line of argument therefore is that teachers generally modify curriculum when faced with practical classroom realities. The intended intentions of policy makers may therefore be reshaped by educators on the ground. In turn, what policy makers look forward to as measures that prescribe or present guidelines about how innovations should unfold, are curtailed.

When presenting an argument as an indication of contradictions within curriculum change and the post-modern world, MacDonald (2003) pointed out that curriculum innovations were invariably transformed between conception and implementation; hence the “slippage” between conception and implementation. What emerges as a key factor in these contradictions is all about what teachers do in class when innovations have to unfold. MacDonald’s study draws our attention to engage intensively with the nuances of the implementation process. This therefore focuses on the core of this study, in that implementation addresses educators’ practices that are captured in the research question. Therefore, the strength of MacDonald’s argument – implementation – is the point of departure for this study.

What Kirk and MacDonald (2001) raise as plans that educators put into place in relation to their daily work, highlights choices that they are faced with in various contexts. It should therefore be noted that these “choices” are translated into practices of educators in their respective classrooms. It must be noted that it is these very practices that are captured in this study’s research question. However, what seems to be missing in MacDonald’s study underlines the challenges that reforms face, is an indication of the nature of actions and the nature of plans that educators put in place with regard to implementation. This study therefore seeks a comprehensive understanding of these two aspects that are being raised, which Flores (2005) values for “curriculum ownership” by educators.

Van Veen’s and Sleeper’s (2006) study in the Netherlands on the implications of educational reforms on educators’ daily practices, suggest that there should be careful consideration of educators’ daily practices as a form of further research. This study therefore is prompted by the suggestion presented by Van Veen and Sleeper (2006). Quite importantly, their findings that challenge research to investigate these daily practices have been taken up by this research. The strength of their argument, namely focus on educators’ daily practices, served as a springboard for the research. For example, in taking up the challenge that these authors are raising, this research utilized observations in the classrooms and analyzed documents that educators used. Both these activities, as focus areas of this research, were direct responses to the challenge posed by these authors when intimating that educators’ practices needed to be explored further by research.

In one research study on school-based improvement programmes and its implications on curriculum implementation, Waxman (2001) suggests the need for “ethic of practicality” to be considered in every educational programme. This, of course, is prompted by a

noteworthy observation made from the literature, which suggests that educators tend to adapt rather than to adopt curriculum proposals, as initially intended by its designers. Key to this is that the initial programme guidelines and instructions that curriculum developers had in mind are not carried out by teachers as intended. This study was therefore interested in the nature of adaptations that educators introduce as opposed to adopting curriculum changes right away. It was therefore incumbent upon this study to reveal, if possible, whether these adaptations were aligned to the guidelines as prescribed by curriculum innovations. Hence, educators' practices were indicated as one of the components of my research question.

Likewise, Glatthorn et al (2006) put across the point that teachers constantly tend to sift and integrate best practices from the field versus blindly adopting external programmes. This underscores the fact that educators may significantly modify reforms as they enact intentions and objectives of educational policies. Consequently, teachers play a profound role in refining the direction that curriculum implementation takes. On one hand, the question that this study is responding to is whether it is an obvious fact that educators will effect changes that affect curriculum innovations.

Literature notably draws attention to reasons for “reinvention of curriculum” (Kulinna et al, 2002). Among possible reasons that influence what teachers do, those that emerge are the extent to which new curriculum complements the existing curriculum; a curriculum that is too complex; and inadequate learning in the use of new curriculum that implies lack of familiarity with new curriculum. From these emerging reasons, it made sense for this study to be conducted with the intention of bringing forth additional explanations, if any, as to why educators “reinvent curriculum.” It appears that there may be more to educators'

practices that is yet to be explored, that relates to why educators see no need to implement curriculum changes as per policy prescriptions. It is therefore the submission of this research that the possibility of any further explanation as suggested by literature regarding the changes that are effected by educators which are incongruent with policy prescriptions, are explored.

Handal and Herrington (2003) found that one of the major causes of curriculum innovations and other related programmes is the failure to take into account the context in which teaching behaviours occur. This observation is an attempt to indicate how vital the actions of educators are within their individual environments. Moreover, Reetz et al (2005) present an argument about curriculum innovations and policy in that the two need to take cognizance of the fact that teachers can achieve major changes in classrooms when innovations consider their context. From the submissions that these authors make, it is evident that the local conditions that educators find themselves in, may hinder or enhance innovations. It must, however, be noted that within this apparent dichotomy, what is at play has to do with the actions of educators in class. This study has therefore contextualized these actions by getting to the setting wherein such practices unfold. In line with the context of the problem identified in the literature, as an essential element that impact on what educators do, this study saw it fit to be located in the educators' contexts – their classrooms.

One study on how primary school teachers experience policy change in South Africa, Smith (2001), noted that policy makers could not control the meanings of their texts. Part of the texts will be reflected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, and

responses may be frivolous. This view highlights the critical role that educators play in redirecting and reshaping what policy makers intend.

Quite clearly, curriculum implementation cannot be a mindless and mechanical activity. It follows that teachers constantly make decisions and judgements to address changes that they must implement. Hence, Kelly (2004) pointed out that, on a large scale, teachers adapted and used what they were offered in their own ways and for their own purposes. This practice unfolds as one consequence of presenting “packaged curriculum” that tends to overlook the central role of teachers’ in implementation. The teachers’ role is therefore the core component of the research question. This was done as a form of acknowledging that we cannot pretend not to notice an array of evidence in literature that suggests that educators tend to effect some form of changes on what they are expected to do.

It is therefore important to consider what Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003) contend when they argue in one US study on the Renaissance in Curriculum. These authors pointed out the perceived perpetual crises in curriculum, in that curriculum theory and development cannot neglect practice and reasonably expect to thrive. Such is the paradox of failure to align curriculum theory with classroom practicalities. Hence, the synergy between curriculum development and theory is paramount as this will be an attempt to be cautious about what these authors raise.

Furthermore, it is important to note that in one study on teachers’ experiences, Swartz (2006) concluded that curriculum is subject to application and individual application of the teacher. This observation highlights the critical role that teachers play, which in essence affects how curriculum is enacted in the classroom. It follows then that the Norwegian

Laerplan 97 study (L 97), which focused on minimized counter-productive measures that adversely affect classroom practice during innovations by Broadhead (2001), concluded that there should be a continued striving for the interface that envisions understanding the links of ideological underpinnings of reality of classroom practice. The bare facts therefore are that curriculum innovations cannot pretend that classroom practices by educators are a given in that prescriptions by policy will automatically be adhered to by educators.

It was therefore the intention of this research to interrogate the assertions that there is a tendency for educators to effect changes on policy prescriptions. Furthermore, this research focused on the assertion that educators' practices are a critical component of curriculum innovations. In line with these assertions, this study had to focus on the interrelationship between what educators do in class and what policy expects them to do. This interrelationship is presented as a challenge that this study had to respond to.

2.3 EDUCATORS AT THE EPICENTRE OF CURRICULUM CHANGES

One major point prevalent in literature, as observed by Hoadley and Jansen (2002), is that, although teachers do not always initiate change, they have been identified as key agents of change. These authors indicate this as they reflect on how educators go about implementing curriculum. The crux of their argument is the failure of policy from roping in teachers in decisions that directly influence innovations. Thus the comparative National Curriculum study done in England and Finland on teachers' self identity and curriculum, Vulliamy et al (1997) strongly assert that teachers' self identities are powerful mediators in terms of their interpretations and responses to imposed changes. Of note is that such an assertion puts teachers at the heart of curriculum innovations.

Lamenting the centrality of educators on curriculum innovations in Namibia, O'Sullivan (2002) indicated that the usual approach of adapting the teachers to the reform proposal (rather than adapting the reform proposal) is still dominant. The observation served as an indication that, at the core of the changes, a major link, namely the educators, was rendered blunt by such an approach.

In a consortium of cross-cultural research in education involving teachers from various countries, namely the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Singapore, the former USSR, Poland, Israel and Canada, Menlo and Poppleton (1999) established that teachers are at the core of any improvement effort. Innovations in the education system, NCS included, are therefore not absolved from these conclusions. Hence, this study was conducted in view of the fact that educators are a significant component of change in innovations that the National Curriculum Statement had to introduce. As a result, the nature of the data that was collected through interviews, observations and document analyses presented educators with the platform to be at the forefront of indicating what they did and how they went about implementing curriculum innovations. Getting into the classrooms and soliciting presentations from educators was an inevitable occurrence, since they are key components that have the potential of rendering curriculum innovations effective or ineffective.

One vital point to be noted in this instance is the fact that teachers have the intimate knowledge of what happens when grand schemes are launched (Olson, 2002). There should therefore be an acknowledgement that teachers can provide valuable insights into reform initiatives and the challenges that reforms have to overcome. The strength of this argument is that teachers are advantaged in the sense that they have a much more detailed

understanding of the nuances, the nitty-gritty, of the innovations that they have to implement. Their strategic positioning at the level of implementation affords them this vital opportunity to have first-hand information as they grapple with the challenges of implementation. The attention therefore has to be drawn to the fact that change in schools is driven by those running the schools and classrooms: teachers are presented as key role players in this regard. Therefore, as “foot soldiers” in the implementation process, this research acknowledges that educators have the potential to make or break curriculum innovations.

It follows that the attention should be drawn to the policy practice disjuncture that presents challenges for curriculum implementation. What is raised here, calls for the commitment to respond to key points that MacDonald (2003, p.140) proposed as underpinning curriculum reform: “A contest over what is chosen, by whom, with what intent and with what result.” At the core of these indicators that MacDonald raises, the central role played by educators emerges as a pointer that presents an enabling environment for curriculum change in the classroom. The point is that “the chosen curriculum” is filtered and mediated through educators. Its intentions and the results it attains are therefore largely dependent on educators.

According to Handal and Herrington (2003), the ultimate fate of an innovation would seem to depend on the users’ decisions. This conclusion points to the direct effect that educators’ decisions have on curriculum reforms. Hence, the focus of this research on educators, considering their impact and role on the nature of changes that the NCS has to put in place.

When Le Grange and Reddy (2006) investigated OBE introduction in the Western Cape, their study revealed that teachers are prepared to involve themselves in change processes so long as what they do and think are recognized, respected and used as a point of departure for change initiatives. Parallel to this assertion is what was noted about OBE and C2005 in an attempt to assist smooth curriculum reforms, when Cross et al (2002), established that teachers need to be part of the process of knowledge construction to be able to deliver in teaching and learning. Therefore, curriculum changes cannot afford to ignore the central and critical role of educators when such changes must be implemented.

An argument that is presented by Blignaut (2007) contends that teachers are professionals whose autonomy should be respected as they make judgements in particular situations and give meaning to policy as final brokers. The evidence that seems to prevail in literature presents facts that suggest that a disjuncture between policy and implementation prompts the argument that Blignaut raises. Consequently, it must be noted that Botha (2002) indicates that the implementation of OBE in South Africa places enormous demands on teachers to further individualize teaching. So teachers are quite central to what has to happen when a change is envisaged.

According to Wong (2006), teacher professionalism can be invigorated when responsibility and power is devoted to schools and teachers. Wong therefore argues for the centre-stage that must be afforded to educators as one form of enhancing systematic and smooth curriculum innovations. Of importance is what Flores and Shiroma (2003) put forward in contending that no reform can be successful against or without teachers because their commitment is crucial to the success of any educational initiative. The NCS therefore has

to respond to the arguments that these authors are presenting, as this would help cushion the bumpy road en route to implementation on the ground.

The focus of this study on educators will therefore include taking into account their professional concerns and personal concerns. This is guided by the observations that the authors referred to above have made. The conclusions that these authors drew on the central role of educators in curriculum implementation serve as a strong motivation for this research.

2.4 PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS OF EDUCATORS

Educator beliefs play a key role in curriculum implementation. For example, Chueng and Davis (2000) in one Hong Kong study concluded the necessity of a systematic monitoring of teacher concerns by the Education Department during the process of curriculum change. Concerns by teachers are an inevitable occurrence of new curriculum or innovations.

This therefore forms the basis for this research and provides grounds of conducting this research. Anderson (1995) raises the issue of educator beliefs being resistant to change. It must, however, be cautioned that this conclusion was based on an ethnocentric study that was conducted in the developed nations of Europe. Although it is a fact that curriculum study and its implementation may have common features that are generic to educators in various countries, this study focused on the local South African schools whose context is not necessarily the same as the one that Anderson (1995) was exposed to. This is in contrast to the context of the developed nations which have lower teacher and learner ratios and are better placed in terms of availability of resources as compared to some of the schools in our country, particularly the rural and township schools.

Quite clearly, what emerges as inevitable is that the failure or success of implementation is, to a large extent, dependent on the teachers' success in wrestling with entrenched and tough changes in beliefs, attitudes, and practices they assume (MacLaughlin, 1998). It must, however, be noted that a change in beliefs that educators have does not necessarily guarantee changed practices when implementing curriculum in the classroom. The implied relationship, as intimated by McLaughlin, deserves some form of research, which in this case was a key area that this research focused on. Hence, the key question which this research responded to was can the argument that says teachers' beliefs have an impact on curriculum innovations be sustained.

Smith and Lovat (2003) raise an important aspect on the need to change and develop beliefs, perceptions and practices that are in accord with change. Research, however, needs to go beyond changing these perceptions and practices and needs to strategically position itself in understanding, exploring and investigating the same with the aim of getting a comprehensive picture in this regard. In the process, it would assist in making informed decisions and introducing innovations from an informed stance. This would help to put curriculum implementation in the right perspective. Kirk and MacDonald (2001), Van der Berg et al (2002), and Waugh and Godfrey (1995), suggest the need for research to interrogate educator beliefs and relate them to classroom practices. It was therefore the intention of this study to interrogate the nature of beliefs in relation to how educators enacted curriculum in class. This study was conducted in response to the research challenge that was presented by these authors.

This point is raised to indicate the paradox that besets the expectations and principles of new curriculum as opposed to what teachers do in class and how they approach learning and teaching. It is therefore worth noting that Handal and Herrington (2003) argue that it is not surprising that many teachers, when they come to enact the curriculum in their classes, rely more on their own beliefs than on current trends in pedagogy. The beliefs of educators can really not be shoved aside, nor can curriculum innovations afford perpetually to pretend that beliefs have no bearing on how innovations unfold in class. Hence, the focus of this research on educators perceptions.

Evidently, what may compound the problems of implementation as observed by Murphy (2004) in the Irish primary schools' study of curriculum implementation, is that the possibility and probability of faithful implementation of new curriculum was considerably reduced in light of the fact that teachers felt poorly prepared and poorly equipped to do so. What may jeopardize implementation is when teachers see no need for new curriculum. When teachers have such perceptions, research has to explore these with the view of understanding how these come about in the light of the innovations.

According to Elliot (2000), the crux of the matter is that all practice is rooted in some theoretical framework, if not explicitly then implicitly. Based on what emerges from the above discussions, it proves futile to argue that educators' perceptions are immune to theoretical frameworks. In turn, it cannot be claimed that perceptions held by educators play no role in what they do in class. Hence, Roehrig et al (2007) indicate that teachers' beliefs directly guide instructional decisions and influence classroom management. Quite importantly, therefore, is that classroom practices that educators engage in are directly

impacted upon by each and every teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning. The reciprocal relationship between these two seems inevitable.

One vital point, according to Carl (1997), Le Grange (2007), O'Sullivan (2002), Virgillo (2001) and Mason (1994), is acceptance of curriculum, which is an aspect that hinges largely on the beliefs held by educators. Notwithstanding the assertions made by these authors, who are of course congruent with the intentions of this study, it must be indicated that these assertions could have elaborated more on the reciprocal role of "curriculum acceptance" and educators' practices. This study has therefore packaged the two – curriculum acceptance and educators' practices, and these are captured in the research question. Amongst others, the brief of this study was to expand on what these authors contented, that is go a step further by investigating the possible interchange between curriculum acceptance (implied in teachers' beliefs) and their role in what teachers did – practices.

Webb and Vulliamy (1999) conducted a comparative study in England and Finland on classroom practice and the National Curriculum. Their observations were that teachers' values, beliefs and school experiences were found to be powerful mediators of their response to change. Quite importantly then, this study deemed it fit to focus on teachers' beliefs as part of its brief. It must, however, be cautioned that the research by these authors was conducted in developed countries which had their unique challenges. Nevertheless, curriculum implementation may have generic features that transcend the concern that is being raised. The NCS cannot therefore be absolved from these common features that cut across different curricula. Certainly, if the beliefs of teachers are incongruent with the

intentions of curriculum changes, the envisaged changes can be in serious jeopardy given that that it is educators who must see to their implementation.

Razvi and Elliot (2005) established that beliefs might act as a professional filter through which new ideas and innovations must pass before teachers internalize them. Seemingly, the defining feature as to whether curriculum changes hit the ground as originally intended by policy-makers is to large extent dependent on whether the beliefs that educators have allow for that. These authors draw our attention to the need for a commensurate relationship between what teachers think and what they have to do in class. When educators' beliefs have to sift naturally "the packaged curriculum" that they must implement, then the very curriculum is largely at the "mercy" of teachers' beliefs.

Carl (2005), when reporting on the results about teacher participation in curriculum development in a South African context, observed that a teacher needs to believe in the relevance of the content and effectiveness of curriculum strategies for changes to be effective. It is therefore imperative that teachers' beliefs be acknowledged as a significant component of innovations as they have a profound effect on what they do in the classroom. The acknowledgement of these as a key component of changes has therefore sparked this research.

According to Hechuan et al (2007), what teachers know, believe and are able and willing to implement is a decisive factor. Key to the point that these authors raise is the profound implications of teacher beliefs on the classroom practices that they engage in. The inference is that the possibility of curriculum innovations and practices to a very large

extent rest on the perceptions that teachers have. It is also apparent that the teachers' level of motivation is quite important in driving them to implement the changes.

It must therefore be noted that the literature seems to identify perceptions held by educators as a problem in relation to reforms. The National Curriculum Statement as new educational reform places demands on educators that need to be met. There is therefore an indication that there is some form of a reciprocal relationship between perceptions that educators have and the type of practices they engage in when implementing curriculum.

Indeed, the argument presented by Fullan (1982), namely that educational change depends on what teachers think, it is as simple as that, poses an enormous challenge about understanding the nuances about beliefs and practices of educators with specific reference to curriculum innovations. This, of course, includes the National Curriculum Statement.

2.5 EXCLUSION OF TEACHERS' VOICES

In a paper presented by Ruiz-Primo (2005), when addressing the fidelity of implementation, it is indicated that even the best programme will fail to have the intended impact if its essential elements are not properly implemented. Of importance to implementation, one vital component is captured in the research question as perceptions, which will then give educators a chance to be heard. Rotte (2006) challenges reforms to "re-engage teachers". This serves as a strong feature that literature raises, which present studies must strive to observe. Regarding the teachers' missing voices, Weber (2006) calls for the attention of curriculum innovations. An important argument here is that there has to be a way by which curriculum changes involve educators as one measure that would enhance successful curriculum implementation. The apparent point is that, more often than

not, the voices of educators and their views have played a secondary role when changes in curriculum are effected. However, the paradox of this scenario is that it is the very educators whose role greatly affects how curriculum changes have to unfold. This study has therefore tried to bring the views of educators to the fore in relation to the introduction of the NCS.

It is important to note that when Rangraje et al (2005) studied the efficacy of teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, they concluded that teachers' participation in the decisions that affect their work lives also bears on teachers' sense of efficacy. Hence, these authors recommend that there be an improvement in teacher efficacy as this has profound effects on whether curriculum changes attain the intended objectives. Quite importantly, then, the NCS has to accede to these recommendations if, and only if, it looks forward to the implementation process that has to be embraced by educators.

Bascia et al (2005) and Ben-Peretz (1990) also draw our attention and caution to the fact that reforms need to guard against being teacher proof. According to Hargreaves (1994), much of the research writing that has addressed the emotions of teaching has started less from teachers themselves. Thus, Webb and Vulliamy (1999) indicate that the result of external pressure and coercion lead to teachers adopting changes in practices which they do not support. As a result, the likelihood of successful curriculum changes is compromised. The likely scenario in such instances is that, although change is accepted, practice to the contrary does not reflect the will for improvement.

Thus, the focus of this study is to solicit views of educators with regard to curriculum changes. In essence, this assists in addressing the concern that is raised by these authors –

non-involvement of educators when changes have to be implemented. Therefore, what educators have to say is paramount in this research and the intention is to ensure that the NCS gets the much-needed support from educators. This would therefore mean that as educators adopt the NCS, they would have had an opportunity to make inputs on the changes that it brings.

Therefore, teachers' voices enacted in their perceptions and practices must be heard for curriculum not to miss the key components of its implementation. Components that impact on curriculum implementation need to get the deserved attention as these in one way or another affect curriculum implementation, be it negatively or positively. This would then help to counteract the imposition of changes on educators and further enhance opportunities for them to be heard.

Le Grange and Reddy (2006) who realized that, in addition to contextual realities and policy processes, top-down curriculum processes militate against enabling change. This can be quite correct, moreover, that teachers do not necessarily resist change but all that they need is to be recognized. This argument was made as these authors argued for the re-thinking of Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa. This study has therefore adopted a bottom-up approach in that the research question focuses on educators who must inform policy and not *vice versa*. By so doing, what educators have to say serve as a priority and their views play a primary role within curriculum innovations. This is therefore an indication that curriculum changes have to strive for striking a balance between the fine line regarding the top-down control and the bottom-up approach.

It must be noted that the argument that emerges in literature gives an indication that teachers do have an authoritative voice as partners in curriculum reforms. This authority is derived from their in-depth knowledge of their local contexts of implementation. Much of this is from the knowledge about their students, available resources and the obdurate practicalities of their work (Kirk and MacDonald, 2001). Their authoritative voice therefore needs to be given the necessary platform, to be better understood and explored further. Immersion in the local context of implementation is what gives weight to the educators' authoritative voice. It must be acknowledged that we cannot wish away what educators have to say, especially if that has to do with the curriculum which they have to implement.

