CHAPTER 4

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN THE EASTERN CAPE – A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

4.1 Introduction

From a detailed account of the theoretical foundations of OBE and the management of the curriculum in Chapters 2 and 3, the focus now turns to the third aspect of the aim (cf. 1.3.3) namely to determine the perceptions of district officials, principals and teachers in the Eastern Cape from a management point of view. What happens in the field at micro-level (cf. 1.6), should suggest the effectiveness of OBE implementation in the Eastern Cape.

The role of district officials in implementing OBE at district level is threefold (cf. 3.3). These three functions are explored to establish whether OBE at district level is satisfactorily implemented. Firstly, a look is taken at the role of the district official in managing the change from C2005 to the RNCS (cf. 3.3.1). Secondly, the effectiveness of the training of principals and teachers in the RNCS curriculum (cf. 3.3.2) is explored. Lastly the situation in the field regarding the monitoring and support of principals and teachers is perceived.

In a quest to discover what is happening in the field regarding the implementation of OBE at school level, it was decided to examine the functions of the principal in managing the curriculum as was discussed in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.4). These functions included:

- co-ordinating the curriculum (cf. 3.4.1)
- ensuring the implementation of policy (cf. 3.4.2)
- the monitoring and support of teachers (cf. 3.4.3)
- 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).

In a bid to explore the effectiveness of the implementation of OBE at classroom level, a number of individual interviews are held with teachers on issues pertaining to their role in managing the curriculum at classroom level (cf. 3.5). An examination of documents pertaining to curriculum development, are also conducted indicating how effectively the Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans have been developed.

After providing the findings of the interviews and/or examination of documents at the three levels of implementation, a summary follows in the form of factors that influence the implementation of OBE at each of these three levels. Although these factors are intended to serve as a summary for the three sections (cf 4.3.2; 4.3.4; 4.3.6), it was decided to request groups of participants to brainstorm these factors. Since the focus groups were not the same people as the individual interview participants, some of the responses from the focus group may not have been mentioned during the individual interviews. However, both groups of participants performed the same roles in their workplaces and received the same training at the same time, which explains the similarity of responses. The responses in the focus group interviews should therefore be seen as a confirmation of issues already mentioned.

4.2 The Research Design

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:58) refer to the research design as the researcher's plan on how to proceed in the research. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:33) also state that the research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation. It describes the procedures for conducting the study as well as when, from whom and under what conditions, the data will be obtained. The research design therefore indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the participants and the methods of data-collection.

4.2.1 The Context of the Study

The characteristics of the province that may impede the implementation of OBE are described. The Eastern Cape, though the second largest province in South Africa, is also one of the poorest. It is situated in the south east of the country and spans the former Eastern Province, Border and north – eastern Cape areas, as well as the former 'homelands' of Transkei and Ciskei. In terms of population in 1994 it numbered 7,1 million, making it the third largest province in the country. Approximately 85 percent of the population are Xhosa speaking and live in a largely rural area (Central Statistics Services (CSS) 1996:6-7 & 25; Erasmus 1996:1-4).

In 1994 the newly established EC DOE was faced with the daunting task of merging six education departments from the previous education system. These included the Ciskei Education Department and the Transkei Education Department (for Blacks from the two respective homelands), the House of Representatives (for Coloureds), the House of Delegates (for Indians), the Cape Education Department (for Whites) and Education and Training (for Blacks outside the homelands). The implications for improving education in these areas were therefore immense.

The EC DOE took on the financial burden of administering the extremely disadvantaged schools of the ex-Transkei and ex-Ciskei. The numbers and conditions of many of these primary schools present serious challenges to the implementation of OBE in the province. Overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure and physical facilities, non-existent LTSM and other resources, un- and under qualified teachers and inadequately trained teachers undermine the feasibility of the OBE innovation. In my capacity as a curriculum specialist, I can safely say that it is largely due to district officials, principals and teachers that, despite these and other barriers, serious, and often encouraging, innovative change has taken place.

Due to the irrelevance of the traditional South African education system, the outcomes-based educational approach was introduced. This represented a new paradigm in education. Many teachers are doubtful regarding its success and therefore they continue with the traditional processes of the content-based education model (Pretorius 1998: v-vi).

The implications of the OBE approach are vast, impacting on, amongst others, the assessment of achievement, learner progression and LTSM resulting in practically a re-organisation of the education system (Pretorius 1998: xi)

4.2.2 The Nature of the Research

Since the aim of the study is to determine the perceptions of participants of the implementation of OBE at district-, school- and classroom levels, a qualitative approach was considered to be the most suitable approach for the research.

A qualitative approach to a research regards the participants as the prime source of information. This statement is confirmed by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:392) who say that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from participants' points of views. The researcher should therefore encourage interaction with the participants in order to acquire an understanding of their views. Borg and Gall (1989:24) state that research data arises from these interactions in the form of what people reveal to the researcher as well as the researcher's impressions.

It is necessary to establish what meaning these participants attach to OBE and its implementation since it is experienced by these participants. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:392) say participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, ideals, thoughts and actions. It is therefore hoped that the use of a qualitative approach to the research will provide the necessary information to determine the perceptions of participants. Tuckman (1994:366) believes that this approach attempts to identify the main concerns of the various participants and audiences and it assesses the merit, worth and meaning of the phenomena to the participants.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:29-33), a qualitative research approach has the following features:

- it takes place in natural settings
- it is descriptive

- it is concerned with the process and not simply the outcomes or products

- in it, data is anlaysed inductively and

- participants' perceptions are of essential concern.

These features should be noted by the qualitative researcher since they form the basis of qualitative research and they provide direction and a framework for developing specific designs and concrete data-collection strategies (Patton 1990:59).

This research is therefore qualitative by nature. It is conducted in a natural setting and there is no manipulation of variables, simulation or externally imposed structures on the situation (Wiersma 1991:219). The research is underpinned by the three features of ethnographic interviews as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:40):

- They are conducted with individuals and small groups of people to capture participants' perspectives of OBE

- They are semi-structured and open-ended to provide participants with opportunities to describe and explain the most salient issues.

- Verbatim words and phrases from the interview are analysed and used as data to illustrate the findings.

Here, I am not in any way concerned about generalising. Only an accurate and adequate description of the situation being studied, is of paramount importance.

4.2.3 Data-Collection Strategies

Patton (1990:10) is of the opinion that qualitative methods consist of three ways of collecting data:

- in-depth, open-ended interviews: participants quote their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge

- direct observations: the researcher describes people's activities, behaviours, actions and interactions or organisational processes and

- examination of written documents: these include excerpts, quotations, programme records, memoranda, correspondence, official publications, reports and diaries.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992:24) say that, to determine which techniques to use, the researcher should carefully consider what it is that has to be established. Techniques should be selected that are likely to:

- elicit data needed to gain an understanding of the issue in question

- provide for different perspectives on the issue and

- provide for sufficient data-collection in the time available.

Best and Kahn (1993:190) believe that the selection of methods for collecting data depends on the focus of the research and the desired timeframe for the study. The researcher therefore has to select those methods that will ensure interaction between researcher and participant. This in turn will enable the researcher to elicit more information from participants. For the purpose of this study, individual interviews, focus group interviews and observations were therefore selected as the methods of collecting the data.

4.2.3.1 Individual Interviews

Although the intention of the literature review in this section is to solicit information from the most recent resources, it was necessary to utilise information which was drawn from a resource of the late seventies since it illustrated most aptly the ideas that I wish to convey.

Van Dalen (1979:158) promulgates the idea that most people are more willing to communicate orally than in writing. This phenomenon results in data being

provided more readily in an interview than by completing a questionnaire. He further believes that in a face-to-face meeting, a researcher is able to encourage participants to reveal information by probing into the problem. This technique proves to be useful – particularly in the case of information being of an emotional nature.

It is this statement that convinced me that individual interviews would be the most appropriate method of investigation for a research project of this nature. District officials, principals and teachers would therefore mostly be interviewed individually. It would be too expensive and time-consuming in any event to interview them collectively from different districts and schools. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:399) express the opinion that principals are regarded as key informants because they are in charge of their respective schools, and as heads they should know what is happening in their institutions. Likewise, the district official is regarded as a knowledgeable expert.

4.2.3.2 Focus Group Interviews

According to Krueger (1994:19), focus group interviews provide qualitative data that provides an insight into the attributes, perceptions and opinions of participants. He also writes that the focus group presents a more natural environment than that of the individual interview because participants influence each other as is the case in a real-life situation. Patton (1990:335) writes that the purpose of focus group interviews is to elicit data from a small group of people on a specific topic. Groups tend to be six to eight people in size, who participate in the interview for say, thirty minutes to two hours. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:433) see the focus group interview as a strategy for obtaining a better understanding of a problem or as an assessment of a problem, concern, a new product or a new idea.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:453) share the view that, by creating a social environment in which group members are stimulated by perceptions of others, the quality of the data increases as opposed to that of individual interviews. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:100) go a step further by saying that focus group interviews are

actually a useful way of getting an insight into issues that can be pursued in individual interviews.

However, warnings on conducting focus group interviews are also issued by several writers. Van Dalen (1979:159) and Bogdan and Biklen (1992:100) feel that the researcher should guard against a situation whereby one person dominates the interview.

The above issues were all taken into account when focus group interviews were conducted with district officials, principals and teachers.

4.2.3.3 Examination of Documents

According to Patton (1990:10), the examination of written documents include excerpts, quotations, programme records, memoranda, correspondence, official publications, reports and diaries.

4.2.4 The Research Instrument

Ary, Jacobs and Razavich (1990:447) share the view that in qualitative studies, *the researcher* is the data-gathering instrument. The researcher talks to people in their natural setting, observes their activities, reads their documents and written records and then records the information in field notes or in journals. Patton (1990:14) contributes by saying that validity in qualitative methods hinges on the skill, competence and rigor of the person doing fieldwork.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:2) state that qualitative researchers do not approach their research with specific questions or with a hypothesis to test. They develop a research focus as they collect their data which is normally through sustained contact with people in settings where participants normally spend their time. However, in this instance I did approach the research with specific questions.

Patton (1990:283) sees an interview guide as a list of specific questions or issues to be explored in the course of an interview. It is developed to ensure that the information gathered from various people is of the same kind for the relevant topic.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:447) agree that in the interview guide topics are selected ahead of time but the researcher decides on the sequence and wording of the questions during the interview.

Patton (1990:283) lists the following advantages of an interview guide:

- It ensures that the interviewer carefully plans how best the limited time of the interview be used.

- It makes interviewing of different people more organised since it limits the interviews to the relevant issues.

- It is useful for conducting focus group interviews since it keeps the interactions of members focused but at the same time allows for individual perspectives and experiences to surface.

This study therefore makes use of an interview schedule, contained in Appendix I, in which the questions correlate with the topics of the sections and sub-sections of Chapter 3. However, the interview schedule does not dictate the structure of the interviews and the participants are free to raise issues or expand on answers.

4.2.5 Data Collection and Sampling

Individual interviews and focus group interviews were used as methods of data-collection. Krueger's (1994:29) thinking is that qualitative procedures such as individual interviews and focus group interviews enable the researcher to discover how participants see the reality of the issue in question.

4.2.5.1 The Sample

The sampling strategy used was a combination of judgement and convenience sampling. Interviewees were selected randomly at schools and district offices and also at district and provincial training sessions.

