

CHAPTER 2

THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

2.1 Introduction

From a detailed account in Chapter 1 which motivates this study on the implementation of OBE from a management perspective, the focus turns to a discussion of the foundational aspects of OBE which serve as a knowledge base for sound implementation practices. The value of curriculum theory must not be underestimated because through it, curriculum practices are better understood. A broad perspective of the theoretical aspects of OBE is therefore essential and is dealt with in this chapter.

The chapter commences with a historical background to education in South Africa (cf. 2.2), followed by the need for relevant education in South Africa (cf. 2.3), the shift from the traditional- to the new system (cf. 2.4) and thereafter an in-depth discussion on the new innovative approach to education in South Africa (cf. 2.5). In this section the different forms of OBE are conceptualized. The key elements of OBE are thoroughly dealt with since they serve to provide direction for curriculum development and curriculum implementation. The curricula that were introduced to serve as a vehicle in taking the OBE process forward are then alluded to. The chapter closes with a discussion of the roles of the OBE teacher (cf. 2.6), the principal (cf. 2.7) and district officials (cf. 2.8).

The answers to a number of key questions ensure sufficient foundational knowledge for teachers and principals to embark on the curriculum process. These questions include the following:

- Why was there a need for a new education system?
- What are the foundations of OBE?
- What are the key elements of OBE?
- What curricula were put in place to take the OBE process forward?

- What are the roles of the OBE teacher, school principal and district officials?

2.2 The Traditional Approach to Education in South Africa

Olivier (1998:29) states that traditional learning provides the learner with knowledge or skills, or both, but they are *not coupled to a specific context* – so the learning takes place in a vacuum and cannot be regarded as outcomes-based learning. It belongs to the *input* part of the learning process whereas OBE deals with the input- as well as the output processes.

Although speaking of traditional methods of education around the world, Spady (1994:32-35), describes the traditional methods of schooling as calender and timetable controlled, opportunities were limited, content was organised into subjects or courses and had to be covered in a specific time before receiving credits. Learners' work was self-contained – meaning that they did not work collaboratively or co-operatively. Furthermore, the traditional approach was contest-driven where results were compared with those of others and learners were in constant competition with each other.

The DOE (1997:6) and Pretorius (1998: viii-ix) also identify a number of problems found in the content-based approach to teaching:

- It was a rigidly structured curriculum process without any stakeholder participation in the decision-making process.
- It laid an emphasis on academic education which resulted in the development of skills being neglected.
- It was an inflexible and prescriptive curriculum.
- It was norm-referenced whereby learner achievement was compared to that of other learners and this resulted in excessive competition.
- There was a gap between formal education and training for a career.

- Testing of learner achievement in terms of symbols or marks were often not a true reflection of the learner's actual performance.
- The emphasis was on differentiation in the form of a broad variety of subjects.
- A teacher-centred, rather than a learner-centred classroom approach, was applied.
- It was a content-based curriculum whereby the teacher instructed and the learner memorised.

There seems to be consensus about the rigidity and quality of the previous system and how detrimental it was to the learner and education. Many of these drawbacks are echoed by each of the writers referred to above. These indicate the *need* for relevant education in the country and this is examined in the next section.

2.3 The Need for Relevant Education in South Africa

South Africa's social and economic systems are rapidly undergoing significant changes. As the country re-enters the international arena, it is critical that its education and training system keeps pace with international standards (The National Qualification Framework Network [NQF] 1996:2). OBE has been introduced in order to change the face of education in South Africa. The type of education that is promoted by OBE will enable South Africa to compete on international markets. Nel (1995:533) says that the South African labour market is facing a shortage of highly skilled people, while there is large-scale unemployment amongst the unskilled. This scenario is the result of the apartheid system which failed to create a coherent, national education and training system which could cater for the needs of all South African citizens. This has prompted the South African government to adopt a curriculum policy, Curriculum 2005, which it is hoped, will address the inequalities of the past and provide equal learning opportunities for all learners in the country. However, as is the case with all other reforms, the introduction of OBE has received mixed responses. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:6) argue that OBE is usually attractive to politicians, policy-makers and managers during times of educational reform which follows socio-political reform. The South African government has taken this route in order to correct the imbalances of the past. It is against this background that Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:6) maintain that the

driving force behind OBE is therefore often political. Pretorius (1998a:v) writes that all reforms in South Africa – including the implementation of Curriculum 2005 – is seen in certain circles as part of a politically-oriented process. However, Vally and Spreen (1998:14) feel that Curriculum 2005 is likely to increase the resource and performance gap between advantaged and disadvantaged schools.

Pretorius (1998:xi) and Genis (1997:5-8) state that education systems look upon OBE as a relevant and appropriate teaching approach to address future needs more readily than the traditional approach and to implement technological inventions and changes that have taken place in the world of work.

Pretorius (1998: viii) writes that, within contemporary society, South Africa is a universal partner. The ruling trends of global interdependence and economic co-operation make it impossible for South Africa to be isolated even remotely and yet desire a competitive economy. There is a fluctuating dependency on expanded and sound domestic policies, better international co-operation, stringent business ties, increased productivity and improved quality products for export to compete with the best in the world. It is crucial that South Africa responds to technological developments to ensure high standards of living for its people. It is only with improved technology that competitive productivity and quality is ensured. It is, therefore, evident that, to be competitive in a global economy in a highly technological era, South Africa requires a workforce that:

- can solve problems
- is committed to ongoing learning
- is creative
- has above-average communication skills
- is in line with new technological developments
- is flexible

- can participate in management processes and decision-making and
- can work interactively.

Regrettably, the old approach to education could not produce a workforce of this nature (Pretorius 1998: viii).

However, Greenstein, Tikly, Motala, Mkwana and Chisholm (1994:82) argue that international experience shows that education seldom functions as a cure for economic problems. Although a sound system of education is a prerequisite for economic growth, it does not automatically lead to greater economic competitiveness. Burroughs (1994:39) in turn thinks differently. He emphasises the importance of education as an organic and interconnected part of systems and structures in the context of the workplace. To be able to create a workforce which is flexible enough to adapt to changing demands, education plays a key role.

OBE is a flexible, empowerment-oriented approach to learning. It aims at equipping learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success after they leave school. Hence its guiding vision is that of a competent future citizen. Success at school level is of limited benefit unless learners are equipped to transfer academic success to life in a complex, challenging, high-technology future (DOE 1997:21).

Relevant education in South Africa should be considered from various perspectives. In light of this, a discussion of OBE as the country's new approach to education is presented.

2.4 The Shift from Content-based Education to Outcomes-based Education

Olivier (1998:20-21) says that the move from mainly content-based education to OBE was thought of at a time when the *quality movement* in business and manufacturing was introduced. Education reflects the notion that, in order for people to get where they want to be, the achievement has to be pre-determined. Once the objective has been determined, strategies and other ways and means should be put into place to achieve this goal. With OBE, the learner will accomplish more than the mere retention of knowledge or the mastering of skills. The aim of education is to prepare learners for

life in society and for performing tasks. It is the intention of the outcomes-based approach to focus as much on the process of learning and the final outcome or result, as on the knowledge and skills. In this way, the process of achieving outcomes during the process of learning can be related directly to the way in which outcomes are achieved in the world of work. The outcomes-based approach requires a mindshift in the curriculum process and the way in which the learner should be empowered for the achievement of outcomes.

It is interesting to see how the DOE (1997:6) differentiates between, what it refers to as, the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ curricula. This is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 The differences between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ educational approaches to teaching (DOE 1997:6).

‘Old’	‘New’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are passive. • The approach is exam-driven. • Rote-learning is encouraged. • The syllabus is content-based and divided into subjects. • Learning is textbook/worksheet-bound and teacher-centred. • The teacher sees the syllabus as rigid and non negotiable. • Teachers are responsible for learning and motivation depends on the personality of the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are active. • Learners are assessed on an ongoing basis. • Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action are encouraged. • Content is integrated and learning is relevant and connected to real-life situations. • Learning is learner-centred, the teacher facilitates and constantly applies group work and team work to consolidate the new approach. • Learning programmes are seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing their programmes. • Learners take responsibility for their own learning and are motivated by feedback and affirmation of their worth.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is on what the teacher hopes to achieve. • Content is placed into rigid time-frames. • The curriculum design process is not open to public comment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis is on what the learner will be able to know and do. • Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace. • Comment and input from the wider community is encouraged.
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Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:27) disagree with the DOE on the above issues by saying that some of these statements referring to traditional education are not a true reflection of what has been accomplished in many South African classrooms in the past. They believe that many innovative teachers have applied a variety of teaching methods for many years that resemble a typical outcomes-based approach. This suggests that while some teachers were text book bound, others used textbooks as a guide and ensured that the learners were actively involved in the teaching-and-learning process. They further argue that these teachers, managed to develop the skills in learners required for research within the learning areas and they motivated learners to become critical thinkers who are able to demonstrate a variety of skills.

Kudlas (1994:32) also claims that OBE is not new. He says it is an age-old, common-sense approach and maintains that teachers who have been responsible for what has to be learned, or rather the outcome of the teaching-and-learning situation, have been applying the principles of OBE anyway.

Olivier (1998:3) maintains that the difference between OBE and traditional content-based education is that the latter is mostly content- or skill-driven and teacher-centred. The primary purpose of content-based education is to master knowledge with textbooks and teachers being the sources of information. OBE on the other hand, is based on identifying and listing the generic competencies for a particular job or a range of job activities at a particular level. Manuals or guides are used as directives to provide guidelines for self-paced learning. Furthermore, OBE is a learner-driven learning process and aimed at achieving outcomes. Particular learning procedures are used to guide learners in order for them to achieve their outcomes in real-life situations. Knowledge and skills can be extracted from any source and the role of teachers evolves accordingly to provide guidance for learners.

In other words, teachers should facilitate the learning by encouraging self-learning and critical thinking and by stimulating creativity. The changing role of teachers signifies that not anyone 'qualifies' to be an OBE teacher. The roles of teachers (cf. 2.6; 3.5) should be redefined so that they can become implementers of OBE (cf. 2.6.1) which promotes learner-centred learning.

In summary, it can be said that the new approach to teaching entails a fundamental shift in how the system operates. The mindshift makes the accomplishment of results more important than simply providing services as with the old approach. Implicit in the OBE paradigm is the desire to have all learners exiting the system as genuinely successful learners in preparation for the world of work. For these reasons, it is necessary to turn to a review of the literature on OBE in South Africa.

2.5 Outcomes-based Education in South Africa

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:6) express the view that the new outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa is aimed at developing a thinking and problem-solving citizen who will be empowered to participate in an active and productive way. However, they feel that whether this will happen depends largely on the knowledge, expertise and motivation of the classroom teachers and the willingness of learners to take the responsibility of working hard.

The new approach has also not been overlooked by other critics. They presented reasons for the possible failure of OBE in the South African context. Jansen (1999:13) argues that OBE has not worked in the United States of America and is unlikely to work in South African schools. Jansen (1998:323-329), presented as many as ten major reasons why OBE will have a negative impact on South African schools. Jansen (1998:323) maintains that the language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times, contradictory. The only certainty about OBE and its terminology, is that it has constantly changed meaning. This terminology is quite simply incomprehensible. Chisholm (2000:16) confirms that the level of understanding of Curriculum 2005 is compromised by the complex terminology used. It is therefore difficult for most teachers to give these policies meaning through their classroom practices.