One vital observation in the South African context on perceptions of teachers towards involvement in school reform significantly presents non-involvement of teachers as problematic. Hence, Swanepoel (2008) argued that such practices do not only discourage the shared principal-teacher vision and planning, but they also jeopardise the implementation of education in general. Rogan (2007) alludes to the plight of educators regarding C2005 implementation versus their willingness to adapt to changes by contending that they (teachers) were not consulted about their needs – indeed these were often not considered. Such is the plight of teachers that in turn reveals the dire state of their non-involvement in curriculum changes. Observations of this nature should appeal to those who spearhead policy changes to ensure that educators rally behind curriculum changes. This research, therefore, serves as one measure that attempts to garner support by letting them voice their opinions on the National Curriculum Statement.

It follows that the conclusion that came about because of one KwaZulu-Natal study on secondary school educators should shed some light about the critical role that educators play in enhancing curriculum implementation. On this note, Ramsuran (2000) concluded that the absence of front-line educators with teachers in particular has distorted the intentions of the policy makers. What emerges in this case is that when such practices prevail, curriculum changes have serious challenges that must be overcome. Dupriez (2006) endorses the above observations when he established that, trying to bring about change simply by pressurizing teachers, is not likely to be effective. It is therefore apparent that there has to be an alternative to the lack of “front-line” educators and “coercion” of educators. This study attempts to bring educators back into the scene of curriculum implementation and present them with an opportunity to present their views.

This should help in providing a better understanding of the practical realities on the ground and in the classroom pertaining to educators’ role in implementation. Ornstein and Huskins (1998) indicate that resistance can be avoided if staff members are involved in deliberations that initially create a programme and deliberations to develop it. The implication therefore is that policy makers and curriculum leaders need to afford teachers the chance to engage in decisions about the changes that new programmes bring.

In one study in the United Kingdom on secondary school educators about the “paralysis of dialogue” and the necessity of a “dialectic engagement”, Cotton (2006) is at pains to impress on the need to guard against the former (paralysis of dialogue) and strive towards the latter (dialectic engagement). Hence, that study suggests that there is some form of interrelationship between these two aspects that this study will strive to highlight in an attempt to understand the nature of such a relationship. In some quarters of literature this is

posited as the dependency culture (Bascia et al, 2005), which in turn results in educators being continuously told what to do versus engaging in a dialogue with policy makers about how they experience “the specified curriculum”.

The argument by Van Veen and Slegers (2006); Anderson (1995); Ornstein and Huskins (1998); and Slattery et al (2006) about interaction, dialogue and engagement is raised as being crucial to implementation and in affecting educator beliefs, perceptions and attitudes. The points alluded to in here are quite crucial, lest a vital community of educators is turned into a blunt tool of policy (Coldron and Smith, 1999). In order not to impoverish the much-needed dialogue, which would give a voice to educators, educators deserve the much-needed platform to critique curriculum. It is through such critique and revision of curriculum that the educators’ voice would benefit curriculum decisions elsewhere. This would serve as a measure that would ensure that educators claim a stake in the change process.

One study in the Western Cape about curriculum changes by Carl (2005) concluded that teachers expect to be included in the initial process of meaningful decision-making where their voices will be heard. This must serve as an important indication of how vital it is to engage teachers when changes are at an infant stage, as well as when changes unfold.

The paper prepared for the South African Council of Educators by the Wits Education Policy unit (2005) underscores one vital point in indicating that one might argue that policy conceptualizes teachers in terms of which teachers do not conceptualize themselves. The paper goes to great lengths in an attempt to present a case for non-exclusion of teachers

with regard to implementation, lest teachers would be compelled not to identify with policy. The suggestion is that, in the end, this is seen as form of coercion, if not imposition.

It is therefore quite clear that the need for educators to be heard calls for the attention of policy makers as well as curriculum innovations. Likewise, such an approach can play a significant role in that our attention should be drawn to the literature that provides evidence that not only in South Africa, but worldwide, teachers have been faced with the task of continuously facilitating education reform that was designed without involving them (Swanepoel, 2008). Consequently, indications are that curriculum changes must be structured in such a way that educators are taken on board. This research attempts to abide by this observation.

2.6 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION AMONGST EDUCATORS

It should be noted that Huberman (1993) draws the attention to supportive communities who work together in pursuit of common goals and continuous improvement or as individuals working with the insecurities that these sometimes bring. Continuous improvement by educators surely leads to knowledge expansion for educators with regard to policy changes and policy implementation. However, as to the nature of how improvement should come about, Huberman (1993) does not shed adequate light in this regard. According to Leonard and Leonard (2001), traditional teacher practice has been characterized more by individualism and isolationism than it has been by collaborative orientations. Observations of this nature should be a cause for concern, if and only if the intentions and objectives of curriculum innovations are genuine.

It is worth noting that, notwithstanding collaboration as an essential component of successful schools, Valli and Rennert-Ariev (2002) established that collaborative practice remains an erratic and elusive enterprise fraught with uncertainty. Thus, identifying evidence of collaboration as an integral part of efficiency in curriculum changes is critical. This should be done in view of the fact that partaking in collaborative activities provides chances for development and meaningful opportunities for shared professional knowledge and expertise.

One critical point raised by Elliot (2000) is that school structures should de-isolate teachers so that they can work with each other and provide feedback to each other in the course of their work. There is therefore an indication that, quite importantly, there is a need for some form of formalized structures in order for educators to engage in a dialogue amongst themselves. These kinds of structures would, as is suggested, help in providing an enabling environment wherein curriculum innovations have to be implemented. Similarly, when teachers provide feedback to each other, they tend to have a united voice on curriculum changes. This, in turn, provides more weight for “their voices” to be taken into consideration when changes must be effected. So, the argument for teachers’ views to be taken into consideration as raised elsewhere in the literature review, acts as one of the defining features of collaboration.

Of importance, as observed by Olson (2002), is that teachers do not work in isolation. The view held by the researcher is therefore that educational reforms require collaborative partnerships which would help to nurture professional development through a community of educators. According to McLaughlin (1998), traditional norms and scripts of action cannot be learned in isolation. It is therefore apparent that teachers cannot undertake the

type of new learning, change beliefs and practices that relate to reforms as “lone rangers” in their individual little corners. By implication, if teachers do not learn together, reflect together and examine student work together, the challenges of sustaining change tend to be overwhelming. Hence, their development is influenced by their level of interaction. It should be noted that it is during these instances of interaction that their perceptions and practices on curriculum changes are influenced, be it negatively or positively.

The points raised in the above paragraphs have to provide some guideline in an attempt to align reforms with teacher development. Collaboration and development must receive attention, because one vital point that emerges from literature is that, unless development is on a par with reforms, change in reforms will be limited. Udelhofen (2005) made a presentation that teachers are compelled to analyze, make decisions about curriculum modifications and ultimately learn collaboratively from each other. It was argued elsewhere in the literature review that, at times, educators implement curriculum differently from what was initially intended by policy makers. The context wherein educators are located was presented as one challenge that brought about such practices. Thus, educators’ practices are in one way or another linked to collaborative practices that educators engage in. This observation must therefore provide an adequate basis for the teachers’ sense of professionalism to be one of the focal points in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

One study conducted in Portugal on teachers’ views about curriculum changes by Flores (2005), concluded that uncertainty, ambiguity and tension are key words when defining Portuguese teachers’ sense of professionalism in times of change. In this sense, it is important to support teachers and to understand the ways in which they interpret and deal

with the change process, as well as the impact of change initiatives on their beliefs and values as teachers. Perceptions and practices of educators have been presented as one component in literature that impacts on what teachers do in class. The implementation of and research on the National Curriculum Statement in particular need to draw from the observations and conclusions indicated above. At times uncertainty may be a symptom that indicates the lack of knowledge regarding policy implementation.

Moroz and Waugh (2000), argue that teacher receptivity is related to teaching processes such as cohesiveness, collaboration and teacher learning opportunities, although these relationships are generally weaker than those between receptivity and teachers' beliefs are. What should emerge from such cohesiveness as a way of enhancing professionalism and development are collaborative communities. This suggests the need for more dialogue amongst educators as a group of professionals in an attempt to bring about improvement in implementation. One way of realising this is through what Glatthorn et al (2006) proposed as one crucial curriculum tip that says, a major component of learning communities is that teachers need to teach other teachers. This lies at the core of this study's research question, wherein educators' practices emerge as a key component of curriculum innovations.

The point that is being made is that research needs to look for measures that discharge the role of educator cohesiveness, how collaboration amongst educators as well as supportive communities affects perceptions and practices of educators. Of course, these play a significant role in influencing the type of knowledge that educators have as well as its nature in relation to policy implementation. These should then be viewed in light of their effect on curriculum implementation. Wai-Yum (2003) terms these lived experiences of real people in real contexts that are to be revealed. It must therefore be indicated that

literature flags educators' knowledge about policy as one key aspect and as one possible theme for further understanding and exploration.

It should be noted that the preceding observations present collaboration as a possible path through which educators are presented with opportunities for feedback regarding their practices. This is possible in that they would have a chance to watch and learn from each other. Hence, they are presented with an opportunity to exchange best practices. In this way, it provides a conduit for professional debate, as observed by Coldron and Smith (1999). The platform for professional debate would consequently provide an enabling environment for educators to model their skills to one another as well as a chance to provide and receive feedback amongst themselves. This, in turn, would provide ample chance to interrogate those finer points around curriculum implementation. Their views and perceptions would be shared amongst themselves. Perceptions of educators are a prominent feature of this study's research question.

In their study on teacher perceptions in the Gauteng Province, Moloi et al (2002) present a case about the sustenance of collaboration amongst educators, and they concluded that these conversations could influence individuals to shift their thinking patterns and see the other side of the coin. This may work as a catalyst for a changed sense of ownership and allegiance to the changes that new curriculum has to offer. These "thinking patterns" are a key component of the argument raised earlier on, on the importance of perceptions in curriculum implementation. Collaboration amongst educators therefore has a profound effect on whether educators as a collective have a sense that new curriculum should be embraced. It can also enable educators collectively to critique new curriculum and this is where perceptions of educators will be at play.

Consequently, Glatthorn et al (2006) quite persuasively argue that, having teachers work together, creates a sense of teacher researchers. The positive effect of this practice can be the creation of a platform to reach a consensus and having that feeling of collaboration fostered by expert opinion in a community of teachers. Likewise, Doll (1992) noted that as a catalyst, collaboration eases the process of curriculum change. It is therefore apparent that the interactions of teachers present the potential for the expansion of their professional knowledge while at the same time, there are possibilities that their anxieties about curriculum innovations would subside. Certainly, these are some of the rewards of collaborative encounters amongst educators. Earlier on in the literature review, presentations of educators' practices were made and these are linked to collaboration and development of educators in that when teachers work together, there is cross-pollination of ideas and sharing of good practices. These practices have the potential to be translated into the classrooms by educators.

A moving revelation that tends to advocate for networks amongst educators, points to the fact that when professional communities misunderstand or contest policy or its goals, the road to the classroom can be quite difficult. It is therefore crucial to note that the connection between policy and practice can ultimately be made or missed in the teachers' professional communities. This is a key factor in that an emerging observation is that such communities can either choose to embrace, ignore, reject or undermine goals advanced by policy, as McLaughlin (1998) indicated. On the one hand, this apparent contradiction stands a chance of being demystified by collaboration amongst educators as argued in here and elsewhere in literature. When educators interact in well-structured collaborative practices, they have the chance to engage in activities such as clarifying new concepts

related to new content to one another as well as demonstrate teaching strategies and approaches to each other. This may then help in enhancing their overall practices as individuals.

Quite importantly, Adams Junior (2004) argues in favour of “teacher’s networks”, particularly with regards to how implementation unfolds, in the sense that teacher networks may bridge the gap between policy and practice. In turn, this presents opportunities for educators to have a shared (common) vision with policy-makers. The intentions of curriculum innovations may therefore be clarified through collaborative interactions, or teacher networks. As a result, the perceptions that educators adopt may eventually reflect those of the policy makers due to constant interactions amongst educators. It follows therefore that collaborative practices have serious implications on educators’ perceptions.

The preceding discussions suggest that there is a need for research to focus on professional dialogue; reduced teachers’ isolation, and professional development and meaningful change efforts, as McLaughlin (1998) indicates. Dialogue amongst educators highlights the importance of teachers’ views and has a direct impact on the extent to which their voices will be heard. Enhanced teachers’ interaction influences the type of practices that they engage in their respective classrooms, which in turn influences their development. So the interrelationship between perceptions and practices of educators as well as their professional development and collaboration, cannot be presented as separate entities.

From the above subheadings, it is quite clear that the actions and practices of educators are impacted upon by perceptions and beliefs that they have about the new curriculum that they have to implement. It should also be noted that when the voices (views) of educators

are excluded from the programmes that have to bring about curriculum changes, the very changes might be in jeopardy in that educators' practices may not necessarily be in line with policy prescriptions. Hence, perceptions of educators as captured in the research question are crucial to these innovations.

It also emerged from the literature review that the nature of collaboration amongst educators could significantly enhance their practices in their respective environments. Furthermore, collaboration presents an opportunity amongst educators to clarify various perceptions that they have with regard to the new curriculum. It further presents an opportunity for educators to speak with one voice when presenting their views about innovations. When there is collaboration, there is a platform for cross-pollination of ideas and practices, which in turn may enhance teacher development. The interrelationship amongst these subheadings therefore reflects that interchange between educators' perceptions and practices when they have to implement new curriculum.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

This research used a qualitative approach. Merriam et al (2002) indicate that interpretative, qualitative research strives to understand the meaning people have about their world and their experiences; that is how they make sense of their own world. Consequently, Henning et al (2004) outline that qualitative studies usually aim for depth rather than quantity understanding. The depth, which this study sought to establish, was mainly around perceptions held by educators in terms of how they experienced curriculum implementation from their point of view.

When doing qualitative research, Creswell et al (2003) assert that the researcher seeks to listen to participants and build an understanding based on the ideas of the population being studied. Much of what this research sought to investigate was in terms of perceptions held by educators and their practices.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) contend that qualitative research is first concerned with understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives. This understanding is analyzing the many contexts of the participants and narrating the participants' meaning of events. Participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and ideas.

These aspects are captured in the research question, which are perceptions that Macmillan and Schumacher (2006) refer to. The aim of the research was to understand educators' experiences of curriculum implementation in their various contexts.

The basis for this approach is guided by Merriam et al (2002), who indicated that qualitative research assumes that there are multiple, changing realities and individuals have their own constructions of reality. Since this reach employed an interpretative approach which, according to Creswell (2003), is idiographic in that idiographic interpretation is utilized. In other words, attention is paid to particulars, and data is interpreted to the case rather than generalizations.

Accordingly, Terre Branche and Durkheim (2002) use the term “emic” to signify an approach to understanding in which meaning derives from understanding phenomena in their own terms. Educators, therefore, were listened to as they reflected on their experiences on NCS implementation. Educators themselves provided their own insights.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design that was used is case studies, which according to Terre Branche and Durkheim (2002) are intensive investigations of particular individuals. They may be studies of single families, units, organisms, communities, or social policies. It is also worth noting what Pyne and Pyne (2002) describe a case study as a detailed research into a single example (of a social process, organization) collectively seen as a social unit in its own right and as a holistic entity.

Trochim (2001) alludes to a case study as an intensive study of a specific individual or context. In this instance, the case was Grade 10 educators and the individual classrooms and schools provided the context in which the study took place. This enabled the

researcher to engage intensively with participants with the view of soliciting their interpretations and understanding of the new curriculum from their perspective.

Henning et al (2004) point out that the crux of the definition, namely that a case is having some conception of unity or totality of a system with some kind of outlines or boundaries. Likewise, Cresswell (2007) indicates that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator studies a bounded system (case) through a detailed in-depth data collection. The boundary here was Grade 10 educators who were implementing NCS. These educators came from the Moretele/Temba district.

3.3 SAMPLING

A sample of twelve Grade 10 educators who had attended NCS training and were in the second year of implementing NCS, was selected. These educators were sampled from five high schools out of 33 secondary schools. All of these schools are village schools. Therefore, purposeful sampling was used by the researcher. According to Pyne and Pyne (2004), when sampling purposefully, people and events are deliberately selected because they are interesting and suitable, rather than being representative. These educators were therefore selected on the basis that they were the best-placed people who would help to gather the data that talked and related to the research question and research topic. They were teaching Grade 10. They had attended NCS training or workshops. They were implementing NCS.

Cohen et al (2003) indicate that researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample based on their judgement of their typicality. In this way, they build a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. Babbie (2007) notes the following about purposive

sampling: units to be observed are selected based on the researcher's judgement about which one will be the most useful. The need in this instance was to get these Grade 10 educators.

Grade 10 educators were selected, as they are the respondents who enabled the researcher to gather data that addressed the research. Somek and Lewin (2006) say that in purposive sampling cases are handpicked for a particular reason such as the use of a new product. Accordingly, Merriam et al (2002) established that there is the importance of selecting information-rich cases. These Grade 10 educators represented the information-rich cases in relation to the key research question.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

The researcher used interviews, observations and documents for the collection of data. These three data gathering techniques were used based on the assertion by Lancy (1993) that printed material and other material are combined with observation and interview records in a process that is known as triangulation. Triangulation involves using more than one data collection strategy, which complement each other.

The researcher triangulated because Yin (1994) argues that the rationale of this strategy (triangulation) is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another. Hence, Gay and Airison (2003) present the case that qualitative researchers employ more than one data collection method. This, it is believed, helped to add substance to the data that was collected as indicated by Nueman (2000), who argued that the aim is to corroborate the same phenomena.

According to Swandt (2007), the central point of this procedure is to examine the data from more than one vantage point. The three data gathering techniques enhanced triangulation through some form of corroboration and validation of data, as will be indicated later. As is noted by Terre Blanche and Durkheim (2002), this can help researchers to reach an understanding of phenomena by approaching it from several different angles. Hence, that is how the different data collection strategies assisted in the research.

3.4.1 Interviews

The educators were interviewed for a period of 55 to 85 minutes, were observed in class for a period of 45 to 90 minutes and the documents that they used when implementing NCS were studied. This was done in the first quarter of the year over a period of two to three months. This period provided ample time for data collection.

Semi-structured interviews were utilised and it must be indicated that one major advantage of using semi structured interviews, as argued by De Vos et al (2005), is that, amongst others, the researcher is able to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerge during the interview, and the participant is able to give a fuller picture. This advantage speaks to the rich data that is a product of qualitative research. The possibility of changing the direction of the interview as and when the need arises proved to be quite helpful during the interviews that were conducted.

Berg (1998) indicates the following about semi-standardized (semi-structured interview): “This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics.” These questions are typically asked of each interviewee in a systematic and consistent order but the interviewees are allowed freedom to digress; that

is interviewers are permitted (in fact expected) to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared and standardized questions.

The nature of the research with the type of data that had to be gathered was the main determining factor in deciding on the semi-structured interviews. By their nature, these types of interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to get the views of educators with regard to NCS implementation in their own understanding.

The interpretative nature of the study enabled respondents to present their perceptions on NCS implementation and relate to how they experienced curriculum implementation in relation to their context. This made semi-structured interviews an obvious choice as one of the data gathering techniques. Educators were therefore given ample time to present their perspectives. It was easier to explore the multiple realities that educators had because semi-structured interviews presented the researcher with the leeway to digress with the purpose of getting the fuller picture, to get more clarity and to get respondents to talk more.

An interview schedule was drawn up (see **Appendix 1**), which had a set of questions and the sequence for the interview. According to Kvale (1996), an interview guide can contain just some rough guide or it can be a detailed sequence of carefully worded questions. In this case, the guide contained a set of open-ended questions that were posed to the respondents. This served as a guide to the researcher and questions were not necessarily asked in the same order. The interview was therefore guided by responses from the respondents, which largely determined the flow of the interview. The guide provided the researcher with a measure of control in the line of questioning. Whenever there was a need to explore further specific responses that were made, there were follow-up questions that

sought to clarify or request respondents to expand on what they said. This was the advantage of having and utilizing a guide in a semi-structured interview. The questions that were contained in the interview schedule were such that they related to the research question.

Bryman (2004), when indicating the importance of an interview guide or interview schedule in qualitative interviewing, made the presentation that interviewers can depart significantly from the guide. They can ask new questions that follow up interviewees' replies and can vary the order and even the wording of questions. This is because in this study, questions were open-ended and these were semi-structured interviews. Open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview helped the researcher to probe and follow up on points made by interviewees.

During the interviews, a number of probes were used. Probes, by their nature, are an intricate part of interviewing, accordingly an interviewer has to ensure that they are used appropriately when interviewing. According to Berg (1998), probing questions or simply probes provide interviewers with a way to extract more complete stories from their subjects. The quality of an interview can therefore be enhanced by good probing techniques. The guide for using this technique was provided for by Bailey (1982), who established the following with special focus to neutral probes:

- Repeating the question: this is done whenever the respondent hesitates or appears not to understand the question.
- Indicating understanding and interest: gestures such as nodding would help in stimulating the respondent to continue.

- Pause: this indicates that the interviewer knows the respondent has begun and is waiting for him to finish.
- A neutral question or comment: How do you mean that? “Or Tell me more” indicate to the respondent that more information is desired.

These interviews therefore helped the researcher to focus on the perceptions and practices that educators had as they implemented NCS. The interviews were recorded and this helped to access to the raw data when it had to be analyzed. The other advantage of the recorded interviews was that the researcher was able to capture the entire interview session without having to miss what the respondents had to say. The data was transcribed verbatim (see an example of an interview transcript in **Appendix 3**). Trochim (2001) states that responses are captured as they are being said. This also helped to focus in ensuring that the respondents were made to feel that the researcher really wanted to listen to what they had to say. This was possible because more time was available for the researcher to focus on what the respondents had to say, therefore allowing time for probing. Notwithstanding the possible pitfalls that recording of interviews have, this process with the different respondents proved to be a vital source for data gathering.