(a) Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with a number of district officials, principals and teachers totalling 37 people from nine districts in the Eastern Cape. Two of the teachers were interviewed by means of virtual interviews (through e-mails) since they had to return to their workplaces earlier than expected. The information contained in Tables 4.1 to 4.3 provides the context for the comments of district officials, principals and teachers:

Table 4.1 Characteristics of District Officials

District Official	Position Held	Phase/Unit/ District	Years of Experience	Training Received (Level)
A	Curriculum Advisor	FP	4	Provincial
B	Curriculum Advisor	FP	8	Provincial
C	Media Services	Curriculum	14	Provincial
D	Team Leader	FP	6	Provincial
E	Deputy Chief Education Specialist	Early Childhood Development	12	Provincial
F	Deputy Chief Education Specialist	Early Childhood Development	8	National
G	Team Leader	FP	16	Provincial
H	Provincial Official	Directorate: Professional Development and Support	14	National
I	Technical Assistant contracted to the EC DOE	Directorate: Professional Development and Support	3	National

J	Curriculum Advisor	FP	2	Provincial
K	Curriculum Advisor	IP	6	Provincial
L	Team Leader	IP	1	Provincial

Table 4.2 Characteristics of Principals

District Official	Position Held	Area	Years of Experience	Training Received
A	Principal	Urban	4	FP
B	Principal	Peri-Urban	4	FP
C	Principal	Urban	6	IP
D	Principal	Urban	16	FP & IP
E	Principal	Urban	8	IP
F	Principal	Farm	1	None
	Principal	Farm	4	IP
G	Acting Principal	Urban	3	IP
H	Vice-Principal	Urban	12	IP
I	Vice-Principal	Peri-Urban	24	IP
J	Principal	Urban	24	FP & IP
K	Principal	Urban	3	None
L	Principal	Urban	6	FP & IP
M	Pensioned – Principal	Peri-Urban	30	FP
N	Principal	Urban	3	IP
O	Principal	Farm	7	None
P	Deputy Principal	Rural	17	IP

Table 4.3 Characteristics of Teachers

Teacher	Phase	Area	Training Received	Qualification
A	IP	Township	FP & IP	B Prim Ed
B	FP (Grade R)	Urban	District Level	STD
C	FP (Grade R)	Peri-Urban	FP	STD
D	IP	Rural	IP	Unqualified
E	FP	Ex-Model C	FP	BA (Hons)
F	IP		IP	B Sc
G	FP	Training Session	FP & IP	JSTC
H	FP	Urban	District Level	B Prim Ed
I	FP (Grade R)	Farm	FP	Primary Teaching Certificate; HDE

KEY:

BA (Hons)	:	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
B Prim Ed	:	Bachelor of Primary Education
B Sc	:	Bachelor of Science
FP	:	Foundation Phase
HDE	:	Higher Diploma in Education
IP	:	Intermediate Phase
JSTC	:	Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate
PTC	:	Primary Teaching Certificate
STD	:	Secondary Teachers' Diploma

(b) Focus Group Interviews

A focus group interview was held at each of three training sites. One with a group of district officials representing the district level, and that mainly consisted of curriculum advisers, one with a group of mainly principals representing the school level and one with a group of mainly teachers representing the classroom level. The groups were on average seven strong and were not the same people who were selected for the individual interviews. However, they were all people who participated in the same training at the same time. In total, 40 people participated in the three focus group interviews. The characteristics of the focus group participants resembled those of the individual participants.

The focus group interview was the method used for the sections dealing with 'factors that influence the implementation of OBE' at district, school and classroom levels respectively.

(c) Examination of Documents

An examination of written documents is described by Patton (1990:10) as a process in which organisational *products* are examined. The management function of the teacher is to develop the curriculum at classroom level. This function culminates in a Learning Programme, Work Schedule and Lesson Plan, also referred to as the three levels of planning, and it is these 'organisational products that were targeted.

4.2.5.2 The Procedure of Data Collection

(a) Individual Interviews

Times, dates and venues were agreed upon and the interviews were conducted in English with the exception of two rural district representatives where an interpreter had to be sought. Overall, the interviews proceeded without incident. Participants were all eager to participate in the process which took place in November 2003 and in May, October and November 2004. They were

interviewed in offices or designated areas at the training sites. The sites of the districts varied according to the geographical nature of the district. In urban areas the training site was a hotel or the Teachers' Centre, in peri-urban areas it was usually a hall of some kind and in the rural areas it was mostly reduced to the confined space of a dilapidated classroom. Improvisations ensured that the settings provided for adequate privacy and district officials, principals and teachers were able to communicate freely without interruptions. The interviews were recorded on an audiotape. Although I had prepared possible interview questions based on the sections and sub-sections of the literature study in Chapter 3, these were only used as a guide to facilitate the thinking of participants. Participants were encouraged to reveal as much as they could on the issues in question. Interviews that could not take place due to other commitments were rescheduled and took place after the training at agreed-upon venues. For the virtual interviews, questions were sent by email to which the two participants responded by email.

(b) Focus Group Interviews

The interviews, using an audiotape, took place in November 2003 and in May, October and November 2004 at an agreed-upon time, date and venue and were conducted in English. In the rural areas however, a translator had to be sought to translate the questions and answers into the vernacular, isiXhosa, using a battery operated audiotape. Generally speaking, the interviews proceeded without incident. Participants also agreed to be interviewed after training hours, except in the case of one participant.

A scribe was also appointed who recorded the answers in some case on a flip chart so as to ensure that the audiotape did not interfere with the spontaneous nature of the group discussion (Hoberg 1999:141).

(c) Examination of Documents

An appointment was made with the respective teachers to examine the Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans that they had developed. These were scrutinised and their layout, content and compliancy to

policy, were examined and recorded. Detailed information in the Lesson Plans such as the selection of teaching methods and assessment practices were also identified. Interviews took place in between where necessary for purposes of clarification.

4.2.5.3 Credibility of Data

According to Best and Kahn (1993:208) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003: 105) reliability and validity are essential to the effectiveness of any data gathering procedure. Meanwhile, Patton (1990:11) maintains that the validity and reliability of qualitative data depends to a great extent on the methodological skill, sensitivity and integrity of the researcher.

Bogdan and Bilkin (1992:48) maintain that in qualitative studies, researchers are concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their data. Qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:404-406) maintain that qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of strategies to enhance reliability in data collected. I therefore used these strategies to ensure that data was reliable:

- verbatim accounts of conversations
- transcripts and
- quotations.

Capturing mechanisms included:

- mechanically recorded data (a tape recorder was used during the individual and focus group interviews
- low-inference description: concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interviews and

- a member checking whereby each participant was given a copy of the transcript of the interview to check if it was correct.

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:404) regard validity of qualitative designs as the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher. Thus, the researcher and the participants should agree on the descriptions and the meanings of different events. Shimahara (1988:87) maintains that internal reliability is closely related to validity; hence measures used to enhance internal reliability may also be used to maximize ethnographic validity. In this study I used these strategies to enhance internal validity as follows:

- participants' verbatim language: participants' words were transcribed as they were spoken

- triangulation: multi-data collection techniques

- comparison of data: all data collected were compared to check their validity and

- feed-back from participants: each participant was given a copy of the transcript of the interview to check if it was valid.

4.2.6 Analysing the Data

Patton (1990:371) believes that the process of data-collection is not an end in itself. The data collected should be analysed and interpreted and then the findings should be presented. Marshall and Rossman (1995:111) regard data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. In analysing the data I listened to the tapes several times to familiarise myself with the contents.

I searched through the data for similarities and patterns in the data. Words and phrases were recorded to represent these patterns. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:166), these words and phrases are coding categories. Taylor and Bogdan

(1984:136) maintain that in qualitative research, coding is a systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of data. The coding process involves bringing together and analysing all the data with a bearing on themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations and propositions. Data was thereafter grouped into topics or categories to correspond with the sections and sub-sections of Chapter 3.

In summary, section 4.2 indicates that a qualitative approach to the research is used. It describes data-collection strategies and the selection of data-collection methods, followed by the research process in which the methods used to obtain the data, namely individual interviews and focus group interviews are described.

4.3 Interpretation and Presentation of Results

4.3.1 Individual Interviews: The Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at District Level

4.3.1.1 Managing Change

In broad terms managing change in the context of this thesis would refer to the change from content-based education to OBE (cf. 3.3.1) but the same theory applies for managing change in the narrower sense of the word – which is what is referred to in this section. It refers to the transition from C2005 (cf. 2.6.1.1) to the RNCS (cf. 2.6.1.3) after C2005 was reviewed (cf. 2.6.1.2)

A district official practising as a curriculum adviser for Foundation Phase in the Fort Beaufort district stated that one of the main aspects in managing change (cf. 3.3.1), is establishing the attitudes (cf. 3.3.1.1) of those implementing the RNCS. She explains that she was part of a team that wrote RNCS resource materials for publishers. As a district official, she was also involved in the training of Foundation and Intermediate Phase teachers in the RNCS. From her observations and experience, the shift (cf. 2.4) from content-based education to OBE with C2005 as its initial curriculum, was much more traumatic for principals and teachers than the change from C2005 to the RNCS. She said, “C2005 required a complete mindshift and the negative attitudes of principals and teachers were very obvious”.

She also stated that many of the principals' and teachers' attitudes towards the RNCS emanated from their past experiences with C2005 and the manner in which information was disseminated during their training. The amount of training they received for a change so complex was totally insufficient. With the initial announcement of the RNCS, many teachers were concerned about what the revision might entail, as well as the extent thereof. Principals and teachers at different levels of understanding displayed different attitudes towards the introduction of the RNCS. Some lacked motivation and others were openly skeptical regarding the credibility of the 'new' curriculum. However, rural- and farm school teachers, most of whom are un- or under-qualified, suffered most under C2005 (cf. 2.6.1.1) so they welcomed any change that would relieve the situation. Ex-model C school teachers worked together, not only with other teachers in their own school, but also with teachers in neighbouring towns to form clusters.

Intermediate Phase teachers became aware of the changes that were dealt with in the Foundation Phase training and they were influenced by the attitudes of principals and teachers who attended the Foundation Phase training. Some were positive, others negative.

A district official, appointed as a curriculum adviser in the Alice district, maintains that managing the change for Foundation Phase teachers was well organised because an advocacy campaign in which the RNCS was introduced, changed teachers' negative attitudes. This campaign included road shows, banners, posters, videos, radio slots and pamphlets. It also involved principals and teachers by actively engaging them in games, plays, questionnaires and competitions. Subsequently, more teachers looked forward to the training. Regrettably there was no advocacy prior to the Intermediate Phase training due to a lack of funds.

The official stated:

> Since most of the trainers of the RNCS trained C2005 as well, they were much more aware of factors such as the attitudes of principals and teachers

> and the ways of disseminating the information. This contributed to the fact that the trainers were determined to bring about change through the quality of their training.

He also claims that:

> In examining the *causes* which often lead to resistance in change, it was found that principals and teachers mostly resist change as a result of a fear for the unknown, a sense of security for that which is familiar, insufficient support by principals and ineffective teacher training. Principals and teachers were exposed to the causes of resistance and had to deal with ways of eliminating them. Principals and teachers became motivated by showing their support for change.

He also notes the importance of commitment to a new curriculum (cf. 3.3.1.2). Preparing teachers for change precedes training – yet it is an integral part of teacher training. There was a need for change in the curriculum (cf. 2.3) and teachers had to be empowered. Asked how much the teachers were committed, he answered:

> The way in which change was managed, left teachers with a sense of commitment. Their attitudes and 'stages of concern' were dealt with and they were able to see which level they were at in terms of adapting to change.

