

**TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN TWO  
UNDER-RESOURCED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE DURBAN AREA**

By

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I declare that **TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN TWO UNDER-RESOURCED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE DURBAN AREA** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

(I. Pillay)

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DATE

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to:

- My late dad, Mr Mari Valayathum and my late mom, Mrs Parvathiammal Valayathum who, sadly, passed away before I could complete this dissertation.

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My sincere thanks and appreciation go to:

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of curriculum change in two under-resourced primary schools in the Durban area. By examining the experiences of educators using a qualitative approach the researcher was able to identify problems that prevent a smooth transition from one curriculum to another.

The introduction of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements in January 2012 necessitated a plethora of adjustments for teachers at schools. Changes were made to the number of subjects to be taught, the notional time for each subject as well as a renewed emphasis on textbooks as a vital teaching resource in the classroom.

This study was conducted in under-resourced primary schools in the Durban area. Data collection in both these schools shows that despite the lack of essential resources such as text books, teachers still manage to implement change and follow policy, whilst at the same time ensuring that their learners benefit from the curriculum. This study also highlights the challenges experienced by teachers in under-resourced schools that need to be confronted for effective curriculum implementation. The researcher makes recommendations to address these challenges as well as suggestions for future research.

### **KEY WORDS**

Curriculum change, curriculum implementation, Outcomes Based Education, C2005, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, under-resourced school, Foundations for Learning Campaign, learner-teacher support materials.

## **KEY TERMS, ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ANA: Annual National Assessment

CAPS: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

C2005: Curriculum 2005

CEPD: Centre for Education Policy Development

FFLC: Foundations for Learning Campaign

LTSM: Learner and Teacher Support Materials

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

OBE: Outcomes-based Education

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

SMT: School Management Team

TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS: Schools with insufficient resources

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# CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm-workers can become the president” – Nelson Mandela

Mahomed (2004), Makhwathana (2007) and the Department of Education (DoE) (2009a) note that for social, economic and political change to succeed in South Africa, a revision of the education system was necessary. Curriculum change is an effective way to cater for the needs of an evolving society. Change is an important component of curriculum dynamics and such change needs to be studied and managed for a better future. At the same time, Fullan (2007: 123) observes that “teachers need to increase their capacity for dealing with change because if they don’t they are going to continue to be victimized by the relentless intrusion of external change forces.” Teachers need to learn to use change to their advantage in order to make it work. Fullan (2001: 124) points out that “significant educational changes consist of changes in beliefs, teaching styles and materials, and can come about only through a process of personal development in a social context.”

Many teachers found the change to outcomes-based education (OBE) highly stressful as it demanded new approaches related to planning, teaching and assessment. Teachers lacked confidence to make this huge paradigm shift that included a mountain of incomprehensible jargon, which some OBE facilitators themselves did not understand (Jansen 1999: 2).

Thompson, Bell, Andrea & Robins (2013: 1) claim that the key element to successful change is to have well-trained and confident teachers to deliver

the new curriculum. According to Fullan (2007: xi), transformation of the curriculum enables one to specifically identify the “inner workings of the educational change processes”. To do this, one has to understand how teachers, learners, parents and administrators interpret educational change. “Educators at all levels are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. Teachers have a particularly important role to play” (DoE 2002: 9). Although the Department of Education (DoE) has acknowledged the role of educators in the transformation process, the ability to create opportunities for the development of educators has proven to be a mammoth task. This is evident from the manner in which OBE was implemented.

The researcher’s interest in curriculum change was inspired by her own experiences in the transformation process. She considers herself fortunate to have taught in a disadvantaged school during the implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005). She had the opportunity to teach a Grade 7 class, using the principles of OBE with a class of 80 learners.

Now the researcher is an educator in a well-resourced school. The intermediate phase teachers (Grade 4 to Grade 6) are implementing the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2013. Despite the provision of learner support materials from the DoE, the school purchased additional textbooks to further facilitate the teachers’ task of effecting change in the curriculum. In addition there is ample parental support and any shortage in staffing is filled by governing body posts. Despite this support, the researcher is still confronted by frequent complaints and challenges with the changes to the curriculum in terms of workload, preparation time and the poor quality of learner support materials. Although educators are not very confident about CAPS at the moment, given all the human and physical resources, this researcher is of the view that teachers should gain confidence and make an effort to satisfy the policy requirements. This raises the question as to how under-resourced schools cope with such change in the absence of adequate resources (both human and physical) and lack of management and community support

Policy has to be implemented, but C2005 was fraught with challenges due to a content-driven curriculum, insufficient teacher training and a rush to effect change (Jansen 1999). In the South African context, educators had barely achieved stability with C2005 when it was amended to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and shortly afterwards to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). Now teachers have to adapt to CAPS. The need for curriculum change is understood; however, as soon as one becomes confident in implementing policy, further changes are effected that destabilise a teacher. While it can be argued that there is a mountain of research related to a particular curriculum change and implementation, not much attention is given to whether teachers in under-resourced schools will manage another change and what will be the consequences if it is not properly implemented. One wonders how some under-resourced schools manage to implement change and fulfil policy requirements despite challenges that confront them. The research problem will outline this issue in greater detail.

This is the third time that the curriculum has been reviewed in the hope that repeated change may lead to improvement and greater success for the future. Since the implementation of CAPS commenced in 2012, information relating to the implementation of CAPS is limited. The researcher therefore believes that this study will make a significant contribution to the field of curriculum studies.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Changes in society require changes in the education curriculum of schools within that society. This statement is relevant to the South African Education system, especially after South Africa became a democracy in 1994 when a process of subject rationalisation and syllabus revision was initiated by the National Education and Training forum. This was necessary as it laid the foundations for a single national core syllabus. Curriculum change was inevitable for various reasons. These include:

- The need to balance the inequalities of the past in order to equitably distribute education opportunities for all.
- Quality education.
- The need to liberate teachers and learners from a system that was stifling and content-driven.
- To keep abreast with global trends (Botha 2002: 1).

For the reasons outlined above, evidence in policy reforms and literature reveals that the South African government embarked on a curriculum change and review process from 1998 to date. Below is an outline of these changes and review processes:

- Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1998;
- Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2004;
- National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2004; and
- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012.

The implementation of C2005 was fraught with problems from the outset. The Report of the Review Committee (Chisholm 2000) highlighted the challenges in the implementation of C2005:

- A skewed curriculum structure and design of the policy documents meant that many educators did not understand the complex language and confusing terminology related to C2005.
- Lack of alignment between the curriculum and assessment policy.
- Inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers.
- Learning support materials that were variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms.
- Policy overload and limited transfer of learning in classrooms.
- Shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005.
- Inadequate recognition of the curriculum as the core business of education departments.