There are quite a number of good quality guidelines that were very helpful in conducting the interviews. They assisted in enhancing the quality of the interview process. These guides were important for the researcher, moreover, that this kind of a data gathering, namely conducting an interview, requires the researcher to be a data-gathering instrument (primary instrument). Therefore, the following guides indicated by Trochim (2001) were observed, as:

- The silent probe: it suggests to respondents that the interviewer is waiting, listening for what will be said next.
- Overt encouragement: it could be as simple as saying okay after a respondent has completed a thought.
- Elaboration: for instance it is appropriate to ask questions like “Would you like to elaborate on that?” or “Is there anything you would like to add?”
- Asking for clarification: sometimes, interviewers could elicit greater detail by asking the respondent to clarify something that was said earlier.

Literature is replete with tips and techniques that one as an interviewer must observe when interacting with interviewees. The main intention of these tips, amongst others, is to ensure that the validity and reliability of the interviews are enhanced. It should be noted that good quality interviews help to gather many rich data that relate to the purpose of the research as well as the research question. Therefore, the following interview guidelines were observed, as indicated by De Vos et al (2005):

- The participant must do 90% of the talking. An interview is not a dialogue. The whole point is for the participant to tell the story. Limit your remarks. Listen more and talk less.
- Ask truly open-ended questions. Truly open-ended questions do not predetermine the answers and they allow room for the participants to respond in their own terms.

- Allow for pauses in the conversation. Don't let periods of silence fluster you. Give your participant a chance to think of what he wants to add before you hassle him along to the next question. Try not to rush.
- Conclude interviews with general questions such as, "Is there anything further that you feel is important?"
- Don't interrupt a good story because you have thought of a good question. Just jot down your question to be asked later.
- Don't use the interview to show off your knowledge, vocabulary, charm, or other abilities. Good interviewers do not shine, only their interviews do.

The interview schedule was field tested with one educator who was eager to engage in this process. The reason for this activity was to give the researcher a feel for how the interviews would unfold. This was also done to have a sense of whether the questions in the schedule did not need any fine-tuning, maybe in the form of rephrasing or totally removing them from the guide.

3.4.2 Observations

Observations were used as one of the data gathering techniques in the research. These were conducted to gather data while educators taught in class. They lasted for a period of approximately 45 to 90 minutes during the actual teaching and learning in class.

When commenting about observations, Merriam et al (2002) indicate that observational data represent a first-hand encounter with the phenomenon rather than a second-hand encounter obtained from an interview. The encounter is direct in the field, for example, right in the classroom as the lessons unfold. The nuances of what really happens when

teaching and learning take place can be seen. This happens, quite importantly, as the researcher has the privilege of observing holistically about what happens in the field. Hence, Darlington (2002) contends that, unlike interviews and document analysis, observation affords us access to events as they occur.

According to Gillham (2000), observation has three main elements, namely watching what people do; listening to what they say; sometimes asking them clarifying questions. The classroom setting provided the ideal, if not the best place, to observe educators in action in relation to the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. It further provided the researcher with an opportunity to hear what they say, how they said it and, most importantly, what the learners had to say and how they responded to the teaching practices. On occasion clarifications would be sought from educators at the end of lessons. Some educators would, at times, make comments after their lessons had been observed, so these observations somehow encompassed some form of conversations between the researcher and the respondents.

It must be noted that Potter (1996) contends that the primary advantage of using this technique is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to see if people say what they mean and mean what they say. It therefore presents an opportunity to negate or confirm what transpired during the interviews. There is thus some form of corroboration that can be attained during observations. The corroboration also played a vital role in validating the data that was collected from the interviews and from document analysis. This also played an important role in illuminating what emerged from the interviews and the documents that were analyzed.

The reason for using observations is clearly stated in Kumar (2005) that observation is a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomena as it takes place. The researcher therefore had the chance to have a clear focus on particular aspects that related to the research question. The researcher had a guideline of aspects that were observed and these were in the form of an observation schedule (see **Appendix 2**), wherein a number of pointers served as the focus area.

When commenting about an observation schedule, Cohen et al (2003) contend that this is more of an agenda of issues. These were key areas on which the researcher had to focus on and write notes about. They in a way provided direction on what to look for during the lessons. They therefore provided a broad outline of channelling the focus. The following pointers therefore formed the basis of the researcher's observation as an agenda of issues:

- The nature of activities that learners engaged in, during the lesson.
- How educators infused NCS principles such as the outcomes-based approach; valuing indigenous knowledge systems; social transformation; human rights and inclusivity in class.
- How assessment was infused into the lesson.
- How the educator used Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM).
- Visual images found in the classroom, their relevance and incorporation into NCS.

These focus areas formed part of the observation schedule, which, according to Henning (2004), will help locate what you are observing. These therefore provided some form of indicators of what to look for.

It must be noted that to be precise the researcher used semi-structured observations. This was done with the help of the observation schedule, whereby the predetermined set of issues were identified in order to guide the observation process. However, there was room for the researcher to observe and collect data on other issues that might not necessarily have appeared in the observation guide, but had some bearing on them.

According to Creswell et al (2003), the observational protocol may be a single page to separate descriptive notes (accounts of particular events) from reflective notes (researcher's personal thoughts). The note-taking process captured the field notes as indicated in this study. The proceedings of different lessons were recorded on an individual basis.

The role that the observer assumed was the non-participant observer. This route was followed because, according to Kumar (2005), non-participant observation is used when you as a researcher do not get involved in the activities of the group but remain a passive observer, watching and listening, and drawing conclusions from this. The researcher's role therefore was known to both the educators and the learners even if he did not take part in the activities that they were engaged in.

According to Darlington (2002, p.80), the suggestion about field notes is to "jot down brief notes during the observations and write up these as full field notes after leaving the field." Field notes were therefore taken during the observations and additional notes were recorded immediately after the observations that were conducted by the researcher. It should be noted that Potter (1998, p.99) indicates that "observations are usually recorded

as field notes, which can be free-form jottings that one takes down on the spot, or lengthier, but perhaps less detailed reconstructions.” The observation schedule that was used had a column for descriptive notes wherein what was directly observed during the lesson was written. It also had a column for reflective notes wherein the researcher wrote notes on his thoughts about what he had observed.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

Documents that educators used as they implemented NCS were also examined. In this regard, Somekh and Lewin (2006) say that documents can be examined for immediate content, changing content over time and values that such changes manifest. One other reason why documents analysis was employed is indicated by Yin (1994), as the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources.

The documents that were examined were NCS policies that inform the practices of educators. They included subject statements, documents used for planning daily activities such as the year programme, lesson plans, work schedules, assessment plans, assessment programmes, learner portfolios and educator portfolios. These assisted in gathering the data that related to educator practices in NCS implementation.

Merriam et al (2002) pointed out that the strength of documents as a data source lies with the fact that they readily exist in the situation. It was therefore an added advantage that the documents that were requested for were available from educators.

3.4.4 Researcher as a Data-Gathering Instrument

Within this research, the researcher also served as a primary data-gathering instrument, which is a key aspect in qualitative research. Merriam et al (2002) contend that a second characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument of data collecting and data analysis. The researcher therefore had to be familiar with the data-gathering techniques that were used in the research, that is the interviews, observations and document analysis.

For example, Cohen et al (2003), points out that the researcher is the research instrument, the effective interviewer is not only knowledgeable about the subject matter, but also an expert communicator. The researcher therefore had to be familiar with the dynamics of the interviewing process and the observation process. One example during the interviews was to expand on the non-verbal clues that were noticed. In essence, the researcher is closer to reality as opposed to a case where an instrument such as a questionnaire could have been given to respondents for them to complete.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

This is mainly the process that assisted in making sense to the interpretation of the data. The approach to the analysis was guided by Huberman and Miles (1984), who indicated that data reduction occurs continuously throughout the life of any qualitative project. The minute the first interview was completed, the researcher was already trying to make sense of the data by sorting it out and reducing it into manageable components that could be understood in terms of the respondents' perceptions.

Similarly, the first observation that was conducted and the first batch of documents that were given to the researcher, were subjected to the interpretation and making sense of the data from the onset. Merriam et al (2002) indicate that in qualitative research, one begins analyzing data with the first interview, the first observation, the first document accessed in the study.

It is important to note that De Vos (2005, p.335) when presenting a case about data analysis contends that “a qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis. An assumption of the qualitative researcher is that the human instrument is capable of fine-tuning in order to generate the widest array of data.”

According to Huberman and Miles (2002), qualitative data analysis is essentially about detection, and the tasks of defining, categorizing, theorizing, explaining, exploring and mapping are fundamental to the analyst’s role. When carrying out this role the researcher had to transcribe the interview data verbatim. The data from the observations was also transcribed by the researcher in order to assist the process of breaking it into categories that were later compiled into themes.

With regard to the transcription of data from interviews, Brayman (2004) reports that it is necessary for a complete account of the series of exchanges in an interview to be available. There was, of course, an advantage for the researcher to transcribe personally all the interview notes and the observation notes. This process was quite helpful and according to De Vos (2005), doing all or some of your own interview transcription provides an opportunity to be immersed in the data, an experience that usually generates emergent insight.

Accordingly, Terre Blanche and Durkheim (2002) indicate that once you have done this, that is transcribed data by yourself, by the time you come to data analysis you already have a preliminary understanding of the meaning of your data. You therefore have an advantage of immersion into the data right away and you are able tentatively to have an idea of the type of categories and themes that may emerge from the data.

When Huberman and Miles (2002) argued for familiarization, they indicated that, during familiarization stage, the analyst listens to and reads the material, listing key ideas and recurrent themes. It follows then that before the data was coded, the researcher had to immerse himself in the data. What Creswell (2007) says is to immerse yourself in the details, trying to get a sense of the interview as a whole. The researcher therefore had to read all the transcriptions carefully, both from the interview and the observations. The idea was to find out if there were any associations between what the different respondents said and what had been observed. The researcher also had to establish if there were any linkages in and across the data from interviews and observations as well as the documents that were analyzed.

Both the textual data from the interview and the observations were coded. Babbie (2007) indicates that the key process in qualitative social research data is coding – classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data – coupled with some form of retrieval system. This was done by writing emerging categories in the right-hand margin of the notes and the emerging themes in the left-hand margin. Trochim (2001) reports that coding is a process for categorizing qualitative data and describing the implications and details of these

categories. This process assisted in providing a measure of realizing the associations between categories and themes.

The Atlas ti software program was later used, in which the different categories were indicated for the different segments of data. From these categories, family units (themes) were developed by clustering the categories, pulling them together into these family units (themes). The program then assisted in compiling all categories from the different respondents in order to present a global view of all the themes that were developed. Graphic representations of the categories and themes with relationships amongst these indicated with arrows, were produced.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of computer programs, analyzing the data with the help of the Atlas ti program had the following advantages, as indicated by Creswell (2007):

- Organized storage system for quick and easy retrieval. It becomes easier especially in locating entire cases or cases with specific characteristics.
- No longer do we need to cut and paste onto the file cards and sort and resort the cards according to themes.
- A computer program encourages a researcher to look closely at the data. Sometimes without a program, a researcher is likely to read the text files or transcripts and not analyze each carefully.
- The concept-mapping feature enables the researcher to visualize the relationships amongst codes and themes by drawing a visual model.

This program was utilized in light of the assertions made by Yvonne (2002), who contends that it is important to choose a program that will support rather than constrain your analysis. The main reason for the choice of this program was that it enhanced the analysis that had to be done.

The process of categorizing and formulating themes boils down to data reduction, which, according to Huberman and Miles (1994), is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organizes data in such a way that the “final” conclusion can be drawn and verified. The analytical induction approach was then used which, according to Potter (1996), enables you to do the following: you look at one case and construct a generalization, and you look at the next case to determine if it fits the generalization, and so on. Essentially, this approach is an inductive strategy, as indicted by Merriam et al (2002) in that one begins with the unit of data and compares it with other units of data. These patterns get refined and adjusted as the analysis proceeds.

The procedure that was employed after the coding and categories were in place, as mentioned by Henning (2004), was to ensure that the whole was illuminated and the researcher had to focus on the following questions: What are the relationships? What do they say together? What do they say about each other? How do you address the research question? What is missing? and other related questions. This approach, as indicated by Coffey and Atkinson (1999), was used to expand, transform, and re-conceptualize data, opening up a range of more diverse analytical possibilities. It was useful in the sense that an intensive form of data interrogation resulted.

Accordingly, data across the respondents had to be compared and, naturally, the data was also compared across the data-gathering techniques (interviews, observations, and documents). Some data displays were developed which provided some networks amongst the themes and categories utilizing the Atlas ti program. According to Huberman and Miles (1994), a data display is an organized assembly of information that permits the drawing of conclusions and taking action.

Likewise, Trochim (2000) suggests that integrative diagrams be used to pull all the data together and, as such, indicate that they might be concept maps, directed maps or even simple cartoons that act as summarizing devices. The key point is to have forms of graphics that are useful in drawing conclusions. Themes with arrows were used that indicated the interrelationships amongst categories. Thus, the network of interrelationships was graphically represented. This provided an overview of connections amongst categories. What is indicated by Babbie (2007) and relates to diagrams and concept mapping is that, often, we think out relationships among concepts by putting the concepts in a graphical format, a process called concept mapping. The process proved to be very helpful in ensuring that the interconnection that emerged from the data could be detected.

From there, the researcher had to draw the findings of the research and write a report. The report is presented through an analysis across the cases. This format was used which is given as guide by Creswell (2003) and has the following features:

- Varying use of long, short, and text embedded quotations.
- Using the wording from participants.
- Intertwining quotations with (the author's) interpretations.

- Using indents formatting to call for attention to quotations from participants.

As these quotes were used within the report, much of the guide in employing this approach also came from Merriam et al (2002), who indicate that the best guideline is whether data is in the form of quotes from interviews, episodes from field observations or documentary evidence presented to support adequately and convincingly the study's findings. Whichever way, quotes and the episodes that are presented in the report findings are such that the vivid details of what transpired in the field are captured. According to Bryman (2004), qualitative researchers are frequently not just interested in what people say but also in the way they say it. In cases where such instances had to be reflected in the report, quotes and episodes from the field then become useful measures of the presentation.

It must be noted that when presenting an argument for the utilization of quotes, Yvonne (2002) indicated that direct quotations from participants are integral to qualitative research reports – they bring the research to life. It was therefore in view of these assertions that this route was taken by the researcher as a way of giving some vibrancy to the data. It follows that on the one hand, as is indicated by Creswell (2007), that quotes prepare the reader for a shift in emphasis or display a point and allow the writer (and reader) to move on. Therefore, there was a combination of reasons why quotes in the research findings and the report were used.

The report also has instances of some thick descriptions. The rationale of this is rooted in the argument by Potter (1996, p.155), which states: “In order for the reader of a qualitative research report to understand how those actors constructed their meanings, the researcher must provide enough description.” The instances where this approach was used presented

some form of background, which in a way provided some logic behind the views that were presented by respondents and the findings that emerged from the observations.

According to Merriam et al (2002, p.5), the reason why the qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive is because “there are likely to be descriptions of the context, participants involved, activities of interest.” In addition, data in the form of quotes, as argued by Creswell (2003, p.191), states that “case study research and ethnographic research involve detailed description of the setting or individuals.” Quite clearly then, the report and the findings of this research are grounded in the notion that there has to be thick descriptions in the data as a way of illuminating the rationale behind the research findings.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

According to Creswell (2003), validity in qualitative research revolves around whether the research findings are accurate. Accuracy would therefore entail the truthfulness of the research findings.

De Vos (2005, p.345) indicates validity as “the soundness of the research findings.” On the other hand, Trochim (2001, p.162) refers to validity, which in the qualitative realm is termed credibility - an equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research, as “establishing that the results of the qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants.”

According to Creswell (2003 and 2007); Merriam (2002), De Vos (2005) and Bryman (2004), there are a number of strategies that can be used to enhance validity as it is presented in qualitative research. These strategies include triangulation; rich, thick data

description and member checking. The manner in which the first two suggested strategies, that is triangulation and rich thick data description, were utilized in this research is explained in some of the paragraphs below. As for member checking, the report of this research was given to some of the respondents who acted as research subjects, and they had to read the report to get a feeling of what it entailed.

When talking about generalizability, Hubberman and Miles (2002, p.52) refer to it as “the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times, or settings than those directly studied.”

Similarly, external validity, which in qualitative terms is an equivalent of the concept generalization, is indicated by Merriam et al (2002) as “the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations.” Hence, Merriam et al (2002) suggest that providing a thick description as a strategy to enable those who read the research findings to determine whether those findings can be applied to their situation or whether to utilize those findings to their context. Much of the interpretations that were arrived at in this research, were provided by some form of contextualization in the form of backgrounds, quotes and episodes from observations as a way of giving the thick description. Such descriptions, it is believed, will enable those who read the findings of this research to determine whether the research findings of this study can be applicable to their contexts or elsewhere.

According to Merriam et al (2002), if possible, researchers are encouraged to use more than one method of data collection as multiple methods to enhance validity of the findings. In simple terms, this refers to triangulation where different data gathering techniques are

used in the research. The reason for this approach, as presented by Yin (1994, p.80), is that: “no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. In fact the various sources are highly complementary.”

Accordingly, Schwandt (2007) defines triangulation as a procedure that is used to establish the fact that the criterion of validity has been met. It must therefore be noted that as a way of enhancing validity (triangulation) of the research findings in this study, the following data-gathering techniques were used: semi-structured interviews, semi-structured observations, and document analysis.

According to Merriam et al (2002), reliability in qualitative research is explained as an indication of whether the results are consistent with the data that is collected. Merriam et al (2002) therefore suggest a number of strategies that can be used to enhance reliability. Amongst the strategies that these authors mention, those that were used in this research in order to enhance reliability are triangulation and audit trial. As for the audit trial, this was accounted for in this research by indicating how the data were collected and how the categories were determined.

A journal was also kept in which the researcher wrote reflective notes on how the interviews, observations and the process of going through the data unfolded. Furthermore, the journal assisted during the research and at the end of the research as it provided additional data for the analysis. The journal assisted during the reflection as data collection was in progress.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Creswell (2007, p.141) indicates that “a qualitative researcher faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection and in analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports.” Similarly, Merriam et al (2002) indicate that, in qualitative research, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and dissemination of the findings. This research has addressed a number of ethical issues that surfaced during the research as the measure of enhancing validity and reliability of the research.

Before the researcher could proceed with the data collection, written permission had to be obtained from the education department at the district office. A letter of permission that gave the required permission to conduct the study and also to inform school principals as well as educators to that effect is contained in the appendices. The appendices also include of the following: examples of letters that sought the consent of educators and school principals to take part in the research; examples of reply letters from school principals that gave permission to conduct the research; and an example of consent forms that were signed by educators who took part in the research. The original copies of all these documents were submitted to the ethics committee at the University, which had to issue an ethical clearance certificate as an indication that the research could proceed. The copy of this certificate is included in the appendices.

The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents and the people who would access the research reports were mentioned to them. It is also indicated in the letter that requested respondents to take part in the research that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time during the research if they so wished. Their consent to be the subjects of the research was therefore mutual and their participation was voluntary. Kvale

(1996, p.112) captures this as “informed consent, entails informing the research subjects about the overall purpose of the research.” Silverman (2005, p.270) puts it simply as “clarify your intentions.”

With regard to the anonymity of the respondents, the names of the respondents have not been mentioned in the research findings. The interview notes do not reflect the names of educators nor do they reflect the names of the schools where these educators teach; pseudonyms have been used instead. The report is such that the responses given by the subjects cannot be identifiable to the respondents. Berg (1998) indicates that your subjects should remain nameless. These measures were taken to ensure that the anonymity of the respondents was maintained.

According to Salkind (2009), confidentiality is maintained when anything that is learned about the participants is held in the strictest of confidence. For example, there were instances where one would notice that some of the challenges that educators perceived as work related were just some forms of negligence which, if followed up, would most probably result in disciplinary procedures being instituted against such teachers. These matters were kept in confidence and the report does not say anything to that effect.

With respect to the safekeeping of the research data, the interview recordings; interview transcripts; the observation notes; as well as the copies of documents that were used, these will be made available to the supervisor and the external examiners. The data will also be made available to the university as and when needed. All the officials that have been mentioned and those who might have to handle the data of this research at the university

are conversant with ethical implications regarding research data. The researcher therefore does not expect the standards of research ethics to be violated by these officials.

In relation to any harm, be it physical, psychological or otherwise, the above-mentioned measures that were taken are to the knowledge of the researcher the best that could be done to ensure that the respondents were not subjected to any form of harm.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFORM

4.1.1 Training

A notable phenomenon was that a sizable number of educators were not apologetic about their reservations with regard to NCS. This was actually a disturbing occurrence, to say the least, if and only if the objectives of this curriculum are to be accomplished. Remember, these are the people on the ground who have the potential to render the implementation process functional or otherwise. The following comments and observations substantiate this view.

The following comment was made by one educator:

I mean the negatives outweigh the positives and the first thing being training itself. There are some cracks, hence the lack of understanding of NCS among educators. So, outside the classroom they talk about this and to me it says if we had intensive training if we had educators understanding this...this...this...policy, then we would be talking a different language altogether.

Another educator, who earlier on sounded optimistic about, NCS had this to say:

NCS implementation was chaos. So it's ...it's a financial burden on the school. Eh, the department did not carry eh...what...the mandate it

should have carried of training the teachers to effectively implement NCS.

What is eminent in these comments is that educators questioned the quality of the workshops that they attended on NCS. All the educators who were interviewed were quite sceptical about how effective these workshops were. Some of the statements they made follow. One educator said:

Eh, I believe that maybe if training can be done, not only being given manuals and say we are implementing NCS or you are being called for a workshop for a week, they give you three manuals and we read through the manuals, That is not the case. That's what we have been doing and it's not working. Because it tells us we only have information in our books but to do the right thing in class is a challenge.