4.3.1.2 The Training of Principals and Teachers

A district official, appointed to Media Services in the Port Elizabeth Curriculum Unit said in a virtual interview that in August 2003, districts started running five-day training workshops in the RNCS for Foundation Phase principals and teachers:

> Training in the Port Elizabeth district started on 25 August 2003 and continued to 30 October 2003. Twelve circuits were trained. An observation of the training revealed that school principals and teachers were

> highly satisfied with the quality of the training. They expressed a better understanding of the new curriculum and had the confidence to implement it in 2004 as specified by the DOE.

The high level of enthusiasm for the RNCS was demonstrated by a high attendance of teachers on a daily basis ranging from 70% - 100%. Teachers attended, but the fact that principals did not all attend the training, was a cause for great concern. The fact that some participants lacked a background knowledge of C2005 slowed progress somewhat at the workshops. Ongoing teacher training on the RNCS is needed to accommodate the ever-changing staff establishment in schools, because many schools have employed substitute teachers. Teachers need encouragement to deal with administrative work and to cope with the new challenges of the curriculum as well as large Foundation Phase classes.

A team leader of the training team in the Uitenhage district said in an interview:

> The RNCS Foundation Phase workshops started in the Uitenhage District as planned, on 1 September 2003. The training that took place over a period of a week in two venues was well attended, although it was rather disappointing that not all school principals attended the training. Teachers in general, were positive about the training – but were of the opinion that a five-day training period was not sufficient. Assessment, in particular, needed to be addressed urgently. Teachers also felt that the availability of training materials in all official languages would make the information more accessible to everyone. With *better planning for teacher training,* assessment would have been included and with more improved training materials development, these two issues would not have been so problematic. However, thanks to a small, dedicated team of trainers, the support of district officials, the Institute for Training and Education Capacity-building (ITEC) and other role players, that no insurmountable problems were encountered to halt the training of 912 teachers by 14 November 2003.

A district official appointed as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Early Childhood Development in the Grahamstown district, who trained in her district

states in a virtual interview, that teachers are very excited about the RNCS. They consider it plain sailing compared to C2005. The language has been simplified and it is rendered user-friendly. The intensive training has also prepared them better for the challenges that lie ahead.

A district official appointed as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Early Childhood Development in the Port Elizabeth district in an interview, is of the opinion that:

> Things went extremely well. Attendance was high and the feedback was good. There were very few negative comments. It was generally felt that the trainers were very competent and we were pleased with the way things went.

She continued:

> During the training of the RNCS, the trainers provided information on the RNCS policy and practices and there were ample opportunities for input from teachers by getting them involved in the activities. Achievement was measured by a post-training evaluation and from reports received from the community. Teachers were motivated to improve education for learners and they went through several stages of concern, from an awareness of the curriculum, to refocussing. The pace and quality of development varied from person to person and could be observed when certain tasks were given e.g. the completion of a timetable for the different grades. Grade R teachers from community sites, now attached to schools through the White Paper 5 Policy, found it difficult to keep up with the level and pace of the RNCS training. Their needs had to be addressed through in-service training for Grade R teachers. The training for this group would have been better had *the planning of the training* been better and the *development of training materials* adapted to suit their needs.

Asked why she thought that various previous curriculum trainings had failed, a district official in the Fort Beaufort district who was appointed as a team leader for the Foundation Phase training explained that it was because teachers were not

trained effectively. With C2005, it was a paradigm shift (cf. 2.4) and many facilitators of that training themselves were uncertain of the facts regarding the new curriculum. Teachers had to work out Learning Programmes that consisted of units. Teachers asked questions and their answers could not be addressed. This proved to have a detrimental effect on teachers and they had no confidence in their trainers. This also contributed to a lack of understanding.

She further stated:

> During training, ways and means were utilised to ensure that teachers became involved in the training in order to overcome their resistance to change. At this level of training, it was important that teachers train together with their principals. It was therefore also important for schools that already had Grade R, to include those teachers in the training. We, at the district office, were aware of the fact that the RNCS can fail as a result of defective or injudicious training. It is therefore essential that *training be planned well.*

According to her, the inclusion of Grade R teachers in the RNCS training was problematic in some districts. There was no uniformity in the 24 districts. In some districts e.g. Port Elizabeth, the Grade R teachers and grades 1 – 3 teachers, were trained separately. In the Fort Beaufort district, the Grade R teachers at public schools were trained together with the Foundation Phase teachers. This however elevated the number of teachers being trained and resulted in the venues being overcrowded. Further problems during the training with the inclusion of Grade R, was that all the Grade R teachers attached to schools, were not qualified teachers and their levels of understanding differed. Many of them were not fluent in English and the medium of training in English hampered their progress. After the RNCS training, the entire group of Grade R teachers at community-based sites was retrained by herself. She said "another problem was that the methodology and class layout of the Grade R classes differed from the rest of the Foundation Phase – and this resulted in confusion for teachers of Grade R". It is of grave concern that not much effort was put into the *planning of the training* (cf. 5.3.1.2).

She is also of the opinion that:

> What was lacking at previous training was sufficient and well-developed training material that was user-friendly and that could be used as reference material by the teacher once they were back in their schools. It should also be easy to understand for all newcomers to the teaching profession. Teachers should be able to interact comfortably with the material. The material used for the C2005 training for Foundation- and Intermediate Phase teachers had many shortcomings and this contributed towards the negative attitudes that teachers had. The RNCS material however, succeeded our expectations. Colleagues from other provinces are requesting our training manuals. Teachers and principals are generally impressed with the training material. However, an observation at the development of training materials proved that there were many irregularities in terms of *the process of materials development.* Fortunately, the product did not reveal these problems that were experienced. This was also admitted by the technical assistant who was appointed as project manager for the training of teachers and materials development. The RNCS makes it much easier for the teacher to develop the three levels of the curriculum because the Assessment Standards specify the skills, knowledge and attitudes for each grade *but unfortunately not the activities to show sequencing of content. This could be provided in a separate guideline document.*

A provincial official appointed to the EC DOE in the Directorate: Professional Development and Support who trains district officials claimed in an interview, that district officials recently embarked on a province-wide campaign to train 22 000 Intermediate Phase principals and teachers in the RNCS. The training took the form of one-week workshops, starting on 30 August 2004 and ending on 12 November 2004.

"The courses were vibrant and very well received by principals and teachers alike. Come 2005, the proposed date for the implementation of the RNCS for the Intermediate Phase, all principals and teachers will be ready to implement the new curriculum" said the provincial coordinator for Intermediate Phase training.

Asked what the workshops entailed, she answered that it covered the theory and practice of the revised curriculum, but with a special emphasis on curriculum development in terms of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans (cf. 3.5.1.1 – 3.5.1.3) for teaching, learning and assessment. She also said, as its premise, the RNCS has five principles (cf. 2.6.1.3) that are rooted in the South African Constitution. Asked why it was important to do the RNCS workshops, she replied that OBE, as implemented through Curriculum 2005, turned out to be too complicated for teachers to use with confidence in their classroom.

"C2005 was streamlined and strengthened so that teachers could implement OBE in a much more user-friendly manner through the RNCS curriculum" explained the official. She added that, if the RNCS was used as a vehicle to successfully implement the OBE approach to teaching, then the learner that would exit the system at the end of his/her school career, would be able to think analytically, be aware of his/her human rights, respect the rights of others and would therefore be able to function satisfactorily in today's global economy.

"Each district has its own team of trainers", continued the official "and since the inception of the campaign, 5 500 principals and teachers have gone through the course. The remaining 16 500 would be reached by 12 November 2004".

A principal at a primary school in Port Elizabeth said:

> Many of the school's Foundation Phase teachers were already about 70% up to speed on the RNCS even before the training and so they knew what to expect. But even though this was the case, the trainers that we had were of the best and we learnt a lot. As I don't have a Foundation Phase background, I personally found the course very useful. I just felt it put me more in touch with the Foundation Phase and now I feel better able to assess the learners and monitor and support those teachers. The teachers from our school are very motivated after the training and they are raring to go. But one drawback is the large number of learners in each classroom. A ratio of 40:1 is too high for the type of teaching required by the RNCS.

Another primary school principal in Port Alfred stated:

> The training course provided valuable learning. So many things like the three levels of managing the curriculum in terms of developing Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans are different from the way we did it before. But the terminology of the RNCS is simple and easy to understand. Everything discussed at the course had a practical and useful application and we as teachers, were involved and given ample opportunities for co-operative learning. The success of the RNCS however, will ultimately depend on the ongoing monitoring and support of teachers. The RNCS is an excellent curriculum and the initial training was really world-class – but it is doomed to fail if the monitoring and support does not continue because teachers in rural areas are doomed to fail if not supported.

An Intermediate Phase teacher at a primary school in King William's Town agreed, stating that, although training in the RNCS (cf. 2.6.1.3; 3.3.2) is becoming increasingly better, there are still a few stumbling blocks in schools that hinder the process. She explained:

> Last year Foundation Phase teachers were trained by district officials, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and private consultants but this year, for the Intermediate phase training, a number of teachers and redundant college lecturers were tasked to assist district officials in performing this role. Although their courage, preparation and enthusiasm were admirable, it was obvious that their background and in-depth knowledge of the curriculum was limited. There knowledge was limited to what was in the Facilitators Guide. It was clear that they lacked expertise in the theoretical foundations of OBE and in the RNCS curriculum. This became alarmingly noticeable when they could not address questions posed from the floor in plenary or from the groups. These teachers also lacked the facilitation skills that most district officials had. The teachers and ex-college lecturers would *lecture* in the traditional style. There was no variation in their training methods – which made the training of principals and teachers rather boring. Had the *teacher training been better planned,* this would not have happened.

A Grade R teacher at a pre-primary school in the Mthatha district felt:

> The teacher training on the RNCS was very interesting and easy to understand. It was clear and straightforward and I feel ready to develop Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans. But once-off training is not enough. We need to be monitored and supported by district officials at our schools to see that we are doing things right. The Foundation Phase teachers in our area have already planned to meet to provide one another with support and to identify new challenges and difficulties that might emerge during the three levels of curriculum development and implementation. Once we have done that, we can approach our principal for further monitoring and support.

Another teacher, teaching Grade R in Port Alfred added:

> I went into the training feeling very negative, but I emerged excited and motivated. People are realising that this is do-able. The trainers had obviously managed to internalize the working of the RNCS before the training began and they put it across very well. The training was very well done indeed. But further monitoring and support, in a 'micro' rather than a 'macro' form, will be required further down the line. Until the RNCS is really put into practice, it is an 'unknown' to us. I expect there will be some stumbling blocks around May and June next year when we will be able to see if the development of our Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans are working. We will need monitoring and support then. It is also going to be very important to bring parents on board.

A technical assistant contracted to the EC DOE and based in the provincial office in the Directorate: Professional Development and Support, was appointed as the project manager for the training of principals and teachers on the RNCS at district level. He stated that, before district officials could even attempt their training, they would have to spend several weeks prior to the training, on *the development of training materials* (cf. 5.3.1.2). It was decided that district officials were best suited for the process since they are the very implementers thereof. "Training doesn't just happen in a vacuum." According to him the development of the

training materials for the training of principals and teachers, proved to be a very time-consuming and costly exercise. A Teacher's Resource Book, a Facilitator's Guide and a Teacher's Workbook were developed.

