

**USING ACTION RESEARCH AS A CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY**

BY

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my father and mother who demonstrate love, wisdom, vision, and guidance that saw me through to this level of education. I really thank you.

I heartfully and humbly express my gratitude to my wife, Choice, who has been the pillar of love, inspiration and encouragement needed to make this study a success.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development at the school level. The scope of the study covers a wide-ranging analysis of discourses underpinning curriculum development. As one of its central aims, the study investigates the role of educators as curriculum developers in grade 8, as an entry level at a secondary level.

The study has two fairly distinct dimensions: a literature survey focusing on global trends and practices, and an empirical investigation focusing at the school (Nqaba High School). The literature study looks at global systems, trend and practises, and provides a suitable point of departure for a contextual analysis of the educators' understanding and interpretation of the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development. Relying on observations and interviews as research techniques, the study's research question investigates the understanding and interpretation of curriculum development as the educators' role.

The study's findings all point to a preference for a common understanding and interpretation of the curriculum development process by all educators at the school level

Key words

Curriculum development

Design

Dissemination

Implementation

Evaluation

TOPIC: USING ACTION RESEARCH AS A CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION.

This study examines the use of action research as a curriculum development strategy. It is triggered by my own interest in understanding whether educators may be curriculum developers at a school level. The role of educators may be understood and interpreted differently by different people. In the old curriculum structure, which was a rigid, subject-based, and educator dominated curriculum, the curriculum was in turn hierarchical and there was little place for educators to innovate. The educators were implementers of someone else's curriculum (Bolin, J.G.1975: 147). The old curriculum structure emphasized knowledge acquisition and rote learning on the part of learners. The curriculum was largely prescriptive in this regard as educators were required to stick to the requirements of a fairly rigid curriculum in the South African context.

On the contrary, Curriculum 2005 is inherently flexible in terms of the content taught and encourages educators to be creative and innovative in their classroom activities. Curriculum 2005 is an important step away from the content-laden, often ideologically distorted, examinations-oriented apartheid curricula. It emphasizes 'learning by doing', problem solving, skills development and continuous assessment, and allows for greater space for educator involvement in curriculum construction (Jansen J. and Christie, P.1999: 282).

In the case of South African schools, the particular forms of curriculum 2005 and its implementation have been highly problematic. Jansen, J and Christie, P (1999: 283) contends that 'most educators have not been actively engaged with the new curriculum as the curriculum frameworks for learning areas were drawn up by committees in which they were represented. For most of them, the new curriculum is being put in place in top-down ways that strongly resemble the imposition of the apartheid curricula'. This is partly due to the poorly planned and overhasty introduction of the new curriculum into schools, with educators being insufficiently prepared for outcomes pedagogy.

It is very important to note that curriculum 2005 contains many contradictory and philosophical pillars about curriculum development. It is also interesting that within this ideological and philosophical omnibus, there might be room for creativity on the part of educators when doing their work. The department of education has provided emergency training and materials to ensure that educators could start from the same footing. However, in-service work with educators and schools has been minimal and resources have been inadequate.

Furthermore Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:283) argue that the ‘debate around Curriculum 2005 has been characterized by scathing criticism and defensive if not hostile government response. Curriculum 2005 has been accused of being jargon ridden and inaccessible in its discourse’. Its procedures for designing learning programmes are complex and sophisticated. Working with such principles requires well-prepared educators.

According to Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999: 4) the former education system in South Africa was characterized by a uniform and predictable curriculum policy environment. Educators were expected to follow and implement a curriculum that was designed and prescribed for them. The nature of education was determined by the apartheid policy of the time. Educators were prevented from developing an understanding of the relationship between education and the context in which knowledge and understanding is created and shared. Consequentially, their professional identity was distorted and this resulted in them not regarding themselves as the main curriculum planners and developers.

The history of curriculum development in South Africa has thus been that in which official knowledge was handed down to be implemented rather than being subjected to retain a dialogue and discussion. Education reflects a critical need for resources to deliver a radically different curriculum into post-apartheid schools to signal a break with the past system. Curriculum 2005 is dynamic in that it permits innovation and educator creativity.

Olivier,C. (1998: 34) contends that ‘Curriculum 2005 is problem-based learning and focuses mainly on the outcomes rather than content. Educators therefore become creative and innovative in assisting learners in problem –based learning. Though the teaching and learning process is learner-centred, educators become facilitators of teaching and learning for learners to benefit from our education system’. The central focus is on the notion of curriculum development in South Africa as seen from the perspective of educators as reflective practitioners.

This study also looks at the use of the principles, conventions and strategies of action research with the aim to establish whether educators may be curriculum developers or not. The educators selected to participate in this study will utilize action research strategies to improve their own practice in curriculum development.

1.2 RESEARCH FOCUS

From the critical theory perspective, which examines the values and assumptions underpinning a particular practice, this study examines the relationship between action research and curriculum development in grade eight. The concept of critical theory in this study refers to the nature of self-conscious critique and to the need to develop a discourse of social transformation and emancipation that does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions. In other words, critical theory refers to both a ‘school of thought’ and a process of critique (Giroux, H.A.1983:8). It refers to a body of knowledge that is invaluable for educational theorists and it also resembles a body of work that both demonstrates and simultaneously calls for the necessity of ongoing critique.

The central focus is on the notion of curriculum development strategies as seen from the perspective of educators as reflective practitioners in the classroom situation. The educators will be requested to use the action research strategy in their endeavour to develop the curriculum. This study focuses especially on how the activities planned by grade eight educators are developed in the classroom. From the perspective of action research, the focus of this study is not on what should be done to facilitate teaching and learning but rather on how to facilitate the learning process. It will also

enable them to be researchers of their own practice so that they may improve teaching and learning.

Today, the new education dispensation in the South African curriculum provides space for active educator involvement in curriculum and instructional design as well as curriculum development. The teaching and learning situation in terms of Curriculum2005 has changed radically as it facilitates creativity on the part of both the educator and the learner with the aim to improve our education system. The role of action research in this study is to enable educators to reflect on their daily practices thereby discovering the areas on which they need to improve. Educators may achieve this by looking at their plans, strategies and methods used in teaching and learning. They may also need to know whether or not outcomes have been achieved. Action research therefore becomes an empowerment tool for educators and they use it as a strategy to develop the curriculum.

This study uses the notion of curriculum that goes beyond the curriculum as a document to a notion that sees the document as merely the first step in the curriculum process. What happens in the classroom is also curriculum and this encompasses all the activities that take place within the classroom. This study thus focuses on the different strategies used by educators and on the conceptions of curriculum development as exemplified by the practice of different educators who are informants in this project. My role in this study is that of a researcher and facilitator of action research with the aim of helping educators realize what to do and how to improve their role as curriculum developers. Needless to say that curriculum development takes many forms that this study seeks to explore (Olivier, C.1998: 35)

According to Lovat, T.J. and Smith, D.L. (1995:99) 'any curriculum could be considered useful as long as it involved the development of critical thinking skills, including open –enquiry methodologies, furthered personal autonomy and stressed the historical, cultural, political, and economic contexts of individual and group action'. It would also look into the practices, which encourage research and independent learning, and would promote approaches to learning, which challenge learners to engage in practical action for change, based on critical and collaborative reflection.

This study examines the teaching strategies used by educators, planning of work, educators' work, resources, learners' work, assessment and organization of classrooms. It also pays particular attention to learner participation in the lessons.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading about what other people have written in this area of interest has been done so as to gather as much information as possible that support arguments in my investigation and findings. This helped me to examine how authors classify their findings, how they explore relationships between facts and how facts and relationships are explained.

In this study, the work of various authorities concerning curriculum development has also been reviewed to support this study and to find out what other authorities say about curriculum development. Some of them are the following: Connelly, F.M.&Clandinin, D.J. (1988) *Teachers as curriculum planners*, Goodson, I.F. (1994): *Studying curriculum*, Pratt D. (1994) *Curriculum Management*, Van Rooy, M.P. (1996) *Didactic Practice*, Zais, R.S. (1976): *Curriculum Principles and Foundations*, Killen, R. (2000) *Teaching Strategies for Outcomes-based Education*, Jansen, J.and Christie. (1999) *Changing Curriculum Studies on Outcomes-based Education in South Africa*.

Curriculum development may be defined in general as all the processes that are necessary to plan, design, implement and evaluate a functional curriculum. Van Rooy, M.P.(1990:15) contends that "curriculum development can never be regarded as a final and complete process." This is best exemplified by the South African education system that constantly undergoes changes. A curriculum will comply more and more with the demands of the times, teaching situation and environment for which it has been designed, for example, the Revised New Curriculum Statement (RNCS). This curriculum emphasizes acquisition of knowledge and skills by learners to meet the demands of the times. Curriculum development can be regarded as a continuous process that forms one of the key elements of our education system and will last as long as educators and learners exist in the school set-up.

Pratt, D. (1994:28) argues that ‘educators do not serve merely as instructional technicians, rigidly implementing a highly detailed curriculum exactly as it has been given to them’ but they are also involved in the curriculum process. Educators become active participants in the development of curriculum by further defining and detailing it in the light of specific contextual variables with which they are intimately familiar. When educators plan their work, they need to do that considering the contextual factors that impact either positively or negatively towards teaching and learning.

Taylor and Henry (1994) in Christie, P. (1996:414) argues that proposals for curriculum development were developed by a group of national players, albeit in a consultative process. The design process of the curriculum requires both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ initiatives to changing actual education. This will only be achieved if there is a two-way communication between the education department and educators where they consult each other and feedback given. I find consultation highly significant in this study as it enables educators to reflect on their practices in order to improve teaching and learning. Working with educators in the classroom yields positive results as educators become open and free to talk about their problems.

Significant change in curriculum development will not occur through wishful thinking but through hard work and diligent application. Meaningful changes demand a deep sense of understanding and beyond all, commitment to improve education. Meaningful curriculum renewal and change is only possible if there is active involvement and dynamic leadership. Carl, A.E. (1995:136) argues that ‘curriculum change endeavours through dissemination to get people involved with the needs of the country, community, learners and educators’. Dissemination is the key factor in curriculum development because ‘knowledge is power’.

Zais, R.S. (1976:478) points out that ‘effective implementation of the curriculum can occur only when educators fully understand and agree with the theoretical basis of the new curriculum, which is a crucial observation for South Africa today. The traditional response towards effective implementation of the curriculum has been the in-service workshops’ whereas educators also needed to change their teaching strategies.

However, it is also important to note that in-service workshops usually do not work because they are not able to enhance the educators' understanding of the new curriculum's foundational rationale. What is required is that 'those individuals who are going to teach the program be involved in many phases of its creation, evaluation, and revision'. Educators also need to work as reflective practitioners in order for them to be in a position to determine whether they are still on the right track or not. This will make it possible for them to appreciate work of their own creation (Zais, R.S.1976: 478)

Schubert (1986) in Carl, A.E. (1995:186) conceives of 'curriculum development as a delivery process (traditionally)'. This can be regarded as a phase that takes design specifications to the educator and the classroom. Implementation of the curriculum should not be a mere carrying out of instructions but developments must take place within the learning environment. In order for educators to be successful in implementing a curriculum effectively they use a variety of strategies. It is action research that may be used as a strategy to enable educators to improve their practice.

Lovat, T.J. and Smith, D.L. (1995:98) discusses three ways of thinking about curriculum, whether curriculum is understood as classroom syllabus, or of the curriculum theory and planning components within educator education, or of the experiences of learners.

When the first, or technical, cognitive interest is dominant, thinking about curriculum would likely be dominated by scientific and technological rationality. In other words, the only things deemed worthwhile to pursue in the classroom might be those, which produced tangible results or are marketable within the world of technology. The content of curriculum theory component within the educator education programme would concentrate heavily on the dominance of science in the modern world and expose learners to some of the more technical forms to be found within the foundational disciplines.

When the second, or hermeneutical, interest is dominant, useful curriculum might be seen as including social sciences, so that learners could learn to understand the values involved in relationships between individuals and within societies and cultures. The content of a curriculum theory component within educator education program would

allow insights gained from the more humanistic forms to be found within the foundational disciplines. The content of a curriculum-planning component would recommend practices, which include negotiated and experiential types of learning.

When the third, or critical cognitive interest is dominant, the curriculum would be considered as useful if it involves the development of critical thinking skills. The content of a curriculum theory component within the educator education program would concentrate on the critical forms to be found within the foundational disciplines. One of the most influential aspects of educator education program concerns the curriculum-planning component. Within this component, the educator is introduced to what are considered to be most appropriate ways of planning, implementing and evaluating units of work. For most prospective educators, this is closest to the heart of what they are all about (Lovat, T.J. and Smith, D. 1995: 98-99).

The history of curriculum development in South Africa has been that in which official knowledge from the former education system was handed down to be implemented by educators rather than set in a dialogue and discussion. It tended to follow a curriculum that was rigid and prescriptive such that educators would strictly follow what was given to them. The new education system that is characterized by flexibility in terms of content and openness reflects a critical need to deliver a radically different curriculum into post-apartheid schools to signal a break with the past system.

Lovat, T.J. and Smith, D.L. (1995) argue that the ‘teacher should be more than a mere classroom mechanic, taking set curricula and interpreting them for learners. It directed thought towards the notion of the educator as local diagnostician, curriculum designer and developer, decision –maker about public teaching and learning’. So, it can be argued, that the educator should be regarded as, first and foremost, a teaching and learning specialist, who possesses skills of diagnosis and remedy prescription in relation to problems in the field of learning.

Openness and flexibility in the current education system can be seen in terms of policy guidelines used in curriculum development and its implementation. Educators plan their work using the departmental policy guidelines and they are free to use their own creativity and innovation. Educators work with learners such that there is co-

operative teaching and learning in the classroom and sometimes decisions are taken on how to improve the teaching practice.

There is therefore a need to review the educator's teaching strategies, teaching methods and their role in curriculum development in order to address the needs of learners. Copper and Jansen, (1993) in Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:132) contend that adherents to an outcomes-based approach to education in South Africa have claimed to meet the needs of all learners regardless of their environment, ethnicity, economic status or disabling conditions. However, this is not the case in most of the South African schools, as some do not have adequate resources and infrastructure to cater for the needs of learners of different abilities.

There are various ways of looking at the curriculum and at the learning theories. The learning theories are ideas that educators consider when designing a curriculum and applying them to instruction. At the heart of every learning theory and its application is the learner. Experiential learning is one of them where learners experience learning. Educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focussed reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. Learners learn a skill of reflecting and expressing their feelings about the learning experience. Educators and learners collaborate in teaching and learning and the exchange of information encourages learners to 'model' their educators. This has a very strong impact on both the educators and learners (Ferguson, E.2004: 2). Learning has no boundaries and it has become an on-going process that does not end in the classroom. Lifelong learning is vital in our technologically developing world. Learners are interested in learning relevant subject matter. Learning becomes more meaningful and significant because it relates directly to the learners' interest and needs.

One of the best ways to accomplish experiential learning is by means of groupwork. Smith, (2001) in Ferguson, E. (2004:3) contends that the programme consists of 'concrete experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualisation abilities and active experimentation abilities'. Learning teams are actually 'teaching teams' because each of the members learns from each other. Each of the team members who are good in a specific area leads the team so that they can learn from each other. Experiential learning and curriculum designers both emphasize

the interest of the learner. Curriculum also recognizes other variables such as subject matter, social and cultural factors. An experiential learning perceives the learner as an individual whose experience of learning differs from learner to learner because they have different backgrounds.

To address the problems facing the education system, this study will look at the work of various authorities in critical theory to support this project. It will involve the debates and arguments made by authorities such as Giroux, H.A. (1983) *Theory and Resistance in Education*, Habermas, J. (1972) *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Carr and Kemmis, (1986): *Becoming Critical*, Lovat, T.J. and Smith, D. (1995) *Curriculum Action on Reflection Revisited*, McNiff, J (1992): *Action Research Principles and Practice* and Tripp, D.H. (1990): *Social Critical Action Research*.

The central themes of a critical theory that a critical researcher might explore include a scientific study of social institutions and their transformations through interpreting the meanings of social life, the historical problems of domination, alienation and social struggles, and a critique of society and the envisioning of new possibilities (Fay, 1987;Morrow&Brown, 1994).

A critical theory has a view of educational reform that is participatory and collaborative; it envisages a form of educational research, which is conducted by those, involved in education. It also takes a view of educational research as critical analyses directed at the transformation of educational practices, the educational understandings and educational values of those involved in the process. In this way critical theory is not research on or about education, it is research in and for education.

Giroux, H.A. (1983:197) contends that ‘critical theory encourages a critique of dominant forms of knowledge and social practices that semantically and emotionally organize meanings and experiences that give learners a sense of voice and identity; similarly, it attempts to provide learners with the critical knowledge and skills necessary for them to examine their own particular lived experiences and cultural resources’. It means that learners are assisted to draw from their own voices and histories in facing multiple and often contradictory experiences that provide them

with a sense of identity, worth and presence. The history of knowledge and experience provides the basis for helping learners to develop respect for their own experiences so that they can be legitimate. The important principle at work here is to validate students' experience in order to empower them and not merely to please them.

From this perspective, we may return to the view of critical social science put by Fay:

(Critical social science)...is clearly rooted in concrete social experience, for it is ...explicitly conceived with the purpose of overcoming felt dissatisfaction. Consequently, it names the people for whom it is directed; it analyses their suffering; it offer enlightenment to them about what their real needs and wants are; it demonstrates to them in what way their ideas about themselves are false and at the same time extracts from these false ideas implicit truths about them; it points to those inherently contradictory social conditions which both engender specific needs and make it impossible for them to be satisfied; it reveals the mechanisms in terms of which this process of oppression operates and, in the light of changing social conditions which it describes , it offers a mode of activity by which they can intervene in and change the social processes which are thwarting them. A critical social theory arises out of the problems of everyday life and is constructed with an eye towards solving them. This quotation has been used because it relates directly to peoples lives, awareness of their sufferings, needs and how they may improve their lives. It may also enlighten educators about their practise and how to improve teaching and learning.

A critical educational science must then be a participatory science, its participants or 'subjects' being the teachers, students and others who create, maintain, enjoy and endure educational arrangements. Habermas, J. (1972:266) makes it clear that the research knowledge generated by critical social science is not, by itself, compelling for social action. Processes of 'enlightenment' by which participants in a situation reach authentic understandings of their situation, and a 'practical discourse' in which decisions are taken by participants about appropriate courses of action that are agreed to be wise and prudent. This means that understanding the realities of life and problems facing people will enable them to take correct and relevant decisions that would enable them to solve problems.

Habermas, J. (1972:267) further points out that: ...the theory that creates consciousness can bring about conditions under which the systematic distortions of communication are dissolved and a practical discourse can then be conducted; but it does not contain any information, which prejudices the future action of those concerned. The psychoanalyst does not have the right, either, to make proposals for prospective action: the patient must make his own conclusions as far as his own actions are concerned.

Critical theory requires therefore participants to collaborate in the organization of their own enlightenment, the decision-making by which they will transform their situations. These are tasks primarily for the participants in the educational situations who, by their practices, construct and constitute these situations as educational, transform them by transforming their own practices, and live with the consequences of the transformations they make.

I find critical theory very useful for thinking about action research for South African educators. The tasks of critical education cannot be divorced from the practical realities of education in particular schools and classrooms, nor from the political reality that schools themselves are concrete historical expressions of the relationship between education and society. This makes it clear that schools do not operate in isolation but should be understood in the context of communities in which they are found. Schools in various communities are there to serve the needs of learners by providing education. Without concrete, practical grounding in research processes which may create critical communities of educators, learners and others, educational research is forced to justify itself in much more general terms.

South African educators are responsible for the transformation of education and this can be realized in collaborative work in the transformation of the concrete settings and institutions of education. The contribution of educational research to educational practice must be evident in the actual improvements of concrete educational practices, of the actual understanding of these practices by their practitioners, and in the improvement of the concrete situations in which these practices occur.

I therefore find action research highly significant in this project as well as to the logistics of critical theory as it may help educators to reflect and become critical of their own practice. As a result literature on Action research including the work of the following authorities has been used: Eisner, E.W. (1998) *The Enlightened Eye. Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*, McNiff, J (1992) *Action Research Principles and Practice*, Rossman, G.B. and Rallis, S.F. (1998) *Learning in the field. An introduction to qualitative Research* and Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1992) *Qualitative Research for Education*.

Action research is defined by Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986:162) as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. In the Department of education, action research has been employed in school-based curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programmes, and systems planning and policy development. This has been done through the introduction of programmes such as Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) and School Self Evaluation (SSE) whereby educators reflect at their own practice within the school environment.