OBE as policy is implicated in problematic claims and assumptions about the relationship between curriculum and society. While the supporters of OBE maintain that it can change the focus of the country's economy (cf. 2.3), Jansen (1998:324) disagrees and argues that there is no evidence in almost eighty years of literature on curriculum change, to suggest that altering the curriculum of schools leads to, or is associated with, changes in national economies.

2.5.1 Outcomes-based Education Defined

OBE is a comprehensive approach to organising and operating a curriculum that is focussed on – and defined by – the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each learner. The term clearly means focussing and organising everything in an education system around “what is essential for all learners to be able to *do* successfully at the end of their learning experiences” (Spady 1994:1). Spady further explains that OBE ultimately implies emerging with a vivid idea of what is important for learners to be able to do (determining the outcomes), thereafter developing the programmes for learning, implementing it and assessing the learner on a continuous basis to ensure that learning has ultimately taken place. The outcomes-based approach to education requires:

- developing a clear set of outcomes organised into the system's subjects and
- establishing conditions and opportunities within the system to enable and encourage learners to achieve these outcomes.

This does not negate the ‘content’ part of learning but, instead, emphasises the importance thereof within a specific context. “OBE is a learner-centred, results-oriented design, based on the belief that all individuals can learn” (DOE 1997:17). It is quite clear from this definition that OBE is concerned with all learners since any learner in a teaching- and learning situation has the potential to learn. OBE is also an ongoing process which occurs over an extended period of time. Learners do not achieve outcomes through a set of prescribed learning experiences in one learning programme, one learning area, or in one grade. They attain these outcomes through a broad range of learning experiences over a number of grades (Niebuhr 1996:1).

OBE can also be seen as a “flexible, empowerment-oriented approach to learning. It aims at equipping learners with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for success after they leave school – therefore its guiding vision is that of a competent future citizen” (DOE 1997a:21). It is furthermore stated that success in school is of limited benefit unless the learners are equipped to transfer that success to life in a complex, challenging, high-tech future.

It is quite clear from the above definitions that OBE focuses on the learner and the results that he/she produces. It organises demonstrations of learning that learners must accomplish by the end of their learning experiences. OBE is also seen in a much broader sense where the teacher develops the programmes for learning, implements it and assesses the learner on an ongoing basis. OBE is also seen as an approach which expects that a set of outcomes be developed and organised into a framework and that learners are assisted in attaining those outcomes through applying content which serves as a vehicle in accomplishing them. Brady (1996:13) maintains that, in effect, classroom practices are heading towards fundamental transformation. The next section discusses the purposes and premises of OBE.

2.5.2 The Purposes and Premises of Outcomes-based Education

Malcolm (1999:105) mentions that the decisions policymakers make about the basic ideas of OBE and which forms of OBE to consider, illustrate the depth to which education depends on politics, cultural norms, interest groups, history and the committees and individuals who provide educational leadership. The South African government introduced OBE for a variety of reasons. It is important that all those that are affected by it should know the purpose of OBE, so that they can participate constructively in its implementation. The purpose of OBE is to increase the knowledge and skills of the learners. OBE creates a flexible education and training system, which provides life-long learning for all South Africans. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:5) voice their opinions by saying that educational change is required to provide equity in terms of educational provision and to promote a more balanced view by developing learners’ critical thinking power and their problem-solving abilities. By means of OBE it is hoped that the needs and interests of all South Africans will be catered for. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:5), educational change is necessary since the majority of learners did not

receive adequate educational and training opportunities during the previous era. This means that all people who need to learn are given an opportunity to learn. This also includes adults and youths who have already exited the school system.

Van Wyk and Mothata (1998:4) argue that, by introducing OBE, opportunities may arise for people whose academic or career paths were stifled due to their prior knowledge not being assessed and certified, or because their qualifications had not been recognised for admission to further learning and employment. Monare (2000:1) continues to say that the reasoning behind the introduction of Curriculum 2005 was that, under the previous system, learners of different race groups did not receive the same quality of education. The previous system therefore was skewed in order to privilege certain race groups. By contrast, Söhnge and Moletsane (1997:274) caution that the advantages of OBE are not clear-cut, adding that educationists in many countries are debating the value of OBE.

The two main purposes of OBE inform its underlying philosophy of ‘success for all learners’. Spady (1994:9) phrases the purposes as follows:

- ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed to be successful after they exit their educational system and
- structuring and operating schools so that those outcomes can be achieved and maximised for all learners.

These two purposes commit the system to focus on the future performance abilities of learners and to establish a success-orientated way of operating. They reject the prevalent belief that learners of variable aptitudes or abilities should be given different curricula and learning opportunities, thereby leaving some permanently behind and others permanently ahead.

Killen (1999:4-5) suggests that, based on the above purposes of OBE, one can safely assume the following premises, or often referred to as philosophical assumptions, of OBE:

- all learners are talented and it is the duty of schools to develop their talents

- the role of schools is to find ways for learners to succeed, rather than finding ways for learners to fail
- mutual trust drives all good outcomes-based schools
- excellence is for every learner and not only for a limited number
- by preparing learners daily for success the following day, the need for corrective measures is reduced
- learners collaborate in learning, rather than competing with each other
- as far as possible, no learner is excluded from an activity in a school and
- a positive attitude is essential.

According to Spady and Marshall (1991:67), OBE is based on three fundamental premises:

- all learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day or in the same way
- success breeds success and
- schools control the conditions of success.

The above reiterates the notion that, in OBE, the learner and the results achieved by the learner are the focal points. All learners need to and can achieve their full potential but it does not necessarily happen in the same way or at the same time. The implications for these premises are that:

- whatever learners are to learn is clearly defined
- each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement

- each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools and
- each learner is given sufficient time and assistance to realize his or her potential.

Hereafter, the three forms of OBE are distinguished, which aims to shed more light on this type of teacher approach.

2.5.3 Forms of Outcomes-based Education

The norms and values of a community often influence the curriculum since the school and community are inseparably bound. Other influences such as teacher training in OBE and resource availability may determine the curriculum. Various works by Spady and Marshall (1991:67-72), Spady (1994:63-64), Brady (1995:9), the DOE (1997a:18) and Oliver (1998:57) touch on this aspect showing that there are basically three forms of OBE, namely traditional-, transitional- and transformational OBE. The key differences among the three types are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.5.3.1 Traditional Outcomes-based Education

Traditional OBE emerges from the traditional content-based approach to education. Outcomes are defined as instructional aims based on the content syllabus. These aims focus on *mastering the content* with the emphasis on recollection and comprehension (a strong *product* alignment). Learner participation or learner involvement is of lesser importance. The major dangers of this approach are that:

- the culminating performance is often limited to small sections of instruction which makes each an end in itself
- the content of the curriculum remains unchanged from year to year and
- the concept of holistic development is often not the focus (Brady 1995:9).

Traditional OBE only attempts to bring clear criteria and flexible timetables into the traditional time-based, means-based schools. They do not alter the structure of either the curriculum or the school. The focus of the outcomes is to master subject matter content.

2.5.3.2 Transitional Outcomes-based Education

Transitional OBE moves away from traditional curricula to identify outcomes that reflect higher order competencies which cut across traditional subjects. Content is used as the vehicle to attain higher order competencies such as problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication and technological applications. An integration-across-the-curriculum approach is adhered to. It is adapted to both the curriculum and the learner and there is a measure of interaction between the learner and teacher (Brady 1995:9).

Transitional OBE also deals with the question: ‘Why do learners need to know this?’ It focusses on the qualities learners will need to operate competently in a competitive society. Instead of simply translating the previous curriculum content into aims and objectives, it begins to look at specific outcomes – the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that society has agreed are vital for all its citizens. It does not take into account the previous traditional curriculum. Once these outcomes are identified, teachers use the traditional syllabus to assist learners in acquiring these ‘competencies’ (DOE 1997a:18).

Transitional OBE, as the name implies, lies between the traditional and transformational types in scope and purpose. There is a fundamentally different conception of outcomes that reflect generic, higher order competencies of learners that cut across content, opens doors to curriculum designs and teaching approaches and redefine the meaning of ‘authentic assessment’ and notions of an outcome being a culminating demonstration of learning.

2.5.3.3 Transformational Outcomes-based Education

Transformational OBE is the most sophisticated evolution of the outcomes-based concept. It moves away not only from the traditional curriculum, but also from the

prescribed structures of schooling. None of the features of the traditional curriculum however, are considered untouchable. Curriculum development and resource allocation reflect the scope and nature of the outcomes. The curriculum is designed by starting with future-driven outcomes. The intention is to equip all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientation needed for success after they leave school (Brady 1995:9).

Transformational OBE requires that the learner and the curriculum should integrate totally with a view to giving meaning to the latter. It is also characterised by strong humanistic and social adaptation, as well as a high level of involvement by both the teacher and the learner (Olivier 1998:57).

Spady (1994:63-64) shares his view by saying that with transformational OBE, the question arises as to what sort of qualities – both as workers and as human beings – would be expected of citizens. This becomes even more important than in transitional OBE. Learning outcomes – which include the knowledge, skills and attitudes that citizens will need to function as critical citizens – become the only determinants of the new curriculum. No thought is given to the traditional content-based curriculum. Instead, schools are told that they may select *any* content and use a wide range of teaching methods as long as these develop citizens who display the agreed-upon outcomes. This allows teachers to relate teaching directly to their own and learners' frame of reference and also to change curriculum content rapidly.

It now stands to reason that transformational OBE answers to the question: “what should learners be prepared for and how is it structured to accomplish broader results?” Life-role responsibilities are part of this curriculum. The outcomes encompass complex life-role performances and from these learning experiences, processes and contexts, exit outcomes are derived.

What the three distinctive forms of OBE reflect (cf. 2.5.3.1-2.5.3.3) and the implications thereof, is a change in the understanding of two key factors – time and outcomes:

- what outcomes are and how they drive conceptions of implementation and assessment
- how schools define and organise time and learning opportunities and
- how curriculum, teaching methods and performance contexts need to be restructured to achieve outcomes of different forms of OBE (Spady 1994:64).

In contrast, Chisholm, Volmink, Ndhlovu, Potenza, Mohamed, Muller, Lubisi, Vinjevold and Ngozi (2000:21) warn against the three distinctions made. They reason that learning can entail the acquisition of both content knowledge *and* skills.

Having dealt with the three forms of OBE above, it is obvious that transitional OBE does not necessarily lead to sufficient authentic changes in the education system. Irrelevant content remains and although it is possible to use the old curriculum in new ways, this is not always done and old practices remain unchanged. It can be argued that by retaining the content and using it to develop new approaches, teachers will be offered a stepping stone – or ‘framework’ – that will guide the transition towards transformational outcomes.

From further discussions (cf. 2.6.1) it is evident that the South African education system is committed to implementing relevant, authentic OBE with transformational outcomes. However, no existing features of the content-driven traditional outcomes should be seen as untouchable.