He further stated that a large section of the process had to be outsourced since the department did not have staff with the required expertise like proofreaders, editors, designers, lay-out artists, etc and the DOE at national level did not provide standardised training material for the training of Intermediate Phase principals and teachers in the districts. Since the RNCS is a revised curriculum (cf. 2.6.1.3), district officials felt that policy interpretations (cf. 3.4.2.1 – 3.4.2.8) needed to be accurate. It was therefore decided that the training materials and the model of training for principals and teachers should be standardised to ensure a good minimum requirement.

A principal at a preparatory school in the East London district wrote in a virtual interview (cf. 4.2.5.1a), that the training of principals and teachers for Foundation Phase took place in the latter part of 2003 and their needs were mostly addressed – but if schools are to engage in meaningful and worthwhile training, district officials should reconsider where and when training should take place and to whom and by whom the training should be delivered. This is what was problematic for the principal and teachers of their school. The principal said:

> District officials set up workshops for RNCS training in the busy fourth term when assessments and end-of-the-year activities were taking place. Teachers were expected to teach until 12:00 each day and then rush to the Teacher's Centre in East London for four afternoons to receive a cascade model of training from district officials in the form of lectures and group activities. Whilst many accepted the revised curriculum, teachers were at different levels of understanding and were learning at different paces. It often slowed colleagues down – who got board – while others, at times, could not keep up the pace.

This issue of teachers being at different levels of understanding has been raised by two other participants. It appears it might have been detrimental to the

effectiveness of the programme. If thorough *planning for teacher training* was done, the problem may have been avoided.

The principal explained his strategy as follows:

> Meanwhile, I as a principal took a different route. I participated in a private five-day training course for five consecutive days from 8:00 – 16:00. The group of 40 principals and teachers were engaged in a total of 40 hours' training by a team of knowledgeable trainers who did not facilitate the workshop, but rather discussed, in an open forum, the RNCS. In other words the 'how to' was conveyed and teachers were not engaged in endless time consuming activities of brainstorming their experiences and pooling ignorance. Trainers clearly differentiated between national policy and guidelines for teachers to ensure that meaningful learning takes place. This workshop assisted principals and teachers in familiarizing themselves with the new documents and it enabled them to start their preparations for January 2004 when the Foundation Phase was to implement the RNCS.

4.3.1.3 The Monitoring and Support of Principals and Teachers

The district official from Fort Beaufort who was interviewed earlier, further remarks that, as a district official, monitoring and supporting principals and teachers (cf. 3.3.3) during the implementation of C2005, she discovered many problems in the development of Foundation Phase Learning Programmes. The most frequently asked question at the workshop was: "How do we develop a Learning Programme"? Some teachers were very negative, some apathetic and some positive, whilst others merely listened – and did not always practise what they received in their training at C2005 workshops. The problem was that teachers did not know how to develop Learning Programmes, including their scope and depth. The C2005 policy document was also not very user friendly. When students were appointed in schools as teachers, many said that they were able to share their knowledge of C2005 with experienced teachers, but there were also instances where the student had to adjust to the non-conforming teachers in the school.

The district official from the Port Elizabeth district said that monitoring and support teams were set up, consisting of district officials, to assist principals and teachers in the development and implementation (cf. 2.6.1) of the curriculum. Focus areas for the monitoring and support were:

- developing a better understanding of the Assessment Standards (cf. 2.6.1.3c)
- learner and teacher portfolios (cf. 2.6.2.6)
- recording of assessment (cf. 2.6.2.7)
- progression schedules (cf. 2.6.2.7)
- summative assessment (cf. 2.6.2.4)
- learner profiles (cf. 2.6.2.7) and
- practical assessment ideas for the classroom (cf. 2.6.2.4 – 2.6.2.6).

Monitoring and support for principals and teachers (cf. 3.3.3) of the Foundation Phase in the district will continue well after the training programme is over. Teacher clusters have been established and the district official mentioned that "we are meeting with cluster leader teachers in the course of November 2004 to get feedback on what issues need clarification or further training".

The team leader from the Mthatha district emphasized:

> The success of the training was not only going to be measured by the quality of the training, but also by the monitoring and support of principals and teachers by district officials during the implementation of the curriculum. This is where many other systems failed in the district. Teachers were trained, attended a few workshops, but were then left on their own without the necessary monitoring and support. Teachers need to be monitored and supported by district officials after the training. As long as district officials apply strategies for the monitoring and support of principals and teachers,

success can be assured at school level with the development of the curriculum and the implementation of the curriculum. At district level, monitoring and support was effectively introduced to establish whether teachers had applied the theory and practice which they had been exposed to in the RNCS training.

In summary, the factors that influence the implementation of OBE at district level are set out in the next sub-section.

4.3.2 Focus Group Interviews: Factors that Influence the Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at District Level

4.3.2.1 Promoting Factors

There are clearly a number of issues that promote the implementation of OBE at district level as is evident from the responses of the focus group held with district officials at district level.

Participants felt that, in terms of managing change (cf. 3.3.1), the following positive factors apply:

- Most principals and teachers are 'transformed' and accept that the change is compulsory and not merely optional.

- There is a willingness amongst principals and teachers to implement the RNCS – indicating a positive attitude.

- Principals and teachers also acknowledge that the change from C2005 to the RNCS makes the curriculum:

    - simpler to understand and

    - stronger – in the sense that there are specific guidelines in terms of what learners must *know* and *do* at what grades (cf. 2.6.1.2).

- Principals and teachers agree that the change is set to develop learners that are internationally competitive (cf. 2.3).

- The advocacy campaign with its road shows was an excellent way of disseminating information to a large number of people in a short space of time.

The group responded to a further question replying that, in terms of the training of principals and teachers, these encouraging factors stand out:

- The trainers were thoroughly trained by national and provincial officials and the training materials in both cases were easy to understand.

- There were regular management meetings of provincial officials with the section heads of the Curriculum directorate at the district office after which trainers were informed on managing the training programmes.

- The co-ordinators of the training programmes at district level are dedicated, knowledgeable and hardworking.

- The training was well attended and there was a high level of enthusiasm.

- Most principals and teachers were highly satisfied with the training and expressed a better understanding of the curriculum which made them feel confident to implement the RNCS.

- Thereafter, a well-structured, functional cluster system for schools with efficient key teachers was formed to support each other in the development of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans.

- Clusters of teachers were established in districts to work together to alleviate the work load, support each other and to pool knowledge.

The training in the RNCS was easier than that of C2005 since the terminology was less complex and the seven-day workshop was intense. The formation of

clusters of teachers in districts, ensure support for each other and collaboration in terms of curriculum development at all three levels. This discussion led to further note-worthy factors:

- District officials and most principals and teachers had a significant prior knowledge base of C2005 which made the training of the RNCS much easier than that of C2005.

- Every principal and teacher received training materials.

- The quality of the facilitator's guides gave district officials the confidence to train principals and teachers.

Further probing sparked the identification of more encouraging factors in terms of monitoring and support:

- Regular reports are submitted to the co-ordinator.

- A good monitoring tool is administered.

- Monitoring and support teams were set up in the districts.

- Regular visits are made to all cluster schools.

Furthermore the focus group mentioned:

- Many concerns were picked up during monitoring and support. When teachers start to work on their own, it is then that problems surface. Monitoring and support have rescued many teachers, especially in the development of the three levels of curriculum development (cf. 3.5.1.1 – 3.5.1.3).

- Regular visits to schools pay off and result in effective curriculum implementation (cf. 2.6.1) and learner assessment (cf. 2.6.2).

- A random survey conducted at the end of the training indicated that principals and teachers are convinced that the RNCS is indeed simpler.

4.3.2.2 Hampering Factors

In contrast, a number of issues hamper the implementation of OBE at district level and these were identified by the focus group comprised of district officials. Teachers are people who are influenced by inter- and intrapersonal issues – be it as individuals, or in a group context. According to Hattingh (1989:87), each of these individuals has a particular deeper psychological character which comes to the fore in a number of ways in certain situations and during certain interpersonal interactions. In the process of preparing teachers for *change* or *renewal*, it is necessary for the district official to also take note of these intrapersonal characteristics of the teachers in society. The negation of the individual's values, norms and feelings can quite possibly cause the total curriculum process to fail.

Asked what specific psychological factors should be taken into account during the management of change (cf.3.3.1), the focus group responded:

- The degree of difficulty which may lead to resistance.

- Any initiative which threatens the self-esteem and self-image of the teacher will be difficult to re-establish and gain acceptance.

- Teachers, especially from rural or farm schools were sceptical about the RNCS as a result of their experiences with C2005.

- A person with an authoritarian personality may reject initiatives from outsiders.

- Information must be conveyed accurately or else it might lead to its distortion.

- Values often determine attitudes and for this reason these key values must be identified and strengthened with a view to cultivating positive attitudes.

- If expectations clash with change, it may bring about resistance.

- Individuals' existing needs must be taken into account.

- A fear of the unknown curriculum and its implications.

- The more experience a person has, the more difficult it might be to accept change.

- Feelings of being threatened like anxiety, fear and uncertainty may lead to rejection of change (Hattingh 1989:87).

From the group interview it was also clear that while creating a climate for change, the following issues impede the implementation of the new curriculum. Principals and teachers:

- feel secure in the traditional curriculum

- lack knowledge of their own abilities

- fear criticism

- are confused by ambiguity and

- lack an understanding of the nature and extent of the changes to the curriculum.

Asked what logistical aspects hampered the process of training principals and teachers, they replied:

- The department's organogram is the biggest stumbling block in these activities. The district office makes use of the services of ex-lecturers for the training (cf. 3.3.2) and monitoring and support of principals and teachers (cf. 3.3.3). The ex-lecturers are utilized to train in all the different phases.

When the Intermediate Phase training takes place, it brings the monitoring and support for the Foundation Phase to a halt.

- District officials are also used to train other programmes in the district – unrelated to curriculum.

- Due to a lack of appropriate staff, district officials' programmes are very full so they find it difficult to give the training the attention it deserves.

- District officials have to travel long distances to train, monitor and support due to the geographical vastness of the district.

- Training cannot take place after school because of the distances that teachers have to travel and the non-availability of transport after 16h00. Training is therefore scheduled for the mornings, but schools also complain about lost teaching time. This makes training very difficult.

- There are not adequate trainers to train all the principals and teachers in the province. Some trainers are not specialists in their field of curriculum and are unable to address teachers' questions during training.

- Not all principals attended the training which was a huge cause for concern.

The above all points to the fact that *proper planning for teacher training* (cf. 5.3.1.2) in the districts, was not done.

From the group interview, the following issues were also identified as a cause for concern:

- Since the districts have a shortage of curriculum advisers to do the training, teachers were called in to assist with the training. It was clear that they lacked the background, in-depth knowledge and the experience of the district officials. Their facilitation skills were poor and they lacked confidence.

- The mode of training needs to be examined since teachers get bored when the training is 'low-level'. The levels of understanding differed in groups and trainers should consider 'streaming' teachers. The timing for training was also inappropriate since the fourth term is a busy one.

- The multi-faceted nature of a teacher's tasks had them concerned about how they would cope – especially regarding the volume of work in curriculum development and learner assessment.

- Training venues with breakaway facilities were not always available.