These programmes allow educators to identify their own strengths as well as areas for development. Educators further make their school improvement plans and personal growth plans indicating how they intend to improve teaching and learning. Participants in these development processes are increasingly choosing action research as a way of participating in decision-making about development.

In terms of method, a self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting is central to the action research approach. Lewin, K. (1952:166) emphasizes the value of involving participants in every phase of action research process so that they become empowered. Educators using action research as a curriculum development strategy are free to use innovation and creativity and not to be rigid. Action research should not be seen as a recipe or technique for bringing about democracy, but rather as an embodiment of democratic principles in research or curriculum practice, allowing participants to influence, if not determine, the

conditions of their own lives and work, and collaboratively to develop critiques of social conditions which sustain dependence, inequality or exploitation.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question in this study may be formulated as follows:

What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development in a teaching and learning environment? This question looks at how educators can use action research as a strategy to develop the curriculum in class. Action research has been employed in school-based curriculum development, professional development, school improvement programmes and policy development. The participants in these development processes are increasingly choosing action research as a way of participating in decision –making about development.

Action research is assisted by a rise of a ‘new wave’ method in educational research and evaluation with emphasis on participants’ perspectives in shaping educational practices and situations. The new wave in this regard is the rising interest of stakeholders to participate in educational practice as well as decision-making. Curriculum development requires that all stakeholders be involved in education so that sound and valid decisions affecting peoples’ lives are taken. There is an increased awareness of action research, which is perceived as providing an understandable and workable approach to the improvement of practice, which is curriculum development, through critical self-reflection. It may be useful for educators to apply action research strategy in developing the curriculum.

Linked to the main question are the following critical questions:

Do educators actively apply action research strategy in curriculum development? This question is very useful in this study as educators work on the curriculum differently. Not too many educators are aware of action research, whereas there is a great need from within an increasingly professionalised educator force for a research role, based on the notion of the extended professional investigating his or her own practice. I will explore the extent to which action research may revive educators’ interest in curriculum development and whether educators benefit from the application of such a strategy.

What are the demonstrable benefits for curriculum development in using action research principles in curriculum development?

Such benefits flow from and to a particular model of teaching and learning such as participatory learning, learning as problem solving and activity based learning. In participatory learning, learners are free to express their ideas in the lesson, which is one of the features of the present curriculum. Through close analyses of the teaching activity, educators may discover how their normal practices of classroom interaction, emphasizing didactic talk and questioning, actually operate to deny learners the opportunity to raise their own questions and to develop independence of the educator in learning.

The educators learn to change the form of their classroom questioning, and to provide resources that encourage learners to raise questions in a framework of classroom activity that gives them the opportunity to answer questions they raised. In a teaching and learning environment educators may also explore the extent to which they change the way they understand classroom questioning. Educators may look at the extent to which they understand more deeply how their questioning practices create or deny opportunities for learners to engage actively in the learning process.

Teaching and learning may also be viewed as activity based learning whereby learners are assigned tasks to do at their own pace. The strategies used by educators are not always clear in this regard. Action research as a strategy to develop the curriculum can easily benefit educators in changing their attitude and behaviour in supervising learners' work. Groups of learners are given work to do and this makes it easier for all learners to be involved and learn from each other. Workings with groups enable educators to get a chance to supervise individual groups of learners. This makes it easier for educators to identify learners with difficulties in learning.

Learning as problem –solving is yet another form of curriculum development that benefits learners in developing their problem-solving skills. Learners of different abilities may give different responses to different questions based on their knowledge and experiences. Learners use their analytical and thinking skills in solving problems that are assigned to them, under the supervision of educators as curriculum developers.

The above questions and model of teaching and learning are given with the aim of exploring various possibilities in curriculum development strategies, in C2005.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach has been used in this study. This approach has potential for the participants to influence the conditions of their own work. Educators become researchers of their own practice and I worked as a facilitator in this regard.

This research study provides a detailed account of how the sampled educators understand the relationship between action research and curriculum development. In order for educators to be able to use action research in their lesson presentations, I guided them on how to use it since not too many educators make this connection. After that I observed educators practising the action research strategy as an attempt to improve curriculum development in class. Educators always reflect on their practice whilst curriculum development is in progress.

My argument therefore is on using action research strategy in developing the curriculum in the school situation. This strategy enables educators to see where they are doing well as well as identify areas where they need development so that they may improve their practice. It is on the basis of how educators understand and interpret their role as curriculum developers that qualitative research comes to play. Qualitative research is multi-method in focus in the sense that qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret, and appraise settings, involving an interpretive character to its subjects. The term interpretive has two meanings. First it means that inquirers try to account for what they have an account of, for example, why does this educator responds to the class this way? How has a new educational policy influenced the way educators teach? In short, one interpretation pertains to the ability to explain why something is taking place.

A second meaning of interpretation pertains to what experience holds for those in the situation studied. Qualitative research is concerned with matters of meaning. In this sense qualitative researchers are interested in matters of motive and in the quality of the experience undergone by those in the situation studied. The underpinning

theoretical framework of this study is the interpretive framework as the study focuses on the requirements of C2005.

However, the use of multiple methods, and triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question, which is using action research as a strategy to develop the curriculum. Triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methods, in this study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds depth and texture to any investigation. Triangulation in this study has been used to validate the findings of the research and is a technique to which many subscribe.

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1992:269) argue that triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out or explain fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality; hence interviews and observations have been used in this study. The researcher made sure that data gathered were not simply artifacts of one specific method of collection. The use of triangular techniques, it is argued, helped to overcome the problem of 'method-boundness' that is pushing one method as the only superior method. So complex and involved is the teaching –learning process in the context of the school that a single –method approach yields only limited and sometimes misleading data.

This research study provides a detailed account of how the sampled educators understand the relationship between action research and curriculum development. In order for the educators to be able to use action research in their lesson presentation, I guided them on how to use it since not too many educators make this connection. After that I observed educators practising the action research strategy as a way to improve curriculum development in class. I asked educators to always reflect on their work whilst developing the curriculum. My argument therefore is on using action research in the South African curriculum development process, which will give educators a better understanding and interpretation of their role as curriculum developers in the classroom situation.

Most of the educators today use different methods in teaching a lesson because they have that privilege to plan the way they like. The application of different methods in the subject makes it easier for the learners to understand .It is comparatively recent that the utility of multi-method approach has come to be appreciated.

1.6 METHODS

The selected action research design took the form of interviews, observations and discussions as methods of gathering information. Therefore in this study, educators as informants monitored, evaluated and assessed their own teaching strategies and the ways in which these strategies contribute to curriculum development. Action research allows people to understand themselves better, increases their awareness of problems and raises commitment. Carr, W.and Kemmis, S. (1986:165) contend that ‘Action research has two main aims that is to improve and to involve. It aims at improvement in three main areas, namely, improvement of practice by its practitioners, improvement of the understanding of practice by its practitioners and the improvement of the situation in which practice takes place’.

Educators involved in practice, namely, curriculum development, are to be involved in the action research process, in all its phases of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and analyses. This approach is particularly pertinent to the concerns of this study as it foregrounds the voices and experiences of educators in the field. Educators also reflected on their teaching strategies and devised means by which to improve their practice.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter one focuses mainly on the research problem, research focus, research question, methodology and methods. The research problem as experienced by educators in the classroom is looked at. The methodology and methods used in the study are discussed.

Literature review on curriculum development is done in chapter two in order to support the study. A closer look at different sources of information is done in an attempt to understand the problem further. Different views and ideas from different sources of information are used to support the study. Various sources give different views about the nature, principles and usage of action research as a strategy to develop the curriculum in the classroom environment.

The research processes are discussed in greater detail in chapter three. In conducting this research study more than one cycle was followed. Interviews, observations and discussions were used as research techniques.

In chapter four the presentation and analysis of data is done. This is done through various ways of coding, for example, open coding and axial coding. The recommendations and conclusions drawn from this study are discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to look at the debate about the role of educators in curriculum development. This issue has been debated for many years and is entirely contingent upon how one defines curriculum. The debate centres on curriculum planning, dissemination and implementation of the curriculum by educators at the school level. Educators at the school level are not actively engaged in curriculum development by the department of education. Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1993:16) argue that educators would not generate educational ideas in their teaching or school curricula, they would use the curricula developed by others. When they were to be educational actors in their own right, it would, as a form of mimicry of what professional curriculum developers did, not as an autonomous educational activity. This has adverse effects on teaching and learning because educators do not actively participate in developing the curriculum in the classroom situation.

This research study intends to make educators fully aware of the active role they need to play in effective curriculum development. Educators will also get a better understanding of what curriculum development is all about. According to Nacino-Brown, R. et al (1990) the educators' role in the curriculum can be described in this way:

‘The curriculum is not so much what is found in the printed guide (syllabus or scheme of work) as what the educator makes of it in the classroom. It is his adaptation of it to meaningful learning experiences that really counts which in turn demands that we shift our appreciation of the term ‘curriculum’. The educator should use the guide as a framework and must feel free to express his teaching methods in the way that can best help make him a success in the classroom’.

It is obvious that the curriculum development process can be a great success or a dismal failure, depending on the attitude of educators as well as other stakeholders in the department of education. They are the key persons who can make the curriculum design achieve what it were designed to achieve. If they are dedicated, hardworking

and imaginative they can enliven what would otherwise be dull and lifeless (Nacino-Brown, R et al: 1990).

Infact curriculum development needs more than this if at all it is to succeed. Educators also have different interpretations and understanding of curriculum development in the classroom. In this study curriculum development is about teaching and learning, which is the core business of all educators in the department of education. The dynamics of curriculum development are to a great extent determined by the educators' role in the classroom. The extent to which the educator accepts and carries out the role of curriculum developer determines the success of the process. It is therefore essential that educators not only be made sensitive to this during initial and continued educator training but should also be empowered to do it as effectively as possible.

According to Carl A.E. (2002: 249) 'The nature of educator involvement may however vary in accordance with the teaching level on which one is moving and need not necessarily be an active role only in the design phase. This involvement and co-operation may take the form of consultation and feedback before and during the design phase, while there will be a greater participation during implementation'. When reference is made to educator involvement, aspects such as input into the design, implementation and evaluation at the various curriculum levels are included in it.

In order for us to gain a clearer understanding of the educators' role in curriculum development, this chapter will consider the following aspects:

- The definitions of curriculum and curriculum development,
- The historical view of the curriculum, and
- The educators' role in curriculum development.
- The stages of curriculum development.

2.2 DEFINING CURRICULUM

The word “Curriculum” has got different meanings for different people and it is a highly contested term. To understand it better one has to start with the Latin root of the word “Curriculum” which means “racecourse” (Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J. 1988:4). Perhaps because of this linguistic origin, the most common everyday definition of the curriculum is, ‘a course of study’. It needs to be reiterated therefore that the ‘curriculum’ is a highly contested term and is defined differently.

Maries et al (1978) in Carl, A.E. (1995:31) views the curriculum as “the sum total of the means by which a student is guided in attaining the intellectual and moral discipline requisite to the role of an intelligent citizen in a free society. It is not merely a course of study, nor is it a listing of goals or objectives, rather, it encompasses all of the learning experiences that students have under the direction of the school.” According to Maries et al (1978), curriculum is therefore the planned and guided learning experiences done under the auspices of the school.

Furthermore, van Rooy, M.P. (1990:14) conceives of the curriculum as “the interrelated system of teaching aims and training outputs, learning and training content, evaluation procedures and teaching activities whereby didactic activities are directed and realized in a planned and responsible way within certain didactic activities and with regard to certain didactic environments”. Curriculum in this context means the sum of all educator and learner activities that take place within the classroom situation. The definition that best suits this study is the one advanced by Marks et al (1978) whereby they contend that the curriculum encompasses all of the learning experiences that learners have under the direction of the school.

2.2.1 HISTORICAL VIEW OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The South African education system has undergone enormous changes. Changes include a change in the curriculum, educator training, resources, strategies and approach to teaching and learning. This can be traced back from the former education system, which was dominated by racial segregation and controlled by a white minority. In terms of the structure of the curriculum and its attendant ideologies

teaching and learning is no longer educator-centre but is now learner-centred. The role of the educator is that of a facilitator of teaching and learning than being a teacher that provides knowledge, as it was the case in the past. The present education system is democratic in nature, although different people can also criticize it from various angles. It allows learners to interact and share knowledge and ideas in the classroom. This education system also encourages all stakeholders to take an active role in the education of their children. The main aim of changing the education system is to develop and improve it for the benefit of learners.

With the new education dispensation teaching and learning is practised using the Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach with the aim to transform education. Kraak (1997) as quoted by Roos, N. (2005:54) argues that at its most basic, OBE is concerned with the ‘demonstration of competencies established by the relevant education or training authority’. However, OBE has received widespread criticism from various angles. It has been described as a systematic approach to managing curriculum design, teaching, assessment and reporting. It therefore follows that some of its critics hold that OBE is unsuited to an under-resourced context like South Africa.

The success of OBE in other, relatively well-resourced countries is premised on a well managed, coherent, infrastructure that is able to support curriculum development and individual capacity building efforts in tangible ways. OBE in South Africa incorporates a range of radical education traditions. These include the critical, or emancipatory paradigm of education as outlined by the Frankfurt school, particularly Jurgen Habermas. The following assertions are central to any curriculum design that incorporates Habermas’ conceptual framework:

- Knowledge is socially constructed;
- A curriculum should be viewed as praxis;
- In their capacity as active, critical, and independent thinkers, teachers and learners create curricula, thereby promoting the ongoing development of self-actualized individuals as well as the ongoing transformation of society.

Knowledge of these assertions would enable educators to design the classroom-based curricula properly so that teaching and learning becomes effective. This will help learners to construct their own knowledge and be independent in doing their work. It is true to say that both Schwab and Stenhouse were spokesman for the practical: both recognized the need for educators to be central to the curriculum exercise as doers, making judgements based on their knowledge and experience and the demands of practical situations (Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. 1993: 18). In real life situations some educators still practice the old teaching style that emphasizes imparting knowledge to learners. Roos, N.(2005: 54) argues that the form of education to which the current generation of educators in South Africa is accustomed can be defined as largely traditionalist. This type of paradigm rests on a different set of assumptions about teaching and learning, and is characterized by:

- The authoritarian imposition of curriculum as a product;
- The view of knowledge as a package of (objective and measurable) truths and skills;
- A set of relations whereby learners are expected to master the established content, which they must then replicate or implement in the workplace.

Carl, A.E. (1995:3) argues that the “role of educators is constantly changing with time and place. The changes that we experience as educators in developing the curriculum are necessitated by the needs and demands of the people”. Roos, N. (2005:55) contends that his experience as an educator suggests that the evolving, “unfixed” practice of OBE in South Africa offers the possibility of developing modes of education that are at once inclusive and critical. Furthermore, the process of implementing OBE can foster opportunities for educators as well as learners to develop valuable insights into the practical steps associated with developing a critical environment for teaching and learning.

It is very important to note that the former education system in South Africa was characterized by a uniform and predictable curriculum policy environment (Jansen, J. and Christie, P. 1999:4). Therefore educators were expected to follow and implement a curriculum that was designed and prescribed for them. The uniform nature of education was determined by the apartheid policy of the time. This idea is further

supported by Ornstein, A.C. and Behar, L.S. (1995:100) who contend that the philosophy of any society provides educators with a framework for organizing schools and classrooms. Implied here is the fact that the education system of any country is determined by the philosophy of the people in power. Today the philosophy of the people in power is democracy. Therefore, a democratic government governs the whole of South Africa. That is why the 1990's are noted as a critical turning point in the curriculum debates in South Africa. Outcomes-based education was introduced with the aim to improve our education system.

It is noted that OBE in South Africa contains an awkward mix of conservative and progressive educators. Educators in this instance claim that their implementation moves constantly between the new requirements of policy and the established conventions and practices of teaching (Jansen, J. and Christie, P. 1999: 210). Although the proponents of OBE, particularly in South Africa, have stopped short of making the explicit claim that OBE has the potential for being an emancipatory and liberating initiative, they have made strong suggestions in documentation that OBE will address issues of social change. They claim that it is built on the principles of 'equity, redress, non-discrimination, democracy access and justice'.

It is further claimed that 'for the first time, high quality education will be available to everyone in South Africa irrespective of age, gender, race, colour, religion, ability or language (Western Cape Education Department (WCED), 1997:1) This however raises quite a number of questions and has been critiqued on two levels. The first critique of OBE is that educators and schools are in distress about how they are meant to implement the proposals. While there is goodwill among educators towards the new government, they are insecure about how they will be bringing the policy into practice in their classes. The second level of critique is the anxiety about the pedagogic form and logic of the reform proposals for education.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) also provided a broad value framework for thinking about democratic education policy after the apartheid era. The NEPI looks into the structure of education and its policies. It further looks into all practices performed in education and makes them as accessible as possible to the people. Education and training would be integrated in a system of lifelong learning

that would articulate adult basic education and training, formal schooling and learning programmes for out-of-school children and the youth. (Jansen and Christie, 1999:280) Structures representing stakeholder interests would ensure accountability and participation at all levels of the integrated system. An outcomes-based curriculum would allow different pathways for learners in different contexts so that adults, out-of-school children and in-school children would be able to follow different curricular content and even assessment methods which would be articulated through outcome statements.

Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:32) believes that educators in the former education system were prevented from developing an understanding of the relationship between education and the context in which knowledge and understanding is created and shared. As a result, their professional identities were distorted. Educators did not regard themselves as the main curriculum planners and developers. In South Africa, curriculum planning was regarded as someone else's responsibility whilst curriculum development was also regarded as someone else's responsibility. This is what the Government of National Unity, established after the 1994 democratic elections and redress became inevitable.

The government of national unity needed a system of education that would satisfy the requirements of equity, equality, social and cultural empowerment in order to satisfy the needs of all people in South Africa. In March 1997, the Minister of Education officially launched the Outcomes-Based Education approach, which became a challenge to the educators as curriculum developers. Adherents to an outcomes-based approach to education (OBE) in South Africa and internationally claim that it has the potential to meet the needs of 'all learners regardless of their environment, ethnicity, economic status, or disabling condition' (Capper&Jamison, 1993:428). They suggest, too, that it enables educators and educationists to have a more explicit, unequivocal curricular focus, thus enabling them to develop better instructional procedures, and assess learners' achievement, clarity and validity.

The principles that underpin such a system are based on the assumption that 'all students can learn and succeed, success breeds success and schools control the environments or conditions of success'. Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:191) contend

that outcomes based education has its basis in two educational reforms, namely, competency education and mastery learning. The fundamental premise of competency-based education is that it should be fabricated around the integration of outcome goals, instructional experiences and assessment mechanisms. The mastery learning movement is built on the assumption that all learners are able to master desired outcomes if educators reconstruct the time and instructional parameters in which learning is set. The emphasis here is on input rather than the culminating point of a set of learning experiences.

Outcomes-based education intends to shift current educational practices to include: a move towards a different philosophy and belief, objectives tied to ‘learner outcomes, core and extended curriculum development, mastery learning, accountability and criterion referenced assessment’ (Capper&Jamison, 1993:431-432). This is seen as a major paradigm shift from a content driven to an outcomes driven curriculum and is seen to be the necessary response to the complex educational dilemmas of South Africa.

The launch of OBE opened up public debate that was very interesting and challenging mostly to educators in that their role had to change. The history of curriculum development in South Africa has been that, in which official knowledge was handed down to be implemented rather than set in a dialogue and discussion (Jansen, J. and Christie, P. 1999:11). Education reflects the critical need for resources to deliver a radically different curriculum into post-apartheid schools to signal a break with the past system. The Department of education expects all schools to perform well regardless of their levels of development. This will only be achieved through the curriculum development that is practised by educators.

Copper and Janison, (1993) in Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:132) contend that adherents to an outcomes-based approach to education in South Africa have claimed to meet the needs of all learners regardless of their environment, ethnicity, economic status or disabling conditions. It is OBE that enables educators to have a more explicit curriculum focus, and thus develop better instructional procedures, and assess learners’ achievement.

2.2.2 REFLECTIONS ON CURRICULUM CHANGE

Curriculum change and reform is a process that evolves in response to shifting pedagogies, learner expectations, and the social demands of the education system. According to Roos, N. (2005: 62) reflection on the changes led to the identification of key points for developing a ‘more participatory learning experience’, which is also sensitive to the requirements of the ‘new economy’. These include the following:

- Students’ inability to respond appropriately and, at times, their demonstration of open resistance to the challenges of a more progressive pedagogy, suggests the need to conscientize learners more overtly to the process of curricular reform.
- Another important contribution and insight that has emerged is the need to work with learners in an on-going partnership, if they are to be genuinely included in a process of constructing new knowledge. During this stage, it is vital that learners develop the foundational competencies that underpin critical thinking.
- It is therefore crucial that both educators and learners deeply engage themselves in active teaching and learning so that learners develop their knowledge that has been developed. This will enable them to be critical thinkers that will contribute to the economy of the country. This may only be achieved through the assistance of the educator.