While these three distinctions indicate the different forms of OBE, it is necessary to explore the features of OBE in the next section.

2.5.4 The Characteristics of Outcomes-based Education

OBE has several characteristics. Pretorius (1998: xi) refers to them as reasons for selecting OBE as a classroom approach. They are as follows:

- OBE aims at demonstrations of significant learning as reflected in the outcomes.

- It is a learner-centred approach based on the philosophical assumption that all learners are achievers if allowed sufficient time to do so.
- There is freedom and flexibility for self-motivated learners to engage in enriching activities in order to attain the required outcome.
- Time and opportunities are provided for each learner to achieve his/her ultimate potential.
- Learners are focussed on what is expected of them since they are exposed to the outcome right from the onset.
- Learners become accountable for their own learning when having to attain and outcome.
- An opportunity for flexible teaching strategies is offered to teachers since the emphasis is not only on whether the learner attains the selected outcome, but also on procedure.
- Learner success is established purely on whether the learner has attained the required outcome or not – and not in terms of the achievements of other learners.
- A variety of opportunities (cf. 2.5.5.1) are offered to learners to demonstrate whether the outcome has been attained.
- Learner progression is based on demonstrated achievements.
- It is a long-term commitment based on the premise of continuous improvement.
- The notion of “great expectations for all to succeed”, is emphasised (cf. 2.5.2).

- It focusses on the future and is able to address the changing needs of the community more readily (cf. 2.3).
- Community requirements tend to be addressed more directly because, in determining the required outcomes, there is the involvement of an extensive range of stakeholders such as parents, teachers and business leaders.
- The emphasis falls on embedding quality problem-solving skills rather than on memorizing a given amount of scientific information.
- The focus is on skills needed in everyday living and the requirements of the career environment, rather than on memorising factual knowledge (Pretorius 1998:xi).

In summary, it can be said that this recent approach to education has unique features which shape the way schools and districts will actually operate. Among others, these characteristics reflect the notion of:

- outcomes as the starting point for learning
- learners having more opportunities for attaining outcomes
- learning that is based on performance skills
- content that must be linked to concepts
- effective teaching strategies
- the highest levels of performance for learning experiences
- co-operative learning with a learner-centred approach
- authentic assessment and
- learning collaboratively.

In the ensuing section the key elements of OBE are discussed.

2.5.5 The Key Elements of Outcomes-based Education

Successful curriculum implementation requires careful planning. Without it, confusion and conflict are likely to characterise the implementation. Teachers should therefore initiate strategies for implementation prior to implementation. How teachers conceptualise the curriculum, will be influenced by their awareness of, and sensitivity to, issues – both present and anticipated. Few people can construct a curriculum without giving some thought to the key elements of the curriculum which serves as a base for curriculum development. This in turn, will then inform the curriculum implementation.

2.5.5.1 The Principles of Outcomes-based Education

Killen (1999:5) indicates that the South African government has incorporated certain principles into its plan for the introduction of an outcomes-based school system. These principles, informed by the premises of OBE (cf. 2.5.2), guide the decision-making, design, development and implementation of OBE. In order to understand why OBE is seen as a suitable focus for the reform of South African education, it is necessary to clarify some of its underlying principles:

- The outcomes-based programme has a clear focus on significant learning outcomes that are stated clearly and unambiguously.
- Outcomes are practical, useful and morally and ethically defensible.
- The curriculum and instructional design are derived from these Learning Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3a).
- The outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3b) are challenging and all learners are expected to achieve them at high performance levels.

- Time (cf. 3.4.1) is used as a flexible resource that allows teachers to accommodate differences in the learning pace and aptitudes of learners.
- Learners are given more than one uniform, routine chance to receive instructions and to demonstrate their learning.
- Assessment (cf. 2.6.2) is an integral component of learning and is, far as possible, authentic (i.e. the use of real-world situations in which the application of knowledge is tested).
- Learners are expected to take some responsibility for their own learning.

Spady (1998:7) in turn offers only four principles to guide the teacher in the development and implementation of OBE:

- *Design Down:* Teachers begin their curriculum development at the point where they want learners to ultimately end up – the learning outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3b). In other words, they design down, starting from learning outcomes, to determine what it is that has to be learnt. Teachers must be willing to eliminate traditional, favourite and unnecessary curriculum details. Curriculum design must be consistent, systematical and creative.
- *Clarity of Focus:* There is a distinct focus on learning outcomes to guide curriculum implementation (cf. 2.6.1). A clear focus on learning outcomes provides teachers with a clear picture of the learning they wish to demonstrate. Learner success therefore becomes a top priority. The envisaged outcome is the point of departure for teaching and learner evaluation. During teaching, the teacher shares, explains and models the outcome so that they and the learners can work together towards attaining the outcome.
- *Expanded Opportunities:* More opportunities and learner support is provided for successful learning. There are four ways in which this is accomplished:

- The timetable is restructured to suit the requirements for OBE (cf. 3.4.1).
- A variety of teaching and learning methods increases opportunities for successful learning.
- There is a balance between comparative or competitive assessment (cf. 2.6.2.5) or else this may inherently limit some learners' chances for success even if their actual performance potential is high. Criteria-based assessment clearly defines and applies the same standard for all learners and does not impose limits on performances.
- Learners are able to engage in learning activities (cf. 2.6.2.6) and have access to resources (cf. 3.4.5). Learning Programmes are developed to facilitate this learning (cf. 3.5.1.1).
- *High Expectations:* Not only are opportunities for learning increased, but the levels of expectations to which learners are exposed, are also increased. Standards of acceptable performance for knowledge and skills are raised for learning while working towards outcomes. Assessment is based on criteria and not tied to norm-referencing which presupposes the number of learners who are successful. A challenging curriculum is therefore provided (Spady 1994:10-18).

Central to OBE are issues of decision-making and action or performance. They guide teachers into putting the principles of OBE into action. These principles drive the outcomes which are the focus of OBE. They can be applied in many ways to achieve OBE's purposes. Successful OBE teachers apply the four principles consistently, systematically, creatively and simultaneously in order to contribute directly to the system's effectiveness (Spady 1994:19).

From the above it appears that the success of these principles may possibly depend on the types of outcomes a school wants to accomplish and the degree of flexibility given to teachers and learners to pursue these outcomes.

2.5.5.2 Outcomes

In a decentralized system of implementation, it is the school community (teachers, parents, principals, taxpayers and business leaders) who decide what it is that learners who leave school need, in order to become economic and cultural contributors to society. Burns and Squires (1997:2) argue that “defining usable learning outcomes is the critical first activity”.

An outcome is a *culminating demonstration* of the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities that underpin it and it occurs in a context of *performance* that directly influences what it is and how it is implemented. These characteristics clearly reveal that an outcome is not merely the name of the learning content or a concept, or a competence, grade or test score – but an *actual demonstration* in an *authentic context* (Niebuhr 1996:24).

Spady (1994:2) provides a far more detailed description by saying that outcomes are clear learning results that learners must demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences. They are not values, beliefs, attitudes, internal mental processes or psychological states of mind. They are what learners can actually *do* with the knowledge that they have learned. They are the tangible application of what has been learned. Because outcomes involve actual *doing*, rather than just *knowing*, or a variety of other purely mental processes, they must be defined according to the actions or demonstration processes being sought. When defining the developing outcomes, teachers must use *observable action verbs* – like *describe*, *explain*, *design*, or *produce* – rather than vague or hidden non-demonstration processes – like *know*, *understand*, *believe* and *think*.

Ornstein (1989:279-280) warns, however, that, while the emphasis of learning is on processes, it does not reduce the value of gaining knowledge, but it rather affirms the need for learners to be active in their learning as well. This is an indication that learners must progress beyond the point of merely gaining an understanding of the knowledge. Niebuhr (1996:15) agrees but adds another dimension by stating that outcomes clearly are “the results of a learning process whether formal, non-formal or informal”. In OBE, curriculum developers work backwards from specified outcomes within a particular or specified context. The

learner should be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to, apply these outcomes appropriately.

(a) Critical Outcomes

Critical Outcomes (cf.2.6.1.3a) are often referred to by writers as curriculum outcomes, exit or culminating outcomes.

Outcomes broaden hierarchically from the broad educational Critical Outcomes arising from the philosophies of life of the broad community to Learning Outcomes in the classroom. Although the latter are more specific, they contribute to the realisation of the critical outcomes. The DOE (1997:12) and Olivier (1998:33) propose a hierarchy of outcomes for clarity:

- Critical Outcomes
- Specific Outcomes
- Learning Outcomes

Every teacher should therefore, be thoroughly aware of the fact that critical outcomes in relation to the classroom, often serve a broad national and/or international philosophy of life. This philosophy often serves as the starting point for a community's view of education and as such, also for the outcomes set in terms of the school and its Learning Areas.

Critical Outcomes are cross-curricular, broad generic outcomes that inform teaching and learning (Niebuhr 1996:15) (cf. 2.6.1.3a). The purpose of the Critical Outcomes is to channel educational activities towards the development of learners within a social and economic environment (Olivier 1998:17). Specific curriculum knowledge and skills are developed from these Critical Outcomes which assist learners in developing performance abilities.

When the notion of an ultimate result refers to the *end* of the learner's school career, rather than to particular sections of the curriculum or school terms,

OBE uses the term “Critical Outcome”. These are defined as broad performance capabilities. The specific curriculum knowledge and skills contained in Learning Outcomes are developed from these broad intended ‘goals’ and assist learners in attaining these broad performance abilities. This becomes evident in the ensuing section.

(b) Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes are often also referred to by writers as Specific Outcomes or Particular Outcomes.

These outcomes are contextually demonstrated knowledge, skills and values, which reflect Critical Outcomes (Niebuhr 1996:15). They express the outcome of narrowly defined aspects of learning and are linked according to their context whilst complying with, and supporting the Critical Outcomes (Olivier 1998:17).

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998:213) say that each curriculum outcome can contain a number of “particular outcomes”. The particular outcomes are attained so that the curriculum outcomes can be arrived at. By analysing these outcomes, the scope of the entire curriculum can be determined. These desired outcomes for learners are attained as a result of experiencing the curriculum (cf. 2.6.1.3). They are specific statements written so that those responsible for curriculum implementation (cf. 2.6.1) can use them as guidelines to achieve the curriculum outcomes.

Specific Outcomes refer to the specifications of what learners are able to do at the end of a learning experience. This includes skills, knowledge and values which are the demonstrations of outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3c) (DOE 1997b:19).

- **Assessment Standards**

Some curricula break the Learning Outcome down even further. They include what some curricula refer to as “assessment standards” (cf. 2.6.1.3c), “assessment criteria” and “range statements” (cf. 2.6.1.1).

The Teacher's Resource Book (2004:29) adds that there are also a number of Assessment Standards for each of the Learning Outcomes. They describe the *level* at which learners should demonstrate their skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for each grade. It does not, however, prescribe teaching methods. The Assessment Standards also contain the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that learners are expected to demonstrate.

- **Content**

Curriculators of traditional teaching approaches often deal with the question: “what *content* shall be included for purposes of learning?” After that, they would deal with ‘how’ to present or arrange what was selected for learning so that learners can learn or experience it. In other words, they would first deal with knowledge and content specifically, and then they would deal with teaching and learning experiences.