Here too, these issues would not have surfaced had there been *adequate planning for the training of teachers.*

Responding to further challenging issues of teacher training, the group remarked:

- Some principals and teachers lacked the background knowledge of C2005 which, to a large extent, slowed down the training process.

- The training and training materials in English hampered the progress of some teachers who came from rural areas and lacked proficiency in English.

- A number of teachers felt that the five-day training for Foundation Phase teachers and the seven-day training for Intermediate Phase teachers was not adequate – which suggests that not all teachers were at the same level of understanding.

- The inclusion of grade R teachers in the training resulted in overcrowded venues. Most grade R teachers are also un- or under qualified which means that their levels of understanding were not on par with the others. The methodology used to teach grade R and the layout of the classrooms were different from those for grades 1-3 and this confused teachers.

The following discussion emerged spontaneously: Many principals and teachers regarded the RNCS training in the seven-day period as inadequate. There were

clearly two types of teachers at different levels of understanding. The first type regarded the training as necessary and useful but felt that a lot more was needed to become more meaningful in the lives and practices of Foundation Phase teachers. The second type regarded the training as being too basic and offered at a level which they had long surpassed in their own development. It was mainly teachers from rural areas who held the former view – while teachers from urban areas (especially ex-model C schools) or peri-urban areas, did not see the need for any training or who expected a more advanced type of training (cf. Table 4.3). The training of principals and teachers are critical for successful curriculum development and -implementation. Certain training activities like curriculum development (cf 3.5.1) and learner assessment (cf. 2.6.2) are more useful than others. Training received by private consultants and other 'experts' was, with few exceptions, considered to be particularly helpful. Some teachers however, complained that consultants could not relate to the particular problems that they were experiencing in their classrooms or that their advice was too abstract to be helpful. Where external experts *were* considered useful, was when their participation was concrete and it involved working closely with teachers in 'hands-on' workshops.

For the training of the Intermediate Phase principals and teachers, *training materials had to be developed* (cf.5.3.1.2). Funding for the development of these training materials was a major concern since it is a very costly exercise. This statement led to the following factors that hamper the process in terms of training materials.

- There were no mechanisms in place for individual contracted writers to be employed or for training to be outsourced.

- The provincial department was unaware of the amount of time in terms of the turnaround time from conceptualization to printing. This resulted in the training initially being postponed.

- The department has to put the process up for tender which is a lengthy process of approximately three months. Meanwhile, specifications change and the tender become invalid.

- A substantial amount of the funding was used to outsource the process since the department does not have staff qualified to do proofreading, editing and designing.

The above indicates that *the development of training materials for teacher training* was not effective by any means.

With regard to factors hampering the monitoring and support of principals and teachers, the group felt that:

- The shortage of district officials and their logistical problems like funds and transport hamper officials in their duties of monitoring and support.

- Officials are often inexperienced in drawing up monitoring instruments with criteria to give them the necessary results.

- Principals and teachers often rely on district officials excessively for assistance, forgetting that schools can support each other as well by working collaboratively or by benchmarking.

- Schools who are not implementing OBE as they should, often perceive monitoring and support as 'spying' on them.

- Geographical distances in the Eastern Cape are vast, which often makes schools inaccessible for officials – especially in the rural areas.

From the above findings it is clear that managing change in the mindset of principals and teachers, training them in the new curriculum and monitoring and supporting them, are vital tasks to be executed by district officials in their role as implementers of OBE at district level. However, the real success of these three functions at district level can only be determined once it is evident that the implementation of OBE at *classroom* level is successful.

4.3.3 Individual Interviews: The Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at School Level

4.3.3.1 Co-ordinating the Curriculum

During an interview with a principal from a primary school in East London he responded, "Co-ordinating the curriculum has undoubtedly been my most exciting and challenging responsibility this year – but it took a great deal of time to plan and implement in my school".

He also confirmed that, while teachers are developing the curriculum (cf. 3.5.1), outcomes are their starting point and that content is applied only to attain those outcomes. He continues:

> The intentions of the teacher are no longer focussed on what he or she wants to impart, but on the desired LOs attained by the learner through learning opportunities provided by the teacher. Knowledge (content) is now socially constructed within the class, taking into account the prior knowledge of the learner and the context in which the learning takes place. This concept is not an easy one for teachers. It takes a lot of practice to realize that the curriculum must be developed by starting with the outcome (the 'design down' principle of OBE). Teachers still grapple with the fact that content is only applied so that the outcome can be attained and that it is no longer a structure used as the premise for teaching and learning. It is the LOs that form the structure.

However, he explained:

> A huge staff-turnover this year has complicated my problems in the sense that new staff had to be brought on board regarding curriculum development whilst ensuring that the existing staff continue as pace-setters. The assistance, commitment and enthusiasm of these teachers were extremely encouraging.

> As the principal, I always endeavour to set the scene for our school by applying principle 1 of the RNCS. Through Social Justice we care for our learners and ensure that they have equal opportunities to improve their lives. Through Human Rights we ensure that their rights are not violated in their day-to-day experiences in the school. A Healthy Environment is provided for learners to live and work in and Inclusivity is assured where we accommodate all learners irrespective of their culture, race, language, economic background, gender or ability.

Asked what aspect of co-ordinating the curriculum it was that she would consider as important, a principal from an urban school in the Port Elizabeth district answered that it would be her timeframes for teaching and her class composition. She continued that she adheres strictly to policy. For Grades R to 2 she allocates 22 hours, 30 minutes and for Grade 3, 25 hours. She structures the timetable to accommodate the new curriculum. This is revised each year through recommendations from teachers. Class sizes are a bit of a concern. The average is a 1:25 ratio which is high for Foundation phase teachers who need to provide young learners with individual attention. Alarmingly, a principal from a rural school in the same district reported that her class ratio was 1:43.

4.3.3.2 Ensuring the Implementation of Policy

A principal from a small farm school in the Graaff-Reinet district was asked to open a discussion on ensuring the implementation of policy. His convictions were: 'The national policy documents (cf. 3.4.2.1 – 3.4.2.3) keep principals on track and guide them – but interpreting, understanding, knowing and applying policy, is a huge challenge in itself, not only for me, but for my teachers too and *we should be trained on it'* (cf. 5.3.2.2).

Another principal from the same area emphasized:

> The RNCS encourages teachers to develop learners who can think for themselves. At this school, the staff set the example. My dedicated teachers and I have taken the initiative to interpret and implement the RNCS

in a manner most beneficial to our learners. Got policy documents (cf. 3.4.2.1 – 3.4.2.8), will implement, is our staff motto!

He further contends that *principals must be trained* to become familiar with the content of policies to be able to interpret them correctly *and be trained* to develop guidelines from them e.g. the school assessment guidelines. *Principals must be empowered* to assist teachers in contextualising policy for Learning Programme development (cf. 3.5.1.1). Insufficient time and a lack of sufficient manuals containing policy documents does not allow all teachers the opportunity to become fully familiar with all policy documents. Whilst he shares his views and implements policy to a degree in his school, the documents are not widely circulated amongst all staff as they should be.

An acting principal at a preparatory school in East London mentioned, in a virtual interview, that the scene was set for the RNCS by the national policy, White Papers and various other policies related to teaching, learning and assessment. "It is of paramount importance that a principal ensures that teachers implement these policies that are in place".

Asked what each of the policies in the school promotes, she summarized as follows:

- The RNCS policy provides the policy for the development and implementation of the curriculum.

- The Language in Education policy promotes additive multilingualism, respect and equity for all languages.

- The Norms and Standards for Language policy promotes the development of all official languages.

- The policy on HIV/Aids promotes prevention and care, a way of coping with HIV/Aids, non-discrimination and responsibility.

- The Norms and Standards for Educators policy promotes the seven roles of a teacher.

- The Education White Paper 6 promotes educational opportunities for learners with barriers to learning.

- The Religion and Education policy promotes knowledge, understanding, appreciation and respect for all religions and traditions.

- The Assessment policy promotes an assessment practice which is learner-centred and criteria-referenced.

Probing which of these policies created particular problems for the implementation of the curriculum, she replied that White Paper 6 makes teaching no easy task for the teacher. She is challenged by Inclusive Education where learners with barriers to learning are included in the mainstream classes. The Religion and Education policy became a controversial issue in the school. She explained:

> All teachers at our school follow a Christian-based belief. This document has created much disillusionment but I dealt with the document in a staff development session and the issues were resolved amicably, with teachers understanding the implications of religion and education. Through careful nurturing, the teachers became aware of the needs, belief and cultures of learners and so they embraced the diversity of all cultures through the curriculum by highlighting the festivals, festivities and celebrations of various cultures. An enlightening experience it certainly was for all! We find these policies difficult to understand and implement at times even being an ex-model C school in an urban area. Goodness knows how principals in rural areas who do not have a good command of the English language, cope. These *principals would certainly need training*.

4.3.3.3 The Monitoring and Support of Teachers

In the interview with the researcher, a vice-principal of an urban school in the Uitenhage district explained what he considered to be a key factor in the monitoring and support of teachers.

> In this suburban, middle-class school, which caters for 955 learners from a cross-section of communities – from squatter camps to upper income families – post-training monitoring and support of teachers are key factors. After the RNCS training, teachers responded to the concept of 'cluster groups' – which consists of teachers from each school in the district that meet regularly to discuss and solve curriculum problems and to support each other.

He is of the opinion that the monitoring and support of staff (cf. 5.3.2.3) is an important ingredient for motivation at a time of curriculum renewal. "I try to make it a cyclic approach which is ongoing and non-threatening to teachers. Although it is continuous, it does not disrupt the day-to-day teaching at the school. Feedback on observations is done in a positive way".

Furthermore, he remarked:

> Teachers are free to ask for assistance. Knowing how to assist teachers in the development of the curriculum and the implementation thereof, is to know the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. I try to focus on their strengths and improve on their areas of weakness. Teachers need to be encouraged at all times since the demands on teachers in terms of curriculum development, implementation and learner assessment, are huge. After all, it is the principal who is accountable for the learning that is taking place.

Another vice-principal from a peri-urban school in the Butterworth district confirmed that the monitoring and support of teachers is most certainly an essential duty of the principal. "Through interaction and participation with staff, it has become evident that they need to be supported and monitored continuously

for encouragement. It has been essential for class visitations to take place in order to support staff in the classroom and to monitor their interaction with learners".

4.3.3.4 The Development of Teaching Staff

A participant stressed that good leadership (cf. 3.4.4.1) with a vision and commitment motivates and empowers staff. He experienced that, as teachers learn to share responsibilities, a spirit of co-operation develops (cf. 5.3.2.4).

> Teamwork in practice, results in better teaching practices for all. Teachers who work in isolation, is a major concern – since it could result in staff-overload. I respect the individuality of my staff. I also don't allow policy to stifle any learning- or teaching style – provided it is in accordance with policy. Since I am accountable to the DOE for implementing OBE, I develop my staff according to acceptable practices.

A principal from an urban school in the Queenstown district was of the opinion:

> Professional development is the key to improving teaching and learning. I create conditions that enable staff to develop and gain the knowledge and skills required to implement OBE. A personal growth plan is what I envisage for each staff member where they will be able to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and look at what opportunities they can make use of to develop – if allowed the freedom and the means to do so. Factors threatening the implementation of OBE are addressed as they emerge, but in staff development meetings, general preventative measures are addressed as a precautionary measure. The combined efforts of all teachers are of the utmost importance.