To address the above issues the Review Committee recommended that strengthening the curriculum required streamlining its design features and simplifying its language through the production of an amended National Curriculum Statement. The Committee further recommended that in the Revised National Curriculum Statement the curriculum design features should be reduced from eight to three, the retention of critical and developmental outcomes, and learning outcomes and assessment standards (DoE 2002: 4). The RNCS was implemented in 2004 for Grades R-9. The NCS (for Grades 10-12) was implemented in 2004 (DoE 2002).

The most drastic transition in the South African curriculum was outcomes-based education, an approach to education that underpinned the principles of Curriculum 2005. From 1997 the Department of Education embarked on an intensive training program for different educators at varying levels to familiarise them with the principles of OBE and implementation of C2005 in the classroom (Rampersad 2000: 287). Although overview guidelines for the RNCS emphasise the importance for long-term and short-term teacher development, this was not the case. As a cost-saving strategy, the so-called 'cascade' model was used to allow for trained educators to convey their knowledge to their colleagues. Gulston (2010) indicated that educators had reported that even facilitators selected by the district offices experienced difficulties in understanding and implementing the new policy.

By 2008, the literacy and numeracy levels of learners in South Africa were at an all-time low (DoE 2008). Mouton points out that many schools had encountered various challenges that necessitated further curriculum review. Gernetzky (cited in Mouton 2011: 34) found that despite large sums of money spent annually, the literacy and numeracy rates of South African learners were lower than their counterparts. Meier (2011) highlights some of the shortfalls in the education system that made further changes imperative. Firstly, learners lacked key skills associated with literacy and numeracy. The Grade 3 and 6 Annual National Assessment (2008) results showed that on average, eight out of every 10 learners were functioning at a level lower than 50%. This was a clear indication that literacy and numeracy levels

were spiralling downwards and needed to be addressed urgently. Secondly, South African Grade 8 learners were amongst the lowest Mathematics and Science performers in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 1995. Thirdly, Meier asserts that according to the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) (2010) there was a steady decline in matriculation results – from 70.7% in 2004 to 62.5% in 2008 with only 2.1% gaining acceptance for a bachelor's degree at university. Finally, Meier claims that first year university students were unable to read or write.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) reported that the 2011 Annual National Assessment (ANA) results had declined since testing in 2008. In 2008, 36% of Grade 3s scored under 35% in literacy while in 2011 the figure increased to 45%. A comparison between the 2008 Grade 3 results and the 2011 Grade 6 results also suggests deterioration in learner performance. For instance, while 36% of 2008 Grade 3s scored under 35% in literacy, in 2011, 57% of the Grade 6s scored under 35% (DBE 2011a).

Various efforts were made to improve the poor condition of South African education which was evident in the deteriorating results. The Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC) was introduced in 2008 in an effort to improve the levels of reading, writing and numeracy. The Campaign involved the provision of lesson plans for teachers as well as the resources needed for effective teaching and assessment. The effect of the FFLC was not great but there was an improvement in the literacy levels (Meier 2011: 559).

After a review of the NCS (R-12) by the ministerial task team many recommendations were made to improve the curriculum. "Its brief was to identify the challenges and pressure points that impacted negatively on the quality of teaching in schools and to propose mechanisms that could address these" (DBE 2011b: 4).

On 7 July 2010, the South African Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga announced the introduction of Curriculum and Assessment

Policy Statements. This did not mean the total scrapping of OBE but an amendment of NCS. The introduction of CAPS meant less recording and reporting for educators. Clear guidelines are given as to what content has to be taught in a particular year and subject. Time frames for implementation were as follows:

- 2012: Implementation of Grades 1–3 and Grade 10;
- 2013: Implementation of Grades 4–9 and Grade 11; and
- 2014: Implementation of Grade 12.

Changes from the NCS to CAPS included the renaming of 'Learning areas' as 'subjects'; clear guidelines for teachers in terms of planning, pacing, progression and assessment requirements; changes in subject offerings and content changes (DBE 2011b: 4). A general outline of CAPS will be provided in the literature review.

For all subjects, provincial and district subject advisors were trained in preparation for the curriculum changes that would be made and for the implementation of CAPS in the various phases. Core training materials were to be provided to ensure consistency throughout the system. Subject advisers thereafter facilitate workshops where they familiarised teachers with the content, assessment, teaching methodology, resources and management of classrooms in CAPS in their respective districts. (DBE 2012a). The quality and effectiveness of such orientation is also the focus of this study.

### **1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Creswell (2012: 66) a research problem is an educational issue, concern or controversy that the researcher investigates. Curriculum transformation is an educational issue warranting investigation to ensure continuous improvement.

Curriculum change in South Africa has implied a complete paradigm shift in the outlook of all stakeholders involved in curriculum development. A major paradigm shift may be a complete transition from a traditional to a more progressive curriculum, which is in keeping with the needs of all concerned. One cannot dispute the fact that the success or failure of such changes may only be realised years down the line. In the event of the failure of initial change, adjustments have to be made and these changes may occur more than once and at different times. This is exactly the situation in South Africa. Educators have had to adapt to changes that started from Curriculum 2005, which was underpinned by OBE, the RNCS, the NCS and now CAPS. There is no doubt that repeated change may be exhausting for educators who no sooner grasp the tenets of one curriculum than they are forced to implement further changes.

Sayed and Jansen (2008: 108 as cited in Makhwathana, 2007: 3) indicate that in their significant role as agents of change, educators, head-teachers, senior education managers as well as directors, up to the superintendent general level, are suffering from innovation overload. Previous research on educational change has highlighted the importance of the educator in instituting change (Carl 2005: 223). Several studies acknowledge that change is necessary although it is challenging and cannot take place in a short space of time. Some studies have focused on the impact of educational change in different schools (Wilmot 2005: 313). Other studies examine teacher involvement in curriculum development and teacher attitude to school reform.

Information on the implementation of CAPS is minimal. Furthermore, not much attention has been given to how under-resourced schools manage curriculum change considering the many factors that make teaching and learning a really difficult task. The researcher is concerned about how teachers in some schools cope with frequent curriculum change despite the shortage of essential human and physical resources. This study therefore seeks to explore teachers' experiences of curriculum change in under-resourced schools. The rationale for this study is that despite under-

resourced schools experiencing challenges, teachers still manage to implement curriculum changes effectively. Learners still manage to progress in these schools despite challenging contextual factors. The aim of the study is to understand the strategies under-resourced schools use to ensure that on-going changes to the curriculum are implemented.