For OBE, authors offer a different view. Spady (1994:22) states that a content-based curriculum determines how the system's *formal* learning experiences for learners are defined, organised and linked. It is included in subjects and learning programmes and is used as a *means* in attaining the outcomes.

For the ‘knowledge’ component, it would be necessary to select relevant content from a variety of resources that can be applied by the learner to attain the outcome. Spady (1994:61) puts it that outcomes are mainly performance-based but, embedded in a performance (skill) outcome, is the domain of *content* which reflects the essential core knowledge *without which the performance domain is impossible*.

Ornstein and Hunkins (1998:278) embrace a radical viewpoint by saying that all curricula have content regardless of the curriculum approach. How the content is viewed by individuals is affected by their view of knowledge. In traditional education knowledge is *discovered*. It is

objective and can be tested, but in future-focussed education, knowledge is *invented* according to interrelationships and the environment. The meaning and truth of learners' experiences depend on their relationships in various situations. It is normally then the selected content which determines the nature and extent of the curriculum activities since the content is used *to achieve* the set of outcomes.

Spady (1994:37) says that in the well-developed OBE approaches, outcomes are likely to take the form of performance abilities that require learners to integrate, synthesize and apply a range of diverse content concepts. It will require that learning experiences bring the diversity of content, concepts and competence together. Learners must be given opportunities and support to experience how it can be integrated and applied.

It is clear that content should be applied to facilitate the skills required for attaining an outcome. The value of content should not be underestimated. The writers share similar beliefs on content. Some prefer categorizing the way content is interpreted. This implies that some categories would apply to traditional OBE, others to transitional and yet others to the superior form of OBE termed transformational OBE (cf. 2.5.3).

From the above discussion on outcomes, it appears that a way of recognising a well-defined outcome is to look for the demonstration verbs that define which processes the learner is expected to carry out at the end of the teaching and learning process. Without these verbs the outcomes lack a clearly defined demonstration process and then take on the character of a 'goal' rather than a true outcome demonstration. Since outcomes occur at, or after, the end of a learning experience, it might be useful to think of them as representing the ultimate result that is sought from the learning.

OBE changes the learning culture by drastically changing the manner in which knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are mastered and how learning processes are adapted and adjusted to achieve these end-products or outcomes.

Now that it is clear that outcomes are likely to take the form of performance abilities that requires of learners to *apply* a range of diverse content in order to attain an outcome, it is the appropriate opportunity to allude to the importance of the role of the teacher in an OBE classroom.

2.6 The Role of the Teacher in an Outcomes-based Approach to Education

Spady (1994:22) maintains that the outcomes, together with the principles of OBE are the two curriculum structures which *inform the teaching- and learning process*. The outcomes (cf. 2.5.5.2) answer to the question: “What do we teach in OBE?” and the Principles (cf. 3.5.5.1) would answer to the question: “How do we teach in OBE?” The outcomes-based approach is therefore based on its outcomes and shaped by its principles. These two structural components *drive* the teaching functions. Two of these teaching functions, namely implementing the curriculum and assessing the learner, need to be reviewed.

2.6.1 Implementing the Curriculum

OBE reflects the belief that the best way to get where you want to be, is to first determine what it is that you want to achieve. Once these outcomes (products or demonstrations) have been determined, methods, techniques and other ways and means are put into place through *a curriculum* to achieve these outcomes.

After it was implemented, a need was seen for a revision of the curriculum. A review process began and the revised version, termed the Revised National Curriculum Statement was produced. A brief look will be taken at both curricula as well as the review process that brought the second curriculum about.

2.6.1.1 Curriculum 2005

After the 1994 elections, a number of people thought that a new approach to education was needed (cf. 1.1.2) – one that developed citizens who had:

- a high level of skills

- a high level of knowledge and
- the attitudes and values that were needed to re-build our country (Eastern Cape Department of Education [EC DOE] & Media in Education Trust [MIET] 2003:2).

Curriculum 2005 was the curriculum that the government then introduced to try and meet these needs (EC DOE & MIET 2003:2). It consists of the following elements:

(a) Critical Outcomes

Basing education on real-world outcomes means selecting Critical Outcomes (cf. 2.5.5.2a) for OBE intended to bring forth the type of citizen expected of a school leaver. They are broad, generic, cross-curricular outcomes which underpin South Africa's constitution. These outcomes will ensure that learners gain skills, knowledge and values that will allow them to contribute to their own success as well as to the success of their family, community and the nation as a whole. There are seven Critical Outcomes with an additional five Developmental Outcomes which apply to all learning areas and therefore support implementation. The Intermediate Phase Policy Document of the DOE (1997b:13-14), Maskew Miller Longman (2003: vii) and RNCS (2002:4) state that learners will be able to successfully demonstrate an ability to:

- identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made
- work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation, community
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information

- communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation
- use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and 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.

As outlined by the DOE (1997b:13-14) and Maskew Miller Longman (2003: vii), there are the five Developmental Outcomes added to the seven Critical Outcomes and they envisage learners who are able to also:

- reflect on, and explore, a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
- participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
- be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
- explore education- an career opportunities and
- develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

It is obvious by now that Critical Outcomes must be relevant to the times – both the present and the future – and furnish direction that is beneficial to society and not only to one particular group.

Derived from the Critical Outcomes are 66 learning outcomes (cf. 2.5.5.2b) referred to as Specific Outcomes which guide the teaching and learning process.

(b) Specific Outcomes

Sixty-six Specific Outcomes are derived from the Critical Outcomes and contain knowledge, skills and values to be demonstrated within a specific context (Niebuhr 1996:15). They project the outcome of narrowly defined aspects of the learning process. Specific Outcomes are linked to a context while complying with, and supporting, the Critical Outcomes (Olivier 1998:17). Each SO contains the following three aspects:

- *Assessment Criteria* are the criteria attached to an assessment task designed to determine the achievement of a specific outcome (Niebuhr 1996:16).

Assessment criteria are the criteria attached to assessment, which provide broad indicators of what evidence learners need to present, submit or provide to be assessed.

- *Range Statements* are statements which indicate the scope, depth, complexity and parameters of achievement.
- *Performance Indicators* are indicators which provide the detailed requirements for the achievement of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and processes (SKAVs) that learners should master in order to progress (DOE 1997b:10-15; Olivier 1998:35-36).

(c) Learning Areas

There are eight Learning Areas in C2005. They are Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC), Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS), Natural Sciences (NS), Technology (Tech), Human- and Social Sciences (HSS), Arts and Culture (AC), Life Orientation (LO) and Economic Management Sciences (EMS) (EC DOE 2001:39-40).

(d) Learning Programmes

Learning Programmes serve as guidelines that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in guiding learners to attain outcomes. A Learning Programme is made up of a combination of outcomes selected from the Learning Areas which allows for learners to progress through the levels through appropriate combinations of the components of the curriculum. They are the sets of learning activities in which the learner will be involved while working towards the attainment of integrated outcomes (DOE 1997b: 10-15; Olivier 1998:35-36). They are also described as vehicles used to implement the curriculum. They integrate Specific Outcomes, Assessment Criteria, Range Statements and Performance Indicators from all Learning Areas. They are sets of learning activities for the learner to achieve one or more outcomes (EC DOE 2001:41).

(e) Phase Organisers

Phase Organisers are themes used for Learning Programme development to organise the content. The DOE has stipulated a number of them (EC DOE 2001:42).

(f) Programme Organisers

Programme Organisers are topics and should be used as a tool for the micro-planning of Learning Programmes. Schools are encouraged to select their own provided they are relevant to the age-group of their learners and the learning context (EC DOE 2001:42).

The EC DOE and MIET (2003:13) and EC DOE (2001:87) also explain that in C2005 planning is done at three levels:

- macro-planning: long term (year plan)
- meso-planning: medium term (term planning) and
- micro-planning: short term (weekly- or daily plan).

2.6.1.2 The Review Process

Due to a number of problems associated with the implementation of OBE, the previous Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, set up a committee in 2000, chaired by Linda Chisholm to review the new curriculum to see whether it was developing the kind of citizens that is envisaged. The initial system that was put in place to act as a vehicle in taking the process of OBE forward, as mentioned, was termed C2005. According to Chisholm (2000:5), the brief was to review C2005 and not OBE. Chisholm (2000:4) maintains that the committee was required to investigate the following:

- the level of understanding of OBE
- key success factors and strategies to strengthen implementation of the new curriculum
- the structure of the new curriculum and
- steps to be taken for the implementation of the new curriculum in grades 4 and 8 in 2001.

Chisholm (2000:18-21) lists the following as the key findings of the review committee:

- a skewed curriculum structure and design
- insufficient follow-up support
- time frames unmanageable and unrealistic
- a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment
- Learning- and Teaching Support Materials vary in quality and are often unavailable

- inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers
- limited transfer of learning into classroom practice and
- strong support for principles of C2005, but levels of understanding are varied.

The members of this committee interviewed teachers, departmental officials and other stakeholders. They found that C2005 had several weaknesses which were mainly:

- The language in policy documents were difficult to understand which led to confusion and teachers became demotivated.
- Overcrowding. C2005 had too many design features. There were Learning Areas, Learning Programmes, Critical Outcomes, 66 Specific Outcomes, Assessment Criteria, Range Statements, Performance Indicators and Phase-and Programme Organisers. Curriculum development was very time-consuming since teachers were trying to include these in their planning which resulted in core concepts being neglected.
- Progression and integration present problems whereby knowledge from different learning areas are combined. There was, however, not sufficient guidance on what to teach, when to teach it and at what level to teach it. This resulted in learners being taught the same concepts, at the same level, over and over again. They did not learn the skills and knowledge that they should have and there was no progression (EC DOE/MIET 2003:3).

Based on their findings, the Curriculum Review Committee recommended that:

- the principles of OBE should remain;
- C2005 in its present form should be phased out;

- it should be replaced by a strengthened and streamlined Outcomes-based curriculum (EC DOE/MIET 2003:3).

According to EC DOE/MIET (2003:5-6) the committee also recommended that the following aspects of C2005 would remain:

- the ten core values for society contained in the Constitution on which C2005 is based
- the seven Critical- and five Developmental Outcomes. These are rooted in the Constitution and describe the kind of citizen the education system aims to develop. They are the overarching outcomes that guide the teaching- and learning at classroom level
- the OBE approach to teaching which emphasises participatory-, learner-centred- and activity based education
- the three Learning Programmes at Foundation Phase level namely Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills and eight (cf. 2.5.6.3) in the Senior Phase. In the Intermediate Phase Languages and Mathematics must be retained as separate Learning Programmes but schools may decide on the number and combination of the other five – depending on the human resources available and the expertise of the staff.

The DOE (2001:1) on the other hand, states that the Review Committee, based on its findings, recommended the following:

- accompanying its language through the production of an amended national curriculum statement
- improving teacher training, (cf. 3.3.2) learning- and teaching support materials (cf. 3.4.5) and provincial support (cf. 3.3.3)
- relaxing timeframes for implementation (cf. 3.4.1) and

- strengthening the curriculum would require streamlining its structure and design (cf. 2.6.1.2).

