

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Until 1994 the education system in South Africa often conflicted with world trends, preferring to serve the ends of a segregated society. The vast inequities between the advantaged and the disadvantaged sectors of the education system and their legacies of illiteracy, under-education and deprivation of the majority of South Africans cannot be eliminated by maintaining the very systems of education that helped cause such inequities (Greenstein, 1997: 7). The end of apartheid and the emergence of a democratic state in 1994 ushered in changes in various social arenas in South Africa. Education is but one of these arenas of change (Lubisi & Murphy, 2002: 255). One of the main reasons for change is that the old curriculum, apart from being the product of a universally discredited past, was considered inappropriate for a developing economy in the 21st century (Glover & Thomas, 1999: 105). The global forces of politics and economy had made the choice of the outcomes-based education (OBE) model inevitable (Bhola, 2002: ix).

South Africa is introducing its own version of OBE as the basis of Curriculum 2005 (Claasen & Malan, cited in Malan, 2000: 22). At the heart of the new education and training system is the new national curriculum, Curriculum 2005 and its OBE approach. On 24 March 1997, the Minister of Education, S. Bhegwell announced in Parliament the launch of Curriculum 2005, which not only marked a dramatic departure from the apartheid curriculum but also represented a paradigm shift from content-based teaching and learning to an outcomes-based one (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani, 2002: 178-179). Curriculum 2005 marked the implementation of the vision of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Bhola, 2002: x).

The Department of Education (1997a: 1) has, as its point of departure, the following rationale for curriculum change:

- In the past the South African curriculum perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship and

nationhood. It is therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of a new democratic society.

- The Lifelong Learning through a National Curriculum Framework document, which is informed by principles derived from the White Paper on Education and Training (1995), emphasises the need for major changes in education and training in South Africa in order to normalise and transform teaching and learning.
- Emphasis is placed on the necessity for a shift from the traditional aims-and-objectives approach to outcomes-based education.

According to Reddy, Department of Education and Arjun (cited in Malan, 2000: 22) curriculum compilers in South Africa hail OBE as a major paradigm shift in education. This paradigm shift, embodied in a National Curriculum Framework document, is a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of the following vision for South Africa to give effect to a new democratic constitution: “A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice” (Department of Education 1997a: 1). A major initiative to make this vision a reality has been the development of the NQF, a coordinating structure and mechanism intended to respond to the fragmented, inequitable system of education (Department of Education, 1997b).

The new curriculum was modeled according to William Spady’s version of OBE. William Spady, who is regarded as OBE’s leading advocate, has defined OBE as a “comprehensive approach to organizing and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning outcomes sought from each learner” (Spady, 1994: 1). Outcomes are clear learning results that learners have to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences and are actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully (Spady, 1994: 1). Regarding the OBE paradigm, Spady (1994: 8) states: **what** and **whether** learners learn successfully is more important than **when** and **how** they learn something. OBE is thus a “learner-centered, results-orientated approach designed on the belief that all individuals can learn” (Department of Education, 1997b: 17).

Based on Spady’s model South African education and training would now be integrated to deliver instruction with pre-determined measurable outcomes, leading to qualifications that

were certifiable and portable. However, the assumptions made about the realities in the field, about educators' capacities and commitments, the abilities of school principals to lead such an effort, the available choices of texts and curriculum products to buy or borrow for use in schools, were not given sufficient consideration (Bhola, 2002: 1).

Further shortcomings included the management of the curriculum process from its conceptualisation, formulation adoption and implementation. The first criticism according to Portenza and Monyokolo (cited in Cross *et al.*, 2002: 181) was the lack of alignment between curriculum development, educator development, selection and supply of learning materials. This lack of co-ordination and interface of the three key components of curriculum led to poor implementation. Ad-hoc workshops were introduced in place of educator training and tied to a cascade training model. This situation was accompanied by a lack of relevant materials, and delays as well as non delivery of such materials. As Christie (cited in Cross *et al.*, 2002: 181) clearly points out, the curriculum was poorly planned and hastily introduced in schools with educators being insufficiently prepared, with inadequate resources.

An additional problem was that the role of the educators in curriculum design became marginal and the curriculum was framed and mystified by jargon. Curriculum 2005 has been criticized for using complicated language, which is not understood by educators who are supposed to implement it according to Christie and Jansen (cited in Cross *et al.*, 2002: 181). At the design level, there seems to be consensus that Curriculum 2005 fell short of constituting an effective curriculum framework for educators and learners. However, given the poor training of educators and lack of resources, as well as the toll that apartheid had inflicted on the education system, the majority of educators found it difficult to know what to teach and tended to act as mere technicians without the necessary conceptual and content tools.

Based on the new OBE and Curriculum 2005 educators are expected to choose their own curricular texts and instructional materials as long as the required learning outcomes are achieved according to established standards (Bhola, 2002: 1). The National Department of Education also expects educators to produce particular agreed-upon outcomes of education and training, but what content and what texts were used to produce those outcomes was not to be constrained. This has led to much confusion and uncertainty among the majority of educators. Choice of content actually taught is to be decided by the educators, administrators,

parents and community leaders. Classroom processes of organisation and instruction are to be democratic. Evaluation should be both formative and summative (Bhola, 2002: x). Educators feel overwhelmed by all the changes they have had to deal with during the past three years (Malan, 2000: 1). The one aspect which they feel most unsure of and which they mention repeatedly in interviews and casual conversation is the issue of assessment. The assessment requirements of the curriculum policy have presented strong challenges to most educators.

Assessment forms an integral component of outcomes-based education and it is widely agreed in education policy circles in South Africa today that a paradigm shift in assessment is required in order to ensure that assessment practices guide, support and underpin the transformative outcomes-based model for education and training (Pahad, 1999: 247). However, the practical implication of this shift is not well understood. In spite of evidence put forward over the last 30 years showing the powerful influence of assessment, it is still the most neglected aspect of curriculum policy. According to Pahad (1999: 247), consensus is emerging about several broad principles of assessment. These include the need to use assessment formatively and developmentally, to make the assessment criteria explicit and the assessment process transparent (Pahad, 1999: 247). These principles flow directly from the guiding principles of the education and training policy in South Africa, and focus on quality, relevance, equity and access. They are reflected in the standards setting, assessment and quality assurance processes that aim to make the NQF viable. However, there is very little practical help for educators and other practitioners trying to assess learners within the new outcomes-based curriculum (Pahad, 1999: 247).

Thus, schools, educators and provincial education departments are faced with a new curriculum that is a radical departure from the past. To lead the process of change and educational transformation in the light of the new constitution and consequent policy changes the Ministry of Education required all public schools to review their management practices (Department of Education and Culture, 1999: 3). School management teams (SMTs) were expected to move from a rigid authoritarian model of education to one radically different, based on outcomes.

In the past, principals and heads of department did not play a strong role in instructional leadership; instead it was their job, mainly, to control educators and learners. They collected subject syllabi from circuit offices and checked that educators taught the prescribed syllabi

and they only used prescribed textbooks (Department of Education, 2000a: 1). SMTs also performed administrative duties whilst the Department of Education made the managerial decisions. The principals worked in environments that were very bureaucratic and controlling and they were used to receiving and giving instructions (Department of Education, 2000a: 18 & 19). It would thus be naive to expect SMTs and educators to make the transition from an inequitable system of education in which educators were mere instruments in the teaching of a centrally prescribed syllabus to facilitators of learning in a democratic country without support. Similarly, the expectation that SMTs and educators could simply make the transition from being instruments of delivery to curriculum designers and mediators of learning is problematic. Despite this, SMTs are expected to ensure curriculum delivery at their schools and to ensure that the outcomes of the new curriculum are attained. This implies monitoring and moderating educators' assessment processes to determine the achievement of outcomes in the new curriculum.

Hence, crucial to the study is the role played by the SMT in managing outcomes-based assessment and making the paradigm shift that is necessary, since SMTs are key change agents in a school. The new educational policies require school leaders and managers to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery of quality education for learners (Department of Education and Culture, 1999: 15). Moreover, the study focuses on the experiences of Foundation Phase educators and the implementation of outcomes-based assessment.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The move to an outcomes-based education, presents South African educators with a challenge significant enough to be called a paradigm shift. According to Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1998: v) this shift has led to fear and even anger in educational institutions country-wide as educators grapple with the implications that this shift holds for their lives and work.

A crucial issue in outcomes-based learning is the attainment of certain outcomes which have been made explicit. A key role of assessment, therefore, is determining whether or not these outcomes have been attained (Lubisi *et al.*, 1998: 12). This therefore implies that educators have to change the way in which they assess learners using a variety of assessment methods, tools and techniques. Coupled with this change comes a move to larger class sizes where

individual assessment has become difficult. This has led to frustration on the part of educators as well as learners. The inability of many educators to demonstrate any convincing links between what they assess in their daily practice and the critical and specific outcomes is cause for concern. In this study the researcher shall endeavour to demonstrate that assessment guidelines and policies cannot be implemented effectively unless educators understand why they are assessing, what they are assessing, and how to assess in a manner appropriate to the purpose of the assessment, by focusing on the role played by the SMT in bridging the gap between policy and practice. Given the difficulties that are associated with OBE assessment, it is important to investigate ways in which these problems are being manifested and managed in the school context. The main research question is: What role can the Senior Management Team of the school play in effectively managing outcomes-based assessment in the Foundation Phase?

The following sub-problems will be examined:

- What are the experiences and perceptions of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment?
- What, if any, strategies are the SMTs employing to overcome the problems that Foundation Phase educators are experiencing in translating assessment policy into practice?

### **1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of the proposed study is therefore two fold. In the first instance, the study investigates the role and function of the SMT in effectively managing outcomes-based assessment. Secondly, it focuses on the perceptions of Foundation Phase educators who operationalise the changes guided by the SMT. The proposed study aims to:

- identify the experiences and perceptions of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment;
- investigate the role played by the SMT in effectively managing outcomes-based education and more specifically outcomes-based assessment; and

- encourage reflective practice by the SMT and an enhanced understanding of outcomes-based assessment.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The information below outlines the research design chosen for the study as well as a brief explanation of the theory underpinning the methodology, the way in which the research is conducted and the procedure for analysis. The research design will be discussed in greater depth in chapter three of this study.

### **1.4.1 Qualitative research paradigm**

The research design will focus on a qualitative approach to the study. According to Burgess (1985: 4-5), the essence of the qualitative approach lies firstly in its focus on the observed present. An attempt is made to obtain a participant's account of the social setting without disturbing the process of social life within this setting. The focus of the qualitative approach is on the participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel & Wallen; Locke *et al.*; Merriam, cited in Creswell, 1994: 162). The method to be employed in examining the research question and to gather, collate and interpret relevant data on the role of the SMT in managing outcomes-based assessment will be:

- A review of the relevant literature focusing on outcomes-based education and assessment. The instructional leadership role of the SMT will also be explored;
- Use of semi-structured interviews to elicit information relevant to the study from the SMT and educators; and
- Document analysis, which comprises an examination of all documents/ records related to outcomes-based assessment at the school.

According to Berg, (cited in Schurink, 1998: 261), more than one method should be used to collect data, since the different methods provide "different facets of the same symbolic reality" and more valid results can thus be obtained.

## **1.4.2 Setting**

The setting chosen for the study is a primary school in Durban in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The identified primary school has a learner population of 812 and a staff composition of 26 educators. The focus of the study is on the Foundation Phase with a learner population of 320 learners. The reasons for the choice is twofold: the researcher is a member of staff this facilitates easy access to the school, and secondly, this particular school has a weekly staff development programme focusing on transformation of the curriculum including outcomes-based assessment initiated by the SMT. This will reveal the extent to which educators have embraced OBE and Curriculum 2005. In order to gain entry into the field the researcher sought permission from the principal and the chosen participants. The purpose and methods of the research were explained in such a way that the participants could understand its benefits, as well as the researcher's intention to collect data in an objective manner.

## **1.4.3 Interviews**

Interviews are important in exploring day-to-day interactions and determining how members of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators construct their social reality and the meanings they attach to events or actions associated with their assessment practices. Interviews are therefore one of the methods chosen for the study. In this study semi-structured, interviews will be conducted with each member of the SMT and each Foundation Phase educator using a separate in-depth interview schedule for the SMT and educators respectively. The first section of the interview schedule will require demographic details of the participants and the additional sections will be derived from the literature survey on outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership. The semi-structured interview schedule for educators will be divided into two broad sections with several sub-questions following each section. The first section will focus on educators' perceptions and experiences of outcomes-based assessment. The second section will focus on their perceptions of the role of the SMT in managing assessment. The SMT's interview schedule will have a management perspective focusing on members' roles and responsibilities in managing outcomes-based assessment, namely their instructional leadership role. The actual design of the interview schedule is discussed in further detail in chapter 3. Most questions will be open-ended questions to afford the research participants (educators and SMTs) an opportunity to answer questions from their own frames of reference. It is hoped that this study will yield meaningful insights into the SMT and



Foundation Phase educators' experiences, perceptions and judgments about outcomes-based assessment in their own context of managing teaching and learning.

#### **1.4.4 Sample**

Quantitative sampling concerns itself with representativeness while qualitative research requires that data to be collected must be rich in description of people and places (Patton, cited in Schurink, 1998: 253). For this reason the researcher will use purposive sampling methods. The participants chosen for the interviews are three members of the SMT who include the principal (male), deputy principal (male) and a head of department in the Foundation Phase (female) and educators who teach in the Foundation Phase, in the identified primary school. The intention behind selecting participants from the same school is that the researcher aims to understand an educational activity, specifically, the management of outcomes-based assessment practices within a bounded reality. The researcher wants to minimise the distance between the researcher and those being researched. As a general guideline, qualitative researchers will seek out groups and settings where the process to be studied will be most likely to occur (Marshall & Rossman, cited in Schurink, 1998: 253). The researcher is aware that the quality of the data depends on the ability of the researcher to establish rapport and to develop open and trustworthy relationships with participants. At the outset the researcher will assure participants of confidentiality and trust.

#### **1.4.5 Document analysis**

Document analysis will involve the analysis of documents related to the new Curriculum 2005, and in particular the assessment practices of this particular school, a careful examination of the relevant assessment documents namely, the school's assessment policy, assessment instruments and the assessment records and results. The key participants will be asked to select documents that would help to establish a profile of the present assessment practice in the school. The researcher envisages that the analysis of data will contribute to a rich description of the study, including an analysis of emerging themes and issues and interpretations and assertions about the school's assessment practice.

### **1.4.6 Data analysis procedure**

Comparisons will be drawn, similarities identified and a discussion of the research will be presented. Once the data have been generated, the researcher will organise the data and discover relationships or patterns through close scrutiny of the data. The data will be coded, categorized and condensed. The researcher will then interpret and draw meaning from the displayed data. In chapter four the findings of the interviews and the examination of the documents will be presented.

## **1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions have been established.

### **1.5.1 School Management Team**

The National Department of Education (2000: 2) defines the School Management Team (SMT) as a team that consists of the following members:

- Principal;
- Deputy principal;
- Heads of Department (either acting or appointed).

### **1.5.2 Assessment**

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement, evaluating this evidence against the outcomes; recording the findings of this evaluation; and, using this information to assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.3 Continuous assessment**

Continuous assessment is an ongoing everyday process that tracks what a learner knows, understands, values and can do. It provides information that is used to support the learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.4 Assessment criteria**

The assessment criteria indicate, in broad terms, the observable processes and products of learning which serve as evidence of the learner's achievement (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.5 Assessment tasks**

Assessment tasks are a series of tasks which are intended to obtain information about a learner's competence. These tasks may be workplace/ coursework/ classroom/ homework based or they may be set in an examination paper (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.6 Credit**

A credit is the recognition that a learner has achieved a unit standard. Credits may be accumulated until conditions have been met for the award of qualification (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.7 Criterion referencing**

Criterion referencing is the practice of assessing a learner's performance against an agreed set of criteria. In the case of OBE the learner is assessed against agreed criteria derived from the specific outcomes (Department of Education, 1998: 10).

### **1.5.8 Critical outcomes**

The critical cross-field outcomes underpin the Constitution and have been adopted by the South African Qualifications Authority. They are perceived to be generic to all fields of learning, all learning areas and all teaching, learning and assessment activities and are divided into two categories, namely:

- Outcomes that are regarded as critical to all learners' cognitive development;
- Additional outcomes that contribute not only to the full personal development of learners but also to the social and economic development of the country as a whole (Hoosain, 2003: 13).

### **1.5.9 Educator**

An educator is any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and educational psychological services, at any public school and who is appointed in a post on any educator establishment under the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, (No. 76 of 1998).

### **1.5.10 Evaluation**

The process of evaluation is whereby the information obtained through assessment is interpreted to make judgments about a learner's level of competence. It includes a consideration of a learner's attitudes and values (Department of Education, 1998: 11).

### **1.5.11 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is used to support the learner developmentally and to provide feedback into the teaching or learning process (Department of Education, 1998: 11).

### **1.5.12 Learning site**

A learning site refers to an environment in which learners are given the opportunity to achieve agreed upon outcomes (Department of Education, 1998: 11).

## **1.6 CHAPTER DIVISION**

This dissertation will be organised as follows:

- Chapter 1 Introduction, problem statement and aims of the study. The main focus of this study is posed in this chapter which includes an introduction to the problem, statement of the problem, aims of the research, definition of terms, research methodology and chapter division.
- Chapter 2 Outcomes-Based Education and Assessment and Instructional Leadership. This chapter presents a literature study and theoretical background for the research. The literature review covers policy requirements on outcomes-based education and assessment and instructional leadership.
- Chapter 3 Research methodology and procedures. This chapter describes the research methodology and procedures selected for the empirical investigation. Qualitative research methodology is utilised in this study.
- Chapter 4 Analysis of findings. This chapter focuses on how data analysis was done and the findings of the research. The focus is on the presentation and interpretation of data as well as the data analysis strategies used.
- Chapter 5 Summary, conclusions and recommendations. This chapter presents the main findings and conclusions of the study.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

Chapter one described the background, problem statement and aims of the study. Research methods, definition of terms and chapter division were discussed. The next chapter will include a literature study on OBE, assessment and instructional leadership.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Hansen (1989: 172) proclaims that the traditional methods of assessing student learning are increasingly being questioned. The belief that teachers teach, learners learn, and schools are successful has been challenged dramatically. Repeated studies and surveys show that learners are lacking fundamental skills and knowledge, basic elements that should constitute the core of learning. According to (Jamentz, 1994: 55), critics have charged that traditional assessment practices have been isolated from and are damaging to instruction, learning and school practices. The introduction of OBE as an instrument for the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in the classroom has a great impact not only on the teaching and learning practices but also on the way assessment is done in schools.

According to Harden, Crosby and Davis (1999: 7), in OBE the educational outcomes are clearly and unambiguously specified. Such an explicit statement serves to guide the teaching and learning process, and makes possible appropriate evaluation of these processes, and ultimately the selection of the outcomes themselves (Lubisi, *et al.*, 1998: 9). These outcomes determine the curriculum content and its organisation, the teaching methods and strategies, the courses offered, the assessment process, the educational environment and the curriculum timetable. Thus OBE has two requirements. First, the learning outcomes are identified, made explicit and communicated to all concerned, including the learners, the educators, the public, employers and other stakeholders. Second, the educational outcomes should be the overriding issue in decisions about the curriculum. They also provide a framework or curriculum evaluation. OBE encourages the educator and the learner to share responsibility for learning and outcomes can guide learner assessment and course evaluation (Harden *et al.*, 1999: 7).

Since SMTs are key change agents and have to manage the shift of the new assessment procedure in OBE they should have an in-depth understanding of the national Department of

Education's new policy on OBE and outcomes-based assessment, as well as the instructional leadership skills needed to manage OBE and outcomes-based assessment. This chapter will outline the theoretical background of OBE and outcomes-based assessment and more specifically an understanding of the sort of outcomes that should be covered in the new curriculum, the terminology used in OBE, how OBE should be implemented, how the educational outcomes should be assessed and the instructional leadership role of the SMT. The next section will outline the parameters for understanding the assessment procedures.

## **2.2 UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION**

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002: 24), OBE originated from the competence-based movement in education. Competence-based means that the emphasis falls on what learners can do, and not simply on what they might be able to repeat. Assessment therefore focuses on what competencies learners have actually achieved. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997: 7) describe outcomes-based education as an approach which requires educators and learners to focus their attention on two things:

- Firstly, the focus is on the desired end results of each learning process. These desired end results are called outcomes of learning and learners need to demonstrate that they have attained them. They will therefore continuously be assessed to ascertain whether they are making any progress.
- Secondly, the focus is on the instructive and learning process that will guide the learners to these end results. Educators are required to use the learning outcomes as a focus when they make instructional decisions and plan their lessons.

According to Lubisi *et al.*, (1998: 24-25), these outcomes are simply not vague statements about values, beliefs, attitudes, or psychological states of mind. Outcomes are what learners can actually do with what they know and have learned. They are the tangible application of what has been learned. This means that outcomes are actions and performances that reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully.

In order to implement OBE meaningfully and to achieve balance among all the aspects of the new curriculum mentioned above, SMTs and educators should understand the theory of outcomes-based education as a condition for meaningful implementation. Moreover, they should align themselves with the underlying beliefs and principles of OBE.

### **2.3 OBE'S KEY GLOBAL BELIEFS ABOUT LEARNING AND SUCCESS**

OBE is a movement conceived and developed chiefly by William Spady (Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 1993: 1). In his published works (cited in Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 29) he identifies the following beliefs and principles of a fully operational outcomes-based school. The beliefs that define genuine OBE efforts across the globe can be expressed in six key statements according to about learner learning and success (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 29):

- What and whether learners learn successfully is more important than exactly when, how, and from whom they learnt it.
- Schools exist to ensure that all their learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed to be successful after they exit the education system.
- Schools should be organised, structured and operated so that all their learners can achieve these life performance outcomes.
- All learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way.
- Successful learning promotes more successful learning, just as poor learning fosters more poor learning.
- Schools control key conditions and opportunities that directly affect successful school learning.

The message embedded in these six statements reflects a deep commitment to creating the conditions and using practices that help every learner become the most successful learner and performer she or he can possibly be. OBE practitioners expect all of their learners to be successful learners and performers and they do everything they can do to focus, organise, and operate their schools and classrooms to achieve that end. Three decades of formal research and experience have shown that this positive, learner-focused approach to education works (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 29). In all the countries where OBE or some of its principles are



being used, for example, Canada, Australia, the United States, Britain and New Zealand, there is strong commitment to sound outcomes-based principles (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 54). It is the responsibility of SMTs and educators to ensure that schools are aligned to the principles of the new curriculum.

## **2.4 KEY PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULUM 2005**

The OBE model in South Africa, which is similar to the global efforts described above, has the following underlying principles for curriculum reform. It is necessary that educators become aware of the principles of OBE as described by the Department of Education, (1997b: 12) which are:

- Integration of education and training;
- All learners will succeed. Time will no longer control the learning process. This means that not all learners will succeed at the same time. Instead, learners will be able to develop at the own pace;
- Learners will be expected to show what they have learnt in different ways. These will no longer only be exams. Outcomes will be assessed in other ways and on an on-going basis;
- Assessment is an integral part of the whole system. Learners will not get marks just for remembering subject content. Different aspects of the learners' abilities, such as their creativity and critical thinking will also be assessed;
- Learners will know what they are learning and why. They will be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. This will help to motivate them because they will be able to see the value of the programme.

It is the responsibility of SMTs to ensure that educators are familiar with the principles of OBE and understand the various mechanism of OBE. These include critical outcomes, specific outcomes, assessment criteria, range statements and performance indicators.

### 2.4.1 Critical outcomes

SMTs must ensure that educators are familiar with the critical outcomes. The critical outcomes have important implications for teaching and learning in the classroom. The rationale for each learning area, the learning area outcomes and the specific outcomes are all based on the critical outcomes. Curriculum 2005 is informed by twelve critical outcomes, which are in turn informed by the Constitution of South Africa. The first seven outcomes encourage the development of reflective, independent and productive citizens. According to Naicker, (1999: 97-98) these outcomes are as follows. Learners should be able to:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- Work effectively with other as members of a team, group, organisation and community;
- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic, and/ or language skills in various modes;
- Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

According to Naicker (1999: 98), to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and to social and economic development at large, the intention underlying any programme of learning should be to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- Exploring education and career opportunities; and
- Developing entrepreneurial opportunities

Keeping the critical and developmental outcomes in mind, it is the responsibility of SMTs to ensure that the school's curriculum policy is designed to achieve the critical and

developmental outcomes mentioned above. These broad cross-curricular outcomes form the basis from which the learning area outcomes are derived.

### **2.4.2 Learning area outcomes**

Instead of teaching the traditional participants in isolation from each other, OBE endorses a more holistic approach where integration of learning content is emphasised. In order to facilitate integration, the new, balanced curriculum is developed on the basis of learning areas. Every learning area has its own broad outcomes, which are called the learning area outcomes. These are the general skills, abilities and values, which a learner will be expected to demonstrate in that learning area (Lubisi *et al.*, 1999: 48). The learning area outcomes have important implications for SMTs. They must monitor whether educators are designing teaching and learning activities appropriate for a particular learning area. The specific outcomes will further assist educators in planning the teaching and learning activities.

### **2.4.3 Specific outcomes**

Specific outcomes are derived from the broad learning area outcomes and are context specific. The specific outcomes provide guidance to all educators in terms of devising learning programmes or learning experiences. These 66 specific outcomes are derived from the critical outcomes. These outcomes assist educators in making academic judgement and assist learners who must prove that they possess the skills and knowledge they claim. The specific outcomes in turn provide direction for the eight learning areas, with each learning area having a number of its 'own' specific outcomes (Naicker, 1999: 98). The new General Education and Training (GET) curriculum steers away from the idea that knowledge occurs in particular permanent packages: it puts participants into new families, learning areas, and then asks for learning programmes which concentrate on integration across various learning areas. Each of these learning areas is compulsory for the whole GET band (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999: 71). In the Foundation Phase however, the focus is on Numeracy, Literacy and Life Skills. Foundation Phase educators have to think about ways to bring the outcomes of the additional learning areas together within the three learning programmes which have been defined for this phase (Tiley & Goldstein, 1997: 1). The learning areas are:

- Communication, Literacy, and Language Learning;
- Numeracy and Mathematics;
- Human and Social Sciences;
- Natural Sciences;
- Arts and Culture;
- Economic and Management Sciences;
- Life Orientation;
- Technology.

#### **2.4.4 Range statements**

A range statement helps SMTs and educators to determine how far a learner needs to progress towards each of the 66 specific outcomes in one phase. Many of these 66 specific outcomes may overlap, especially in the Foundation Phase (Tiley & Goldstein, 1997: 10). Range statements provide important guidelines to SMTs and educators for the following reasons:

- A range statement indicates the scope, depth and level of complexity of the outcomes each learner is expected to demonstrate, as well as the context in which the outcomes will be demonstrated;
- Range statements therefore also delineate the critical areas of content, the processes and the contexts educators and learners should work with;
- Range statements ensure a balance between the acquisition of both knowledge and skills and the development of values;
- Range statements provide direction, but allow for multiple learning strategies and for flexibility in the choice of teaching methodologies and strategies;
- As they are part of the policy document, range statements will be similar for all provinces and all schools; and
- Assessment criteria (explained below) function within range statements (Naicker, 1999: 99)

### **2.4.5 Assessment criteria**

The goal of teaching is to help the learner to learn. In order to do so, the educator and the learner must know how well he or she is doing in reaching the educational outcome desired. Assessment is the process by which the educator and the learner gain knowledge of the learner's progress (Smith & Dollase, 1999: 19). Assessment criteria give SMTs and educators more detail on how a learner is progressing. The assessment criteria assist SMTs and educators in the following ways:

- Assessment criteria describe the learner's behaviour that would be partial evidence of the learner demonstrating the specific outcomes. Taken together, all the assessment criteria for a specific outcomes should enable an educator to determine whether a learner does indeed demonstrate an outcome;
- Assessment criteria therefore refer to observable processes and products of learning; and
- Assessment criteria indicate what kind of assessment will be applied (Naicker, 1999: 99).

The assessment criteria are a way of fine-tuning the performance indicator (Tiley & Goldstein, 1997: 10).

### **2. 4.6 Performance indicators**

Performance indicators provide SMTs and educators with further guidelines on how the learner is progressing towards each outcome. Performance indicators are important for the following reasons:

- Performance indicators describe essential developmental stages or stepping-stones towards ultimately demonstrating the outcome;
- They provide detailed information about what learners should know, feel and be able to do as well as about the learning contexts; and
- Educators use performance indicators to plan learning and assessment in more detail (Naicker, 1999: 99).