By using a qualitative approach to investigate the experiences of educators we can better understand the circumstances that hinder a smooth transition from one curriculum to another. Curriculum developers can therefore consider these factors when planning a new curriculum so that all educators, in both well-resourced and under-resourced schools, can implement change with the same level of success. Other educators can also learn and benefit from the coping strategies of their colleagues in different schools.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main question considered in this research is: What coping mechanisms do intermediate-phase teachers in under-resourced primary schools use to enable them to adapt to curriculum change?

From this the following sub-questions are derived:

- a. Why are teachers central agents in curriculum change?
- b. How are teachers prepared for change?
- c. Are learner support materials adequate for effective implementation?
- d. Currently, what are some of the problems teachers experience in implementing the new curriculum?
- e. How do teachers manage to achieve positive results in under-resourced schools despite frequent curriculum change?

#### **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

##### **1.5.1 Aim**

The aim of the study is to develop an understanding of the experiences of intermediate phase teachers in under-resourced primary schools during curriculum change.

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Demonstrate that teachers in the intermediate phase are principal agents in the implementation of curriculum change.
2. Investigate the extent to which teachers in the intermediate phase are prepared for curriculum change.
3. Identify essential resources that teachers in the intermediate phase need to successfully implement change.
4. Determine and investigate problems that teachers in the intermediate phase have experienced in the implementation of CAPS.
5. Determine how intermediate phase teachers in under-resourced schools manage to successfully implement change.

### **1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The structure of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter One provides an orientation to the study which includes the introduction, background to the problem, problem statement, research question and aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter Two is the literature review which focuses on curriculum change in the South African context; an outline of CAPS; the teacher as an agent of change; a description of under-resourced schools and difficulties encountered by these schools in implementing the new curriculum.

Chapter Three describes the research design and methodology along with specific measures to ensure research ethics and trustworthiness of the results.

Chapter Four presents and discusses the findings of the research. Patterns and themes from the responses of educators are identified.

In Chapter Five the conclusions and limitations of the study are presented. Recommendations are made on how educators' burden due to the implementation of frequent curriculum changes could be minimised. Recommendations are also made for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study focuses on teachers' experience of curriculum change in under-resourced schools. This chapter begins with a section on the need for curriculum change. The review then provides a global perspective on curriculum change as a backdrop for a historical review of education in South Africa. The transition to CAPS will be examined in greater detail as this is the curriculum change that is alluded to in the topic of this study.

Major aspects that must be considered when there is a curriculum change are teacher development and support, monitoring and management of curriculum implementation, assessment, and provision of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). Each of the aforementioned aspects will be elaborated on with special emphasis on the role of the teacher in curriculum change.

This review will also highlight the plight of under-resourced schools and the manner in which they implement transformation despite the shortage of fundamental resources.

### **2.2 THE NEED FOR CURRICULUM CHANGE**

There is no doubt that curriculum change is inevitable. The demands of life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are in a constant state of flux and there is a need for the curriculum to evolve in order to meet these demands. The quest for highly skilled workers in an ever-changing world necessitates the need for constant curriculum innovation and development.

Hagos & Dejarme (2008: 225) reinforce this idea when they point out that "...schools of today should participate in the educational and social revolution". The idea that change is vital for the progress of a country is

reiterated by Rooth (2005: 46): “The phenomenology of change, in its complexity and multitudinous strata, has to take into account the importance of educational change as a socio-political process.” Change involves a variety of interrelated factors. This includes school, regional, local, national and individual elements.

Bennie and Newstead (1999: 1) assert that introducing a new curriculum has far-reaching consequences for teachers with regards to the demarcation of subjects, the content, the teaching approach, and the methods of assessment. Change should be a gradual process – one aspect of the curriculum at a time rather than the entire system.

### **2.3 A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

According to Gove (cited in Coughlan 2013: 1) “no national curriculum can be modernised without paying close attention to what’s been happening in education internationally”. This implies the need for intensive research. Research conducted by Epstein & Yuthas (2012: 20) reveals that in countries like Bangladesh, Columbia and India the quality of education needs to be redefined. Consequently a ‘school for life’ model was created with the intention of redirecting the goals of schooling from the acquisition of standardised learning outcomes to the creation of a “more positive impact on the economic and social well-being of students and their communities”. In countries like sub-Saharan Africa, there is a need to redefine schooling to create innovative and pedagogical approaches as a reliable route out of poverty.

Fullan (2007) cited by Altinyelken (2010: 61) points out that literature on education change in developing countries tends to highlight the extent to which the effort to initiate educational reform fails to achieve their objectives. This is an indication that in advocating changes, especially of the curriculum in developing countries, the overall impact on the communities at large needs to be considered. Creating overambitious policies towards the attainment of standardised goals may not necessarily

fulfil the needs of a community. When amending a curriculum it is important to set realistic goals that are likely to have a long-term benefit for the community.

Both developed and developing countries are currently engaged in transforming the formal education system in an effort to create greater flexibility in curriculum frameworks in which the aims, objectives and learning outcomes are outlined in broad terms. Epstein & Yuthas (2012: 19) argue that education programmes in many developing countries, like Ghana, utilise western models of education with focus on subjects such as mathematics, science, language and social studies that are intellectually stimulating but have little influence on the lives of impoverished children. Educational models need to be adapted to cater for “financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills; health maintenance and management skills; and administrative capabilities, such as teamwork, problem solving, and project management” (Epstein & Yuthas 2012: 19). These life skills should equip children with the skills necessary to succeed when they leave school.

A driving force in curriculum change in both developed and developing countries has been the shift towards contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. Scott (2010) explains that contemporary approaches allude to education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, incorporating technology, involving students in unique ways, transforming teaching and learning, creating new opportunities for achievement and extending communication with both local and global communities.

A study of curriculum change in developing countries highlights the fact that there is a need for educational policies to be amended in accordance with the changing needs of society. However, the process of curriculum change is one of trial and error as evident in a study of educational change in developing countries such as Turkey and Zimbabwe, and in the United Kingdom, a developed country.

Turkey has been developing and implementing on-going changes to its elementary school curriculum since 2004 in an effort to strengthen democratisation, gain full membership in the European Union, and confront the challenges of global competition and performance of the economic system (Öztürk 2012). This involved shifting from a subject-centred to a learner-centred curriculum and transforming pedagogics from behaviourism to constructivism. Despite the good intent of the change, criticisms focussed on the execution of the new curriculum. Öztürk (2011: 114) cites Bulut (2007), Kırkgöz (2008), Korkmaz (2008) and Öztürk (2009) whose studies indicated that successful implementation of the curriculum in Turkey was impeded by the scarcity of material support, inadequately trained teachers, a shortage of resources and materials, archaic technological infrastructure and poor physical facilities – all factors that should be considered during the planning stage prior to the implementation of a new curriculum.