In June 2000, the Council of Education Ministers accepted the curriculum recommendations of the Review Committee. In July 2000, Cabinet resolved that:

- A clear description must be given of the kind of learner in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that is expected at the end of the GET band (cf. 2.6.1.3c).
- The development of a national curriculum statement, dealing in clear and simple language with what the curriculum requirements are at various levels and phases, must begin immediately.
- The concerns around curriculum overload must be addressed (DOE 2001:1).

According to Monare (2000:1), the outcome of the Review Committee suggests that funds earmarked for material were wasted, the South African government was unable to achieve its objectives and the education system in South Africa had once again been thrown into confusion. Contrary to this, Pratt (1994:339) remarks that a curriculum should never be considered to be a final draft (cf. 2.6.1.1). It is instead, an interim document awaiting further improvement.

2.6.1.3 The Revised National Curriculum Statement

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) is a revised curriculum describing what South African learners should know, be able to do and value by the time they exit the school system. OBE remains an educational approach which the DOE has selected to implement the curriculum. This means that OBE is an approach that is used in the RNCS (EC DOE/MIET 2003:12). The RNCS was implemented in 2004 in the Foundation Phase. The preparation for implementation, including the development of Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) and teacher training, will be negotiated with all relevant stakeholders. If successfully implemented, the RNCS is considered to be the most liberating element of the education system, which will enable all learners

regardless of their background, to fully realise their potential (RNCS 2002:8). The important changes that have been made to the curriculum are that it is *simpler* and *stronger*. This simpler curriculum means that teachers and other stakeholders will understand it better and the stronger curriculum means that there is a better chance of developing learners who have a high level of skills, knowledge and values (EC DOE & MIET 2003:8-10).

There are five major principles that underpin the RNCS. They are:

- Social Justice, a Healthy Environment, Human Rights and Inclusivity
- OBE
- A high level of Skills and Knowledge for All
- Clarity and Accessibility and
- Progression and Integration (RNCS Teacher's Guide 2004: 18-19).

The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) has been simplified. It contains an overview of the curriculum process, the principles and the Learning Area Statements with their purposes and outcomes.

It currently has the following design features:

- (a) **Critical Outcomes:** There are seven Critical Outcomes and five Developmental Outcomes which set the broad goals for learning (cf. 2.5.5.2a).
- (b) **Learning Outcomes:** The Learning Outcomes describe what learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band at a general level.
- (c) **Assessment Standards:** Assessment Standards (cf. 2.5.5.2b) specify in greater detail how these are to be accomplished. They describe the

minimum level, depth and breadth of what it is that has to be learnt. They are grade specific and show how conceptual progression should occur in a learning area. They do not, however, prescribe method. Learning Outcomes on the whole remain the same from Grades R – 9 while Assessment Standards change from grade to grade showing what it is that has to be learnt in order to realise the outcomes. The Assessment Standards contained within the Learning Outcomes also contribute towards the qualification which is the General Education and Training Certificate (RNCS, 2002:3).

Assessment Standards describe the level of knowledge and skills at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of the Learning Outcome(s) and the ways (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement. They are grade-specific and show how conceptual progression will occur in a Learning Area. They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve Learning Outcomes but they do not prescribe methods (RNCS 2002:4).

- (d) **Learning Areas:** There are eight Learning Area statements which provide details on each of the eight Learning Areas in the RNCS – including information on core concepts that make each Learning Area so unique. The eight Learning Areas are: Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation, Economic- and Management Sciences (EC DOE/MIET 2003:7-8). The Learning Area statements provide a broad guideline of what is expected that learners will *know* and be able to *do* at the end of Grade 9 in each Learning Area. These expectations are expressed on a grade-by-grade level through Learning Outcomes (cf. 2.5.5.2b; 2.6.1.3b) and Assessment Standards (cf. 2.5.5.2b; 2.6.1.3c).
- (e) **Learning Programmes:** There are three Learning Programmes in the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) with time allocations for each in brackets: Literacy 40%, Numeracy 35% and Life Skills 25% (cf. 3.4.1). In the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6), Languages and Mathematics are distinct Learning Programmes while schools could propose the number

and nature of other integrated Learning Programmes. In the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9), there are eight Learning Programmes based on the eight Learning Area Statements.

(f) **Levels of Planning:** There are still three levels of planning in the RNCS (cf. 3.5.1.1-3.5.1.3), and they are to be developed in the following order:

- **Learning Programmes:** The Learning Programme (cf. 3.5.1.1) is a plan for all the grades in a phase. It represents the first and broadest level of planning and gives teachers in the phase an overview of what teaching, learning and assessment will take place across the phase in all eight Learning Areas. These Learning Programmes must ensure that the prescribed outcomes for each learning area are effectively and comprehensively covered. National priorities and developmental needs of learners in a phase must be taken into consideration when developing these Learning Programmes. Teachers will be responsible for the development of Learning Programmes. The Department of Education will provide policy guidelines for the development of Learning Programmes in order to support this process. Provinces will develop further guidelines where necessary in order to accommodate diversity (RNCS 2002:7).
- **Work Schedules:** A Work Schedule (cf. 3.5.1.2) describes the plan for one year in a particular grade in a particular Learning Area. It is drawn from the Learning Programme and it sequences the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards to ensure progression across the four terms of the year. It provides more detail than a Learning Programme like information on resources, assessment methods and tools and broad teaching- and learning strategies.
- **Lesson Plans:** A Lesson Plan (cf. 3.5.1.3) is based on the information contained in the Work Schedule. It provides the detail of teaching, learning and assessment plans for an activity, or a

series of activities, spread over a number of days or weeks. It is a personal planning instrument for teachers and allows them to use their own initiative and to display creativity (EC DOE & MIET 2003:13; Teacher's Resource Book 2004: 31).

To summarise the issues of the curriculum, it is evident that the RNCS is designed to include an overview of the process and its principles. The Critical Outcomes and Developmental Outcomes set the broad learning goals and the Learning Area statements provide a broad indication of what learners are expected to know and do. These are reflected in the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Learning Outcomes specify the broad outcomes to be achieved in each Learning Area and Assessment Standards show *how* these are to be achieved. They describe the level of knowledge and skills learners should achieve in each grade (RNCS, 2002:2-3; EC DOE & MIET 2003:7-8). There is much more detail in the Assessment Standards than in the Learning Outcomes. Each Learning Area has its own Learning Outcomes. They specify the core concepts, content and skills for teaching and learning in each grade (EC DOE & MIET 2003:7-8). The Learning Outcomes are a broad statement of what learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band. Learning Outcomes do not prescribe content or method (RNCS 2002:4). This then brings the discussion to the second most important role of the teacher in OBE namely assessing the learner.

2.6.2 Assessing the Learner

The basis for assessment in traditional education concentrated on written tests or exams and were passed or failed on the basis of how well learners mastered the knowledge. Assessment of outcomes-based learning is continuous, based on the assessment of knowledge, skills and values within the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcome. Assessment currently forms *part of the learning and teaching process* and its purpose is to establish the success of the learner (Olivier 1998:3). Teachers have the overall responsibility of assessing learners although, in essence, this is a partnership between two people. A variety of techniques, including informal by observations, formal tests, oral questions-and-answers and interviewing can be used. Learners can also engage in self- and peer-assessment. For continuous

assessment to be successful, teachers need to have a sound knowledge of what each technique provides – and be able to use them in a balanced combination (Republic of South Africa [RSA] 1998:6). Niebuhr (1996:16) and the DOE (1997b:12) put it that assessment consists of a task (or series of tasks) set, in order to obtain information about a learner's competence. These tasks could be assessed in a variety of ways using different assessment techniques throughout the learning process. Assessment includes tests and examinations but will also rely on learners' portfolios, self- and peer assessment, projects and a range of other methods to measure the attainment of Learning Outcomes. Assessment Standards are benchmarks that are developed for assessment tasks to establish the achievement of a Learning Outcome.

Assessing the evidence of learning is closely linked to the characteristics of OBE (cf. 2.5.4). There is congruence between the format, nature and scope of a curriculum and that which will ultimately be achieved and assessed. Unless assessment is correctly aligned with the changes in the curriculum (cf. 2.6.1.2; 2.6.1.3) and the teaching practices (cf. 2.6.2), the desired changes in education (cf. 2.4) will be very difficult, if not impossible, to implement. The traditional content-based approach mainly involved judgmental assessment but outcomes-based assessment incorporates the assessment of processes. OBE consists of a range of activities (cf. 2.5.7.2f), which take place to provide the evidence of the learning. The teacher can then ascertain a learner's competence in an effort to attain the outcome (Olivier 1998:44-45; Van Rensburg 1998:82).

2.6.2.1 Defining Assessment

According to the DOE's assessment policy (RSA 1998:3) 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 in learning. There are four steps involved in the process of assessment namely:

- collecting evidence of learner achievement
- evaluating the evidence against the outcomes

- recording the findings of the evaluation
- using the information to assist in the development of the learner and
- using the information to inform further teaching and learning processes.

Spady (1994:189) is also of the opinion that assessment is the process of gathering information on the quality of a product, performance or demonstration. Assessment typically implies the use of methods other than traditional paper-and-pencil testing.

According to Malan (1997:24), assessment is globally conceptualised as a process through which the quality of a learner's achievements can be judged, recorded (cf. 2.6.2.7) and reported. It is therefore important that the principal, teacher, parent and learner, should all be familiar with the requirements of assessment.

Assessment needs clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies. These can then be used to give constructive feedback to the learner and to report to parents and other interested people as indicated in the guide of a learner textbook (Shuter & Shooter 2003:vii).

How learning takes place, argues Olivier (1998:32), impacts directly on how assessment takes place. Assessment consists of a series of activities that are carried out to gather evidence and information about a learner's progress and competence towards achieving Learning Outcomes (cf. 2.6.2.6). These activities are carried out, using a variety of assessment techniques.

2.6.2.2 The Purpose of Assessment

Many teachers fear the term *assessment*. They are concerned about the way in which assessment should be conducted and whether they will be able to do it successfully. What many forget is that the aim of education is to facilitate learning and that assessment is *part of this process*.

Assessment is one of a teacher's most important activities in OBE. In OBE, assessment is often described as *ongoing* or *continuous*. This means that assessment forms an integral part of all teaching and learning activities (Van der Horst & McDonald 1997:12-13).

Killen (1999:19) maintains that in an OBE system, assessment should be seen as an integral part of learning and teaching rather than a culmination of the process. Assessment should always contribute to the goal of improving learners' learning. Van Rensburg (1998:82) adds that unless assessment is properly aligned with curriculum reform (cf. 2.6.1.2) and teaching practices, the desired changes in education will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement. Yet, Chisholm (2000:19) discovered that there is a lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy (cf. 3.4.2.8) – as well as a lack of clarity on assessment policy and practice.

Malan (1997:59) says that teachers have a central role to play in assessment since they have to communicate information on learner progress or non-progress to the learners, parents, principal and the departmental officials. Moreover, Duke (1987:224) maintains that school leaders should assist teachers (cf. 3.4.3) in broadening the scope of their assessment to include high-level skills (cf. 2.5.3.3). It is necessary therefore that school principals should become knowledgeable about assessment procedures so that they are able to support teachers with their assessment activities.