An overview of what educators thought about these workshops is succinctly stated by one educator in this fashion:

Ya, useful, not effective because really they did not explain much about the approach or the implementation.

The mixture of views that educators demonstrated during the interviews about the NCS workshops is a call for the attention, especially those that seem a bit sceptical. Such views should therefore serve as some form of a sounding board that helps to reflect the nature of preparation that educators went through prior to NCS implementation. This kind of

reflection may be utilised as an opportunity to realign and make the necessary adjustments that will help to address these views that may sound sceptical. The emergence of such views may be of great assistance for the implementation of the envisaged innovations. One key element that has a significant impact on educators' practices is their level of development. When educators themselves do not feel that they have been adequately prepared, what they do in class may be adversely affected. It must be indicated that this point even emerged in the literature review when the development of educators was presented as one of the factors that enhance educators' practices in the classroom.

The challenge with regard to the type of training that they received and the quality of training they underwent proved to be problematic for almost all educators. This challenge therefore impacts on the nature of implementation, in that the perception that educators create is more of desperation than confident professionals who are supposed to feel sure about what they are doing.

One educator presented this challenge by indicating that:

This is one thing that I feel really teachers lack at this juncture. So, intensive training would really mean that NCS won't be effectively implemented, bottom line eh, training, training, training is what I'm really appealing for?

One educator was not apologetic about the challenges that she felt had to be attended to, and she made her submission as:

I rather call them crush workshops, something like that because the Department offers teachers I think three days workshops, the maximum of five days. So, I can't call them training. They are just workshops. I would then recommend training rather than workshops because these crush workshops it's a problem.

Another educator was not really impressed when he said:

But really the training is so minimal that there are some things that need to be clarified. I mean if... if... if... you train educators more especially if it's a new curriculum, I don't think a week is enough for them to master all the curriculum.

Quite clearly then, the nature of training that educators received should be a cause for concern if what these educators raised is anything to go by. It should further be noted that the quality of training for educators has significant effects on how educators implement the envisaged innovations. The views that educators raised must be taken as pointers that must assist in bringing about the necessary adjustments in the NCS.

4.1.2 Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

The availability of learning and teaching support material cannot be separated from the challenge of learner ratios that educators have. Accordingly, this had a direct impact on the teaching strategy in which they had to engage their learners. For example, the depth and intensity of group work and individual work in which learners had to be engaged were activities that were adversely affected by the shortage of LTSM. It was therefore not

surprising that educators would naturally link these two challenges. One could not help but notice the pessimism indicated by one educator who presented her case in this manner:

Eh, learning and teaching support material in a classroom is a problem. The NCS is learner centred, it dictates that each learner must have his or her own eh, learner personal guide. So, in my school that is not the case, learners share books. So, if I give them homework or any other thing to be done at home I know it won't be done. So, it's impossible to monitor their homework at home because they don't have the learner support material.

Another educator, as if she had consulted with the one quoted above, had this to say:

They share. You make them share books. Learners are too many, so those are the problems that we face.

A related challenge also surfaced in terms of how schools had to choose the LTSM when educators were not adequately prepared to execute this task. This particular challenge lies at the core of the first major challenge that was raised by educators, which deals with the level of their preparedness in implementing NCS as opposed to the amount and quality of training that they received in that regard. What emerged was that they had to choose the LTSM even if they did not know the relevant NCS criteria peculiar to the LTSM that was to be used in an NCS class.

An appeal was made in an attempt to respond to a challenge that emerged from the researcher's interaction with educators. This is how the appeal was made by one educator, who indicated that:

There were no workshops in selecting learner teacher support material. So, we are facing a problem of sitting with books that we don't really use. But that's what is available to us. They must train eh, educators how best to choose the learner support material and give them another chance to choose for their schools.

The magnitude of the possible inappropriate choice of the learning and teaching support material was raised by one educator who indicated that:

In some of the textbooks that you are using, the terminology is not eh, according to their level of understanding.

One Geography educator presented another dimension with regard to challenges on the utilisation of LTSM, that is the over-reliance of educators on textbooks. Other related learning and teaching support material as it emerged was another hurdle that educators and schools had to overcome. It was a moving submission that was made by this educator and other educators too, lamenting a similar challenge. This is how the submission was made:

We focus predominantly on textbooks, we don't have wall maps, and we don't have charts, we don't have videos or DVD's we don't have

sufficient computers. Mostly we depend on textbooks. We don't have slides, we don't have overheads. That means we depend on textbooks.

It must be noted that, making an appeal to the above challenges with specific reference to LTSM, one educator was very emotional about this aspect. Hence, this educator made the following remarks in an attempt to implore the department to address implementation challenges that are adversely affected by LTSM shortages. This is what this educator said:

*They (the department), they must stop running education like an industry.
They must run education like it is supposed to be run, as a service not as an industry.*

This educator went to great lengths to try to show the impact of LTSM shortage as well as the lack of capacity by educators in being innovative when utilising LTSM in class.

A sensible expectation is that, because there is new curriculum that must be introduced, prior preparations should enable educators to be innovative enough in introducing additional LTSM during lessons. It must be noted that, somehow, the introduction of the NCS seems to have overlooked this expectation. Almost all the educators were found wanting in this regard and indications are that the necessary preparations on the side of policy in ensuring that educators were adequately capacitated were not forthcoming.

It became clear that the first major challenge confronting educators was the shortage of Learner Guides (textbooks). During many of the lessons, learners had to share books and the main reason was that there were just not enough textbooks available for all learners.

The other reason that was mentioned by educators why learners had to share books was that quite a number of them just decided to leave some of their textbooks at home, for various reasons, one of which is that their textbooks go missing or are stolen at times. The downside of this situation was that the shortage of textbooks, no matter the cause, presented educators with an obvious challenge of having learners who might not focus a hundred percent on the lesson. For example, there was one instance during an English period where the lesson was on a comprehension passage and at some stage individual learners had to read aloud as they alternated. This resulted in some of the learners only listening without reading along because of the shortage that was indicated.

Therefore, it was clear that the shortage of books hampered the smooth running of the lesson with learners in some instances experiencing lapses of concentration as it was experienced during the lesson referred to above. This was because when learners had to pass on books to their peers, there were moments where learners struggled in refocusing on the task at hand. The shortage of textbooks was prevalent in most of the lessons where the observations were made and the larger classes were the ones that suffered the most. Incidentally, many of the educators indicated during the interviews that they made learners share books, not out of choice but mainly because of the shortage. In one of the interviews one educator, who had a class of approximately 67 learners, presented the problem in this fashion:

Learning and teaching support material in a classroom is a problem, so in my school, learners share books.

It became clear that for at first, without other related Learning and Teaching Support Material such as computers and models being available, to mention but a few, the non-availability of adequate textbooks (learner guides) in one way or the other impeded on the classroom activities that educators had to perform with their learners.

The learning and teaching support material that educators used were mainly confined to textbooks in the form of Teacher Guides and Learner Guides. This was the case even in a practical subject like Geography, where the lesson dealt with pollution and all its causes. One would have expected the educator to be a bit innovative by bringing a wide range of pictures and to let learners indicate specific forms of pollution peculiar to each picture and perhaps discuss the causes of pollution with reference to those pictures. Alternatively, learners could have been asked to bring along these pictures and maybe then let them, in their respective groups, identify forms of pollution and discuss the causes of pollution using the pictures that they themselves have identified. Instead, the educator opted to confine the lesson and the learning and teaching support material to what was available in the Teacher Guide and the Learner Guide.

The other scenario where one educator could have been a bit more innovative was during a poetry lesson with the poem entitled “The last lesson of the afternoon” being taught. One would have thought that the educator could have brought along pictures appropriate to the lesson taking place and let learners discuss what they thought about the experiences of the individuals who appeared in those pictures. Alternatively, learners themselves could have been requested to bring such pictures and in their groups or individually indicate what they thought the experiences of the people who appeared in those pictures were. This would have been a much more hands-on approach, which would have maximised the utilisation of

the learning and teaching support material and at the same time spark a discussion and let learners engage much more intensively during the lesson.

However, the teacher opted for an approach where learners had to discuss the contents of the poem, allocating each stanza to a group. In the opinion of the researcher, the alternative approach indicated above could have been a much more intensive learner centred approach with the utilisation of the learning and teaching support material. The two scenarios that have been mentioned were a reflection of a many of the lessons that were observed. One is therefore inclined to conclude that, even if educators are confronted with a number of challenges around LTSM, they can be more innovative in how they make up for the shortage or augment the LTSM that they have.

There were, however, instances where educators demonstrated good utilisation of the LTSM as well as some innovation. For example, there was one Geography lesson about the heating of the atmosphere. The educator showed learners a 25-minute video on climate change and learners had been requested to bring along pictures that indicated some form of climate change. The learners had to indicate how their pictures fitted into the video that was shown in class. They also had to indicate how the climate change that was depicted in their pictures fitted into this video. Presentations were made by learners in their respective groups and the discussions that ensued were very informative. At some stage, learners were very critical about how other groups presented their cases and all these intensive discussions were the result of how innovative the educator was. The point, therefore, is that the manner in which the educator utilised LTSM made this particular lesson very interesting.

Apart from the shortage of textbooks, it emerged that additional LTSM, such as adequate computers and not only the availability of the Internet but the ability to utilize it fully, were some of the avenues that could have enriched the lessons. For example, one could have easily made use of the Internet to collect examples and instances both in the form of written texts and pictures that would have assisted in the presentation of the two Geography lessons, one on pollution and the other on the heating of the atmosphere. By the way, the non-availability of these forms of LTSM was mentioned by some educators during the interviews as some of the challenges that hinder progress en route to the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement.

The observations that were made revealed that, for educators to be fully functional in the implementation of this new curriculum, to engage learners fully in activities that maximise the ability of learners, LTSM supply is a necessary precondition that must be met. It is largely through the adequate availability of the necessary LTSM that facilitation in class will be enhanced. On the other hand, some form of innovation by educators is also necessary. Quite importantly then, LTSM is a significant component with regard to how the NCS is implemented. Its adequacy and appropriate utilisation have profound effects on whether educators succeed in ensuring that policy prescriptions that the NCS aspires for are implemented accordingly.

4.1.3 Workload and Class Size

More often than not, one would detect that learner ratios in class was a serious challenge related to group work. The following illustrations serve as indications.

One educator whose school has a learner population of approximately 980 indicated that:

I'm teaching sixty seven learners, so preparing for a seventy eight learner class in a classroom that accommodates forty learners especially when I have to involve them maybe in group activities, then it's another thing. So, how do I arrange them, their seating arrangement, how do I do that?

The following two educators were concise and to the point

Educator 1:

Ya I believe in as far as learner teacher ratio is concerned, this is abnormal. But really ... we really do our best irrespective of such conditions.

Educator 2:

So, there is no time for example eh, to be allocated to each an every individual in a class of sixty.

It was therefore not surprising that some of them had strong feelings about group work versus the numbers of learners in class. For example, this was said by one educator:

It is not an easy task. I don't... I don't think any educator in the right sense will say it is an easy task to deliver NCS to these particular learners in a class of sixty. However, when you divide them into six groups of ten, where am I going to find the space of these ten groups of six, number one? And how do we engage all these particular learners because all learners are supposed to be treated on an equal footing

which is absolutely not possible. Those are some of the challenges that we face.

Much as these educators do all in their power to maximise learner engagement in class, they do come across a number of challenges. Class size or the teacher-pupil ratio proved to be one of their major obstacles in grappling with teaching strategies that are NCS related. One would sense desperation in the teaching method that this educator tried to utilise and this is an indication:

Ya, I believe in as far as learner teacher ratio is concerned, this is abnormal. But really we do our best irrespective of such conditions. Well the first challenge is you...you...you lack the capacity to control them effectively. Ya, and besides, there is no space...there is no space, you cannot manoeuvre easily from one group to the other, and that really frustrates the...the...the teaching process. So these are some of the constraints that one really eh, is actually coming across whenever one implements this group activity.”

Note: This educator had a class of sixty-five learners.

The majority of educators lamented this fact, and this is captured below in the remarks of this educator, who had a class of fifty-five learners, when she said:

Another thing that I think needs attention from the department is the teacher-pupil ratio. If you teach a class that has a huge number of learners, it becomes difficult to assist learners.

Quite clearly, then, curriculum innovations need to respond to the challenges that these educators are raising lest what teachers do in class does not reflect what policy would want them to do. Therefore, for educators to utilize group work effectively as one of the teaching strategies in NCS, one major obstacle that they have to face is the numbers of learners who have to be taught per class. Policy aspirations should therefore align teacher-pupil ratios with classroom realities. This is important because the points that these educators raised imply that their workload overwhelms them.

One class had approximately 68 learners in a school with a learner population of around 950. It was a one-hour English lesson on poetry. The educator did a lot of explanation on the content of the poem and important concepts instead of letting learners do more of the explanations. Learners were later requested to discuss questions that were written on the chalkboard, which entailed analysis of the poem, key features of the poem, and contextual questions in their respective groups. Learners had to break into their respective groups and this exercise took about three to four minutes before everyone could settle down. Group discussions were monitored and this exercise proved to be problematic for the educator. For one, moving through all the groups did not prove to be the best option. Therefore, the educator chose to engage intensively with only four groups from a total of seven groups with an average of eight members per group when moving from group to group. When it was time for group responses, not all the groups were able to give feedback. Even during the feedback session, most of the comments were done by the educator instead of the learners. This was understandable, given the time frame (duration) of the lesson and the number of groups that had to give feedback. There were, of course, isolated instances where learners were given an opportunity to make comments about what their colleagues had to say. Unfortunately those instances were for brief moments and the centre stage was

mainly utilised by the educator who had to explain and elaborate on what the responses should have been or otherwise.

This trend was apparent in about five classes and, with bigger classes, the trend was glaring. It was quite clear that those educators who had big classes of fifty and more, faced serious challenges when doing group work. The concern that they raised in the interviews about group work being problematic was confirmed in this instance. It became clear that the teacher-learner ratio was a major challenge for educators when implementing the outcomes-based approach in their classrooms. These bigger classes did not do much good in assisting educators to ensure that learners' engagement during classroom activities were maximised.

4.2 TEACHING STRATEGY

Almost all educators are of the view that a learner-centred approach and utilisation of group work are key features that define the success of their teaching approach. They quite clearly indicated that teaching through facilitation is key, as opposed to constantly explaining to learners the contents of the lesson. This is in line with the outcomes-based approach that NCS stipulates, educators engaging learners in significant group work activities. It is also evident that educators are eager to ensure that a learner-centred approach is utilised in their classroom activities. This is very encouraging in that educators are doing their best to involve learners. This teaching approach proved to be a valued approach that they use. This is indicated by educators through their remarks.

One of them said:

I think seventy percent of our learning activities are group work in the sense that our classes are already divided into groups.

This educator confirms the above comments in this fashion:

NCS it is...it is...it is much learner centred, most of the things eh, more than seventy percent is...is...learner centred and whatever they do I give instructions as long as I have highlighted my learning outcomes and the assessment standards.

There was a sense of obligation in what was said by the educator below in an attempt to highlight that learner involvement was the focal point in her engagement with learners. She had this to say:

Eh, after checking what they know it is then that I come up with whatever I have prepared for them. But before I give them the answers to whatever that I have prepared, I also encourage and involve them in trying to give the solutions to the problems that I have in class. That's how I implement NCS in my class.

The comments below summarize this view especially with regard to group work.

One English educator was enthused:

My implementation of NCS, what I do mostly is group work, the group work eh...what we also do is the debate, the role play and the dialogue, all of these.

Another educator had this to say:

Group work has worked very well and is still working very well as part of how I...eh, learners are involved in my lesson.

On the other hand, educators experience some challenges when utilising a learner-centred approach as well as group work. This concern was raised by one English class educator, who did not sound encouraging as she had this to say:

In a way they are not used to group work. We have to force them, to make them aware that look this is not work that you can do on your own but this activity needs you to be in a group. So that is still the hiccup of group work.

However, what should be encouraging is that, notwithstanding the challenges that educators have mentioned, they notice the importance of a learner-centered approach and they acknowledge their role in ensuring that there is maximum learner participation during lessons. This should be a big plus on the side of this new curriculum.

There is, however, another challenge in engaging learners themselves. For example, according to these two educators, these are the challenges.

This educator sounded despondent:

The only problems that I realise in group activities are that some learners tend to hide behind other learners no matter how much you try to monitor their learning activities.

It is interesting to note that one educator seemed to be in a firing mode and he made the following submission:

Eh to be honest I...I...I'm not a fan of group work because I realised that group work is a nest of laziness and parasitism. Meaning that, some kids in a group work they depend on other kids to do the spadework for them.

The other problem area was the level of preparation that educators have in relation to group work, hence an avalanche of statements lamenting this aspect ensued. This presented one significant challenge that needed to be overcome on the way to smooth curriculum implementation. It was an emerging pattern throughout the interviews and even during the observations. More than half of the twelve educators presented the picture that they faced a big challenge with regard to group work. It must be noted that from the deductions that were made it really was an enormous task for them.

One educator responded to a question on group work as a teaching strategy in this disparate fashion, lamenting about her frustrations:

The problems that I realise in group activities are that, some learners tend to hide behind other learners no matter how much you try to

monitor their learning activities. And there are those who don't want to be part of the group activity. Others would do the work you know, others would just lay back.

It must be noted that it was indicated in the interviews by the educators themselves that more than half of them engaged learners in a lot of group work activities. To be precise, from twelve educators that were observed, eight did their best to involve learners intensively in some form of group work. Therefore, educators did their best to become more of facilitators as opposed to the conventional approach where they would spend most of the time in class talking. It must therefore be mentioned that this approach (group work) provided a number of challenges, one of which is whether this was a success.

One of the lessons in which such an approach was utilised was during an English lesson on summary writing. The lesson lasted for about one hour. As in all the lessons that were observed, the educator introduced the lesson by indicating the learning outcome, which in this case was Reading and Viewing. The educator explained what this outcome entailed. This was the trend in the other lessons that were observed. The researcher thought it would have been much more effective if learners were the ones who should have been asked to indicate what the learning outcome entailed. This would have been a means of sparking discussions right at the beginning of the lesson in order to intensify the learner-centred approach that NCS espouses. In almost all the lessons, it was as if educators had made the assumption that learners did not know what the learning outcome for each lesson or topic entailed.

In this case, the class was not as big as some of the others, with 48 learners. An exemplar summary was given to learners and in their respective groups; they had to discuss whether they would come up with the similar points as the ones that were provided as the main points in the exemplar summary. This group of learners did not pose much of a challenge for the educator, as she was able to maintain their focus on the task. It must, however, be noted that this educator could have had more time to intensively engage with each group had the numbers in each group been less. This became evident when the teacher was moving from group to group monitoring the progress of learners. She had to stop her discussion with one group prematurely in order to resume the discussions with the whole of the class. The educator had to do this even if it was clear that the discussions in that particular group had not been exhausted.

One other observation that was made was that it seemed as if educators felt obliged to utilise group work in most teaching activities. Almost all educators opted for group work activities, even in instances where an alternative approach would have been an option. For example, one poetry lesson with a class of approximately 68 learners could have been approached with the utilisation of a worksheet, where learners would, after having completed the worksheet, have a chance to make their presentations. The presentations could have been done by individual learners while the whole class would have had the chance to engage with these presentations. This would have curbed the situation wherein group work seemingly was the end in itself for almost all the educators that were observed. An important point that needs to be made, in line with group work is that, as one educator during the interview said:

I think seventy percent of our learning activities are group work in the sense that our learners are already divided into groups.

So, the over-utilisation of group work that became apparent during the observations was actually mentioned as “the” teaching strategy in the interviews that were conducted.

It is interesting to note that one other critical aspect that emerged in the literature on practices of educators is that educators at times modify the stipulated curriculum in order to accommodate the circumstances they find themselves in. They effect changes in line with the practical realities that they are confronted with in their respective classrooms. There are various reasons for such practices, but the bottom line is that the intended objectives of curriculum innovations may not necessarily be realised as a result of this practice. Nevertheless, based on their unique contextual conditions, the teaching strategies that NCS requires are not implemented as expected. The following practices that this educator engages in confirm this, and this is what the educator said:

Well, sometimes when you put it in paper you have this clear picture of what you are going to do, start with this and that. You write down in your lesson plan and once you come into the classroom to implement, there are situations where it wouldn't go smoothly as you anticipated, why, because of many reasons. Sometimes it is frustrating you know if you can't achieve what you wanted to achieve and you end up looking at them, seeing that they don't understand what is it exactly that you are trying to teach, then you end up reverting to the old method of teaching,

standing there explaining while they are supposed to do the explaining to you.

On average, the lowest number of learners per class was 45, the highest being 78. More than half of the educators that took part in this project had an average of 55 learners per class. This situation posed some challenges that they experienced in class. From their submissions, it became clear that successful NCS implementation was being compromised mainly when they had to render individual attention to learners and when they had to engage learners in group work activities.

4.3 CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

4.3.1 Planning

Among the records that educators kept, the following were available: Subject Statement for each learning area, Learning Programme Guidelines, Subject Assessment Guidelines; Teacher Portfolio and Learner Portfolios. Among the documents contained in the Teacher Portfolios, the following are very important documents: the Work-Schedule (a form of a pace-setter), Assessment Programme and Lessons Plans and the term Mark-Schedule. Educators had these documents in their portfolios. It is quite clear that educators acknowledge the need to plan. This is indicated by one educator whose planning documents were available. A general view about planning is captured through comments made by two educators, as quoted below.

One of them said:

Year planners are important. Work-schedules are also important as year planners they in a way mmm... guide you on what you are supposed to do or carry on as an educator.

The other one remarked:

We plan our lessons so that we fulfil the requirements of the Subject Framework.