Meaningful teaching and learning cannot take place without some form of assessment or evaluation of how effective it has been. Assessment is therefore an integral part of the process of teaching and learning, but it is often misused. A crucial part of thinking about assessment is why you are doing it and how it influences further learning, that is the purpose and the effects of assessment (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 117). OBE is based on the philosophy that all learners can learn. The central idea is mastery learning-providing all learners the opportunity to master learning outcomes specified by the teacher according to O'Neill, (cited in Grover, 1994: 174). Mastery learning requires the careful planning of instruction, including assessment techniques, which enable the educator to evaluate learner progress toward the stated outcomes and to design additional learning activities for remediation or for enrichment. Frequent monitoring requires a variety of assessment procedures, and assessment results are employed to improve individual student performance (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1990: 152). Since assessment forms an integral component of OBE, the assessment of learner achievement focusing on the definition of assessment, how assessment works within the new framework, principles of assessment, the purpose of assessment, methods, tools techniques, what to assess, who assesses and recording and reporting of learner achievement will now be given special attention.

## **2.5 OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is a central feature of the new curriculum. Assessment in OBE focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learners' achievements at every level, whatever pathway they may have followed, and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence (Department of Education, 1998: 3-4). Unlike behavioural objectives, which educators have been encouraged to use in the past, outcomes are broader in scope and reflect goals, which require critical thinking or the ability to solve complex problems. "Such outcomes.... call on learners to synthesize their knowledge and skills, not merely regurgitate discrete facts" according to O'Neill, (cited in Grover, 1994: 174).

Within the new national curriculum framework, learning, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. Assessment has a developmental and monitoring function to fulfill. It is through assessment that the efficacy of the teaching and learning process can be evaluated; feedback from assessment informs teaching and learning and allows for the critique of outcomes, methodology and materials. Assessment practices can have a profound impact on

the processes of teaching and learning, since they set standards, which guide these activities. For all these reasons, the approach to assessment that is proposed in the new curriculum framework must support the approach to teaching and learning contained within it (Lubisi *et al.*, 1998: 12). Assessment thus plays a key role in the continuous monitoring of a learner's progress towards achieving these outcomes.

Willis and Kissane (1997: 10) describe the role of assessment as being to improve the quality of teaching and learning and relate assessment to five aspects of the teacher's work: planning (knowing and sharing what is learned); teaching (assessment as part of effective teaching and learning); recording (summarising, success and progress); reporting (providing useful feedback); and evaluating (using assessment to evaluate learning and teaching). These aspects will be discussed in subsequent sections. However, it is important for SMTs and educators to understand how assessment works within the new framework and to become familiar with the basic premise and principles of assessment.

### **2.5.1 Assessment within the new framework**

Assessment within the new framework is a radical departure from previous forms of assessment. According to Le Grange and Reddy (1998: 3) the way in which the learning and teaching process is understood influences the kind of assessment practices that are used. The traditional curriculum is based on a certain understanding of what educational processes try to achieve, so it has a certain form of assessment to match that understanding of the learning and teaching process. The new outcomes-based education and training curriculum is based on different understanding of the learning and teaching process and therefore requires a different form of assessment.

The previous testing system - which was a syllabus-based and norm-referenced system – was mainly concerned with sifting and categorising learners on the basis of the final product of 'learning' at the end of a period of teaching and learning. This mostly involved the memorising and recall of knowledge. Much emphasis was put on rote learning and the regurgitation of bodies of knowledge that educators imposed on learners.

Assessment within OBE aims to assist the learner and to help the educator improve his/ her teaching. This approach to assessment pays attention to both end products and processes. End

products could be acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as products in which these have been applied, for example, models, illustrations, dramas, and research essays. Processes could involve knowledge-related skills such as memorising and recall, but also other cognitive skills such as conceptual understanding, analysing, synthesising, evaluating, problem solving, and decision-making, estimating and counting. Skills, however, go wider than cognitive skills and include psychomotor skills (writing, cutting with scissors, catching a ball, etcetera.) and social interaction skills (communicating, negotiating, listening, etcetera). Attitudes pertain to self-image, tolerance, respect, empathy and empathy.

A central characteristic of assessment within the new system is that educators have to give learners continuous feedback during the learning process. This helps them to learn and improve their competencies.

Le Grange and Reddy (1998: 11) describe the main general differences between the old (traditional) and the new (continuous) system of assessment in Table 2.1 below.



Table 2.1: Differences between traditional, product-orientated assessment and continuous assessment

TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT	CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT
Is mainly made up to written and examinations that take place in formal settings.	Is made up a variety of assessment methods that can be formal and informal.
Is mainly used to decide whether or not the learner is promoted to the next grade.	Is used to inform teaching and learning processes.
Takes place after the learning process at dates and times previously decided on (summative).	Also takes place during the learning process when it is considered necessary (formative).
Is mostly norm-referenced rather than criterion-referenced.	Uses criterion referencing. (Individuals are not compared with others but are assessed in relation to previous performance in relation to particular criteria)
Provides isolated marks or percentages to show how learners have changed.	Provides information in context as feedback on how learners are changing.

(Le Grange & Reddy 1998: 11).

### 2.5.2 Basic principles and premises that inform the management of the assessment process

According to the assessment policy (Department of Education, 1998: 4-5), SMTs must focus on four areas, which are key to the successful management of the assessment process. These four areas are:

- Planning assessment;
- Using a variety of assessment methods, tools and techniques;
- Recording learner performance;
- Reporting learner performance.

SMTs must also guide educators to plan their assessment by focusing on the four basic principles as described in the circular by Gauteng Department of Education, (2000b: 5-6) when planning assessment in OBE, namely:

- Design down/ deliver up;
- Clarity of focus;
- High expectations; and
- Expanded opportunities.

**Design down** refers to planning backwards. The outcomes to be addressed through teaching and learning are first clearly stated before developing the teaching and learning activities the learners will be engage in. When planning assessment, educators must start by identifying outcomes to be assessed from those that are to be addressed through teaching and learning. The next step is to choose appropriate assessment methods, tools, techniques and activities to be used when assessing the chosen outcomes.

**Clarity** of focus means everyone involved must have a clear picture of what is wanted at the end. This implies that educators must ensure that learners are clear about the criteria against which they are to be assessed and therefore what they are expected to demonstrate.

**High expectations** imply that educators must assist learners to reach their full potential.

**Expanded opportunities** means that educators must find multiple ways of exposing learners to learning opportunities that will help them demonstrate their full potential in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

### **2. 5.3 The principles of assessment**

For assessment to be fair, valid and reliable, it must be in line with certain principles. SMTs should ensure that assessment processes in school match the principles outlined in the assessment policy document (Department of Education, 1998: 4-5). Effective assessment in OBE is underpinned by the following principles:

- The purpose of assessment should always be made explicit. The criterion-referenced approach is used;
- Assessment must be authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced;
- Assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process. It must be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient. Assessment takes many forms, gathers information from several contexts, and uses a variety of methods according to what is being assessed and the needs of the learner;
- The methods and techniques used must be appropriate to the knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be assessed as well as to the age and developmental level of the learner;
- It must be bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities;
- Assessment results must be communicated clearly, accurately, timeously and meaningfully;
- Progression should be linked to the achievement of the specific outcomes and should not be rigidly time bound; and
- Evidence of progress in achieving outcomes should be used to identify areas where learners need support and remedial intervention.

After a review of the definition of assessment, how assessment works in the new framework, and outlining the principles and premise of assessment, SMTs and educators have to understand the purpose of assessment, the types of assessment, what to assess and how to assess, which will be discussed in the sections that follow.

#### **2.5.4 The purpose of assessment**

Assessment in the form of tests and exams is so much part of SMTs and educators' experience of schools and learning that it seems absolutely natural. Educators seldom ask the question about whether it serves our purposes or whether there are alternative and better ways to judge whether learners have learnt what we want them to learn. In the new curriculum it is important for SMTs and educators to establish the purpose of assessment before they determine the content and method of assessment. It is important for educators to ask themselves why they want to assess before they decide what and how to assess. If educators know why they want to assess their learners, there is a better chance they would use assessment methods to fit the purpose of assessment (Lubisi *et al.*, 1998: 14).

The general aim of assessing learners in OBE is for growth, development and support (Department of Education, 2000d: 12). SMTs and educators should keep this in mind when designing teaching and learning activities. In keeping with the principles of the NQF, assessment will serve to:

- Determine whether the learning required for the achievement of the specific outcomes is taking place and whether any difficulties are being encountered;
- Report to parents and other role players and stakeholders on the levels of achievement during the learning process and to build a profile of the learner's achievement across the curriculum;
- Provide information for the evaluation and review of learning programmes used in the classroom; and
- Maximise learners' access to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values defined in the National Curriculum Policy (Department of Education, 1998: 5).

It is the responsibility of the SMT to monitor the assessment procedure of educators to ensure that the purposes outlined above are attained and that assessment in the Foundation Phase is a continuous feature of the new curriculum. The features of continuous assessment are outlined below.

### **2.5.5 Features of continuous assessment**

Continuous assessment (CASS) is an ongoing process that finds out what a learner knows, understands, values and can do, providing information that is used to support the learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process. In the Foundation Phase assessment is based entirely on continuous assessment. Educators and SMTs must understand that in the new curriculum all types of assessment must be continuous (Department of Education, 2000d: 13). The features of continuous assessment described in the circular by the Gauteng Department of Education, (2000b: 4-5) are:

- It takes place during the learning process, in everyday conditions;
- It is used to help the learner and the learning process (formative);
- It enables educators to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievements and progress;
- It makes more use of criterion referencing than norm referencing;
- It is transparent as learners are aware of the criteria against which they are assessed;
- It is diagnostic, enabling the educator to monitor strengths and to address the needs of the learner;
- It enables educators to pace learners and to provide enrichment for fast learners;
- It covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks;
- It ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment methods, both formal and informal;
- It encourages educators to appraise their own work;
- It requires the development of a sound assessment record to track learner progress and to provide useful data for reporting and progression; and

- It ensures that tests and examinations are only one component of the evaluation.

Therefore, when assessing learners on a continuous basis, SMTs should ensure that educators know what to assess.

### **2.5.6 What should educators assess?**

Some educators are unsure about exactly what they are supposed to assess in outcomes-based education. Specification of the intended learning outcomes is essential for the planning and implementation of student assessment (Harden *et al.*, 1999: 9). Decisions about what to assess and how to assess, must endorse the value of the critical outcomes, which have been identified as underpinning relevant, high quality education and training (Lubisi *et al.*, 1998: 12). SMTs and educators should be aware that the specific outcomes, which are grounded in the critical outcomes, will serve as the basis for assessment. What skills, behaviours, attitudes and understandings signal the mastery of an outcome? These critical outcomes help the teacher construct the course content, which in turn leads to daily instructional strategies (Jasa & Enger, 1994: 31). The learners will be evaluated in terms of their ability to achieve the clearly defined purposes, or outcomes of the learning area taught. The focus of assessment shall be on the progress learners make towards the achievement of the outcomes. This process must be transparent such that the various specific outcomes and their assessment criteria must be available to learners to inform them of what is to be assessed (Department of Education, 1998: 5).

Educators will assess learners on a continuous basis by employing various strategies (Department of Education, 1997b: 19). The main reason for this is that learners' learn at a different pace and have different learning styles and therefore may not be assessed at the same time, context and in the same way. An educator should therefore use a variety of methods, tools and techniques appropriate to learners' needs, when assessing. At its best learners should be given opportunities to demonstrate their competence in a variety of ways (Department of Education, 2000c: 22-23). The types, methods, tools and techniques of assessment will thus be elaborated on in the next section.

### 2.5.7 Types of assessment

SMTs and educators must be aware that the overall aim of assessment in OBE is to improve the learner's achievement. Learners must be assessed continuously. Thus continuous assessment fulfils five main purposes of assessment, namely baseline, formative, diagnostic, summative and systemic evaluation. The continuous assessment model requires the integration of the first four assessment processes in the teaching and learning context (Department of Education, 2000d: 14). Such integration will also improve the effectiveness of the assessments, by making them more valid, more reliable and more likely to lead the development of learners (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000c: 20). The following different types of assessment serve important functions within OBE:

- **Formative assessment** involves a developmental approach, and is designed to monitor and support learner progress. It is built into learning activities on a continuous basis, guiding the learner and the educator through constructive feedback. It also informs the educator's decision with reference to selecting appropriate follow-up activities. It helps to determine what the learner's strengths and developmental needs are in reaction to a particular outcome or criteria. Formative assessment will indicate which situations help or hinder the learner's strengths. Formative assessment indicates which assessment tools, methods and techniques are appropriate for the learners (Department of Education, 2000d: 14).
- **Diagnostic assessment** is assessment, which is specifically focused on finding the nature and cause of a learning difficulty so that appropriate remedial help can be provided (Department of Education, 1998: 5).
- **Summative assessment** encompasses a series of assessment activities resulting in the overall achievement of a learner's performance in a systematic way. It is used to determine how well a learner has progressed towards the achievement of selected outcomes. Summative assessment must be used to give formative feedback to the educator and to feed into the next planning session (Department of Education, 2000d: 14-15).
- **Evaluative assessment** is assessment that is used to compare and aggregate information about learner achievements so that it can be used to assist in

curriculum development and evaluation of teaching and learning (Department of Education, 1998: 5).

- **Baseline assessment** is the assessment an educator uses at the beginning of a new set of learning activities, in order to find out what the learners already know and can demonstrate in order to decide what level of demands to build into the learning experience plan (Department of Education, 2000d: 14).

These types of assessment are not mutually exclusive and should be integrated in the overall assessment process. Educators should also incorporate a variety of assessment methods in the learning process.

### **2.5.8 Assessment methods for the assessment of the learning process**

SMTs must encourage educators to use various methods of assessment as outlined in the policy documents on assessment (Department of Education, 2000d: 26). Educators in effective schools strive to develop assessments which are “authentic to the instructional objectives and are as performance based as is feasible” (Lezotte & Jacoby, 1990: 152). In other words, assessment is used to evaluate learning and to diagnose the need for additional instruction. A good authentic performance assessment has three qualities (Doris, 1994: 99):

- 1) It is integrative, measuring many facets simultaneously;
- 2) It is applied, having the complexity of the real world roles; and
- 3) It may be individual or group performance effectiveness is evaluated.

Assessment should therefore be multidimensional in order to accommodate the various learning styles of learners so that they utilise their abilities (Grover, 1994: 174-175). Below is an overview of assessment methods frequently used.

#### *2.5.8.1 Peer assessment*

In this type of assessment learners assess each other’s achievement against clearly defined outcomes. Learners can assess each other individually or in a group situation. Groups of learners can also assess each other against clearly defined assessment criteria which are



established before the learners start on the assessment task (Department of Education, 2000d: 26).

#### *2.5.8.2 Self-assessment*

According to Lubisi *et al.*, (1998: 13), outcomes-based education suggests that educators make the learning outcomes of their course explicit to learners so that learners can assess themselves. Time should be spent on helping learners to reflect on their own performance, in order to take more responsibility for their own learning. This method of assessment helps the learner to reflect on his/her own learning (Department of Education, 2000d: 26).

#### *2.5.8.3 Learner to learner*

In this method of assessment, two learners assess each other's performance on an assigned assessment grid (Department of Education, 2000d: 27).

#### *2.5.8.4 Learner to group*

In this type of assessment the performance of a group is assessed by each learner against clearly defined outcomes (Department of Education, 2000d: 27).

In outcomes-based assessment SMTs must ensure that educators use multi-strategies as described above to assess their learners.

### **2.5.9 Techniques for assessments**

According to Baker (1994: 58), by embracing alternative assessments, educators are beginning rather than ending a complex process. Many questions surface right away; among the foremost is determining which forms of assessment are most useful for which educational purposes. SMTs therefore play a crucial role in assisting educators to select appropriate assessment techniques. SMTS and Foundation Phase educators need to be aware that in the Foundation Phase assessment is continuous and formative. The different kinds of outcomes educators want to assess namely, understanding knowledge, or practising skills, or developing attitude and values – require different modes and techniques of assessing. Whenever it is

appropriate educators should allow the learners to choose how they will be assessed. They might choose any of the above or one of the following, depending on their particular strengths:

- Creative writing and written reports;
- Role play and oral presentations;
- Expressive movement;
- Musical interpretation;
- Art, craft or graphical work;
- Written tests that use application of knowledge rather than asking recall questions only. For example, a learner who has strength in linguistic intelligence may choose to write or talk about a topic whereas a learner with visual intelligence may prefer to draw a poster about it (School TV, 2000).
- Interview: Interviews between learner and educator can be both formal and informal and will include discussions on a research project, discussion on a piece of writing, talking about feelings about a work of art, talk about a scientific experiment, or questions about process in a project;
- Conferencing: A group of learners discussing - conferencing effective dialogue about a project, or a common interest to reach a certain target (outcomes). Educators have control of the meeting and have responsibility to direct communications;
- Tests or examinations and written assignments;
- These tools should be assessed using a marking memorandum or set of criteria. This should be given to the learners for them to know how to improve their future levels of performance;
- Oral questions and answers: Learners listen attentively, interact with the educator or another role player(s) and respond with interest (Department of Education, 2000d: 28-29);
- Portfolios: Portfolios are usually files or folders that contain collections of a learner's work. They furnish a broad portrait of individual performance, assembled over time (Lubisi, 1999: 59).

Once the need for variety is established, it is important to consider the age-appropriateness of assessment.

According to Pahad (1999: 247), Foundation Phase educators should focus on how young learners learn through activities that are relevant to their lives and of interest to them at that moment. For this age group learning involves more concrete experience and less abstract thought and young learners need to explore ideas thoroughly. Self-expression through stories, movement, music, rhyme, painting and drawing are examples as well as basic skills such as reading, speaking and concrete number operations should be the focus of assessment. Assessment will be less formal and will usually be carried out through daily, targeted observation. This need to be sensitive and analytical observation should be followed by interpretation, planning and interaction. For example, educators need to ask the following types of questions: Why are those two so fascinated by emptying that jug? What could I provide later to extend their exploration? How can I help Vusi to participate more actively? What kinds of things does he seem to enjoy watching? Why can't Thando answer that question on a worksheet when he can do it using play coins? What can I do to help her make the link? Educators should also help learners to begin to develop self- and peer assessment skills, discussing and reflecting on their own and each other's work or play.

Finally, there is another important aspect of appropriateness, which also needs consideration. This is in relation to the assessment suiting the task. For example, assess the oral skills using an oral; the ability to work collaboratively by observing collaborative work; and practical application by demanding practical application (Pahad, 1999: 271). Having outlined the assessment techniques, the tools for assessing learners will now be discussed.

### **2.5.10 Tools for assessing learners**

It is important for SMTs to ensure that educators select appropriate assessment tools to measure or observe learning outcomes for the task. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997: 190), educators should guide learners through the completion of a task and assess each learner's performance using the assessment tools they have selected. The following are examples of assessment tools used.

#### *2.5.10.1 Observation*

Intelligent observation is an invaluable assessment and instructional tool. Observing learners is the most common basis for judgement of learner's behaviour and progress. By observing

learners' an educator is often able not only to construct authentic assessment of learners' schoolwork, but also to spot clues to the causes of learner's behaviour or lack of understanding (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997: 190). The educator must observe a learner against certain criteria. The specific skills, behaviours and achievements must be linked to the learning programme outcomes and be readily observable. It is a tool in which educators record their observations by using a checklist, rating scale or some written guide, such as an interview sheet to help identify the object of the observations (Department of Education, 2000d: 29). SMTs together with educators within a phase can design an observation schedule to record observations of learner's progress.

#### 2.5.10.2 *Profile*

A learner profile is a panoramic representation of a learner's qualities as observed by educators. It is an up-to-date database on all information that may assist the learning process, collected throughout the learner's path. It also includes records of a learner's progress collected over a period of time. It includes a wide range of activities that gives a holistic view of the nature of the learner for example strengths, areas that need support or achievements (Department of Education, 2000d: 29). Such profiles must be updated regularly by educators and monitored by the SMT.

According to Department of Education (2000c: 72), the following range of documents must be included in a learner's profile:

- Personal information;
- Schooling attendance history;
- Physical condition / medical history;
- Participation in extra-curricular activities;
- Achievements;
- Emotional and social development;
- Parental involvement;
- Areas in which support is needed;
- Special support is needed;
- Special support given;

- General remarks;
- Summative end of year overall report on the progress of the learner in each learning programme;
- Sample of the learner's work in each learning programme (portfolios); and
- The progression records of each school year.

#### 2.5.10.3 *Class lists*

Each educator must have a class list, which is used for ensuring that individual learners are assessed systematically (Department of Education, 2000d: 30). SMTs can use these class lists to monitor the progress of individual learners.

#### 2.5.10.4 *Journal*

Each learner may keep a journal in which for example he/she reflects on his/her own learning and/or writes about his/her life in general. The learner's journal should be considered to be confidential by the educator and everyone else (Department of Education, 2000d: 30).

Most Foundation Phase educators make use of rubrics or assessment grids to assess learner's progress.

### **2.5.11 Rubrics or assessment grids**

According to Steffy (cited in Willis & Kissane, 1997: 20), assessment tasks and scoring rubrics "evaluate and give specific meaning to the learner outcomes." Schools are expected to judge learners' achievements in ways that reflect the outcomes, tasks and rubrics and regularly report to learners and their parents in terms of learners' progress towards outcomes.

A rubric is a set of criteria that is used to ensure that different parts of the tasks are assessed. A rubric can be designed in the form of a grid. It can, however, be simply a list of what is assessed, who assesses and what assessment key is used, for example, "Not yet achieved/achieved." A rubric is a handy tool for gathering information. It can seldom be used on its own to determine whether an assessment criteria or specific outcome has been achieved.

No rubric should contain words, which give a sense of failure or a sense of inadequacy to learners (Department of Education, 2000d: 29). SMTs can work collaboratively with educators in the Foundation Phase to determine the design of the rubric for the grade or phase. An assessment rubric has several inherent advantages:

- It is performance-based / outcomes-based, that is, the educator must know the desired outcomes and performance indicators;
- It gives the learner clear guidelines towards better quality work (process and product);
- It is a justification of the assessment as well as being instant feedback for the learner;
- Assessment becomes part of the learning process, that is, formative assessment;
- The educator also gets more detailed feedback;
- Learners can more easily become involved in the assessment process through ongoing self-assessment and also peer assessment – this results in more focused work; and
- Learners know what is expected (School TV, 2003).

#### 2.5.11.1 *Creating a rubric*

When SMTs and educators design rubrics the following points must be kept in mind (School TV, 2003):

- Determine which learning outcomes educators are assessing;
- Review the measurable criteria (performance indicators) that should be used to assess performance. Each should focus on a different skill;
- Decide on how you will measure the range, that is a number scale or word scale;
- Describe three or four different levels of performance for each criteria;
- First describe the performance for the highest level;
- Then circle descriptive words, which can vary according to the level of performance;
- Then write the other performance descriptions for that criteria;
- Test the rubric on learners to see if they understand the concepts and terms; and
- Revise the rubric, if necessary.

### **2.5.12 Timing of assessment**

SMTs need to remind their educators that learners learn at different rates and use different learning styles. Therefore they should not necessarily be assessed at the same time in the same way. What needs to remain constant are the outcomes and criteria against which the learners are assessed. Different learners may take different routes to achieving the same outcomes. Outcomes-based assessment focuses on the progress that a learner is making towards achieving stated outcomes and not on the time taken or the ‘vehicle’ used to get there (The Teacher, 2000: 4). Assessment should therefore be done on an ongoing basis, both formally and informally:

- When educators think learners are ready to show progress;
- When educators want to know whether or not a learner is making progress (diagnostic assessment);
- When educators notice something significant; and
- At the end of learning experience when an educator needs a formal record (The Teacher, 2000: 5).

### **2.5.13 Responsibility for assessment**

Educators have an overall responsibility for the assessment of learners. The actual form of assessment undertaken will determine the decision as to who should be involved. Educators assess learners to support growth and development. It is crucial, therefore, to identify those skills that need constant training and ongoing support for the development of learners. At its best, it involves a partnership between educator, learner, parents, the District Assessment Team (DAT), the School Assessment Team (SAT), and includes occupational therapists, speech therapists and psychologists. In this partnership, the learner’s right to confidentiality should be ensured. Parents or guardians together with education support personnel form a crucial support system necessary to make assessment as effective as possible (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000b: 4). It is through reporting that the various role players are kept informed about the learner’s progress towards the attainment of outcomes. Recording and reporting of learner achievement is an integral aspect of outcomes-based assessment.

## **2. 6 RECORDING AND REPORTING PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

SMTs have the responsibility of ensuring that they assist educators in developing a systematic way of evaluating every child's performance and careful recording of assessment results is a crucial component of authentic assessment. According to the (Department of Education, 1998: 6), since outcomes-based assessment is primarily concerned with the assessment of intended learning outcomes, educators have to record learners' progress towards the attainment of those outcomes. The Department of Education requires educators to have cumulative evidence of learner achievements, which must be recorded, and these records should accompany all learners throughout their learning paths. Cumulative records should also include information on the holistic development of the learner, such as the development of values and attitudes and social development. Recording is a management and planning tool aimed at affirming the learner and assisting the planning of the teacher. The success of a continuous assessment model rests on sound and meticulous methods of recording learner achievement. SMTs therefore have the responsibility of monitoring these records of educators to ensure that the records meet the criteria stipulated by the Department of Education. SMTs must also ensure that educators have learner portfolios, which should be built over a period of time and retained as visible proof of the development and improvement of learner achievement.

Effective communication about learner achievement is a prerequisite for the provision of quality education. According to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Department of Education, 1996a), parents have a right to information relating to their child. Educators therefore have the responsibility of writing out a report on each learner. A report must convey, through the educator's comments, a clear impression of personal knowledge of the learner, summarise achievement and progress and provide useful feedback to evaluate and improve learning and teaching. Comments from parents and, where practicable, from learners themselves, should be encouraged. The head of the learning site (principal) or other member of the SMT should sign the report with an overview comment when this is necessary (Department of Education, 1998: 6).

As stipulated by the assessment policy ((Department of Education, 1998: 6-7), SMTs must ensure that the reporting process at the school:



- Serves as an opportunity for educators to provide regular feedback to learners as part of the everyday teaching and learning process;
- Provides an accurate description of progress and achievement;
- Allows for comment on the personal and social development and the attendance of the learner at learning sites;
- Gives an indication of strengths and developmental needs and identifies follow-up steps for learning and teaching;
- Encourages motivation through a constructive approach;
- Becomes a focal point for dialogue between home, learning site and (where appropriate) work and Further Education and Training;
- Enhances accountability at all levels of the system; and
- In the case of learners in grades R to 9, must be sensitive to the needs and responsibilities of parents.

All these aspects are relevant to a well-rounded and comprehensive report. Reporting must be treated as an integral part of learning, teaching and assessment. Moreover, formal reporting on learner assessment will be done at regular intervals as determined by provincial policy, or at the request of a learner, parent or prospective employer. Reporting may include formal meetings, written reports and the less formal opportunities for dialogue, either individually or in groups (Department of Education, 1998: 7).

In order to manage OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment, SMTs must keep in mind the factors mentioned above so that they can provide effective instructional leadership. The school as a dynamic setting cannot function in isolation. There are several factors, which have a direct bearing on managing the curriculum, which SMTs should take into account to ensure the successful implementation of OBE and Curriculum 2005. One of these factors includes a study by the SMT of the literature on effective schools such as those cited in Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan and Lee (1982: 35) which is discussed below. In creating the conditions conducive to sound OBE practices, SMTs can ensure that the assessment of outcomes, are valid and reliable.

## 2.7 OBE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

Outcomes-based education emphasises that the success of schools should be measured not on what learners are supposed to know, but rather on what learners actually know. This shift from the traditional approach in which the emphasis is on inputs (for example, number of days in school) to an outcomes-based system in which the emphasis is on performance standards for all learners is at the core of this performance-based restructuring process (Brogan, 1995: 14). Elmore (cited in Brogan, 1995: 14) writes that central to this shift is a change in expectation of student learning, in the practice of teaching, and in the organisation and management of public schools, with an emphasis on:

- 1) establishing what is it we want learners to know and be able to do;
- 2) designing appropriate assessments to measure how well learners are achieving these outcomes; and
- 3) holding learners, educators and administrators (SMTs) accountable for reaching these goals and expectations.

Early studies cited in Bossert *et al.*, (1982: 35) consistently report that successful schools have the following characteristics:

- A school climate conducive to learning – one free of disciplinary problems and vandalism;
- A school-wide emphasis on basic skills instruction;
- The expectation among educators that all learners can achieve; and
- A system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing learners' performances (Bossert *et al.*, 1982: 35).

Effective principals create the conditions listed above by providing coherence to their schools' instructional programmes, conceptualising instructional goals, setting high academic standards, staying informed of policies and educators' problems, making frequent classroom visits, creating incentives for learning, and maintaining learner discipline.