2.2.3. FACTORS THAT DICTATE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

2.2.3.1 Availability of teaching staff

The availability of suitably qualified educators is a crucial factor that determines the nature and quality of teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom. The political willingness to tamper with relations of knowledge and power in the classroom are more important than specific subject knowledge. In the South African situation the success of education relies solely on the suitability of educators to teach in the classroom.

The educators we have are highly qualified but still have different interpretations and understanding of how to effectively develop the curriculum. Educators observed in this study approached their lessons differently and they used different strategies in teaching and learning. Suitably qualified educators also influence curriculum development. “It makes no sense to plan an ideal curriculum, if there are insufficient human resources to interpret correctly, disseminate, implement, and to realize meaningfully the programmes, which have been planned”(van Rooy, M.P. 1990:15-16). The department of education is deeply engaged in conducting in-service workshops for educators in order to enable them to have a common understanding and interpretation of the curriculum. This will make them more effective in the classroom where the curriculum has to be developed to accommodate learners of different abilities. This is affecting educators and learners in South Africa.

In order for the curriculum development process to be successful, a lot of imagination and inventiveness is required on the part of all educators to make the syllabus vital and stimulating in the classroom. This process requires a lot of creativity and innovation on the part of educators as well as co-operation with learners. In addition, the educators’ efforts will to a very large extent determine whether the learners’ total experience in the school will later be pleasantly remembered or best forgotten. Nacino-Brown, R. et al (1990): states that ‘of all personnel involved in curriculum implementation and design, the educator is almost certainly the most important. The educator is the one who implements the ideas and aspirations of the designers.

2.2.3.2 The target group of the curriculum

Van Rooy, M.P. (1990:16) believes that the socio-cultural and economic environments as well as the cognitive abilities of all learners, for whom the curriculum development is sought, must be thoroughly considered. Teaching and learning in different schools has to consider the contextual factors of that particular school if it has to bring meaning to the learners. In the school where this study was conducted educators used resources from their immediate environment to promote understanding of the lesson.

Curriculum plans must be appropriate to the age of learners for whom it is designed. The curriculum development process should also consider its relevance to the

practical experiences of learners that are targeted. The appropriateness of the curriculum can be seen in terms of learners' understanding and performance in the classroom. For example, learners seem to under-perform and sometimes fail to progress if the curriculum is imposed as it was the case in the former education system. The curriculum is planned to achieve desired outcomes. If the desired outcomes are not obtained it will have to be determined whether the curriculum is suitable or not to the abilities and competencies of the group. The current curriculum development processes seek to address the needs of learners by enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to fit in the future community.

From the teaching and learning point of view one may add that during the 'apartheid era educators were trained to reproduce knowledge gained from the textbooks, where the good, old-fashioned banking education was promoted. Roos, N. (2005) argues that educators were the active leaders in the classroom whilst learners were to remain passive recipients of the educators 'wisdom'. The curriculum was structured in such a way that educators would not deviate from what was given and prescribed for them to teach. Learners became passive listeners in the classroom and made very little contributions in terms of answering questions asked by the educator in the classroom.

Democratisation of education in South Africa marks a great era whereby learners are expected to construct their own knowledge with the assistance of educators as curriculum developers. Learners take an active role in the teaching and learning process. The role of educators in the new education dispensation is to facilitate and supervise learners whilst doing their work. Educators also assist learners where they encounter problems as individuals or in groups. The intention here is to enable learners to benefit from education. Therefore, the teaching and learning environment in the school needs to be made conducive to all learning activities, so that the desired objectives and outcomes may be achieved (van Rooy, M.P., 1990:17).

In schools, educators are experiencing problems in promoting effective teaching and learning as a result of the shortage of educator-learner support materials. Some schools have also experienced difficulties due to departmental policies such as Appointment procedures for educators where in some schools some educators are appointed on a temporal basis for longer periods whilst in other schools learners are sometimes left without educators. The South African Schools Act that deals with

policies governing the schools is not properly implemented. Redeployment policy where educators are redeployed depending on the enrolment of the school causes problems in teaching and learning. Promotions and attrition of educators that occur unexpectedly and it takes time for the department to replace them. All of these factors have affected educators and have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning since some classes are sometimes left without educators.

2.2.4 PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Linking the curriculum development process to the current South African context, the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Department of Education 2002:Overview: 10-13) states that the guiding curriculum principles for the new curriculum are:

- Social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity are key values. This means that the curriculum development process should recognize these factors so that teaching and learning is justified, inclusive and occurs in a healthy environment. Inclusivity in our education system can be seen in terms of structures that cater for learners of different abilities and how educators actually handle them. Admission policies in educational institutions should also recognize human rights such as the right to learn for all people.
- Outcomes Based Education is the point of departure in our new education dispensation. It has as its focus the transformation of the country's pedagogical and ideological legacy for it has the potential to satisfy the needs of learners of different abilities. This principle suggests that educators change their approach such that they become facilitators of effective teaching and learning. This approach would allow learners to engage in debates and discussions about the lesson thereby developing their own knowledge.
- A high level of skills and knowledge for all is non-negotiable; it is this principle that would enable learners to solve problems using knowledge and skills developed during teaching and learning. It is a high level of knowledge that makes learners highly competent in various fields.

- Clarity and accessibility are to be key aspects in both the design and language; the curriculum development process should be clear and accessible to all stakeholders. The different stakeholders should be informed of what the curriculum entails and language used should be the one that is commonly understood by the stakeholders.
- Progressive ongoing development and integrated learning are integral principles, that curriculum development is a continuous process that is done with the aim to promote integrated learning. On-going curriculum development may eventually lead to an improved quality of education being offered to the school community.

Carl, A.E.(2002: 79) contends that without a clear image as to what principles are valid as departure points, curriculum development may not necessarily be accountable. For that reason, those involved with the curriculum must ascertain for themselves what their fundamental principles are. This is not only valid for curriculum planners outside the school context, but also an educator within the classroom as each planner/educator one has a particular role and function, which determines the success of the curriculum. This requires a specific level of empowerment to be able to do this

2.3 THE STAGES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development can be regarded as an umbrella and a continuous process. It will last as long as the educators and learners exist. It is an ongoing and dynamic process with which there is a variety of involved persons and role-players. Those having an interest in curriculum have, consciously and unconsciously, a particular approach or conceptual framework in regard to curriculum development, which may also determine the nature of their involvement (Carl, A.E.2002: 80). It would be valuable if the involved persons could determine what their approach or orientation in regard to curriculum development is, as it may increase the quality of their involvement and make a contribution to the process of empowerment. It is also very

important to note that this approach is based largely on the objectives model spelled out by Killen, R. (2002). It is in curriculum development that structures and systematic planning methods figure strongly from design to evaluation. Curriculum development comprises a number of phases viz those of curriculum design, curriculum dissemination, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation.

2.3.1 Curriculum Design

Design involves systematic planning and organising what is to be taught. Carl, A.E. (2002:87) alleges that curriculum design as a phase within curriculum development relates both to the creation of a new curriculum as well as the replanning of an existing one, after a more complete evaluation has been done. Aspects such as method, team approach and responsible decision –making should figure prominently within this phase and should take place in the classroom. Curriculum design has largely to do with curriculum decisions based on accountable criteria. Decisions are taken, for example, in regard to content, which must be included, how it should be presented and how it should be evaluated.

There are many views and opinions regarding what should be included in the design process. Certain aspects deserve thorough consideration in the design phase, and as such decision-making comes strongly to the fore as the following contributory factors particularly are taken into consideration:

- Criteria for curriculum development
- Procedure for curriculum development
- Educational and teaching objectives
- Child knowledge
- Subject knowledge
- Necessary didactic and subject didactic knowledge and skills

It becomes clear therefore that curriculum design is in reality a multi-disciplinary affair that must be addressed by a large team of curriculum experts, subject specialist, subject didacticians, educational psychologists and those in teaching practice who have an interest.

The nature and extent of decision-making will depend on the level at which the curriculum development is done. Curriculum design is also done at various levels such as Macro, Meso and Micro level although these terms are relative and may be applicable in one school. The nature of activities of a curriculum developer involved on a national level with a curriculum committee will differ from that of a subject educator curricululating for specific pupils at a micro-level (Carl, A.E.2002: 88). Curriculum design is therefore not a fixed recipe consisting of components and fixed rules, but is a process characterized by flexibility and pliability within which the specific variables exercise a strong influence.

While in school-phase planning, for example, the broad curriculum (for a total school population) is considered, the subject educator in his classroom will be more involved with micro curriculum development (objectives, goals, contents, media, methods, evaluation for a specific pupil or group of pupils). This curriculum development often takes place simultaneously although the subject educator will be particularly involved with the syllabus development, school curriculum development, more complete subject curriculum development and micro-curriculum development.

Carl, A.E. (2002:89) further argues that curriculum design can take place during the design of the broad curriculum, but it is filled in further during syllabus design and development by curriculum committees for a particular standard, which in turn leads to further design actions when the subject educator begins a subject curriculum. Educator involvement is the heart of really successful curriculum development hence the educator must be maximally involved. It is however not proof of being a poor educator if the person is not involved at higher levels, as it is not everyone that gets this chance. An educator may, on the contrary, be a first-class curriculum developer even though there is only a certain measure of involvement at classroom and school level.

One of the basic points of departure is that any curriculum must take account of the development level of the child. Such a curriculum design must not only have the children's intellectual development in mind but also the development of their full potential. The design must be based on a valid frame of reference, as it must

help the child to adulthood. Carl, A.E. (1986:33) states that the functions may contribute to a higher quality of curriculum design and comprise inter alia the following:

- The design must not only consider subject content, but also the methods and skills necessary for the learning process
- The pupils should also be exercised in communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, non-verbal)
- The design should make provision for the needs, abilities and skills of all pupils as potential differs from learner to learner
- The design should create learning experiences which may also develop a skill in the use of free time
- The design should correlate to a high degree with the values of the broad community and country

The phase of curriculum design is one of ongoing decision-making as a result of the planning and action aspects in this process as is done by educators. Comfort (1990) in Pratt, D. (1994:28) contends that “educators become active participants in the development of curriculum by further defining and detailing it in the light of specific contextual variables with which they are intimately familiar”. This enables educators to have a sense of ownership in it. They are the ones to teach and assess learners in the classroom.

Proposals for curriculum development were developed by a group of national players, albeit in a consultative process. The curriculum design process is done in consultation with all the stakeholders in order for it to succeed. However, the success depends upon local action by educators in the classroom. The design process of the curriculum requires both “top-down” and “bottom-up” initiatives to wards changing educational practices. Therefore, the Department of Education needs to consult all relevant stakeholders if design or improvements are to be effected in education. Educators as practitioners in education also need to consult each other if the teaching and learning is to succeed.

Educators must develop a professional agenda to demonstrate real alternatives for policy makers when designing the school curriculum. They also need to clarify their role in education so that policy makers are kept informed and even to challenge departmental curricula. This is further supported by Young (1985) in Marsh, C. et al (1997:67) when alleging that the “educators are perceived to be at the hierarchy in any education system”. Educators are part and parcel of the education system. The decisions taken concerning curriculum design are then filtered down to them. Educators further take curriculum design decisions into the classroom situations.

Carl, A.E. (1995:85) argues that ‘whenever curriculum design takes place, it should consider the age, ability, and level of achievement of people for whom it is designed’. The relevance of the curriculum in terms of age makes it easy for both the educators and learners to work with the curriculum. It becomes easier if educators do curriculum design because they work with learners and are aware of learners’ needs. The learners’ needs should be a cardinal consideration and whatever the educator does should address the needs of learners. The pupil’s development needs and the manner, in which learning takes place, must be taken into account. Curriculum design should inter alia consider the values of the community, needs, abilities, and skills of all learners. One of the aims of education is to develop skills and abilities of learners, for example, thinking skills. It also aims at considering the methods and skills necessary for the learning process.

Pratt, D. (1994:280) also argues that it is the educators’ duty to design what is to occur in the few moments and the next day. This is what is expected in education in that educators need to meet, consult and plan what is to be taught. “Whether they view their immediate purpose as to enhance happiness, liberation or other qualities of life, how successful they are depends to a great extent on the quality of their design”. The quality of educators’ design determines their success as well as the product.

Nicholls, A. and Nicholls, S. (1983:71) believe that the learners’ progress is the main criterion determining the success of the curriculum. “The curriculum design process is concerned with good planning of learning opportunities, which will afford learners a chance to make progress towards desired objectives. Curriculum design is the “educators’ duty that needs to be handled with pride”. Teachers are very happy about

the activities they design and implement in the classroom. They are the ones to assess and evaluate the validity and contributions of their own creativity. The teachers' design is in accordance with work programmes.

2.3.2 Curriculum Dissemination

Carl, E. (1995:135) argues that curriculum dissemination is concerned with preparation of curriculum activities, which is probably a fairly neglected field. This is done through the distribution of information, thoughts and concepts in order to make people aware of the envisaged curriculum. As key activity it is an important strategy for implementing renewal and it is a pre-requisite for meaningful and successful implementation. Renewal has often failed as a result of defective or injudicious dissemination. Effective dissemination is not only the requirement for the effective implementation of a curriculum, but also for the institutionalisation thereof, in other words, the establishment and consolidation thereof into an accepted and inherent part of curriculum practice.

It is during dissemination that the climate for change is created. The level of engagement of the people determines the level of dissemination. Meaningful change and renewal is only possible if there is active involvement and dynamic leadership at the school level. The various communities of different schools have and are empowered through workshops, media and pamphlets to promote understanding so that we all commit ourselves to the improvement of education. However, at this stage curriculum 2005 has its own flaws, in that people were not well prepared for it, especially educators. In any case education at a school level has changed and is improving since learners are able to relate what they learn to practical situation. Learners also develop knowledge and skills at their own pace. There are developmental programmes that are introduced to aid curriculum development.

Carl, A.E. (1995:135-136) further contends, "Effective dissemination of the curriculum is a requirement for the effective implementation of the curriculum". If curriculum 2005 were properly and effectively disseminated, the flaws in it would be minimal. Jansen, J. and Christie, P. (1999:284) argues that there are deeper issues involved in curriculum dissemination. 'It has become commonplace for members of

government to admit to themselves that South Africa has excellent policies but knows nothing about implementation'. This generalisation disregards the question of whether or not any policies may be judged to be 'good' when implementation issues are ignored. The successful curriculum change and development depend on the level of preparedness for such a change, for those involved. The acceptability of the curriculum depends mainly in the manner in which information has been disseminated. Each person in the education system must be kept fully informed and involved with the view to make best decisions, thus ensuring optimal development; as it is through injudicious dissemination that the curriculum renewal process seems to falter.

Georgiades (1980:74) asserts, "Significant change in curriculum dissemination will not occur through wishful thinking but through hard work and diligent application. Meaningful changes demand a deep sense of understanding and beyond all, commitment to improve education". Curriculum renewal and change is only possible if there is active involvement and dynamic leadership. Curriculum change endeavours through dissemination to get people involved with the needs of the country, community, learners and educators. Dissemination is the key factor in curriculum development because "knowledge is power" (Carl, A.E. 1995:136).

It is clear, as already stated, that change is an inherent part of dissemination. If a curriculum stagnates, it can be detrimental to dynamic curriculum development. Change endeavours to make provision for and satisfy the needs of specific groups, which may include needs of the country, community, learners and educators. Dissemination has as one of its prime functions the task of communicating the curriculum to stakeholders so that they are purposely involved. According to Carl, A.E. (2002: 148) 'The creation of a renewal climate appears to be of cardinal importance, not only in eliminating resistance, orientating and motivating those involved, but also possibly in determining the viability of implementation phase'.

From the previous paragraphs, it is clear that curriculum dissemination is not only a multi-faceted and complex process, but also a critical phase in ensuring dynamic curriculum development. It is also a process which must be carried out carefully and purposefully to ensure success. A haphazard way of dealing with it may harm

effective curriculum. South Africa is characterized by quick changes and this is the case in the field of education in our schools. Education laws are amended overnight and implemented without effective dissemination to schools. This creates a state of dissatisfaction, as all interested parties are not effectively prepared within reasonable time frames with regard to changes envisaged. Changes in education must be characterized by effective dissemination to prevent this.

In our schools, not only must relevant curricula be designed and relevant education be provided but all interested parties must be effectively involved and prepared. The development of new learning areas must take the dissemination phase into account, as the success of implementation will be determined by it. Carl, A.E. (2002:165) further states that dissemination 'has a big influence on educator empowerment as the educators will have to be able to implement and develop the curriculum. Dissemination thus has a key role to play in the process of empowering educators as curriculum developers. Curriculum dissemination from the national to the local level is still too often defective and curriculum initiatives suffer. Thus the more purposefully the educator is empowered; the more effectively the process can progress. It is through successful dissemination that effective curriculum implementation may take place.

2.3.3 Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation may be regarded as the application phase of not only core syllabi but also the school's broad curriculum and every lesson unit. Schubert (1986:42) in Carl, A.E. (2002:172) is of the view that 'Traditionally seen as the delivery process, implementation can be considered a system of engineering that takes design specifications through various channels to the educator and the classroom'. Curriculum implementation thus depends on the level on which the initial design is made and for whom it is envisaged. Hence a broad curriculum will be implemented at the broad national level while a specific subject syllabus will be implemented at school and classroom level. It is important at this stage to note that dissemination and implementation are regarded as synonymous in most of the curriculum literature, but for the purpose of this study they are dealt with separately.

Pratt, D. (1994:326) believes that “curriculum implementation entails social action that builds a climate of acceptance of trust ensuring that the change meets recognized needs, time and resources”. If educators buy into such change and renewal in education, they may as well accept curriculum implementation. The curriculum should be regarded as subject to continual improvement and renewal. Pratt further believes that curriculum authors do not always give attention to implementation to the extent that they should. He even alleges that the condition arises where ‘...curriculum designers do not know how to implement what they have designed ...’. The implication of this is that maximal involvement of all those having an interest in the curriculum is of cardinal importance.

“Effective implementation of the curriculum can occur only when implementers (that is educators) fully understand (and agree with) the theoretical basis of the new curriculum. The traditional response to this problem in effective implementation has been the in-service workshops”. However it is also important to note that in-service workshops usually do not work well because they are not always able to produce in educators’ effective understanding of the new curriculum’s foundational rationale. This may be due to the fact that educators are busy people in that they have too many things to do at a time like sports, cultural activities, look into learners’ welfare, and provide for learners’ needs. This might be attributed to the duration of the in-service training. Educators may not have full understanding of the curriculum because some educators are overloaded with lots of activities other than teaching and learning. What is required is that “those individuals who are going to teach the program be involved in many phases of its creation, evaluation, and revision”(Zais, R.S. 1976:478) In effect this makes educators the curriculum decision makers at every stage of the construction process.

Van Rooy, M.P. (1990:19) argues “a curriculum can only be seen to be practicable if it has been tested in practice and complied with all the requirements for which it was designed”. Curriculum 2005 was also piloted in some schools to see if it would work. Curriculum implementation needs necessary guidance and support; and it also calls for orientation as to how the course should be practised. In South Africa, educators for various grades have been and are still groomed on how to facilitate teaching and

learning. The only disadvantage we have is that implementation is done concurrently with educator workshops and in-service training. This is done over a very short period of time. The time factor for educator training has adverse effects on teaching and learning if it is done over a very short period of time, as it affects the quality of teaching and learning.

It is natural for people to reject what they do not know or what is forced upon them, whatever its merits may be. This is as true of the new curricula as it is of anything else. The notion of “teacherproof” curricula, for example, is an affront to both the teaching profession and to educators as individuals (Zais, R.S. 1976:480). Educators are always the ones blamed whenever the department of education is experiencing failures in curriculum implementation. For example, educators are blamed if the curriculum is not properly implemented and this is occasioned by the fact that some receive no proper training on curriculum development prior to its implementation. Failures may, amongst other factors, be attributed to training and the educators’ approach to education and not individual educators.

Zais, R.S. (1976: 481) believe that ‘even if some educators climb up the ladder, they are also reluctant to be the first to try innovations’. Many educators are reluctant to take risks of curriculum development, because of the blame they receive after the occurrence of a blunder. Moreover the bureaucratic culture in South Africa does not encourage innovation or risk-taking. Again educators are the ones to blame when a school obtains poor results.