The trend that emerged is that educators sit together and plan the Work-Schedule per grade, which helps in pacing the content that they must teach in class. This process has to be preceded by the drawing of the Subject Framework, which is a combination of the Work-Schedule of each grade. This first level of planning unfortunately is not what most educators practice, except for only one educator from the twelve educators that were involved in this project. This practice raises serious concerns in that a well-coordinated plan that has to ensure that every educator's plan is informed by the overarching plan is not in place. As for the role of the School Management Team in the whole planning process, a lot is yet to be done to ensure that adequate planning on the side of the educators takes place. The NCS policy prescriptions on planning are therefore not adhered to, to the level where it can be said that implementation in this instance is a success. Only one educator reflected on the planning that is coordinated by the School Management Team. If this is anything to go by, this state of affairs poses great challenges to the implementation process. This should be a worrying factor in that, even if educators are at the core of curriculum implementation, they have no support structures at school level that must adequately assist the implementation process.

The planning practices in relation to School Management Teams therefore need development in one way or another. This is shown by the educator quoted below, who gave a vivid encounter of the practices regarding the School Management Team at her institution. The scenario below reflects the entire encounter:

My SMT you know to be honest there isn't much that they can do to help us as educators because in many instances they... they...will be asking you the educator what you understand. It's like the... the...the... our HOD you know, the Deputy Principal you know, are still not in par with the NCS. So it's like you the educator must fend for yourself. You must go out there and gather information for yourself like when you come back they want to ask what you understand about this thing. Sometimes they think you know us gathering information, you are enlightened. So it's like the SMT is not ... not yet groomed as far as this NCS is concerned.

However, encouraging practices with regard to Work-Schedules in which planning does take place, is reflected by one educator who was quite confident about this planning process, as indicated below.

Her comments were:

Well we do sit down and plan as different educators in a particular department for a particular eh, grade, use the week time-table , see what

are we going to teach. Mostly we interact when we plan the overall Work-Schedule.

In relation to lesson plans, educators have the general view that the contents of each lesson plan are vital in enhancing the success of a lesson. For example, these are the comments made by one female educator:

Lesson plans are very useful because you know which area you touch and those that you don't touch.

The general practice among all educators is that the drawing of lesson plans is guided by the Work-Schedules. Educators have to extrapolate the relevant content from the Work-Schedule into their lessons plans and are guided by the Learning Outcomes, which are reflected accordingly. There is also an indication that Learning Outcomes play a key role in determining the direction that the lessons must take. Such a situation gives some form of assurance that planning practices that are in line with NCS objectives can be accomplished. The following are demonstrations of such practices.

One educator sounded positive:

The work-schedule dictates which topics to treat when and then after that, each individual teacher will out of the work-schedule draw his or her eh ... lesson plan. It is only after you have drawn your lesson plan, you have planned for your class, your individual classroom. That is when you start implementing NCS in your class.

Another educator agreed:

Well it will depend on the learning outcomes that I want to achieve, so, and the assessment standards. Lesson Plans have to be planned based on the work-schedule that we have for the year.

4.3.2 Record Keeping

It is quite interesting to note that one educator holds contrasting views about record keeping. The same educator had this to say:

Comment 1:

They are good even if they are many.

Comment 2:

There is too much paperwork in NCS because you have to record everything that you are doing. Eh, written evidence is needed always.

One educator in line with Comment 2 above, painted a gloomy picture when she said:

Ya that one is stressful also. It's a stressful exercise because every time you make sure that...you ensure that eh, records are up to scratch. But you find that if they are not up to scratch most of the time eh, is taken, making...ensuring that the records are up to date, only to find that, that may not be what is happening in class.

One however gets the sense that no matter the quantity, record keeping is inevitable. The comments made by the educator quoted below provide a completely different picture from the one above and bring a sense of importance about record keeping. This is what this educator said:

In NCS... well eh...eh...they are quite...they...they...they...are not bad. Eh, I mean really you need to have evidence of what you're doing in the classroom. If you don't have evidence of that, what are you going to do in the first place? So those records are quite good to me. You have eh, proof that indeed this is what I...I...I... have done in the classroom. So, keeping those records to me, is quite good.

Comments of this nature offer some hope that even if the path that NCS implementation has to travel is quite bumpy, indications are that there is some light at end of the tunnel. There is an indication that there are educators who are of the view that given the circumstances, they are coping. This should therefore bring some relief that there are areas with regard to curriculum implementation whereby educators are in accord with policy prescriptions.

The emerging challenge in relation to record keeping seems quite substantial in that almost all educators, even if they acknowledged the importance of record keeping, lamented the amount of records that they have to keep. Even if all educators were interviewed and observed at different times, in the recommendations that they made, they were in agreement as if they had consulted with one another about the amount of records that they

keep. This is a significant challenge to them, in that it seems to be an impediment in the focus that must be channelled to learning and teaching in the classroom.

An indication of such a challenge somehow emerges from what the educators had to say. There appears to be a problem in maintaining the balance between classroom activities and ensuring that the necessary documents are available. For example, one educator echoed the sentiments of his colleagues when he had this to say:

They are saying the NCS is eh...document orientated that is too much administration that needs teachers. So it's...it's...more of administration than of teaching.

Another one sounded desperate when she said:

There's just a lot of administrative work. That is one ...one negative of NCS that all teachers have, 'cause you have to keep records and records.

The problems that educators encountered with records seemed to be compounded by the amount of preparations that they had to make in order to be effective when teaching in class. For example, one educator said this:

That's the disadvantage, 'cause you spend so much time preparing....preparing, than contact time with the learners.

The indication therefore is that, while there is a need for record keeping, the challenge is to maintain the necessary balance between the amount of records to be kept as well as the extent to which preparations have to be made by educators. This balancing act seems inevitable as documentation seems to be overwhelming for educators because, according to one educator:

It's...it's...it's an array of...of...of documentation.

It must also be a point of concern that from most of the Work-Schedules that are kept by educators, most did not cover the whole year. By the way, a complete work-schedule has to cover 40 weeks. Most of these work-schedules were drawn for the first and second terms only. It was only on two occasions where the complete work-schedules were available. In fact, these were the ones that are supplied by the department. It then emerged that for those educators who offered Geography as a subject, there was no need for them to draw a work-schedule as this was supplied by the department. For the other subjects, these documents had to be drawn by educators themselves. The implication of these incomplete work-schedules is that, for the period that is not catered for in the work-schedule, teaching and learning does not unfold in a systematised planned manner. This therefore has an impact on the consistency of content that must be facilitated in class as well as the level of preparation that educators must make.

It must be noted that classroom preparation is guided by how the subject content is arranged in the work-schedule, that is when to teach what. Therefore, if the Work-Schedule is incomplete then the question to be asked is, is teaching in class in line with the expectation of the new curriculum that must be implemented? For example, did the

educators find ample time to draw lesson plans that are in line with the work-schedule which would ensure that the necessary LTSM is in place, the necessary learner activities are in place and that the necessary assessment tasks are given to the learners.

One other point of concern was the availability of lesson plans. It is granted that all the available lesson plans complied with the criteria that are expected in an NCS lesson plan. The criteria include indicating the learning outcomes, assessment standards covered, learner activities, teacher activities, assessment methods used, the LTSM used and reflection by the educator. What was striking about the lesson plans was that very few of them were drawn by educators. Those that were drawn did not cover all the weeks that were reflected in the work-schedule.

It is a requirement that every drawn lesson plan must indicate the content that is reflected in a particular week on the work-schedule. Few drawn lesson plans then imply that some teaching went on without necessarily teaching what should be the content of a particular week, as demanded by the work-schedule. What this also implies is that a systematic form of teaching, where one would confidently indicate that a particular aspect of the content has been treated, does not take place. It furthermore says that one would not find it easy to account for the quality of teaching and learning that took place in one's class. Besides, the unavailability of lesson plans is a contradiction of the importance of planning that was acknowledged by educators during the interview sessions that were held.

Another dimension is that perhaps the unavailability of lesson plans has a direct impact on learner performance, which proved to be dismal as reflected in the term mark schedules. It could also mean that educators find it difficult to draw the quantity of the expected lesson

plans. This may mean at some stage that educators were not adequately empowered in this regard. It may be recalled that one of the concerns that they raised about the NCS workshops was that they felt that they needed more development. It may also mean that they are overwhelmed by the amount of records that they must keep.

A lesson plan is one of those records that are supposed to be kept by educators. One of the challenges that educators raised during the interviews was that there was too much paperwork in NCS. However, one major concern is that planning in NCS is being compromised when lesson plans cannot be drawn to the latter. Teaching, in turn, is being compromised when the actual planning does not observe the stipulated criteria. One would ponder whether what one educator raised during the interviews, seemingly that there is a lot of administrative work in NCS, was this scenario not an indication of what that educator lamented?

A very disturbing factor was that the Subject Framework, which is a combination of all the Work-Schedules per grade, was not available in all of the portfolios that were analyzed, except for one educator who teaches English. The importance of this document is that it gives educators of each learning area an opportunity to plan together from Grade 10 to 12. This planning assists in the selection of assessment standards with related activities which ensures that the complexity or the depth of activities that are given to learners are progressive as learners move from one grade to the next. The unavailability of this document implies that the monitoring process of progression of the content cannot be accounted for. The other implication is that learners might progress to the next grade without having adequately covered the content of a particular grade and its related activities, as this coverage has to be informed by the Subject Framework. Incidentally, the

non-availability of this document further implies that a formalised form of collaboration at school level does not assist in this regard. This challenge identifies the core of some of the challenges that educators raised during the interviews, in that some indicated that collaboration took place mostly in an informal way. Such a practice also shows that planning is not up to the expected level. The state at which the abovementioned records were found must serve as a caution and perhaps raises the question whether the planning processes in NCS should not be revised.

In relation to the learner portfolios, most educators had portfolios for both informal and formal tasks of learners. This indicated that there are informal activities that learners were engaged in. It must, however, be noted that some of the formal activities were administered to learners without having evidence in the learners' informal tasks that these activities were done as part of informal activities before they could do them as formal tasks. For example, in the English learning area, there were learners who did not have evidence that they had done advertisements (visual literacy) as part of their daily classroom activities. Neither did the available lesson plans of this particular educator indicate that some form of visual literacy and advertisements in this case were treated in class. But one formal task that was given to learners was an advertisement. Therefore, the implication is that learners were given a formal task that most likely was not treated in class. This situation was prevalent in many of the learner portfolios that were available. One would therefore deduce that the dismal learner performance that is reflected in the term mark-schedules is most probably linked to the manner in which they are prepared for writing their formal tasks.

In conclusion, the state in which the records of educators were found must serve as a caution about whether the necessary planning that is stipulated by NCS does take place.

Therefore, an important question to ask is whether educators are able to plan in accordance to what NCS stipulates. It is also important to respond the question whether educators are able to keep records in accordance with expectations of the National Curriculum Statement. Quite clearly, according to the observations that were made, the response to these two questions is that educators seemingly find it difficult to plan and keep records according to the National Curriculum Statement's stipulations.

4.4 COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.4.1 Collaboration

Educators see the value of collegiality and interaction with colleagues both within their schools and outside their schools. When putting forward a case in this regard, this is what one educator said:

I think it's of vital importance that to...to...to invite eh... or to involve colleagues because you are not a master of all, you specialise in certain things.

There was some excitement when one educator made comments on this:

It, it helps a lot. It helps. It develops an individual, you in a way develop a sense that you are doing the right thing.

Educators in their respective schools engage in collaborative practices where they share ideas and engage in some form of joint planning. Such practices, as indicated by almost all educators, generally take place either in an informal way or in most instances through the

initiative of educators. What should be of some concern, especially in relation to educator development, is that formalised structures that are supposed to be helping educators in this regard are not forthcoming. In a way, this hampers quite a useful resource avenue, which could help educators as they implement NCS.

Collaboration among educators was raised in the literature review as one of the key elements that may improve educators' practices when new curriculum is being introduced. It may, as argued in the literature review, help to ease tensions that are associated with curriculum implementation because educators have the platform to share best practices – copy from one other practices that they can transfer to their schools or to their classrooms. Their interpretations (perceptions) on curriculum may be clarified and they may even be strengthened as a result of engaging in collaborative practices.

On the other hand, a very encouraging practice is displayed by one educator whose school was engaging in collaborative practices with colleagues from different schools. The comments by this educator were as follows:

We have what we call eh, Learner Attainment Improvement Plan which in our school says we must twin with the best schools to go and study best methods. So, as you do that you interact with teachers from outside your school.

There are instances where educators would take advantage of having converged at workshops or subject meetings and hence seize the opportunity of sharing whatever

information may be useful among themselves. Such an instance is illustrated by the remarks of one educator, who did not sound encouraging:

We have got subject meetings where for example my learning area is English, all the educators that are offering English come together and sit down ok, but like I indicated it only happens once in six months. So it's not that much effective and usually when it happens it's after school hours. Everybody wants to go home. So it's like for record purposes.

It must be noted that there are instances where educators through their initiatives meet in order to seek assistance and to help one another. This is demonstrated by the spirit shown by the educator below:

My colleague would request me to help her with eh, literature classes and I too, would sometimes request her to exchange, that I would go to her class and she would come to my class and check how far one can reach out to our learners in teaching our subject English.

One educator was to the point about internal mechanisms at her school on how she went about ensuring that she had some form of interaction with her colleagues. This also demonstrates how initiatives among educators have developed in order to overcome some of the challenges that they encounter as they implement the new curriculum. This is how the interaction unfolds, as shown by one educator:

When I find information I share with my colleagues. If I find that there is a different approach that I found somewhere and we need to implement it, I always seek opinions with them and share and I believe in...in...team teaching. Well you can always ask one colleague to teach a certain aspect that you feel you are not comfortable with, in that way it helps.

It is also encouraging to realise that there are instances where schools took the initiative to ensure that educators meet in a formal session as a way of sharing some advice in an attempt to bolster the spirit of collaboration. An indication of such a practice is seen in the following instance, as this educator explained:

In our case at our school we normally have this eh, these Fridays' meetings to check how are you coping with eh, lessons from the past week, have you encountered problems and so forth and so on.

However, contrary to the enthusiasm shown above, a sorry sight emerged from almost all educators when they were asked whether such collegiality is forthcoming, especially with regard to formalised structures.

One of them had this to say:

We very seldom get opportunities to meet. But I hope it happens in the near future.

The educator quoted below was equally not enthused by the non-availability of formalised collaborative structures:

Eh you know we just interact sometimes. We don't see each other regularly, like when we go to meetings it is where we see each other and interact, talk about this and that's it.

These educators summed up the sombre mood that prevailed when educators had to air their views on the question of the existence of formalised structures for collaboration. There is therefore a need for the existence of such structures, as these in their view will help address some of the challenges where they feel that they are still lacking. For example, one key argument that was presented in the literature review was that teachers do not learn implementation practices in isolation. Interaction amongst educators within their institutions or from outside their institutions appears to be crucial. The crux of the argument is that curriculum innovations must ensure that formalised structures of collaboration amongst educators are in place and functional, as this will to a very large extent assist educators as they face the challenges that they come across as a result of curriculum innovations.

The observation that was made is that it is granted that educators see the need for collaboration and they do engage in activities that foster interaction amongst themselves, both within their institutions and outside. Nevertheless, one gets the sense that they are faced with a number of challenges that they must overcome in ensuring that they interact in the manner that would achieve maximum collaboration. Their major obstacle is around structures that are not forthcoming from the side of the department. This is a serious

concern in that there is a feeling amongst educators that they need ample support to enhance curriculum implementation. Part of the support would be provided in formalised forums and these have to be well established through the initiative of the department. The other challenge is that such structures should be sustainable.

It was noted that one educator, who at some stage sounded very positive about the manner in which she went about interacting with colleagues at her school, was at the same time concerned about collaboration that seemed to be curtailed by a number of factors within the schools themselves. She indicated the following in her submission:

Well, eh...outside our sister schools there's always the spirit of competition in our district. So, what I realised is that, there is a lot of information that teachers wouldn't readily share from one school to the next. So, it's a question of who is the best when the results are announced. So, the interaction is not what it is supposed to be. So, it's something that is still lacking in our schools.

Another educator seemed to compound this challenge by intimating that educators are left to fend for themselves. One gets the sense that educators have been thrown into the deep end – implement the NCS while not being sure whether they are on the right track. This educator summed up these assertions in this manner:

So, it's like every man for himself here, of which is not working for me.

Responding to a question on external interaction with colleagues, one could not help but notice the extent of the challenge. What one educator indicated in this regard was testimony to this. These are the comments:

Very seldom, unfortunately it is very seldom. We see them once a year or twice when there is a workshop or when we sit and plan a Work-Schedule at the beginning of the year. But very seldom it materialises. Eh, once we...we interact with colleagues in the form of departmental meetings is fine, that it is school based. But when it comes to cluster based it is quite certain that eh, meetings like that don't take place. It is very unfortunate. We very seldom get the opportunities to meet. The opportunities are not there. The facilitation is not very good.

The dire need for well-established interaction structures is seen from the following comments by one educator who combined educator development (training) with collaboration and made this recommendation:

There should be enough information sharing sessions and also training.

Another educator demonstrated the need by making the following statement:

I can share ideas with educators on the other side of the school. We can always share the idea, we can learn from each other and then that plays quite a big part when it comes to delivering of the subject matter

especially in a programme like NCS. But unfortunately it doesn't take place.

From the submissions made by educators, it is therefore quite clear that the extent to which there is collaboration amongst educators remains a challenge. It is also clear that when this challenge has been overcome, it will assist in enriching their classroom practices. The prevailing situation therefore calls for some form of intervention that does not only need to establish these collegial practices, but the one that needs to go a step further in sustaining them. The interviews that were conducted and the responses that came from educators, give credence to the assertions being made. It must be noted that one of the strong arguments that were made in the literature review was the potential for collaboration amongst educators in bridging the gap between policy and practice. The NCS prescriptions, therefore, have the prerogative of ensuring maximum interaction amongst educators. The reason for this is simple: when “networks” among educators are intensified, curriculum challenges have a platform from which collective discussions can be held and concerted effort can be taken in confronting such challenges.

4.4.2 Support and Development

The picture painted by educators is not encouraging. This should send strong messages for interrogating whether successful implementation is a possibility when educators portray such desperation. There is a sense that educators feel somehow neglected. These comments should really raise some concern. This is what they said:

One of them somehow sounded disillusioned when he indicated that:

“Well...eh, you know we, we are trying to implement, but I feel we don’t get support from the department. You know if we could have the support system.

Another one had this to say:

They (educators) are positive about this (NCS) but worries are that training hasn’t been enough. So I believe that if...if...if really the department could...could do something about this. If we really want to have this well soaked into educators.

This should serve as an indication that from the educators that were interviewed, the perception is that a great deal of assistance is needed by these educators. It is therefore noteworthy that it was argued elsewhere in the literature review that the quality of educators’ professional development was one of the major factors that enhanced their classroom practices.

An important realisation related to the challenges raised above was made when one educator made the comments below. These comments were an indication that educators seemed to feel that they are left in the lurch and seemingly had to fend for themselves. There is a perception that they were not taken on board when NCS innovations were introduced and they commented:

Comment 1:

Well ... eh, you know we, we are trying to implement it but I feel that we need support from the department. Why am I saying that? In the sense that you know, they now they keep sending us material do this, do that, don't do that. Right, then we try and implement where you meet problems, you don't know where to report and say people this is the situation. So, there are no support structures. If we could have the support systems.

Comment 2:

They didn't consult the teachers, they just bring the new curriculum without any inputs from the teachers. We are expected just to flow, swim or sink. No teacher opinions were required when this curriculum was proposed. We were just given information and told that go and do this.

It is evident from the above assertions that what was argued at one point in this research as the “voice of teachers”, which needed to be given a hearing, is at play. The top-down approach does not prove to be effective as educators get overwhelmed by policy prescriptions that they are doing their best to abide by. Their problems, therefore, seem to be exacerbated by the fact that they have nowhere to run to – a back-up structure that attends to their challenges of implementation is non-existent.

4.5 ASSESSMENT

4.5.1 Practices

There is an indication that Continuous Assessment (CASS) is generally being administered by all educators. This is done through various forms of assessment and learner books give

an indication of this. Educators use the programme of assessment per learning area, as an indication of which type of tasks are to be administered and when. What served as a good practice among all educators was that portfolio files for learners had the programme of assessment; hence, learners knew the type of formal tasks on which they would be assessed.

With regard to the monitoring and planning practices, schools must have functional School Assessment Teams. Sadly, it is only in one school where the School Assessment Team seems to be fully functional. As a result, this gives an impression that practices around assessment are not as intensive as they are supposed to be, in terms of ensuring that the quality of formal and informal tasks adequately prepares learners for promotion into the next grade. This state of affairs poses serious challenges to assessment as a whole and indications are that the implementation process is being compromised. When assessment teams do not perform duties as per policy prescription, such as drawing comprehensive assessment programmes, monitoring informal tasks that learners have to write, then this says the implementation process, NCS, has to align its prescriptions with what is actually taking place in relation to classroom practices.

It was noted that educators are of the view that the problems in assessment are a headache. Quite interestingly, informal assessment by its nature is developmental and does not contribute towards the grading of learners. Hence it should not cause problems for them. The problems that they encounter are evident in the comments that follow.

One educator said:

Well with regards to peer assessment, it's still somewhat eh...eh...eh somewhat difficult because I don't think they have, they have the mental maturity to be able to really eh, engage in this peer exercise quite clearly. Hence I said if we could train them quite intensively.

Another educator had this to say:

Imagine the situation where...where we have got people teaching seven out of eight periods, you ask how are we going to improve assessment techniques. I don't have an answer for that one because you know I know it is virtually impossible.

As for the assessment practices through the supervision of the School Assessment Team, the educator below sums up specific activities that take place at her school. This is the educator from a total of twelve, whose School Assessment Team seems to be functional.