Continuous assessment is an ongoing process that can be carried out when and wherever it is appropriate to do so. It is important to realise that even informal and seemingly unimportant situations are potential assessment issues states the guidelines of a text book (Nasou via Africa 2003:12).

The teacher must understand the reasons for assessing a learner or a group of learners. Nasou via Africa (2003:13) offers some of the reasons:

- to provide feedback to the learners
- to determine what outcomes and competencies learners have achieved

- to identify the need for remedial and/or extension work
- to find out what weaknesses and gaps there are in the learners' learning and/or any learning difficulties they may have
- to ensure that the outcomes have been attained and
- to build up an individual profile (cf. 2.6.2.7) of each learner's progress.

The main purpose, according to Shuter & Shooter (2003: vii), should be to enhance individual growth and development, monitor the progress of learners and facilitate their learning.

Assessment determines to what extent learning has taken place. The focus is on Learning Outcomes and whether they have been attained or not. The learner's progress is measured against these outcomes rather than against tests only. Learners decide when they are ready for assessment and those who do not meet the Assessment Standards for attaining an outcome, can apply for re-assessment. Assessment is ongoing which means a learner's progress is monitored continuously. A variety of assessment methods are available to ensure that the methods are suited to the performance being assessed. They do not disadvantage individuals or groups by limiting them in ways unrelated to the evidence sought. Collecting evidence (cf. 2.6.2.6) is continuous and linked to the normal course of learning and not based on once-off assessment tasks. The methods used are straightforward and pre-arranged with learners who are to understand *the assessment process* and *the criteria applied* and can therefore contribute to the planning and accumulation of evidence (cf. 2.6.2.6) (DOE 1997b:19). Niebuhr (1996:31) magnifies the issue by saying that assessment should be based on criteria-referencing or self-referencing whereby a learner's progress is compared against his/her own previous achievements and not against those of other learners.

It is clear that assessment takes into account the knowledge, skills and values (cf. 2.5.5.2b; 2.6.1.3c) that the learner has acquired. It is a process whereby learners' performance is assessed and learners receive feedback on their progress. It is also for their individual growth and development and for promotion purposes.

The teacher needs to monitor the progress of learners and to facilitate learning so that they can reach their full potential.

To do this, teachers must measure the learners' performance against standards of assessment (cf. 2.6.1.3c). The teachers will need to use a variety of assessment strategies, record results (cf. 2.6.2.7), provide constructive feedback to learners and discuss and report back to teachers, parents, the principal and management involved (Nasou via Africa 2003:13).

2.6.2.3 The Characteristics of Outcomes-based Assessment

The assessment process is regarded as part of the learning process (a means) and not as an end in itself. For this reason, it is essential that those learners, who do not meet the requirements, should receive clear feedback and ongoing support in order to attain the required standard. The focus therefore shifts from a judgmental assessment to a continuous developmental assessment. A critical characteristic of evaluation therefore is to enable and to empower (Olivier 1998:44-45).

Outcomes-based assessment suggests not only the assessment of knowledge and skills, but also the application thereof in order to achieve the outcome. The following characteristics of outcomes-based assessment have been identified:

- Learners are assessed against the requirements in the learning programme.
- Learners are given the chance to provide further evidence of achieving outcomes.
- Moderation ensures consistency of assessment.
- The assessment process is seen as part of the learning process and not as a means in itself (Olivier 1998:47).

Further features of Outcomes-based assessment include:

- It uses strategies that cater for a variety of learners' needs (language-, physical, psychological, emotional and cultural needs).

- It supports growth and the development of learners.
- It takes place over a period of time and is ongoing (continuous).
- It is integrated into the learning process.
- It informs summative assessment (cf. 2.6.2.4) (Shuter & Shooter 2003: vii).

2.6.2.4 Types of Assessment

The appropriateness of an assessment is largely determined by its purpose. It refers to the need for assessing the learner at a specific stage during, or at the end of, the learning process (Vaccarino 1995:45).

Oliver (1998:67-71), RSA (1998b:5), Shuter and Shooter (2003:vii) and the Teacher's Resource Book (2004:58) suggest the following types of assessment:

- *Baseline assessment* is an assessment of learners' prior learning. By establishing what the learners already know, the planning of Learning Programmes and activities can be done.
- *Diagnostic assessment* assists in discovering the nature and cause of barriers to learning that specific learners might have. Learners can then be given guidance and appropriate support and intervention strategies can be implemented.
- *Formative assessment* monitors and supports learning and teaching. It can be used to inform the learners and the teacher about their progress in order to improve learning. It takes place during the learning process while the learner is progressing towards the outcome. Learners develop with its constructive feedback, remedial interventions and additional support.

- *Summative assessment* provides an overall view of learners' progress at any given time such as at the end of the learning period, term or year and is used to verify whether the learners have attained the outcomes.

Olivier (1998:67) writes that mainly the two types of assessment – formative and summative – can be used, either separately or combined. Van Rensburg (1998:97) argues that assessment should be based on continuous diagnostic assessment and not merely on summative assessment which is a content-based method. He does, however, concede that these types of assessment are not mutually exclusive and should be integrated in assessment as a whole.

Teachers should be knowledgeable about the formative and summative types of assessment since they were inherited by OBE from the traditional education system. Writers like Oliva (1988:445), De Corte (1981:353-354), Steyn (1982:106) and Calitz *et al.* (1982:74) contributed to an understanding of these types of assessment.

2.6.2.5 Methods of Assessment

Nasou via Africa (2003:13), Shuter and Shooter (2003:viii) and the Teacher's Resource Book (2004:59) state that there are three main assessment methods:

- *Self-assessment*: The learners are asked to assess themselves against given criteria. Before they start a learning experience, they know what the required standards are, which means that they know what is expected of them. Once they have completed the task, they will assess how well the task has been carried out. For example, they will look at what they were able to do well and where they would need assistance. It therefore assists learners in recognising their strengths and weaknesses and in taking responsibility for their own learning. Self-assessment also assists learners in reflecting on their learning.
- *Peer-assessment*: The learners assess each other's work against the given criteria. Once again, the learners know what the expected outcome is. At the end of the learning experience, they assess each other. They give their

opinion as to how well others performed, whether the criteria were met, the level of participation, and so on. It is important that learners learn to assess constructively since co-operative learning is an important facet of OBE, including its assessment.

- *Teacher-assessment:* The teacher will assess each learner on a continuous basis both as an individual and as a member of a group. The relevant questions that should arise are: ‘Why am I assessing this?’ ‘What am I assessing?’ ‘How will I assess?’

2.6.2.6 Activities that Generate Evidence for Assessment

Killen (1999:18) maintains that assessment of learning which often takes place in the classroom is an essential function of the teacher in OBE. A fundamental part of OBE is the notion that learners should be able to demonstrate their achievement of predetermined outcomes. However, learners can only demonstrate their knowledge, ability and competences if they are provided with opportunities and are encouraged to demonstrate these. It is important that teachers and learners understand ‘why’, ‘when’ and ‘how’ assessment should take place. This will ensure that learners direct their activities towards the expected outcomes. This will enable the teacher to assess the learners in a fair and equitable manner. Killen (1999:18) contributes by saying that without appropriate assessment procedures, teachers will simply not know whether learners have achieved the outcomes but even worse, neither will the learners.

Olivier (1998:44-45) states that there are a variety of methods and techniques to be implemented to assess the progress of learners throughout the learning process. It is essential to note that assessment standards (cf. 2.6.1.3c) are standards which draw out the evidence that teachers will need to decide whether a particular outcome, or aspect thereof, has been attained.

The most difficult question for many teachers is, ‘How do we assess?’ The answer is not simple, but there are a few basic ideas that need to be considered, bearing in mind that the nature of the assessment could be either formal or informal. Activities that provide the evidence for assessment are as follows (Nasou via Africa 2003:14; Shuter & Shooter 2003:viii):

- **Learner Portfolios**

A portfolio is a collection of learner activities over a period of time that provides the evidence for a teacher to assess. These samples can include worksheets, written work, projects, posters, first drafts and planning as well as completed pieces of work. Samples of work may have been assessed through a combination of self-, peer- and teacher assessment and should be selected by the learner and the teacher. Portfolios are very useful for continuous assessment (Teacher's Resource Book 2004:66-68).

Maskew Miller Longman (2003: xvii) states that a portfolio is a method of keeping a record of learners' work in a file or box. It gives the learner and teacher the opportunity to consider a number of assessment activities together. Learners would keep written work or records of practical exercises and should be personally responsible for maintaining their portfolios. It should be something that they value and display to their families with pride at the end of a year.

Nasou via Africa (2003:16) says a portfolio is a suitable container (folder, file, large envelope or box) in which a collection of the learner's work can be kept over a period of time (a year or phase). Learning Programmes must be reflected in the portfolio. A portfolio is useful for assessment for three reasons:

- it reflects the process through which a learner acquires knowledge and skills
- it shows the progress a learner has made over a fixed period of time and
- it presents the products (outcomes) of the learner's learning.

The portfolio contains specified items assigned by the teacher and/or suggested by the learners. It could also contain optional items that the

learner chooses to include. Such optional items would usually be accompanied by a short written statement, giving the reasons why the learner chose to include them, or why they are especially significant.

The following items may be included in the portfolio:

- a list of contents
- a contract or pledge signed by the learner taking responsibility for his or her portfolio and the learning process
- a contract signed by the parent(s) or guardian(s) undertaking to assist the learner in keeping his or her pledge
- samples of work and activities
- reports
- reports on group activities
- observation checklists
- creative writing, poems, songs, drawing, and
- graphs, charts, pictures, photographs or sketches of projects (Nasou via Africa 2003:16).

The portfolio could include items that have already been assessed by the learner or the learner's peers. The teacher need not re-assess these, but should look at them and make brief comments where applicable. Learners should be encouraged to regard their portfolios as a source of pride and affirmation. Portfolios, or sections from them, can be exhibited, displayed and shared with parents, other learners and other teachers. Parents and guardians could also be invited to respond in writing to the learner's work and comment on the progress made.

- **Oral Work**

An oral presentation is done when the learner addresses the teacher and/or peers on a specific topic. Oral work includes discussions, role-plays, choral verse, debating and reporting on work. Oral work can be used to assess learners' speaking and listening skills, reading and thinking skills and their ability to answer questions and comprehend ideas. Questioning is also used using lower-order questions to test knowledge skills and using higher-order questions that test deeper understanding like 'Why?' 'What happens if...?' 'What do you think?' It is also used for specific, pertinent questions, e.g. 'What have you done so far?'

- **Projects**

Projects include practical work where the teacher assists the learners in selecting and investigating a topic that requires the application of appropriate knowledge and skills. Projects give learners opportunities to a variety of skills. Learners can be assessed on many aspects of their work in a project, for example, planning, research, content and presentation. When learners work on a group project, they can be assessed on their co-operative working skills.

According to a textbook (Maskew Miller Longman 2003: xvii), the choice of assessment strategies is subjective and will be unique to each teacher, grade and school depending on the teacher's professional judgement. Factors such as space and available resources may influence the decision that a teacher makes but even when resources are similar, teachers may make different selections.