In Zimbabwe, education was prioritised for ‘national regeneration and progress’. The Director of the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), Martin Prew, indicates that Zimbabwe focussed on strengthening schools that were old, built new schools and employed competent teaching staff (DoE 2009b: 3). Curriculum transformation spanned a period of ten years during the 1980s. The old curriculum was not entirely scrapped. Gradual but adequate changes facilitated learner and teacher orientation to the new curriculum in Zimbabwe (DoE 2009b: 3). Teacher unions, principals and educators were recognised as vital components for nation building, and were accountable for its implementation. Despite numerous challenges, the Zimbabwean education system is lauded as one of the more effective education systems in Africa (Prew 2012).

In an effort to conform to the world’s best education systems, a new national curriculum that sets high standards of achievements for learners came into effect in the United Kingdom from September 2014. This curriculum places greater emphasis on writing skills, problem-solving, mathematical modelling and computer programming. Only fundamental knowledge to be acquired is set out as schools and teachers will be given

the mandate on how best to teach and to develop a school curriculum that will suit the needs of their learners (Department for Education in the United Kingdom 2013). Teacher unions regard the plan to begin implementation in September 2014, as 'unrealistic' as teaching plans and textbooks will need to be rewritten and teachers believe that this "timescale for implementation is far too compressed, with no indication that it will be properly resourced" (Adams 2013).

On-going research shows that many low-income countries such as Rwanda, Pakistan and South Africa have changed school curricula in an effort to improve the socio-economic conditions of these countries (Barwell, Bishop, Erduran, Halai, Iyamuremye, Nyabanyaba, Rizvi, Rodrigues, Rubagiza, & Uworwabayeho 2007). However, similar changes are prevalent in developed countries too, rendering curriculum transformation an international occurrence that presents its own sets of challenges. Constant review and evaluation allows for these constraints to be addressed in a manner specific to the local needs. In South Africa, too, frequent revision of the education system by curriculum managers will highlight possible implementation problems that may ensue and timeous intervention will ensure the success of the curriculum.

## **2.4 EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

One of the first priorities of the first democratic government in South Africa was to reshape the education system, as the existing system was steeped in apartheid ideologies that were not suited to the ideals of democracy. It became imperative to remodel the system of education that "was rooted in authoritarian, rigid Christian national education, with rote learning and streaming at its core, manifested by an unequal distribution of resources, racially-biased content-driven curricula and racially delineated, separate education departments" (Rooth 2005: 28). It became the responsibility of the new dispensation to effect the changes. Since 1994 many policies had been introduced in an effort to redress the fragmented, inconsistent education system of the past. The Department of Education favoured a

system of education that would build “democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice, as well as a system of lifelong learning, to enable us to respond to the economic and social challenges of the 21st Century” (DoE 2005: 28).

There was a need to “normalise and transform teaching and learning by creating a single, national core curriculum, by removing bias and prejudice of the apartheid regime and by shifting from aims and objectives to an outcomes-based approach (OBE)” (DoE 2004: 4). One of the most controversial deviations from the traditional apartheid system of education through curriculum reform was the introduction of Outcomes Based Education in the form of Curriculum 2005. The change from the traditional content driven, teacher-centred curriculum of the apartheid era to Curriculum 2005 required an entire paradigm shift in teaching and learning in South African schools. Major changes were made to both content and methodology. (DoE 2004: 4)

The implementation of OBE could not achieve success by merely adapting the curriculum as was evident in the findings of the Ministerial Review Committee chaired by Linda Chisholm in 2000. The confusing language used in the structure and design of C2005 resulted in different interpretations by teachers. Since curriculum and assessment policies were not regulated, there was no consistency and consequently assessment was being conducted differently in the various schools. Implementation of C2005 in the classroom proved to be a major challenge for educators who were inadequately trained and developed and who were inundated with various administrative tasks as well as numerous policy documents.(Chisolm 2000: 6). Msila (2008: 195) found that problems in the implementation of OBE were largely due to the fact that policymakers failed to consult with teachers in an effort to establish whether the schools were prepared for such a drastic change to the curriculum. Furthermore, the shift in roles from teacher to facilitator and the focus on learner-centred education confused many educators. Teachers were unsure as to what to

teach. As a result there was a general decline in learners' ability to read, write and count at the appropriate grade levels.

In many cases, learner support materials were unavailable and in some cases, learner support materials were not used in the classrooms. The situation was exacerbated by a dire shortage of physical and human resources in many under-privileged schools (Chisholm 2000: 18-21).

On the recommendations of the C2005 Review Committee in 2002, the Revised National Curriculum (RNCS) was introduced with a renewed approach to teacher training, provision of learner support materials, timeframes for implementation as well as addressing the problem of resources and staffing in national and provincial education departments (Chisholm 2000: 193). This was not an entirely new curriculum, but a streamlined and strengthened version of C2005 as it retained the principles of OBE.

Although overview guidelines for the RNCS emphasised the importance of long-term and short-term teacher development, as a cost-saving strategy the so-called 'cascade' model was used. This allowed for trained educators to convey their knowledge to their colleagues, leading to varied interpretations and confusion amongst educators. Gulston (2010: 2) indicates that educators had reported that even facilitators selected by the district offices experienced difficulties in understanding and implementing the new policy.

Failure to implement the OBE policy successfully had disastrous effects for education in South Africa as is evident in the background to this study in Chapter One. Despite efforts like the FFLC, the literacy and numeracy levels remained extremely low. (Meier 2011: 559).

Due to the lack of clarity of the RNCS and the failure of the education system to introduce quality teaching and learning at schools, the curriculum needed to be addressed urgently once more. The Task Team for the

Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement reported that teachers were “confused, overloaded, stressed and demotivated, and as a result, were under-performing” (DBE 2011b: 14). Consequently the task team identified areas that had a debilitating effect on the standard of teaching in schools and made recommendations that would address these challenges. The report of the Ministerial Committee proposed the need to create one clear and accessible policy document, to streamline the curriculum, focus on subjects and subject knowledge, promote continuity and grade progression and standardise assessment (DBE 2011b: 14).

On 7 July 2010, the South African Minister of basic Education, Angie Motshekga announced the introduction of CAPS which is based on a ‘Five Year Plan’ to support teachers. Like the RNCS, Minister of Education Angie Motshekga reiterated that the transition to CAPS did not mean the total scrapping of OBE but an amendment of the NCS, as is evident in the following statement: “We are not changing the vision of the curriculum transformation process that started after 1994, but we are implementing changes in order to strengthen curriculum implementation” (DBE 2010a: 2).