The real measure of success during the implementation phase is largely determined by the quality of planning, design and dissemination done beforehand. It also comprises not only aspects such as involvement of all stakeholders, credibility, acceptable pupil responses and completeness, but also the accentuation of the following factors as illustrated by Pratt, D. (1980:435-442):

- Continuous contact with stakeholders to give advice and help, to encourage mutual contact between stakeholders as well as effecting contact with pupils and parents.

- Clear communication to illustrate roles, to explain terminology, illustration of possible means of evaluation and supply answers to the well-known queries.
- Provision of a support service, for example, spelling out time scheduling, support by supplying material, setting one's own example, creating a climate within which trust and security figure and through encouragement of educators.
- Compensation, for example, financial, acknowledgement and intrinsic aspects of compensation. This creates opportunities to grow professionally by way of a more extended responsibility. Educators often find their reward merely in the acceptance of the new curriculum and not so much in its implementation. Most of the time educators find satisfaction in the introduction of the new curriculum and they do not mind much about its implementation at the school level. Educators do not bother themselves about the successes and failures of the curriculum and this might be attributed to their conditions of work.

Development and participation of educators are key factors in effective curriculum development. Participation such as active educator involvement in the classroom is essential, and a relationship of confidence between the initiators and implementers is necessary. Support in the form of resources, finance and material may not be ignored. To get educators to take part in the application of the curriculum often offers an enormous challenge. The success of curriculum design is often determined during the implementation phase.

The implementation of the curriculum may take place at different levels that is macro-implementation and micro-implementation. Jordaan (1989:392-393) and Mostert (1986) define macro-implementation as the application of policy and curriculum initiatives as determined at the national level by curriculum authorities. Micro-implementation is defined as the process during which local decisions are taken. In practice it means that the core syllabi must be implemented at the school and the classroom levels by subject educators. Educator participation and initiatives are high at this level as, through them, they make their own mark on the development of the

syllabus. Micro-implementation may in practice include the implementation of subject educators' specific lessons in a particular classroom.

Therefore, when the process of curriculum implementation is relevant, the educator must also consider the particular level as this may determine the relevant implementation strategies that will be followed. The success of implementation may be assured if the dissemination was effective and specific strategies are also followed during implementation. However, the success of the curriculum implementation also depends largely on the following:

2.4 ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

2.4.1 ESTABLISH A CLIMATE OF TRUST

Carl, A.E. (1995:166) believes that “teaching is a very public activity that involves educators, learners and the public at large. The educators share determined roles to a large extent for the successful and effective curriculum implementation. Curriculum implementation is concerned mainly with what happens in class”. It is the application phase of the core syllabi and also the school's broad curriculum, every subject curriculum and every lesson. Educators need to have trust amongst themselves and with learners. Trust can be displayed in subject committee meetings, in staff rooms and in classrooms with learners where there is interaction. Working together implies a sense of trust in the school. Trust is a key aspect of professionalism without which our professional duty may be adversely affected. It plays a significant role in team building in any work environment and educators need to be trustworthy people as they work with the community.

Fullan (1991) as quoted by Pratt; D. (1994:325) states that, “if change works, the individual educator gets very little credit and if it does not, the educator gets most of the blame”. One of the reasons why educators get very little credit is lack of trust from education authorities. Educators need to be part of establishing an environment of trust. At this stage educators also design classroom activities in which to engage learners. Implementation depends on the level of trust on which the initial design is made and for whom it is envisaged. “Implementation of the curriculum should not be

a mere carrying out of instructions but developments must take place within the learning environment. Education should not be done for the sake of it being policy, but should bear positive results that is, produce knowledgeable and skilful people”(Pratt, D.1994: 325).

Louis and Miles (1990) in Pratt, D. (1994:326) argue that centrally designed curriculum may be effective, provided that “local school people who will implement it are empowered to make significant choices about details of design and get central office support.” The local community surrounding the school also needs to have close ties and trust with the school so that the educational and social goals of the school can be achieved. It can therefore be argued that effective curriculum practice needs to extend all the way to the classroom.

2.4.2 CHANGES THAT MEET PEOPLES’ NEEDS

Pratt, D. (1994:326) contends that, “Educational leaders must be close to the educators and understand how they work. It is necessary to understand the rewards that are important to educators. These rewards should be in the form of improved student progress and more stimulating learning conditions”. This is what teaching and learning is expected to achieve that is improved student performance through quality teaching and learning. If we need to overcome the problem of people rejecting change, a climate must be established in which people’s needs are considered. People need to be actively encouraged and rewarded for the risks taken with the aim of improving education. For example, if we always penalise learners for their mistakes, they will never try to learn, and the same applies to educators.

Designers may not be aware of peoples’ needs. Educators can design and implement all curriculum activities for they understand education better than anyone. Maximal involvement of all those having an interest in the curriculum is of cardinal importance. Fullan (1982) “believes that generally speaking, students do not feel that educators or administrators understand and listen to them. If they did, they retain curriculum content and instructional methods that would be more interesting for everyone”. It is crucial therefore for educators to know more about people’s needs. Educators need to be part of the curriculum design process.

2.4.3 CONSULT WIDELY

For the proper implementation of the curriculum, the curriculum designers need to consult. This will enable the designers to know more about people's needs. The key players that are parents, teachers, students and the community in curriculum development must be regularly consulted throughout the development and implementation phases. This is the case with the present education system. Parents are invited to schools to discuss with educators the choice of learning areas/subjects. Parents are not actively involved during the initial stages of curriculum design and they are sometimes consulted through meetings and media.

2.4.4 PROVIDE SYSTEMATIC IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Pratt, D. (1994:334) argues that, "It has become common practice to blame educator education and training for the shortcomings of schools". In South Africa educators are blamed for different interpretations and understanding of curriculum development in schools. The problem is not with educators but with in-service training offered to them. Educators are also human beings who need to grow personally and professionally. Most of the educators are well qualified to teach different learning areas in the school. They also come to school prepared to teach but only to find that various programmes that take them out of the classroom disturb them. As a result learners are sometimes left unoccupied. They need to be provided with a school environment that provides social support, shared experiences and collaborative staff development. There is sometimes lack of support from the districts to address the needs of educators. Educators need continuous and enough support in implementing the curriculum at the school. Teaching is a continuous process; hence educators need continuous professional development through staff development programs. OBE would have been implemented with great success if educators were given adequate in-service training.

2.4.5 PROVIDE TIME AND RESOURCES

Fullan (1982) as quoted by Pratt; D. (1994:336) states that “educators never have enough time, just like anyone else. The shortage of time is the single most frequently cited barrier to effective implementation of the curriculum at school”. Even the department of education does not have enough time to plan and implement its initiatives and programmes. Educators are busy people and classrooms are intensely busy places. Educators need time for in-service training, development of teaching material and some other professional activity. Development of material, for example, learner support material, is one of the most time-consuming tasks for educators. Educators always need time for teaching and learning, which is why they sometimes use their spare time. They also need more resources in order to improve the quality of work they perform.

2.5 CURRICULUM EVALUATION

Van Rooy, M.P. (1990) argues that, “Curriculum evaluation involves investigation of the curriculum. It deals with the findings on the effective functioning and impact of the features relative to the purpose for which it was designed. Decisions are made about modifications, adjustments to or a renewal of the curriculum on the basis of practical findings”. Curriculum evaluation is about the basic functionality of the school. Curriculum evaluation looks at the school policies, vision and mission statement of the school.

Curriculum evaluation by educators gives clear performance indicators whether or not the school is working towards the desired direction. The evaluation of the curriculum can be done through the provision of assessment tasks to learners to assess their performance. Decisions taken must be made public in the form of feedback to the community so that strengths and areas for development are identified and made known by the people affected. The process of curriculum evaluation such as Curriculum 2005 must be done in order to see if the curriculum is in line with the needs of the people. It must be done whilst successful design, dissemination and implementation phases are taking place. Evaluation of the curriculum is done with the aim to make timeous adjustments and determining success. In order to make this

process work to the best advantage, specific curriculum knowledge, skills and ability are required.

Mostert (1980) in Carl, A.E. (1995:178) states that, “The curriculum must be acceptable to both educators and pupils. The acceptability and effectiveness of the curriculum must always be evaluated. Evaluation is inevitably important in that it helps in finding out whether or not the curriculum is in line with people’s needs”. The success of the curriculum can only be measured in terms of being accepted and implemented by the people concerned. It is also possible to think of ongoing classroom-based evaluation aimed at improving teaching and learning, which can be achieved through reflective practice. Classroom-based evaluation is used to enhance teaching and learning as it makes educators aware of their strengths and to identify areas for development. This is where educators make a review of their work in terms of lesson plans, strategies, resources, and assessment and learner participation. Awareness of educators of areas for development makes them to seek assistance so that they can improve. Effectiveness is determined by the measures in which pupils reached the objectives.

2.6 EXPECTED EDUCATORS’ ROLE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Carl, A.E. (1995:329) contends that the educators, can make valuable contributions with regard to curriculum development. The educators’ initiatives will always be hampered if they are not given a chance. It is educators who assist learners to acquire knowledge and understanding. This idea is further supported by Connelly, F.M. and Clandinin, D.J. (1998:147-148) where they raised the problem concerning the treatment of educators. The problem is posed in the form of a question, are they to be seen as screens whose effect has been minimised or are they to be seen as integral parts of the curriculum situation? If the answer is “yes” to the second question, they will even be more encouraged to do their work. It is vital that educators take a leading role for better curriculum development and implementation.

Carl, A.E. (1995:254) believes that “the extent of educator involvement and participation in regard to school curriculum, school atmosphere, existence of opportunities for participation and level of educator involvement is very important. It

is the duty of both the school principal and educators to create opportunities for co-planning at the school. It is upon the educators to react positively and utilise the opportunities”. Educator participation in curriculum development has been supported by literature on both ideological and practical grounds. This has been done through planning and development of teaching units. Educators have a right as professionals to be involved in educational decision-making. Educator-developed curriculum will encourage other teachers to use it.

Miller (1994) as quoted by Carl; A.E. (1995:2) argues that “the quality and standard of what takes place in the classroom, is determined by the educators’ whole adaptation and style. The central idea in this task is to enable the educator, through exposure to this process, to grow in empowerment”. It is through effective empowerment that the environment in which optimal teaching may occur, is created. Educators must acquire freedom and motivation to participate freely and actively in regard to curriculum development. Educators need not stand on the periphery and be onlookers with regard to things, which are done for them.

Fullan (1993) in Carl, A.E. (1995:17) states that, “educators must not only be trained to teach well, but they must also be able to bring about changes. Curriculum development is not just a field of specialists and those who know, but educators have a cardinal role to play as they are directly involved in classroom practice”. To be effectively involved in the classroom, the educator must have specific curriculum knowledge and skills. Educator empowerment process includes involvement in syllabus development, the school curriculum development and full subject curriculum. The syllabus may not be regarded as a recipe from which an educator may not deviate. Instead it should be regarded as an opportunity to experiment and still to make it relevant and meaningful. The educator needs to act as facilitator and make pupils realise that they have not only a share in their own learning process, but in the learning process of others as well.

2.7 THE CURRICULUM CHALLENGE FOR EDUCATORS

Looking at the changes and problems facing the department of education in South Africa, educators often find themselves the busiest people in the department. Using

some of Bernstein's early concepts, we are able to identify some daunting challenges for educators (Bernstein, B.1971: 191).

- One of Bernstein's foundational concepts is that of 'classification'. The essence of classification is boundary strength between different areas/fields/regions of learning. Whereas learners were previously stratified and positioned in a highly structured environment, now they are both differentiated and expected to develop coherence through civil interpersonal relations.
- The tensions contained within the curriculum approach are likely to manifest themselves in the classroom. While learners may learn at different rates, there are no pupil deficits, and education is about the learners 'realisation of innate potentialities that simply need the right environment to develop. On the other hand, outcomes-based assessment implies that learners are assessed against specific benchmarks. Learning is aimed at what is missing: the deficit. The focus shifts to the educator and his or her ability not just to elicit, but also to impose the 'correct' knowledge, skills, and values required to achieve the specific outcomes.
- The integration of knowledge into 'learning areas' means a collapsing of the traditional boundaries and subject disciplines. Educators are expected to work together in teams and to promote a cooperative culture of learning amongst learners, encouraging a problem-solving and project approach to curriculum. At the same time, outcomes-based assessment promotes a solution-giving and task-oriented curriculum.
- Learners have stronger relationships with one another in co-operative learning, and educators with one another as they attempt to integrate knowledge. Educators and learners also 'work together' to achieve a common goal: achievement of outcomes.
- There is much evidence in literature to suggest that, in practice, a good deal of teaching is about control first and education second. Educators have to adapt from reliance on positional control to personalised forms of control.

- There is a weakening of the boundary between the school and home in the schools act. Educators are subject to a variety of accountability relations to the employer, parents, SACE, unions and the governing body. Learners must be encouraged to express their different identities in a co-operative environment. The learners must both learn through their own activities and learn specific outcomes-a difficult balancing act (Bernstein, B.1971: 192).

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has asserted emphatically that educators need to take an active role in curriculum development so that teaching and learning may improve. The main focus of this chapter has been to explore different literature in connection with the role occupied by educators in curriculum development. I have also attempted to look at the work and various activities performed by educators in helping learners achieve educational and social goals. This chapter has also looked at the problem of the educators' different interpretations and understanding about curriculum development. Poor learner performance has become a great problem in our schools that needs active involvement of educators in order to improve performance. I therefore believe that active educator involvement and participation in curriculum development can help curb the situation.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research design of the study and describes sampling procedures, research methodology, site, data collection instruments, and issues related to the trustworthiness of the study. This chapter explores the implications of the researchers' role as a researcher, observer, advisor and as a participant.

As mentioned in chapter one, this study is largely qualitative in orientation. Hence it was conducted in a natural setting which is the school. Accordingly, it focuses on what Lincoln and Guba (1978) in Eisner, E.W. (1991:33) refer to as being “naturalistic” in that it tends to study situations and objects that are intact so as to gather valid data. It also provides an in-depth view of the experiences of the participants regarding the use of action research as a strategy to develop the curriculum at the school level, particularly in the grade eight social sciences class.

In line with the theoretical paradigm underpinning this study that is critical theory, which explores the values and assumptions underpinning a particular practice, data gathering instruments focused on the participants' understanding and interpretation of the strategies and processes of curriculum development within the classroom situation, in one grade with three sections and same learning area. Action research enables educators to adopt a reflective practice in teaching and learning in order to improve their practice.

Inevitably, the policy document with regard to social sciences, and as outlined by the Department of Education has undergone modifications and adaptations as different curriculum developers in a particular classroom context interpreted them. This reflected on the activities that take place in the classroom as well as strategies used by educators in developing the curriculum. It was therefore important, for the reason stated above to grasp the experiences and views of educators directly responsible for the development of the curriculum in the grade eight social sciences classes. As

explained below the study's research design reflects its central concerns as outlined in the research question and also conforms to the standard requirements of qualitative studies in the social sciences. However the choice of qualitative methodology requires some justification.

3.2. RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE APPROACH

It could be argued that this study focuses on the understanding and the different interpretations educators of the same learning area and same grade may have on the strategies they use in developing the curriculum. Given the same policy documents, there is no substantive evidence why educators of the same learning area and grade might have interpretation that might be the same.

The curriculum development process is in transition in South Africa owing to the lack of new theoretical and empirical insights into the implementation process of Curriculum 2005. There is therefore a need to explore and describe the experiences of the participants involved in the curriculum development process in grade eight classes. Perhaps the most effective way of doing this is by researching in one school focussing on a carefully chosen sample of educators, which may reveal general trends and practices in curriculum development in spite of its institutional uniqueness. This study also revealed general trends and practices as well as common problems experienced by educators in the interpretation of the curriculum development process. For this kind of exploratory study, a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate.

The underpinning principles of qualitative research as articulated by Lincoln and Guba inform the outlook of the research in this study. Consequently, both research instruments are designed to examine the experiences of educators in a chosen research site, which in this case is the school. To a large extent, this study is predicated on the assumptions underlying the qualitative mode of inquiry as outlined by Merriam (1988:19-20):

- Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products. This study is mainly concerned with processes

educators engage in with the aim to develop the curriculum. It further looks into the use of action research as a curriculum development strategy.

- Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning –how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world. It looks into the meaning of teaching and learning to the stakeholders and how it is interpreted and understood by educators.
- The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analyses. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. In data collection, the researcher is the key instrument in that he interacts with the people involved.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting. The researcher in this study goes to the school to interact with educators where lesson observations are conducted and interviews held with them. The researcher obtains first hand information from the respondents.
- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures. Words used by the respondents will be analysed in order to make sense of their experiences.
- The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypothesis, and theories from details. The information gained from the participants enables the researcher to make statements about teaching and learning.

3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

Quite a number of questions arise when thinking about curriculum development strategies as a much-contested area in the South African Education system. Educators

sometimes struggle with strategies to use in the curriculum development process, as some do not have a clear understanding of Outcomes-Based Education whilst others have never been exposed to it let alone how to apply it in Curriculum 2005.

In this study the most important question to answer is “What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development? An attempt is made in this study to answer the question. The view that educators are not competent curriculum developers could be an indication of the inherent complexity of the OBE curriculum. This can also be attributed to the ever-changing nature of the curriculum as educators attend different workshops on new curriculum developments, which are conducted by the department itself and non-governmental organisations. The new curriculum is by its very nature flexible rather than prescriptive, like the old curriculum structure. It does not restrict educators as to what to do. Rather, educators are free to plan activities and strategies to use in curriculum development. In the new policy statement co-operative teaching and learning takes place.

The curriculum development process therefore requires some level of creativity and innovation on the part of the educators. This is mainly the case because the curriculum focuses on outcomes, which is what learners will be able to do or achieve as a result of effective teaching and learning. Educators have an obligation to plan and teach learners such that specific outcomes are achieved. The achievement of outcomes by learners indicates whether or not teaching and learning is effective. It is therefore particularly pertinent to the concerns of this study to use action research methodology as it foregrounds reflective and interventionist practice. In this study the educators as participants are encouraged to reflect on the various ways in which they develop and enrich the curriculum within the context of didactic practise. In other words, they are required to systematically monitor and evaluate their own practice as educators and curriculum developers.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are different general approaches that may be used in action research. Regardless of the chosen methods, the focus is always on reflective practice. In the teaching and learning situation, the participants seek to improve their teaching

practice by consciously reflecting on underlying principles, strategies and beliefs regarding teaching and learning.

Practically, a closer look into the ways in which educators understand and interpret their practices in the classroom is necessary, as well as the meaning they bring into the curriculum development process. This study was done with the people that are educators and learners in the classroom, as part of qualitative research studies. This was done with the aim of increasing people's awareness of their existence and their problems so that they could effect changes where necessary with the view to improve their practices in the classroom. The qualitative method helps educators to become more sensitive to the factors that affect their own work and their interactions with others.

Qualitative action research enables people to participate in the action research study hence they become participants as well as co-researchers in the study. Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1992:228) maintain that 'action research strengthens one's commitment and encourages progress towards particular social goals as it allows people to understand themselves better and increases their awareness of problems'. Through action research, educators are able to collect data that will enable them to change the existing practices in education. As educators sometimes plan their work differently, action research may be used as a strategy to get them involved and active around curriculum development and by so doing educators develop confidence. This study emphasizes active involvement of educators in curriculum development through action research strategy.

Another characteristic feature about action research data is that they are often gathered and used to expose hidden practices. In institutions like schools action research attempts to expose corruption, scandal, and injustice and sometimes questionable assumptions about teaching and learning. It is quite unfair for educators to remain implementers of a curriculum that has been planned by someone else. In schools the educators' goal must be to expose his or her own practices in order to change them. Action research has been chosen in this study because of its very nature in that it builds upon which is fundamental in qualitative approach. It also relies on people's own words, both to understand a social problem and to convince others to

help remedy it. This study therefore looks at what educators say and how they understand curriculum development in grade eight, especially curriculum 2005.

As an action research facilitator, my role has been supportive in character, thus helping the educators to research their own practices, with the view to help them improve where they are not doing well. Educators will be asked questions so as to engage them in a discussion about their own practices. People need to raise their own awareness of the significance of what they are doing as a form of social change, and have confidence in its legitimacy and importance. They also need to be aware of the politically constructed nature of the contexts in which they work.

It is at this stage that educators will be able to display how they understand and interpret the curriculum development process. I have been part and parcel of the process, which means that I have been a participant observer, for I observed and interacted with educators during the discussions. This has both political and sociological issues of power for me as a senior education official. Educators respect and co-operate with me as an official from their department. I explained my role to the educators as a facilitator and researcher. They have trust in me hence they take advices from me and they also ask questions for clarification where they do not understand. They did the analysis of information given by them, as co-researchers and this was done using all the information gathered through interviews and observations.