However, to ensure some kind of uniformity in the province, it would be essential for *principals to be trained* on issues relating to staff development.

4.3.3.5 Managing the Resources in the School

In terms of the curriculum resources in the school, the principal of an urban primary school said that the resources are a contributing factor to the implementation of OBE and without the RNCS policy (cf. 3.4.2.1) guidelines and workshop manuals, it would have been impossible for teachers to organize and manage the curriculum efficiently and effectively (cf. 5.3.2.5). He explained:

> The initial supporting documentation on Curriculum 2005 was not user friendly. Staff really battled to work with these documents and a lot of frustration and anger was felt as everyone felt very insecure. The terminology was also extremely difficult to understand and apply. Yet, my staff managed to develop and implement teaching- and learning processes according to the Critical Outcomes and Specific Outcomes as set out by the DOE. Many tedious hours were spent trying to familiarize ourselves with these cumbersome documents. The RNCS policy- and training documents however, are far more user-friendly and were received with much relief. These documents are easier for teachers to work with and are constantly referred to as a source of reference. Additional resources for development of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans were developed at grade meetings and staff also designed booklets covering the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria necessary for each grade.

In terms of learning and support materials, a principal of a pre-primary school in East London said:

> Inadequate computer facilities hampers the effective retrieval of information, but the programmes available on computer are being used and applied according to our curriculum needs. Many more computers from the Department of Education would be welcome in order for each learner to be developed to his or her full potential. Through library referencing and other technological resources, learning materials are made available. Teachers are also adapting equipment and teaching aids to meet the needs of learners. However, more learning- and teaching support materials need to be made available, particularly for Mathematics and Languages. Reading books

based on more contemporary issues and written with the frame of reference of all cultures in mind, also need to be provided.

A pensioned-principal, providing voluntary service, from a primary school in a township area in the Butterworth district had a similar view:

> Learning and teaching support materials play a critical role in both motivating and empowering teachers to try new approaches and to support their endeavours. How the resources are budgeted for, is of paramount importance. All staff have a role to play in what the needs of their classes are and a system to manage the resources, is kept at all times. All resources of a physical nature like desks, chairs etc, need to be taken into account when managing the resources and must also be accounted for at all times. The human resources are acknowledged as a crucial and pivotal factor when it comes to resources, since my school and most others, are understaffed. *Training* on the procurement process of text books, and the selection of books from the catalogue would be most useful as well as *training* on inventories for physical facilities.

4.3.3.6 Evaluating the Curriculum

A renowned principal at a college in an affluent suburb in the East London district shared his view in an interview, by saying:

> Clearly there are a number of reasons for evaluation in a school like establishing the quality and merit of Learning Programmes, establishing whether sound curriculum management practices prevail or judging the nature and quality of the entire curriculum. There is also a number of objects that can be selected for evaluation. These objects could include assessment, Learning Outcomes, Learning Programmes, resources and so forth. In fact anything in curriculum can be an evaluation object. How I select my evaluation objects, depends on what I am evaluating *for*. If I am evaluating for accountability, I would look at products like Learning Outcomes (whether they have been attained or not), resources, policies and Learning Programmes, but if I am evaluating for performance improvement

> or development, I would naturally look at processes like teaching and learning or the curriculum development processes of developing Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans.

Asked for an example of an evaluation in his school, his deputy answered:

> For me to conduct a meaningful end-of-the-year evaluation, all teachers need to engage in effective summative assessments and recording practices so that they are able to provide an input into my evaluation. Clearly our objectives for assessment and recording need to be stated and the assessment processes need to be monitored accordingly. To establish whether Assessment Standards have been met by the learner, I would have to look at the continuous formative assessments carried out by the teacher. To establish whether the Learning Outcomes have been met, I would have to look at the summative assessments conducted by the teacher. On evaluating the assessment issue, I found that, by implementing RNCS, teachers were more aware of, and more focussed on, the needs of the learners and their learning experiences. These teachers obviously had to work hard on designing learner portfolios which included activities that generated the evidence for learner assessment, different types of assessment and a variety of assessment methods.

However, the principal made it very clear that he is a principal by trade and not a qualified evaluator. This implies that *principals should be given the opportunity of being empowered by fully-fledged evaluators.*

In summary, the following sub-section highlights the factors that influence the implementation of OBE at school level.

4.3.4 Focus Group Interviews: Factors that Influence the Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at School Level

4.3.4.1 Promoting Factors

Factors that promote the implementation of OBE at school level were clearly illustrated by the participants of the focus group selected for this level.

In terms of co-ordinating the curriculum (cf. 3.4.1), a number of positive factors were mentioned. In short, principals:

- ensure that appropriate teaching takes place by working with teachers to promote learning and the attainment of outcomes
- guide teachers in the development of the curriculum (cf. 3.5.1)
- ensure that principle 1 of the RNCS sets the scene for their schools
- ensure that effective teaching takes place by co-ordinating:
    - teaching hours and timetabling (cf. 4.5.1)
    - class size and composition and
    - the distribution of work to make it balanced and fair.

Furthermore, participants felt that there was a good all-round view of the implementation of RNCS and principals are focussed and committed to make it work. They are extremely committed and concede that they have a system that will show learners how to use knowledge in a practical way. Staff that is committed is essential for successful curriculum implementation. Certain days like Heritage Day or Arbor Day can be brought to life with the revised curriculum.

Fortunately the policy documents keep principals on track with co-ordinating the curriculum. The National DOE has developed the Learning Outcome structure which helps to stay focussed on what teachers should teach and learners should learn.

Principle 1 of the RNCS namely Social Justice, A Healthy Environment, Human Rights and Inclusivity (cf. 2.6.1.3) sets the scene for schools.

By ensuring the implementation of policy (cf. 3.4.2), principals have brought about the following contributing factors. Principals:

- themselves are familiar with policy
- interpret it correctly
- develop guidelines from policy e.g. the school's assessment guidelines and
- assist teachers in contextualising policy.

Good-quality, meaningful, easy-to-understand policy documents are available. This makes it easy and enjoyable for teachers to implement the revised curriculum. The national policy documents also give principals a base to work from when they develop their school's guidelines e.g. the school's assessment guidelines or guidelines on Languages. The many policy documents are a contributing factor to the sound implementation of RNCS as they are all explicit in what is required in the implementation.

Asked to summarise the monitoring and support of teachers (cf. 3.4.3) by principals, the group identified the following positive issues:

- It is frequent and continuous.
- Teaching- and learning events are observed.
- Teachers are assisted in ensuring quality curriculum implementation.

- There is a continued presence of the principal.

- The management team shows a joint effort in the monitoring and support of teachers.

- Principals ensure quality curriculum development and implementation.

These issues led to a concluding remark by one participant:

> The success of the RNCS implementation can be ascribed to the monitoring and support that is provided for teachers. Teachers however also support each other by working collaborately in clusters. Principals motivate their staff – especially in a time of curriculum renewal which can be very traumatic for some staff. Feedback must be done in a positive way.

When asked about staff development (cf. 3.4.4.) by principals, participants mentioned the following points:

- Shared responsibilities and effective teamwork improves the creativity of staff members.

- Professional development seems to have been the key to improving teaching and learning.

- Principals assist teachers by creating conditions that enable staff to develop so that schools can achieve their goals.

- Principals identify the strengths and weaknesses of staff members and work on them.

- Principals are generally vigilant on curriculum issues.

A further informal discussion on staff development followed where group members concurred that good leadership with a vision and commitment has staff

up to speed when implementing the RNCS. The most important aspect of staff development is a shared responsibility so teachers are managers in their own right. Principals however, remain accountable for the implementation of the RNCS in the school. They also encourage their staff to be creative, maintain their individuality and to experiment – provided this is all in accordance with policy. Principals create conditions for their staff to develop and to gain the knowledge and skills required to implement the curriculum. What principals cannot manage, they overcome by sending teachers on courses and seminars which the school pays for. Staff also have a personal growth plan. Regular reflection seeks to contribute to the growth of staff whereby strengths and weaknesses are discovered. Many opportunities and freedom also allows staff to grow. Preventative measures are also addressed. As staff learn to share responsibilities, a spirit of co-operation develops.

Participants were provided with these findings on staff development and asked if they would agree to these conditions. The vote signalled affirmation.

According to Saylor, Alexander and Lewis (1981:38), Wiles and Bond (1984:351), Hopkins (1986:111) and Hattingh (1989:97-98), factors that promote staff development are:

- a high level of curriculum expertise by the principal (cf. 2.6.1.3)
- involvement with all teachers (cf. 3.3.1.1)
- a pleasant and positive climate for renewal (cf. 3.3.1.2)
- good communication between principal and staff
- effective leadership (cf. 3.4.4.1) and
- thorough planning (cf. 3.5.1.1 – 3.5.1.3).

Managing the resources in a school (cf. 3.4.5) has never been an easy task for principals. When asked to comment on this statement, the following contributing issues emerged:

- principals generally ensure that there are adequate resources for implementing the curriculum and

- principals generally manage resources effectively, which creates an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning.

A principal in the focus group summed up the situation in his school by saying that resources are a contributing factor to the implementation of OBE. Without the RNCS policy guidelines (cf. 3.4.2.1) and workshop manuals, it would have been impossible for teachers to organize and manage the curriculum efficiently and effectively. The materials are constantly referred to as a source of reference. The school ensures that policy documents circulate amongst teachers. Further guidelines are developed from these policies. Teachers are also creative and adapt equipment and teaching aids to suit learners' needs especially for the learners with barriers to learning.

"In evaluating the curriculum, (cf. 3.4.6) principals are found to be rather enterprising". This statement during the interview provoked the following encouraging responses:

- Principals have become more knowledgeable on conducting evaluations.

- Principals take cognizance of the context in which the school operates and the evaluation is conducted by them, having a sound knowledge of the curriculum.

- Evaluations are ongoing.

- Evaluation objects are carefully selected. When evaluating for accountability, outcomes or other products are evaluated, but when

evaluating for performance improvement or development, the processes are looked at.

A discussion by the group members on evaluating the curriculum led to the following conclusion:

An evaluation establishes the quality and merit of Learning Programmes and also whether sound curriculum development, teaching and assessment practices prevail. The findings of an evaluation also inform further curriculum development as in the development of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans.

4.3.4.2 Hampering Factors

The focus group at school level clearly revealed some factors hampering the implementation of OBE at school level. Concerns regarding the co-ordination (cf. 3.4.1) of the curriculum were raised. The following was of significance:

- Standardisation of OBE implementation will need to be looked at for all the districts in the province.

- Co-ordinating the curriculum takes a great deal of time to plan and implement.

- A big staff turnover means that new teachers have to be trained constantly.

Asked to identify the challenging issues are for ensuring the implementation of policy (cf. 3.4.2), the participants answered:

- Principals must be familiar with the contents of policy to be able to implement it. Time must be made available for this in order to also assist teachers in implementing the policy.

- Documents are not circulated within the school as they should be.

- White Paper 6 encourages inclusive education which makes it difficult for teachers to include learners with barriers to learning since the physical facilities in the school and the resources, do not always allow for this. Teachers also do not have the time to cope with individuals when developing and implementing the curriculum.

Participants continued by summarising the impeding factors in the monitoring and support (cf. 3.4.3) of teachers:

- Non-conforming teachers often feel threatened by monitoring.

- Monitoring is time-consuming for a principal.