## **2.5 THE TRANSITION TO CAPS**

CAPS is based on the following principals of the NCS (Grade R-12) which adopt the vision and values embodied in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act no 108 of 1996).

- Social transformation;
- Active and critical thinking;
- High Knowledge and high skills;
- Progression;
- Human rights, valuing indigenous knowledge system;
- Credibility;
- Quality and efficiency; and

- Providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries (DBE 2012d: 8).

The intention of these principles is to create and promote a national South African identity. Achievement of the aims of underlying principles of the NCS will only be evident upon evaluation of the amended curriculum.

The advent of CAPS saw many drastic changes to the curriculum which is now in practice from Grade R to Grade 12. Learning areas are now referred to as subjects. Terminology such as 'learning outcomes' and 'assessment standards' have been replaced with 'topics' and 'themes'. According to DBE (2011b: 7) "each subject now has a grade-by-grade and term-by-term delineation of content to be taught and skills to be learnt". The Department of Education has provided learners with additional, easy-to-use workbooks in the 11 official languages in the belief that it would assist the 'core three T's of schooling' – text books, teachers and time (DBE 2011b: 11).

In terms of planning, teachers are provided with a week by week plan to follow. Clear guidelines are given in terms of pacing and progression. Teachers are given more detailed guidance with regards to what they need to know and how they should assess. In an effort to standardize the reporting and recording process for Grade R-12 within the National Curriculum Statement, the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 clearly outlines the assessment requirements for each grade.

Subject offerings in the foundation phase include home language, first additional language, mathematics and life skills. In Grades 4-6, subjects have been reduced from eight to six. Economic and Management Sciences has been removed, Technology has been combined with Natural Sciences; and Arts and Culture have been combined with Life Orientation. In the senior phase all nine subjects have been retained. In some subjects the content has remained more or less the same, whilst in others the content has changed drastically. (DBE 2010a: 2).

The notional time for the intermediate phase is laid out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Notional timetable for intermediate phase (DBE 2011b: 6)**

SUBJECT	TIME ALLOCATION PER WEEK (HOURS)
Home Language	6
First Additional Language	5
Mathematics	6
Natural Science and Technology	3.5
Social Science	3
Life Skills	4
TOTAL	27.5

In view of implementation problems with C2005 and RNCS, the Department of Education has minimised their requirements from both teachers and learners. These include a single administrative file from teachers, the discontinuation of learner portfolios, the reduction of projects and the value of text books in teaching and learning (DBE 2010a: 2).

## **2.6 WHAT CONSTITUES A NEW CURRICULUM?**

Mahomed (2004: 1) indicates that the following aspects must be considered in the dissemination and implementation of a new curriculum:

- Teacher development and support;
- Monitoring of the implementation;
- Managing scheduling changes;
- Assessment;
- Provision of learning support materials; and
- Getting the desired result

Careful focus on the above factors when introducing changes to the curriculum will ensure a favourable response to such change. These factors are relevant to this study as it will examine to what extent the emphasis on the preceding factors have allowed educators in the intermediate phase to adapt from NCS to CAPS.

### **2.6.1 Teacher development and support**

The Final Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the NCS indicated that teachers found that previous teacher development policies were too broad and did not offer them the necessary support. A 'one size fits all' approach was insufficient to develop teachers' skills. It was unanimously agreed that training needed to be directed at specific subjects and the roles of national, provincial and district level support for the curriculum had to be clarified. In order to strengthen the implementation of CAPS, provincial and district subject advisors were trained extensively in all subjects on the anticipated changes (DoE 2010: 16). Training for Foundation phase educators took place in 2011, for intermediate phase educators in 2012 and senior phase educators in 2013, all on the year before actual implementation of CAPS. Teachers attended orientation for two days per subject. At these orientation sessions, subject advisors familiarised teachers with content, assessment, teaching methodology, resources and management of classrooms in accordance with CAPS requirements. The effectiveness of the in-service training will be determined when examining teachers' experiences in the change to CAPS as a focus of this study. Since this study explores the experiences of teachers with curriculum change in under-resourced schools, this review will further delve into the role of educators in the implementation of a new curriculum.

### **2.6.2 The role of educators in the implementation of a new curriculum**

"The ultimate goal of change is when people see themselves as shareholders with a stake in the success of the system as a whole, with the

pursuit of meaning as the elusive key” (Fullan 2001: 11). This quote reiterates the role of teachers. Poppleton & Williamson (2004: 289, as cited in Swanepoel & Booyse 2006: 190) maintain that “the more teachers participated in responsible and initiating roles in school change, the more positive they felt about the change, and the more willing they were to seriously engage in future change”. Similar studies have been conducted by Rampersad (2000), Gertrude (2009), Rogan (2000) and Stoffels (2005). McBeath (1995) asserts that curriculum change is a complicated process that entails “careful planning, adequate time, funding and support and opportunities for teacher involvement”. It is important for teachers who implement the curriculum to become involved on a personal level and to accept the change on their own terms according to their own perceptions.

Sahlberg (2005: 8), Mokuia (2010: 24) and Badugela (2012: 38) accentuate the key role that teachers play in the implementation of policies relating to curriculum change. When teachers attend in-service training for a new curriculum, it must be remembered that the educational policies are already prepared by the national education department. Teachers are required to implement these policies in the classroom. This poses a problem as in many cases teachers have expressed a feeling of alienation in the policy making process. Involving teachers earlier in curriculum change, at the planning stages, will give teachers a sense of ownership and the accountability in ensuring the success of the curriculum. There has been much debate regarding teacher involvement in decision making in curriculum planning.

Teachers have a crucial responsibility in directing learners towards a productive and successful future. In contemplating curriculum development Hussain et al (2011: 264) stress that teachers have a significant role in schooling that embodies the following crucial questions:

- (i) What to teach?
- (ii) How to teach?
- (iii) When to teach?
- (iv) What is the impact of teaching?

Teachers select the most worthwhile knowledge that should be conveyed to learners and the activities that are most suitable for the acquisition of this knowledge. They also consider the most effective way to convey this knowledge and strategies to determine whether learners have acquired this knowledge. With this significant role of the educator, it must be borne in mind that the NCS was created “to make the curriculum more accessible to the teachers” (Coetzee 2012). A point of concern is the lack of consultation with educators in making decisions in the development of CAPS. Experienced teachers have the knowledge and expertise to guide the process of change and their contributions may be invaluable in ensuring that the needs of learners are adequately met in the curriculum.