The grade eight classes and educators responsible for the Social Sciences learning area were observed because the study is concerned with the context of the class and it can best be understood when action is observed in the context of the history of the class. Educators acting as researchers do not only perform their duties but also watch themselves, they step back and, distance themselves from immediate conflicts. They also gain a larger view of what is happening in the class.

I strongly believe therefore that the research findings are a reflection of what takes place in grade eight at Nqaba High School. The educators were also observed and interviewed. Creswell, J.W. (1998:17) argues that if participants are removed from their settings, it leads to contrived findings that are out of context. Therefore, this research study was conducted in the classroom situation.

This is further supported by Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986:162) who maintain that “action research is simply a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social institutions, in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out. “Such reflection has some limitation. According to Fay, B. (1987:164)’certain of our inheritances are so deeply a part of who we are that it is psychologically naïve to think that we can regard them with a naïve eye, ready to discard them when ‘reason ‘shows them to be deficient’. This extends to reflection and action on the assumptions that order such practice, the shape of the formal classroom and the power structures that underlie educational practice. This makes people become aware of their own practices, existence and seek ways in which to improve their own living conditions.

The researcher is the key facilitator of data collection in this qualitative action research study. The research was based on what people felt and said about their own environment. I further believe that this study is of great value as it particularly encourages active involvement of educators by using the action research strategy to improve curriculum development. It will therefore help other people in solving other research problems and questions, experienced by educators in the classroom situation.

3.5 THEORETICAL PARADIGM AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Research paradigms and the questions we ask vary depending on the nature of the subject and are used in many ways. For this study I opted for critical theory, which is chosen as a paradigm guiding the study because in studying humans one criticizes with the aim of transforming, improving, and empowering people, emancipating them from all constraints and injustices. Whether stated or not, all research is guided by some theoretical orientation and good researchers are aware of their theoretical base and use it to collect and analyse data. Guba and Lincoln in Denzil, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998:2000) discuss different paradigms that guide a qualitative study. Major paradigms competing for acceptance, as paradigms informing and guiding qualitative inquiry are many and we now talk of research epistemologies

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998:264) contend that ‘ a critical research is best understood in the context of empowerment of individuals’. The concepts of empowerment, transformation and improvement are particularly pertinent to this study as the main object is to enable educators to take charge of their core function at the school, namely, teaching. Educators will become aware and transform their curriculum development practices. By so doing they will become empowered to own the curriculum development process and will not only be curriculum implementers but also will become curriculum developers.

This section focuses mainly on the selection of the respondents and informants who participated in the data collection process using research instruments, namely, observations and interviews. As shown below, the two research instruments, because of their inherent features as well as their function and purpose in this particular investigation, require slightly different sampling procedures.

I therefore concentrated on the work of the educators in the classroom as respondents who participated in this study. Elliot (1978) as quoted by Masikane, E.S. (1999:27) states “action research in schools investigates human actions and social situations, which are experienced by educators as unacceptable in some respects (problematic), susceptible to change (contingent) and requiring a practical response.” This is further supported by Davidoff and van den Berg (1992) in Masikane, E.S. (1999:27) whereby they argue that action research is a way of trying out ideas in action and attempting to make some improvements or changes in the classroom or school setting so as to improve the overall effectiveness of schools. This study is an attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions that take place between the educator and learners in the classroom situation mainly from their own point of view.

In an attempt to improve or make changes in education, one may need to look at and adopt the Action Research Spiral, which further clarifies what happens when people reflect on their own practices. Tripp, D.H. (1990:159) maintains that in action research the following activities are involved: planning, acting, monitoring, analysing, evaluation and replanning further action, monitoring, analysing and evaluating data. Educators who need to reflect on the quality of teaching and learning they provide to learners and also identify areas on which they need to develop can use such a model.

Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1992:219) argue that ‘this approach is useful in educator – training programs because it offers prospective educators the opportunity to explore the complex environment of schools and at the same time become self-conscious about their own values and how these values influence their attitudes toward learners, school management team and others’. It is also relevant in this study because it deals with human practice and behaviour.

The action research spiral also helps in highlighting some problematic areas in education such as the way educators understand and interpret curriculum development. Educators are often not aware of the values and beliefs they bring to the classroom. Values can influence everyone’s work and can strengthen teaching. Hence awareness helps us see how values shape our attitudes toward learners and other educators. Educators become more aware of how they participate in creating what happens to them. As a way of teasing out these I observed educators and gave feedback to them so as to make them aware of how they contribute in creating what is happening around them in class. We also discussed how they felt about teaching and learning. This approach may help educators sort out their conflicting perspectives about teaching and stimulate them to question their own unquestioned assumptions about what classrooms are like.

In this study I used the action research model adapted from the Action Research Spiral (1990:159) with the view determine how can it be used by educators in the classroom to improve their performance. My role in this study has been that of a researcher and the other three participants were interviewees and co-researchers and they were also observed practising in class. I wanted to see educators using action research as a way of improving the curriculum development process and professional development needs of educators. The educators need to continuously review their teaching strategies because they were trained yesterday to teach today to produce quality learners that will be highly competitive in their work. It is through action research that educators can reflect on their own practices and experiences and come up with recommendations.

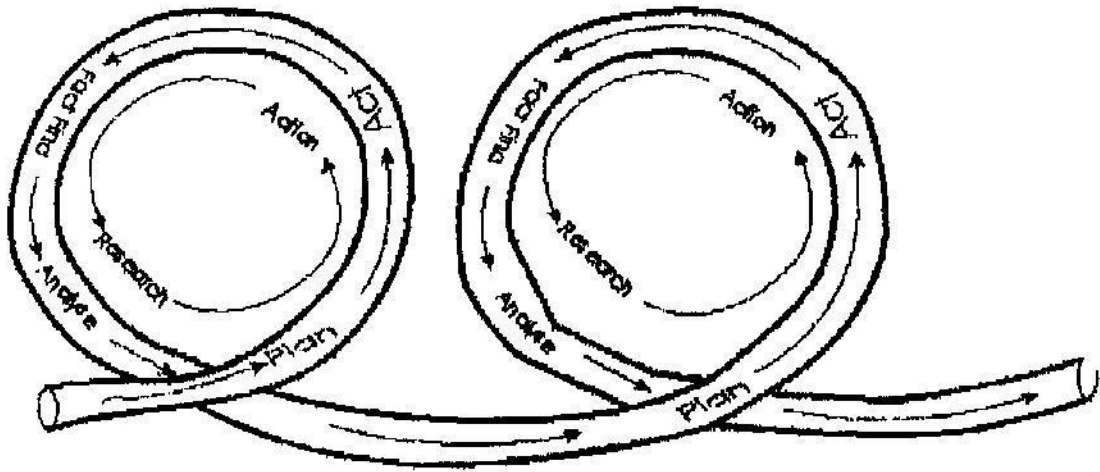


Figure 1: The Action Research Cycle by Kurt Lewin (1946, 1947) Volume xxix, Number3

The action research cycle is used in this study with the aim to understand how educators understand and interpret curriculum development in the classroom and how it can best be done. Action research encourages the educator to be reflective of his/her own practice in order to enhance the quality of education for him and the learners. It is a form of self-reflective enquiry that is now being used in school based curriculum development and as such, it actively involves educators as participants in their own educational practice. Action research also sees the educator as the best judge of his total educational experience.

Action research is a powerful method of bridging the gap between theory and practice of education, for here educators are encouraged to develop their own personal theories of education, from their own classroom practice (Mcniff, J. 1992: 1) It is action research that allows educators to own knowledge which makes teaching and learning effective and interesting. Educators become political ‘activist’ in the classroom for they determine classroom rules as well as activities to be done in class. They also plan resources and strategies to use in promoting effective teaching and learning. This has professional significance as educators determine work to be done.

This method looked into the various activities educators engage in with the aim to facilitate teaching and learning. As this research study was conducted in two cycles

the researcher observed three lessons from different educators in different grade eight Social Sciences classes. Lesson observations were followed by a meeting where the researcher gave feedback and interact with individual educators on how they perform in class. This gave the researcher and the participants time to interact with each other. The action research spiral enabled the educators to look into their plans of work, actions of both educators and learners in class, mechanisms or systems educators use to monitor their work, and the way in which educators analyse and evaluate data that has been collected from their work.

Replanning further action, monitoring, analysing, and evaluating data may also be necessary if educators are to be effective and improve their overall performance in the subject. The above is applicable in the research study conducted. In the second cycle the educators teach with some background knowledge and awareness of what transpired during the first cycle. Educators try by all means to improve on their teaching and learning activities. The aim of cycle two is to see if there is any improvement made by educators in their classroom activities.

3.6 THE SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AND SITE

In this study, the focus was on curriculum development strategies used by educators in grade eight classes. The findings and recommendations of this study are not confined only to the classes where I did the study. Generally, the aspects of findings in this study are the educators understanding and interpretation of the curriculum development process. It also looked at the educators' knowledge, expertise and experiences they have with regard to curriculum development. When teaching and learning takes place educators do not handle their classes exactly the same way, as they deal with different groups of learners. Another useful aspect was the teaching strategies educators' use in their respective classes. The findings and recommendations also apply to other cases where similar problems were experienced that is teaching strategies used by educators in facilitating effective curriculum development in grade eight classes.

This study was done in grade eight as an entrance grade and where learners in some schools make choices of learning areas to do. These educators were also co-

participants in the research study and discussions were held with them and not on them. The on-site research was done at Nqaba High School and this is a pseudonym for the school.

For logistical and social purposes I was not able to visit many schools for they are far apart from one another. Grade eight has been chosen because I have taught them before. It is the only grade to which I have access. The sample of educators used in this study, are the ones who are accessible and responsible for teaching social sciences in grade eight. The three educators are well qualified and experienced to teach. They all have a secondary teachers' diploma (STD) obtained from different colleges of education, at the completion of three years training. Educators are knowledgeable and experienced to teach the learning area. Their experience in teaching the learning is more than five years. They have also attended numerous developmental workshops organized by the department of education on curricular issues pertaining to the social sciences learning area. This learning area deals mainly with history and geography to enable learners has a balanced knowledge about their environment. The sample of educators used in this study is the total number of educators responsible for grade eight social sciences at the school under study.

3.7 THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE

My role as a researcher was in the first place to conduct and administer the research process that is observing lessons and having interviews with the participants. According to Tripp D.H. (1990:164) "Administratively, the role of the action research facilitator is construed as someone who can make available resources, answer questions, raise problems, act as a "sounding board" and be an intermediary". This is further supported by Boomer, (1988) in Tripp D.H. (1990:164) that the issue of facilitator can be regarded as an issue about the kind of relationship in terms of power and autonomy that exist between the practitioner and the facilitator.

3.8 THE EDUCATORS' ROLE

Educators who participated in this study were grade eight educators who are well qualified to teach the subject that is social sciences. Their qualification is a secondary

teachers diploma (STD) obtained from different colleges of education and their college training was deeply rooted in fundamental pedagogics. The ideological focus of their college training was to teach learners and not to facilitate teaching and learning. They were trained to impart knowledge to learners who became recipients of knowledge. They have been teaching the subject over the past five years and have also received inset training on curriculum 2005. The in-service training received by educators took place over a very short span of time. Educators participating in this study did not get adequate training on curriculum 2005. Some educators found OBE training confusing and not clear enough about what to do when doing it in schools. They observed and interviewed on the same learning area that is Social Sciences.

For the purpose of this study, educators were expected to facilitate teaching and learning and not to dominate the lesson such that it becomes educator –centred. Most of the teaching and learning activity is centred on learners because they are the main beneficiaries of our education system. This study is also interested on interactions that exist between educators and learners as well as learners' response in the lesson.

3.9 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is essential in any research study hence it was done in this study for the purpose of analysis. Masikane (1999:31) maintains that the term data refers to the rough material researchers collect from the world they are studying. The data that are collected form the basis of analysis. Data are collected in many ways. Creswell (1998:20) mentions four types of data collection, that is observations, interviews, documents and audiovisual material. Data collection methods in this study include classroom observations which were done using the educators' lesson plan, lesson presentation and learners' work, so as to find out whether or not there is any lesson plan that is being followed by the educator in his or her lesson delivery.

The researcher observed the educators in various classes. I also observed learners' responses to the lesson, scrutinized learners' work and class assessment tasks to ascertain the performance of educators after various curriculum development interventions. Interviews were also be held with each of the participants, including learners' focus groups, where they all expressed their views regarding curriculum

delivery. The recorded material using a tape recorder, and minutes from discussion meetings with educators formed part and parcel of data I collected.

This research study consisted of two cycles. The first week was spent on collecting data from the Social Sciences educators of different grade eight classes. The Composite Time Table of the school was strictly followed so that the normal teaching time of the various learning areas is not interfered with. This was done through lesson observations and discussions with the participants. Feedback was only given to the educators after finishing their lessons for the day. Feed backing was given in the presence of a witness that is another educator so that they could witness the way in which the process is done.

The second week was spent again collecting data through interviews, and discussions with the participants. The participants were asked one open-ended question that is: what is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development? Questions for clarification were also asked where necessary so as to gather more information from the participants. Responses from different educators were then recorded for analyses. These processes were done in a meeting and this enabled the participants to share their knowledge and expertise on curriculum development.

3.9.1 OBSERVATIONS

It is crucial in action research to observe the participants in their work setting, which is the classroom in this case so as to gather valid information about the performance of educators. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:125) observing in a setting is a special skill that requires management of issues such as potential deception of people being interviewed, impression management, and the potential marginality of the researcher in a strange setting. In this study I observed issues such as the educators, the class and notes obtained from the lessons conducted by different educators in three grade eight classes.

I also looked at the files and teaching material as well as focus groups. Eisner, E.W. (1991:2) argues that a qualitative study tends to be 'field focussed' which in this case

is the school. I looked at the culture of the school as well as the contextual factors impacting on its functionality. A closer look was given to the timetable in order to have a clear picture about the distribution of notional time. This means that I went to school and observed the educators in action i.e. in their classrooms. I also observed the interaction between the educators and learners more especially their responses during the course of the lesson. In this study, I did not disturb the educators but I observed the lessons being presented. After each lesson presented, I met with the educators and discussed the presentation and understanding of the lessons by learners.

3.9.2 INTERVIEWS

For the purpose of this study, interviews were held with educators and learners involved in the teaching and learning of social sciences in order to gather valid and first hand information about the learning area they teach. Paton as quoted by Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) in Masikane, E.S. (1999:33) remarks: “We interview people to find out from them those things that we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions, all we do is ask questions about those things.” An interview is one of the most powerful tools we use to obtain first-hand information from the interviewee.

There are different types of interviews that a researcher may use. Some interviews have structured questions whilst others have open-ended questions. In a structured interview, the interviewee is limited to a question whilst in an interview with an open-ended question; the interviewee can give a lot of information as much as he/she can. One of the recommended interview techniques is that by Meulenberg-Buskens (1997:2) who maintains that the ‘Free Attitude Interview’ technique can be used in a two-person interview as well as in a group discussion. This interview will give the interviewees freedom to speak and the information obtained becomes more relevant than when they would use a structured questionnaire.

This interview technique is very important as a means of reflecting the respondent’s feelings. This technique enables the interviewer to summarize, reflect, stimulate and ask questions for clarification. The interview revealed that educators’ knowledge, ability, interests, experience, problems, successes and failures in the learning area.

The free attitude interview was then used in this study in order to elicit as much information as possible. The interview was only held with three educators responsible for the learning area and focus groups that participated in the lesson.

Creswell, J.W. (1998:124) discusses three types of interviews that may be conducted by a researcher that is a telephone interview, a focus group interview and a one-on-one interview. For the purpose of this study a focus group interview was adopted so that the educators (interviewees) could be in a position to share information. This technique assisted me in gathering data from the rest of the co-participants without disturbances such as gestures and facial expressions that may occur between the interviewees and interviewer. This interview was held with educators who were participants in the study.

3.10 RESEARCH PLAN

In preparation for my on-site observation I met the three educators at the school to plan activities and a checklist to be used during the observation. I also observed Social Sciences lessons in grade 8 and had interviews with grade 8 educators. This helped me to confirm and validate findings obtained through observation. The empirical study took place within a period of nine days. The table below is a plan of action on how the research was conducted.

DAY	RESEARCH ACTIVITY	PURPOSE
1	Meeting Social Sciences learning area educators	Planning for cycle 1
2	Formulation of checklist	Planning for cycle 1
3	Lesson observation for three different educators	Observe
4	Meeting/intervention with the three educators	Feedback on cycle 1 and planning for cycle 2
5	Lesson observations for the three educators	Observe
6	Evaluation of educators' work and	Observe

	learners' work	
7	Interviews with the focus groups	Interview
8	Analysis of findings for both cycle One and two	Analysis

Table 1: Research plan and activities

3.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis only done after the collection of data from three educators. The researcher needs to analyse data so as to find out what is there and make sense of the environment. Coding is the process in which data is analysed. Coding makes it easier for the researcher to categorize statements with similar ideas. The responses given by participants were categorized and statements with similar ideas were put together to ease the process of data analyses. According to Straus and Corbin (1990:57) "coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised, and put together in new ways, it is the control process by which theories are built from data. By categorizing data, one is able to organize information such that the researcher can draw conclusions and some kind of sense is drawn from it.

Coding was used in this study so as to make it easier to understand and interpret data collected through observation and the interviews. Through observation, the researcher gathered information on what educators actually do in class when teaching and learning takes place. Observation enabled the researcher to observe interaction between the educators and learners. Interviews also held, whereby educators expressed their feelings freely and the information obtained from the participants was more relevant.

3.12 VALIDITY OF RESEARCH

This study used a variety of methods with the aim of confirming and validating its own findings. Information obtained through interviews, observations, discussions with educators has been analysed. Furthermore, analyses of documents such as lesson plans and lesson observations has been done. This will be done with the aim to find out whether what is taught by educators is what has been planned for that particular lesson. An attempt has also been made to check whether what is said by educators during interviews is what actually takes place during teaching and learning in class. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researchers' picture of the particular slice of reality hence a variety of methods are used. Therefore I made sure that data gathered were not simply artefacts of one specific method of collection. The use of triangular techniques, it is argued, helps to overcome the problem of 'method- boundness' that is pushing one method as the only superior method.

Researchers are sometimes taken to task for their rigid adherence to one particular theory or theoretical orientation to the exclusion of competing theories. It is good therefore for the researcher to be more active when designing research so that competing theories can be tested. In this study more than one participant was used in the research setting so as to gather different views about what they feel about curriculum development as their responsibility. Participants working on their own each have their own styles and this is reflected in the resulting data. Cohen, L. and Manion, L. (1992: 274) state that the careful use of two or more participants independently, can lead to more valid and reliable data. The greatest use of triangulation centres perhaps around validity rather than reliability checks.

In an attempt to improve curriculum development process, one has to encourage active educator involvement, which can be achieved through action research. This is a very big challenge in getting educators to adopt what research finds to be a good practice. Action research highlights a very important point in curriculum development that a key ingredient in effecting change is the active involvement of educators and learners engaged in the teaching and learning process.

Curriculum development is a continuous process that involves both educators and learners while action research is a continuous and participative learning process that can be used to promote effective curriculum development. Warrigan, S.J. (2006:1) argue that the ‘core goal of action research is to create sustainable learning capacities and give the participants the option of increasing control over their own situation’. I therefore encouraged educators and learners to develop knowledge and take control of the teaching and learning environment. They needed to be made aware that action research process is an emergent one that operates until a problem is solved or the desired aims are achieved. Educators using action research in curriculum development may benefit from this strategy as action research is guided by learning gained through process. Action research allows educators to understand and solve problems facing educators in their professional work.

Discussions that bring stakeholders together on a regular basis allow for collaborative planning and designing of activities aimed at solving their problems. To carry out this objective I made the planning of activities collaborative to include both educators and learners. Allowing learners to participate in the planning process provides them with the opportunity to choose activities in which they are interested. Monitoring of the curriculum development process was done to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place.

The true worth of action research depends mainly in its implementation. I would like to see action research adopted and sustained as a strategy to use in curriculum development throughout the school. In doing this I invited other educators to visit classes observed and see how they perform. I discussed action research and the power of using it with other educators. I had educators who participated sharing their experiences .I also shared some of the findings with educators so that they could improve curriculum development.

3.12 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 (three) is aimed at highlighting the methodological procedures that were used to collect data. These procedures were used in researching about the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development in the grade

eight social sciences classes. This study reveals various strategies used and problems encountered by educators when curriculum development takes place. It also reveals responses displayed by learners during the teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

Relying on the data collected by means of observations and interviews with selected respondents, this chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of data and draws appropriate conclusions. It begins with the analysis of observations of the educators' work and the learners' work and proceeds to offer an assessment of the interviews with educators and learners as expressed in their responses.