- Principals in areas with lean resources are often discouraged because teachers cannot perform if they do not have the means to do so. Principals must be creative and make suggestions for improvising when they give feed back to the teachers.

Participants were provided with the following findings to which they could agree or disagree. They unanimously agreed with the writers on these impeding factors.

According to Saylor et al (1981:38), Wiles and Bond (1984:351), Hopkins (1986:111) and Hattingh (1989: 97-98), factors that hamper staff development (cf. 3.4.4) are:

- traditions and poor salaries

- a lack of financial support

- excessive centralisation in terms of educational control

- political pressure from the authorities and

- vulnerability in terms of community needs.

Human factors which may be of an inhibitory nature in staff development are:

- poor leadership (cf. 3.4.4.1)
- incapability
- a lack of self-confidence and motivation
- poor training (cf. 3.3.2) and defective skills
- a lack of time
- negative attitudes and emotions (cf. 3.3.1.1)
- other administrative duties
- a lack of readiness (cf. 3.3.1.1) and
- a lack of understanding by teachers (Saylor et al 1981:38; Wiles & Bond 1984:351; Hopkins 1986:111; Hattingh 1989:97-98).

A further discussion on staff development, led to the following:

Teachers who work in isolation is a major concern since it could result in teachers not coping with their curriculum development, implementation and learner assessment. Then there are also the antagonists – teachers who mainly work for the salary and who are not interested in going the proverbial 'extra-mile'. They are hard to empower. They are disinterested in staff development. This scenario is often found amongst the older teachers who are set in their ways.

"Managing the resources in a school can be a daunting task". The participants were asked to comment on this statement which they did as follows:

> It is a pity that teachers had to go through the trauma of dealing with C2005 documents which were not easy to understand. It created confusion and

> some grades, still implementing C2005, have to contend with this matter. However, inadequate computer facilities in most schools also hamper the effective implementation of the curriculum. Materials for Mathematics and Languages are sadly still very scarce. Most schools in rural areas do not have sufficient physical facilities like liveable classrooms and school furniture. A principal's hands are tied since the provincial DOE does not always deliver on its promises. There is also a huge shortage of staff in most schools.

Concerning the management of resources by the principal, the participants were concerned about the following:

Evaluating the curriculum (cf. 3.4.6) is a specialised skill that every principal should acquire since principals are not experienced evaluators. To appoint an evaluator would be less beneficial because their knowledge on curriculum issues are limited – if any at all.

From the above list of potentially inhibiting factors, the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the implementation of OBE at school level, becomes clear. If the principal neglects as little as *one* of the many possible factors in his/her implementation of OBE, then this one factor may cause the entire initiative to fail. What is of utmost importance in all the above-mentioned issues, is that the principal should not only empower his/her staff, manage and evaluate, *but principals need to be empowered by district officials in managing the curriculum – in all its facets.* According to Hattingh (1989:99) it is clearly a difficult task to pay attention to all these factors during implementation. The complexity and the extent of the implementation of OBE at school level will naturally influence the extent and intensity of the implementation of OBE at classroom level.

4.3.5 Examination of Documents and Individual Interviews: The Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at Classroom Level

4.3.5.1 Developing the Curriculum

The findings on curriculum development are based on individual interviews conducted with teachers as well as an examination of the *product* which is the Learning Programme, Work Schedule and Lesson Plan that was developed by these teachers. It was evident that most teachers have gained valuable experience in developing the curriculum for C2005 (cf. 2.6.1.1). Some teachers were enthusiastic about the new curriculum at the time. In the words of one teacher, "Growth comes through change". They received training and shared their knowledge, ideas and frustrations. By developing the curriculum, they have discovered their strengths and weaknesses.

A teacher in the Graaff-Reinet district explained that, after the training, teachers were actively involved in their schools and in clusters, developing Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans (cf. 3.5.1.1 – 3.5.1.3) while principals played a prominent role in the monitoring and support of teachers (cf. 3.1.3). A number of aspects found in C2005 (cf. 2.6.1.1) were retained in the RNCS (cf. 2.6.1.3) while others are new. What was disappointing however, was that the RNCS still does not provide sufficient *guidance within the Assessment Standards regarding activities to be carried out in order to attain the outcome*. It would not be possible to include these activities in the policy document, but a separate Assessment Standard Guideline would suffice. The guideline should spell out progression within each Learning Area indicating time lines.

A Foundation Phase teacher at a primary school in East London comments that there are basic issues to be considered when developing Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans in the RNCS:

- It is still based on the values of the constitution.

- It is still an outcomes-based curriculum.

- The Critical- and Development Outcomes remain the same.

- Teachers are still encouraged to use learner-centred, active, participatory learning- and teaching methods.

She further says that, since the Learning Programme is a phase long plan, its development (cf. 3.5.1.1) cannot take place unless all the teachers teaching in that phase contribute to the development. A phase spans three grades in the IP and the SP but four grades in the FP (cf. 3.4.1).

The Learning Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3b) and their Assessment Standards (cf. 2.6.1.3c) are carefully placed in the RNCS to ensure a good spread over the four-year period. The Assessment Standards provide the range, scope and depth of the Learning Outcome *but a huge gap exists in that these Assessment Standards do not prescribe activities showing sequential development within LA*s, which means that teachers can do as little as they want and still be able to say that the learners have attained the LO – which in itself, is only a broad requirement. She also maintains that Learning Area co-ordinators usually guide their thinking and if they have any problems, they tap on the expertise of a district official – usually the Curriculum Adviser. In terms of the timeframes for each Learning Programme (cf. 2.6.1.3e), they are guided by the RNCS policy document (cf. 3.4.2.1).

On examining the developed curriculum at this teacher's school, based on the RNCS curriculum, and comparing it with the C2005, the Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans rightfully reflected the aspects which have been retained:

- There are still eight Learning Areas (cf. 3.6.1.3d).

- There are still three Learning Programmes in the Foundation Phase. They are still Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills (cf. 2.6.1.3c).

- There are still eight Learning Programmes in the Senior Phase (cf. 2.6.1.3e).

- Regarding the Learning Programmes for the Intermediate Phase, Languages and Mathematics are kept as separate Learning Programmes.

"Provinces will provide guidelines on how the other Learning Areas should be integrated to form Learning Programmes", the teacher added.

A Foundation Phase teacher at a Mthatha primary school mentioned that aspects that are new in the RNCS (cf. 2.6.1.2), are a simpler design and simpler language that make the RNCS curriculum easier for teachers to understand and as a result, easier for teachers to understand and as a result, easier for them to do curriculum development.

An examination of the curriculum developed, based on the RNCS and C2005 has revealed the following:

Curriculum 2005 for example, had a complicated design structure:

- Critical- and Developmental Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.1.a)
- Specific Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.1.b)
- Phase Organisers (cf. 2.6.1.1.e)
- Programme Organisers (cf. 2.6.1.1.f)
- Assessment Criteria (cf. 2.6.1.1.b)
- Range Statements (cf. 2.6.1.1.b) and
- Performance Indicators (cf. 2.6.1.1.b).

The RNCS in turn has a simpler design structure:

- Critical- and Developmental Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3a).

- Learning Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3b): A Learning Outcome describes the knowledge, skills and values a learner should know and be able to demonstrate. Learning Outcomes usually remain the same from grade to grade.

- Assessment Standards (cf. 2.6.1.3c): Assessment Standards are grade-specific. They describe the *minimum* level, depth and breadth of what has to be learnt. The term "minimum" is not exaggerated. *Assessment Standards do not provide enough guidance for teachers* on the amount or kind of activities to be covered per grade.

Unnecessary jargon has also been removed according to the interviewee, for example the Learning Area, Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) is now referred to as Languages, and Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS) is now referred to as *Mathematics*.

An Intermediate Phase teacher from a boys' college in the King Williams Town District disagrees with the previous participant:

> C2005 gave too little guidance on what learners should know by the end of each grade and at what level they should know these issues. As a result, learners were often taught the same thing at the same level repeatedly and they did not get a deeper and broader understanding of concepts. This means that there was barely any *conceptual development* or progression in C2005. To assist teachers in developing the curriculum, the RNCS has it much more explicit. In the RNCS, the Assessment Standards give details on the skills and knowledge that should be assessed in each grade and the level at which learners should develop these skills and knowledge in each grade. This will ensure that learners' skills and knowledge will increase and intensify as they move through the schooling system. This also means that the Assessment Standards in the RNCS ensure conceptual progression'.

Asked how he coped when developing his lesson plans, he did however admit that *the Assessment Standards do not "spoonfeed" teachers with content and activities.* This means that the majority of teachers in the province who are un-

and underqualified and who have no resources at schools, would find it difficult to develop their curriculum.

He further states that he is delighted to see that the national DOE adhered to the cries of teachers and, through a participatory process termed the Review Process (cf. 2.6.1.2), they built on the best of C2005 and developed a simpler and stronger curriculum – now referred to as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (cf. 2.6.1.3).

He adds:

> I think that the Critical Outcomes (cf. 2.6.1.3a) provide valuable goals for developing independent, active learners. The learner-centred approach also made me see how much more learners are capable of and the learner-centred methods that we included when developing the curriculum, made me realise that we are all not only teachers, but learners as well.

In an examination of documents at a teacher training session in the East London district where a group of teachers were developing the curriculum for Foundation Phase learners, it was obvious that teachers still grapple with certain terminology, e.g.:

- the difference between OBE (cf. 2.5.1) and the RNCS (cf. 2.6.1.3)

- the difference between a Learning Programme (cf. 2.6.1.3e) referring to the names of the 'subjects', and the Learning Programme (cf. 3.5.1.1) referring to the first level of curriculum development.

The teachers further stated, "We as teachers, when developing the curriculum, do not know how to address the issue of assessing values objectively. We also do not know how to develop criteria for assessment or how often to assess in 'continuous assessment".

A Foundation Phase teacher at a primary school in the East London district alluded to the fact that, for the development of Learning Programmes, Work

Schedules and Lesson Plans (cf. 3.5.1.1 – 3.5.1.3) a number of issues had to be considered. These issues were then confirmed by examining these documents:

More *time* was allocated to the three Learning Programmes in the Foundation Phase during the implementation of the RNCS than during C2005. This meant that learners' skills and knowledge would improve in these Learning Programmes. Time allocations were considered according to policy. These were:

- Literacy – 40%
- Numeracy – 35% and
- Life Skills – 25% (cf. 2.6.1.3e).
- Looking back, values education and environmental issues were not mentioned in each Learning Area in C2005. In the RNCS, Human Rights, Social Justice, a Healthy Environment and Inclusivity were addressed in each Learning Area since this is the first principle of the RNCS which is contained in the RNCS policy document (cf 3.4.2.1).

The teacher continues by saying:

> I feel that the RNCS benefits the teacher, learner and the wider community. I am pleased to know that the revised curriculum gives us more guidance on what to assess and when to assess it. It will be able to guide me when I do curriculum development. Yes, I think this will help me feel more confident when I develop Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans. Lesson Plans are the most difficult to develop because the Assessment Standards do *not specify activities to be used*. There are Learning Areas like Mathematics, Languages and Natural Sciences where sequential development has to take place. For instance, a Mathematics teacher must deal with percentages before fractions, a Languages teacher must teach listening skills before reading skills and so forth. *It would be helpful to have a guideline of some sort.* We will also be able to develop learners who have a high level of skills, a high level of knowledge and good attitudes and

> values. This will assist them in competing in South Africa and in the world. It will also assist them in coping with the challenges that we are facing in our country like the HIV/Aids epidemic – but the policy on HIV/Aids lays the foundation for what we have to include in the three levels of curriculum development.