Fullan (2007 cited in Carl 2012: 198) points out that there is a “perception that teachers are against curriculum change and that they would therefore resist it because they have not been involved”. Ownership of the change may only be acquired once the culture of schools and classrooms has been transformed. Fullan (1991: 32) mentions the “subjective realities of teachers”, which alludes to the “fears, uncertainties and anxieties” experienced by the teacher during change. These ‘subjective realities’ must be addressed if teachers are to become responsible for change as this could determine success or failure of curriculum reform. Raselimo & Wilmot (2013: 5) points out that whilst teachers are important agents of change, those who cling to outdated forms of instruction may be a hindrance to curriculum innovation. Teachers must therefore be given adequate time to accept change and the implication thereof on their practice. Quite often teachers are unsure about what is expected of them but this uncertainty should not be misconstrued as reluctance to change but rather as uncertainty of what is expected of them. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009: 267) believe that in order for teachers to commit to change and innovation, one must involve them. However in South Africa, the ‘top-down’ approach requires teachers to simply apply a curriculum that is designed by the higher authorities. Carl (2005: 223) comments that this approach is detrimental to the process of taking ownership of the curriculum. Fullan

(1994: 1) recommends that a blend of top-down and bottom-up methods would be ideal for education transformation to work.

Quite often education policy is created and enforced without consultation with the workers in the field, in this case the teachers. Fernandez (2007: 1) stresses that “curriculum change is inextricably woven with teacher change”. The teacher is the central component to curriculum change in the classroom. The teachers are the individuals who experience the problems and they are the people who may identify possible difficulties that could be prevented in the future. Swanepoel (2008: 39) reaffirms the fact that educators are frequently burdened with curriculum reform in which they themselves have not been consulted. Carl (2005: 223) points out that “teachers are in effect the principal role players” in the change process. The ability to adapt to and manage change without involving the actual agents of change may be debatable as teachers “mediate between the change agenda and the actual change in the classroom buying into the change agenda” (Swanepoel 2008: 39). The teacher has to be actively involved in the curriculum development process. In analysing the involvement of teachers in curriculum change one realises that when teachers are involved in the process of change they are bound to internalise the need to successfully implement such change. Failure to involve teachers contributes largely to the apathy and dissatisfaction which is evident amongst teaching staff during curriculum implementation. Whilst teachers want to be involved in curriculum innovations, they also require the support of other stakeholders in the educational community for success in the classroom.

## **2.7 MANAGING AND MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM CHANGE**

The need to monitor and support the implementation of a new curriculum has been articulated in various studies. (Mafora & Phorabatho 2013; Ndou 2008; Altrichter 2005; Olibie 2011). Fullan (1993: 46) states that effective

curriculum change and implementation requires time, personal interaction, in-service training, and other forms of people-based support.

### **2.7.1 School management teams and the principal**

At school level, the effective management of implementing a curriculum lies in the hands of the school management team (SMT) as they are responsible for providing the necessary support to teachers in effecting curriculum transformation. In South African schools, the school management team comprises the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments. Fullan (2002: 1) believes that the principal is the 'instructional leader' who should be able to prepare the school environment for the achievement of shared vision, promote an ethos of shared vision, participatory team work, and design mechanisms to monitor results. Mafora & Phorabatho (2013: 118) assert that principals should "embrace and show commitment to the curriculum change, and not perceive it as an imposition from above to which they merely comply". By involving teachers in the decision making processes, and equipping them with essential resources, principals can attain and uphold teachers' allegiance to reforms. Ndou (2008) suggests that principals and SMTs should work in unison to direct and assist teachers in the choice of text books and suitable LTSM.

The management team of a school is also accountable to the authorities when the school programme is inadequate. According to Ndou (2008: 4) "the school management team is expected to align the current practices and plans to strategies, structures and systems which bring the school closer to attaining the outcomes of the new curriculum" Training and orientation of school management teams in the pre-requisites of a new curriculum is essential, as an empowered management team would be equipped with the necessary skills to adequately provide support to educators during implementation.

### **2.7.2 The role of the subject advisor**

Mafora & Phorabatho (2013: 117) infer that in the NCS, principals have the responsibility of continuously monitoring the system to measure the extent to which teaching and learning objectives have been achieved. Such action would help principals to identify and solve problems that may occur during the implementation of curriculum change. Subject advisors, too can provide support in the context of a school.

The tasks of the subject advisors in monitoring CAPS have been outlined in the Curriculum Management and Delivery Strategy as follows:

- Check the pace at which work is done against the work schedule.
- Check that homework and class work exercises are relevant, short, focused, frequent, and manageable and meaningfully selected exercises.
- Visit and observe at least one classroom activity per grade.
- Check that written work given to learners collectively incorporates all cognitive levels and are of a relevant standard.
- Check that corrections are done regularly,
- Check that effective remedial work is done.
- Check that daily lessons include reading and writing in the subject as far as possible. The reading and writing exercises include activities such as problem solving, paragraph writing, etc. Check that teachers have all the necessary support material for e.g. content framework, textbooks, exam guidelines, exemplar papers and memoranda, past exam papers and memoranda, training materials on content, etc.
- Moderate formal assessment tasks where relevant.
- Undertake to moderate subjects that have practical assessment tasks or orals (KZN DoE 2013c: 27).

If subject advisors monitored curriculum delivery rigorously, as described above, potential problems would be identified and reviewed. Taole (2013: 45) reiterates that subject advisors have the critical task of acting as a buffer between curriculum policies and implementation in the classroom. Studies show that some subject advisors lacked the knowledge and skills

needed to guide and support teachers to improve the performance of learners (DoE 2009a; Phorabatho 2013). According to Taole (2013: 45) there is a need to properly train subject advisors so that the dissemination of information to teachers is correct and unambiguous. In keeping with this requirement, the Department of Education has trained provincial and district subject advisors to orientate teachers in content, assessment, teaching methodology, resources and management of classrooms in CAPS in their own districts. Both subject advisors and school principals have been given a training manual and resource pack to ensure consistency in the management of CAPS implementation. Taole (2013: 45) further recommends that SMTs and subject advisors provide constant on-site support for teachers to cope with changes to the curriculum.

This researcher's analysis reveals that teachers depend on subject advisors and management structures for the appropriate mentoring in the implementation of a changed curriculum. In the absence of such vital support, curriculum innovation would be doomed to failure. Curriculum change is therefore a collaborative effort in which all stakeholders should actively engage for the maximum achievement of positive results.