The methods selected for assessing activities must be relevant to the Assessment Standard of the outcome being assessed. The purpose of assessment and the assessment methods to be used, must be clearly understood by all learners and teachers involved. Competence can be demonstrated in many ways and therefore a variety of methods must provide

learners with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities more fully, which is the *evidence* a teacher requires to be able to assess the competence of the learner.

A guide to a textbook (Teacher's Resource Book 2004:63-64) states that, after teachers have collected an array of evidence, it should then be decided what is relevant and what is not. Learner performances are then assessed against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Areas. Teachers should then record the important and relevant information.

2.6.2.7 Recording Assessment

Finally, some consideration needs to be given to the recording of assessment. The teacher can give learners immediate feedback on their performance. However, in order to plan a teaching programme effectively, the teacher needs to keep a written record of the assessment that has taken place. The main purpose for this is to provide accessible information on the progress of learners, their progress and the issues of attitudes and values (Republic of South Africa 1998:6; Van Rensburg 1998:94).

The school should provide details of 'what' and 'how' records should be kept. Since assessment is ongoing, teachers should use a variety of methods for recording. Nasou via Africa (2003:15) and Maskew Miller Longman (2003:xvii) suggest that written assessment can be recorded in the form of a learner's profile, an observation book, a progress file or record book for individuals or groups, checklists, portfolios and progression schedules.

Standards for assessment for each learning area should be recorded and the learners' progress marked off against each one. These should be given a date and appropriate comments should be recorded.

Since issues often arise unexpectedly, it is a good idea to have a notebook handy to jot down observations. Teachers should ensure that comments are clear, constructive and supportive. Learners should be encouraged to evaluate and assess

their own and each other's work. Therefore, the profiles, the record book, progression schedules and portfolios will be discussed.

- **Observation Sheets and Checklists**

Teacher observation is time-consuming but not every learner needs to be observed in every activity. Learners' achievements of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards can be observed and the teacher can tell how well they are coping and how effectively they are working in a group. Observation sheets and checklists can be used to record observations. Learners can be listened to when they discuss work with their peers and when they ask questions.

Observation is done while the learners are busy with activities. The teacher looks to see what skills are being used, what knowledge is being acquired and looks for evidence of the learners' performance (Nasou via Africa 2003:14; Shuter & Shooter 2003: viii).

- **Learner Profiles**

The EC DOE (2001:11) states that a learner profile is a holistic reflection of a learner's work as recorded over a period of time. Learner profiles provide the teacher with an ongoing and developing picture of each learner's achievement and progress. The learner profile is an up-to-date database of all information pertaining to a particular learner that will assist the learning process. This information is collected throughout the learner's learning path and his or her progress is recorded over a period of time. A learner's profile is kept for each individual learner and will accompany the learner throughout his or her learning path.

The learner's profile should contain the following:

- personal and confidential information on the learner
- physical condition/medical history

- attendance/absenteeism record and schools attended
- participation in extracurricular activities
- achievements
- emotional and social behaviour
- parental involvement
- areas in which support is needed and evidence where this support has been provided
- optimal selected work from the portfolio (of each LP)
- summative record sheet of outcomes
- motivation for retaining a learner in the same grade in the following year (if necessary)
- overall progression sheet per grade and
- term reports and promotion report (Nasou via Africa 2003:15-16).

A learner profile must be kept for each learner. This is a record of information developed on a continuous basis that should accompany learners throughout their school careers. It should provide an all-round impression of a learner's progress, including the holistic development of values, attitudes and social development. This is also relevant to daily record-keeping for continuous assessment (Maskew Miller Longman 2003: xviii).

- **Record Book**

Each teacher should keep an updated record book or file. This would include information such as learners' names, dates of assessment, name and description of assessment activities, the results of assessment activities according to the Assessment Standard of the Learning Outcomes for the particular LA and comments for support purposes. This type of record-keeping would be used throughout the year for all aspects of continuous assessment and would therefore be used for activities generally found in text books (Maskew Miller Longman 2003: xviii).

- **Progression Schedule**

A progression schedule must be completed and signed by the principal and a departmental official at the end of each year. This is a record with summarised information about the progress of all learners in the grade and is informed by the daily record keeping for continuous assessment (Maskew Miller Longman 2003:xviii).

2.6.2.8 Implications for Outcomes-based Assessment

Shuter and Shooter (2003: vii) believe that teachers should assist learners in reaching their full potential (cf. 2.5.5.1). Assessment should therefore be:

- transparent and clearly focussed
- based on predetermined criteria or assessment standards
- varied in terms of methods and contexts
- valid, reliable, fair
- learner-paced and
- flexible enough to allow for increased opportunities.

According to Killen (1999:18-19), to be useful in an OBE system, assessment should conform to the following assessment principles. It should:

- be valid (assess what is intended to be assessed)
- be reliable (give consistent results)
- be fair (indicate what learners have learned and not be influenced by any irrelevant factors such as the learner's cultural background)
- reflect the knowledge and skills that are most important for the learners to learn and
- support every learning opportunity of significance.

Olivier (1998:67-71) agrees to the above that assessment should be *valid, reliable and fair*. The outcome, as well as the supportive processes which are needed to attain the outcome, should be stated at the outset. The teacher and the learner must know exactly what it is that will be assessed, as well as 'how' it will be assessed. It is important that assessment should be reliable by selecting the correct assessment methods to capture the correct type of evidence (cf. 2.6.2.6). This may be related to particular achievements. Assessment being fair, means that the learner will not be discriminated against. The assessment process must also be *open and transparent*. This will ensure that the learners and teachers are involved in the assessment process.

Added to the above, Bells (1997:14-15) says that implications for teachers such as *flexibility* and *authenticity* are important. Flexibility ensures that the same performance or standard is fairly assessed even though another instrument is used or another teacher assesses. Authenticity is ensuring that the evidence being assessed is truly the work of the candidate. This is of particular importance since learners often complete their tasks at home. 'Flexibility' here, seems to fit the description which was referred to in the previous paragraph as 'reliable'.

Two additional implications of assessment are identified by Marais (1999:18) as *appropriateness* and *efficiency*. In the quest for zero-defect these, together with the abovementioned implications for teachers, should ensure the quality and success of ongoing assessment practices.

In summarising the sub-section on the recording of assessment, it can be said that a record of cumulative evidence of learner achievement should be kept for each learner. The records should include information on the holistic development of the learner. Reporting is the way in which the parents, teacher and other stakeholders can communicate. When a teacher reports a learner's progress through comments, a clear outline of personal knowledge of the learner should be conveyed.

From the above section on assessing the learner it is clear that the teacher assesses what is demonstrated and monitors learners' progress against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcomes. He/she also identifies learners' strengths and areas of weakness where support is needed. The teacher guides the learners in continuous, formative assessment and is responsible for summative assessment decisions such as the progression of learners from grade to grade.

The learners take responsibility for their own learning through self-assessment and should be willing to accept feedback and suggestions from others. They should also be committed to continuous improvement. Learners should offer portfolio evidence to prove that they are progressing towards the achievement of the Learning Outcomes which is measured against the Assessment Standards for each grade.

Assessment becomes a more meaningful process for *learners* because it:

- provides learners with multiple opportunities, in varying contexts, to demonstrate different aspects of their abilities and show what they 'know' and can 'do'
- enables learners to be part of the monitoring of and reflecting of their own progress

- gives learners feedback that is constructive and
- involves learners in the assessment process in such a way that they understand it and are aware of what criteria are being applied.

When assessment becomes a meaningful process for learners, it helps to empower and motivate them and this contributes to a positive learning environment.

It can safely be said that assessment forms an integral part of OBE. Each teacher should use it as a teaching aid. To be able to do this, each teacher should have a good knowledge base of the process of assessment in OBE (Van Rensburg 1998:97). The need for specialized knowledge and expertise to ensure the quality of assessment is also emphasised by Marais (1999:20-21).

In summary, the role of the teacher in an OBE approach to education is, without a doubt, an amorphous task. A sound knowledge and understanding of the current curriculum is essential for the implementation process and assessment practices. Teachers have to work collaboratively to empower and motivate each other. Being proactive and engagement in self-study to keep abreast of the current changes, is also a prerequisite for successful OBE practices. The role of the teacher will further be elaborated on in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.5) where aspects on the management of curriculum will be dealt with. A discussion on the role of the principal in an OBE approach to education therefore follows.

2.7 The Role of the Principal in an Outcomes-based Approach to Education

Principals have a range of duties to perform in OBE. Among them are co-ordinating the curriculum (cf. 3.4.1), ensuring the implementation of policy (cf. 3.4.2), the monitoring and support of teachers (cf. 3.4.2), the development of teaching staff (cf. 3.4.4), managing the resources in the school (cf. 3.4.5), and evaluating the curriculum (cf. 3.4.6). The following discussion is, however, only a brief outline of some of the generic issues ascribed to the principal in his/her daily task. The specific issues are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 3.

The introduction of OBE in South African schools has changed the role of the school principal. This role therefore needs to be redefined so that principals can perform successfully.

According to Pretorius (1998a:v), school principals are not clear on the implications of the new model for the management of their schools. Such confusion can have detrimental effects on schools if it does not receive proper attention. Pretorius (1998:105) reasons that in the new approach to teaching, the responsibility of the principal moves back to instructional activities (an interaction between the teacher and the learner) and the attainment of the desired outcomes. The principal should therefore have a clear understanding of these outcomes, so that it can be established whether the desired outcomes have been attained or not.

Pretorius (1998:105) mentions that the principal can only be seen in a group as credible when he/she is prepared to learn and develop *with* the team and become an expert in OBE. Malcolm (2001:221) reckons that the success of learner-centred education depends on whole-school approaches and overall leadership in schools. Malcolm (2001:221) therefore suggests that school leaders, as well as the whole school, should be a primary target for in-service training. Moreover, school development and staff development should go hand in hand – thereby reinforcing each other.

Chisholm (2000:20) states that there is a widespread sense that the DOE and school management provide far too little support for teachers. This lack of support makes it difficult for teachers to implement the new curriculum in the classroom as it was intended. Chisholm (2000:20) contends that provincial and district capacity to implement the curriculum and provide support to teachers in classrooms, is stifled by problems such as organizing curriculum support structures, shortages of personnel, inadequate expertise of personnel and a lack of resources for supporting the curriculum. Chisholm (2000:20) suggests a need for:

- reorganising and consolidating curriculum structures at national-, provincial- and district levels
- reinforcing personnel and

- adequate resource provision.

The lack of support can be attributed to the fact that Departmental officials and school principals lack the necessary training and skills. They are therefore uncertain as to what kind of support teachers require and how to offer it.

Basson *et al.* (1991:648) feel that the primary task of a school principal is that of advisory and psychological support in the process of change. This can only happen in a situation where the school principal understands the needs and requirements of the teachers, as well as those of the school. Pretorius (1998b:105) suggests that, in a school where OBE is implemented, the school principal should lead by listening. Leading by listening implies that the opinions of the teachers should be respected and sought. After all, the principal is the leader among equals.