Recent studies of effective principals and successful schools mirror these findings (in Bossert *et al.*, 1982: 37). Distinguishing four areas of principal leadership can summarise their results. These areas according to Bossert *et al.*, (1982: 37) are:

- **Goals and production emphasis:** A number of studies have found that principals in high achieving schools tend to emphasise achievement. This involves setting instructional goals, developing performance standards for learners and expressing optimism about the ability of learners to meet instructional goals. These behaviours are often called instructional leadership and the principal's performance in this area is apparently central to the establishment of a school climate that supports achievement.
- **Power and decision making:** The literature on effective schools also has shown that effective principals are more powerful than their colleagues in ineffective schools, especially in the areas of curriculum and instruction, where effective principals are found to be more active and powerful in decisions.
- **Organisation/co-ordination:** Principals in effective schools, as well as other administrators, apparently devote more time to the coordination and control of instruction and are more skillful at the tasks involved. They do more observations of educators' work, discuss more work problems with educators, are more supportive of educators' efforts to improve (especially by distributing materials or promoting in-service activities), and are more active in setting up educator and program evaluation procedures than principals in less effective schools. Structured learning environments with few disciplinary problems characterise successful schools, where learners are engaged actively on tasks. Principals are important to this process, in particular to the extent that they support educators with discipline problems. By controlling public spaces, by stressing discipline, and by handling disciplinary problems in their offices, principals buffer the instructional core from disruptions. SMTs can take the cue from research on successful schools to create the conditions that will foster the effective implementation and management of OBE and outcomes-based assessment.
- **Human relations:** Highly effective schools also appear to differ from less effective schools in terms of the quality of human relations, and principals appear important to

this difference. Effective principals apparently recognize the unique styles and needs of educators and help educators achieve their own performance goals, a process that may fulfill an educator's higher order needs. They also encourage and acknowledge good work. Gross and Herriott (cited in Bossert *et al.*, 1982: 38) report that principals high on Executive Professional Leadership (EPL) have a positive impact on educator morale. Educators led by such principals manifest more of a sense of pride in their school and are more willing to cooperate with fellow educators and respect the judgements of administrators. This has important implications for SMTs in managing their educators and assisting them to adjust to the new curriculum.

To summarise, these findings indicate that the managerial behaviour of principals and the SMT is important to school effectiveness especially in relation to the transformation of the curriculum and the educator's need for guidance and support.

The recent research on instructional organisation and its effects is also fundamental to an understanding of the link between the principal's instructional management and learner academic outcomes. The school climate and culture is also generally described as a particular dimension of an organisation whose interaction with the other aspects contributes to the uniqueness and excellence of that organisation (Kruger & Badenhorst, 1993: 79).

### **2.7.1 School climate**

Recent studies identify climate as a contributor to learner learning (Bossert *et al.*, 1982: 44). Creating a school climate that is conducive to learner learning is also a fundamental part of the principal's instructional management role. Lezotte and associates cited in Bossert *et al.*, (1982: 45) define climate as the "norms, beliefs and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behaviour that enhance or impede learner learning." SMTs should create the conditions that foster the belief that underpins OBE, namely, "all learners can learn" and inculcate a positive attitude towards the new curriculum. Another important factor to be considered by the SMT in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment is that of school culture.

### **2.7.2 School culture**

The school culture is reflected through the values and beliefs of all the members of the school. SMTs should ensure there is a collaborative effort by all as to what the purpose of the school is and on what beliefs the purpose is built. This implies that the school's SMT should support an outcomes-based approach of the new curriculum. This defines the mission and vision of the school, which should reflect the critical and developmental outcomes and recognises the context of OBE in which curriculum goals for the school are formulated. Structures, strategies and systems aligned to an OBE approach are put in place to ensure that the school culture is dynamic and supportive of an effective learning culture. It is the cultural change that supports the teaching-learning process, which leads to an enhanced outcome for learners. It is the task of management to create and support the culture needed to foster an attitude of effectiveness in educators and learners (Department of Education, 2000c: 8-9).

According to Jamentz (1994: 55), increased learner performance, quality teaching and learning and a healthy school environment rely strongly on good management plans and practices. Therefore, in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment, the instructional leadership role of the SMT will be the focus of the next section, namely instructional leadership. In this section, literature on effective instructional leadership is examined. SMTs have to provide a support structure for educators who wish to monitor and improve their own assessment practice.

## **2.8 LINKING OBE, OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

According to Jamentz (1994: 55), the ultimate purpose of assessment is to validate learning outcomes - be it for diagnostic, formative or summative purposes. SMTs must work collaboratively with educators towards instructionally sound assessment, that is, rich in performance tasks that guide instruction and build the capacity of educators, learners and schools to improve their work. Assessment can accomplish these ends only when it produces information that influences what learners are taught, how they are taught, and what schools do to support learning. The assessment strategies outlined above are based on the principles of outcomes-based education that have been adopted by the Education and Training system in

the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Assessment and reporting are key elements in an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning.

Considering the complexity of the issues involved in OBE and outcomes-based assessment, a new approach to education management is undoubtedly necessary in relation to an outcomes-based curriculum, and it is the responsibility of educational managers to modify their organisational arrangement in line with the new approach. In particular, there needs to be a shift in managerial decision making, from a focus on process events towards documented learner achievements. The thrust is towards the local management of schools, with administrators and managers (instructional leaders) at all levels supporting the classroom educator (Hindle, 1997: 24). Instructional leadership will be elaborated upon further in the next section.

### **2. 8.1 Instructional leadership**

Instructional leadership is a complex variable comprised of functions, processes and activities (Murphy, Hallinger, Marsha and Mitman, 1983: 146). According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, (2001: 11), the challenge for SMTs is to apply certain knowledge, interpersonal skills and technical skills to the tasks of direct assistance, group development, professional development, curriculum development, and action research that will enable educators to teach in a collective, purposeful manner, uniting organisational goals and educator needs. As the SMT allows educators to take greater control over their own professional lives, a school becomes a dynamic setting for learning.

Leadership is about guiding and inspiring. The members of the SMT are instructional leaders and they are responsible for taking the lead in putting their school curriculum into practice and improving it. At all times they should ensure that there is a culture of learning and teaching in their school. Good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching (Department of Education, 2000a: 1).

According to Reynders (cited in Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 41), management as leading and guiding is usually described as the activity or tasks which influences people in such a way that they will willingly work and strive towards achieving the goals of the group. Hence, guidance must be given so that all the efforts in the school can be channeled correctly.

Reynders (cited in Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 41) emphasises this, by stating that management is synonymous with leading and guiding. He maintains that leading and guiding are universal human activities. They are tasks carried out by a person in control of other people's activities, and include the making of decisions and various steps to achieve certain goals. One of the main goals of SMTs in this period of curriculum transformation is to ensure instructional improvement.

### **2.8.2 Linking OBE to instructional improvement and instructional leadership**

Instructional improvement can be defined as helping educators acquire teaching strategies, consistent with their general teaching styles that increase the capabilities of learners, to make wise decisions about actions, routines and techniques that increase the decision-making capabilities of learners (Glickman *et al.*, 2001: 105). To facilitate such collective instructional improvement, those responsible for supervision, namely, SMTs must have certain pre-requisites (Glickman *et al.*, 2001: 11):

- The first is a knowledge base. SMT's need to understand the exception. The exception is related to: what educators and schools can be - in contrast to the norm, that is what educators and schools typically are. They need to understand how knowledge of adult and educator development and alternative supervisory practices can help break the norm of mediocrity found in typical schools. SMTs need to have a good knowledge base of OBE. Since outcomes-based assessment is an integral component of OBE, SMTs can provide assistance to educators in managing the assessment process;
- Second, an interpersonal skills base is required. SMT's must know how their own interpersonal behaviours affect individuals as well as groups of educators and then study ranges of interpersonal behaviours that might be used to promote more positive and change-oriented relationships. This is integral to provide educators with the guidance and support to manage the shift from the traditional aims and objectives approach to an outcomes-based approach; and
- Third, the members of the SMT must have technical skills in observing, planning, assessing and evaluating instructional improvement. Knowledge, interpersonal skills

and technical competence are three complementary aspects of supervision as a development function.

SMTs teams therefore have a significant role to play as instructional leaders and coaches. Their role function is further elaborated upon below.

### **2.8.3 SMTs as instructional leaders and coaches**

According to LeMahieu, Roy and Foss (1997: 594), effective instructional leadership requires the application of an educational model appropriate to current conceptions of teaching and learning. This implies the implementation of OBE. It requires principals (SMTs) to help the department reflect upon and examine their teaching practices in the light of what is now known about teaching and learning processes. No longer is listening to lectures, reading from a text, and answering worksheets or questions thought to be an appropriate or effective way to teach all learners. Many learners need hands-on experiences in which they can engage, discuss, manipulate and question the content being studied. OBA encourages educators to use a wide variety of instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of learners. They may thus require many forms of professional development to learn new instructional strategies that have been developed since their final preparation as professionals according to LeMahieu *et al.*, (cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). Even the most conservative estimates suggest that it takes educators two to three years to learn and use instructional methods competently (Joyce & Showers, cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). After first implementing a new instructional practice, the educator often goes through an 'implementation dip.' This has already been experienced with the implementation of OBE (chapter one). Performance gets worse before it gets better according to Fullan, (cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). What do educators need during this dip? They need support during problem solving and assistance to help them know they are moving in the right direction (Joyce & Showers, cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). SMTs play a significant role in providing the necessary guidance, support and assistance to educators in managing curriculum change. In managing this change there are five OBE principles described by the Department of Education that affect SMTs as instructional leaders. These principles are described below.



## **2.8.4 Important OBE principles for instructional leaders**

There are five OBE principles outlined by the Department of Education (2000a: 11-13), that affect the SMT as instructional leaders:

- **Principle 1 – Content teaching should promote values and skills**

In the curriculum, the facts and figures taught must always be linked to values and skills. Values reflect what we believe to be important, for example, that we should be tolerant and have empathy for others. Skills are what learners can do, think and understand. Writing, working in groups and making connections between ideas from different sources are all examples of skills. The SMT's role is to help educators to be clear about the values and skills in the content they are using to achieve the outcomes (Department of Education, 2000a: 11). Skills are an important aspect of the new curriculum that has to be assessed.

- **Principle 2 – Present knowledge in an integrated way**

In the past, educators presented learners with knowledge broken up into separate participants. In the new curriculum, knowledge has been brought together and combined into broader learning areas as discussed earlier. As instructional leaders, it is the responsibility of SMT members to encourage educators to integrate content, values and skills, both within and between the learning programmes. A useful way to do this is to encourage educators to plan together and work in teams. In fact, the SMT needs to organise time for educators to meet regularly; only then is collaborative work possible (Department of Education, 2000a: 12).

- **Principle 3 – Teaching and learning should focus on outcomes**

Outcomes-based education emphasises that effective teaching leads to effective learning and the achievement of outcomes. Members of the SMT must be familiar with the OBE outcomes so that they can help educators to understand them. The eight critical outcomes apply to all training, like adult education centres and trade centres, not just schools. Schools must not ignore the critical outcomes because they represent the philosophy

behind the current curriculum. The critical outcomes should guide educators (Department of Education, 2000a: 12).

- **Principle 4 – The learner is at the centre**

Everything that happens in the classroom should benefit the learners. For example: the content of learning areas should be related to learners' everyday lives; the classroom should be comfortable and conducive to learning, and should stimulate learners' desire to learn; and learning activities and materials should make learning fun and exciting. The role of the SMT is to encourage educators to approach their lessons in this way (Department of Education, 2000a: 13).

- **Principle 5 – Assessment is part of the learning process**

In the new assessment approach, learners are continuously assessed in terms of their progress towards achieving the outcomes. The educator is always asking: What do learners know? What can they do? How has their learning grown? Assessment is no longer only at the end of the learning experience. Instead, assessment cannot be separated from the learning experience. Effective assessment shows where improvement is needed, both, in how the educator teaches and how the learner performs? The SMT needs to help educators develop different ways to assess learners in their classroom (Department of Education, 2000a: 13).

### **2.8.5 OBE and its implications for SMTs**

There are important areas of focus, which impact on how SMTs manage the changes imposed by curriculum reform. According to the Department of Education (2000c: 14), these are:

- Rigorous planning at macro, meso and micro levels and at different management levels within the school;
- Identifying and developing support strategies and mechanisms;
- Defining ways of motivating and evaluation strategies which can be used to enhance rather detract from, classroom practice;

- Finding effective and collaborative ways of enthusing different school constituencies about reform and its implications;
- Educator development: SMTs will have to ensure the re-skilling of educators to deliver effectively;
- Defining the teaching and learning expectations. This means that the outcomes for teaching and learning practices are clearly spelt out. One of the factors that have been shown to be consistently associated with school effectiveness is high staff expectation for learners according to Edmonds and Fredericksen; Brookover *et al.*; Squires; Ramey, Hillman and Matthews; Shoemaker and Fraser, (cited in Murphy & Hallinger, 1983: 140). In effective classrooms high expectations are maintained for all learners. The entire school is characterised by a strong academic orientation. Principals promote high expectation for learners indirectly through the expectations they hold for themselves and their staff. They exert an even more direct effect upon school-wide expectations through the policies they develop in such areas as reporting learner progress, remediation, and classroom instructional practices (Wynne; Brookover *et al.*; Murphy *et al.*; Murphy & Hallinger cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 140).

In addition to the above, in providing instructional leadership, the SMT must also execute the following functions as described by the Department of Education, (2000a: 2):

- Oversee curriculum planning in the school;
- Help to develop learning activities – inside and outside the classroom;
- Ensure that teaching and learning time is used effectively;
- Ensure that the classroom activities are learner-paced and learner-centred;
- Develop and manage learning resources.

Some of the aspects mentioned above will be elaborated on in the next section focusing on the role played by the SMT in developing the curriculum.

#### 2. 8.5.1 *The role of the SMT in developing the curriculum*

The SMT needs to ensure that the curriculum is well planned, that changes are implemented and delivery is monitored (Hilditch, 1993: 162). In the new curriculum, assessment is ongoing

and varied. All public schools in South Africa must implement the new curriculum in accordance with the National Department of Education's implementation policy and plan. This new approach is not a set of rules and regulations handed down by the Department and which schools just have to follow. It is a set of guidelines for how schools can put the new curriculum into practice and it is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure effective management of all aspects of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2000a: 2).

In order to assess the outcomes of the new curriculum, SMTs will have to begin by developing the curriculum with staff. Curriculum, according to Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 397) is the *what* of instruction - what is intentionally taught to learners in a school or classroom. The curriculum is everything a learner experiences at school. The term 'curriculum' includes the selection of **content**, ways of **teaching and learning** and forms of **assessment**. The members of the SMT are instructional leaders and that means that they are responsible for translating the curriculum into practice (Department of Education, 2000a: 2). Since the focus of the study is on the assessment practices of educators, SMTs will have to ensure that the school's assessment system is aligned to the policy requirements mentioned earlier regarding outcomes-based assessment.

Outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005 is a matter of complying with external mandates to transmit knowledge, skills, attitudes and values deemed essential by the educational bureaucracy. One argument often made by state officials discussing the reality of a state mandated curriculum is that educators do not need to have a say in the curriculum because they use their professional expertise and creativity when they plan how to teach the curriculum in their classrooms. These policy makers fail to understand that the curriculum, if rigidly enforced, has a significant impact on how educators teach. For example, educators working under a highly prescribed curriculum with long lists of required outcomes will approach instruction quite differently from educators with a webbed curriculum that they have designed themselves. In short, *what* gets taught (curriculum) has a strong impact on *how* it gets taught (instruction) (Glickman *et al.*, 2001: 412-413).

Therefore, one of the most important functions of the SMT is to make sure the new curriculum is being developed. To do this, SMT's should form a sub-committee called the curriculum committee who makes sure that the whole school is using the current curriculum, principles and practices properly. The curriculum committee should help educators to develop

programme organisers, design learning activities and work in teams. Members of the curriculum committee should be the heads of each phase or learning area. This is one of the most important sub-committees in the school and should report to the SMT (Department of Education, 2000a: 16). Since the SMT is accountable to the Department of Education and parents regarding learners' progress towards the attainment of outcomes they will have to ensure that the outcomes-based assessment practices are fully understood by educators.

Promoting curricular coordination is another instructional leadership function that has been shown to be associated with effective schools and principals (Cohen *et al.*; Wellische *et al.*; Cohen & Miller cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 141). Principals promote curricular coordination in three ways. First they work to ensure that basic and supplementary materials used in their schools are consistent and mutually reinforcing. Second, they ensure that the curriculum content is consistent with both instructional objectives/outcomes and with appropriate assessment used to measure mastery of those objectives/outcomes. Third, principals establish programme evaluation procedures and ensure that evaluations occur on a regular basis (Murphy, *et al.*, 1983: 141). By ensuring that the above components are in place, SMTs will assist educators in making the transition to new ways of assessing learners a lot easier. Planning is therefore essential.

#### 2.8.5.2 *Planning*

Planning is essential to ensure effective teaching and learning. Learner-centeredness is the key focus of what happens in the classroom and in the school broadly. Of paramount importance is that learners will and should be life long learners. For this to be achieved the outcomes inherent in each premise and principle mentioned earlier, must be clear and the attainment of outcomes must be managed. It is the responsibility of the SMT to align current practices and plans to strategies, structures and systems which bring the school closer to attaining the outcomes implicit in each of the premises and principles (Department of Education, 2000c: 14). This has important implications for planning.

SMTs play a crucial role in planning assessment at the different levels within the school. In the Foundation Phase, planning assessment should be done at three levels according to the facilitator's guide (Department of Education, 2000d: 19) which is discussed below.

### a) *Macro planning*

The school community, namely the SMT, educators and parents, should identify programme organisers and phase organisers through which the 66 specific outcomes of the eight learning areas will be addressed. The school assessment policy should address what the macro planning implications are for reporting to parents: what issues parents will expect to be reflected in the report cards at the end of the year as well as the various methods, tools, techniques and recording of assessment. The assessment policy will be discussed in detail in another section. Once the macro plan has been designed, it forms the basis of the meso-plan.

### b) *Meso planning*

SMTs must ensure that educators together with members of the SMT engage in meso planning. In meso planning educators in a phase focus on the specific outcomes, assessment criteria and performance indicators to be covered in each grade, over a specified period and in each learning programme with regard to the phase and programme organisers planned. Once this has been decided upon, educators will have to engage in micro planning.

### c) *Micro planning*

In micro planning the main focus is on day-to-day assessment planning and implementation. It ensures that assessment is integrated into teaching and learning. SMTs perform the function of monitoring the day-to-day planning of educators with a view to providing support and guidance to educators in respect of their teaching and assessment practices.

#### *2.8.5.3 Arrange staff development programmes*

When a new policy like Curriculum 2005 is introduced in a school, experienced and new educators all need to get used to it and to be trained in the new system. However, in February 2000, the Ministry commissioned a review of Curriculum 2005, which was completed in May. The central findings were that (Department of Education, 2001: 18):

- There was wide support for the curriculum changes envisaged (especially its underlying principles), but levels of understanding of the policy and its implications were highly varied.
- There were basic flaws in the structure and design of the policy. In particular, the language was often complex and confusing. Notions of sequence, concept development, content, content and progression were poorly developed, and the scope of the outcomes and learning areas resulted in crowding of the curriculum overall.
- There was lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policies, with insufficient clarity in both areas.
- Training programmes, in concept, duration and quality were often inadequate, especially early in the implementation process.
- Learning support materials were variable in quality, and often unavailable.
- Follow-up support for teachers and schools was far too little.
- Time frames for implementation were unmanageable and unrealistic. The policy was released before the system was ready, with time frames that were too rushed.

In response to the review, the Ministry of Education retained the broad vision of Curriculum 2005, but refined policy documents. A set of National Curriculum Statements was released in July, 2001 for public discussion. The revisions simplified the structure, redefined the outcomes, and gave closer guidance on progression and content. Assessment standards have been prepared for each grade level, in each outcome (Department of Education, 2001: 18). Implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for the Foundation Phase is 2004. The most important way to provide this orientation and training to Curriculum 2005 and its revised version is through a staff development programme (SDP) (Department of Education, 2000a: 15).

SMTs act directly to support instruction when they conduct staff development in-service programmes for their staff and when they work in the classroom with educators who are in the process of learning new skills. Some of the ways SMTs act indirectly to support instructional improvement include the selection of staff development and training programmes, the distribution of research reports and notices of in-service opportunities, arranging for educators to observe their colleagues teach, private and public recognition of educator efforts in the area

of instructional improvement and the allocation of resources to instructional improvement activities (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 141-142).

According to Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 363), the common characteristics of an effective professional development programme include:

- Involvement of participants in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes;
- Programmes that are based on school-wide goals, but that integrate individual and group goals with school goals;
- Long range planning and development;
- Programmes that incorporate research and best practice on school improvement and instructional improvement;
- Administrative support, including provision of time and other resources as well as involvement in programme planning and delivery;
- Attention to the research on change, including the need to address individual concerns throughout the change process;
- Follow-up and support for transfer of learning to the school or classroom;
- Ongoing assessment and feedback; and
- Continuous professional development that becomes part of the school culture.

Keeping in mind the characteristics discussed above and the various problems experienced by educators with the introduction of Curriculum 2005, especially with regard to the new assessment procedures, SMTs play a significant role in designing appropriate staff development programmes to address the concerns of educators and to continuously workshop aspects of the new curriculum for the benefit of effective teaching and learning. One way of addressing educator concerns on issues of assessment is through the establishment of sub-committees within the school.

One of these committees is the Staff Development Team (SDT). The Staff Development Team should include members of the SMT and some members of the teaching and administrative staff. The Staff Development Team must identify educator concerns on various aspects of the new curriculum, including assessment and plan staff development programmes



(SDP) and report regularly to the SMT (Department of Education, 2000a: 15). The Staff Development Team also plays a significant role in drawing up the assessment policy.

#### *2.8.5.4 The role of the SMT in writing a policy*

SMTs play a pivotal role in formulation of policies within a school. The assessment policy is one such policy that forms the basis of the assessment practices within the school. In drawing up the assessment policy, SMTs can use the guidelines described in the circular by the Gauteng Department of Education (2000a: 18):

“Every school/ learning site must establish a School Assessment Team (SAT). The purpose of the School Assessment Team will be to develop a new school assessment policy, which will be an integral part of whole school planning.

The SAT must also implement and monitor the implementation of a school assessment policy as well as evaluate the policy on an ongoing basis and, where necessary, make revisions. The SAT must include the principal and/or deputy principal, all heads of departments and at least one elected staff member from each of the phases offered in the school.”

In drawing up the assessment policy the following steps may be followed:

#### **Step 1: Establish a team to drive the process**

All professional staff at the school should be asked to nominate candidates. The best team will be one that includes educators with an active interest in assessment and one or two members of the school management team.

#### **Step 2: Conduct audits of existing procedures for assessing, recording and reporting on learners’ progress**

This will involve discussions with educators on how they currently assess and record progress. The assessment policy team should produce a written report on their findings, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of current practice in school. The report should be

discussed with all teaching staff to make sure they understand and broadly agree with its findings.

### **Step 3: Define new policy objectives**

There should be extensive consultation with classroom educators. Thereafter, the assessment team should draw up a brief, clear statement of what sort of accomplishments by learners the school would like to recognise, and how these could be accurately assessed, recorded and reported. This statement must be in line with provincial policy.

### **Step 4: Draft new school assessment policy**

Once broad consensus has been reached on the statement of the policy objectives, the assessment team can fill in more detail on each point so that it becomes a draft policy document. At this stage, practical procedures can be proposed for managing the assessment policy in the classroom and the school as a whole.

### **Step 5: Produce and adopt final version of school assessment policy**

The draft policy should be circulated amongst all professional staff and discussed informally and at departmental or general staff meetings called specifically for that purpose. At this stage, too, the governing body should be invited to review and comment on the draft policy, especially from parents' perspective.

Once the necessary amendments and revisions have been made and sufficient consensus has been reached, the final version of the policy should be formally adopted by a joint meeting of the assessment team and the school management team.

### **Step 6: Develop action plan to implement new policy**

The SMT should agree on what steps must be taken to turn the new policy into standard practice. Who needs to be informed? Who must do what? When? Where? How? Who will monitor exactly what is happening? When will progress be reviewed?

Another significant function of the SMT is to make information on OBE and outcomes-based assessment accessible to educators.

#### *2. 8.5.5 The role of the SMT in providing information*

Educators need information to put the new curriculum into practice successfully. The SMT must make sure that the school has the necessary policies in place namely: continuous assessment policy; policy on selection of textbooks; homework policy and other relevant policies. Each educator must be aware of these policies, abides by their requirements and participates fully in the process. It would be helpful if the SMT puts together a programme of guided reading on curriculum matters on issues related to OBE and outcomes-based assessment for educators. SMTs could also encourage mentoring arrangements, where experienced or specially trained educators help others (Department of Education, 2000a: 16).

#### *2. 8.5.6 Organise meetings for the different phases*

In primary schools, the curriculum committee organises meetings for educators in the three different phases - Foundation, Intermediate and Senior – and these three groups should probably meet separately. In the Foundation Phase educators can first meet as a phase with members of the SMT at the beginning of each term, where the group discusses and plans the curriculum content for their phase or learning area, the use of resources, and assessment methods (Department of Education, 2000a: 16).

Thereafter the SMT must ensure that educators meet as a grade to plan for the three learning areas in the Foundation Phase. This is to make sure that, once a week, groups of grade educators meet to develop short-term plans for the grade. They must develop programme organisers with activities and assessment strategies (Department of Education, 2000a: 17). The curriculum committee monitors all planning activities carefully. In this way, they ensure that the implementation plan described by the Department of Education (2000a: 17) has the following benefits:

- **Team – building:** A staff team that works together stays together. When educators plan and develop programme organisers together, they get to know each other well. They draw

together, develop a sense of group belonging, and become committed to making teaching and learning more effective.

- **Creating a learning culture:** Educators take responsibility for the consequence of their difficulties. They understand their work better by constantly planning, implementing, reflecting on and assessing what they achieve. A culture of learning is created as everyone searches for answers and shares experiences.
- **Sharing responsibility:** Educators take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. They make decisions more carefully and bring a greater commitment to what they do. When responsibility is shared, the work will almost certainly be better than when people work individually.

Once a term, the curriculum committee calls the groups together. Each group presents its curriculum to the bigger group of educators for joint discussions. All the educators together reach agreement on the content and outcomes for each phase or learning area. In this way, the curriculum committee ensures progression from one phase to another (Department of Education, 2000a: 16). SMTs play a significant role in guiding the process to ensure that decisions taken are in accordance with policy requirements.

#### 2.8.5.7 *Formal and informal classroom visits*

The idea of the school principal, deputy principal and heads of department (SMTs) acting as critical friends to the classroom educator is encouraged. In the context of a critical friend, line managers have their roles defined by the nature and scope of the support they provide at classroom level (Department of Education, 2000c: 42). The supervision and evaluation of instruction is one of the most important functions of instructional leadership (Wellish *et al.*, cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). Principals need to take an active role in setting up evaluation procedures and the criteria for evaluation. Principals need to work with educators to ensure that classroom outcomes are directly connected to school goals and objectives, to ensure instructional co-ordination (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). The purpose of these visits is to help educators with their work, like implementing continuous assessment strategies, establishing a learner-centred classroom, observing the effectiveness of group work, managing time, or evaluating the learners' use of worksheets (Department of Education,

2000a: 19). Based upon these reviews, principals must communicate information about specific strengths and weaknesses to educators and work with educators to become better instructors (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). In arranging classroom visits the role of the SMT includes, amongst others, the following (Department of Education, 2000c: 42):

- Deciding with the educator the purpose of a class visit (pre- conference);
- What criteria will be used to monitor classroom practice;
- Developing a profile of each educator, with the educators themselves;
- Discussing in an ongoing way the feedback from class visits and how to feed through recommendations into future practice;
- To support review and reflective practice;
- The value of immediate feedback;
- Developing post-classroom visit action plans;
- Reporting and recording structures;
- To determine the professional needs of each educator, and describe an INSET plan against those needs; and
- To ensure quality assurance practices at classroom level.

Based on research, according to Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 51-52) certain propositions can be made concerning educator's attitudes, confidence, awareness, stimulations, and thoughtfulness that can be promoted via supervision. These are as follows:

- **Proposition 1:** Supervision can enhance educator belief in a cause beyond oneself. Educators can see themselves not just as individuals separated by classrooms walls, but as a body of people complementing and strengthening each other.
- **Proposition 2:** Supervision can promote educators' sense of efficacy. Educators can see themselves as being able to instruct learners successfully, regardless of influences outside of school. Within the school they can learn that they do have control over management and instruction. They have power to reach learners.

- **Proposition 3:** Supervision can make educators aware of how they complement each other in striving for common goals. Educators can observe each other at work, share materials, pick up techniques from each other and learn how to support each other.
- **Proposition 4:** Supervision can stimulate educators to plan common purposes and actions. Educators can be given responsibilities to guide and assist others, to make decisions about school wide instruction, to plan professional development, to develop curriculum and to engage in action research. Such involvements show respect and trust in educators and strengthen collective actions.
- **Proposition 5:** Supervision can challenge educators to think abstractly about their work. Educators can be given feedback, questioned and confronted to appraise, reflect and adapt their current practices to future instructions. More varied practice and abstract thinking are the results.