## **2.8 PROVISION OF LEARNER-TEACHER-SUPPORT MATERIALS**

Modisaotsile (2012: 4) describes learner-teacher support materials (LTSMs) as "any tool or resource used to enhance teaching and the understanding of the subject content." LTSMs may be printed material such as books, newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, picture, posters, graphs and models or audio-visual resources such as CDs, DVDs, computer software, multimedia and the World Wide Web (Mentz 2013: 191). Mafora & Phorabatho (2013: 118-119) maintain that curricular objectives are not likely to be achieved where schools fail to organise relevant and adequate resources. For the teachers to comply with the needs of CAPS policy documents, it is imperative that they have the necessary LTSMs. The National Department of Education has acknowledged the importance of LTSMs, especially in schools where teachers have limited professional training. LTSMs provide a

more structured approach to what subject matter is taught and the method of conveying such subject matter.

Yara & Otieno (2010: 128) cite Yadar (2007) and a Unesco Report (2008) which concludes that LTSMs such as text books, classrooms, teaching aids (chalk, board, ruler and protractor), stationary and laboratories impact on the academic performance of learners. Furthermore, Manqele (2012: 16) examined the relevance of a school library, school laboratory and computer technology as valuable resources in facilitating teaching and learning at schools and found that under-developed schools without essential facilities are still steeped in traditional teaching methods. Computers have proven to be effective as teaching and learning tools in schools. For teachers, computers may be valuable in facilitating administrative tasks, doing research, preparing lessons, networking with other teachers, etc. For learners the use of computers to do research, explore the world-wide web and complete assignments will encourage self-directed and independent learning. In preparing learners for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, educators have the important task of equipping learners with skills relevant to the information age. Prince (2007: 2) established that computer use was inadequate in schools in rural communities where infrastructure and electricity shortages and unskilled teachers in computer technology needed to be addressed before the effective use of such technology is possible. The lack of computers in under-resourced schools creates a setback for these schools in comparison to more developed schools where resources are readily accessible. The availability of much needed resources can motivate teachers to engage learners and make learning more interesting and stimulating.

Despite the emphasis on the need for various resources for the successful implementation of CAPS, the Department of Education has prioritised text books as valuable teaching and learning materials. Research conducted by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) indicates that only 45% of South African learners had their own textbooks in 2007, this being a decline from 45.5% in the same

survey that was conducted in 2000 (DBE 2011d: 18). One of the findings of the Ministerial Review Committee (DoE: 2009a) was the lack of text books in C2005 and RNCS. Many educators developed their own learning materials, further impacting on teaching time. Furthermore, many schools had not received enough text books for years and the quality of some textbooks was rated as very poor. The Committee has reaffirmed the value of text books in ensuring consistency, coverage, appropriate pacing and better quality instruction in implementing a curriculum (DoE 2009a: 9)

On the recommendation of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher and Learner Support Material, the following system of selecting and providing LTSMs was devised (DoE 2009a):

- The development of a national LTSM catalogue where high quality approved text books, were to be aligned with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy.
- Affordably priced text books that would suite the different needs and contexts of teachers.
- Inform teachers about the need to use nationally approved text books that would assist them to guide them in terms of coverage of content, sequencing and pacing of their lessons.
- The provision of text books to section 20 and 21 schools (no fee schools) by the National Department of Education.
- Text books are to be provided for every learner from Grade 4 to 12. Foundation phase classrooms are to be adequately provisioned so as to ensure equity across schools.

Quality LTSMs are essential for effective classroom practise. Although the Department of Education has undertaken to provide all public schools with workbooks, the system has been found wanting. Failure to deliver books successfully to the Eastern Cape and Limpopo and some rural schools by April 2013, served to accentuate the flaws in the Department of Education's system of text book distribution (Mtshali 2013). This resulted in schools having to cope without textbooks in some schools, or with outdated books.

Since CAPS covers content and assessment and is regarded as a useful tool to assist teachers with year planning and lesson planning, the shortage of text books poses a further challenge for teachers to comply with the requirements of the curriculum in the different grades. Although the Department of Education undertook to ensure that every child has his or her own text books to facilitate learning many schools still do not have books and in some cases learners still share books.

## **2.9 ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is regarded as a vital component of CAPS which is why the department of education has provided schools with a National Protocol for Assessment (Grades R-12) with the intention of outlining the policy framework for the “management of school assessment, school assessment records and basic requirements for learner profiles, teacher files, report cards, record sheets and schedules for Grades R-12” (DBE 2012c: 1).

Recording and reporting procedures for Grade R-12 has been standardised and aligned with the NCS. The Assessment document also delineates the programme and promotion requirements in accordance with the NCS. Assessment guidelines for school-based assessments, practical assessment tasks and end-of-year examinations are also contained in the assessment policy.

Teachers are expected to have an assessment plan for the year for each grade. Formal assessment tasks include tests and examinations written for the purpose of progression and certification. These formal tasks reflect the knowledge and skills acquired by the learners in each subject and grade and must be indicated in the school assessment plan. The Department of Education suggests that this plan be conveyed to parents at the beginning of the year. The formal programme of assessment must also encompass rubrics, marking memoranda and checklists; suggestions and notes for improving assessment the following year as well as adjustments to tasks for

learners who experience barriers to learning (DBE 2012b: 3). In the intermediate phase 75% of the marks will be the year mark and 25% will be the year-end examination for promotion purposes.

In an effort to generate data on learner performance, learners in Grades 2-7 in public schools will write the ANA. The idea behind ANA is to monitor the progress of Grades 3, 6 and 9 in literacy and numeracy (DBE 2012b). Results from ANA provide teachers with valuable data on what learners can or cannot do at a particular stage and grade so that they can make informed decisions when planning their lessons. The Department of Education uses the data generated from ANA results to establish the level of support needed at different levels of the education system and thereby provide relevant support to teachers and schools.

Hopefully, teachers will be more optimistic in their use of the National Protocol for Assessment as clear guidelines have been provided on what is to be assessed and when it should be assessed. The effort to improve learner performance through standardised tests will also ensure uniformity of the curriculum across the education system in all public schools. Proper monitoring of the results and the necessary interventions by teachers, SMTs and subject advisors will ensure that the desired result should be achieved by learners.

## **2.10 THE PLIGHT OF UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS**

This section focuses on factors that inhibit teaching and learning in some under-resourced schools. Badugela (2012: 18) indicates that when chopping and changing a curriculum the problem of limited resources and poor professional backgrounds of teachers must be addressed. Physical, human as well as economic resources are necessary for the successful implementation of a curriculum. According to Rice (2010: 1), “[t]he declining results of many rural schools have been attributed to limited resources, a lack of libraries, laboratories, computer equipment and ineffective teaching from under-qualified teachers”.