In summary, it is clear that the intention of this sub-section was merely to give the reader a glimpse of the role of the principal in an outcomes-based school. It mainly states that, in the light of the new changes in education, ways of managing the school should change accordingly. Since the principal will be accountable for what takes place in the school, it is essential that he or she *is fully trained*. The section therefore, highlights challenges, expectations and implications for the principal as an OBE leader. Principals should also understand their roles as curriculum managers in the implementation of OBE. Only then will they be able to manage their schools effectively. This aspect is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.4). A discussion on the role of district officials in an OBE approach to education is therefore outlined in the ensuing section.

2.8 The Role of District Officials in an Outcomes-based Approach to Education

The term ‘district officials’ is here used in the broad sense to describe the professional staff in education who deal with curriculum issues. It mainly includes curriculum advisers, previously referred to as subject advisers. They are based in each of the 24 districts of the Eastern Cape and are trained at provincial level by the curriculum developers of the directorate: Professional Development. This training in turn, is informed by national policy.

District officials have a number of duties to perform in OBE like managing change (cf. 3.3.1), the training of principals and teachers (cf. 3.3.2) and the monitoring and support of principals and teachers (cf. 3.3.3). Since these functions are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, only the training of teachers is referred to briefly in this section since it probably takes up the greater part of a district official's portfolio. This, however, does not imply that managing change and monitoring and support are duties of lesser importance.

2.8.1 Training of Teachers

Le Roux and Loubser (2000:101) mention that the introduction of OBE and the new curriculum undoubtedly influence how teachers teach. Practising teachers and principals have to undergo training (cf. 3.3.2) to enable them to implement the new system (cf. 2.6.1.3) if it is to succeed. In the same vein, Potenza and Monyokolo (1999:236) argue that teachers are in many ways the most important educational resource and they will determine whether the new curriculum has succeeded or not. The success of the new curriculum therefore depends on the training and support (cf. 3.3.3) that teachers and principals receive from district officials and their ability to mobilise and manage the resources around them to implement the curriculum. This suggests that teachers need to be adequately trained in order to implement the outcomes-based approach. Söhnge and Moletsane (1997:274) argue that in South Africa the implementation of OBE depends on the adequate preparation of teachers in the principles that guide the teacher, the development of the curriculum, the policy documents and guidelines and the implementation of OBE.

Chisholm (2000:14) feels that the implementation of an OBE curriculum framework ultimately rests upon adequately prepared teachers, motivated to teach and supported in their work. Teachers can only be committed and motivated to do their work if they have been adequately trained and they know exactly what is expected of them. Vermeulen (1998:60) is of the opinion that only empowered teachers and parents will be able to overcome the possible detrimental effects of OBE as it was experienced in other parts of the world. Chisholm (2000:19) is also concerned about the duration and quality of training offered to teachers. She says teachers were previously trained for only a few days and they then returned to their schools to train their colleagues. Chisholm (2000:53) maintains that this training model – commonly

referred to as the ‘cascade model’ – became the primary means of preparing the majority of teachers for C2005. Chisholm (2000:19) found that there were complaints about the cascade model of training. District trainers themselves often did not understand C2005 and did not apply the principles of C2005 in their own training. Chisholm (2000:19) therefore continues to say that attention needs to be paid to the following:

- strengthening and adapting the training model and the duration of the training
- addressing the quality of the trainers and the training materials
- improving the quality of the content and methodology of the training and
- providing for follow-up classroom support for teachers.

According to the Department of Education (2001:3), the following are the key elements of a broad training strategy for teachers, school management and district officials in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS):

- the establishment of a cadre of trainers at national- and provincial levels who will use a cascade model to orientate district-officials, principals and teachers in the RNCS
- teacher training which focuses on:
 - the level and depth of knowledge, skills and values as well as resources and assessment strategies to be used in each Learning Area
 - Learning Area-specific training which focuses on the ‘less familiar’ Learning Areas like Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences and Arts and Culture and also the development and use of LTSM
- redirection or training of teachers in those Learning Areas where there is a shortage of teachers

- involvement of higher education institutions, teacher unions and non-governmental organisation in the required training of teachers and principals
- training of district-officials in the development and implementation of Learning Programmes, team building, management and monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure more effective school-based support
- accreditation of short- and long-term teacher training to support the curriculum and
- a review of the use of the 80 hours set aside for in-service training.

Although the training starts at national level and continues to provincial level, it is the duty of district officials to ensure that this strategy for teacher training takes place.

From the above it is obvious that teachers should be trained and supported in order to understand the foundations of OBE. They should know and understand what OBE is about and how it should be implemented. This is the core business of district officials. This section highlighted the intensity of this mammoth task with its implications. There are clear indications that the DOE wants to see OBE successfully implemented in the education system. As much as it is true that the training of teachers is a priority, the additional roles of district officials should not be underestimated by any means. In Chapter 3 (cf. 3.3) the roles of district officials in terms of managing the curriculum, will be dealt with.

The changing role of teachers, principals and district officials are not to be ignored. Indications are that not anyone qualifies to be a successful teacher, principal or district official of OBE. Their roles must be redefined to align them with authentic, learner-centred learning which is characteristic of OBE.

2.9 Conclusion to the Foundations of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa

In terms of the current needs of the country (cf. 2.3), OBE (cf. 2.5) is seen as a more relevant and appropriate approach to education for three reasons:

- It is a futuristic approach and is able to address the changing needs of the country.
- It is seen as providing the means to improve the workforce in order to be part of a competitive economy (cf. 2.3 – 2.4).
- The focus is on skills needed in learners' everyday life and the requirements for a work environment.

The implications for teachers, principals and officials are therefore as follows:

- There should be more stakeholder participation in the decision-making process.
- There should be a move to a more flexible curriculum and a more integrated approach.
- There should be a change in the assessment method to one which indicates actual performance.
- There should be a move away from competition between learners.
- There should be a more learner-centred approach.

From the sections of the chapter it is evident that the curriculum is well structured. The curriculum should therefore direct systematic curriculum development and eventual implementation. To ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and topical it is expected that each component mentioned, receives attention. Moreover, there are *implications* for teachers and principals facing curriculum. Based on the theoretical framework contained in this chapter, there should be an endeavour to implement systematic and effective planning and implementation in which the components dealt with – such as Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards and learner assessment –

feature strongly. This is essential to bring about success in the development and implementation phases of the curriculum process. The quality and nature of teachers' involvement, as well as the level and quality of their curriculum knowledge and skills, will eventually determine their level of competence and make the difference between either a rigid or a dynamic curriculum.

The purposes, premises and principles of OBE (cf. 2.5.2 and 2.5.5.1) which commit the system to focus on the demonstration abilities of learners, were discussed. These reflect the need for teachers to be committed to achieving learning success for all learners. Suitable conditions and teaching and learning strategies must maximise opportunities for learners to attain outcomes successfully. It is therefore essential that OBE's purposes and principles be brought into sharp focus when outcomes are to be attained.

Outcomes were dealt with (cf. 2.5.5.2b; 2.6.1.3b), reflecting the skills, knowledge and values that learners need as positive, contributing adults in an increasingly complex, changing world. There must be clarity as to which Learning Outcomes are addressed. The knowledge, skills and values attached to these outcomes, must feature strongly and learners must demonstrate these successfully before they leave school.

Content (cf. 2.5.5.2b) is no longer a structure from which point the teaching process starts. Content is *applied* to facilitate the attainment of an outcome. Therefore it should not be studied rigidly according to a textbook from the first to the last chapter. Instead, it should be *carefully selected after* the outcome and the context in which learning takes place, have been determined. This will ensure that the content required, is appropriate. Since each school community, classroom and learner is different, ideas and suggestions should be adapted to suit particular circumstances. A variety of teaching methods should be applied to assist learners in reaching their full potential.

The process of revision for C2005 (cf. 2.6.1.2) began in January 2001 with approximately 150 curriculum developers drawn from the provinces. In 2001, the draft of the new curriculum for grades R-9 was released for public comment and hearings. These were analysed to include suggested changes for improvement. The RNCS was the result of this process and was implemented in January 2004.

There are a number of implications for schools in the assessment process (cf. 2.6.2) as well. Schools have the overall responsibility of assessing learners. Each school should develop an assessment programme based on national and provincial assessment guidelines. It then needs to have a team made up of representatives from each phase and LA to facilitate and monitor the assessment process.

The implications for teachers in terms of learner assessment are reflected in the implications for outcomes-based assessment (cf. 2.6.2.8). The most frequently occurring ones contributed by a number of writers are that assessment must be valid, reliable, fair, transparent, authentic, relevant and based on criteria.

Specific details on how teachers assess should be provided by the school. However, the following types of assessment (cf. 2.6.2.4) should guide assessment in the classroom:

- At the beginning of each year the teacher should do a *baseline assessment* to establish prior learning for planning the year. A record sheet may be used for this purpose.
- If a specific learner is experiencing a barrier to learning, the teacher should ensure that a *diagnostic assessment* is carried out. This may require the assistance of a specialist and it should be followed by guidance, appropriate support and intervention strategies.
- The teacher should ensure that *formative assessment* is carried out against Assessment Standards. He/she should use a variety of teaching strategies such as, tasks and projects which will generate evidence of the learning that took place (cf. 2.6.2.6.). He/she should give learners feedback after every assessment to help them improve their performance. One activity may be carried out to assess a number of different Assessment Standards.
- Towards the end of each term the teacher should conduct a *summative assessment*. This will provide an overall picture of each learner's progress at a given time.

A variety of assessment methods should also be used. Teachers should create *self-assessment*, *peer-assessment* and *teacher-assessment* (cf. 2.6.2.5) opportunities at

appropriate times to encourage learners to reflect on the learning process and assess their own strengths and weaknesses.

Recording follows on assessment and should be included in the assessment plan. A number of recording methods should be used (cf. 2.6.2.7) depending on the purpose, type and method of assessment. At the end of the year the teacher must complete *progression schedules* and *learner profiles* (cf. 2.6.2.7).

OBE is a learner-driven learning process aimed at attaining outcomes. It is based on identifying and listing generic competencies at a particular level to attain the Learning Outcomes. Appropriate teaching strategies must be used to guide learners in attaining these outcomes designed for real-life situations. Knowledge (content) and skills can be extracted from any source and the *role of the teacher* should emerge accordingly to provide guidance for learners. Teachers should facilitate the learning by encouraging self-discovery, critical thinking and creativity to prepare the learners for their careers.

The role of the principal in an outcomes-based approach is of paramount importance. Principals *must be trained* (cf. 5.3.1.2) so that they are able to address the implications that OBE has for schools. Engaging in classroom practice would assist principals in their tasks. They must train and support their teachers and avail resources so that effective OBE implementation can take place.

District officials also have a crucial role to play in the planning, delivery and assessment of OBE. Teachers should be trained, supported and guided. District officials should also ensure self empowerment so that they are in a position to advise schools on problem issues pertaining to the curriculum.

Having thoroughly dealt with the theoretical foundations of OBE, that serve as a knowledge base for managing the curriculum, it is necessary to examine the roles of teachers, principals and district officials in managing the curriculum. It is my intention that these roles will provide the criteria for establishing the effectiveness of the implementation of OBE at classroom, school and district level in the empirical investigation described in Chapter 4.