She made this submission:

So normally there is a committee in school that is called the School Assessment Team that will monitor, see that standardised question papers are set, standardised question papers are moderated by the Head of Department. And they again have to go from the HOD to the School Assessment Team to make sure that whatever teachers are assessing, eh.... whatever they have taught in class, they are... they are assessing the Learning Outcomes they have taught before and give these learners these activities. So, that's how assessment is done in our school.

It is, however, encouraging noting that assessment is incorporated into the daily teaching and learning process by educators. This is clearly captured by one educator as:

Well I make sure that it becomes the integral part because eh, once you teach and you facilitate without making sure that you assess your learners properly, it becomes a problem because your achievement of the lesson for that specific day will really just be a mirage. So, it becomes an integral part, I make sure that in each an every lesson assessment has to be there.

As educators engage learners in continuous assessment, they employ various forms of assessment and this is a big plus for the stipulations of assessment forms as required by NCS. The different forms of assessment are indicated by one educator, when he asserts:

They group themselves, sometimes they assess themselves, and also there is peer assessment and also there is teacher assessment.

A clear and succinct dimension is provided by one female educator:

I have to apply baseline assessment because that is the only assessment through which I can recognise their learning gaps.

There is therefore the view that informal assessment is vital for learners' level of preparedness. On this note, this is what the educators said:

Comment 1:

At least in this NCS, assessment is continuous, I think it's is eh...advantage to the...to the learners.

Comment 2:

You are able to see the strength of different learners.

Comment 3:

In that way they are able to see that they understood what you are implementing.

Assessment incorporates promotion of learners, and through learner portfolios and educator portfolios, it was clear that both formal assessment in the form of formal tasks that constituted Continuous Assessment (CASS) and year-end examination, are assessment activities that educators use for promotion of learners. The manner in which these forms of assessment are utilized is indicated below by one educator. This is encouraging in that it is in line with the promotion requirements as contained in the NCS policy documents. NCS policy prescriptions are being adhered to in this instance.

One educator, when indicating practices of how learners are promoted, decided to put it like this:

For learners to pass to the next grade one has to have a twenty five percent CASS which is a year mark and seventy five percent as formal mark. We spend a lot of time preparing learners to produce this twenty five percent hence, we are calling it a year mark.

4.5.2 Learner Performance

One major challenge is learner performance. It is quite clear that learners are not performing well. The situation with this challenge is against the background of the promotion criteria that, according to many of the educators, have been lowered. To a certain extent it is rather ironic that one challenge is the perception that the pass criteria have been lowered, yet the performance of learners is not commensurate with the perceived lowered standards of promoting learners into the next grade. One educator, echoing the sentiments of many of the educators that were interviewed and observed about performance, lamented in this manner:

The ones that were in Grade 10 last year (2007), they failed horribly because out of two hundred and fifty, only twenty two got a clear pass 'cause only twenty two were able to make those criteria. So, the department had to try and promote those who had failed more than two subjects. So if they are doing more than seven learning areas it means they have to pass three with three...with forty percent. But there are some who managed to fail all of them, all the learning areas. So, it was bad. But like I'm saying they failed. It is just not working for them.

As a result of this challenge, one educator made a bold recommendation, which was reiterated by a number of educators that were interviewed. The recommendation was as follows:

I strongly suggest that the promotion criteria be looked at by the department. I still believe for a learner to get forty percent is really

below the benchmark, it cannot help a learner to go to a tertiary institution.

Presenting a point about how easy it has become in NCS for learners to gain promotion into the next grade, the educator below summed it up:

It says learners are...are...are having it easy to go through eh, eh, next grade. Only if they could get serious with their work they'll be able to pass. To me it's a golden opportunity.

When educators were asked to comment about the promotion criteria, an overwhelming majority did not approve of the leniency which, in their view, does not do much to improve learner performance. Their comments bear evidence to this. For example, one educator lamented:

Learners progress to the next grade without sufficient information. So you are not proud to say that I have prepared my learners to let them go to the next grade.

The other one sounded discouraged:

Learners are having it quite easy to really go to the next.

This educator was emphatic:

I think the passing criteria, the percentage that, that I talked about is not in a way a good benchmark for a learner to move into a tertiary institution. When learners exit Grade 12 and go maybe to a tertiary institution, I think they would suffer a great deal.

These comments should serve as an indication that the views of educators should perhaps be one of the elements that must guide policy prescriptions. Remember, educators views were raised in the literature review as one of the key elements that begged for the attention of policy makers. Such views may therefore serve as an indication that the promotion criteria as stipulated by the NCS needs to be interrogated as a way of ensuring that the views of educators are considered.

Another educator sounded dejected when she indicated the paradox between the promotion of learners versus the empowerment of learners. She put her case in this fashion:

Eh it is advantageous for learners to progress, but progressing knowing nothing is a disadvantage.

Most importantly, it is quite clear that in terms of assessment as a whole there are a number of hurdles that educators have to overcome for them to declare confidently that they are on the right track in implementing NCS assessment practices. One can safely say that the development of educators in line with how to infuse NCS aligned assessment strategies is a challenge that is yet to be addressed. This challenge poses adverse implications for the performance of learners.

The learner portfolios, both formal and informal, served as indicators of the situation with regard to learner performance. The other documents that were analyzed were the term schedules which were used for drawing term reports for learners. To be precise, the term one mark schedules were analyzed as the study took place when the first term reports had been compiled.

The term schedules gave an indication that learner performance was very poor in all the schools that took part in this project. There was one educator who had a total of 170 learners with an average of 60 learners per class. From this total of 170 learners, only 83 learners were able to pass. This means that almost half of the grade ten learners failed. One other educator had a total of 118 learners with not even a single learner being able to pass. Another educator had 40 learners in her class and not even one could get a clear pass. The high failure rate of learners was evident in all the term schedules that were collected from the educators. What was painfully clear was that learners were failing. The extent of the failure rate was quite dire and this bore testimony to one educator's submissions, who indicated during the interviews that: "Learners had failed horribly." Maybe this resulted in one situation that was mentioned by one educator during the interviews that the promotion criteria were altered in an attempt to address this failure rate. This may give credence to the fact that one educator indicated that these learners knew that they would pass anyway.

It is ironic to observe that in many of the informal tasks that were analyzed, the performance of the learners was good. These tasks gave an indication that learners were on par or understood what they were taught. These tasks presented an impression that they had the potential to pass. This was the case with almost all the informal tasks that were studied. It must, however, be acceded that the quality of these informal tasks might have

given some educators and learners in general a false sense of assurance that they were on the right track in terms of their (learners) preparation for promotion to the next grade. The dismal performance of learners in formal tasks serves as a contradiction of what some of the educators said during the interview. For example, there was one educator who, when talking about learner performance, said in one of the interviews: “I think they...they...they are achieving.”

One must also indicate that the quality of the formal tasks that learners wrote was somewhat high compared to the standard of work that appeared in their daily informal tasks. Maybe this confirms what one English educator mentioned what her learners said after they had written one of the formal tasks: “The way of questioning in NCS is sort of more applied than simple answer questions. So the high order questions they really find them difficult, then you find them saying but this is not what we did.” A sense of balance must therefore be found in the questioning techniques for informal tasks and formal tasks. This might be the other challenge where some form of balance must be maintained in order to bring synergy in the results of the daily activities and those of the formal tasks.

It should be noted that in many of the group work activities, many of the questions that the educator asked were in most cases responded to by the educators themselves. The group leaders would on some occasions respond to some of the questions. This scenario should therefore have served as an indicator that learners were really not adequately prepared to respond to some questions and it was apparent that their level of preparedness was yet to improve for them to meet that challenge.

The poor learner performance could also be related to the type of teaching strategies that are utilised in class. For example, there are educators who had some reservations about the group work activities that they engaged learners in. One educator referred to them as “a nest of laziness” and another educator indicated that “some learners would just lay back whilst the other learners covered for them or did some work for them.” We should note that these are but some of the challenges of NCS which educators raised especially during the interviews. Hence, what was said by some of the educators during the interviews is exactly what they experienced as a result the teaching strategy that they were not in favour of. This type of performance in their formal tasks could probably be due to the quality of group work activities that these learners were exposed to. The comments that these educators made were probably some warning signs that the product of the new teaching approach might leave a lot to be desired. The over-utilisation of group work that one observed even in cases where group work was not an ideal option, might also have been a contributing factor. These are but some of the warning signs that need to be attended to in curbing this high failure rate.

It must therefore be mentioned that what was observed about the poor learner performance raises serious concerns about the success of teaching strategies that educators implement in class. It also raises questions as to whether NCS implementation achieves the envisaged objectives. It further draws attention to the concerns that emerged in literature whether what NCS or policy as a whole propagates can be aligned to the implementation process. All these points are raised in the light of the fact that generally curriculum innovations will encounter challenges of implementation which need the attention of policy makers to ensure that such innovations attain the envisaged objectives.

4.6 MANAGEMENT

It emerged from perceptions held by educators that another challenge is the empowered School Management Teams (SMTs) which are in a position to internally monitor and, where possible, assist with the empowerment of educators. A significant number of educators indicated the need for guidance and leadership as they came to grips with the implementation of NCS. So, if it is not only educators themselves, but their supervisors as well, who are also found wanting, then the road to NCS implementation will be in disarray. The need for empowered SMTs could be inferred from the following comments by one educator who presented the challenge in this manner:

The principal in my understanding and the deputy principals maybe and the head of department could have been taken on board to monitor even the subjects that they are not teaching. I think the department lost it because I don't remember in all the workshops, there was no workshop on how to train school management teams on how eh... on how to implement NCS correctly or on how to monitor the implementation of NCS.

This educator summed up this challenge when he said:

You'll realise that SMTs are not familiar with this eh...NCS.

There is therefore an indication that an empowered SMT with regard to NCS implementation will relieve the apparent tension that exists between policy and practice. It must be noted that when the SMT is empowered, it is in a better position to devise relevant

strategies to handle the challenges of curriculum implementation. For example, they may provide avenues for teacher collaboration with the potential for rippling effects of empowering educators with regard to teaching strategies.

4.7 CONCLUSION

It is evident that with regard to the training that educators have received; how they utilise the LTSM as well as the LTSM that is available to them; and their experiences about the generally huge learner ratios, NCS implementation has serious challenges that are yet to be overcome for the success of its implementation. The other challenge relates to group work as “the” teaching strategy that educators seem to utilise even in instances where an alternative approach of individually engaging learners could have sufficed.

It must also be noted that the level of planning that relates to records that are not at the expected state as well as the quality of support with regard to planning at school level, is another challenge for curriculum implementation. On the other hand, the quality of collaboration among educators both from within their institutions as well as formalised structures of collaboration from the department (authorities) proves to be quite challenging for the successful implementations of NCS. Lastly, for NCS implementation to yield its envisaged results, learner performance, which should be one of the yardsticks, must in one way or another improve. The promotion criteria, which in the view of educators have been lowered, is one area that needs to be interrogated. All these points as presented highlight the fact that perceptions of educators about NCS implementation are not encouraging. Their practices indicate that NCS as the new curriculum is not necessarily implemented in accordance with policy prescriptions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions and practices of educators in the implementations of the National Curriculum Statements. These were demonstrated through the data that was gathered using interviews, observations and document analysis. The focus of the research was determined by the fact that the views of educators and what they do in class, that is their practices, play a critical role in how any form of curriculum innovations have to unfold. The value of this study was that it ensured that perceptions of educators with regard to NCS implementation were brought to the fore. This was done through the utilisation of interviews. As NCS encompasses curriculum innovations that South Africa is experiencing, the findings of this study may be useful in identifying areas that need to be strengthened to ensure that NCS implementation is on a sound footing.

The significant role that educators play in curriculum innovations was demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this research. The focus areas that gave an indication of what impact educators have on curriculum or *vice versa* were elaborated upon in this chapter. A sizable amount of literature was cited as a way of going into the detail about this complex interplay. The literature with regard to curriculum implementation as it affects perceptions and practices of educators, were discussed. This chapter therefore could be seen as a foreword to the possible views that educators had. It also presented the possible type of interactions that educators had with regard to curriculum innovations. The study also attempted to bring to the fore areas in our curriculum that are potential problem areas that may derail the objectives of curriculum innovations. By illuminating the apparent

weaknesses that challenge NCS implementation, existing literature may tap from these and employ measures that could help remedy the situation. One way in which the situation could be remedied, as suggested by this study, is to align curriculum expectations with the practical classroom realities that educators are confronted with.

Chapter 3 of this research related how during data collection, triangulation was used as one form of validating the data through for example comparing the data across the respondents and between the forms of data collection – interviews, observations and documents. It also indicated how the researcher came up with the themes from the field notes, which facilitated the interpretation of the data. Data collection was based on the qualitative approach that the research subscribed to. Hence an interpretative approach, which follows the route that says the interpretation that the researcher arrives at, has to come from how the respondents themselves experience their situation. The semi-structured interviews and the semi-structured observations were of great assistance in gathering the type of data to this effect. Quite importantly, the chapter also gives details of how ethical considerations were observed as one component of the research imperatives.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of this research by indicating what emerged when the researcher interacted with the respondents. It became clear to the researcher what the respondents' perceptions and practices were, as described throughout this chapter. Perceptions of educators emerged mainly from the type of responses that educators came up with and these played a significant role in drawing inferences through presenting examples of direct quotes of educators. Their practices could also be discerned from what they actually did in class and instances where these could be noticed were mentioned.

Chapter 5 presents a global overview of the themes of the research, which were perceptions of educators, practices of educators, and the challenges facing the National Curriculum Statement. The summary of the main findings is presented, as well as the recommendations of the research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Perceptions of Educators

The findings of this research have revealed that, given the mixed views that educators have about NCS, there is some willingness to embrace the changes that are envisaged by NCS. Such willingness is in agreement with what the literature review has raised in one study in the Western Cape by Le Grange and Reddy (2005, p.25) which revealed that “teachers are prepared to involve themselves in the change process so long as what they do and think are recognised, respected and used as point of departure in change initiatives.”

There are clearly educators who, according to the findings, view innovations that are inherent in NCS as a good reform. Some even indicated that such reforms are in fact a blessing. These are the educators who, according to the research, welcomed curriculum changes. The revelation is that they did not have any qualms with NCS innovations. This position that was adopted by these educators was confirmation by what emerged from the literature through a case study on curriculum change by Gibbs (1998, p.182), who confirmed the findings of this study by indicating that “educators must be able to see beyond their individual needs to those of the education system as a whole and recognise that there is a need for change.”

We should, however, not overlook the fact that it emerged from this study that there are those educators who in their view summed up NCS as being chaotic and even indicated that its negatives outweighed its positives. This was at some stage attributed to lack of training and appropriate professional knowledge amongst educators. In line with this assertion, literature through Murphy (2004, p.255) revealed that the problems that compounded the implementation of curriculum came in this fashion: “The possibility and probability of faithful implementation of new curriculum was considerably reduced in light of the fact that teachers felt poorly prepared.”

Elsewhere in this research Yael Shalem (2003, p.30) argued that “curriculum processes should not underestimate the complexity and unevenness in which change processes are experienced by individuals.” This was substantiated by the mixed feelings that different educators had about NCS implementation. These mixed feelings are captured in the findings of this research where, for example, it emerged that while one educator would feel that educators were starting to master NCS, another would just say that NCS was a monster for other educators. This accentuates the unevenness with which educators experience curriculum innovations as well the complexity of curriculum implementation. Literature and the research findings corroborate these assertions.

It is indicated by literature, through by O’Sullivan’s (2002, p.222) study that “the usual approach of adapting teachers to the reform proposal (rather than adapting the reform proposal) is still dominant.” In agreement with this assertion, it emerged from the findings that there were educators who felt that upon the introduction on NCS, they were not consulted but simply given information and told to implement NCS. One educator in the findings indicated that “we are expected to flow, sink or swim.” Hence, it was argued in

the literature review that there is a need to give a hearing to the “voices of educators”. This point serves to confirm what Cross et al (2002) concluded about OBE and C2005 when they indicate in the literature review that “teachers need to be part of the process of knowledge construction to be able to deliver in teaching and learning.”

With regard to teaching strategies, the findings indicate that some educators believe that group work is one teaching strategy that they can best implement in their classrooms. According to the findings, these educators have shown an indication that they are generally of the opinion that group work has been of benefit to them. At the same time, there are those who, according to the research, felt that they had it tough with group work and some of them presented big classes as the source of the problem. The point about all this is that, in line with the importance of educator beliefs on how they should go about implementing teaching strategies such as group work as an example, Reohrig et al (2007, p.885) in the arguments presented in the literature review, indicated that “teachers’ beliefs directly guide instructional decisions and influence classroom management.” As was seen in the research findings, what educators did in their classrooms was largely influenced by whether they believed that group work would bear fruits or not. Their beliefs were the major determining factor in this instance. This practice that educators decided to follow confirms what Carl (2005, p.227) indicated in literature that “a teacher needs to believe in the relevance of the content and the strategies and effectiveness of curriculum strategies.”

With regard to record keeping, the findings indicated that there are some educators who felt that this exercise was stressful and the paperwork that they were involved with, reduced them to doing administrative work. This finding presented itself in the observations where some important documents such as work-schedules, lesson plans and

the subject framework were either not available, or when available, were incomplete. This situation therefore bears testimony to what was argued earlier on in the literature by Anderson (1995, p.24) about “educator beliefs being resistant to change.” Some of this resistance presented itself in the form of incomplete documents or the non-availability of these documents.

The findings also revealed that notwithstanding the fact that formal structures of collaboration were not forthcoming from the department’s side, educators believed that collaboration, when available, was of great help to them. This is evidenced by the statement of one educator that one cannot master everything. Hence, elsewhere in the literature it was noted that Olson (2002, p.133) presented the case as “teachers do not work in isolation.” This was in line with what emerged from the research findings.

With regard to learner performance, it emerged from the findings that a good number of educators felt disillusioned about how easy it is for learners to be promoted to the next grade. That was their main concern regarding assessment. One educator indicated that she was really not proud of learners when seeing them in the next grade, knowing very well that they were not adequately prepared. The findings revealed that at times educators were not sure how to assess these learners. For example, it emerged that some were not sure whether the grades that learners obtained as a result of peer assessment played a role in the final mark that was awarded for a learner to pass or fail.

Quite clearly, the perception that educators held about a number of aspects that were raised in the research findings must be noted, giving a clear indication that the views of educators have profound effects on what they will do in class in order to implement the changes.

These findings serve as an indication that perceptions of educators are an important facet in curriculum innovations.

5.2.2 Practices of Educators

One critical finding that emerged was that educators indicated that they go back to their old ways of teaching when confronted with problems that they thought are insurmountable. Class size is one of the challenges which one educator gave as an example of not utilising group work activity. It was therefore mentioned by one educator that “you end up reverting to the old method of teaching, standing there and explaining while they are supposed to do the explaining to you.” This point confirms the literature about educators who seem uncertain about what they are expected to do during times of change and consequently engage in teaching practices that they are comfortable with. Hence, Sabela (2004, p.252), in the review of literature, affirmed this point by indicating that “teachers who have taught for a number of years often resort to their old ways of teaching rather than continuing with new strategies.”

The realities that prevail in schools and in the classroom where the actual implementation of curriculum must take place, proved to be a critical factor raised by the findings. A typical example was the shortage of the learning and teaching support material, where educators had to make learners share books. It emerged that this was not by choice, but due to the fact that there was a real shortage of textbooks in some schools. For example, it was indicated by one female educator that “...they share. You make them share books. Learners are too many.” The revelation is that, when such practical situations that prevail on the ground are not taken into consideration, curriculum implementation may be compromised. This point was supported by the literature as raised by Carl (1995, p.170):

“Many curriculum initiatives have miscarried as curriculum developers underestimated the importance of implementation.”

However, the findings revealed that given the problems of learning and teaching support material that were experienced, some educators were very innovative and came up with teaching materials that augmented what was available in the textbooks. This reflected the willingness to adapt to the changes and throw their weight behind the changes. This was an important point that was confirmed by literature, namely that educators play a critical role in that they can make or break curriculum innovations. Such corroboration was made in the literature review by Blignaut (2007, p.56) who indicated that “teachers are professionals whose autonomy should be respected as they make judgements in particular situations and give meaning to policy as final brokers.”

The practices that educators engage in as a consequence of their different practical situations, is an indication of what literature has raised in that educators may agree that changes are necessary while not necessarily engaged in practices that curriculum change envisages. Morris (2002, p.23) confirmed this when the study that he conducted on Target Oriented Curriculum concluded that: “Innovations are symbolically adopted by teachers but had little impact on classroom practices.”

A typical example in confirmation to the symbolic adoption of policy while the actual practices tell a different story, was demonstrated by the records that were kept by educators. It emerged from the findings that these records, even if they were available, were often not up to the expected standard. For example, the educators had work-schedules that did not cover the whole year, and lesson plans were incomplete for most of the

educators. So, planning by educators proved to be a serious challenge facing educators. One educator, who is the head of department, indicated that “...it’s...it’s...it’s an array of documentation.”

It follows from the findings that educators understand that they must keep records and have plans, but the manner in which they keep these records and plan their work is not in line with policy expectations. The question therefore is, how devoted are the educators in ensuring that they put into place what they acknowledge. Elsewhere in the literature review, Flores and Shiroma (2003, p.13) confirmed this finding when they put forward the case that “no reform can be successful against or without teachers because their commitment is crucial to the success of any educational initiative.”

The findings on learner assessment are that their exceptional performance in informal assessment is not commensurate with their dismal performance in formal tasks. For example, there was an instance where in a class of 40 learners not even a single learner could get a clear pass. One educator, according to the findings, did not even have a single learner getting a pass from a total of 118 learners. This was quite shocking.

Quite a number of reasons were indicated in the findings about what the cause of this dismal performance of learners could have been. One of the reasons advanced was that informal tasks did not prepare learners adequately for formal tasks. Teaching strategies and the learning and teaching support material that were used were presented as the major causes that led to this situation.