#### *2.8.5.8 The supportive and positive role of the SMT*

When SMT members do classroom observation visits, they need to be sensitive to the educators' feelings. They can help educators feel more comfortable with the visits by making sure that their feedback includes the positive aspects of the lesson, as well as highlighting what needs to improve. With this kind of feedback, it is hoped that educators will realise that curriculum development visits help them improve their classroom practice (Department of Education, 2000a: 19)

#### *2.8.5.9 Monitoring formal assessment*

Assessing and monitoring of learner performance are the mechanisms, which determine whether the outcomes of high levels of learner achievement of all learners are being met. Studies have shown that effective schools are characterized by systemic, school-wide procedures for monitoring learner progress, according to Edmond and Frederickson; Cohen; Sweeney; Baron and Shoemaker (cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 140-141). Both educators and principals need the information on assessment. Educators need this information to prescribe instructional treatments in their classrooms. Principals use assessment data to determine whether outcomes and standards are being met and to evaluate the instructional and curricular

programs of the school (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 140-141). Individual educators are responsible for day-to-day assessment, but the SMT plays an important role in making sure that there is a systematic programme for continuous assessment. This programme monitors the learner's progress and the learning and teaching programmes that the educator is using (Department of Education, 2000a: 22). A systematic programme includes recording and reporting learners' progress.

#### *2.8.5.10 Recording and reporting of assessment information*

Another instructional leadership role of the SMT is to help educators find ways to record and report assessment. Essentially, assessment is the process of gathering information on each learner's progress. Educators use this information to plot their teaching and remediate gaps in learning. Systems of continuous assessment require a very organised system of recording (Criticos, Long, Moletsane & Mthiyane, 2002: 111). This may include but is not limited to the following activities.

##### *a) Mark books*

Every educator must keep a mark book, which is a record of the marks, symbols and comments he/she gives to learners. The SMT must check that each educator diligently and accurately keeps these records (Department of Education, 2000a: 24).

##### *b) Portfolios*

Educators should also keep a portfolio of each learner's work. This is a file for examples of the different tasks and assignments learners have done. All the tasks in the portfolio can be used to measure the learners' progress towards achieving the outcomes (Department of Education, 2000a: 24).

##### *c) Report Cards*

SMTs will have to ensure that educators regularly complete report cards to communicate each learner's progress towards the achievement of outcomes to parents and educational authorities with report cards. In the past, report cards were mainly about the learner's marks. These

marks were usually shown as the percentage or symbols which learners obtained in examinations and tests. The old report card sometimes also made comparisons between the learner's marks and the class average. According to the new policy, report cards focus on each learner's progress towards meeting specific outcomes. In the Foundation Phase detailed reporting of learner's progress in the three learning areas is required. Rubrics given in the Foundation Phase report card are reached through many continuous assessment activities. Remarks aim to be informative and helpful to guide parents to help the learner. They are less judgemental because they concentrate on the learner's strengths, rather than weaknesses (Department of Education, 2000a: 24).

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

Finally the key to success in the whole matter of curriculum transformation lies in the quality of education management. Without effective management from the classroom level to the Director-General, an outcomes-based curriculum will be meaningless. International research makes it clear that the prior commitment and leadership of educational managers is a precondition for success (Hindle, 1997: 27). In view of the complexities of the issues involved in OBE and outcomes-based assessment, SMTs are the key agents of change in making the new curriculum a success at their schools by virtue of their instructional leadership roles.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research in can explore and test existing education can function to generate questions about teaching and learning. It can explore and test existing theories and explanations. Research can be used to open up difficult and problematic areas, providing descriptions of them and through evaluation studies; research can focus upon the effectiveness of existing curricular and pedagogic policies and processes (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 5). The aim and purpose of this study was to review the role of the SMT with particular reference to the management of outcomes based assessment.

This chapter describes and discusses the procedures and methods to be employed in examining the subject matter and gathering, collating and interpreting the relevant data. More specifically, it looks at the research design which was deemed most appropriate, given the purpose of the study. It also discusses the procedure followed in:

- Gaining access to the research site;
- Deciding on who the participants of the research are;
- How the data was collected and analysed; and
- A description of the research instrument employed.

The research question of this study is: What role can the SMT of the school play in managing outcomes based assessment in the Foundation Phase?

The research aim is to determine qualitatively:

- The perceptions and experiences of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment.
- The role played by the SMT in managing OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment.

- What strategies SMTs are employing to overcome the problems that educators are experiencing in practice.

### **3.2 LITERATURE STUDY**

Literature studies of both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Neumann (1997: 122) suggests that the first step in narrowing a topic into a researchable question is to examine what the literature says about it. This enables the researcher to gain insight into the topic and to identify the key issues that need to be explored. The literature reviews plays a crucial role in determining both the feasibility and credibility of research. It places the research in a broad framework (that is, the body of knowledge) and provides a foundation and justification for further research. The researcher is challenged to think about how his or her work extends, modifies, supports or challenges that of others (Bell, 1993: 33-34; Neuman 1997: 89, 95-96). In this study the gathered information was gathered and evaluated and conclusions drawn.

### **3.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

Qualitative research focuses on meaning, experience and understanding; qualitative research designs give the researcher an opportunity to interact with the individuals or groups whose experiences the researcher wants to understand. Qualitative designs therefore focus on fostering a relationship of trust and empathy between the researcher and the research participants (Van Eeden & Terre Blanch, 2000: 134).

According to Denzin and Lincoln cited in Schurink (1998: 240), qualitative research is defined as “multiperspective approach (utilising different qualitative techniques and data collection methods) to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the participants attach to it.” A qualitative research design is therefore selected for the purposes of this study because it contains features, which enable the researcher to obtain thick descriptions and to attain depth of information for a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The research methods used in this study are mainly semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The documents to be analysed are referred to in sub-section 1.4.5.

### **3.3.1 The role of the researcher**

According to Neuman (1997: 354) the researcher is the instrument for measuring field data. This has two implications. First, it puts pressure on the researcher to be alert and sensitive to what happens in the field and to be disciplined about recording data. Second, it has personal consequences. Fieldwork involves social relationships and personal feelings (Neuman, 1997: 354).

In qualitative research the role of the researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study (Cresswell, 1994: 163). The researcher's perceptions of managing outcomes-based education have been shaped by the researcher's personal experiences. From January 2000 the researcher was appointed as head of department in the Foundation Phase and worked closely with members of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators and therefore brings certain biases to this study. The researcher has established a relationship of trust and has a good rapport with the participants. Although every effort will be made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way the researcher views and analyses the data collected, and the way the researcher interprets experiences.

## **3.4 DESIGN OF THE STUDY**

### **3.4.1 Setting**

The research site for this study is a co-educational primary school that is located in an urban area in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal with a learner population of 812 from grade one to grade seven. The total staff population comprises 26 educators, eight of whom belong to the Foundation Phase which is the focus of this study. The educator and learner ratio in the Foundation Phase is approximately 1: 42. The reason for choosing this particular site has been mentioned in section 1.4.2. A qualitative approach to the study will, according to Cohen and Manion (1994: 150), help to provide feedback to participants that could be used for staff or individual development, as well as evaluation or development of programmes for the particular social setting.

### **3.4.2 Sample**

The participants in this study are eight Foundation Phase educators and members of the SMT of the identified primary school. For the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity educators are referred to as: Educator A, Educator B, Educator C, Educator D, Educator E, Educator F and Educator G. The SMT will be referred to by fictitious names, namely Mr Mahomed, Mrs Naidoo and Mr Khan. The reason for the choice as well as the identified participants has been elaborated upon in section 1.4.4. A further reason for choosing participants from the same school is that reflective teaching and professional learning are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues. Participants teaching experience in the Foundation Phase range from 14 years to 36 years. The participant's years of experience will also reveal the extent to which they have transformed and embraced outcomes-based assessment. The focus of this study is on the experiences and perceptions of Foundation Phase educators and members of the SMT of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment. Moreover it focuses on the management practices of the SMT of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment.

### **3.4.3 Ethical considerations**

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 372), because the objects of inquiry in interviewing are human beings, extreme care must be taken to avoid any harm to them. They have pointed out that traditional ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of informed consent (consent received from the subject after he or she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research), right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject) and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind).

Consent and privacy create major challenges for researchers who use qualitative methods. In South Africa, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (1997) has a code of ethics (cited in Du Plooy, 2000: 115) which consists of ethical research guidelines. This includes the four ethical principles mentioned above, (that is: doing no harm, obtaining consent, protecting privacy and maintaining integrity. The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant(s) (Cresswell, 1994: 165). Therefore, in this study the following safeguards will be employed to protect the informant's rights:

1) The participants will be approached personally. During the researcher's discussion with them, they will be informed of the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. In addition, the time anticipated for their participation, the place where the interview will be conducted and researcher's role will be explained. Although Christians (2000: 138) mentions that, "participants must agree voluntarily to participate, that is, without physical or psychological coercion," the researcher will make every effort to inform participants in a manner that will encourage free participation.

2) The research objectives will be articulated verbally at the outset of the interview, so that they are clearly understood by the informant (including a description of how data will be used);

3) Written permission was sought from the Department of Education (Appendix A), principal (Appendix B) and the school governing body (Appendix C) to proceed with the study;

4) The participants will be informed of all data collection devices and activities. Permission will be sought to audiotape interviews because the researcher can obtain accurate information. Participants will be informed that they will receive a copy of the transcripts to check and modify if necessary. In addition the final analysis of data would be provided for each participant to review.

5) The informant's rights, interests and wishes will be considered when choices are made regarding reporting data; and

6) The final decision regarding informant anonymity will rest with the informant. code of ethics insists on safeguards to protect people's identities and those of research locations (Christians, 2000: 139). All personal data have to be secured or concealed and made public behind a shield of anonymity (Christians, 2000: 139).

## **3.5 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

The two main methods of data collection used are semi-structured interviews and documentary study.

### **3.5.1 The interview as a research technique**

#### *3.5.1.1 Definition of a research interview*

An interview, as a data collection method uses personal contact and interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee (respondent). Such personal contact takes place either in a face-to-face situation or via telephone (Du Plooy, 2000: 176). For the purpose of this study, the face-to-face interview method was considered a suitable instrument for collecting data. This technique was selected in order to gather descriptive data in the participant's own words so that the researcher can develop insights on the experiences and perceptions of the participants on OBE and outcomes-based assessment. An interview, according to Morgan (cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992: 96), is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other.

According to Goodwin (2002: 399), the interview format of collecting data has the advantage of being comprehensive and of yielding highly detailed information. Even though the interviewer typically asks a standard set of questions, the skilled interviewer is able to elicit considerable information through follow-up questions or probes. Having the interviewer present also reduces the problem of unclear questions. These can be clarified by the interviewer on the spot (Goodwin, 2002: 399). One of the major advantages of the interview is that it allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection.

#### *3.5.1.2 Types of research interviews*

Interviews can be highly structured, semi-structured or completely open and unstructured (Du Plooy, 2000: 176). According to Du Plooy (2000: 176-177), the decision to use one rather than the other depends on the following:

- The researcher's knowledge and familiarity of the topic;
- The purpose of the interview;
- The nature and sensitivity of the topic;
- The actual participant (s);
- The setting; and
- The relation between the interviewer and participants.

In this study a semi-structured interview technique was chosen because “it is a basic method of data gathering the purpose of which is to obtain rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent” (Fontana & Frey, 2000: 646). The semi-structured interview is also a much more flexible version of the structured interview (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 157). It is the one which tends to be most favoured by educational researchers since it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the participant's responses (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 157). One of the main advantages of the semi-structured interview is that it provides uniform information, which ensures comparability of data.

The researcher therefore had to do a careful study of the literature on the topic to enable the interviewer to construct an interview schedule.

### 3.5.1.3 *Conducting and recording interviews*

Before fieldwork commenced the researcher sought permission and clearance from the Department of Education (Appendix H), the principal, and school governing body (Appendix I) for the research to be undertaken. The reply received cleared the official channels. Thereafter, the researcher made the request for the interviews personally to each of the participants. When these were agreed upon, it was followed up by a confirmation of the date, time and length, and the interview schedule was forwarded to the participants. The interviews were held in the researcher's office at the identified site at a time convenient for them.

Since a semi-structured approach was used, all the interviews were tape-recorded with the express permission of the participants. Neuman (1997: 371), states that the interviews involve asking questions, listening, expressing interests and recording what was said. The tape

recording of the interview session produces the most complete record of what was said (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995: 170). These interviews were then transcribed, using the main heading and sub-questions in the interview schedule for the transcription and subsequent analysis (example of transcript of educator interview schedule: Appendix F and SMT interview schedule: Appendix G). Patton (2002: 383) advises that the use of the tape recorder does not eliminate the need for taking notes, but does allow one to concentrate on taking strategic and focused notes, rather than attempting verbatim notes. In this study, the researcher took notes as a backup by recording key points, phrases and comments.

The aims of the research as well as the envisaged utilisation of the results were made explicit to the participants. Participants were assured that the information disclosed would be regarded as highly confidential. Mutual trust not only ensures the cooperation of the interviewee, but also improves the quality of the data collected (Schurink, 1998: 303).

#### 3.5.1.4 *The interview schedule*

According to Patton (2002: 343), an interview schedule lists the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. An interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed. Thus, the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined (Patton, 2002: 343). Therefore, for the purpose of this study carefully worded interview schedules (Educator interview schedule: Appendix D and SMT interview schedule Appendix E) were constructed, with the intention of permitting more latitude than in a structured interview.

Initially, in conducting the interviews the participant's biographical details were addressed. This approach enabled the participants to become comfortable before taking the opportunity to be discursive, to provide details on their experiences and knowledge of practices and processes and to reflect on their experiences and perceptions. The interview schedule for Foundation Phase educators was divided into seven main sections. The first section required demographic details of the participants such as school or region employed in, their position in the system and length of experience in the phase. The other six areas were derived from the literature survey, focusing on OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership.



The following main categories are covered: implementation of OBE, principles and premise of the assessment process, teacher assessment: classroom practices, record keeping, reporting and management of the assessment process by the SMT. Within each section, there were several sub-questions, which acted as probes.

The interview schedule for the SMT was divided into eight main sections. The first section required demographic details of the participants such as school or region employed in, their position in the system and length of experience in management. The other seven areas are derived from the literature survey, focusing on OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership. The following main categories are covered: understanding OBE: management perspective, planning OBE, instructional leadership, managing assessment, monitoring formal assessment, policy on OBE, departmental guidelines and records and SMTs' experiences and perceptions. Within each section there are several sub-questions, which act as probes.

Interviews were terminated by inviting the participant to summarise thoughts or to reflect on the overall content of the conversation and by thanking them for their time and participation.

### **3.5.2 Document analysis**

Most educational projects require analysis of documentary evidence. According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 218), once a written source has been created, for whatever reason, it becomes a 'potential' historical fact and therefore documentary data. Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 393) mention that the analysis and interpretation of written material offer distinctive challenges, which enable the qualitative researcher to collect data that would not have become available otherwise. The participants were therefore requested to submit all documents related to their assessment practices. The intention was to identify the extent to which such documents were consistent with departmental policy requirements on assessment. The inclusion of educator assessment records and educator designed assessment tasks and other classroom material was also analysed.

### **3.5.3 Triangulation**

In order to guard against being misled, either in the interview or by documents, the researcher must check one source of information against another, and test what they reported against the existing documents. This process is called triangulation.

According to Neuman (1997: 151) triangulation in social research means using different types of measures, or data collection techniques, in order to examine the same variable. Exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality he is investigating. Therefore, the researcher triangulated the data by using both literature study and semi- structured interviews as methods of data collection.

## **3.6 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS**

Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants from the identified school. The researcher applied Guba's strategies (cited in Poggenpoel, 1998: 344-345), to ensure trustworthiness. The process of analysis proceeds as follows.

### **3.6.1 Assembling and organising data**

The data collected by means of audiotape were transcribed verbatim and data collected in the notebook were organised into personal and analytical logs. A personal log includes a descriptive account of the participants and their settings, reflective notes on the fieldwork experience and methodological issues. An analytical log includes a detailed examination of the research question asked and ideas emerging as the study progresses according to Rubin and Babbie; Taylor; Creswell (cited in Poggenpoel, 1998: 344-345). These will form the universum for analysis.

### **3.6.2 Method of data analysis**

Merriam; Marshall and Rossman, (cited in Cresswell, 1994: 166), contend that data collection and data analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. In this study, throughout the data analysis process the data were coded using as many categories as

possible. The purpose was to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the participants and an attempt was made to understand and explain these patterns and themes. During data analysis the data were organised categorically and coded and the responses were correlated with the predominant and emerging views identified in the literature survey.

### **3.6.3 Reporting the findings**

Miles and Huberman, (cited in Cresswell, 1994: 168) address the importance of creating a data display and suggest that narrative text has been the most frequent form of display for qualitative data. Therefore, the results are presented in a narrative descriptive form rather than as a scientific report. According to Patton (2002: 437), thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Thick description was the vehicle for communicating the experiences and perceptions of the assessment practices of the SMT and Foundation Phase educators. The final chapter will be a construction of the participants' experiences and the meanings they attach to them.

## **3.7 VERIFICATION**

In ensuring internal validity, the following strategies were used:

- Triangulations of data – Data were collected through multiple sources to include interviews and document analysis. This strengthens reliability as well as internal validity.
- Clarification of researcher bias - In this study researcher bias is articulated in sub-section 3.3.1.
- The participants served as a check throughout the analysis procedure. An ongoing dialogue regarding the researcher's interpretations of the participant's reality and meanings ensures the true value of the data.

The primary strategy utilised in this project to ensure external validity was the provision of rich, thick, detailed descriptions so that anyone interested in transferability would have a solid framework for comparison (Merriam, cited in Cresswell, 1994: 168). Three techniques to ensure reliability were employed in this study. First, the researcher, provides a detailed

account of the focus of the study, the researcher's role, the participant's position and basis for selection, and the context from which data were gathered (Le Compte & Goetze, cited in Cresswell, 1994: 168). Second, triangulation or multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used, which strengthens reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, cited in Cresswell, 1994: 168). Finally, data collection and analysis strategies were reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods used in this study.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the design for a qualitative research study was explored. The data collection instrument, the interview, and procedures for data collection were described in detail. An in-depth presentation of data processing and analysis was then made. In the next chapter the research data will be analysed, interpreted and presented.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. The aim of this chapter is to report on analysis, interpret and discuss the data collected. According to Patton (2002: 432), the challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Patton, 2002: 432).

The interviews were conducted with eight Foundation Phase educators and three members of the SMT who have been referred to by fictitious names as mentioned in section 3.4.2. As mentioned previously the purpose of the interviews was to determine the educators and SMTs perceptions and experiences of OBE and outcomes-based assessment as well as the SMTs role in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The average interview took 60 minutes with a range from 50 minutes to 80 minutes. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The interviews with Foundation Phase educators and members of the SMT focused on three central issues derived from the literature survey, focusing on OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership. The various categories and sub-categories of the interview schedules for both the SMT and Foundation Phase educators have been elaborated upon in section 3.5.1.4. The major purpose of the analysis was to organise participants' responses in such a way that overall patterns would become clear. The emphasis throughout is on letting participants speak for themselves. The challenge for the researcher is to present participant responses in a cogent way that integrates the variety of experiences and perceptions recorded during the interview. An analysis of the relevant assessment documents submitted by the educators and members of the SMT is also presented. In terms of the data analysis, the results obtained are organised into categories and sub-categories where appropriate. In the pages that follow, participants' responses to these questions are presented and analysed. The following outline for the categories obtained is used in this chapter.

## **Views of educators and the SMT of OBE and Curriculum 2005**

Definition;

Parental involvement.

### **Problems experienced with OBE and Outcomes-Based Assessment**

- Poor implementation;
- Poor quality of training;
- Complex terminology;
- Too much work;
- Vague understanding of principles of assessment;
- Equating continuous assessment with outcomes-based assessment;
- Inexplicit assessment criteria;
- Effect on the school climate.

### **OBE: teaching methods**

- Traditional method verses OBE and Curriculum 2005;
- Importance of outcomes.

### **Outcomes-based assessment**

- Defining the assessment process;
- Assessing outcomes;
- Methods, tools and techniques of assessment;
- Formative and summative assessment;
- Rubrics or assessment grids;
- Learner centred and learner paced activities;
- SMT's perceptions of assessment in the Foundation Phase.

## **Outcomes-based assessment: policies, guidelines and records**

- Access to information;
- Knowledge of OBE and outcomes-based assessment documents;
- Recording learner's progress;
- Portfolio assessment
  - Managing a portfolio
  - Accessibility of a portfolio;
- Reporting.

## **Management of OBE and outcomes-based assessment**

- Educators' perspectives on the role of the SMT;
- Effective management;
- Participation and team work.
- Parental involvement

## **Instructional leadership and management**

- Planning;
- Providing curriculum guidance and support;
- Providing follow up support and assistance;
- Interpersonal relations;
- Effective time management;
- Encouraging reflective practice;
- Drawing up policy;
- Monitoring formal instruction;
  - Evaluating instruction;
  - Evaluating assessment procedures.

## **Coming to grips with OBE: SMTs initiatives**

- Staff development programme, meetings, discussions and workshops;

- OBE resources.

## **4.2 FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

As mentioned before, since the study aimed to determine the role played by the SMT in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment at the identified school, the response was adequate to draw meaningful conclusions. The SMTs and educators perceptions and experiences of OBE and assessment are compared throughout with policy stipulations and literature review on OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership. Based on these findings the researcher shall attempt to highlight the implications these findings have for the SMTs role in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment. An analysis of the documents and transcripts of educator interviews indicated more commonalities than differences in the SMTs and educators' understandings and applications of outcomes-based assessment. The themes that emerged from these analyses are described below.

### **4.2.1 Views of educators and the SMT of OBE and Curriculum 2005**

#### *4.2.1.1 Definition*

The educators interviewed expressed considerable similarities in their understanding of OBE and Curriculum 2005. Most educators defined OBE by reference to certain common practices. For example, Educator E referred to OBE as: *"It is an on-going process, teaching them all the time,"* whilst Educator F stated that in OBE *"there are integration of concepts and there is learner centred instruction."* This is what Educator B had to say: *"there is no isolation of children, learners are free to participate. There is activity-based learning, group work and learning by doing."* In other words, educators held and expressed a very practical view about what constitutes OBE. None of the educators referred to OBE according to Spady's definition: "outcomes are clear results that learners have to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences and are actions and performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully," (Spady, 1994: 1). However, the interview with the SMT revealed a theoretical and practical understanding of OBE as described by Mr Khan *"OBE focuses on the achievement of outcomes, it is a learner centred approach."* Mrs Naidoo referred to OBE as: *"It is based on outcomes, that is, what the learners can do at the end of a range of experiences."* The meanings attributed to OBE by



educators reflect the range of terms and concepts used in official documents, according to literature study on OBE namely, Department of National Education (1997b: 12). The following are some key principles of OBE:

- Integration of education and training;
- All learners will succeed. Time will no longer control the learning process. This means that not all learners will succeed at the same time. Instead learners will be able to develop at their own pace;
- Learners will be expected to show what they have learnt in different ways. There will no longer be exams. Outcomes will be assessed in other ways and on an ongoing basis.

Based on the literature study and the response of educators and members of the SMT one could infer that both educators and the SMT have a fairly good understanding of what constitutes OBE. Educators rated their understanding of OBE and Curriculum 2005 from good to excellent. Two of the educators had visited Denmark where OBE is implemented and expressed that they had a good understanding of OBE and Curriculum 2005. This is the response of Educator D: *“I visited Denmark as an exchange educator to observe OBE. I visited a very affluent school with small numbers of about 17 learners. They have a lot of resources and there is full parent participation. Assessment is continuous and they have specialised educators, one for Numeracy, one for Life Skills and so on. I learnt a lot there.”* Some of the educators had a broad understanding of OBE as a result of exposure to OBE implementation in other countries and expressed their confidence about their understanding of OBE. Below are some of the problems identified as revealed by the research interviews.

## **4.2.2 Problems experienced with OBE and outcomes-based assessment**

### *4.2.2.1 Poor implementation*

All Foundation Phase educators as well as members of the SMT conceded that the launch of OBE had led to fear, anxiety and frustration. The lack of educator preparation was expressed by Educator G as *“The manner in which implementation was done, was not thought out properly. If qualified and experienced teachers found it difficult, can you imagine how the new teachers felt? This fantasy did not fit in with reality. There were no resources, and*

*conditions were not taken into account.*” This is a similar view held by Mr Khan who said: *“Initially it resulted in confusion. It confused educators. They felt it was very new. It way-laid everything we did over the years. Presentation was confusing; it called for different types of teaching that led to confusion. It was difficult at the beginning to get educators to implement it. We had to learn about it ourselves, so that we could help the teachers.”* All educators and members of the SMT held the view that the quality of educator preparation for OBE was too rushed and poorly planned. This view was supported by similar literature findings.

According to Christie and Jansen (cited in Cross, *et al.*, 2002: 181), at the design level, there seems to be consensus that Curriculum 2005 fell short of constituting an effective curriculum framework for educators and learners. However, given the poor training of educators and lack of resources, as well as the toll that apartheid had inflicted on the education system, the majority of educators found it difficult to know what to teach and tended to act as mere technicians without the necessary conceptual and content tools as mentioned in section 1.1.

#### 4.2.2.2 *Poor quality of training*

All educators in the phase indicated that they had attended the departmental training workshops on OBE. Educators unanimously agreed that OBE training in the five-day block period was inadequate and too basic. Educator A had the following to say about the training: *“The departmental training programme was too rushed. It was based more on theory. It would have been beneficial if they focused on practise. The facilitators themselves were confused. But all the workshops we had in school and the SDP helped me a lot.”* This was the response of another educator, Educator G: *“I was disappointed with the training in North West. They did not have the knowledge and skills to cascade the information. In North West, I went for three consecutive years, even the jokes were the same. I tried to understand the document myself.”* Mr Mahomed, a member of the SMT held similar views. *“We were given superficial training on OBE and Curriculum 2005 from a management perspective.”*

It seemed that that educators and members of the SMT were unanimous in their views regarding the inadequacy of the training programme which corroborated with the views of Portenza and Monyokola (cited in Cross, *et al.*, (2002: 181) that the ad-hoc workshops led to poor implementation as mentioned in Section 1.1. This was also one of the central findings of the Department of Education and the Education Policy Unit (2001: 18) that the training

programmes, in concept, duration and quality were often inadequate, especially early in the implementation process. Jansen (1999: 208) identified two strands of opinion in the assessment of training in his interview with thirty-two grade one educators in KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga. The first strand regarded the training as necessary and useful but felt that much more training was needed in order to become more meaningful in the lives and practices of grade one educators. A second strand regarded the training as simply misguided, that is, the training was too basic and was offered at a level which educators had long surpassed in their own development. It seems that a common thread in the responses of the SMT and educators is that the training period did not prepare them adequately for the actual classroom situation. This was further compounded by the complex terminology.

#### 4.2.2.3 *Complex terminology*

Most educators indicated that they felt overwhelmed by the complexity of the terms used during training. This is the response of Educator E: *“When I went for the one week workshop the terminology knocked me off! I felt unsure. I needed more time.”* Educator A held a similar view *“At first I couldn’t remember most of them. It was difficult and received major criticism.”* However, all the educators made reference to OBE terms when asked about OBE terminology such as the response of Educator G: *“critical outcomes, specific outcomes, range statements, observation, numeracy and life skills.”* Whilst reference was made to OBE terminology, they were vague in explaining the terms precisely as defined by the literature study. For example, a specific outcome was described by Educator C as: *“I relate these to old terms, for example, specific outcomes are the objectives, maths is numeracy and life skills is like guidance and right living.”*

The Department of Education (1997b: 17) describes a specific outcome as specific knowledge, attitudes and understanding which should be displayed in a particular context. Naicker (1999: 98) states that specific outcomes provide guidance to all educators in terms of devising learning programmes or learning experiences. These 66 specific outcomes are derived from the critical outcomes. These outcomes assist educators in making judgements, and also assist learners who must prove that they really do possess the skills and knowledge they claim (section 2.4.3).

The problem with the terms being too complex is a common view expressed as revealed by the findings of the Department of Education and the Education Policy Unit (2001: 18) that there were basic flaws in the structure and design of the policy. In particular, the language was often complex and confusing. Notions of sequence, concept development, content and progression were poorly developed, and the scope of the outcomes and learning areas resulted in crowding of the curriculum overall.

However, all the educators conceded that the follow up meetings initiated by the SMT and held at the staff, grade and phase level played a significant role in capacitating them to understand and unpack the complex terms and to adjust to the new curriculum. Many felt that at this stage they were adequately *au fait* with OBE and Curriculum 2005 despite the initial hurdles encountered. The volume of work in assessment was another criticism.