- In terms of structure, data analysis conforms to the study's research methodology as outlined in chapter three. The information, in the form of opinions and perceptions gathered by means of observations and discussions, provides the background or context that is further illuminated and supplemented by the views expressed by the informants in more in-depth interviews. Nevertheless, the collected data reflect discernible patterns and trends, which could provide a worthwhile starting point for debate on the topic of action research as one of the curriculum development strategies in schools in South Africa today. This study also seeks to find out whether the aims as set out in chapter one can be supported by the findings of practical research.

4.2 Reconnaissance

The Department of Education in South Africa urges all stakeholders to improve service delivery, but educators are specifically singled out to improve curriculum development strategies so as to offer quality education to the learners. Quality in education may benefit our education system in the sense that highly productive citizens of our country may be produced.

Educators in schools have all along been debating about different strategies, interpretations and understanding they have about curriculum development in the school set-up. Educators are not effectively using the teaching strategies that can help

them develop the curriculum effectively, so that all learners benefit from our education system. The educators observed did not specify the teaching strategies they would use in their lesson presentations. Instead of using a variety of teaching strategies, educators would just ask questions to get responses from learners. Educators also experience lack of active involvement in curriculum development as a major area of interest. They are not involved in curriculum decision making by the department of education whereas they are the key people who know better about curriculum development. As a result educators do not have a sense of ownership in curricular matters and they do not take pride in the curriculum.

The problem of curricula development has, today, been further complicated by the introduction of the new approach in the teaching and learning activity, known as Outcomes-Based-Education (OBE). For example, it has not been easy for educators to understand what OBE is actually all about because of many reasons such as nature of in-service training given to them. When OBE was introduced educators were trained over a very short period of time. What complicated the process was that some of the trainers were not clear enough about OBE. Hence training given to educators was not enriching to enable them kick start the process in schools. An attempt is also made through the Revised New Curriculum Statement to simplify the curriculum for the educators and learners.

The educators of the school where the research was conducted also complained about the lack of knowledge, understanding, time, skills and clarity on active engagement in curriculum development in grade eight classes. They were not clear about how to teach grade eight as a result of the new approach used in teaching and learning. The curriculum development process in most secondary schools begins mainly in grade eight as an entrance grade with the aim of making the teaching and learning processes more learner-centred.

Quite a number of workshops and seminars are organised by the Provincial Department of Education in order to equip, empower and guide educators on how they should understand and interpret curriculum development. Departmental officials are sometimes invited to the school to workshop educators on curriculum development, using the OBE approach. Educators are given material such as policy

documents to use when planning their work. Some educators are keen to have a clearer understanding and interpretation about curriculum development in grade eight. In conducting this study members of staff were invited to a meeting to discuss the research study. The grade eight educators in the Social Sciences learning area were requested to participate in the research work for the benefit of the school as a whole. Planning was done in the meeting for cycle one and two so that everyone could be made aware of what was going to take place. I introduced the research topic to the educators, and explained the research project, that is its purpose and benefits to the educators, and classified my role as facilitator and the educators as participants in the research project.

In introducing the topic I explained to the educators that as a researcher I am interested in studying about the way in which curriculum development takes place as well as what curriculum development entails. We also discussed alternative ways used to develop the curriculum and I also made it clear that curriculum development is about teaching and learning. I then introduced them to action research as an alternative strategy that can be used to promote effective teaching and learning. When educators asked questions I explained clearly to make sure that they understand so that we could practise it with understanding. I explained that it is about reflective practice in which educators engage in so that they improve teaching and learning.

I indicated to the participants that a tape recorder would be used in gathering data. Some educators felt uneasy with the use of the tape recorder, as an instrument of gathering information. The only way to solve the problem was to explain well to the participants about the purpose of the research. Other research instruments were interviews, lesson observations and discussions. This was clearly explained to the educators. Assurance was given to the educators that information given by the respondents would remain confidential. The two action research cycles were then followed.

4.3 Action research cycle 1

In conducting this research study the action plan for cycle one was followed, whereby observations, interviews and discussions were held with the educators. The purpose

of the study was clearly explained to the participants (See Annexure A1) .The participants were Educator A, Educator B and Educator C. All the participants were qualified to teach the Social Sciences learning area and they each have a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD). Their teaching experience was above five years and they are quite knowledgeable. Lesson observations were conducted in different grade eight classes. Upon completion of the lesson observations the educators and the facilitator had a discussion about the lesson observations. We made some remarks and comments together regarding the presentation of lessons by the educators and how they felt during lesson presentations. The educators were also made aware that it is their responsibility to come up with suggestions on how they may improve their own practice that is curriculum development. My role was that of a facilitator of action research in the school so that educators could feel its benefits.

The purpose of cycle one was to find out whether or not educators understand the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development. If they do, what strategies do they employ in order to effectively develop the curriculum in the grade eight social sciences classes? Cycle one, therefore sought to uncover knowledge, and skills educators use in developing the curriculum. It further looked at the interaction between the educators and the learners in class and the responses given by the learners. It also sought to find out how educators understand and interpret their role as curriculum developers. This study looked at the understanding of OBE by different educators and how they implement it. It revealed that they do not have a common understanding and interpretation of the curriculum although they teach the same grade.

- The educators interviewed revealed different understandings and interpretations of OBE, even if they teach the same grade. The majority of the educators defined OBE by pointing at some common practices, which occur when teaching, and learning takes place. They mentioned practices like participation, recognition of their views, flexibility, innovation, knowledge and skills, resourcefulness and lot of paperwork. Educators gave an immediate view or picture of what constitutes OBE. Instead they described OBE in terms commonly found and used in educational institutions. The different views raised by the educators reflect a wide range of terms used in official documents. This study did not expect educators to give a common

understanding of OBE. However, the range of meanings given to OBE has serious implications for implementation, which could be expected to reflect a very broad set of teaching and learning strategies used by educators teaching grade 8 learners. This also indicates lack of coherence and focus in the communication of policy on OBE.

- Educators felt that their training in preparation for OBE implementation was inadequate. All educators regarded OBE training as inadequate and could not prepare educators enough to face new challenges. The training session as it lasted only for five days, which too appeared as an introduction was successfully done. Some educators regarded training as necessary and useful but more training was needed over time in order to equip the educators with knowledge, skills and expertise. This would make OBE more meaningful to educators. The educators felt that training was too basic and offered them very little information to enable them implement OBE.
- The educators were not sure whether their practices constitute OBE. Most of the educators revealed that they were not sure whether they were in fact 'doing' OBE in their classrooms. The educators interviewed are well qualified, knowledgeable and experienced to teach, but they demonstrated the different levels of uncertainty about their practices. Possibly, the feeling that there needs to be a distinction between the past and present practices might have caused this uncertainty. The uncertainty also reflected educators as doing what they have always done. OBE implementation had some problems such as lack of in-depth training, uncertainty of planners and trainers, lack of supervision on site and feedback on current practices.
- Availability of Curriculum 2005 documentation to most educators who were involved in the teaching and learning of social sciences in grade eight at a secondary school level. The basic documentation consisted of all the learning areas taught in grade eight. Some educators did not have the material; instead they had to share with other educators. This study did not investigate the extent to which educators used the documents to implement OBE. Had this been done, it would have been much easier for me to establish whether or not educators are implementing OBE in grade eight.

- Some educators claimed that they were teaching as they did before, with the exception of a few things that have changed. Educators claimed that they teach far less, as more work is given to learners to do on their own and the amount of written work in the learners' books has finally decreased. Moreover the way they plan their lessons has changed too. Otherwise educators indicated that they are still using the very same set of activities such as map reading.
- Educators understand and implement OBE differently. Some educators are clearly not doing anything different from what they normally did. Their observational evidence suggests that most of them are doing what they feel comfortable with and what is familiar to them from years of experience. Some educators have just imposed the framework provided by the new curriculum on what they already planned as a way of demonstrating compliance with the new policy. This is the group of educators that is unsure if their practices constitute OBE or not. Another group of educators claim and understands that their implementation moves constantly between the requirements of policy and established conventions of teaching in grade eight classrooms. This was clearly demonstrated by the more confident and experienced educators. These educators were actively negotiating the meaning of OBE within the contexts of their classrooms.

The study further looked at the behaviour of learners during lessons as well as their attitude towards schoolwork. In an interview with the learners it became clear that learners in some classes are given more time to do the tasks assigned to them. The educators give instructions regarding how the task should be done and learners would listen and do the tasks. Learners revealed that, though their work is marked and controlled, this is not done on a regular basis, as some sections of their work are not marked. Monitoring of learners' attendance in classes is not strictly done and there is no consistency. Learners are very co-operative and work well with educators.

The participation of learners of different abilities in lessons is also very crucial since the department of education promotes inclusivity in education. One notable feature about learner participation is that not all learners actively participate in lessons. Some learners lack discipline and they sometimes disturb teaching and learning. The

changes that take place in our education system are considered since they impact mostly on curriculum development and implementation. Learners indicated that their educators are very dedicated and that they try by all means to make sure that learners understand lessons taught.

Learners also displayed trust and loyalty to their educators during lesson presentation. Interaction between educators and learners is good as learners respond positively to instructions given. The influence of learners on the strategies used by educators in developing the curriculum also plays a very important role. Learners show keen interest to learn and they attend classes. Educators need to have a clearer understanding of the strategies to use in Curriculum 2005 in order to become empowered and more effective in the teaching and learning process.

Action research intervention took place in an attempt to enable educators reflect on their practices and the success of action research would not have been possible if they had not been major partners in the planning and development of the activities. As professionals, educators began to investigate their own practice. There is thus an increased awareness of action research as a strategy providing an understandable approach to the improvement of practice and this is achieved through critical self-reflection. Educators needed to buy into action research to such an extent that they would continue with it. During intervention it became clear that the more collaboration is involved, the more committed the participants are likely to be. The educators observed in this study enjoyed during the intervention period as it afforded the opportunity to look at their mistakes and learn from them. It is during this time that they could do replanning of their work so that they can improve their practice.

4.3.1. Analysis of observation

The observation of lessons conducted by educators proved to be fairly effective as an information-gathering technique, as it allowed the researcher to gather data from the respondents, all of whom are educators in grade eight. It also allowed the respondents to reflect on their lesson plans and presentations. Only three educators were observed practising in class, which represented the three sections of grade eight. The three educators managed to facilitate teaching and learning fairly well. They followed their

lesson plans as per plans with the aim to achieve the desired outcome. In facilitating teaching and learning, educators assigned tasks to their learners. The educators' role in the lessons observed was to monitor different groups of the learners. The educators were getting positive responses from the learners as learners co-operated in lessons.

4.3.1.1. Educator A

Educator A started by greeting the learners and introduced the researcher upon entering the classroom. He looked around the class and made a request for the cleaning of the chalkboard. Interestingly, the educator asked learners to name islands they know in South Africa and made a list of them on the board. Robben Island became the topic for the day (See Annexure D3). This was a way of introducing the lesson. The educator went on to hang the map of South Africa and requested the learners to identify Robben Island. Learners were also required to make note on what they could find on the island. The following points emerged from the observation of the lesson presented:

- The educator had done his lesson preparation for that day indicating the activities that learners would engage in. Lesson preparation was evident in the educators' lesson plan and in the way it was conducted with the learners on the board.
- The lesson observation also revealed that the lesson was learner-centred in the sense that the greater part of the work was done with learners that is in terms of learner responses to questions and discussions with other learners. Learners in groups did the lesson for the day. Each group of learners had a scribe to write down the learners' responses to the task assigned to them. Leaders also did the presentation of the findings from different groups. The learners handled teaching and learning resources themselves to promote understanding of the lesson.

- The scrutiny of the educators' file indicated that the educators' long-term and medium-term planning is not properly done. The educator relies mainly on what has been provided by the department of education, as a result creativity and innovativeness is not displayed in the educators' work.
- It also emerged from the scrutiny of the learners' work that they do not have enough written work and this poses a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The educator does not do the work as stipulated in the subject policy.
- Scrutiny of the learners' work indicated that the learners are not assessed as stipulated in the Continuous Assessment Policy. The educator still relies on tests and examination. Some sections of the work are not assessed.

The general performance of learners in the class revealed that although it is good for the learners to dominate the lesson and improve performance, the progress made becomes too slow for the educator to complete the learning area programme. The majority of the learners display a keen interest to participate and learn. However, this approach does not guarantee full participation by all learners. Effective teaching in the class is also hindered by the shortage of resources.

4.3.1.2 Educator B

Educator B started by introducing the researcher thereby making learners fully aware of my presence as a researcher. The educator then introduced the lesson to the learners. In introducing the lesson the educator asked the learners about a famous South African political leader that was imprisoned at Robben Island for a long period. The majority of the learners raised their hands to give the answer. The educator proceeded to tell them that the lesson was on 'Robben Island as a political prison' (See Annexure D4). The learners were given a map of South Africa and they were requested to identify islands from the map. Having done this, the learners were given textbooks to read about the island. They were required to make notes on what they

could see on the island. The learners were also seated in groups of 6-7 members per group. The educator moved from group to group, supervising the learners when they were doing the task. In the lesson observation conducted the following points became noticeable:

- Educator B utilized learner groups in class to facilitate teaching and learning. The educator was interested in seeing the learners do the task. The educator kept on stressing that each learner should make a contribution towards the work that is done by the group. The learners were talking to each other and they took down notes. Each group of the learners sat down and recorded their own findings about the prison. Each group had its own scribe and leader to report back to the class. The educator was busy supervising the groups although he could not use individual attention for the benefit of all the learners. The educator would sometimes talk to different learner groups.
- The scrutiny of the educators' file revealed that Macro, Meso and Micro-planning are properly done although recording is not properly done and updated. The learners' marks are also recorded in the educators' file.
- Records of assessment of the learners' work were made available. What became a notable feature is that not all the learners have assessment marks on all the activities done. The learners' work is not always marked and controlled since some sections of the work are left unmarked.
- With regard to interaction between the educator and the learners, the lesson was quite interesting. The majority of the learners were very active in the lesson with the exception of a few that seemed not to participate. The learners were free and eager to interact with each other. This is very crucial in the classroom situation, as learners need to construct their own knowledge so that they own it. Participation by the learners indicates the learners' involvement in the lessons.

- The educator also seemed to be synthesizing as he made a summary of the whole lesson. A link of the findings by the learners in the task given to them with what the educator had done earlier on was made.

It became clear in the lesson observed that there is a shortage of educator-learner support material to make teaching and learning more effective. Learners become very active in the lesson provided they are given the opportunity to participate under the supervision and guidance of the educator. Educators also benefit from the workshops organized by the department of education to empower and equip them to face new challenges in their field of teaching. Educators benefit through group discussions, presentations made by facilitators in workshops and material in the form of documents given to them to use at school as sources of information. Educators share their experiences, knowledge and strategies they use in solving particular problems. They apply knowledge gained from the departmental workshops in facilitating the curriculum.

4.3.1.3 Educator C

The educator, right from the beginning of the lesson, applied the question and answer method. Questions were based on the previous work covered with the aim to link it with the lesson for the day. The response of the learners to the questions was satisfactory. The lesson was introduced in the form of questions. The lesson was on the same topic; Robben Island prison. The class was quite huge and overcrowded without space for the educator to move around (See Annexure D5). Some learners did not pay attention to what the educator was doing with them. The educator kept on disciplining learners who were misbehaving in class. It was difficult for the educator to have groups. The following points emerged from the lesson:

- It became obvious from the lesson observed that the control of learners' work was not satisfactory. Learners are not given adequate class work and homework regularly to enable learners to improve their performance. Corrections and remedial work is not properly done with learners to enable them to rectify the mistakes they made on their tasks.

- The educator does not have enough textbooks to use when giving homework to learners. The educator relies mainly on handouts and photocopies if at all she manages to get them. As a result the general performance of the learners in class is not satisfactory. Another factor that affects the performance of learners in this class is the lack of discipline in the classroom.
- Educator C does not have long-term, medium-term and short-term planning for the class. However the lesson plan for the day is made available by educator C to the researcher so that scrutiny of educators work could be done. Time factor is another contributory factor in that she spends most of the time teaching and marking learners' work. The educator does not have enough time to do classroom management duties like lesson planning and class attendance register.
- The scrutiny of the learners' work also revealed that they do not attend classes on a regular basis hence the quality and quantity of work covered is not the same. Attempts to make learners up-date their work are not done such that some learners are without assessment marks in some sections of the work.

The observation conducted with Educator C revealed that support in the form of resources such as textbooks is necessary in order for the educator to perform optimally. The educator also needs support and development in terms of control of learners' work as well as preparation of lessons at different levels. Overcrowded classes have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning in that the educator may not achieve the desired goals of the lesson. The classrooms where observations of lessons were conducted are conducive to teaching and learning since they have enough ventilation and light.

4.31.4. Super vision of the educators' work

The scrutiny of three educators as well as learners' work revealed that their work is at times controlled by the Head of Department (HOD) in the Social Sciences learning

area. This is well demonstrated by the date stamp and signature of the HOD that is appended on some pages of the work. Looking at the subject policy the educators are expected to submit their files on a weekly basis but this is not the case since there is no consistency in their submissions. Instead, some do not even have the HOD's signature, which indicates that they have never been submitted for supervision. This is very important, as the educators' work has to be monitored to ensure that proper planning is done for all lessons. This also enables the HOD's to monitor the educators' records of work done.

The supervision of learners' work also is not satisfactory since it does not have signs of supervision by the HOD. Some sections of the learners' work have not been seen by the educators themselves. However, in spite of all these areas for development educators have undergone both internal and external assessments and evaluations. Interestingly, they have been given a satisfactory rating.

4.3.2 Interviews

4.3.2.1 Analysis of interview responses

This section provides an analysis of the interviews conducted with the selected educators directly involved in the curriculum development in grade eight classes. Each interview took between 30minutes-1hour and all interviews were conducted in the old principals' office during times that were convenient to both the researcher and the informants. The actual phrasing of questions and the probing questions were aimed at facilitating open discussion of issues. The fact that the researcher is well known to all the informants could have enriched the quality of the information gathered but also it could have encouraged interviewees to assume that the researcher knows some of the things he did not know.

The interviews with selected informants yielded rich and sometimes apparently contradictory information. The purpose of this brief descriptive overview of the content of each interview response is to get a sense of the scope and depth of each interview. This should facilitate coding and analysis. However, as pointed out in the previous chapters description is a form of analysis and interpretation as it involves the

transformation of a 'field text' into a 'research text' (Clandinin and Connelly, 1998:161-162)

4.3.2.1 Educator A

Educator A interprets the notion of curriculum to mean 'recognition' of educators' views and suggestions, but as he went on to explain, recognition would stimulate 'a feeling of being part of the curriculum development process'. All discussions of curriculum development at Nqaba high school should take cognisance of 'poverty' that characterizes the community being served by the school. Thus, according to him curriculum development should be seen in relation to the various forms of material deprivation the main consequence of which is that Nqaba's grade eight learners are not adequately prepared to cope with the demands of secondary education (See Annexure C1). Educator A, in response to questions raised by the researcher, also raised the following points:

- Educators should feel responsible towards the success of the curriculum development process at the school level
- Participation of educators in curriculum development would help to explain the role, reasons and requirements of various aspects of the curriculum
- Participation would also enable the educators to fully comprehend what is expected of each of the role-players in curriculum development
- Educator A went on to enumerate practical steps taken by the department of education to implement its own policies with regard to curriculum development. These included the following:
 - a. Making it mandatory for all educators to provide comprehensive lesson plans which specify the outcomes and objectives of lessons offered, their content and secondary reading list
 - b. The design of an assessment policy which is currently being used to evaluate both the content and presentation of lessons to the learners as offered by the school
 - c. Making it obligatory for the school principal and the school management team (SMT) to ensure that appropriate

procedures are followed in the promotion of curriculum development

Asked about the relationship between action research and curriculum development Educator A pointed out that the school was fortunate enough to have a facilitator on curriculum issues who was appointed by the department of education to groom other educators in the ward.

4.3.2.2. Educator B

The aim of the study is to get the views of educators on curriculum development .The same set of themes used with educator A were used in the interview.

According to Educator B, in order for the educators to effectively engage in curriculum development they need to have a ‘curriculum that is flexible’. This would enable educators to develop the curriculum with an open mind. The educator went on to say that ‘individual innovation’ and ‘resourcefulness’ would stimulate interest among educators and learners (See Annexure C2). Responses from educator B indicate that he is not yet comfortable with curriculum practice as he comments about ‘a lot of paperwork’ that is done in OBE. Learners would also be keen to work with educators who are open to views and ideas given by learners.