However, the point is that literature has revealed that every educator has his or her own unique particularities which, when not properly taken into account, led to the situation that is being alluded to here. In confirmation of this point, Blignaut (2007, p.54) indicated that: “Educational change often falters due to glossing over unique particularities within which it will be realised.” The teaching strategies as well as learning and teaching support material were some of factors that, when taken into account, would have revealed that educators have situations that needed to be intensively interrogated before one could even imagine expecting curriculum innovations to be implemented.

5.2.3 Challenges of the NCS

It became clear that most of the challenges that were raised in the findings point to the fact that quite a number of practices in relation to curriculum changes that were effected will have to change, failing which, the implementation of these changes will not be realised.

One significant finding was that even if there are some educators who felt that the NCS workshops that they attended were helpful, the majority of them felt that much more could have been done to ensure that these workshops yielded the results that they envisaged. A key factor raised by the findings was that the duration of these workshops was just too short. The indication was that the three to five days training sessions that educators went through were inadequate. More days could have been allocated and this is what many educators lamented on, according to the findings of this research. Actually, many of the educators called for training as opposed to the three to four days workshops. They indicated training in the form of some kind of a certificate where accredited training would be given to them. For example, the findings captured one educator who, when commenting on these workshops, indicated that: “So I can’t call them training. They are just workshops.

I would recommend training rather than workshops because these crush workshops it's a problem.”

The training and development of educators is a key challenge which would help a great deal in ensuring that NCS implementation becomes a success. The review of literature also confirms the need for teacher development in this regard. This became evident when Guskey (2002, p.381) noted that: “High-quality professional development is a central component in nearly every modern proposal of improving education.” Consequently, what educators lamented, as indicated in the research finding, is also reflected in the literature.

Another important factor that is a challenge is how to keep educators abreast with the changes that are inevitable as a result of the new curriculum that they must implement. It emerged from the research findings that all twelve educators who took part in the research felt that when this new curriculum was introduced, they were not consulted about their inputs. One educator did not beat about the bush but simply indicated that: “Eh, you know we were taken by surprise, that's what I think.” Another educator indicated “...there is this gap between the policymakers and implementers. So to avoid that, eh whoever conceptualised the...eh, idea should have eh...eh...eh... at least made sure that there is this type of consultation.”

It was therefore presented by a number of scholars in the literature review that curriculum innovations that tend to isolate educators would experience a major problem because these are the very people who must spearhead the implementation process. In line with this assertion, it was raised by Ramsuran (2000, p.107) that: “The absence of front-line educators with teachers in particular has distorted the intentions of policymakers.” That is

why one scholar in the literature review indicated that, for innovations to be a success, “teachers need to own the change process, and without teacher involvement there will be no effective change.” So it became quite clear that the findings of this research call for the re-engagement of educators in the innovations that must be implemented.

It also became clear from the findings that even if educators do their best to utilise the teaching approach that is stipulated by NCS, their efforts are stifled by a number of challenges. The major challenges that they had were in relation to huge classes, and inadequate learning and teaching support material in their classrooms. From the problems that educators mentioned, it was clear that due to the situation they found themselves in, they had no option but to change their teaching practices to suit their prevailing circumstances.

For example, some of them would do a lot of talking during the lesson instead of learners talking more. They would also let learners take turns to read by way of exchanging books because of the shortage. In agreement with these types of changes that educators effected as an alternative in addressing the problems at hand, it was indicated in the literature by Glatthorn et al (2006, p.266) that: “Teachers constantly tend to sift the best practices from the field versus blindly adopting external programmes.” So they would naturally decide what to leave out and what to include or do, based on the challenges facing them. It must therefore be mentioned that much as educators have an obligation to implement policy, policy on the other hand should provide ample opportunities by ensuring that these challenges that educators encounter are minimised, lest the implementation process will continuously be compromised.

The findings also revealed that, in as much as educators see the need for collaboration amongst themselves and with educators externally, such collaboration is not being realised as expected. That is probably why one educator in the findings indicated that: “So, it’s like every man for himself here, of which is not working for me.” Another one said: “There is a lot of information and teachers wouldn’t readily share information from another school to the next.” In line with what emerged from the review of literature, Leonard and Leonard (2001, p.300) observed that: “Traditional teacher practice has been characterised more by individualism and isolationism than it has been by collaborative practices.” It is therefore important to recognise that the lack of collaborative practices may cause anxieties amongst educators as they face the problems of implementing curriculum innovations.

When one takes a closer look at the research findings on the perceptions of educators, the practices of educators and the challenges that are faced by NCS with regard to implementation, it is quite clear that for NCS innovations to be implemented as envisaged, a number of considerations will have to dawn in the minds of policy makers. For a start, it has to be acknowledged that, as stated elsewhere in the literature, the process will be quite messy and innovations by themselves do not produce quick fix solutions. Testimony to this point is what the literature indicated through Kraak and Young (2001, p.4) that when changes in curriculum have to be implemented, this is by itself: “a slow process when compared to the easy task of designing new policies.” The fact that the innovations in our curriculum seem to be stalled should not be a cause to start pressing panic buttons. However, the important factor to be considered is whether the appropriate measures are being taken to ensure that an enabling environment is created for innovations to be nurtured.

It follows that appropriate measures will have to include one major observation that emerged from the findings, namely to align policy implementation with what actually happens on the ground. The immediate realities in the classroom that are experienced by educators will have to get the deserved attention if the intentions of these changes are to be taken seriously at all, and become meaningful to educators who by virtue of their strategic positioning carry the “verdict” on whether curriculum will be implemented according to its intentions. The synergy that has to come about in order to realise the policy intentions is in line with what was presented in the background of this research by Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003, p.434) who indicated that: “The potential for fostering a vital interplay between curriculum theory and curriculum practice is key to advancing the field of curriculum studies.”

It should therefore be noted that the synergy that was alluded to by these authors presented itself through, for example, considering that classroom teacher-pupil ratios will differ and hence, there will be different challenges for different educators. Alignment should be in the form of stabilising these classroom ratios. The other policy practice interplay that needs to be synergised presented itself through learning and teaching support material that resulted in the teaching process being compromised. Furthermore, it must ensure that educators are not only well equipped to utilise the LTSM, but are innovative in coming up with additional LTSM. Most importantly, they must be confident enough to indicate that their professional competence gives them the ability to implement curriculum as intended by policy. Therefore, their development in the form of quality training and support will assist significantly in ensuring that the gap between policy and practice is narrowed. Fostering teacher collaborations through well-established structures will also assist this venture.

The concerns that educators raised around LTSM, teacher-pupil ratios, record keeping, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, collaboration as well as the practices that they engage in their daily activities, were confirmation of what the literature review raised. This was pointed out by MacDonald (2003, p.141) in this fashion: “Curriculum innovations were invariably transformed between conception and implementation, hence the slippage between conception and implementation.” It is therefore important to take these factors into account and design measures that would address them. By so doing, it would mean that there is that necessary interchange between what policy says and the appropriate actions that have to be taken. It would therefore also mean that the policy practice dichotomy that was raised as one of the factors that hinder effective implementation, is being addressed.

The synergy should also come about by constantly reflecting on what educators say and do as they implement innovations. This important point was raised in literature after it became clear that educator beliefs about what they should do when implementing curriculum and how they should do it, have profound implications for curriculum innovations. In line with the necessity of constant reflection, it was argued in the literature review by Chueng and Davis (2000, p.120) that there is a need for “systematic monitoring of teacher concerns by the Education Department during the process of change.”

It must therefore be stressed that the necessary alignment between what is intended by policy and ensuring that the environment for implementation is conducive are the preconditions in ensuring that the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement becomes a success. Hence, it is quite correct to heed the caution by Handal and Herrington (2003, p.65) who indicated that: “The times for well-polished, ‘teacher proof’ curricular

documents are over. Policy-makers should no longer assume that curriculum implementation is a process that translated directly into the classroom reality.”

Perceptions and practices of educators as it emerged from the findings of this research have therefore provided a significant indicator that has shown the need for this alignment.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. Biographical information.

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What experience do you have as a Grade 10 educator?
3. What training on NCS did you receive?
4. Was the training effective?

B. General understanding of NCS.

1. Please explain your understanding of NCS?
2. How do you implement NCS in your class?

C. Planning.

3. How do you plan your lessons?
4. How do you interact with your colleagues as you plan for your class?
5. Are the preparations for your lessons a success? Please explain.

D. Learning and Teaching Support Material.

6. How do you use Learning and Teaching Support Material in an NCS class?
7. What do you think about how you use Learning and Teaching Support Material in your class? Please elaborate.

E. Interaction with learners.

8. Can you please explain the type of activities that you engage your learners in as you implement NCS?
9. How do you involve learners in your lesson when implementing NCS?

F. Assessment.

10. How do you assess your learners?

11. How do you think that your learners are responding to assessment in NCS? Please explain.

12. Has student learning improved as a result of NCS? Please explain.

13. How can the methods of assessment be improved?

G. Implementation at school.

14. How has NCS been implemented at your school?

15. How do you interact with your colleagues when preparing for an NCS class?

16. What do your colleagues say about NCS?

17. Do you work closely with your colleagues as you implement NCS? Please explain.

H. Success / improvement of NCS.

18. Do you think that NCS is a good reform? Please explain.

19. How would you suggest that NCS be improved?

I. Records/documents.

20. How do you keep your records as you implement NCS?

21. What do you think about the records that you keep? Please explain.

J. Promotion of learners.

22. How do you promote your learners to the next Grade in NCS?

23. Please explain what you think about the way learners are promoted to the next class in NCS?

K. Recommendations.

24. What are your recommendations regarding NCS implementation? Please elaborate.

APPENDIX 2

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

The following will serve as guidelines to my observation:

A. Content of the lesson.

1. What is the lesson all about?
2. What does the teacher say?
3. How do the learners respond?
4. In what ways are facilitation methods geared towards NCS principles i.e social transformation; outcomes-based education; integrated learning of theory, practice and reflection; human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice; and valuing indigenous knowledge systems?

B. Interaction/classroom atmosphere.

5. How does the teacher interact with learners for example when giving instructions, questioning and explaining content?
6. Response of learners to the educator's instructions and questions.
7. Interaction amongst learners themselves for example group work, discussions, reading and writing exercises.
8. Grouping of learners in class.
9. The number of learners in class.

C. Learning and Teaching Support Material.

10. What Learning and Teaching Support Materials are used in class?
11. How does the educator incorporate Learning and Teaching Support Material when teaching?
12. How successful is the incorporation of Learning and Teaching Support Material when teaching?

13. Are there any charts/drawings/artifacts that relate to NCS?
14. How are the aspects mentioned in 13 incorporated into the lesson?
- D. Assessment.**
15. How are learners assessed?
16. How do the learners respond to assessment?
17. Is assessment effective?
- E. Planning.**
18. How does the educator plan teaching and learning?
19. What documents does the educator use for planning?
20. How does the educator use documents for planning?
21. How successful is this planning?
- F. Portfolios and documents.**
22. How are the Educator's and Learner's portfolios used?
23. Usage of Educator's and Learner's guides.
24. Records of marks and promotion schedules.
25. Records of Year Planners and Work Schedule and how these are used?

APPENDIX 3

EXAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PROJECT: PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES OF GRADE 10 EDUCATORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NCS.

PLACE: MAKAPANSTAD

DATE: 04-04-2008

TIME: 6H30

DURATION: 50 MINUTES

INTERVIEWEE: GONTSE (EDUCATOR & ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

INTERVIEWER: V.M PHANYANE (V.M)

V.M: Thank you for having agreed to take part in this interview.

Gontse: You are welcome.

V.M: Ok, eh, the other thing that I must indicate to you is the purpose of this interview which is practices of Grade 10 teachers. The other thing that I must mention to you, make you aware of is that the contents of this interview will be made available to my supervisor and the external moderator to quality assure what I shall have gathered. The findings of the whole report. The other thing is that what we talk about here will be confidential between the two of us and the only two people who will get access of the information I that shall have gathered are those two people. So I must indicate that the confidentiality of what we will be talking about is guaranteed. I hope you are fine with that.

Gontse: Ok.

V.M: Eh, eh by the way for how long have you been teaching.

Gontse: 19 years

V.M: And what about the Grade 10 class, for how long have you been teaching the Grade 10 NCS class?

Gontse: Three years.

V.M: Three years, so, you started with NCS when it started.

Gontse: Ya, in 2005.

V.M: Was it 2005?

Gontse: No, 2006.

V.M: Ok, eh, the other things this is, did you receive any training on NCS?

Gontse: Ya, a five day workshop.

V.M: Five day?

Gontse: Five days, workshop.

V.M: Ok, eh, was it effective? How was it?

Gontse: Well. I wouldn't use the word effective. It was just enlightening us on the NCS. They just explained what it really entailed. How it came about, but there was not really much information that one could absorb in five days.

V.M: So would you say it was useful?

Gontse: Ya, useful not effective because really they did not explain much about the approach or the implementation.

V.M: Ok. I think I should, I need to start with my main questions now. Eh the first question that I have for you eh, is this one. Can you please explain to me your understanding of NCS?

Gontse: Eh, my understanding is that it is a modified OBE. It was actually made after they realised that OBE needed to be modified. That's my understanding of it and it is learner orientated and it emphasizes the learning outcomes and the assessment standards when one

teaches one has to look at the LO's and the AS's and depending on the LO's and assessment standards, one would adopt different approaches like group work and research and so forth.

V.M: Ok, ok. Eh, my second question to you is this one, how do you implement NCS in your class?

Gontse: What actually I do in class?

V.M: Ya, the way you go about it in class as you implement this...this new curriculum.

Gontse: Well eh, it will depend on the learning outcomes that I want to achieve so and the assessment standards. There has to be some planning and if the lesson plan requires group work I will divide them into groups, explain the instructions and then give them a few minutes to carry out the instructions that they are requested to do.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: That's my approach.

V.M: Ok. Eh, let's talk about your planning now, eh, as you plan your lessons. Can you please explain to me how you go about planning your lessons? How do you plan your lesson?

Gontse: Eh, well lesson plans have to be planned based on work-schedule, the overall work-schedule we have for the year and also depending on the type of lessons. Some lessons will require weekly preparations that will take... eh, our periods normally take 45 minutes per day. So, if a lesson requires more than forty five minutes it means it will be a two day lesson plan. Eh, mostly I fill in a template that is sent by the department for lesson planning, so I follow that template.

V.M: Ok. Eh, I heard you talking about the work schedule, can you explain how do you go about coming up with that work schedule that you talking about?

Gontse: Well we have to sit down plan as different educators in a particular department for a particular eh, grade, use the week time-table, see what are we going to teach, which aspects are we going to teach, which week is for assessment and so on and so on.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So then we draw plans from the work schedule.

V.M.: Ok, you said the work-schedule.

Gonste: Ya.

VM: Do you have it with you?

Gontse: Ya.

V.M: Can I maybe see it later?

Gontse: Ya, you can see it later.

V.M: Ok, no...no thanks. Eh, now lets talk about your interaction with your colleagues as you plan work. Eh, how do you interact with your colleagues as you plan your work?

Gontse: Well we consult one another and we come up with different resources that are available, then we plan and take it from there by each department.

V.M: Eh, how often do you that, eh the interaction with your colleagues as you plan, when does that happen?

Gontse: Oh... well, the work-schedule normally we plan at the end of the year for next year, eh, after receiving resources or textbooks for learners and teacher books we sit down and plan, and it differs, what we realize is that it's different for each year for instance we started the work-schedule in 2006 for NCS for the following year we had to re-schedule it to adopt eh, the textbook that we were using. So we changed, we didn't follow the same work-schedule as we were also learning the implementation of NCS

V.M: Ok. What do you think about that change of plan, is it useful or is of any help to you?

Gontse: Well, it is because we realised if we stick to that one and saying, ok, 2006 we had the Grade 10 one so 2007 we will follow the same one we used in 2006, it would really not help us to achieve the all learning outcomes that we wanted to, especially if we choose a different book in my department, so it helps us a we are also learning, as we teach along we are also learning.

V.M: Ok, eh... can we revert to the lesson plans tell me, eh how do you interact with your colleagues as you draw your lesson plan, or is there any form of interaction with your colleagues?

Gontse: No... lesson plans we don't actually interact that much because our approaches are different.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So like we say there is a template that we know we have to fill in for instance things like the...eh... LO's and the AS's, assessment standards and the LO's for that particular lesson. And the approach and the activities, what we actually do what the teacher does, what the learner does, it's different, our approaches are different. That's why our lesson plans for the same lesson will be different.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So, mostly we interact when we plan the overall work-schedule not the lesson plan, the daily lesson plan.

V.M: Ok, ok, eh...can we go my next question here, eh, my next question for you is this one, are the preparations for you lessons successful or have you experienced eh, difficulties, can you please explain?

Gontse: Well... I can't say yes or no they are successful. Sometimes when you put in paper you have this clear picture of what you are going to do, start with this and that, you write it down in you lesson plan and once you come into the classroom to implement, there

are always situations where it wouldn't go as smoothly as you anticipated, why because of many factors. It can be the overcrowded class, maybe you wanted to separate them it's too crowded you can't even create these groups you wanted to create, moving furniture around, you can't move around if you want to supervise the activities they are doing. Sometimes it's frustrating you know if you can't achieve what you wanted to achieve and you end up looking at them, seeing that as if they are surprised, they don't understand what is it exactly that you are trying to teach, then you end up reverting to the old method of teaching, standing there explaining while they are supposed to do the explaining to you.

V.M: Ok, eh..., the frustrations.

Gontse: The difficulties.

V.M: Ok, I heard you talking about big classes. In. your ... in your NCS class at least one class roughly how many learners do you have in there?

Gontse: Anything between forty eight and sixty per class.

V.M: Ok. Can we get to the Learning and Teaching Support Material, eh, my first question on this issue is this one, how do you use Learning and Teaching Support Material in your class?

Gontse: Well, the learners will have their learner books, I have my teacher book mostly because I teach eh, language, so for instance when we... I'm teaching eh... comprehension skills I will refer them to their learner books where they read a text and I go about explaining for them. So, mostly they use the learner books, or sometimes if is something that needs to be photocopied or typed, then I will make them copies and they go to the pamphlets.

V.M: Ok, ok. Tell me in your class are there any LTSM material maybe that you use except eh... apart from the learner books, something that can be displayed on walls?

Gontse: Ya, well, we do have eh... in our school we have adopted eh... the teaching system where the teacher remains in the class and the learners are the ones who alternate, go to the classroom. So, in my class I have displayed charts that are related to the learning area that I'm teaching which is English, so charts for grammar, pronouns adjectives and anything, any Learning and Teaching Support Material that they might find useful or I find useful for my learners.

V.M: Ok. That is in your classroom.

Gontse: Yes. Can we pause? We should have a break. (5 minutes break)

V.M: Right my next question to you is this one Gontse, have you experienced any difficulties or successes in using the Learning and Teaching Support Material? Can you please explain?

Gontse: Well yes and no, sometimes there are difficulties, if you want to teach listening comprehension you go in with a tape and they decided to... (Laughing) load-shedding, the electricity just decides to switch off. We have a problem of load shedding then the lesson is spoiled, that's the problem with Learning and Teaching Support Material. Sometimes you find that the charts that you have are not visual or we running out of paper, you want to photocopy something there's no ink. There will always be hiccups there and there, so far we are coping.

V.M: But the Learning and Teaching Support Material, apart from electricity, printing and photocopying, the hiccups that you talk about, are there any other...other...other problems that you experience around this eh, the Learning and Teaching Support Material?

Gontse: Well the one supplied by the government, I mean they do supply books but sometimes they are not there on time especially literature books. So, you find that there is no time to finish the books that they prescribe or the learners are too many they are sharing

a book, so, those are the problems that we experience, but otherwise like I said before we are coping, it's not Zimbabwe.

V.M: (laughing) But how do you go about the shortage, how do you try to go around the... as you solve the problem?

Gontse: No, they share. You make them share books, and then we also have a problem of when you have given them the books, they steal from one another, so some learners don't bring the books, they prefer to leave it at home. When you want to read a text, they don't have books, so that's their problem of control. Some prefer to keep it at home so that they are able to bring it back at the end of the year. So, it doesn't serve the purpose of teaching in the classroom if they have left it home. So it's quite a serious problem.

V.M: Ok, eh... let's talk about the interaction with the learners. Eh... how do you involve learners in the lesson when you implement NCS?

Gontse: Well since I believe NCS it's eh... learner based, more learner based from the previous one where the teacher would just stand in front and start explaining or budging as you would call it, this it involves eh... the learners. So, when you come in, for instance eh.. it's a lesson that needs groupwork that you have to... they have groups already that they are in. You issue pamphlets that you want to issue out, then explain your instructions for the activity very clearly and you give them a chance to go through the activity, then you go group by group to checking if they are following the right procedure. Then after, they present whatever it is that they were doing to me. So the groups normally will alternate and next time, to make sure that each learner is involved, we don't just have one group leader. They alternate their presentation. In a group of five, today if this one will present next time it will be the next one.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: To make sure that each one of them is involved.

V.M: Ok. So I heard you talking about groups you see, eh... what's... is...is is groupwork, eh... how effective is it?

Gontse: Well, it is effective and again it's not effective because the effective part comes along when you find... you know I normally ask them to group themselves with their friends, the way they like. I don't like eh... to enforce the groups into them. So, they choose themselves according to their friendship how they know each other, how well can they work together. So, you always find the leader in the group and you always find the lay ones, those who don't want to do anything. You find the leader who always wants to do everything himself not involving other learners and one who says no, I prefer to work myself and find information by myself. So in a way they are not used to groupwork as well. We have to force them to make them aware that look, this is not work that you can do on your own, it needs to be done as a group, you will have you own work that you can do, but this activity needs you to be in group. So that is still the hiccup of group work.

V.M: Ok

Gontse: They have to get used to it. But again you must also guard against too much groupwork because they tend to lose their individuality. So, it's quite... it's quite challenging for most teachers.