#### 4.2.2.4 *Too much work*

The interviews also revealed educators' concern in respect of the volume of work involved in the assessment procedure. They indicated that there were too many specific outcomes and assessment criteria which they had to consider. As a result they had too much work to do on a daily basis. This is the response of Educator B: "*The assessment process with so many learners is very time consuming and lengthy.*" Educator G expressed similar views stating: "*I assess daily as far as possible, but the large numbers makes it difficult and there's too much work especially the recording of assessment.*" Although they indicated that the volume of work is too much, the document analysis revealed a systematic and consistent recording of learner achievement. Another finding was the problem related to the educator's vague understanding about the principles of assessment.

#### 4.2.2.5 *Vague understanding of principles of assessment*

Educators were not clear in their response with reference to the principles of assessment. Some of the responses received were: Educator A: "*Failing is taboo. It is outcomes based and learners have to apply what they have learnt. There is no rote learning, children have to understand their work.*" Another response by Educator C is: "*It is understanding knowledge and grasping concepts. To ensure that children understand, you have to use different teaching methods, for example using concrete apparatus and doing practical work.*" Educator G's

response was also vague: *“It involves motor skills, reading and writing. In numeracy they have to understand, analyse and measure. Thinking, reasoning, listening and speaking are all important.”*

From the above responses it is clear that educators have a very simplistic understanding of the principles of assessment as none of the educators made reference to principles (section 2.5.3) outlined in the assessment policy document (Department of Education, 1998: 4-5) namely:

- The purpose of assessment should always be made explicit. The criterion-referenced approach will be used;
- Assessment must be authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced;
- Assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process. It must be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient. Assessment takes many forms, gathers information from several contexts, and uses a variety of methods according to what is being assessed and the needs of the learner;
- The methods and techniques used must be appropriate to the knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be assessed as well as to the age and developmental level of the learner;
- It must be bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities;
- Assessment results must be communicated clearly, accurately, timeously and meaningfully;
- Progression should be linked to the achievement of the specific outcomes and should not be rigidly time bound; and
- Evidence of progress in achieving outcomes shall be used to identify areas where learners need support and remedial intervention.

A member of the SMT, however, expressed the view members were sufficiently empowered to guide educators in the Foundation Phase in respect of OBE assessment because they are conversant with the principles of assessment. This is Mr Khan’s response: *“Yes, definitely, we are familiar with the principles of assessment and this guides us in all our assessment*

*practices.*” Mention was also made that assessment must be valid, fair, reliable and progress of learners must be linked to achieving outcomes. During the interview, however, educators equated continuous assessment with outcomes-based assessment.

#### 4.2.2.6 *Equating continuous assessment with outcomes-based assessment*

With regard to the frequency of assessment of learner performance, most of the educators indicated that they were now required to do continuous assessment. In other words they assessed learners continuously because this formed the basis for outcomes-based assessment. This is the response of Educator D: *“I assess after a lesson is taught, in-between while they are working or during a lesson by observing and listening to their responses.”* To some educators this constituted a change from the past assessment practices; to others it meant that they could continue assessing as they had done in the past. Those who regarded it as a continuation of past practices said, *“Not only are formal tests given after a concept is taught, we do it all the time, listening to them, observing them with friends, observing children while they’re busy and writing down the observations.”* Educator H who saw assessment as a change from the past indicated that *“Because of the number of specific outcomes and performance indicators it was sometimes necessary to assess daily, although this was difficult, we tried to do it.”* Educator F held a similar view stating that: *“With OBE and the number of outcomes, I assess daily.”*

According to section 2.5.5, continuous assessment is an ongoing process that determines what a learner knows, understands, values and can do, providing information that is used to support the learner’s development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process. In the Foundation Phase assessment is based on one hundred percent continuous assessment. Educators and SMTs must understand that in the new curriculum all types of assessment must be continuous (Department of Education, 2000d: 13). The features of continuous assessment described in the circular by the Gauteng Department of Education (2000b: 4-5) are:

- It takes place during the learning process, in everyday conditions;
- It is used to help the learner and the learning process (formative);
- It enables educators to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievements and progress;

- It makes greater use of criterion referencing than norm referencing;
- It is transparent as learners are aware of the criteria against which they are assessed;
- It is diagnostic, enabling the educator to monitor strengths and to address the needs of the learner;
- It enables educators to pace learners and to provide enrichment for fast learners;
- It covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks;
- It ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment methods, both formal and informal;
- It encourages educators to appraise their own work;
- It requires the development of a sound assessment record to track learner progress and to provide useful data for reporting and progression; and
- It ensures that tests and examinations are only one component of the evaluation.

Based on the literature review and educator responses it seems that educators were in fact attempting to assess learners on an ongoing basis and in a variety of situations as suggested by the above circular on assessment. They did, however, fail to make the assessment criteria known to learners.

#### 4.2.2.7 *Inexplicit assessment criteria*

Most of the educators interviewed indicated that they did not make the assessment criteria of the outcomes being assessed known to learners. When tasks were set, they merely provided learners with verbal instructions in grade one, and written as well as verbal instructions in grades two and three. In other words learners were not aware of the evidence that is required to indicate that the outcome is achieved. These are some responses: Educator G: *“They don’t. I give them an idea of what is expected of a certain task, but I don’t tell them its assessment.”* A similar response came from Educator C: *“I don’t tell them formally, but in grade one I ask them questions.”* Even Educator E stated that this was not explicit: *“When you ask questions for example what is an odd number? Or what is an even number? Sometimes by means of written instruction or oral instructions.”* According to OBE, both the educator and the learner

should know the outcome that must be achieved and when it has been achieved. Every outcome that may be set for learners has a range of possible evidences for assessment which must be made explicit.

According to the Department of Education (1998: 10) as mentioned in section 2.5.3, effective assessment will be underpinned by the following principles:

- The purpose of assessment must always be made explicit;
- The criterion referenced approach will be used.

This is further reiterated by the Department of Education (1998: 9) namely, what learners are to learn is clearly defined. A further problem identified was related to school climate.

#### 4.2.2.8 *Effect on the school climate*

With reference to the question asked on climate in relation to educator and learner productivity, most educators were positive in their responses. They indicated that the climate was conducive to educator productivity. However, many complained about the large classes of about 45 learners per class where discipline became problematic during group work and non teaching time. This was the response of Educator D: *“Our only problem is that we have too large class sizes and the environment becomes small for so many learners. But during teaching time there is a sense of learning. There is a sense of good business at all times. There is a good climate because we have good relations with educators and everyone helps each other.”* A similar view was expressed by Educator A: *“We have a good climate, but the disadvantage is that the number of learners makes educator and learner productivity difficult, learners rush out. But we have everything we need, access to everything. Physical conditions are comfortable and resources are available.”*

The SMT also expressed similar views concerning the school climatic. They regarded it as being good and conducive to work as a result of mechanisms put into place by the SMT. The following is the response of Mr Mahomed: *“The staff has been workshopped on classroom atmosphere, school cleanliness and discipline.”* Mr Khan also stated that much effort was put into creating the conditions to make the school conducive to productivity. His response was: *“We encourage educators to create the environment and atmosphere in the classroom. We*



*invite people to create the learning environment for example people from the science department. We invite experts in the field. We provide teachers with all the support material. We do not give teachers an opportunity to make excuses that the environment is not conducive or unsuitable.”*

As mentioned in section 2.7.1, recent studies identify climate as a contributor to effective learning (Bossert, *et al.*, 1982: 44). Creating a school climate that is conducive to learner learning is also a fundamental part of the principal’s instructional management role. Lezotte and associates cited in Bossert *et al.*, (1982: 45) define climate as the “norms, beliefs and attitudes reflected in institutional patterns and behaviour that enhance or impede learner learning.” SMTs should create the conditions that foster the belief that underpins OBE namely, “all learners can learn” and inculcate a positive attitude towards the new curriculum.

From the educator and SMT’s responses it was concluded that every effort was being made by the SMT to make the conditions suitable for teaching and learning. Judging from the responses above one can therefore infer that educators on the whole were agreeable, and the atmosphere and climate were productive and conducive to work except for the problem of large class sizes. Another important component of OBE which arose in the interviews was that of teaching methods.

### **4.2.3 OBE: Teaching methods**

#### *4.2.3.1 Traditional methods versus OBE and Curriculum 2005*

Most of the educators expressed the view that since the introduction of OBE, the methods used to teach have not differed drastically from those used in the past. They are of the view that basic skills in the Foundation Phase were a pre-requisite in order to benefit from formal education. The interviews with Foundation Phase educators revealed that, although they were using the OBE approach, their lessons were a combination of a learner centred and an educator centred approach. Educator A’s responses was: “*Honestly, part of the day is teacher centred. I also give learners a chance to participate, share, play, assess themselves but it is not absolutely learner centred. Learner centredness sometimes leads to chaos.*”

The inference made from the interviews with most Foundation Phase educators is that by virtue of their teaching experience (ranging from 14 to 36 years in the Foundation Phase) they relied on a combination of the old and the new approaches. Educator F expressed similar views: *“I haven’t moved away from the traditional method. I still consolidate the three Rs.”*

According to all Foundation Phase educators interviewed this means some drill work, phonics, number recognition and other basic skills; in short, an exposure to traditional grade one teaching prior to the introduction of OBE. The educators expressed the view that they were also creating opportunities to allow for learner participation, group work and learner centred activities. According to the grade one educators the OBE approach is too complex to begin with, particularly in grade one, and needs learners with a starting level competency in reading and writing to engage with this new approach. Educators express the view that children in grade one classrooms are not yet independent and come with varying abilities in respect of competencies such as reading abilities, numerical literacy, personal confidence and mastery of early life skill routines (for example, toilet and wash routines). The challenge for educators was children who did not attend pre-school or school readiness programmes. They differed markedly in terms of their preparedness for formal schooling. Again, this means that long before educators can implement Curriculum 2005, as they understand it, the basic preparatory skills need to be learned and taught. Educator A stated that *“in the Foundation Phase there is not much deviation from the past, because we always did group work, took them on field trips, played shopping games and so on.”*

In short, educators generally claimed that there were some things that they were doing differently since the introduction of OBE, such as the manner in which assessment was done. However, they were mainly teaching as they had done before OBE, but now using more OBE strategies and techniques in their teaching. Once basic competencies had been established among learners, more OBE practices were introduced as learners became more confident, such as more learner centred activities and a focus on outcomes.

#### 4.2.3.2 Importance of outcomes

All educators indicated that they were mindful of the critical and specific outcomes in planning activities. Some of the responses to this question included: Educator C: *“It gives us more direction and focus,”* Educator D: *“Very important! You have to look at the outcome.*

*You then devise methods and strategies to reach an outcome.*” Educator E: *“It guides me, what my main aim for the lesson is.”* The researcher’s observations revealed detailed lesson preparation and well designed worksheets that focused on the achievement of the specific and critical outcomes. Literature reviews by the Department of Education (2000a: 12) also stress that outcomes-based education emphasises that effective teaching leads to effective learning and the achievement of outcomes. The eight critical outcomes apply to all training, like adult education centres and trade centres, not just schools. Schools must not ignore the critical outcomes because they represent the philosophy behind the current curriculum. The critical outcomes should guide educators in planning lessons and activities. Both educators and members of the SMT expressed the view the critical outcomes and specific outcomes are the central focus of all planning of teaching and learning activities as they form the basis of outcomes-based assessment.

#### **4.2.4 Outcomes based assessment**

##### *4.2.4.1 Defining the assessment process*

There is a common understanding amongst Foundation Phase educators regarding assessment in OBE. The researcher’s observations revealed that educators equated continuous assessment with outcomes-based assessment. Reference was also made to assessing specific outcomes using the assessment criteria as stipulated by the Foundation Phase document (Department of Education, 1997a: 30). In the interviews educators also referred to the assessment methods they commonly used, namely peer assessment, self- assessment, group assessment and strong emphasis was laid by most educators on assessing a learner’s performance. Some educators also made reference to written tests, observation, oral assessment projects and assignments. The manner in which the educators responded to the question on the assessment procedure indicated that they had a fairly good understanding of policy requirements on assessment. This is the response of one educator: Educator E: *“Assessment is continuous in OBE. I find it very effective because it helped me to determine new strategies. Self and peer assessment is something new. Before learners had no say. Keeping portfolios is also new. I found this very impressive.”*

According to literature studies mentioned in 2.5, assessment is a central feature of the new curriculum. Assessment in OBE focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes,

making it possible to credit learners' achievements at every level, whatever pathway they may have followed, and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence (Department of Education, 1998: 3-4). Unlike behavioural objectives, which educators have been encouraged to use in the past, outcomes are broader in scope and reflect goals, which require critical thinking or the ability to solve complex problems. "Such outcomes... call on learners to synthesize their knowledge and skills, not merely regurgitate discrete facts" according to O'Neill, (cited in Grover, 1994: 174). Based on a literature reviews regarding assessment in OBE, educators had a fairly good understanding of the assessment requirements.

#### 4.2.4.2 Assessing outcomes

Most educators expressed the view that the specification of the intended learning outcome is essential for the planning and implementation of student assessment. The responses included: Educator G: "*The child's ability to achieve the outcome.*" Educator C: "*I assess the child's knowledge, attitude, values and skills. I also assess their reading, recall, general knowledge, concentration and so on.*" Educator F also held similar views: "*I assess how much a learner knows, his ability level,*" and Educator H's response was: "*Learning outcomes gives you a broad outline of what the learner is supposed to know, what the child can do at the end of the whole batch of experiences you expose him to.*"

The responses corroborate literature studies (section 2.5.6) because, according to Jasa and Enger (1994: 31), the specific outcomes which are grounded in the critical outcomes, serve as the basis for assessment. The Assessment Policy for the General Education and Training Band (Grades R to 9 and ABET) (Department of Education, 1998) describes specific outcomes as what learners are capable of knowing and doing at the end of a learning experience. A learner's skills, knowledge, attitudes or values may demonstrate the achievement of an outcome or a set of outcomes. According to most educators, the Assessment Policy for the General Education and Training Band (Grades R to 9 and ABET) (Department of Education, 1998) and the phase document for the Foundation Phase (Department of Education, 1997a) are used as guidelines for assessment.

The first document – Assessment Policy for the General Education and Training Band (Grades R TO 9 and ABET) – was promulgated as Act 27 of 1996 in Government Gazette

19640 (Department of Education, 1998). The purpose of this document is “to guide provincial education authorities in designing their own assessment policies,” thereby “shaping educational practice in . . . sites of learning across the country” (Department of Education, 1998: 7). To this purpose it stipulates that policy must be applied “in respect of curriculum frameworks, core syllabuses and the certification for qualifications” in the GET band (Department of Education, 1998: 1) and that the assessment policy, “alongside the new national curriculum framework, (should provide) the pedagogic basis for our new education system” (Department of Education, 1998: 7).

The Foundation Phase document (Department of Education, 1997a), which describes curriculum policy, provides additional guidelines for assessment in this particular phase. According to this document “it is imperative that learners (are) continuously be assessed against criteria reflected in the assessment criteria attached to the 66 specific outcomes” (Department of Education, 1997a: 30).

Keeping the above guidelines in mind and as well as an analysis of the educator interviews, Foundation Phase educator’s understanding and practice of the assessment procedure are to a large extent in keeping with departmental guidelines. Most of the educators made reference to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) stating that the streamlined version was simpler to understand; outcomes were redefined and it gave clear guidelines on progression and content. They were also pleased that there were clear assessment standards for each grade level in each outcome. This is the response of Educator B: “*With OBE we were not sure what content we had to assess, we were merely given the critical and specific outcomes, but with the RNCS, it gives us a clear focus and direction. The assessment standards guide us on what to do, to achieve the outcomes and it is also grade specific.*” Educator: C also held similar views: “*I feel more confident about the RNCS because we only have to focus on the outcomes and assessment standards rather than assessment criteria and specific outcomes and so on.*” It seems that educators are looking forward to the implementation of the RNCS and seem more enthusiastic about it. However, the SMT made no reference to the RNCS. Another important component of outcomes-based assessment concerns methods, tools and techniques of assessment.

#### 4.2.4.3 *Methods, tools and techniques of assessment*

Most educators indicated that they accommodated for the different learning styles, by grouping learners according to ability levels which was and is still a common practice in the Foundation Phase. This is the response of Educator E: *“I group them according to ability levels. My first and second group is quite independent, but the third group gets individual attention. I do remediation on a daily basis and also work with parents to get them assessed.”* Another view expressed by Educator D is: *“I do individual work, I also identify how they work because some learn by pictures and I group them accordingly.”* It seems that educators are mindful of learner’s ability levels and are making provisions for them.

This practice is endorsed by the literature reviews section 2.5.12, because, according to the Department of Education (1997b: 19) learners learn at a different pace and have different learning styles and therefore may not be assessed at the same time, context and in the same way. An educator should therefore use a variety of methods, tools and techniques appropriate to learners’ needs when assessing. The Department of Education (1997a: 24) mentions, moreover, that assessment “procedures must acknowledge that learners process knowledge in unique and multiple ways and (that) enhanced assessment strategies should reflect the diversity of learning styles.” Further literature on the assessment policy document (Department of Education, 1998) describes continuous assessment as a means of assessment that comprises a range of assessment strategies as illustrated by the following excerpts from the document:

“Continuous assessment must be undertaken with a variety of suitable assessment tools & techniques. These include portfolio assessment, observation sheets, journals, tests, project work and assignments. A balanced combination of these techniques should be employed to ascertain achievement of learners, as fairly and transparently as possible.”

The interview revealed that educators were in fact using observation sheets, learner portfolios, projects and assignments to assess learner’s progress as some of the assessment methods commonly used. This is the response of Educator A: *“Worksheets, observation and listening to them.”* A similar response was received by Educator E: *“I use worksheets, written*

tests, projects and profile and self and peer assessment.” Formative and summative assessments are also important types of assessment and the findings in respect of these two types of assessment are explained below.

#### 4.2.4.4 *Formative and summative assessment*

The interviews revealed that some educators supplemented continuous assessment with continual summative assessments such as traditional spelling or dictation tests, mental tests and formal assessment tests after teaching concepts in both literacy and numeracy as well as the regular recording of learners’ reading and phonic proficiency. Educator D described formative assessment as: *“helping the child to understand his weakness and working from there.”*

Most educators indicated that they incorporated formative assessment into the planning of activities. According to educator D: *“when weaknesses are identified then a new method is used to re-teach, or we spend more time on a concept.”*

Educators were correct in their assumption of what formative assessment entailed. As mentioned in 2.5.7, the Gauteng Department of Education (2000c: 20) describes formative assessment as a developmental approach, which is designed to monitor and support learner progress. It is built into learning activities on a continuous basis, guiding the educator and learner through constructive feedback. Educators mentioned that they also included various other methods of assessment as described by the Department of Education (2000d: 26) facilitators guide, namely, peer assessment, self-assessment, learner-to-learner assessment and group assessment. The interview revealed that educators had a good understanding of assessment and were using these methods to evaluate learning. They indicated that rubrics, assessment grids and comments were important to evaluate learning and to report on a learner’s progress.

#### 4.2.4.5 *Rubrics or assessment grids*

Most educators indicated that learner assessment in the Foundation Phase was assessed by means of both rubrics for an overall assessment and marks for the more formal testing of

concepts. Some examples of rubrics used in their assessment schedule or worksheets included:

- a) A tick denotes that an outcome has been achieved;
- b) A stroke denotes that an outcome has been partially achieved; and
- c) A dot denotes that an outcome has not been achieved.

All educators indicated that the rubric system above is common to all grades in the Foundation Phase so that learner's progressing from one grade to the next can be tracked and easily monitored. They also indicated that they allocated marks for formal tests in numeracy, for example, mental tests and spelling and comprehension tests in literacy.

Educator G said: *"I also use happy faces, sad or unhappy faces or thumbs up signs on my worksheets as a rubric."* According to Steffy (cited in Willis & Kissane, 1997: 20), assessment tasks and scoring rubrics "evaluate and give specific meaning to the learner outcomes." Schools are expected to assess learners' achievements in ways that reflect the outcomes, tasks and rubrics and regularly report to learners and their parents in terms of learners' progress towards outcomes.

As mentioned in 2.5.1, the (Department of Education, 2000d: 29) defines a rubric as a set of criteria that is used to ensure that different parts of the tasks are assessed. A rubric can be designed in the form of a grid. It can, however, simply be a list of what is assessed, who assesses and what assessment key is used, for example, "not yet achieved/achieved." A rubric is a handy tool for gathering information. It can seldom be used on its own to determine whether an assessment criteria or specific outcome has been achieved. No rubric should contain words, which give a sense of failure or a sense of inadequacy to learners. An analysis of educator records and learner's worksheets revealed both the use of rubrics that were not derogatory and the use of test marks as well as written comments and observations for both learner centred activities and educator based tasks.



#### 4.2.4.6 *Learner centred and learner paced activities*

Members of the SMT also indicated that they ensured that activities are learner paced and learner centred through planning and monitoring. According to Mr Khan this is how they monitored: *“Assessment tests, the different types will reveal this. Also by monitoring the record books and testing programme.”* Mr Mahomed also expressed the view that: *“Our planning reflects that activities are learner centred and learner paced.”* Educators, however, indicated that they used a combination of learner centred and educator centred activities. According to Educator F: *“It is balanced, I use a bit of both.”* Educator H expressed similar views: *“I think both, at times learners are encouraged to participate and talk, but sometimes they are shy. The educator therefore has to provide guidelines and encourage all learners to participate in activities.”*

According to Department of Education (2000a: 13), everything that happens in the classroom should benefit the learners. For example, the content of learning areas should be related to learners' everyday lives; the classroom should be comfortable and conducive to learning, and should stimulate the learners' desire to learn; and learning activities and materials should make learning fun and exciting. The role of the SMT is to encourage educators to approach their lessons in this way. Judging from the responses of both educators and members of management, one could infer that although learner-centred activities are incorporated into lessons, they are not totally learner paced and learner centred. In fact, Foundation Phase learners need to be taught basic skills and educators are required to engage in formal structured teaching (4.2.4.1). Below are the perceptions of the SMT of the assessment practices in the Foundation Phase.

#### 4.2.4.7 *The SMT's perceptions of assessment in the Foundation Phase*

The final question posed to members of management concerned their experiences and perceptions of OBE and outcomes-based assessment in the Foundation Phase. Members of management are in agreement that the school has adopted sound assessment practices. However, one member indicated that the recording of learner assessment is too detailed and time consuming which confirmed the researcher's observations. This is Mr Mahomed's response: *“Whilst it is excellent, it appears very detailed and time consuming; also the depth at which assessment was done might compromise tuition time.”*

Mr Khan perceived the assessment process as: *“Our assessment practice is going well. Educators have a good idea of learner strengths and weaknesses. They use this to provide enrichment and remediation.”* The interviews and document analysis revealed sound assessment practices at the school. The discussion below highlights the findings in respect of outcomes-based assessment policies, guidelines and records.

#### **4.2.5 Outcomes-based assessment: policies, guidelines and records**

##### *4.2.5.1 Access to information*

From the responses to the questions related to record keeping, one could infer that all Foundation Phase educators had access to information because all educators interviewed said that they had the Foundation Phase Document on assessment as well as the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET. According to Educator C, *“I know we have the Foundation Phase document and the assessment policy document, but I’m not sure of the exact title. We were all given copies of this.”* They also stated that they had filed workshop handouts and departmental circulars. Educator E stated: *“Whenever we attend workshops or meetings we file the handouts we receive.”*

When the SMT was asked a similar question on how educators access information on curriculum matters, all members indicated that all new information received is work shopped, copies are made available to the respective heads who in turn make these available to educators, booksellers are invited and notices are placed on the staff notice board. This is Mrs Naidoo’s response: *“Educators are given copies of all relevant documents.”* Mr Mahomed expressed a similar view: *“All educators have Curriculum 2005 and other relevant national policies which they can access at leisure.”* The response was reiterated by Mr Khan: *“HODs and educators have all the documents as for as OBE is concerned. We also have support materials. We inform them via circulars and learning area meetings that these are available. We invite publishers to get updated information on OBE. We also put notices on staff notice boards.”* Educator H also stated the importance of using the relevant documents: *“The policy guidelines, I use it as a bible.”*

According to the Department of Education (2000a: 16), providing educators with access to information has important implications for SMTs. Literature reveals that educators need

information to put the new curriculum into practice successfully. The SMT must make sure that the school has the necessary policies in place, namely continuous assessment policy; policy on selection of textbooks; homework policy and other relevant policies. Each educator must be aware of these policies, abide by their requirements and must participate fully in the process. The interview reveals that the SMT ensures that curriculum matters on issues related to OBE and outcomes-based assessment are made available to educators. This includes knowledge of outcomes-based assessment and OBE documents.

#### *4.2.5.2 Knowledge of OBE and outcomes-based assessment documents*

Members of the SMT referred to departmental guidelines, policies and workshop handouts when asked to submit names of records they used as reference works on OBE and outcomes-based assessment. Whilst no specific title was referred to, the lists submitted by some members did indicate a variety of OBE and outcomes-based assessment references that were filed for referral. They indicated that they relied heavily on guidelines from these sources as a basis for all their planning. Mr Mahomed said *“I use all the National Education Department’s national policy document.”* Mr Khan expressed similar views: *“I use the policy document from the department and the assessment strategies there. I also use the basic document on reporting as well as the promotion requirements for assessments.”* The views of educators were similar to that of management. All the educators interviewed indicated that they had copies of the various policy documents as well as departmental guidelines and handouts. This is the response of educator F: *“We have all the necessary policy documents on assessment and OBE, but I can’t remember the exact reference off-hand.”* On the basis of responses of both educators and the SMT as well as an analysis of documents, one can conclude both the educators and members of management had sufficient OBE materials for the purpose of reference and hence the focus is now on how a learner’s progress is recorded.

#### *4.2.5.3 Recording learner’s progress*

All educators also reported that they had detailed records of each learner’s progress as these form part of the school’s policy on assessment. The SMT together with educators decide on what records are to be kept of a learner’s progress. Using the Departmental Policy Guidelines on assessment, the Foundation Phase educators together with the SMT, designed and shaped the assessment schedule for the Foundation Phase department, which suited the policy

document criteria. This is the response of Educator G: “*We keep detailed records of learner’s progress. We have an ‘at hand’ booklet. It’s like an observation book. Here we write down things we observe about the child. We also have a record sheet with all the specific outcomes and the learner’s names for each learning area and we tick against these. It is a lot of work and very time consuming.*” Educator E’s response is: “*Our record keeping is very detailed. You can see if there is an improvement or whether the child needs remedial or enrichment. It helps us to plan for the day.*” As mentioned in 2.6, according to the assessment policy document (Department of Education, 1998: 12), cumulative evidence of learner achievement must be recorded and these records should accompany learners throughout their learning paths. Cumulative records should also include information on the holistic development of the learner. The document analysis as well as interviews with both educators and members of the SMT revealed detailed assessment records of learners progress. SMTs expressed the view that they expect educators to have the following assessment records:

1. An assessment schedule or file recording the progress of all learners in each of the three learning areas with clear assessment grids using marks, rubrics or comments;
2. A comments and observation file focusing on the holistic development of the learner; and
3. Records of formal tests, for example mental tests, spelling, phonic, numeracy assessment tests, grammar and comprehension tests.

With reference to the above, my personal view is that, the records are a comprehensive and time consuming task and could compromise tuition time given the large class sizes especially at a school where the teacher learner-ratio is 1: 45 learners. Educators might spend too much time on updating assessment records at the expense of actual teaching time. However as mentioned in 2.8.5.10, the requirements stipulated by the SMT are an endorsement of the requirements suggested by the Department of Education (2000a: 24) requiring educators to keep the following records but is not limited to:

- *Mark books*

Every educator must keep a mark book, which is a record of the marks, symbols and comments he/she gives to learners. The SMT must check that each educator diligently and accurately keeps these records (Department of Education, 2000a: 24).

- *Report Cards*

SMTs will have to ensure that educators regularly complete report cards to communicate each learner's progress towards the achievement of outcomes to parents and educational authorities with report cards. Another important document is the portfolio which can be used to report on a learner's progress.

- *Portfolios*

Educators should also keep a portfolio of each learner's work. This is a file for examples of the different tasks and assignments learners have done. All the tasks in the portfolio can be used to measure the learners' progress towards achieving the outcomes (Department of Education, 2000a: 24).

#### 4.2.5.4 *Portfolio assessment*

All the educators also indicated that learner portfolios were also used as an assessment tool. Their responses with regard to portfolio requirements were consistent with the requirements stipulated by the school's policy on assessment. Educator E stated that the portfolio assessment: *"entails worksheets, tests, their best efforts in any learning area chosen by learners themselves."*

The school's policy on assessment highlights the following requirements in respect of portfolios revealed by the document analysis. Below is an extract from the Foundation Phase policy document on assessment of the identified school.

##### *a) Managing a portfolio*

Learners should be involved in selecting evidence to be placed in their portfolios and should therefore be involved in establishing the criteria for their selection. Together the learner and the educator should:

- Decide on what goals should be set for the next few weeks or months;

- Highlight areas of growth.

The learner may use the following table as a checklist to establish, whether the portfolio has been kept according to given criteria.