- It also emerged from the interview that educators do not have a clear understanding on curriculum development and on the role of educators in this regard. The focus on the activities done by educators in the classroom is on the curriculum development processes utilizing various curriculum development strategies.
- The application of different curriculum development strategies is a useful means of identifying good practice and gaps or weaknesses although nothing is being done with regard to learner development. This is a direct consequence of the gaps in the schools’ curriculum development strategies.

- The functions, roles and authority of educators with regard to curriculum development are not clearly spelt out in the current policies. This problem is further compounded by the imminent Curriculum 2005(C2005) in the schools.

It also emerged from the interview that the educators do believe that they have to take over the responsibility and functions of the department of education. The educator emphasized the importance of having a significant role to play in all the committees and structures concerned with curriculum development.

The educator is also in favour of the decentralization of the curriculum functions to the schools so that the role of the department of education would be to ‘provide support’, for example, finance, and to ‘facilitate’ the management of curriculum development in the school set-up.

The department of education is gradually succeeding in changing the perceptions of educators about their roles and responsibilities from one characterized by suspicion and, sometimes, open hostility to one of acceptance and co-operation. The educator went on to say that a curriculum that fulfils its objectives would create a sense of stability and security. Thus educators would want to work.

4.3.2.3. Educator C

The last educator interviewed defined curriculum development as having educators with a ‘thorough knowledge’ on all aspects of curriculum falling within the fields of specialisation. She went on to emphasize the role of professional bodies in the education department such as Skills department, Unions and South African Council for Educators in ensuring effective curriculum development through continuous support. The educator emphasized the importance of having professional rendering of ongoing support in terms of equipping educators with knowledge, skills and strategies to use in developing the curriculum. The provision of continuous support will make it possible for the educators to improve curriculum development and ensure that academic standards are maintained (See Annexure C3).

The educator also pointed out that those educators whose work is monitored on a regular basis are not scared of assessment activities that are conducted by the department of education at specified intervals. Even the learners become familiar with assessment tasks. In addition, the following points emerged from the discussion with

Educator C:

- It emerged from the interview that action research should not be seen as synonymous with curriculum development as the two are conceptually and structurally distinct. Action research should be seen as a strategy that can be used in developing the curriculum whereas curriculum development deals mainly with teaching and learning. Action research enables educators to reflect on their practices on a regular basis. The professional bodies like advisory services that support curriculum development initiatives should be used to enhance curriculum quality. Action research, on the other hand, has the responsibility of identifying gaps and shortcomings on the curriculum development process and ensure that the goals of the school are attained. It will enable educators to be aware of their shortcomings and work on them by developing their personal growth plans, indicating areas where they need to be developed.
- Educators who comply more and more with the requirements of the national curriculum development policies should not be 'scared of being assessed as they would be confident that they are doing the right thing'. Assessment of educators' work builds self-confidence and esteem among them.
- Internal and external audits in the school should be conducted with the aim to identify areas in need of improvement or some form of remedial intervention. Human, Financial and Material resources can only be used effectively once gaps and weaknesses in the curriculum development process are identified.

4.3.2.4. The learners

As the aim of the study is to get the views and perceptions of curriculum development in the classroom, three focus groups of learners were identified

and interviewed in one classroom that was unoccupied at that moment. Learners were interviewed with the aim of getting more relevant information that pertains to teaching and learning. A different set of themes was used for the learners as the main recipients of education in the school:

The learners in grade eight have experienced learning social sciences under different educators. Their experience is that different educators handle their lessons differently. According to the learners the learning process is ‘not a difficult task’ provided educators have done the necessary preparations to teach them effectively. An educator who comes to class ‘prepared’ is likely to succeed in his or her educational endeavour as the goals and outcomes of the lesson are clearly spelt out. Learners are also keen to participate in a lesson that is challenging and thought provoking. They therefore went on to say that they ‘enjoy’ tasks once they are given with clear instructions. They also pointed out that it is very easy to see the educator who comes to class not thoroughly prepared to teach.

It also emerged from the interview that learners are generally satisfied with the outcomes-based education to teaching and learning as it affords them enough time to participate in the lesson. Learners also feel that sometimes it causes ‘disorder’ in some classes that lack discipline. Not all educators are capable of maintaining discipline in the classroom. Some form of disciplinary measures need to be devised as discipline forms the basis of effective teaching and learning.

Although learners enjoy teaching and learning, the department of education does not consult them to get their views about curriculum development. They are not given a chance to make contributions whenever changes are to be effected in the curriculum development process. Learners do not know why the department keeps on effecting changes in the curriculum. They feel left out when decisions about classroom activities are taken whereas they feel they can make valuable contributions to make teaching and learning effective. Learner involvement will make educators aware of what they expect from them that will obviously suit their needs.

With regard to class attendance, it became clear that attendance is a serious problem as some educators and learners do not always ‘honour’ the teaching and learning periods. Some educators find themselves unable to attend classes on a regular basis, for reasons beyond control such as chronic illnesses and departmental workshops. Learners also argue that they do not have enough power to make sure that educators attend classes regularly.

The learners indicated that they are not taught the same content at the same pace. As the study conducted using the three class groups, some groups are far ahead with the learning programme whilst others are lagging behind. Even the assessment activities are conducted differently and on different themes. It was in the light of educators’ experiences that preparations for cycle two was made.

4.4 Action research cycle 2

4.4.1 Analyses of Observation

During the second cycle, educators displayed a great improvement in their lesson presentations, when the lesson observations were conducted. There was a great improvement in terms of lesson plans, which were detailed, showing the topic, aim, objectives, steps to be followed in the presentation of the lesson and evaluation thereof. The educators wanted to make sure that they improve teaching and learning so that learners benefit from them. The three educators observed kept on reflecting on their work so as to identify areas where they needed improvement. My presence as a researcher might have influenced their practice as they became aware of their shortcomings in cycle one. They were aware that I was observing them whether or not they were practising action research and following their lesson plans. Apparently they might have wanted to prove to me that they can teach effectively.

4.4.1.1 Educator A

Educator A began his lesson highly motivated. The lesson was on ‘calculating area’, which involved quite a lot of practical work (See Annexure E1). The educator brought

with him resources to use in facilitating teaching and learning. The educator, in his approach, also indicated that he wanted to conduct the lesson with learners and not on them. As a result the following points emerged from the lesson presentation:

- The educator brought his file to class with up-dated lesson plans and preparation. The aim, content, outcomes and methodology were clearly indicated in his lesson plans.
- Looking at the amount of written work given to learners, one realizes that there is a great improvement. There is also an increase in the amount of written work, which is now marked and controlled by the educator.
- Scrutiny of the learners' work also revealed that the educator is gradually improving his assessment methods in the sense that it was no longer based on tests and examination only. Learners were assessed on all forms of activities that were done with them in class.
- In the second cycle, the educator displayed more creativity and innovativeness in that both the educator and the learners enjoyed teaching and learning. The educator defined concepts such as area and scale with learners so as to gauge their level of understanding. In doing this questions that led learners to the correct answers were asked. The learners were asked to measure the sides of their exercise books. There was greater involvement of the learners, which was promoted through the proper use of teacher-learner support material in the classroom. The educator used topographic maps to engage learners in the lesson.

Teaching and learning seemed more effective and interesting during the second cycle. The learners were highly motivated to participate in the lesson that was well expressed in the active interaction that took place between the educator and the learners. The learners showed interest in working topographic maps, which enabled them to discover and arrive at the correct answers on their own. The learners were engaged in debates and arguments about the lesson. Most of the questions and responses came from the learners themselves and the educator was there to assist where they encountered problems.

4.4.1.2. Educator B

Educator B seemed to rely more on group work as he was moving from group to group to see if the learners were doing the task correctly. The educator attended to learners who were experiencing problems with the task and even those who needed clarification in some instances. Learner groups were highly involved in the lesson and they used the teaching and learning material that was made available to them. They appeared to have background knowledge about calculating area, which was the lesson for the day (See Annexure E2). The knowledge displayed by learners might have been in the lower levels of learning. The following points emerged from the lesson presentation:

- The teaching and learning process became easier for the educator since he was supervising and facilitating the teaching and learning process. Learners were highly engaged in the lesson, debating and arguing about the task assigned to them.
- The macro, meso and micro planning were properly done with up-dated records of educators' work.
- Records of assessment of learners' work were up-dated and well kept by the educator.
- Learners were also kept motivated and involved in the lesson.

In the second cycle, Educator B changed his approach to teaching and learning in that a greater part of the work was done with the learners. Action research helped educators to improve teaching and learning by reflecting on the work done with the learners. Educators would reflect on their lesson plans to see if they worked according to their plans. They would also assess whether or not assessment of the learners' work did help them to improve teaching and learning. Educators became aware that they are responsible for their own practice; hence they can improve on their own. The learners, in various groups took an active role in leading the lesson in order to construct their own knowledge. Calculating the area was not a big problem since they worked together and shared knowledge. Planning as one of the significant aspects of effective teaching and learning was well done.

4.4.1.3 Educator C

In the lesson observation conducted, Educator C also changed from using questions and answers as the only method of teaching to using a learner centred approach to promote effective teaching and learning in class. Although the class was overcrowded, the educator tried to use her creativity and innovativeness in making teaching and learning more interesting (See Annexure E3). The following points emerged from the lesson presentation:

- In the lesson observed, the educators' control of the learners' work improved significantly as this became evident in the scrutiny of supervision of the learners' work.
- Educator C worked with learners in doing corrections and remedial work on the work done, regardless of class size. This made it easier for the learners to learn from the mistakes they made.
- The educator showed signs of a changed attitude altogether because even the level of discipline and behaviour of the learners improved. In facilitating the teaching and learning, the educator made more photocopies and handouts in order that all learners could have their own copies. The general performance of the learners in class showed a significant improvement.
- The educator did her long, medium and short-term planning to indicate what was going to be taught throughout the year. In planning departmental documents were also used as sources of information and guide by the educator.
- The class attendance by the learners improved significantly. Scrutiny of the attendance registers revealed that very few learners absent themselves from school due to illness or other reasons beyond control.

Lesson observation with Educator C indicated that a lot of improvement such as in lesson plans, quality of learners' work, and discipline in class has been achieved by the educator. The educator does not capitalize on overcrowding as a problem but she tries by all means to work against it.

The scrutiny of the learners' work reveals a steady increase and improvement in learner performance and attainment.

4.4.2 Interviews

4.4.2.1. Analyses of Interview Responses

In response to the interview, the three educators spelt it out clearly that they have 'improved greatly' in their teaching and learning activities since they started reflecting on their previous experience with their classes. They further said that reflection is something new and educators had never done it before but they believed it would work for them (See Annexure F1). The educators realized that it is through action research that they achieve co-operation with learners when doing tasks assigned to them.

Through the analyses of lesson planning the educators discovered how their normal practices of classroom interaction worked to deny learners the opportunity to raise their own questions and to develop independence of the educators in their learning. Instead the educators usual teaching was based on maintaining classroom control through controlling classroom talk. The educators learned to change the form of questions they asked in the classroom and to provide resources, which encouraged learners to raise their own questions falling within the activities done in the classroom. This would afford learners an opportunity to answer the questions they had raised within the lesson. Educators also changed the way they understood classroom questioning. They understood it in terms of maintaining classroom control and sharing knowledge with others. The educators began to understand deeply how their questioning practices could either create or deny learners opportunities to engage actively in the learning process. They also changed the teaching and learning environment in which they operated, though it was not easy. Educators changed their classrooms physically in that they had more resources to the support learners' learning. They also changed them socially as learners began to have more control over their own behaviour. The learning activities began to be negotiated by the educators and the learners. In response to the questions raised Educator A raised the following points:

4.4.2.3.1 Educator A

- Although the educator is not quite familiar with the use of reflective practice in teaching and learning process, he believes that it has helped him greatly to improve in his teaching profession.
- Sharing of knowledge, skills, and strategies in the teaching and learning process is of great benefit to both educators and learners.
- The use of a variety of teaching strategies helps educators to identify their strengths as well as areas for development so that they may improve in their teaching profession. This also helps in stimulating more interest to learn amongst learners.

Asked about support from the departmental officials, the educator stated that they ‘need more and more support’ in the form of resources from the department of education. The educator went on to say that if ‘enough resources’ can be obtained to assist teaching and learning some institutions may change and become ‘centres of excellence’. Even the educator himself is a very important resource in education, which needs to be continuously developed, and without which effective teaching and learning may not take place.

4.4.2.1.2. Educator B

In the interview held in the principal’s office with Educator B, with the aim to get his views on curriculum development, the responses given were positive. He also used the self-reflective practice to make initial observations and analyse his current teaching practice and planned ways he wanted to change. The educator also observed the problems and effects of the changes he introduced and then reflected on observations to decide how next to act in the process of improving his teaching practice. At the end of the lesson observation the educator began to achieve marked differences in his classroom practice, which he regarded as great improvements. The same set of themes used with educator A was used. Educator B felt very strong about ‘planning together as a team’ that is supposed to be done by educators teaching the

same learning area (See Annexure F3). The following points emerged from the interview:

- Planning as a team by educators involved in the learning area helps in improving curriculum delivery. This is where educators may share knowledge, experiences and strategies they use in curriculum development.
- It also became evident that educators become researchers of their own work through self-reflection. Educators sometimes use Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) with the aim to identify strengths and areas for development so that they may improve their practice. IQMS focuses mainly at the educators performance within the school.
- Lesson observations, if well planned motivate educators to do justice to their work. It conscientizes educators about the quality of work they do as agents of curriculum development.

-

It is evident from the above statements that educator B believes that planning as a team is crucial in order for teaching and learning to become effective. Educator appraisal and assessments are a necessity in sharpening the educators' performance for the benefit of learners.

4.4.2.3.2 Educator C

During the second cycle, Educator C still emphasized the role of professional bodies in rendering adequate support to educators for them to become effective in their professional duties. The educator also pointed out the need for the schools to be adequately resourced (See Annexure F3).

- Educator C pointed out that the schools that are well resourced tend to perform better than schools that are poorly resourced. The application of educator-learner support (TLSM) in lessons makes it possible for the learners to understand and improve their performance. Learners who do not have TLSM at their disposal tend to suffer because a

greater part of the lesson ends up being theoretical rather than being practical. The use of resources reinforces what has been learnt in the classroom.

- With regard to support she believes that educators should receive continuous support and professional growth from the department of education. As the South African education system undergoes enormous changes, educators need to be developed with regard to curriculum changes so that they can be in line with the current curriculum issues.

4.4.2.1.4. Learners

Learners were again interviewed during the second cycle in order to get their views and suggestions regarding curriculum development. An interview was held with the three focus groups that were very excited about the performance of educators during the research study. They were also excited about their own performance as they began to develop a shared sense of responsibility for maintaining a classroom environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The educators and the learners came to understand how their classroom practices created a conducive environment for others. They also began to understand how educator-centred classroom control actually worked to deny learners responsibility to create a conducive classroom environment. The control of the classroom and the educators' responsibility began to change.

According to the learners, educators are 'very busy and serious people' about their work if they are to be visited in class, especially by departmental officials. They went on to say that they feel they are making good progress in their lessons during the research study week.

Learners also mentioned that 'educators come to class well prepared' to teach lessons. Educators seem to honour their teaching periods on a daily basis and they are punctual in class most of the time. Learners indicated that they wish I could 'stay longer' in their school because educators were always with them at work. Preparedness on the

part of the educators might have been caused by the application of action research with the aim to improve educator practice.

It also emerged from the interview that learners ‘enjoyed teaching and learning’ during my stay at the school as a researcher. They also mentioned that educators allowed them ‘enough time to participate’ in the lesson. Even the strategies educators use were quite interesting to learners in that they stimulated interest among them. Learners were somehow excited about the approval of work of their own making. They were happy to see wall displays of their own work in class. The debates learners had in class helped them to develop knowledge and share experiences.

The learners were impressed about the way educators conducted assessments on learners’ work. The learners were assessed on all activities done in class. In order to improve learner performance in class educators used assessments differently. The educators established a system in which a class meeting determined the learning tasks for the whole class and divided responsibilities amongst class groups. For each task clear instructions were agreed upon and learners could determine individually or in groups whether requirements were met when the tasks were done.

By getting information on classroom participation, on the quality of work done, and on the amount of work completed by learners the educators were able to modify their practices. Educators began to understand how learners could take responsibility for their learning and succeed in their own terms. Their classroom environment changed dramatically from the one educators established from their early days with other groups of learners. The majority of learners changed their attitudes towards learning as they became interested in improving their performance.

In the lessons observed the aims, according to the educators’ lesson plan were as follows: To make learners aware of the geographical situation of Robben Island as a prison. To make learners understand the political role of the prison and its importance in the South African history. Learners will also understand the reasons why Robben Island was used for political prisoners.

Looking at the aims of the lessons observed one realizes how the lesson fits into the broader social sciences curriculum. It increases the level of awareness of the learners about their own environment and existence. It makes the learners understand why some of the South African politicians were taken to Robben Island and the conditions under which they lived. In other words learners learn about their own politics in the sense that it touches on the great leaders of the country.

The observations conducted indicate clearly that there are opportunities for curriculum development by educators as defined in chapter one. Curriculum 2005 is inherently flexible and it encourages educators to be creative hence educators can design classroom activities on their own using the National Education Policy guidelines. Some educators today implement curricular designed by the education department as well as their own programmes. They also need to look at their own practices, as reflective practitioners so that they may understand their own role and practice. In other words educators are researchers of their own practice.

The learning process as a whole took place in the South African context because it dealt with the South African political leaders in the South African prison. They could not interact freely with their own people. Work given to learners was done well because it related to their own environment and their own history. The educators still need to improve on the lesson plan and its development because they did not do it in the same way. Sometimes the educators dominated the lesson unaware. Some educators interpret curriculum development as teaching learners in groups and not to allow them to own the lesson.

The new understanding of teaching and learning demanded new assessment practices in our education system. In an outcomes-based system, assessment is concerned with the attainment and demonstration of skills, knowledge, and attitudes rather than with an individual's achievement relative to others in a group. Educators would no longer rely on tests and examinations as the only forms of assessment of learner performance in the classroom. Instead, assessment would be based on a number of activities. This form of assessment is non-competitive and has no numerical grading.

Educators discussed their experiences and new insights in the lessons held on Robben Island in their classes in the presence of the researcher. The educators applied the OBE approach in their lessons and some were not really sure of what they were doing. Educators were not aware of the presence of learners who had special education needs in their classrooms. Educators believed that learners with special education needs were found in special schools only.

4.4.4.3. Management of curriculum development at school

As outlined in the previous sections of this study, the three educators chose to adopt action research as one of the strategies that can be used to develop the curriculum effectively. This strategy was successful in that the educators who participated in the study began to implement it in other classes. Educators would invite learners to reflect on what they already know, to decide what they wanted to know and consider ways they would use to find out what they wanted to know. This is what we call ‘negotiating the curriculum’. Thus in line with the principles of the department of education curriculum development by educators is not only confined to teaching and learning but encompasses management and support services received by educators at the school level. Educator C put it clearly in the interview that ‘Educators need support and skills to inculcate the value of learning by doing among learners. ‘Significantly, this comment echoed the view expressed by Educator A: to the effect that ‘not all educators attend developmental workshops’ on the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).

4.4.4.4. Changing the attitude of educators towards curriculum development

Arguably, the most demanding aspect of effective curriculum development in a school is the creation of a commonly shared vision and understanding about the importance of curriculum development and this relates to the specifics of an institutional culture of the school. When this point was raised during the second cycle the three educators pointed out that they felt they were succeeding in changing their attitudes with regard to curriculum development. The subsequent changes in their attitudes could be attributed to the information workshops organized by the department of education as well as the discussions that transpired during the research. Verbal communication also

played a role in creating a collected vision and understanding of the significance of curriculum development.

4.5 Drawing conclusions

In drawing conclusions, the most important point to bear in mind is the fact that the researcher is the main research instrument in this study. Consequently, he is the collaborator in the creation of the ‘field texts’ as well as ‘research texts’. Conclusions in a study of this nature take the form of the researchers’ own interpretations of the respondents’ views and suggestions. These interpretations seek to uncover assumptions underpinning particular comments and views expressed by informants.