V.M: Right my next question is around assessment. Eh, my first question on this one is. How do you assess your learners?

Gontse: How do I assess my learners as prescribed by NCS?

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: As prescribed by NCS, we eh... have what they call formal assessment and informal assessment, informal assessment being assessment that you do in class to see progress of learning.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: If whatever you have taught, the learners understood. So, that will be done in the form of self assessment. There are activities that need them to self-assess themselves and that in self assessment...no let me go to the next one. Then we also have what we call formal assessment.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: That includes the activities that learners have to do throughout the year of continuous assessment. So that is also done through a programme of assessment and using different assessment methods that are and are required by eh... NCS.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So, normally there is a committee in school that is called the School Assessment Team that will monitor, see that standardised question papers are set, standardized question papers are moderated by the Head of Department.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: And they are again have to go from the HOD to the School Assessment Team to make sure that whatever the teachers are assessing, eh... whatever they have taught in class, they are assessing the Learning Outcomes they have taught before they go and give these learners these activities. So, that's how assessment is done in our school.

V.M: Ok. Eh, I heard you talking about informal assessment. Eh, can you please explain eh, how effective is that part of assessment the informal one? Is it of any help in your opinion?

Gontse: Ya it is, because it is for the sake of eh... progress. So things like homeworks, eh... classworks, because it establishes the understanding of a particular activity or programme or learning programme that you are teaching. So, in that way they are able to see that they understood what you were implementing, did they achieve the learning outcome that you intended to teach at the end of the lesson?

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: That's how we use informal assessment.

V.M: Ok, eh, my next question to you is this one, how do you think that your learners are responding to assessment in NCS?

Gontse: Well, I want to categorise them again.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: Eh... informal assessment one for instance where now they have to do self assessment, they are not used to that. The learners are not genuine, you know they will mark themselves correct where they are incorrect.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: They tend to cheat. So, at the end you still have to go through them, yourself, the activities and correct them, make sure that they have marked themselves correctly. They are not genuine in that informal one.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: And the formal one, well it's different from what they are used to, 'cause I find it to be more... more, what do they call it, case studies, a question of case studies for the learners. They have to apply they ...of that...

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: When answering the questions and they still don't seem to relate the two application theories.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: They really find it difficult. They are still used to the old method of cramming and regurgitating what they have crammed. So, the way of questioning in NCS is sort of more applied questioning than simple answer questions. So the high order questions, they really find them difficult then you find them saying but this is not what we were taught. If you

rephrase the question then they understand, oh it really needed this and this, just needed interpretation and analysis.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So those are quite eh, big words that they still have to get used to. But we're slowly getting there.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: Slowly but surely.

V.M: Ok. Now as you talk like that, eh, assessing your learners, in...in your opinion, has student learning improved in NCS as you assess your learners? What is your opinion?

Gontse: Oh, yes and no. It has improved in my opinion I think in the sense that with an above average IQ, are good at it. They are able to pass, and those who are with an average IQ are struggling and the below average IQ are not accommodated in NCS. It's just not working for them. So actually it doesn't have the... what can I say... the grey in between the margin for people who are not intelligent can't cope with it. It doesn't cater for them.

V.M: Ok. Eh, but as you say that neh, now how can the methods of assessment in NCS be improved? How do you think that can be done?

Gontse: Well, I think we... NCS eh, the learner has eh, what in the old system used to be called higher grade papers or standard grade or lower grade.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: It doesn't address that. So, meaning it's simply meaning that it doesn't address the different levels of the IQ that we find in our learners. So, I think they need to revise that, go back and put that thing.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: So that you are able to give those who are able to write higher grade, then lower grade, and standard grade. That's how it can be improved.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: Because now they just write one common paper. It's quite difficult for most.

V.M: Ok. But as you say that how useful is that in your opinion? The way in which you are putting it.

Gontse: The grading?

V.M: Ya

Gontse: Ya, because it will accommodate different IQ's. You know people are different, we don't have the same levels of IQ. Eh, NCS the thing it will talk about enrichment but I believe it needs also grading that we used to have.

V.M: Ok. Eh, as you talk about that, you mentioned something about enrichment, would you elaborate on that, what that is all about?

Gontse: Well, it simply means if Tom and Harry did not understand, you have to take them and give them extra lessons and extra work and work on them until you are sure that they trying to catch the levels of the others.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: But, but and a big but, time, time that we don't have. I always say that eh, NCS doesn't cater for the prove...proverbial lost sheep (laughing), that you leave ninety nine and go and look for the one that is lost.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: There's no time for that.

V.M: Ok, eh, my next set of questions is around those that deal with implementation at your school. Eh, how has NCS been implemented at your school?

Ray: How, the how part of it?

V.M: Ya, the how part if it at school as a collective.

Gontse: As a collective. I wouldn't use the word collective. I mean what really happens is that eh...grade teachers, different grade teachers went for that five day course of induction period, I don't know what to call it, that was offered to be briefed on NCS. The teachers felt that it was not enough. There were so many things that we had to learn so quick. The LO's and the Assessment Standards. Going back to school to implement, one really had to sit down, read the material read the book, make sense out of the whole NCS thing and adopt it to your particular eh, Learning Area.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So, it's basically a question of everyone one for himself. So you use the experience you have as a teacher to adapt to the new curriculum.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: And, there are some who are willing to do that and there are some who will still be grumpy and complaining about it and tend to use the old method when they feel threatened.

V.M: Ok. Eh, tell me about your colleagues. What do your colleagues say about the implementation of NCS?

Gontse: Well, it is difficult, they didn't get enough training. The government didn't consult the teachers, they just bring you new curriculum without any inputs from the teachers. We are expected just to flow, swim or sink.

V.M: Ok, but as...as...as your colleagues say this, do you agree with them, and could you please explain? Do you agree with them or not?

Gontse: Well I agree in the sense that, really it's true that they didn't get any, no teacher opinions were required when this curriculum was proposed. We were just given information and told that go and do this. I do agree with them to a certain extent, but I think maybe the government thought that look, we being teachers with qualifications, it's

not really something that can be difficult for us to implement if we really want to. It's all about reading and making sense out of it. But as we know most of us don't want to read, you get comfortable with what you know and implementing it the way you know it.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: 'Cause change is always challenging to people, I expect that there should be resistant and all those sort of things. But what can we say?

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: It's work, and work is work.

V.M: Work is work.

Gontse: Ya.

V.M: Well I do agree with you maybe, like we're working now.

Gontse: Ya.

V.M: It's all about work. Eh, tell me, do you work closely with your colleagues as you implement NCS? And please explain.

Gontse: Well we do with some, we don't with some, depending on the attitude of the teacher. Some teachers will prefer not to, to isolate, to keep to themselves. But normally I do, when I find information, then I share...

V.M: Ya

Gontse: with my colleagues. I always do that. If I find that there's a different approach that I found somewhere and we need to implement it, I always seek opinions with them and share and I believe in...in...eh, team teaching.

V.M: Ok

Gontse: Well, you can always ask one colleague to teach a certain aspect that you feel you are not comfortable with. In that way it helps.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: But some teachers you know feel comfortable doing things alone. Ya, it's different.

V.M: Ok, but now tell me about your colleagues outside your school. How is the interaction with colleagues outside your school within the same learning area? Is there any form of interaction, and if there is, how you go about interacting with one another?

Gontse: Well, eh... outside our sister schools there's always a spirit of competition in our district, so what I have realised is that there is a lot of information and teachers wouldn't readily share information from another school to the next.

V.M Ok.

Gontse: So, it's a question of who is the best. Which school is the best when the results are announced? So, the interaction is not what it is supposed to be. That we should... the department is encouraging us to share resources in terms of human resources as well, expertise that you can borrow one teacher to go and teach that particular learning area there where you go and teach that one, and exchange teachers. So it's something that is still lacking in our district.

V.M: Eh, my next question to you is this one, do you think that NCS is a good reform and can please explain?

Gontse: Yes, I think it is because for the first time in our country we are having the same education system. All the different racial groups in grade 10 are studying the same education system.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: Eh, its good because it is learner orientated, in involves learners more in the education through the different activities that they do.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So, in that way it teaches them eh...eh... responsibility. Eh, it's good sometimes as a teacher when you know, you start implementing an activity or new methods or something new, you see the darkness as you teach, as if they are not understanding anything that you say as you plan your lessons and implement it. But slowly you see it coming together, you know, I love it when I see things coming together, it's the most exhilarating feeling when you see your students learning for instance how to write a poem, writing a poem and reciting as opposed to the old method of where they had cram and recite for you.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: So, this is really interesting, you know you get to experience that aha moment when you see that this is really working. It can really work and I believe it can. All it needs is... is... thorough preparation from the teacher's side. And also for the learners be prepared, to listen and research and go along as you take them through the process. So I believe it can work.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: And it's a good thing.

V.M: It's a good thing?

Gontse: Ya.

V.M: Ok, eh, in improvements, how would you suggest that NCS be improved?

Gontse: Like I said maybe now we experiencing problems because at the FET band we just started with Grade 10. Those Grade 10 learners from Grade 9.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: It was new to them.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So it was really a problem for them to...to link from what they were learning with the new curriculum.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: But the 2007 Grade 10, and the 2008 this year's Grade 10 you see quite a difference. So which simply means that those who started with it from the GET band, by the time they reach FET band, you don't experience a problem. The Grade tens...2008 Grade tens have improved a lot. When you go into class and ask them to form groups, they do it very quickly, you know it's something that they are used to.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: Presentation when you ask them to talk, to talk, they do speak a lot. The shortfall that I see now is writing. They are not used to writing. I don't know what is it that they do at the GET band, they are more talkative than writing. So we still need to improve the writing part of it.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: To assess more on the writing the creative part of it. But articulation they are very good, oral work. So I think we need to...to get some way or method of giving them more written work for cutting on the creativity of writing and writing. That is the problem.

V.M: Ok, eh, my next set of question to you Gontse is about records and documents that you keep. What records and documents do you keep as you implement NCS? Documents.

Gontse: Eish, a lot.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: There's just a lot of administrative work. There's one...one, negative of NCS that all the teachers have, 'cause you have to keep records and records. There are files and files, resource file, a portfolio file a teacher file you know only as teacher in class I have to have three files. Now as a head of department is worse, you have to keep records of different

committees like the school assessment team like the LTSM. So there's just so many records that are driving teachers crazy, there's a lot of paperwork to be done. But...and that's a disadvantage 'cause you spend so much time preparing...preparing than contact time with the learners. They affect the contact time, the keeping of records that's ...that's the major, eh what eh, drawback of NCS. Records, 'cause really I hate keeping records, I will tell them that I'm not a clerk, or we still need a course in filling or something.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: Teachers I feel need that since the only way... we do understand that the only way for the department to monitor our work is through records.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: But you can have a neat file and... and neat records and while the implementation in class is failing

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: So, Ya, that's it records. I do have schedule, the year planners, the lesson plans all in tact.

V.M: And the portfolios.

Gontse: And the portfolios, a teacher's nightmare.

V.M: A portfolio?

Gontse: Yes. (Laughing) .All the records are a teacher's nightmare.

V.M: Is it?

Gontse: Yes

V.M: Why do you say so?

Gontse: Because we are not filling clerks. We are not used to them.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: Ya. You know filing and clerical work and administrative work it's a course on its own, that's why principals have secretaries, unfortunately we can't afford to have one.

V.M: Ok

Gontse: And any teacher can't afford to have an assistance secretary or something to keep the records.

V.M: Ok. Eh as you talk about those records, may I please, eh go through them hereafter?

Gontse: Sure you can.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: There's a big file waiting for you to peruse.

V.M: Ok...thanks. Eh, let's talk about the promotion of learners. How do you promote learners to the next grade in NCS?

Gontse: Well, according the requirements promotion requirements of NCS a learner must at least pass three learning areas with eh...eh... a minimum of thirty percent. Three learning areas with a minimum of forty percent, one being forty percent being eh... of language. Those are the requirements to the next grade.

V.M: Ok, eh now tell me, eh, what do you think about those requirements, about the way those learners are promoted to the next grade?

Gonste: Well, for starters I think they are low, they are very, very low. They are very low because if you look at forty percent, three forty percent and then thirty percent is at F, if you categorise them according to symbols, the old symbols. So, university entrance after matric is normally fifty percent and whatever they'll be studying, courses they are studying they are expected to pass at fifty percent. So there's quite a gap you know, to promote learners from Grade 11-12 with thirty percent and forty percent and all of a sudden at the end of the year, or from Grade 10 to Grade 12, at the end of Grade 12 you expect them to get fifty percent and above.

V.M: Ya

Gontse: It's just not feasible, you know. They tend to say, no I did fail with twenty nine why didn't you give me one mark? And I say to the it's not one mark, if you get twenty nine out of a hundred, it's not one mark it's seventy one marks.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: So the standard is quite low though they find it difficult, maybe it will change as the system goes on, but for now, most learners can't achieve.

V.M: By the way you taught Grade 10 last year or these previous years?

Gontse: Ya.

V.M: How was the performance of the learners in terms of their promotion? How did they perform?

Gontse: Very bad... very bad. Like eh, we were saying out of a class of...we have 250 Grade 10, you know Grade 10.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: Those who were not repeating and those who did not study NCS I think in Grade nine...but they did the last year ones. Like the GET band when did they get...no...last year they implemented it in Grade 9.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: So the ones that were in Grade 10 last year, they did not study eh... NCS in Grade 9, so, they failed horribly, because out two hundred and fifty, only twenty two got a clear pass, 'cause only twenty two were able to make those criteria. So, the department had to try and promote those who had failed more than two subjects. So, if they are doing seven Learning Areas it means if they have to pass three with thirty three...with forty, they only allow you to fail one Learning Area.

VM: Ok.

Gontse: But there are some who managed to fail all of them, all of the Learning Areas, so it was quite bad. But like I'm saying, they failed.

V.M: Ok I heard you talking about learners who were promoted without having met the requirements of being promoted into the next class, what do you think about that process, the procedure you know, of promoting these learners into the next grade even if they don't meet the requirement?

Gontse: Well the department was very strict, they only could give five marks, not anything more than that. So, there were not so many that were promoted. They were very strict with that five marks 'cause already they could see that the thirty is quite low. So if they really fail to make that requirement and you expect them to be in the next Grade, and they haven't achieved in two three subjects.

V.M: Ok.

Gontse: They haven't any...especially if the Grade eh, 11 were writing external examination. I think the department was using that as a sort of radar to sift, to make sure that those who go to Grade 12 will be...will be able to make the requirements there.

V.M: Ok. Eh... we have talked about many things, but now what I need from you, from all what we have talked about, can you respond to this last question that I have? What are your recommendations all in all regarding NCS implementation and can you please elaborate?

Gontse: Well...eh, you know we, we are trying to implement it, but I feel that that we don't get support from the department. Why am I saying that? In the sense that, you know they, now they keep sending us material, do this do that don't do that. Right then we try and implement and where you meet problems, you don't know where to report that and say people look, this is the situation. I'll tell you an incident, I'm an English teacher and as we implement I realize that the Grade tens couldn't write their names, have a reading problem, you know, and you find that there's one learner there who can't make sense out of the

whole thing. You give him an essay to write, you give instructions, he copies out the whole question paper with the instructions as they are. Those who have serious reading problems, reading and writing problems and you need remedial work. So, there are no structures which are there for us to say ok, I have this type of learners and you see they are not going to make it, what do I do?

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: So we don't have a support system. I would recommend that there should be a body from the curriculum department. Somewhere, where you will be able to report the failures that we are getting. And then in a way it will need how the department can see whether it's being successful or it's not being successful. Help us how to do remedial thing. So, at the end we see that they have failed, they are not coping but we don't know what to do.

V.M: Ya.

Gontse: And they are not allowed to tri-peat the system. They are not allowed to be in a Grade for three years, so we end up casting the poor learners out of the system.

V.M: Ok, so you basically that's your recommendation.

Gontse: Ya, if we could have the support system.

V.M: Ok, eh, Maggie we have come to the conclusion of our interview, eh once more let me thank you for having eh, lasted this long. I thought maybe somewhere in the middle of this process you would maybe...

Gontse: I would perish? (Laughs)

V.M: You would perish. But at least you have lasted till the end, so I thank you very much.

Gontse: You are welcome. It's my pleasure

V.M: Thank you.

APPENDIX 4

P. O. Box 81762
Doornpoort
0017
15 February 2008

The Area Project Office Manager
Moretele Area Project Office
Private Bag x 365
Makapanstad
0404

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Masters student in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development at the University of Pretoria. My research is topic is: **Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.**

I wish to apply for permission to conduct research at High Schools that offer Grade 10 in your district. This research requires me to interview Grade 10 educators for a period of 45-60 minutes; observe them in class for periods of 30-45 minutes; and go through the documentation that they use in teaching the NCS.

Please note that the names of the educators and the names of the schools will not be identified in the findings and the report of my research. I will use pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The educators as well as the schools are free to withdraw from this research at any time. Participation is voluntary. I promise to abide by all the rules and regulations of the schools and the regulations that apply in the district. I will not disrupt the day-to-day functioning of the schools or the education of the learners.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely

.....
V.M Phanyane

APPENDIX 5

P. O. Box 81762
Doornpoort
0017
22 February 2008

The Principal

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.....

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Masters student in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development at the University of Pretoria. My research is topic is: **Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.**

I wish to ask for your permission to conduct research at your school. I have also applied for permission from the Education Department as well as from the local District. I will forward the relevant documentation to you as soon as I have obtained it. I would like to interview Grade 10 teachers, observe their lessons, and study documents related to their work. The research findings and report will be made available to my supervisor and the external examiner appointed by the university. Your name and the name of your school will not be identified. I will use pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Any teacher is free to withdraw from this research at any time. Participation is voluntary. I promise to conduct the research at the times that are most convenient for you and the teachers at the school.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely

.....

V.M Phanyane

APPENDIX 6

P.O. Box 81762
Doornpoort
0017
28 February 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I am a Masters student in Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development at the University of Pretoria. My research is topic is: **Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.**

I wish to ask your permission to participate in my research. I have already obtained permission from the Education Department, the local District as well as the Principal of this school. I would like to interview you, observe your lessons, and study documents related to your work. The research findings and report will be made available to my supervisor and the external examiner at the university. Your name and the name of your school will not be identified in this research. I will use pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. You are free to withdraw from this research at any time. Participation is voluntary. I promise to conduct this research at the times that are most convenient for you and the school.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated. Please indicate your consent by signing the acceptance form below.

Sincerely

.....

V.M Phanyane



APPENDIX 7

ACCEPTANCE FORM

I agree to participate in the research project conducted by Mr V.M Phanyane on the topic: **Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.**

I understand that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research. My name and the name of my school will not be divulged to anyone. I reserve the right to withdraw from this research at any time.

Signature:.....

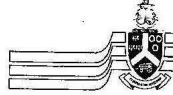
Date:

Name:
Educator

.....

Date:

V.M Phanyane
Researcher



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

CLEARANCE NUMBER : CS08/04/06

DEGREE AND PROJECT

MEd. Curriculum and Instructional Design and Development
Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the
implementation of National Curriculum Statements in the
Moretele/Temba district.

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Victor M. Phanyane – 25411234

DEPARTMENT

Curriculum Studies

DATE CONSIDERED

16 May 2008

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

APPROVED

This ethical clearance is valid for 2 years from the date of consideration and may be renewed upon application

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS
COMMITTEE**

Dr Salomé Human-Vogel

DATE

16 May 2008

CC

Dr E Weber
Mrs Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



education

Lefapha la Thuto
Onderwys Departement
Department of Education
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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OFFICE OF THE AREA MANAGER: MORETELE AREA PROJECT OFFICE

DATE: 18 February 2008

FROM: The Acting Area Project Office Manager.

TO: Mr V.M Phanyane

SUBJECT: Permission to conduct research.

Dear Sir

RE: GRANTING OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This serves to confirm that Mr V.M Phanyane is granted permission to conduct research on the topic: Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.

Permission to conduct research is granted with the understanding that the researcher is a Masters student at the University of Pretoria and the research is conducted as part of his studies. He will therefore interview Grade 10 educators, observe them as they teach in class and study documents that they use for their preparations.

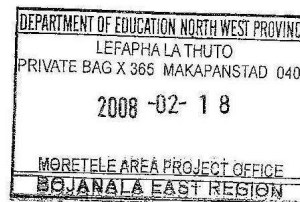
This office therefore understands that the names of educators and those of the schools will not be identified in the findings and the report of the research as pseudonyms will be used. This office further understands that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained for the participants. Kindly note that schools as well as educators are free to withdraw from the research at any time, so their participation is voluntary. Please note that the rules and regulations of the schools and those that apply in the district must be observed.

This office therefore wishes Mr V.M Phanyane success in his endeavour and looks forward to reading a copy of the research report before it is submitted to the university.

Sincerely


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MZK Mosala
(Acting Area Project Office Manager)





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OFFICE OF THE AREA MANAGER: MORETELE AREA PROJECT OFFICE

DATE: 18 February 2008

FROM: The Acting Area Project Office Manager.

TO: High School Principals (Moretele Area Project Office)

SUBJECT: Permission to conduct research.

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: GRANTING OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This serves to confirm that Mr V.M Phanyane is granted permission to conduct research on the topic: Perceptions and practices of Grade 10 educators in the implementation of National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in the Temba/Moretele district.

Permission to conduct research is granted with the understanding that the researcher is a Masters student at the University of Pretoria and the research is conducted as part of his studies. He intends to interview Grade 10 educators, observe them as they teach in class and study documents that they use for their preparations.

This office therefore understands that the names of educators and those of the schools will not be identified in the findings and the report of the research as pseudonyms will be used. This office further understands that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained for the participants. Kindly note that schools as well as educators are free to withdraw from the research at any time, so, participation is voluntary. Please note that the rules and regulations of the schools and those that apply in the district must be observed.

Please afford him the necessary support and cooperation in this venture.

Sincerely


.....

MZK Mosala
(Acting Area Project Office Manager)