Table 4.1: Learner's Portfolio Checklist

Portfolio: Organisation and Structure Learner's Checklist	Y/N
Is my name and grade indicated in the portfolio?	
Are the items in the portfolio dated?	
Is a main title page included?	
Does the portfolio have a broad index?	
Is the sequence of the collection evident and purposeful?	
Are the task descriptions and applicable criteria regarding the collection in the portfolio included?	
Are the applicable rating scales according to criteria included?	
Did I include a statement of personal goals?	
Should any of the items be replaced by something that shows further progress?	

The educator needs to continuously analyse the collection within the portfolio to record the main characteristics of the competence of the learner.

Table 4.2: Educator's Portfolio Checklist

Portfolio: Quality Indicators Educator's Checklist	Y/N
Is the context from which the evidence emerged clear?	
Is the portfolio accessible to anyone looking through it?	
Have the task descriptions and applicable criteria regarding the collection been included?	
Is it evident which outcomes are demonstrated by the collection?	
Does the evidence show progress over time?	
Does the evidence communicate learner growth through a variety of processes?	
Does the evidence reveal any other information?	
Does the evidence reveal any new needs for the learner?	
Have the next steps been formulated for the learner?	
Should any of the items of be replaced by something that shows further progress?	

Educators must use the above table as criteria to evaluate the portfolio.

*b) Accessibility of a portfolio*

The Foundation Phase policy document specifies that a portfolio needs to be accessible in the sense that anyone looking through it:

- Can understand the thinking behind the decision to place particular evidence/item into the portfolio;
- Knows how to interpret the evidence in the portfolio;
- Knows what the evidence actually demonstrates about individual learner achievement.

All educators indicated that the portfolio is an important piece of evidence of a learner's progress. Therefore, they ensured that this was properly managed according to the requirements laid down by the school's Foundation Phase policy. The Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET Department of Education (1998: 12) also states that

portfolios should be built over a period of time and retained as visible proof of the development and improvement of learner achievement. A random analysis of learner portfolios from each of the grades in the Foundation Phase revealed contents that were in keeping with policy requirements.

The response by educators in respect of record keeping of a learner's progress was consistent with the findings of the document analysis. A study of the policy document on assessment as well as a random analysis of learner's portfolios revealed that the portfolios contained evidence of a learner's progress. Findings also indicate that the school's policy on assessment is adapted from the department's policy on assessment.

The results of the document analysis can be reported as indicative of change in six key areas:

- Planning;
- Policy;
- Record keeping;
- Curriculum and teaching;
- Assessment; and
- Reporting.

The interview revealed that the design and format of the documents mentioned above was a collaborative effort by educators and members of the SMT. According to educators and members of the SMT, the Foundation Phase policy document on assessment was elaborated for educators and parents in very specific terms. They also indicated that the record keeping showed support for learners in terms of enrichment and remediation. This is the response of two educators: Educator G: *"The record keeping helps with feedback and planning."* Educator H: *"I use colour codes. I can see at a glance. The dot indicates that the learner did not achieve an outcome. You can go back to those outcomes and do remedial work."*

When asked about their views on the recording system of learner assessment at the school, all the responses received were positive as educators felt that it was detailed and specific. This is the response of Educator F: *"I'm quite happy with it. It gives me a clear understanding of*



*learner's progress. It helps me when I'm consulting with parents. It's very clear cut. It's an honest reflection of the learner."*

The response to the interviews in respect of recording and reporting progress and achievement was consistent to a large extent with the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET Department of Education (1998: 12) which stipulates that cumulative evidence of learner achievement should accompany learners throughout their learning paths. Cumulative records should also include information on the holistic development of the learner, such as the development of values and attitudes and social development. An analysis of the educator assessment schedule showed evidence of learner's progress on the aspects mentioned above.

An analysis of the policy documents namely the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET Department of Education (1998: 10) states that educators are required to ensure that assessment should be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient. Policy documents mention that assessment should be integrated into learning that a range of methods should be used to collect evidence of learner progress and achievement and the determination of such progress should be criterion referenced. Reference to the above was incorporated into the school's Foundation Phase Assessment Policy. Moreover, educator daily preparation records revealed integration of assessment into the learning and teaching process. Educators indicated that they had the basic Curriculum 2005 documents required for the Foundation Phase.

This basic documentation consisted of the Foundation Phase programmes in Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills as well as the Foundation Phase Policy and the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET. Some educators had personal copies of these materials filed, whilst other educators had to access the materials through the principal or Head of Department. With regard to OBE related resources, educators indicated that educator and learner support material was made available to them by the SMT.

There was clear evidence in the educator's daily preparation books and assessment records that the various methods and techniques of assessment had been incorporated into the teaching and learning process and that assessment was continuously incorporated into the teaching and learning activities. An analysis of teacher generated worksheets and assessment material showed that Foundation Phase educators were assessing learners on the attainment of

specific outcomes as suggested by the departmental policy on assessment. Recording of assessment lends itself to reporting.

#### 4.2.5.5 Reporting

All educators indicated that the reporting of learner achievement was more than adequate at the school. Reporting on a learner's progress is done formally by means of written reports and scheduled parent meetings as well as informally by means of informal discussions with parents. This is the response of Educator B: *“Our reports are quite detailed. We meet with parents during scheduled parent meetings as well as in-between. We give them two detailed reports and we continuously encourage parents to come in.”*

An analysis of the formal report used to comment on learner achievement showed evidence of detailed reporting in all three learning areas, namely Numeracy, Literacy and Life skills as well as an overall general comment. As mentioned in 2.6 according to the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET Department of Education (1998: 12), effective communication about learner achievement is a prerequisite for the provision of quality education. A report must convey, through the educator comments, a clear impression of personal knowledge of the learner, summarise achievement and progress and provide useful feedback to evaluate and improve learning and teaching. Both the SMT and educators expressed the view that an adequate system of reporting on a learner's progress exists at the school. The findings also focussed on the management of OBE and assessment.

### 4.2.6 Management of OBE and assessment

#### 4.2.6.1 Educator perspectives on the role of the SMT

All educators were of the opinion that the SMT plays a significant role in supporting and guiding educators. All were positive in their response regarding the guidance and support they received from the SMT with regard to their assessment practices. Some of the responses included: Educator A *“In our school we received good support. We are spoon fed. In fact we are spoilt. Whenever we need guidance we get it.”* A similar view was expressed by Educator G: *“The SMT has a weekly staff development programme, which we didn't have before. I don't have a problem approaching management. There is transparency and team work.”*

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*Whenever I needed to know anything I got the answers I wanted. There's an excellent system here."* This view was reiterated by a third educator, Educator C: *"The principal had a lot of meetings and informed us of all the changes. He discussed handouts, policies and made things easier. He even made reporting and assessment easier with the computer system."*

As mentioned in 2.8.1, leadership is about guiding and inspiring. The members of the SMT instructional leaders and they are responsible for taking the lead in putting their school curriculum into practice and improving it. At all times they should ensure that there is a culture of learning and teaching in their school. Good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching (Department of Education, 2000a: 1). The responses of educators and the SMTs revealed that the SMT is fulfilling its function of putting the school's curriculum into practice and improving it by providing guidance and support. The educators' responses regarding the management of the institution are outlined below.

#### 4.2.6.2 *Effective management*

All the educators interviewed expressed considerable support and unanimously agreed that the institution was effectively managed. Educator H responded by saying that: *"Management seems to know what they are doing. They seem to be doing everything right, unlike the problems at other institutions. All members of management seem to know their duties, roles and responsibilities."*

The positive statements made by educators prompted the researcher to remind them that they should answer as honestly as possible and should feel free to be critical of any issue. However, they further indicated that they were part of the decision making processes in the design of the assessment policy, assessment schedules, planning of curriculum matters, in fact on almost all aspects that affected them. This is illustrated by Educator D: *"The SMT plays an active role in supporting educators. All the changes that were implemented were necessary. The SMT tries to get everyone on board."*

According to Reynders (cited in Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 41), management as leading and guiding is usually described as the activity or tasks which influences people in such a way that they will willingly work and strive towards achieving the goals of the group (section 2.8.1). Hence, guidance must be given so that all the efforts in the school can be channelled

correctly. Even Mr Mahomed stated: *“I call up a management meeting and set out goals to guide both management and staff members I also, if I request them to come up with learning area policies, I provide a detailed exemplar of what is required. We invite input from staff members and then ratify it and adopt it. The implementation of the policies are closely monitored and teachers are given the necessary support.”* The interviews with both educators and members of management indicated that the institution is effectively managed. Educators also made reference to participation and team work.

#### 4.2.6.3 Participation and team work

Educators at the site indicated that sufficient opportunities existed in the school for team work such as scheduled weekly meetings to discuss different aspects of the curriculum. Educator F expressed the view that: *“A great deal of opportunities exists for team work. Educators get an opportunity to share and air their views.”*

These views are endorsed by literature (section 2.8.5.6). According to the Department of Education (2000a: 17), a staff team that works together, stays together. When educators plan and develop programme organisers together, they get to know each other well. They draw together, develop a sense of group belonging and become committed to making teaching and learning more effective.

All SMT members expressed similar views that sufficient opportunity exists for collaborative team work among educators and among educators and members of the SMT by means of scheduled grade, phase, learning area meetings as well as a weekly staff development slot. This is Mr Mahomed’s response: *“Grade meeting are held weekly and phase meetings are held monthly.”* These meetings according to educators and members of management discuss all the essential components of OBE including assessment. According to the Department of Education (2000a: 16), once a term, the curriculum committee must call the groups together. Each group presents its curriculum to the bigger group of educators for joint discussions. All the educators together reach agreement on the content and outcomes for each phase or learning area. In this way, the Curriculum Committee ensures progression from one phase to another (section 2.8.5.6 a). One can therefore conclude that sufficient opportunities exist for educators to work collaboratively. The next section focuses on those questions posed specifically to the SMT.

#### 4.2.6.4 Parental involvement

With reference to parental involvement, Mrs Naidoo identified an important component which she felt should be included into the research. This is her response: *“I think parental involvement is important, especially with the new curriculum. Parents must get involved in the education of their children.”* Educator G also made reference to parental involvement in her response about the school climate. She said: *“In this school there is hundred percent parent involvement. Parents visit often. When assistance is needed, they readily assist.”* Even literature studies stress the important role that parents play in the education of their children. According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999: 110), both parents and educators share the function of having to guide, inspire and ask the right questions, basically to mediate and facilitate learning. This is an important component which is beyond the scope of this research and should be included in future studies.

### 4.2.7 Instructional leadership and management

#### 4.2.7.1 Planning

Members of the SMT expressed the view that planning is crucial for developing the curriculum at the different management levels within the school. Mrs Naidoo expressed the following view: *“We plan at management level, then with staff, and all handouts, and circulars are discussed.”* Similar views were expressed by Mr Khan: *“Our head lays the foundation. He plays a key role. We meet at management level and discuss OBE and assessment. We then have workshops with teachers at phase and grade level.”* Mr Mahomed too expressed the view that planning played an important role at management level: *“We set the parameters for long term, medium term and short term planning and set aside days on which these planning sessions need to take place.”*

The above responses addressed the question on how planning takes place. None of the members of the SMT referred specifically to the levels of planning described by the Department of Education (2000c: 14) namely, that there should be rigorous planning at macro, meso and micro levels and at different management levels within the school. As mentioned in 2.8.5.2, planning is essential to ensure effective teaching and learning. Learner-centeredness is the key focus of what happens in the classroom and in the school broadly. Of

paramount importance is that learners will and must learn for life. For this to be achieved, the outcomes inherent in each premise and principle mentioned earlier must be clear, and the attainment of outcomes must be managed. It is the responsibility of the SMT to align current practices and plans to strategies, structures and systems which bring the school closer to attaining the outcomes implicit in each of the premises and principles (Department of Education, 2000c: 14). The interviews and document analysis revealed evidence of planning at the various levels. For example, educator records showed evidence of macro, meso and micro planning for the various learning areas. The SMT's year plan projected the school's macro plan for the academic and non academic activities within the school. The next section outlines the findings in respect of the guidance and support instituted for the new curriculum, namely OBE and Curriculum 2005.

#### 4.2.7.2 *Providing curriculum guidance and support*

Members of the SMT indicated that guidance and support are provided in putting the school's curriculum into practice but conceded that it is only possible by having the necessary knowledge and skills. Analysing the response to the interviews, one could conclude that all members of the SMT felt that being thoroughly familiar with the document and coming to terms with it is a first step. This is the response of Mr Khan: *"First I read the material to determine what is expected. I then had drawn up lesson plans to see if it works for me. I check this with the principal and then implement it. If it doesn't work, it means we must change it."* Mrs Naidoo also indicated that educators received much guidance and support. Her response is *"I attend workshops, I take the guidelines and handouts and unpack it, discuss it with members of managers and educators. We have workshops, meetings and discussions all the time."*

Members of management also mentioned that there was a continuous cycle of support for educators to acquire teaching strategies consistent with OBE by means of discussions, workshops and meetings. According to literature studies, one of the most important functions of the SMT is to make sure the new curriculum is being developed. To do this, SMTs should form a sub-committee called the Curriculum Committee which ensures sure that the whole school is using the current curriculum, principles and practices properly. The curriculum committee helps educators to develop programme organisers, to design learning activities, and to work in teams. Members of the Curriculum Committee should be the heads of each phase

or learning area. This is one of the most important sub-committees in the school and should report to the SMT (Department of Education, 2000a: 16). The SMTs response was indicative of this being practised. Mr Khan said : *“Firstly we look at their lesson preps to determine the methods and strategies used. In fact we design OBE prep books for them. If we ask them to do it, then they don’t. We also do networking with other schools. We keep in touch with Department facilitators to clarify issues. We also invited facilitators to talk to parents about OBE.”*

Mr Mahomed’s response is: *“We ensure that the schools curriculum is prepared for circulation to all parents. The schools year planner is discussed with educators and we expect educators to prepare the curriculum where all aspects are covered in the four terms. This is monitored every term. Educators experiencing problems at the end of each term are supported and internal arrangements are made to give them more time. We also have staff appraisal and staff development mechanisms. This identifies areas of weakness and such needs are addressed in the form of workshops.”* One can therefore conclude that the SMT is actively engaged in curriculum improvement and development.

The literature review (section 2.8.5.1) also confirms that the SMT needs to ensure that the curriculum is well planned, that changes are implemented and delivery is monitored (Hilditch, 1993: 162). In the new curriculum, assessment is ongoing and varied. All public schools in South Africa must implement the new curriculum in accordance with the National Department of Education’s implementation policy and plan. This new approach is not a set of rules and regulations handed down by the Department, which schools just have to follow. It is a set of guidelines for how schools can put the new curriculum into practice and it is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure effective management of all aspects of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2000a: 2).

Members of the SMT stated that assistance is given to educators to help them develop different ways to assess learners, namely through meetings, discussions, workshops and constructive guidelines. Mr Mahomed’s response indicated: *“A comprehensive booklet was prepared and presented to members of staff on various types of assessment activities.”* Mr Khan expressed similar views: *“We have a list of assessment techniques and to ensure that this is used, we had several meetings to broaden their assessment scope.”*

The response by the SMT again corroborated educator responses on the question of guidance and support. It seemed that the SMT was doing their best to fulfil their management function and were assisting educators to come to a better understanding of OBE and outcomes based assessment.

As mentioned in 2.8.4, according to Department of Education (2000a: 13) in the new assessment approach, learners are continuously assessed in terms of their progress towards achieving the outcomes. The educator is always asking: What do learners know? What can they do? How has their learning grown? Assessment is no longer only at the end of the learning experience. Instead, assessment cannot be separated from the learning experience. Effective assessment shows where improvement is needed both in how the educator teaches and how the learner performs. The interview revealed that the SMT helps educators to develop different ways to assess learners in their classroom. One can therefore conclude that the SMT was fulfilling this important OBE principle. With regard to follow-up and support for educators, the findings are discussed below.

#### 4.2.7.3 *Providing follow-up and support*

The SMT indicated that follow-up and support for educators who require assistance is provided for by having meetings and discussions with them. This view is also confirmed by educators who felt that sufficient support and guidance are provided by the SMT. This is the response of Mr Mahomed: *‘The HOD’s are mandated to set up meetings and support teachers on and individual basis.’* A similar view was expressed by Mr Khan: *“We meet with them one a one to basis. We have a consultation slot and address their problems.”*

Even in literature (section 2.8.3), it is suggested that outcomes based assessment encourages educators to use a wide variety of instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of learners. They may thus require many forms of professional development to learn new instructional strategies that have been developed since their final preparation as professionals according to LeMahieu, Foss and Roy (cited in LeMahieu, Roy & Foss, 1997: 595). Even the most conservative estimates suggest that it takes educators two to three years to competently learn and use instructional methods (Joyce and Showers cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). After first implementing a new instructional practice, the educator often goes through an ‘implementation dip’ (chapter one). Performance gets worse before it gets better according to



Fullan (cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). It can be asked what do educators need during this dip. They need support, problem solving, and assistance to help them know they are moving in the right direction (Joyce & Showers cited in LeMahieu *et al.*, 1997: 595). It can therefore be concluded that the SMT was fulfilling this important role in managing OBE and outcomes based assessment by providing individual support and assistance. Therefore, the question of interpersonal relations is important.

#### 4.2.7.4 *Interpersonal relations*

On the question of interpersonal relations all members of the SMT concurred that they enjoyed good, healthy relations with educators. This is the response of Mr Mahomed: “*Excellent!*” Even Mr Khan stated that it is “*very good.*” A similar view is held by Mrs Naidoo: “*We have a good working relation.*” From these responses and a general observation there seemed to be healthy interpersonal staff relations between members of the SMT and educators. According to the literature study by Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 11), SMTs should demonstrate certain pre-requisites as mentioned in 2.8.2. One of these is an interpersonal skills base. The SMT must know how their own interpersonal behaviours affect individuals as well as groups of educators and then study ranges of interpersonal behaviours that might be used to promote more positive and change-oriented relationships. This is integral to provide educators with the guidance and support to manage the shift from the traditional aims and objectives approach to an outcomes-based approach. One can therefore conclude that members of staff enjoyed a good interpersonal relationship. Another important aspect discussed during the interview is that of time management.

#### 4.2.7.5 *Effective time management*

The SMT expressed the view that they ensured that teaching time is effectively managed through monitoring of classroom practices, lesson preparation, learner books and worksheets. These responses were consistent with the findings of the document analysis of educator preparation, learner worksheets and a random appraisal of learner books. This is Mr Mahomed’s response: “*We monitor it and when teachers are found wanting, they are advised accordingly.*” Mr Khan stated “*The effectiveness of teaching is determined by the work completed in class during a lesson. The lesson plan will also help to ensure that the lesson is*

*profitably used.*” The interviews revealed that mechanisms were set in place to ensure that teaching time is effectively used.

However, with reference to their insights into the study, the issue of time management was raised by members of management. In short, two members management expressed the view that they did not have sufficient time to execute their various responsibilities. Mr Mahomed expressed the view that the research did not consider time management. According to him “*I think an important aspect you left out is, does the principal have sufficient time to deal with day to day time consuming issues and also that principals are classroom based and therefore cannot lead the institution effectively.*”

A similar view was expressed by Mr Khan: “*We need more time as managers to address problems identified. We need to give educators ongoing support. There must be no time lapses. We must bring it to its logical conclusion. We do the appraisal but we haven’t gone to the professional growth plan. We must have more workshops for specific aspects. The Revised National Curriculum Statement is not bad because it’s a structured document outlining exactly what is expected.*” This indicates that educators are engaging in reflective practice as they compared outcomes-based assessment with the new revised curriculum statement.

#### 4.2.7.6 Encouraging reflective practice

Members of the SMT stated that they constantly encouraged educators to reflect and examine their teaching practice in the light of the new teaching and assessment procedures. This was done through staff development and staff appraisal and through the review of policies and practices. This is the response of Mr Mahomed: “*I had requested that they review all policies and practices annually and special meetings are set aside for that purpose.*” Mr Khan’s stated that he encouraged educators to reflect in the following way: “*Through staff development and appraisal. Also through peer appraisal and self- appraisal where they identify their shortcomings and we address these.*”

This practice of reflection mentioned in 2.8.5.7 is summarised by Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 52) as: Supervision can challenge educators to think abstractly about their work. Educators can be given feedback, questioned and confronted to appraise, reflect and adapt their current practices to future instructions. More varied practice and abstract thinking are the results. The

response to the interview questions indicated that the practice of reflection is encouraged at this school. Another important finding is based on drawing up policy.

#### 4.2.7.7 Drawing up policy

Members of the SMT confirmed that an assessment policy for the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior phase has been designed at the school. They indicated that assessment in the Foundation Phase is continuous and no formal exams are written. All members concurred that the process of drawing up policy was done by all educators and members of management. This is consistent with the Assessment Policy in the GET Band Grade R to 9 and ABET which states that the weighting for continuous assessment for the Foundation Phase is entirely based on continuous assessment. Members of management also indicated that the shaping and design of the policy was the product of consultation. According to Mr Mahomed the design of policy follows the following procedure: *“First there’s consultation, then there are proposals of draft policies, then we call for amendments, then we adopt and implement, we monitor, evaluate and review.”*

On the question of drawing up a school policy on assessment, one can conclude that the school followed a process and included the relevant stakeholders. The school followed similar guidelines described in the circular by the Gauteng Department of Education (2000a: 18). The assessment policy as mentioned in section 2.8.5.4 is one such policy that forms the basis of the assessment practices within the school.

“Every school/ learning site must establish a School Assessment Team will be to develop a new school assessment policy, which will be an integral part of whole school planning.

The SAT must also implement and monitor the implementation of a school assessment policy as well as evaluate the policy on an ongoing basis and, where necessary, make revisions. The SAT must include the principal and/or deputy principal, all heads of departments and at least one elected staff member from each of the phases offered in the school” (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000a: 18).

The next section focuses on monitoring formal assessment.

#### 4.2.7.8 Monitoring formal assessment

##### a) *Evaluating instruction*

All members of the management team indicated that the monitoring of OBE instruction is done by means of observation of learner's books and by monitoring educator records as well as classroom observation. This is the response of Mr Mahomed: "*Preparation books should reflect the details and step-by-step instruction given in class, even projects and assignment instructions are set out clearly and are monitored against a checklist.*" According to Mr Khan: "*We monitor instruction by observing their lesson, checking their lesson preps and appraising the learner's books.*"

The literature study as mentioned in 2.8.5.7 also supports the idea of the school principal, deputy principal and heads of department (SMTs) acting as critical friends to the classroom educator. In the context of a critical friend, line managers have their roles defined by the nature and scope of the support they provide at classroom level (Department of Education, 2000c: 42). The supervision and evaluation of instruction is one of the most important functions of instructional leadership according to Wellish; MacQueen; Carriere and Duck (cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). Principals need to take an active role in setting up evaluation procedures and the criteria for evaluation. Principals need to work with educators to ensure that classroom outcomes are directly connected to school goals and objectives, to ensure instructional co-ordination (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). The purpose of these visits is to help educators with their work, like implementing continuous assessment strategies, establishing a learner-centred classroom, observing the effectiveness of group work, managing time, or evaluating the learners' use of worksheets (Department of Education, 2000a: 19). Based upon these reviews, principals must communicate information about specific strengths and weaknesses to educators and work with educators to become better instructors (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 142). The interviews revealed that the SMT at the identified site was executing this important function. The findings revealed that not only instruction is evaluated but also assessment.

## b) *Evaluating assessment*

As part of the process of evaluation the SMT also indicated that the evaluation of assessment procedures and monitoring of student progress constituted a complete cycle of the whole evaluation process. This was Mr Khan's response: *"We get a sampling of the learner's portfolios and we check this against educator's assessment records."* Another response by Mr Mahomed is: *"We call for all pupils' written work books and this is monitored against the syllabus. Pupils who are underachieving are invited with their parents for a focused consultation."*

According to literature review (section 2.8.5.9), assessing and monitoring of learner performance are the mechanisms, which determine whether the outcomes of high levels of learner achievement of all learners are being met. Studies have shown that effective schools are characterised by systemic, school-wide procedures for monitoring learner progress according to Edmond and Frederickson; Cohen; Sweeney; Baron and Shoemaker, (cited in Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 140-141). The interview reveals that the SMT plays an important role in making sure that there is a systematic programme for continuous assessment. According to Mr Mahomed: *"A format of what the assessment schedule should look like is given to educators after consulting."* He also stated that: *"A policy on reporting has been designed and adopted by all members of staff."*

From the responses one can conclude that the school has mechanisms in place for the evaluation of educator and learner assessment which is one of the characteristics of effective schools according to literature studies. Below are the findings related to the initiatives undertaken by the SMT.

### **4.2.8 Coming to grips with OBE: SMT's initiatives**

The SMT expressed the view that while the training received was satisfactory, they had to come to grips with OBE and Curriculum 2005 on their own accord, as educators relied heavily on them for guidance. They had several meetings at management level to discuss OBE and outcomes-based assessment. These are the major initiatives undertaken.

#### 4.2.8.1 *Staff development programmes, meetings, discussions and workshops*

With reference to the training received, the following is a response by Mrs Naidoo: *“Initially the training was satisfactory, but we had to do most of the work. What helped was talking to others, to unravel the confusion, having management meetings trying to understand the document. It was a lot of work.”*

Members of the SMT indicated that they were sufficiently empowered to provide the necessary guidance and support by firstly sitting together as a team and arriving at a common understanding of what the requirements were. This was followed by staff development programmes, workshops and meetings.

When reference to the mechanisms set in place for the professional development of educators, all of the educators referred to the professional development programmes which benefited them immensely in understanding OBE and outcomes-based assessment. Some of the responses included, Educator A: *“During our Foundation Phase workshops we sat together and unpacked the Foundation Phase document which was of great benefit. You can’t do it individually.”* Educator G expressed similar views: *“The staff development programme helps me to understand the policies in school. I am more aware of it, and it allows us as a team to discuss and be together. In this way the information is cascaded to all of us.”*

Members of the SMT also expressed that much focus was given to staff development programmes. The interviews with educators revealed that explicit guidelines on “what to assess, how to assess and how to record learner achievement” were the focus of staff development meetings which helped educators to gain a better understanding of what is expected.

A further literature study reveals that SMTs act directly to support instruction when they conduct staff development in-service programmes for their staff and when they work in the classroom with educators who are in the process of learning new skills. Some of the ways SMTs act indirectly to support instructional improvement include the selection of staff development and training programmes, the distribution of research reports and notices of in-service opportunities, arranging for educators to observe their colleagues teach, private and public recognition of educator efforts in the area of instructional improvement and the allocation of resources to instructional improvement activities (Murphy *et al.*, 1983: 141-142).

As mentioned in 2.8.5.3, the importance of staff development is reiterated by the Department of Education (2000a: 15) because, according to them, one of the most important ways to provide orientation and training of OBE, and Curriculum 2005 and the revised version, is through a staff development programme. According to Mr Khan this is how they approached the new curriculum, *“First of all management had a workshop unraveling the package. We guided teachers in what content to teach as this was lacking in OBE. We drew up an integrated programme. We drew up phase and programme organisers to determine content. We tried to integrate all learning areas into one programme organiser. We tried to provide step-by-step guidance to our teachers on how to assess.”* Mrs Naidoo also said that: *“After many meetings and discussions I feel confident in imparting knowledge to my fellow colleagues. I know I can help my teachers. We have all the resources and guidance from the principal.”*

From the responses above, it could be inferred that there was consistency and commonality of both the educator and SMT’s perspective on the role of the SMT in managing OBE and assessment. It can therefore be concluded that the SMT was placing much emphasis on staff development programmes to empower educators and were fulfilling their function in this regard.

During the staff development programmes assessment guidelines were discussed with educators. All members of the SMT expressed the view that explicit assessment guidelines were provided to assist educators. Mr Mahomed stated: *“We had worked with exemplars of assessment requirements during our workshops.”* Mr Khan expressed a similar view: *“We had exemplars of assessment criteria and procedures. We mentioned the assessment criteria and how to use them by specifically by workshopping.”* One can therefore conclude that the SMT at the school was executing their role and responsibilities effectively. Another initiative of the SMT is ensuring that OBE resources are available.