The general aim of the study as outlined in Chapter 1 is to uncover the different ways of understanding the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development. The conclusions listed below are developed from data collected by means of both observations and interviews:

- Respondents and informants showed a marked preference for a variety of teaching strategies such as action research as one of the strategies that may be used in curriculum development. Infact they were in favour of using a more effective way in curriculum development.
- The responses of the respondents and informants to questions reflected an awareness of the need for the schools to become academically competent while paying attention to its local needs. This awareness was particularly evident in the views expressed by the informants who participated in the interviews.
- More material, such as educator-learner support material (TLSM), human and financial resources are needed for effective curriculum development. As a way of dealing with the obvious shortage of resources, the respondents and informants felt that the school should decentralize power to educators. This would result in the involvement of educators in the effective process of curriculum development.

- Fundamental changes needed to be made in the school in order to ensure effective means of curriculum delivery. Effective curriculum development should become everybody's business. This may be achieved through the creation of a common vision and understanding among educators.
- The respondents and informants also believed that all educators should be empowered to become researchers of their practice

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the research study conducted on curriculum development by educators. This chapter also provides a brief overview of the main conclusions of the study and suggests aspects of curriculum development, which require further investigation. Furthermore this chapter also includes some recommendations based on the findings about curriculum development.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter one of focussed mainly on the research problem and research question. The research focus and purpose of curriculum development in the classroom is also looked at. The research methodology (qualitative research) and the research method (action research) used in this study were also discussed. This study also included research techniques used, such as interviews, observation and meetings. The methods used in data analysis are also included in this chapter.

In chapter two literature review was done. This chapter has approached its analyses of curriculum development as one of the prominent fields of the department of education at the school level. It is very important to note that curriculum development is an on-going process that will last as long as we have educators and learners. The framework policy of the new education authorities has separated formulation from implementation, thereby weakening the chances of effecting changes. This is a process that may not succeed without the involvement of educators as curriculum developers. As a result OBE and Curriculum2005 have brought with them numerous problems in transforming education due to the lack of consultation with relevant stakeholders. In curriculum development, the involvements of the educator as well as methods used in their teaching practices were examined.

It becomes important to recognize that the role of educators is constantly changing and these changes are necessitated by the needs of the people. The launch of OBE also posed a challenge to educators in that their role changed. There is a critical need for the educator to deliver with resources a curriculum that is totally different into post-apartheid schools. Some review on methods used previously in teaching and learning was done in order to find out if there is any effective curriculum development taking place in schools.

Different views and ideas from different authors on curriculum development were also adopted to support the study. This chapter has clearly demonstrated that curriculum development comprises a number of phases without which it may not be fully developed. The significance of active educator involvement in curriculum development as professionals with a better understanding of the curriculum is clearly demonstrated.

In chapter three, the methodology, method and research techniques used in the study were discussed. The study is an action research study, hence two cycles were followed. In collecting data the techniques used were observations, interviews and meetings. The reasons for choosing action research were clearly discussed. The main purpose of the study discussed was to get answers that would correspond to the research problem. The answers obtained were used in improving the teaching and learning activities. The site and participants chosen were also discussed.

In conclusion to this chapter I believe that educational practice involves a commitment on the part of educational researchers inside and outside the educational process to the improvement of education. Clearly, it involves educators in researching education, and it can also involve parents, learners, school management teams and others. The success of educational practice lies mainly in the improvement of actual educational practices, the improvement of the understandings of those involved in the educational processes, and the improvement of situations in which those practices are carried out. It is through a more detailed analysis of action research that educational practices may improve.

In chapter four the presentation and analysis of data was done. The analysis and interpretation of data collected was done through open and axial coding. The reasons in this regard were that the two coding systems supplement each other. Chapter five dealt mainly with the conclusion and recommendations.

5.3 CRITICAL REFLECTION

A great attempt has been made to make this study a success by involving more than one participant by looking at comparative literatures on action research. This would enable the study to compare and draw conclusions. Interventions, in the form of discussions used in this study highlighted the significance of sharing knowledge, experiences, skills and expertise among educators in order for them to improve curriculum development at the school level.

The time taken to conduct and make this study a success is also highly valued. The findings of the research indicated a positive response to the research question “What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development?” It is clear that educators need to share a common understanding and interpretation of the curriculum development process in terms of planning, resources, teaching methods, strategies and educator training. They also need more knowledge and information about effective teaching and learning in order to improve their teaching practice.

Quite a number of factors exists that made it difficult to conduct the research. To mention a few, it was for the first time for the participants and the researcher to engage in such an activity. Although it was an eye-opener to some extent but it was a difficult exercise for the educators. It has made us to understand the urgent need for educators to engage in reflective practice so as to improve the curriculum development process. Action research made it easier for educators to realize their own mistakes and improve on them. Teaching and learning became more interesting to both educators and learners.

5.4 . RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the duty of all educators to make sure that they actively engage themselves in effective curriculum development. By so doing they will have a sense of ownership of the curriculum development process that would lead to effective teaching and learning. I therefore have a few recommendations to make in order that our education may improve:

- The poor academic standards that we achieve in our education system are a result of inactive participation of most educators in teaching and learning. I then recommend that educators be motivated to do justice to their professional work. Educators need to be motivated to do research on their own practices so that they can understand their role in shaping educational practice. A change of attitude and conduct in educational institutions can also assist educators in improving their performance. It is crucial that educators do proper planning of their work so that teaching and learning may improve. Such planning must be informed by the needs of the learners.
- Educators also need clarity on understanding and interpretation of the curriculum development process as well as strategies to use in developing the curriculum. Some educators lack knowledge, expertise and skills to effectively implement the curriculum. I recommend that educators be equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to develop the curriculum. Educators may achieve this by providing resources that will encourage learners to raise questions within the framework of classroom activities. By so doing learners get the opportunity to interact with teaching and learning resources. Learners construct and develop their own knowledge, which will help them to face future challenges.
- The time allocated for in-service training, workshops and seminars is too short for educators to understand and become fully empowered to develop the curriculum. To qualify as an educator we need three years of training or more. In educator training, the development of reflective practice should be the

underlying principle in courses offered to educators. The courses designed to provide for professional development for educators should be designed such that they provide experience of theory and practice of reflection within a framework of experiential learning. The in-service training given to educators is not comprehensive enough to make educators become reflective practitioners in their work. Three weeks training is insufficient if we really want our educators to improve the curriculum development process. Such training should be an on-going process to enable educators develop professionally and respond promptly to learners' needs.

- I also recommend that educators be involved in all the phases of curriculum development that is, from inception up to the implementation phase of the curriculum as this is their field as professionals of the teaching and learning process. May be we would not be having much confusion as we had with the OBE implementation if educators were involved right from its inception. This is the duty of the department of education.

This study has revealed that the application of action research as a curriculum development strategy has some benefits for educators. The role of educators changes from being bureaucrats who ultimately read following the syllabus to be reflective practitioners where reflection is seen as being fundamental to success in facilitating curriculum development. Different educators come up with different strategies that interest them, which they can use to solve problems they want to address. The practices of educators change as they implement their teaching strategies with an aim of improving curriculum development process. Even the situations in which educators work change in responding to the needs of learners. In such practices the educators become flexible in order to accommodate different learners' needs. In designing activities to be done in the classroom the educators would invite learners to reflect on what they already know, what they would like to know and considering ways in which plans could be implemented.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research study has many implications. The study has been conducted in one school only i.e. Nqaba high school. The findings in this empirical study may be true in some areas whilst in others it may not. The reason behind is that schools are situated in different areas and are affected by different contextual factors. Schools are also not yet equally resourced in terms of human and material resources. Researchers may therefore need to have standards for evaluating and assessing educators' involvement in curriculum development. This will help us arrive at a common goal of ensuring active educators' participation in curriculum development.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The research focus of this study has been mainly on a common understanding and interpretation of curriculum development by educators as well as strategies to use in order to develop the curriculum effectively. This study also makes it clear then that our education system may only improve if educators receive full recognition as professionals in education and take an active role in curriculum development process.

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EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE -INTERVIEW

1. How do you understand the concept 'curriculum development' and 'action research' within the classroom situation?
2. What contributions have you made with your colleagues towards curriculum development? Briefly explain your answer.
3. Do you get adequate support from the Departmental Officials, Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of Department and colleagues in order to develop the curriculum effectively?
4. How do you assist learners who experience difficulties/problems in coping with the curriculum development process in your class?
5. If you had an opportunity to change any two things in your curriculum development process, what would they be?

LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE-INTERVIEW

1. How do you feel about the type of work that you do in this grade as a learner?

Briefly explain your answer.

2. Does your educator allow you enough time to participate in the lessons as well as to give you adequate support in doing schoolwork?

3. Does your educator supervise, control, mark and in so doing indicate to you how you may improve your academic performance?

4. Does your educator honour the lesson periods as well as attend your class on a regular basis?

5. Do you have continuous assessment tasks regularly?

Annexure A

Minutes of the meeting held between the researcher and the Human and Social Sciences educators of Nqaba High School.

Venue : **Nqaba High School**
Time : **14:30 – 15:30**
Date : **15-08-2005**
Place : **Principal's office**

I, as a researcher explained the purpose of the meeting that I want to do research on curriculum development in grade eight classes. The educators present as participants were Educator A, Educator B and Educator C. The three participants would also be interviewed and observed in their lesson presentations.

I explained that the research I am going to conduct is for academic purposes. I also assured them of the confidentiality of information. I therefore requested them to help me. I also indicated that there would be observations and interviews where a tape recorder will be used to record information. When everybody was satisfied I then again stressed that research is mainly done for the purpose of my study and nothing more.

The meeting closed at 15h30.

Chairperson: Researcher
(Researcher)

Secretary: ms TC (acronym)
(Educator)

ANNEXURE B I

Observation instrument and field notes –First observation during the first lesson observation, the educators are teaching without prior intervention/remarks

Activities observed	Frequency for period	Total
Learners participation	11111	5
Questions by learners	1111	4
Learner's responses to questions	1111111	7

The lessons started at 9:45 for all educators in grade eight, during week one. Learners were seated in groups of five to six. The topic of the lesson was on Robben Island. The medium of instruction was English and the educators explained the meaning of the word “Island”. Educators were asking questions during the course of the lessons and a few responses were received from the learners. Learners were given class work to do. Learners also asked a few questions on class work given. By 10:45 the period was over and I thanked the learners for participating in the lesson.

Annexure B 2

Observation instrument and field notes – second observation.

In this observation the educators were teaching with remarks in mind made during our discussions.

Activities observed	Frequency for period	Total
Action research contributions	111111111111	12
Questions by learners	11111111111111	15
Learner responses to questions	1111111111	10

The lessons started at 8:45 and ended at 9:45 for all lessons in week two. The lesson topic was on calculating area. Background knowledge questions were asked with regard to calculations. The educators had some pictures to use in the lesson presentation. Learners tried to answer questions. Learners were listening attentively. The learners' response to the lesson was positive. The bell would sometimes ring whilst learners are given some homework to do. I thanked the learners in appreciation of their improved involvement in the lesson.

Annexure C I

Project: To find out about knowledge, understanding and interpretation educators have about curriculum development and how to make them effective in their curriculum development endeavour.

Time of interview: 11h00

Date : 23-08-2005

Venue : Nqaba High School

Interviewer : Researcher

Interviewee : Educator A

Question : What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development?

Eh . . . eh their views and suggestions must be recognized that is point number one. Why... eh... why? This would help to stimulate a feeling of being part of the proceedings. Teachers would then feel responsible towards the success of the curriculum. Yes, we need this. I don't know but participation would help to explain the reasons and requirements of various aspects of the curriculum. This would enable the teachers to fully comprehend what is expected of each of the role players in curriculum development.

Annexure C2

Project: To find out about knowledge, understanding and interpretation educators have about curriculum development and how to make them effective in their curriculum development endeavour.

Time of interview: 12H30

Date : 23-08-2005

Venue : Nqaba High School

Interviewer : Researcher

Interviewee : Educator B

Question : What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development?

Interviewee : Yah a curriculum that is flexible and open you see, for individual innovation and resourcefulness would stimulate interest. A prescriptive sort of curriculum would dampen the morale of educators, just like apartheid. A curriculum that fulfils its objectives would create a sense of stability and security and thus teachers would want to work on it. Educators would want to be encouraged to participate in curriculum development, which would give them a chance to access their input as well as the success or shortcomings of their opinions.

Annexure C3

Project: To find out about knowledge, understanding and interpretation educators have about curriculum development and how to make them effective in their curriculum development endeavour.

Time of interview: 14H00

Venue : Nqaba High School

Date : 23-08-2005

Interviewer : Researcher

Interviewee : Educator C

Question : What is the nature of the relationship between action research and curriculum development?

Interviewee : Usafuna more? Okay ... eh ... educators need to have a thorough knowledge on all aspects of the curriculum falling within their fields of specialisation. Educators need skills to inculcate the value of learning by doing among learners. Knowledge of facts is not enough; learners must have the skills to solve day-to-day life problems of their community and society.

Mm ... educators need to improve on the skills of objectiveness in assessing learners and their work. Educators need the skill to handle learners of various age groups, right? Environments and social background. The deficit categories of learners need to be integrated and developed without anyone feeling inferior, just like From I, II etc.

This eh. ...Lack of resources like space, teaching and learning aids, capital leads to lack of motivation among learners who then develop an attitude that schooling is a waste of time. Lack of role models in the society leads to demotivation and lesser will to succeed.

Yes okay participation will lead to eh... umdlandla in English ye motivation. A motivated educator will be able to motivate learners. As educators feel they are part of the process, they will have a more positive outlook in their work. Educators will develop a sense of identity with what they feel is theirs and belongs to them. This is what I can tell Hm.... Bekunzima ngoba othisha othisha.

Annexure D 1

- Interview** : With Educator B.
- Date** : 26 – 08 – 2005
- Time** : 14h00
- Place** : Principal’s office
- Interviewer** : Do educators apply action research strategy in curriculum development?
- Interviewee** : This OBE of theirs has got a lot of paperwork. How can the department expect educators to fill all these forms? One needs to assess his or her class and at the same time to teach learners. Educators also need to attend workshops sometimes for the whole week. Some learners register for grade eight not knowing how to spell words correctly. Some cannot write whilst others cannot read. The best therefore is to teach all this i.e. reading and writing.
- Interviewer** : Thank you, for your contributions. Hoping that we will work together until the end.

Annexure D 2

- Interview** : Educator C.
- Date** : 26 – 08-2005
- Time** : 15h00
- Place** : Principal’s office
- Interviewer** : Do educators apply action research in curriculum development?
- Interviewee** : “Curriculum development in grade eight needs highly skilled people in the new approach i.e. OBE. Besides that educators need enough time for training in OBE. Educators also complained that very little time is given for training whilst at the same time they need to teach in their normal daily classes.”
- Interviewer** : Thank you Sir for your comments.

Annexure D 3

Date	:	15/08/2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator A
Grade	:	8
Learning Area	:	Human and Social Sciences (HSS)
Topic	:	How is Robben Island situated and its purpose.
Duration	:	60 Minutes
Aim	:	To make learners aware of the situated ness of Robben Island. They need to know and understand the purpose served by Robben Island and its importance in South African history.
Objectives	:	Learners will know at the end of the lesson as to what was happening in Robben Island.
Introduction	:	The educator will ask learners to tell what they know about Robben Island, generally. The educator will also explain the meaning of concepts like 'Island'.

Presentation

- Island is a part of land that is surrounded by seawater.
- Robben Island is one of such places.
- Place where political prisoners were kept
- Prisoners would not escape easily
- Former First Black State President in South Africa, Dr Nelson Mandela lived there.
- Most people who violated the rules of the country were imprisoned there.

Evaluation

Questions will be asked to test the level of understanding.

Annexure D 4

Date	:	15-08-2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator B
Grade	:	8
Learning Area	:	Human and Social Sciences (HSS)
Topic	:	Robben Island
Duration	:	60 minutes
Aim	:	To make learners understand the political role of Robben island prison and its importance in the South African history.
Objective	:	Learners will know the political role of Robben Island prison in the South African history.
Introduction	:	The educator will request learners to research from textbooks and handouts about the island.
Presentation	:	Learners will be expected to work in groups Learners will also be expected to participate in the lesson Each group will have a leader to present on their behalf The educator will at the end synthesize the findings of learner groups on Robben Island
Evaluation	:	Homework will be given at the end of the lesson

Annexure D 5

Date	:	15-08-2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator C
Grade	:	8
Learning Area	:	Human and Social Sciences (HSS)
Topic	:	The role of Robben Island in the South African history
Duration	:	60minutes
Aim	:	To make learners understand why Robben Island was used for the imprisonment of political prisoners
Objective	:	Learners will know the role of political prisoners that were kept in the island.
Introduction	:	The educator will introduce the lesson to the learners Learners will be organized into groups of 6-7 members per group. The educator will teach learners since the class is overcrowded and it is not easy to apply individual attention to learners experiencing problems Learners will also be requested to refer to a few handouts available. The educator also has to discipline learners who sometimes misbehave during the course of the lesson.
Evaluation	:	Learners will be given a test as a way assessing learner performance in the classroom.

Annexure E 1

Date	:	22/08/2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator A
Grade	:	8
Topic	:	How to calculate area.
Duration	:	60 Minutes
Aim	:	To make learners know how to calculate area of their classroom. They will know how to go about measuring length and breadth of the sides of the classroom.
Objectives	:	Learners will know the meaning of area and scale which is 1:50 000.
Presentation	:	The educator will draw a sketch of a four-sided figure.
STEP I	:	Two sides will be equal to each other in terms of length.
Two	:	sides will show the length and two showing the breadth.
STEP II	:	The term area will be defined as well as scale. An example of a 1: 50 000 will be used.
STEP III	:	Length and breadth will be measured. The short and long sides will be identified.
STEP IV	:	The meaning of scale. The use of scale on topographic maps The formula to be used. The use measurements obtained in relation to formula.
Evaluation	:	Learners will be asked to measure the sides of their exercise books to assess their level of understanding.

Annexure E 2

Date	:	22-08-2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator B
Grade	:	8
Topic	:	Area
Duration	:	60minutes
Aim:	:	To make learners understand how to calculate area
Objectives	:	Learners will know how to calculate area and to relate theory into practice
Presentation	:	The educator will define terms like ‘area’, ‘length’ and ‘breadth’ with learners Learners will be taught how to calculate area using the formula. Learners will be taught how to measure length using a ruler. Learners will be assigned different tasks to do as classwork.
Evaluation	:	Homework will be given to learners

Annexure E3

Date	:	22-08-2005
Name of school	:	Nqaba High School
Educator	:	Educator C
Grade	:	8
Topic	:	Calculating Area
Duration	:	60minutes
Aim	:	To enable learners to understand what area is all about and how to calculate it
Objectives	:	Learners will understand how to calculate area
Presentation	:	Learners will be organized into groups The educator will introduce the lesson in the form of questions. The educator will also explain difficult concepts like 'area'. Learner groups will be assigned different tasks. Both the educator and learners will deal with questions and problems that arise from the lesson
Evaluation	:	Questions will be asked to assess the level of understanding of learners.

Annexure F 1

Interview : Educator A

Date : 22-08-2005

Time : 14h00

Place : Principal's office

Interviewer : How do you understand curriculum development as an educator for an educator for

Interviewee: I think I have “improved greatly” in my teaching style because the style I am using allows me enough time to check on my work. I keep on checking whether I am still on the right track or not with my learners. Even the learners are very active now in class. They participate in tasks assigned to them. We have now started planning together as educators of the same grade and we share our experiences and knowledge about the subject.

Interviewer : Tell me more

Interviewee : I am very excited about my performance and that is all

Interviewer : Thank you sir. Keep it up.

Annexure F2

Interview : Educator B
Date : 22-08-2005
Time : 14h30
Place : Principal's office
Interviewer : How do you understand curriculum development concept and what are your strengths as an educator for the learning area that you teach?

Interviewee : Curriculum development has to do with good teaching practises that enable learners to benefit from our education system. It needs educators who are highly dedicated and motivated to do their work. As a qualified

educator, I am highly motivated to do my work and I am only short of resources to use in my profession in order that I become effective. I have learnt to co-operate and share knowledge with my colleagues. I also enjoy working with my learners since they now engage in learning and are prepared to do work.

Interviewer: Thank you sir hoping that you have benefited from our meeting.

Annexure F3

Interview : Educator C
Date : 22-08-2005
Time : 15h00
Place : Principal's office

Interviewer: How do you understand curriculum development concept and what are your strengths as an educator in the learning area that you teach?

Interviewee: I feel it is my responsibility to make sure that effective teaching and learning takes place in grade eight. During this research period I feel I have made big progress in my class and I feel much more empowered to do my work .The kind of support I have received from my colleagues has made me feel strong and empowered in doing my work. Working with colleagues makes things easier. The effective use of a few resources that we have at our disposal makes a big difference in promoting understanding of lessons. It also promotes participation of learners in the lesson.

Interviewer: Thanks for your co-operation in making this study a success.