A teacher from a preparatory school in the remote areas of the Queenstown district also shares her view:

> Principals often see themselves as school administrators only and not as curriculum managers – hence the fact that we don't always get the support that we need. We do not get opportunities of performing our roles as curriculum developers beyond that of the classroom, for example giving input in the revision of a curriculum.

A principal from the Libode district stated that a major aspect to be included when developing the curriculum is the assessment function of the teacher (cf. 2.6.2). What proves to be very helpful indeed, is that assessment procedures are explained in full detail in each of the RNCS Learning Area Policy documents. She explained further that it can be found in the English Home Language policy document of the RNCS in Chapter 5 on pages 125 to 132.

She said that she strives to include a variety of the types of assessment (cf. 2.6.2.4) that they were exposed to during the training. It depends of course, on the *purpose* of the assessment. The following types of assessment are often included when developing the curriculum:

- formative assessment to assess learner progress whereby the feedback strengthens learning

- a baseline assessment to discover what learners already know

- diagnostic assessment is often used to establish the nature and cause of barriers to learning and

- a summative assessment is done at the end of the term, semester or year to establish learners' progress.

"Continuous assessment is the main method of assessing the learner as prescribed by RNCS policy", reiterates this teacher. "When developing the curriculum, we ensure that assessment methods used for activities, are selected so that they are relevant to the Assessment Standards listed".

She cautions that teachers should take the following into account when developing the curriculum.

- Foundation Phase learners cannot do self- or peer assessment against the 4-point scale as is stipulated by the DOE for teacher assessment.

- Not all Foundation Phase learners can read so the assessment forms will have to be explained to them e.g. the interpretation of symbols.

- Peer assessment is encouraged in the RNCS but it could be risky at this age. Learners are still predominantly self-centered and will find it difficult to make an unbiased judgment of other learners in the class.

During an examination of curriculum documents, in the Butterworth district, it was evident that there is still is *an overemphasis on clustering and integration* within- and across Learning Outcomes in the RNCS when developing Learning Programmes. This has meant that *attention to integration has overshadowed attention to conceptual coherence and progression* which has had a number of unfortunate consequences.

A deputy principal from a deep rural school in the Aliwal North district maintains that the Guideline for the Development of Learning Programmes *continues to over-emphasise the clustering* of Assessment Standards within a Learning Outcome *and the integration* of Learning Outcomes within- and across Learning Areas. This concept is also heavily emphasised during the training of teachers. Endless hours are spent in workshops forcing the 'marriage' of Assessment Standards and Learning Outcomes instead of leaving it up to the teacher to seek

natural links when developing the curriculum and promulgating it as 'optional' but advisable in order to streamline curriculum development.

He continues to say that if in Learning Areas like Literacy and Numeracy, where sequential development prevails, the body of knowledge that defines, let's say the Mathematics, is obscured or dominated by non-mathematical considerations like *clustering and integration*, the result is a weaker grasp of the central skills and concepts of the Mathematics which, in turn, jeopardises higher-skill acquisition required by Transformational OBE (cf. 2.5.3.3).

Factors that influence the implementation of OBE at classroom level will be discussed in the next sub-section.

4.3.6 Focus Group Interviews: Factors that Influence the Implementation of Outcomes-based Education at Classroom Level

4.3.6.1 Promoting Factors

The focus group interview with this group clearly reveals factors which encourage the implementation of OBE at classroom level. As seen in previous sections throughout this project, the implementation of OBE at classroom level refers to the management function of the teacher namely, the development of the curriculum. I set the scene for the focus group interview with the following opening remarks from the literature. Klein (1991:34) states:

> The teacher occupies a central position in curriculum decision-making. The teacher decides what aspects of the curriculum, newly developed or ongoing, to implement or emphasise in a particular class. The teacher also determines whether to spend time, and how much of it, on developing basic skills or critical thinking skills. Observers point out that when teachers close the classroom door, they determine the details of the curriculum – regardless of the curriculum plans of others since they themselves, are clearly the most powerful implementers of the curriculum.

In addition to being curriculum developers at classroom level, some teachers are also involved in curriculum committees. Some of these committees are organised according to grade level, for example, a Grade 5 curriculum committee. Others are organised according to Learning Areas and others according to the type of learner under consideration for example, the gifted or the learning-impaired learner. The idea of establishing a curriculum committee is a standard way of involving teachers in curriculum activities beyond the classroom level (Kimpston & Anderson 1986:109). Relevant curriculum development is not only assured at a broad, provincial level, but also through curriculum actions of those involved at other levels such as the district, school or classroom level.

The group discussed the following issues and reached consensus about them:

- From an evaluation study undertaken by the provincial DOE, almost all teachers at classroom level in urban and peri-urban areas were indeed developing Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans to ultimately ensure effective OBE implementation at classroom level. This means that most teachers are on the way to developing learners with a high level of skills, knowledge and values – learners who can help build this country and who can compete internationally.

- The RNCS retains the best of C2005 but is simpler to understand and stronger (cf. 2.6.1.3). The term 'stronger' refers to the Assessment Standards which provide the teacher with the scope, range and depth of what has to be learnt in each and every grade. It constitutes the content (skills, knowledge and values) which is *applied* in order to attain the outcome.

- All teachers obtained a copy of the RNCS policy documents during the training (cf. 3.4.2.1) as well as the Teacher's Guide for the Development of Learning Programmes. These documents inform and guide teachers as they develop the curriculum.

- Most teachers attended the training on the RNCS and there was a team approach when they engaged in the development of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans on days 6 and 7.

- Teachers on the whole feel confident in developing the curriculum. Learning Programmes for the three year phase, Work Schedules for the year and Lesson Plans for a number of weeks or a term, are in place.

- C2005 failed to provide stringent guidelines for Learning Programmes like Literacy and Numeracy that require sequencing, progression and pacing. The RNCS by contrast, has shown a remarkable improvement on this issue which will ensure higher- order cognitive skills as required by Transformational OBE. This also holds true for overt Learning Programmes such as Life Skills. This feature of the RNCS is of great benefit to the teacher when developing the curriculum.

- As a way forward, teachers gather in their clusters to assist each other in developing the curriculum. This support is of great value to teachers who are uncertain about the task at hand, but it also has the benefit of alleviating the workload since teachers 'outsource' sections of curriculum development to their colleagues in the cluster. The pooling of resources results in a spirit of sharing which also taps of the expertise and creativity of the groups members. This then has extended benefits because it results in benchmarking whereby teachers 'copy' the successes of teachers and strive to reach the expectations of their colleagues. Clusters were formed purely on a geographical basis to ensure easy access to cluster meetings. The context in which these schools operated, were therefore the same and as a result, teachers could identify with each other's successes and challenges in developing the curriculum.

4.3.6.2 Hampering Factors

The focus group interview with this group clearly reveals a number of factors that impede the implementation of OBE at classroom level. An open, unguided

discussion by all the participants took place and the following key issues were captured.

Teacher participation in the development of the curriculum at district, provincial or even national level, was poor. A small and elite group of teachers has been involved in the operationalisation of the RNCS policy. At both national- and provincial levels, small numbers of teachers and bureaucrats from departments, for example the Learning Area Committees (LACs), have shaped the development of the curriculum at various stages. The majority of teachers however, have had very little insight into, or substansive participation in, the development of the RNCS curriculum – even though the broader, official discourse is one of widespread participation and consultation.

In addition to this, those consulted were often 'stakeholders', which refers to the teacher unions and labour representatives. Teachers standing outside of these bodies are excluded. What is more alarming, whether it is unions or LACs, is that there is little systematic contact between delegates and teachers who participate in the development of the curriculum at school- or classroom level. The fact that the latter was limited to elaborating on RNCS policy and was not concerned in its adoption, revision or conceptualisation – was adding the proverbial 'insult to injury'. In other words, no teachers were consulted as to whether the revised curriculum would be workable or more useful in their classrooms. At the most, teacher participation was limited to the group work at the standardised seven-day training sessions – often observed as merely being dissemination of information by trained facilitators.

The RNCS, although an improvement on C2005*, continues to be strong on clustering of Assessment Standards and the integration of Learning Outcomes.* Conceptual coherence or progression in Learning Areas such as Literacy, Numeracy and Natural Sciences, can be affected negatively by this overemphasis in the curriculum.

In many rural areas where also most farm schools are situated with few resources, make-shift physical infrastructures and un- or underqualified teachers, there is no sign of curriculum development taking place as prescribed by the DOE. An

examination of curriculum documents combined with interviews in schools in the rural areas of the Alice district revealed that teachers found great difficulty in communicating in English, found it difficult to understand curriculum development, did not attend RNCS training due to vast travelling distances and had inadequate human resources. Time constraints, however, were highest on the agenda. Often their principals were oblivious of the fact that curriculum development did not take place. Principals were also generally excluded from the training – hence the lack of motivation for staff to change.

The examination of Learning Programmes, Work Schedules and Lesson Plans further revealed that teachers, mainly in rural areas, do not know how to assess against the Assessment Standards in order to attain the outcome. The volume of Assessment Standards to be addressed in a given grade aggravates this problem – not to mention the fact that most teachers are un- or underqualified.

4.3.7 Summary of the Findings concerning the Implementation of OBE in the Eastern Cape

The aforegoing highlighted the experiences of district officials, principals and teachers in the field in terms of implementing OBE in the Eastern Cape. A number of discoveries – both encouraging and challenging came to the fore.

At first a look was taken into the implementation of OBE at district level and how exactly district officials carry out their duties in terms of managing change, training principals and teachers and the monitoring and support of teachers. Many positive experiences, problems and gaps that were encountered, were noted.

The role of the principal in the implementation of OBE was also addressed in the research. He/she proved to have a mammoth task in shaping his/her school to ensure co-ordinating the curriculum, sustaining policy practices, monitoring and supporting teachers, rendering staff development training and evaluating all curriculum related issues. Here again, many factors were discovered to be contributing to the implementation of OBE but unfortunately also a number of issues stifled his endeavours to successful implementation.

Interviews demonstrated the satisfaction as well as the pleas of teachers on the ground regarding their role in the implementation of OBE at classroom level. It was clear that curriculum development has proved to be a challenging function – even traumatising at times – for most teachers who are experiencing this complex way of preparing for curriculum implementation.

A cause for concern was that there is such a huge difference between the levels of readiness of staff at classroom level. A marked difference appears to be between teachers' understandings of OBE in rural settings and those in urban- or peri-urban areas.

The successes of these three sections dealt with however, often outnumbered the hindrances. Most district officials, principals and teachers have experienced greater 'comfort' and ease with the RNCS in comparison with C2005. They find that the RNCS is easier to understand, has less jargon and is more structured.

Teachers almost universally also singled out cluster meetings as one of the most important factors contributing to the success of curriculum development. Such time to share ideas and problems was, in view of all teachers, especially important in the experimental first year of curriculum development of this nature. Where meetings were infrequent or irregular, mostly in the rural areas due to long travelling distances, morale was noticeably lower and reports of friction within the project were higher.

The last, however not the least, of encouraging factors is the fact that the RNCS spells out assessment procedures for OBE in its policy document. This amounts to more than was done in C2005 or even in the traditional approach to education.

Chapter 5 concludes the research with an overview of the investigation, a synthesis of significant findings and recommendations for further research.