#### 4.2.8.2 OBE resources

All members of management expressed the view that every effort was being made to ensure appropriate resources were available to educators and learners. This is what Mr Khan had to say: *“The latest teaching resources are made available to educators from all publishers for all learning areas.”* Mrs Naidoo reiterated the point by stating: *We have adequate resources*

*available, in fact we order the latest.*” A similar view was expressed by educators in respect of resources for both educators and learners to promote educator and learner productivity. This was confirmed by Educator H: *“This is the most enjoyable institution I have ever worked in. We have enough resources and there is hundred percent parent involvement.”* The availability of resources largely determines whether the OBE succeeds or not. The findings indicate that there are sufficient learner and educator resources provided and made available by the SMT to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

In this study it is evident that the principles, tools, strategies, techniques, recording and report of OBE and outcomes-based assessment were to a large extent an endorsement of the policy requirements in respect of OBE set by the Department of Education. Although the transition from the traditional to the OBE approach proved to be a challenge for most educators, the SMT together with educators had the power to transform the school into a vibrant centre of teaching and learning. Carried out effectively, an OBE approach to teaching and learning can have a profound effect on quality in education and the culture of learning. Furthermore, assessment if managed and applied creatively throughout the entire education system, as it is intended to, can make a difference to quality education.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

South Africa faces many challenges in its development as a democratic country. Reconstructing education from what it has been to the introduction of a totally new curriculum, namely OBE and Curriculum 2005 is one of those challenges. It is therefore important for all stakeholders involved in education to have a clear understanding of the structure of the OBE model including outcomes-based assessment which is an integral part of the process of teaching and learning. However, outcomes-based assessment is often misused and misunderstood. This makes it necessary to investigate the experiences and perceptions of educators and the SMT of outcomes-based assessment and to determine how this process is managed. It is also critical for those in a leadership role in the school (SMT) to develop and understand the basic tenets of OBE and outcomes-based assessment so that they can lead and guide the institution.

Chapter one therefore outlines a brief overview of the basis of OBE, the problems encountered and the need for all public schools to review their management practices in view of the OBE model. Chapter two then explored the literature related to OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership. The preceding chapter described in detail the findings of this study after an analysis of the data gathered. The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the study, to draw conclusions and to make recommendations based upon the findings. In addition, some recommendations for further research will be provided.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

The aim of this study was to investigate the role played by the SMT in managing outcomes-based assessment and to identify the experiences and perceptions that the SMT and Foundation Phase educators experience in translating assessment policy into practice as well as to encourage reflective practice by the SMT and enhanced understanding of outcomes-based assessment (section 1.3). The paragraphs below provide a summary of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter one provided the basis for the study. Section 1.1 introduced the study and explained the background and motivation for the study focusing on issues related to the need for curriculum change in South Africa, the problems encountered during the implementation phase and the role of the SMT in managing the curriculum change process. After conducting a literature review using primary and secondary sources, a research question was formulated (section 1.2) and the aims of the study clearly defined (section 1.3). An overview of the research design, which followed a qualitative research approach, was described in section 1.4. Important definitions used in the study were established in section 1.5. Finally the outline of the dissertation in terms of chapter divisions was described in section 1.6.

In chapter two, a literature review of OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership was explored. In order to understand outcomes-based assessment, it was important to begin with an understanding and conceptualisation of OBE; hence the researcher used various primary sources to elucidate the concept of OBE (section 2.2). In order to conceptualise OBE, one has to understand the global assumptions and key principles that underpin OBE (sections 2.3 and 2.4). This was followed by a brief explanation of the various mechanisms associated with OBE, namely: critical outcomes (sections 2.4.1), learning area outcomes (section 2.4.2), specific outcomes (section 2.4.3), range statement (section 2.4.4), assessment criteria (section 2.4.5) and performance indicators (section 2.4.6). Since assessment forms an integral component of OBE, the researcher defined assessment in OBE as the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learners' achievement at every level (sections 2.5). Furthermore, since assessment in OBE requires a paradigm shift from previous forms of assessment, it was necessary to describe how assessment works within the new framework (section 2.5.1), followed by an overview of the basic principles and premises that inform the management of the assessment process (section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3).

Following the principles of outcomes-based assessment, it was then considered essential to establish the purpose of assessment (section 2.5.4) before educators establish the content and method. As the literature indicates that assessment in OBE is continuous, the features of continuous assessment were outlined in section 2.5.5. Since continuous assessment is an ongoing process, educators should know what to assess (section 2.5.6). The specific outcomes which are grounded in the critical outcomes, serve as a basis of assessment and educators should assess learners on a continuous basis using a variety of assessment types, methods and

techniques which is elaborated upon in sections 2.5.7, 2.5.8 and 2.5.9. Another important aspect is to ensure that educators select appropriate assessment tools to measure or observe learning outcomes for the task (section 2.5.10) such as observation (section 2.5.10.1) and profiles (section 2.5.10.2), class lists (section 2.5.10.3) and journals (section 2.5.10.4). Furthermore, schools are expected to judge learner achievements in ways that reflect the outcomes; hence the use of appropriate rubrics or assessment grids to record learning outcomes was discussed in section 2.5.11. Further guidelines in creating a rubric were outlined in section 2.5.11.

Assessment in OBE is based on the principle that learners learn at different rates and use different learning styles and they should therefore be assessed at different times, hence it is important for educators and SMT to know when to assess learners and who should be involved in the assessment process (sections 2.5.12 and 2.5.13). The systematic recording and reporting of learners' progress is a crucial component of authentic assessment and formed the focus of section 2.6.

Having established the basis of outcomes-based assessment and OBE chapter two continued with the instructional leadership role of the SMT. The researcher began with a literature review on OBE and successful schools (section 2.7) which highlighted several characteristics of successful schools, including a discussion on school climate and culture (section 2.7.1 and 2.7.2). Since the SMT is the key agent in working collaboratively with educators towards instructionally sound assessment procedures, the researcher established a link between OBE, outcomes-based assessment and instructional leadership (section 2.8). The first aspect to be considered was the definition of instructional leadership (section 2.8.1). This was followed by a discussion on linking OBE to instructional improvement and instructional leadership (section 2.8.2). Instructional improvement was defined and the various pre-requisites that the SMT must fulfill for supervision purposes were highlighted. The SMT as a body of instructional leaders and coaches was reviewed in section 2.8.3 followed by five important OBE principles that affect the SMT as instructional leaders (section 2.8.4).

This discussion implied that OBE has important implications for the SMT (section 2.8.5). Their various role functions and responsibilities were elaborated upon, namely: the role of the SMT in developing the curriculum (section 2.8.5.1), planning (section 2.8.5.2), arranging staff development meetings (section 2.8.5.3), writing policy (section 2.8.5.4), providing

information (section 2.8.5.5), organising meetings for the different phases (section 2.8.5.6), conducting formal and informal classroom visits (section 2.8.5.7), providing positive supportive (section 2.8.5.8), monitoring formal assessment (2.8.5.9) and recording and reporting of assessment information (section 2.8.5.10). This was then followed with concluding remarks (section 2.9).

In chapter three the elements of the qualitative methodology were elucidated (section 3.1) followed by a discussion on the purpose of the literature study (section 3.2). The qualitative approach was chosen after considering the historical foundation of qualitative inquiry (section 3.3). Next the role of the researcher was defined as the main instrument for the collection of data (section 3.3.1). Thereafter the design of the study was elaborated upon in section 3.4. The analysis of data for qualitative research requires a careful description of the setting because the researcher observes the participants within a specific context (section 3.4.1). Purposeful sampling was used in the study as it is deemed most appropriate given the purpose of the study (section 3.4.2). The ethical considerations of the study were given in section 3.4 along with an explanation of the safeguards employed to protect the participants' rights.

The data collection strategies were explained in section 3.5. Because the researcher chose to use interviews for this study, a research interview was described in section 3.5.1.1 followed by a description of the types of interviews and the researcher's choice of a semi-structured interview technique. This is a basic method of data gathering the purpose of which is to obtain rich, in-depth information (section 3.5.1.2). The researcher then explained how the interview was conducted and recorded, elaborating on how entry into the field was gained after clearance, the process and procedure involved in setting up the interviews, the use of the tape recorder as an interview tool for an accurate recording of the interview as well as a description of how the interview was transcribed in section 3.5.1.3. Next the researcher described the interview schedule detailing the various sections and sub-sections of both the interview schedule for the educator and the SMT respectively (section 3.5.1.4). This was then followed by a brief literature review of the choice of document analysis as a data collection strategy as well as details of the types of documents the researcher envisaged analysing (section 3.5.2). Triangulation was discussed in section 3.5.3.

In section 3.6 reference was made to data processing and analysis. More specifically the researcher applied Guba's strategies of trustworthiness (section 3.6). The three strategies in

Guba's model are: assembling and organising data (section 3.6.1), method of data analysis (section 3.6.2) and reporting the findings (section 3.6.3).

Finally, in ensuring internal validity, the following strategies were used: triangulation of data, clarification of researcher bias and use of informants as a check throughout the study (section 3.7). In addition, the primary strategy utilised to ensure external validity was the provision of rich, detailed descriptions (section 3.7). With regard to reliability the following steps were employed. First, a detailed account of the focus of the study was provided, the researcher's role clarified, the informant's position explained, the basis for selection and the context from which data were gathered was discussed. Secondly, triangulation of data collection and analysis was used and thirdly an account of the data collection and analysis strategies was reported in detail. The concluding remarks were discussed in section 3.8.

Chapter four recorded the emerging themes found in the study through a careful analysis and interpretation of data. Section 4.1 provided a brief overview of qualitative analysis and made reference to sections where appropriate data appeared.

The first theme to be considered focused on the views of educators and the SMT of OBE and Curriculum 2005 (section 4.2.). The interview commenced with the SMT and educators' definition of OBE (section 4.2.1). During the interview the researcher identified the following problems experienced in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005 (section 4.2.2), namely: poor implementation (section 4.2.2.1) whereby all educators agreed that the initial implementation phase was exacerbated by numerous problems. Another problem identified and confirmed by all educators and members of management was that of poor quality of training (section 4.2.2.2) which was considered to be too basic and inadequate followed by the problem of complex terminology (section 4.2.2.3). Next the problem of too much work (section 4.2.2.4) in the procedure adopted for assessing student performance was outlined. A further problem identified was that whilst educators expressed a good understanding of assessment, they were vague in identifying the principles of assessment (section 4.2.2.5). In addition, educators equated continuous assessment with outcomes-based assessment (section 4.2.2.6) and they failed to make the criteria for assessment known to learners. Inexplicit assessment criteria were therefore discussed in section 4.2.2.7 and finally, whilst both educators and SMT concede that every effort is made to make the climate conducive, class size still has an effect on school climate (section 4.2.2.8).

A second theme that emerged refers to OBE teaching methods (section 4.2.3). Most Foundation Phase educators are of the view that teaching basic skills is a pre-requisite for sound teaching and learning and hence the sub-category of the traditional method versus OBE and Curriculum 2005 was presented in (section 4.2.3.1). Since OBE stresses outcomes, the SMTs and educators' views on the importance of outcomes was the focus of section 4.2.3.2.

Having identified the views of the SMT on OBE and Curriculum 2005 and the related problems that emerged, the researcher focused on outcomes-based assessment (section 4.2.4). The first sub-category dealt with defining the assessment process (section 4.2.4.1) whereby both educators and members of the SMT defined the term adequately as the literature study revealed. Educators and members of management displayed a good understanding of the key aspects of assessment as portrayed in the following sub-categories, namely: assessing outcomes (section 4.2.4.2), methods, tools and techniques of assessment (section 4.2.4.3), formative and summative assessment (section 4.2.4.4), rubrics or assessment grids (Section 4.2.4.5), learner centred and learner paced activities (section 4.2.4.6) and the SMT's perceptions of assessment in the Foundation Phase (section 4.2.4.7).

With reference to outcomes-based assessment, another theme explored dealt with policies, guidelines and records (section 4.2.5). The following findings emerged in the sub-categories. With regard to access to information (section 4.2.5.1) both educators and members of management conceded that educators and members of management had free access to information. The next category examined, was whether, the educators and SMT had adequate knowledge of OBE and outcomes-based assessment documents (section 4.2.5.2). This was followed by an analysis of the recording of learner's progress (section 4.2.5.3). After commenting on the detailed records of learner's achievement, the researcher presented an abstract on portfolios taken from the school's assessment policy in (section 4.2.5.4) and concluded this theme with the reporting practices at the site (section 4.2.5.5).

Management of OBE and outcomes-based assessment was the next theme discussed in section 4.2.6. Therefore, the first sub-category described the educator's perspectives on the role of the SMT (section 4.2.6.1). The educators identified effective management practices at the identified school (section 4.2.6.2) as well as adequate opportunities for participation and team work (section 4.2.6.3). Another sub-category elaborated upon was parental involvement (section 4.2.6.4).

Section 4.2.7 reviewed instructional leadership and management. The following were identified as important management and instructional leadership functions in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment: planning (section 4.2.7.1), providing curriculum guidance and support (section 4.2.7.2), providing follow-up support and assistance (section 4.2.7.3), interpersonal relations (section 4.2.7.4), effective time management (section 4.2.7.5), encouraging reflective practice (section 4.2.7.6), drawing up policy (section 4.2.7.7) and monitoring formal instruction (section 4.2.7.8).

The final theme dealt with the SMT's initiative in coming to grips with OBE (section 4.2.8). The SMT's initiatives focused on staff development programmes, meetings, discussions and workshops which were elaborated upon in section 4.2.8.1 and the availability of OBE resources as discussed in section 4.2.8.2.

Chapter five gives the summary of the chapters (sections 5.2). The conclusion in respect of the literature study is discussed in section 5.3.1 followed by the conclusions from the empirical study in section 5.3.2. Thereafter, based on the findings the researcher proposes several recommendations in section 5.4, recommendation for further research is noted in section 5.5 and the concluding remarks of the study are presented in section 5.6. Below are the conclusions drawn from literature.

## **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.3.1 Conclusions from literature**

The following conclusions are drawn from the literature review.

#### *5.3.1.1 The complex and contested issues of OBE*

The introduction of OBE and Curriculum 2005 in 1997 was the critical turning point of curriculum transformation in South Africa. In section 1.1 the rationale for curriculum change was highlighted. While the core curriculum, that is OBE and Curriculum 2005 were devised for all South African schools, it brought educators into contact with a curriculum that was completely foreign to their understanding and practices (section 1.1). Several shortcomings were identified within the curriculum itself and the system (section 2.8.5.3), namely: levels of

understanding, flaws in the design and structure of policy, lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy, inadequate training, learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms, too little follow-up and support and unrealistic and unmanageable time frames for implementation. Another area of concern which educators felt unsure about was the issue of assessment (section 1.1). As mentioned in section 1.1 assessment forms an integral component of outcomes-based education but, according to Pahad (1999: 247), it is still the most neglected aspect of curriculum policy.

Both educators and members of management expressed strong reservations about the means and capacity for implementing such a complex and different curriculum (section 1.1). The Department of Education (1999: 1), however, required all public schools to review their management practices (section 1.1) leaving the SMT with the responsibility of ensuring successful implementation in schools.

#### *5.3.1.2 Outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005*

As mentioned in section 2.1, since the SMT are the key change agents and have to manage the shift of the new assessment procedure in OBE, they therefore have to have an in-depth understanding of OBE, outcomes-based assessment as well as instructional leadership. The literature study therefore commenced with the theory of OBE as a condition for meaningful understanding of the assessment process. The new curriculum was modelled according to William Spady's version of OBE (section 1.1). William Spady is regarded as OBE's leading advocate who has defined OBE as a "comprehensive approach to organising and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning outcomes sought from each learner" (Spady 1994: 1). The introduction of OBE as an instrument for the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in the classroom has a great impact not only on the teaching and learning practices but also on the way assessment is done in schools (section 2.1). Defining outcome-based education and its various mechanisms, (sections 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.3; 2.4.4; 2.4.5 and 2.4.6) provided some parameters for understanding the improved learner assessment procedures. Section 2.4 described the principles of OBE as provided by the Department of Education (1997b: 12).



### 5.3.1.3 *Outcomes-based assessment*

Section 2.5.1 described assessment as a central feature of the new curriculum and acknowledged that within the new national curriculum framework, learning, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. Section 2.5 provided the various definitions of outcomes-based assessment, whilst the basic premise and principles were highlighted in sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3. In the new curriculum establishing the purpose of assessment is crucial (section 2.5.4). As mentioned in section 2.5.4 the general aim of assessing learners in OBE is for growth development and support and that is why assessment is an ongoing process. Educators and the SMT must understand that in the new curriculum all types of assessment are continuous (section 2.5.5). OBE encourages educators to know what to assess (section 2.5.6), use a variety of assessment types (section 2.5.7), methods and techniques (sections 2.5.8 & 2.5.9) and make use of rubrics or assessment grids to assess a learner's progress (section 2.5.11). Since different learners take different routes to achieving the same outcomes, educators should know when to assess learners (section 2.5.12). Finally, the careful recording of assessment results as a crucial component of authentic assessment was mentioned in section 2.6. According to Lubisi, Parker and Wedekind (1998: 12), assessment practices can have a profound impact on the processes of teaching and learning and it is therefore imperative for the SMT to understand the assessment process so that they can offer effective instructional leadership (section 2.6).

### 5.3.1.4 *Curriculum development and instructional leadership*

Curriculum development is the life-blood of education. Reconceptualising its processes and content is critical for the re-examination of schooling, so necessary during the present state of flux that characterises the global economy (Taylor, cited by Portenza & Monyokola 1999: 235).

OBE emphasises that the success of schools should be measured not on what learners are supposed to know, but rather on what learners actually know (section 2.7). This therefore implies a change in expectation of student learning, in the practice of teaching, and in the organisation and management of public schools (Brogan 1995: 14). In the light of this the literature related to the characteristics of successful schools and effective principals was mentioned in section 2.7. In particular, as mentioned in section 2.8, since the ultimate purpose

of assessment is to validate learning outcomes, SMTs should work collaboratively with educators towards instructionally sound assessment that is, rich in performance tasks that guide instruction and build the capacity of educators, learners and schools to improve their work (Jamentz, 1994: 55).

With OBE, the focus of managing the curriculum rests largely with the SMT. This requires a degree of instructional leadership competencies, resources and capacity to manage curriculum transformation effectively. The process of turning a set of national outcome statements into classroom practice is a tremendous challenge for the SMT.

#### 5.3.1.5 *The role of the SMT as instructional leader and coach.*

To sum up, section 2.8.1 highlights the implications of instructional leadership for the SMT as described by Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 11). The challenge for SMTs is to apply certain knowledge, interpersonal skills and technical skills to the task of direct assistance, group development, professional development, curriculum development and action research. This enables educators to teach in a collective, purposeful manner, uniting organisational goals and educator needs. In section 2.8.1 leadership was defined as guiding and inspiring. Members of the SMT were further described as taking the lead in putting their school curriculum into practice and improving it (section 2.8.1). In order to effectively manage OBE and outcomes-based assessment, SMTs should fulfill certain pre-requisites, described by Glickman *et al.*, (2001: 11) in section 2.8.2 as well as adhere to certain important OBE principles that affect the SMT as instructional leaders (Section 2.8.4). Finally, the important areas of focus which impact on how SMTs manage the changes imposed by curriculum reform (OBE and OBA) were discussed in section 2.8.5.

### **5.3.2 Empirical conclusions**

The following conclusions are based on the rich, narrative data collected in this study.

#### 5.3.2.1 *Perceptions and experiences of educators and the SMT of OBE and Curriculum 2005*

The first aim was to identify the experiences and perceptions of educators and the SMT of OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment (section 1.3). All participants

interviewed expressed considerable similarities in their understanding of OBE (section 4.2.1.1) by reference to certain common terms which revealed that they had a fairly good understanding of OBE. The latter corroborated the literature study in section 2.2. However, most educators highlighted several problems experienced with OBE during the initial implementation phase (section 4.2.2). These problems, ranging from poor implementation (section 4.2.2.1) to effect on the school climate (section 4.2.2.8) as well as a range of other problems which were gradually addressed by guided supervision, staff development programmes, workshops and discussions initiated by the SMT (section 4.2.7.2).

### *5.3.2.2 Perceptions and experiences of educators and the SMT of outcomes-based assessment*

The central feature of outcomes-based assessment is assessing outcomes (section 4.2.5.1) making it necessary for educators and members of management to know the purpose of assessment, what to assess, who assesses as well as the use of a variety of assessment types, methods and techniques (section 2.5.7, 2.5.8, 2.5.9 and 2.5.10). Educators interviewed expressed a fairly good understanding of the various aspects of assessment mentioned above (section 4.2.4.2 and 4.2.4.3). Educators also made use of rubrics or assessment grids (section 4.2.4.5) and ensured that activities are learners paced and learner centred (section 4.2.4.6), although a degree of formal structured teaching was considered necessary in the Foundation Phase to teach basic skills (section 4.2.3.1 and section 4.2.4.6). All members of the SMT were in agreement that the school had adopted sound assessment practices (section 4.2.4.7), the various policies, guidelines and records had been made accessible to educators and they had adequate knowledge of the relevant OBE and outcomes-based assessment documents. The recording and reporting of learners' progress were detailed and were an endorsement of the department's policy requirements (section 4.2.5.3). To conclude, the educators and the SMT were practicing sound assessment procedures as prescribed by the department's policy on assessment.

### *5.3.2.3 The role of the SMT in managing OBE and outcomes-based assessment*

The second aim was to investigate the role played by the SMT in managing OBE and more specifically outcomes-based assessment. The views of both the SMT and educators correspond to a large extent in respect of the guidance and support they received from the SMT with regard to assessment practices (section 4.2.6.1). Section 4.2.6.3 showed that the

institution is effectively managed making educators part of the decision making process in the design of the assessment policy, assessment schedules, planning of curriculum matters and almost all aspects that affected them as well as providing sufficient opportunities for educators to work collaboratively (section 4.2.6.3). In respect of instructional leadership, the SMT were fulfilling their various roles and responsibilities by executing the various instructional leadership tasks namely: planning (section 4.2.7.1), providing curriculum guidance and support (section 4.2.7.3), establishing healthy interpersonal relations (section 4.2.7.4) ensuring effective time management (section 4.2.7.5), encouraging reflective practice (section 4.2.7.6), drawing up policy (section 4.2.7.7), monitoring formal instruction (4.2.7.8), conducting staff meetings and workshop (section 4.2.8.1) and making adequate OBE resources available (section 4.2.8.2). In short, the identified school has a dynamic and motivated SMT whose initiative in providing adequate curriculum guidance and support has made the task of educators easier and the institution's assessment practices valid and authentic.

#### *5.3.2.4 Encouraging reflective practice*

The final aim was to encourage reflective practice by the SMT and an enhanced understanding of outcomes-based assessment. As mentioned in section 2.8.3, according to LeMahieu *et al.*, (1997: 594) effective instructional leadership requires the application of an educational model appropriate to current conceptions of teaching and learning namely OBE and outcomes-based assessment. It requires school management to help the department reflect upon and examine teaching practices in the light of what is known about the teaching and learning process. At the identified site a common practice illustrated in the interviews was a cycle of proposal, adoption, evaluation, review, implementation, monitoring and reflection of all policies and procedures as a collaborative staff effort. This was mentioned in an interview with a member of management (section 4.3.1.7). Educators and the SMT indicated that this process of reflection had led to an enhanced understanding of outcomes-based assessment. The conclusions derived from this study provide a platform for recommendations that can be used by SMTs to manage schools more efficiently.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Whilst the findings of the interviews and the document analysis suggest that the school is functioning effectively in terms of OBE and outcomes-based assessment practices, there is still room for improvement where problems were identified. The following recommendations are therefore made.

### **5.4.1 Professional development programmes**

It is recommended that since professional development is a life-long journey, and the quality of the initial training of any new curriculum is critical (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 159), the SMT must continue, if not increase the time allocated for professional development programmes as educators benefited greatly from this practice. The continuing and cyclic process of developing new skills, insights and qualities is crucial (Donald *et al.*, 2002: 159), especially since inception of the Revised National Curriculum Statement is current (2004) and educators must still adjust to the new changes.

### **5.4.2 In-service programmes**

Educators with many years of teaching experience should be encouraged to expand their teaching skills and their understanding of the teaching and learning process through participating in departmental in-service programmes and establishing a professional network to share, explore and develop new ideas, especially in the light of the findings that they still resorted to the traditional ways of teaching. In-service programmes will encourage educators to develop new and innovative ways of thinking and to adapt to change especially in a period of rapid transformation.

### **5.4.3 Parental involvement**

In congruence with the democratic process in South Africa, most people rightfully feel that parents and communities should have more involvement in and control over the development of schools (Department of Education, 1996b). Given the situation where educators are overloaded with large classes, the school should endeavour to engage parents in making a constructive contribution to the school. This should include:

- Parental involvement in life-skills education programmes, and acting as teacher aids to help educators cope with the diverse needs in the classroom or school.
- Involvement in the teaching of particular skills, topics or areas of need such as helping educators to listen to groups of learners reading or supervising group work during learner centred activities as well as assisting educators with general classroom routines as well as various other tasks to lighten the workload of educators.

#### **5.4.4 Guidelines for learner centred tasks and group work**

In those classes where educators indicated that learner centeredness and group work can be chaotic in large classes, they should follow the guidelines below.

- Divide the class into manageable groups which can facilitate cohesion and implementation of effective facilitation skills. Alternate group task on certain days.
- Educators must also select tasks and activities that are suitable and appropriate for group work. Educators may have to experiment with different combinations and activities, but if they observe carefully and reflect on the process, their understanding and skill of engaging learners, group work will improve.
- It is important to clarify the goal or purpose of the activity. Foundation Phase educators conceded in their interviews that what they were assessing was not made explicit to learners. Depending on the nature of the activity and/ or the teaching/ learning level, educators have to offer some guidance in helping learners achieve a point of clarity.
- Groups need to be given clear guidelines about how to share the work, using the strengths of each member of the team. Depending on the nature of the task, different members of the team might take on key roles such as researcher, recorder and reporter. Although educators should provide guidelines and monitor the process the actual decision making should be part of each group's task. In this way learners learn important lessons about co-operative decision making, accountability, leadership and

management. This also enables educators to allow greater opportunities for group and learner centred tasks as OBE suggests.

#### **5.4.5 Tracking and recording a learner's progress**

Since workloads expand exponentially as learner numbers go up (tracking and recording learners progress in each learning area, recording observations and helping learners individually) educators should be conservative and realistic with the number of outcomes tracked in class with large enrolments and should also assess different groups of learners on different days. However, the Revised National Curriculum Statement which has been streamlined with assessment standards for each grade level should assist educators in this regard.

#### **5.4.6 'Time off' for the SMT**

The Department of Education should review the contact time of the SMT. For example, school principals should not be expected to teach in a classroom. They should be 'free' to ensure that every facet of the institution is functioning effectively. Heads of departments should also be given time off for administrative tasks such as working on a professional growth plan for educators and completing the cycle of assistance needed as well as various other needs of the institution.

#### **5.4.7 Explicit assessment criteria**

Learners in the Foundation Phase need to know what outcomes are being measured and informed of the process by which they can achieve that outcome. For example, in an arts and culture lesson, one might need to state explicitly what outcomes are being measured and include creating, interpreting and presenting a song and making music to express a variety of ideas, feeling and moods. Foundation Phase educators should brainstorm ideas on how to make learners aware of what is being assessed, that is, the criteria against which their work will be assessed. Educators should make learners aware of the purpose of the task and for which aspects a rubric/mark will be allocated either verbally or in writing. In the next section the researcher makes recommendations for further research.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following are recommendations for further research based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical investigation.

### **5.5.1 Expansion of research to other contexts**

The present study involved only one primary school. It would be advantageous to expand this kind of research to include other schools in the region or provinces. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to compare the experiences and perceptions of educators and SMTs in advantaged and disadvantaged schools to see what is being done to manage OBE and outcomes-based assessment.

### **5.5.2 Evaluating the authenticity, reliability and validity of classroom-based assessment in the Foundation Phase**

According to Donald *et al.*, (2002: 117), despite the OBE approach to teaching and learning, many common forms of assessment are still used which are in total contradiction to outcomes-based assessment. A crucial part of thinking about assessment is why you are doing it, and how it influences further learning, that is the purpose and effects of assessment. All too often, assessment is done automatically without this forethought. It would therefore be advantageous to research the authenticity, reliability and validity of classroom-based assessment in the Foundation Phase.

### **5.5.3 Comparing the level of competency of learners using the outcomes-based assessment approach and the traditional approach to teaching and learning.**

Given the lack of teacher training, the low levels of material support for the new curriculum and the complexity of the new curriculum innovation, it would be useful to investigate and compare the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners have acquired using the outcomes-based assessment approach as opposed to the traditional approach.



#### **5.5.4 The management of OBE and its effects on learners' schooling experiences and achievements**

The literature on effective leadership has identified a broad range of behaviours that contribute to effective instructional management. According to Jamentz (1994: 55), increased learner performance, quality teaching and a healthy school environment rely strongly on good management plans and practices (section 2.7.2). Furthermore, the instructional leadership role of the SMT is crucial to school effectiveness especially in relation to OBE and Curriculum 2005. It would therefore be interesting to research the various management practices at schools in relation to curriculum transformation (OBE) to determine its impact on learner experiences and achievements.

#### **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The findings of the empirical investigation only pertain to those educators and members of management who were interviewed at this particular site. However, findings from similar research reports on teaching practice in other parts of the country suggest that a flawed understanding of outcomes-based assessment is common. It is hoped that the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings will provide some direction for educators and SMTs to implement strategies to overcome the problems identified in section 4.2.2. Finally, it is hoped that curriculum reform in South Africa will help schools to make their contribution to a “prosperous, truly united and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice” (Department of Education 1997a: 1).

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**APPENDIX A**

M.Saib  
Hartley Primary  
133 Hartley Road  
Overport  
4067

The Regional Chief Director  
Department of Education KZN  
Att: S.B.Singh  
Truro House  
17 Victoria Embankment

17/06/2003

Re: Research Studies

I am currently engaged in completing my dissertation for my MED (Management) as a student at Unisa under the supervision of processor G.M.Steyn. My topic is: The role of the Senior Management Team in managing outcomes-based assessment.

I would like to conduct interviews with Foundation Phase educators and members of the Senior Management Team as the chosen sample for my studies at the above site. Strict confidentiality and anonymity of all participants will be maintained. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the findings and to determine how the Senior Management Team can improve the assessment practices at the identified school.

For further information regarding the study, please contact my supervisor:

Professor GM Steyn  
University of South Africa  
Faculty of Education  
Tel: 021 429 4598

I trust that my request to conduct the study is viewed favourably.

Yours faithfully

---

M.Saib (Mrs)

Student no : 655 8798  
Personal no: 109 891 61

## APPENDIX B

M.Saib  
Hartley Primary  
133 Hartley Road  
Overport  
4067

The Principal  
Hartley Primary School  
133 Hartley Road  
Overport  
4067

17/06/2003

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For further information regarding the study, please contact my supervisor:

Professor GM Steyn  
University of South Africa  
Faculty of Education  
Tel: 021 429 4598

I trust that my request to conduct the study is viewed favourably.

Yours faithfully

---

M.Saib (Mrs)

Student no : 655 8798  
Personal no: 109 891 61

**APPENDIX C**

M.Saib  
Hartley Primary  
133 Hartley Road  
Overport  
4067

The Chairman  
Hartley Primary School  
133 Hartley Road  
Overport  
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17/06/2003

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University of South Africa  
Faculty of Education  
Tel: 021 429 4598

I trust that my request to conduct the study is viewed favourably.

Yours faithfully

---

M.Saib (Mrs)

Student no: 655 8798  
Personal no: 109 891 61

17

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (APPENDIX D)**

**INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATORS ON OBE AND  
ASSESSMENT**

Hello Mrs..... Thank you for granting me consent to interview you. The aim of the interview is to get you thinking about your experiences and perceptions of outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the findings and to see how we can improve our assessment practice by reviewing what we are doing and to determine what we can learn from it. I would like to tape record what you say so I do not miss any of it. I do not want to take the chance of relying on my notes and maybe missing something or inadvertently changing your words somehow. So if you do not mind, I would very much like to use the tape recorder. Please relax and feel free to respond and comment as honestly as possible.

**1. DETAILS OF PERSON INTERVIEWED**

- 1.1. Name :** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.2. School :** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.3. Region:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.4. Position:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.5. Length of experience (service) in the Foundation Phase:** \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p><b>2 IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION</b></p> <p>2.1 First, I'd like to know your views on OBE and curriculum 2005.</p> <p>2.2 How would you rate your understanding (working knowledge) of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>2.3 What training did you receive in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>2.4 Tell me a little more about the workshops you attended.</p> <p>2.5 In OBE various new terms have been introduced. What are your views concerning these terms?</p> <p>2.5.1 Identify terms related to assessment in OBE and explain your practical understanding of them?</p> <p><b>3 PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</b></p> <p>3.1 An important aspect of curriculum 2005 is assessment. Tell me about the assessment procedure in OBE?</p>	

<p>3.2 What are some of the principles of OBE assessment?</p> <p>3.3 What do you assess?</p> <p>3.4 How do learners know what you are assessing?</p> <p>3.5 What are some of the assessment methods you commonly use when assessing your learners?</p> <p>3.6 How often do you assess learners?</p> <p>3.7 What do you understand by formative and summative assessment?</p> <p>3.7.1 How is formative assessment incorporated into the planning of activities?</p> <p>3.7.2 How is summative assessment incorporated into the planning of activities?</p> <p>3.8 How do you accommodate for different learning styles?</p> <p><b>4 TEACHER ASSESSMENT: CLASSROOM PRACTICES</b></p> <p>4.1 Since the introduction of OBE, how has your teaching methodology changed?</p>	
--	--

4.2 What role does the learning outcome play in your planning?

4.3 Explain whether your lesson is teacher centred or learner centred?

4.4 How is instruction for a specific task given?

4.5 Please give me an example of an assessment criteria, rubric or marking grid you may have used for assessment?

## **5 RECORD KEEPING**

5.1 Please name a few Departmental guidelines, circulars, handouts etcetera you refer to when planning assessment?

5.2 What evidence is there of recording learners progress?

5.3 How does the record keeping system show support for learners in terms of enrichment and remediation?

5.4 How frequently is assessment done?

5.5 What does your pupils' portfolio entail?



5.6 What are your views on the recording system of learner assessment at the school?

## **6 REPORTING**

6.1 How is reporting of learner achievement done?

6.2 Please comment on the school's reporting policy?

## **7 MANAGEMENT OF OBE AND ASSESSMENT**

7.1 What role do you think SMTs play in supporting and guiding educators?

7.2 What kind of guidance and assistance did you receive from the SMT in respect of assessment procedures and practices?

7.3 How effective are the members of the SMT in leading the institution?

7.4 What policy exists on assessment for the foundation phase?

7.5 What role did you play in the process of designing the school policy on assessment in the foundation phase?

<p>7.6 What opportunities are created for team work in the grade/phase?</p> <p>7.7 What mechanisms are put in place by the SMT for the professional development of educators?</p> <p>7.8 How has this benefited you?</p> <p>7.9 Comment on the climate of the school in relation to educator and learner productivity?</p> <p>7.10 Are there any other areas of concern in respect of OBE and assessment that you think the SMT can improve on?</p> <p>It was wonderful chatting to you. Thank you for your time and I hope you have a pleasant day.</p>	
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**(APPENDIX E)****INTERVIEW SCHEDULE****INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM ON OBE AND ASSESSMENT**

Hello Mr, Mrs ..... thank you for granting me consent to interview you. The aim of the interview is to determine your role as a member of the Senior Management Team in managing outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment. This will help us to reflect on the current OBE and assessment practices at the school. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the findings and to see how we can improve our assessment practices which can be of benefit to both members of the Senior Management Team and educators, namely what are we doing and what can we learn from it. I would like to tape record what you say so I do not miss any of it. I do not want to take the chance of relying on my notes and maybe missing something or inadvertently changing your words somehow. So if you do not mind, I would very much like to use the tape recorder. Please relax and feel free to respond and comment as honestly as possible.

**2. DETAILS OF PERSON INTERVIEWED**

- 1.1 Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.2 School:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.3 Region:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.4 Position:** \_\_\_\_\_
- 1.5 Length of experience (service) in management:** \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p><b>2 UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION: MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE</b></p> <p>2.1 First, I'd like you to comment on your understanding of OBE and Curriculum 2005.</p> <p>2.2 What training did you as a member of the school management team receive in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>2.2.1 Please comment on the training you received?</p> <p>2.2.2 How did this empower you as a member of the SMT?</p> <p>2.3 Please comment on your understanding of the various OBE terms?</p> <p>2.4 Are you sufficiently empowered to guide educators in your phase in respect of OBE and assessment?</p> <p>2.4.1 If yes, how do you provide the necessary guidance and support?</p> <p><b>3. PLANNING</b></p> <p>3.1 What type of planning is done in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005 at the different management levels within the school?</p>	

3.2 How does the planning process take place?

#### **4. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

4.1 How do you provide guidance and support in putting the school's curriculum into practice

4.2 How is assistance given to educators to acquire teaching strategies consistent with the OBE model?

4.3 How are your interpersonal relations with members of your staff?

4.4 How do you ensure that the school climate is conducive to learning?

4.5 How do you ensure a school wide emphasis on the achievement of outcomes?

4.6 How is assistance given to educators to help them develop different ways to assess learners?

4.7 How are opportunities for educators created to work collaboratively?

4.8 What types of meeting are held to discuss OBE and assessment?

4.9 How do educators access information on curriculum matters?

4.10 How do you encourage the foundation phase educators to reflect and examine their teaching practice in light of the new teaching and assessment procedures?

4.11 What assessment guidelines did you provide to assist educators in the phase?

4.12 How do you ensure that activities are learner paced and learner centred?

4.13 What teaching resources are available for educators to use?

4.14 What learning resources are available for learners?

4.15 How do you ensure that teaching time is used effectively?

4.16 How do you provide follow-up and support for those educators requiring assistance?

## **5. MONITORING FORMAL ASSESSMENT**

5.1 How is the evaluation of OBE instruction done?

5.2 How is the evaluation of the assessment procedure used by educators done?

5.3 What procedure is in place for monitoring student progress?

5.4 What guidelines are educators provided with on :

5.4.1 Recording and reporting

## **6. SCHOOL POLICY, DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES AND RECORDS**

6.1 Please give me a few examples of departmental documents, guidelines, circulars, handouts etcetera on OBE and assessment that you use as reference?

6.2 How are these documents made accessible to educators?

6.3 What policy does the school have on assessment for the foundation phase?

6.4 What process was followed to design and shape the assessment policy?

6.5 List the assessment records you expect educators to keep?

## **7 EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS**

7.1 What are your experiences and perceptions of OBE and the assessment practices in the foundation phase?

7.2 I believe that I have covered the crucial aspects for my research and would like you to add your insight on aspects I did not include. Please feel free to comment.

Thank you for your time. It was a simulating experience interviewing you.



**(APPENDIX F)****TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW****INTERVIEW WITH FOUNDATION PHASE EDUCATOR ON OBE AND  
ASSESSMENT**

Hello Mrs..... Thank you for granting me consent to interview you. The aim of the interview is to get you thinking about your experiences and perceptions of outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the findings and to see how we can improve our assessment practice by reviewing what we are doing and to determine what we can learn from it? I would like to tape record what you say so I do not miss any of it. I do not want to take the chance of relying on my notes and maybe missing something or inadvertently changing your words somehow. So if you do not mind, I would very much like to use the tape recorder. Please relax and feel free to respond and comment as honestly as possible.

**1. DETAILS OF PERSON INTERVIEWED**

- 1.1. Name:** Educator A
- 1.2. School:**
- 1.3. Region:** KZN - Durban
- 1.4. Position:** Level 1
- 1.5. Length of experience (service) in the foundation phase:** 19 years

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p><b>2 IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION</b></p> <p>2.1 First, I would like to know your views on OBE and Curriculum 2005.</p> <p>I see</p> <p>2.2 How would you rate your understanding (working knowledge) of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>Hmm</p> <p>2.3 What training did you receive in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>I see</p>	<p>It has many advantages because it's an ongoing process. You don't hold children back. There is no isolation of children. There is integration of content. But we always did this with Foundation Phase classes. There is a lot of admin work. We stress so much on admin work that we focus less on teaching children. There is also too many terms. It required great adjustment. When you receive a child you start at that level, as long as progress is made.</p> <p>Initially it was very difficult to apply. With the help of management and consultation I gradually understood it.</p> <p>One week of training. This was insufficient. Even the period of training was appropriate. We were not in the mood because it was at the end of the year. The practical practise of how to teach the OBE way would have been more beneficial rather than the theory.</p>

<p>2.4 Tell me a little more about the workshops you attended.</p>	<p>The facilitators themselves were confused. It was a political move. The government had to do something for education.</p>
<p>2.5 In OBE various new terms have been introduced. What are your views concerning these terms?</p>	<p>I couldn't remember most of them. It was difficult and there was major confusion.</p>
<p>I can imagine</p>	
<p>2.5.1 Identify terms related to assessment in OBE and explain your practical understanding of them?</p>	<p>Group assessment Self assessment Peer assessment Projects Role play Continuous Assessment</p>
<p>Okay!</p>	
<p><b>3 PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS</b></p>	
<p>3.1 An important aspect of Curriculum 2005 is assessment. Tell me about the assessment procedure in OBE?</p>	<p>Assessment is continuous. It is effective because it helped me to determine new teaching strategies. Educators were accountable for learner's progress. Learners were also accountable for their own progress. Continued observation – made reporting easy. Record keeping such as portfolios provided evidence of the child's work. All this helps to protect educators.</p>
<p>I see</p>	

<p>3.2 What are some of the principles of OBE assessment?</p>	<p>Failing is taboo, the new system is outcomes based. Learners have to apply what they have learnt. There must be an integration of knowledge, and they must understand.</p>
<p>3.3 What do you assess?</p>	<p>I assess their listening skills, application of concepts. Also assess their projects and their ability to read and write and calculate. I base my assessment on a particular child.</p>
<p>I see</p>	
<p>3.4 How do learners know what you are assessing?</p>	<p>I tell the learners for example if we are doing reading, we will have a critical debate. Learners are given the freedom to criticise. I also encourage them to assess themselves by doing self evaluation/ “I enjoyed reading because .....” I give them guidelines by using rubrics in worksheets. I always try to give them positive motivation.</p>
<p>3.5 What are some of the assessment methods you commonly use when assessing your learners?</p>	<p>I use worksheets, observation, listening to them and group work also. Peers also assess each other. Self evaluation.</p>
<p>I see</p>	
<p>3.6 How often do you assess learners?</p>	<p>They are assessed continuously on an ongoing basis. Also I assess their written work depending on their progress. I assess what they know, concrete work. This is done in stages.</p>

<p>3.7 What do you understand by formative and summative assessment?</p> <p>I see</p>	<p>Formative assessment is looking at their work all the time and seeing their progress. Summative assessment is the over-all assessment done on the basis of your formative assessment.</p>
<p>3.7.1 How is formative assessment incorporated into the planning of activities?</p> <p>So that's how you do it.</p>	<p>I assess when tasks and activities are given for example reading, written work in worksheets or when they are drawing. Artistic ability is observed often.</p>
<p>3.7.2 How is summative assessment incorporated into the planning of activities?</p>	<p>I assess them all the time, its easy to do a final evaluation for example, if I taught them a new concept in numeracy, I might incorporate a few examples in a worksheet and may give them a formal test to see if they understood the concept. I use both marks for formal tests and rubrics for less formal assessments.</p>
<p>3.8 How do you accommodate for different learning styles?</p>	<p>Learners are not compared. Even though I have a large class I call them out in little groups and do group work or give them individual attention. With the very weak learners, I call their parents as they are very helpful. I explain the problem and they also try and help. For the bright learners I give them enrichment from grade 2 worksheets, I'm not a happy teacher if child does not grasp a concept. For reading I allow the</p>

<p>Oh, that's great!</p> <p><b>4. EDUCATOR ASSESSMENT: CLASSROOM PRACTICE</b></p> <p>4.1 Since the introduction of OBE, how has your teaching methodology changed?</p> <p>I see</p> <p>4.2 What role does the learning outcome play in your planning?</p> <p>I see!</p> <p>4.3 Explain whether your lesson is teacher centred or learner centred?</p> <p>I see.</p> <p>4.4 How is instruction for a specific task given?</p>	<p>bright learners to bring their own books.</p> <p>I haven't moved away from the traditional method. In the foundation phase, there is not much deviation from the past, because we always did group work, took them on field trips, played shopping games and so on.</p> <p>The outcome is very important. You have to look at the outcome and devise methods and strategies to reach the outcome.</p> <p>Honestly, part of the day is teacher centred. I also give learners a chance to participate, share, and play and to assess themselves, but it is not absolutely learner centred. Learner centeredness sometimes leads to chaos.</p> <p>In JP, especially grade one it is done orally. They are asked to listen to instructions as they learn to read, then we give them written instructions, but we read this to them. On some worksheets instructions are drawn.</p>
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<p>I see.</p> <p>4.5 Please give me an example of an assessment criteria, rubric or marking grid you may have used for assessment?</p> <p>That's great!</p>	<p>I use stars, rubrics that we have in our assessment file. Sometimes a pat on their shoulder or a smile. Body language makes them feel important. When I speak to them I praise them and use positive motivation.</p>
<p><b>5 RECORD KEEPING</b></p> <p>5.1 Please name a few Departmental guidelines, circulars, handouts etcetera you refer to when planning assessment?</p> <p>Mm.</p> <p>5.2 What evidence is there of recording learners progress?</p> <p>I see.</p> <p>5.3 How does the record keeping system show support for learners in terms of enrichment and remediation?</p> <p>5.4 How frequently is assessment done?</p>	<p>We normally use the foundation phase document and the assessment policy. I don't know the name exactly, but all workshop handouts, circulars and guidelines are filed and we use this when we plan.</p> <p>Portfolios; Profiles; Observation Sheet; Mark file/Records Sheets and Phonic/Tests</p> <p>It helps us with feedback on learner's progress and helps us in planning. The records are very detailed, so we can track each child's progress.</p> <p>Continuously.</p>

<p>Mm.</p> <p>5.5 What does your pupils' portfolio entail?</p> <p>I see.</p> <p>5.6 What are your views on the recording system of learner assessment at the school?</p> <p>I see.</p> <p><b>6. REPORTING</b></p> <p>6.1 How is reporting of learner achievement done?</p> <p>6.2 Please comment on the school's reporting policy?</p>	<p>It has bits of their work, showing progress. Pupils choose their best efforts. You can see a child's progress by looking at their portfolio.</p> <p>A very good system, we cover ourselves fully. We assess learners on concepts learnt and their application. We also see how a child is developing socially in Life Skills. We also have focused consultation with parents. There is enough evidence of learners' progress. We also have enough free time to meet parents but the only thing is that the numbers are too large.</p> <p>Through observation, formal written reports and parent consultations.</p> <p>It is quite detailed. We have meeting with parents often. We have two formal meetings and we give them two written reports. We continuously encourage parents to attend and discuss their child's work.</p>
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<b>7 MANAGEMENT OF OBE AND ASSESSMENT</b>	
<p>7.1 What role do you think Senior Management Team play in supporting and guiding educators?</p> <p>That's good!</p>	<p>In our school good support “we were spoon fed.” We are spoilt. Whenever we needed guidance, we got it.</p>
<p>7.2 What kind of guidance and assistance did you receive from the Senior Management Team in respect of assessment procedures and practices?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>The management team showed us what to do. We were not scared to ask. We asked our peers and even our head of department helped us a lot.</p>
<p>7.3 How effective are the members of the Senior Management Team in leading the institution?</p> <p>That's great!</p>	<p>They are very effective. Our school administration will speak for itself. We have a very motivated Senior Management Team. In fact comparatively they are quite ahead of other schools. For our own personal and professional growth, they are very encouraging.</p>
<p>7.4 What policy exists on assessment for the Foundation Phase?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>A detailed assessment policy in the Foundation Phase.</p>

<p>7.5 What role did you play in the process of designing the school policy on assessment in the Foundation Phase?</p> <p>Mm.</p>	<p>We sat together and worked with our head of department. We put our heads together and discussed what we needed to include in the policy and together we agreed on it.</p>
<p>7.6 What opportunities are created for team work in the grade/phase?</p> <p>Good!</p>	<p>A lot of opportunities. We have scheduled meetings which are compulsory for us to attend. There is a lot of team work. During the breaks we have discussions. We help each other all the time. We even have grade and phase meetings. Many opportunities are created.</p>
<p>7.7 What mechanisms are put in place by the Senior Management Team for the professional development of educators?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>Every Friday we have a staff development programme. Our principal rigidly sticks to it. The Senior Management Team encourages educators to grow. We have free access to all equipment. We are encouraged to attend workshops and alternate arrangements are made for our learners.</p>
<p>7.8 How has this benefited you?</p>	<p>Attending our Foundation Phase workshops we sat and unpacked the foundation phase documents together, which was of great benefit. We can't do it individually.</p>

<p>7.9 Comment on the climate of the school in relation to educator and learner productivity?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>We have a good climate but the disadvantage is that the number of learners makes educator and learner productivity difficult. Learners rush out, but we have everything we need, access to everything. Physical conditions are comfortable and resources are available.</p>
<p>7.10 Are there any other areas of concern in respect of OBE and assessment that you think the Senior Management Team can improve on?</p> <p>Great!</p> <p>It was wonderful chatting to you. Thank you for your time and have a pleasant day.</p>	<p>No, I think we are doing well.</p>

## (APPENDIX G)

### TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

#### INTERVIEW WITH SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM ON OBE AND ASSESSMENT

Hello Mr Mahomed, thank you for granting me consent to interview you. The aim of the interview is to determine your role as a member of the Senior Management Team in managing outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment. This will help us to reflect on the current OBE and assessment practice at the school. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the findings and to see how we can improve our assessment practices which can be of benefit to both members of the Senior Management Team and educators, namely what are we doing and what can we learn from it. I would like to tape record what you say so I do not miss any of it. I do not want to take the chance of relying on my notes and maybe missing something or inadvertently changing your words somehow. So if you do not mind, I would very much like to use the tape recorder. Please relax and feel free to respond and comment as honestly as possible.

#### 3. DETAILS OF PERSON INTERVIEWED

- 1.1 **Name:** Mr Mahomed
- 1.2 **School:**
- 1.3 **Region:** KZN
- 1.4 **Position:** Senior Management Team
- 1.5 **Length of experience (service) in management:** 5 years

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
<p><b>2. UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION: MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE</b></p> <p>2.1 First, I'd like you to comment on your understanding of OBE and Curriculum 2005.</p> <p>I see</p> <p>2.2 What training did you as a member of the Senior Management Team receive in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005?</p> <p>Hmm</p> <p>2.2.1 Please comment on the training you received?</p> <p>2.2.2 How did this empower you as a member of the Senior Management Team?</p> <p>Oh! I see</p>	<p>OBE is an excellent concept and yet vastly misunderstood by the majority of parents and educators. OBE gives direction to teachers, lessons and pupil activities as the outcome is known before hand. Curriculum 2005 was too heavily loaded with semantics and caused much confusion amongst educators.</p> <p>We were given superficial training on OBE and Curriculum 2005 from a management perspective.</p> <p>We did receive training which was insufficient. Much had to be done to translate theory into practice.</p> <p>The workshop was only the basis but we had to empower ourselves. I researched and read on my own.</p>

<p>2.3 Please comment on your understanding of the various OBE terms?</p>	<p>Although it's heavily loaded, I have a very good understanding, Range statements for example is the depth in which a particular section of the syllabus must be done.</p>
<p>2.4 Are you sufficiently empowered to guide educators in your phase in respect of OBE and assessment?</p>	<p>Yes, I have an excellent understanding of it. I can guide my heads of department, my teachers and the parents. They were all in the dark at one stage but now they know it well.</p>
<p>Great!</p>	
<p>2.4.1 If yes, how do you provide the necessary guidance and support?</p>	<p>I call up a management meeting and set out goals to guide both management and staff members. I also- if I request them to come up with learning area policies, I provide a detailed exemplar of what is expected. We invite input from staff members and then ratify it and adopt it. The implementation of the policies are closely monitored and teachers are given the necessary support.</p>
<p>That's wonderful!</p>	
<p><b>3. PLANNING</b></p>	
<p>3.1 What type of planning is done in respect of OBE and Curriculum 2005 at the different management levels within the school?</p>	<p>We set the parameters for long term, medium term and short term planning and set aside days on which these planning sessions need to take place.</p>
<p>I see.</p>	

<p>3.2 How does the planning process take place?</p>	<p>Notices are circularised and members of those committees are informed.</p>
<p><b>4. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b></p>	
<p>4.1 How do you provide guidance and support in putting the school's curriculum into practice?</p>	<p>We ensure that the schools curriculum is prepared for circulation to all parents. The schools year planner is discussed with educators and we expect the educators to prepare the curriculum where all aspects are covered in the four terms. This is monitored termly. Educators experiencing problems at the end of each term are supported and internal arrangement made to give them more time. We also have staff appraisal and staff development mechanisms. This identifies areas of weakness and such needs are addressed in the form of workshops.</p>
<p>I see a great deal of work done, tell me...</p>	
<p>4.2 How is assistance given to educators to acquire teaching strategies consistent with the OBE model?</p>	<p>Teachers are given the freedom to attend workshops.</p>
<p>4.3 How are your interpersonal relations with members of your staff?</p>	<p>Excellent!</p>
<p>4.4 How do you ensure that the school climate is conducive to learning?</p>	<p>The staff has been workshopped on classroom atmosphere, school cleanliness and discipline</p>

<p>4.5 How do you ensure a school wide emphasis on the achievement of outcomes?</p> <p>Okay!</p>	<p>Opportunities are created at assembly to assess school wide outcomes. Grade and phase meetings also help shape lesson outcomes, also by means of monitoring though limited.</p>
<p>4.6 How is assistance given to educators to help them develop different ways to assess learners?</p> <p>Good!</p>	<p>A comprehensive booklet was prepared and presented to members of staff on various types of assessment activities.</p>
<p>4.7 How are opportunities for educators created to work collaboratively?</p> <p>It seems a lot of time is spent on meetings, tell me.....</p>	<p>Grade meetings are held weekly and phase meeting are held monthly.</p>
<p>4.8 What types of meeting are held to discuss OBE and assessment?</p> <p>I see!</p>	<p>Staff, grade and phase and learning area meetings.</p>
<p>4.9 How do educators access information on curriculum matters?</p> <p>Good!</p>	<p>All educators have Curriculum 2005 and other relevant national policies which they can access at leisure.</p>



<p>4.10 How do you encourage the Foundation Phase educators to reflect and examine their teaching practice in light of the new teaching and assessment procedures?</p> <p>I see</p>	<p>I had requested that they review all policies and practices annually and special meetings are set aside for that purpose.</p>
<p>4.11 What assessment guidelines did you provide to assist educators in the phase?</p> <p>It's good to work with examples.</p>	<p>We had worked with exemplars of assessment requirements during our workshops.</p>
<p>4.12 How do you ensure that activities are learner paced and learner centred?</p>	<p>Our planning reflects that activities are learner centred and learner paced.</p>
<p>4.13 What teaching resources are available for educators to use?</p>	<p>The latest teaching resources are made available to educators from all publishers for all learning areas.</p>
<p>4.14 What learning resources are available for learners?</p> <p>I see</p>	<p>Because of the transition the number of learner resource material has been minimal. However worksheets are well designed and given out.</p>
<p>4.15 How do you ensure that teaching time is used effectively?</p> <p>That's good</p>	<p>We monitor it and where teachers are found wanting, they are advised accordingly.</p>

<p>4.16 How do you provide follow-up and support for those educators requiring assistance?</p> <p>I see</p>	<p>The heads of department are mandated to set up meetings to assist and support teachers on an individual basis.</p>
<p><b>5 MONITORING FORMAL ASSESSMENT</b></p>	
<p>5.1 How is the evaluation of OBE instruction done?</p> <p>Mm, that's a good system!</p>	<p>Preparation books should reflect the details and step-by step instruction given in class, even projects and assignment instructions are set out clearly and are monitored against a checklist.</p>
<p>5.2 How is the evaluation of the assessment procedure used by educators done?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>We get a sampling of the learner's portfolios and we check this against the educator's assessment records.</p>
<p>5.3 What procedure is in place for monitoring student progress?</p> <p>Good!</p>	<p>We call for all pupils written work books and this is monitored against the syllabus. Pupils who are underperforming are invited with their parents for a focused consultation.</p>
<p>5.4 What guidelines are educators provided with on :</p> <p>5.4.1 recording and reporting</p>	<p>A format of what the assessment schedule should look like is given to educators after consulting.</p> <p>A policy on reporting has been designed and adopted by all members of staff.</p>

<p>I see.</p> <p><b>6. SCHOOL POLICY, DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES AND RECORDS</b></p> <p>6.1 Please give me a few examples of departmental documents, guidelines, circulars, handouts etcetera on OBE and assessment that you use as reference?</p> <p>I see</p> <p>6.2 How are these documents made accessible to educators?</p> <p>That's good!</p> <p>6.3 What policy does the school have on assessment for the Foundation Phase?</p> <p>6.4 What process was followed to design and shape the assessment policy?</p> <p>That's great!</p> <p>6.5 List the assessment records you expect educators to keep?</p> <p>I see.</p>	<p>I use all the National Education Departments national policy documents.</p> <p>Educators have personal copies of most of the relevant documents.</p> <p>They have a continuous assess policy. No formal exams are written.</p> <p>First there's consultation, then there are proposals, then we call for amendments, then we adopt and implement, we monitor, evaluate and review.</p> <p>Progress on each of the three learning fields as well as general observations. Records of formal tests for example mental, spelling, phonic etcetera.</p>
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## 7 EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

7.1 What are your experiences and perceptions of OBE and the assessment practices in the Foundation Phase?

Oh!

7.2 I believe that I have covered the crucial aspects for my research and would like you to add your insight on aspects I did not include. Please feel free to comment.

I can imagine, anyway thank you for your time. It was a simulating experience interviewing you. Thank you!

Whilst it is excellent, it appears very detailed and time consuming, also the depth of at which assessment is done might compromise tuition time.

I think an important aspect you left out is does the principal have sufficient time to focus on curriculum issues given the time consuming day to day issues and also principals are classroom based and therefore cannot lead the institutions effectively.

Thank you. I hope I answered most of your questions and good luck with your studies.