Failure on the part of the South African Government to provide significant essential resources like libraries, laboratory equipment and text books results in a decline in the standard of education. Teachers prefer to teach in well-resourced schools as a lack of resources tends to impede the progress of both learners and teachers (Modisaotsile 2012: 4). Badugela (2012: 21) stresses that for schools to successfully implement the curriculum they must have the fundamental facilities.

In 2011 the following statistics were released by the Department of Basic Education following the national education infrastructure management study in 24,793 public schools:

- 544 schools have no electricity supply and 804 an unreliable electricity supply;
- 2,402 schools have no water supply and 2,611 an unreliable one;
- 913 schools do not have any ablution facilities, and 11,450 still use pit-latrines toilets;
- 2,703 schools have no fencing;
- 79% are without any library and only 7% have stocked libraries;
- 85% have no laboratories and only 5% have stocked laboratories;
- 77% are without any computer centres and only 10% have stocked computer centres; and
- 17% of schools lack any sporting facilities (Veriava 2012).

Mouton, Louw & Strydom (2012: 1213) affirm that there is a shortage of classrooms in close to 50% of South Africa's schools with almost 65,000 classrooms being needed. Furthermore, 2.3 million learners attend schools where there is no available water and 6.6 million learners attend schools that have no toilets. The above statistics highlight the plight of under-resourced schools that may be affected by curriculum change. Poor infrastructure has an adverse effect on the efficient functionality of the school which in turn affects the smooth implementation of the curriculum.

When putting a curriculum plan into practice, according to Booyse & Du Plessis (2008: 68), one must ask what resources are available in the school for the effective delivery of the learning programme. Different subjects need different resources for their success. Educators need to be *au fait* with what resources are available and what is required in order to teach effectively. “Learner and teacher support material are especially important in developing countries, as many schools lack material resources, such as age- and culture-appropriate reading materials for children” (DBE 2011b: 18). Even in the absence of adequate resources it becomes incumbent on the teacher to find alternative ways to attain their teaching and learning goals. Learner support material is vital “in defining a more structured approach to what subject matter is taught and how it is taught” (DBE 2011b: 18). The Department of Education therefore undertook to ensure that all children received their text books on time. Unfortunately this undertaking was not met in 2012 due to budgetary constraints. Media reports show that the government has allocated only 50% of the money required to provide learners with text books in all subjects. In more than half of Kwazulu Natal’s 6,000 schools that are subsidised by the government, less than half the necessary books had been purchased. This has resulted in children sharing books and teachers struggling to cope with the shortage (Nkosi 2013; Davis 2013).

Badugela (2012: 19) claims that government, private business or parents need to support schools financially in order to achieve success in curriculum implementation. Modisaotsile (2012: 4) argues that according to the South African Bill of Rights all individuals have the right to education and it is the duty of the state to provide adequate schools and competent educators to fulfil this right. Many previously disadvantaged schools still face challenges in obtaining access to resources in education. Some South African schools still experience a shortage of necessary resources even after twenty years of democracy.

A grave concern is the decision by the Department of Education to reduce the allocation of learner-teacher support by 13% in favour of compensating

educators' outstanding salaries. Mbanjwa (2013) reports that R155 million has been cut from the book budget over and above R500 million that has been cut from the infrastructure programme. This raises serious concerns as Superintendent-General of the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Nkosinathi Sishi, points out there is already a dire shortage of books with the current ratio being one book for every five pupils. There is a desperate need for resources as is evident in Sishi's appeal: "If you give us the job to run this system, please also give us the tools to do the job" (cited in Mbanjwa: 2013). The R500 million cut from the infrastructure budget impacts on financial support for new school buildings and maintenance of existing buildings. This situation will tend to aggravate the grave shortages of resources in under-resourced schools with detrimental ramifications for the implementation of CAPS.

The lack of resources can impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning. Change may exacerbate conditions in schools situated in communities where poor social and economic conditions exist. The pressure is therefore on teachers in under-resourced schools to adopt creative and innovative ways to ensure that CAPS works successfully in their schools.

Implementing curriculum change in schools that are under-resourced can be a major challenge to teachers. However, in some schools, despite the lack of resources, committed and responsible teachers are able to achieve excellent results whilst in others, minimal teaching is done due to the shortage of basic resources.

## **2.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This literature review began with a section on the need for curriculum change before engaging in global perspective on curriculum change. Education in South Africa is highlighted and special attention is given to CAPS, which is the current policy in South African schools. Factors that would contribute to successful curriculum implementation were explored in

detail. Conditions in under-resourced schools were examined as a focus for this study.

# **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

## **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The literature review in the preceding chapter sought to provide a theoretical background to the research question, namely, what coping mechanisms do intermediate-phase teachers in under-resourced primary schools use to enable them to adapt to curriculum change.

This chapter presented an outline of the research methodology that was used in this study. The chapter described the research approach and provided a synopsis of the research design. It elucidated the data collection and analysis techniques used for the investigation. The experiences and perspectives of the participants were of interest to the researcher whose goal was to enable teachers to adapt to future curriculum changes. Limitations of this research, reliability and validity were reviewed and ethical considerations conclude this chapter.

## **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.2.1 Qualitative approach**

Rampersad (2000: 289) indicates that problems in education require a research methodology that provides the broadest and deepest insight into the education system. According to Strauss & Corbin (1998: 11) qualitative techniques are effective to gather the complex evidence about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods. The researcher's priority was to comprehend the world of the participants as they view it. A qualitative research project within an interpretive paradigm therefore fitted the purpose of this study. Teachers' management of change was viewed as the central phenomenon requiring exploration and understanding.

This research was an in-depth study of teachers' experiences of curriculum change. The underlying research philosophy is based on an interpretative understanding of the world. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011: 17) reiterate that the interpretive paradigm enables one to comprehend the personal experience of people. The interpretive approach allowed for the researcher to be objective where the researcher's professional judgments and perspectives were considered in the interpretation of data. There was emphasis on values and context rather than on numbers (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 6). Merriam (1998: 7) postulates that the researcher forms an integral part of the context being studied. The researcher had a dual task of being researcher as well as participant. Creswell (2009: 176) concurs that in interpretive enquiry in qualitative research, researchers assimilate what they see, hear and understand. The interpretation of the researcher is associated with his/her own contextual background and previous perceptions. Since this paradigm is driven by context, teaching and learning was therefore examined in the environment within which they take place.

Creswell contends that in qualitative research the essential reality is based on the key concept, idea or process studied (2012: 16). This being the case, the literature review, purpose statement, research questions and data collection methods focused on a qualitative approach to the problem that was studied. The aim in qualitative research is to learn from the participants and a single phenomenon is studied and recorded in a purpose statement. A qualitative approach allowed the researcher in this study to delve into pertinent issues by questioning, to gain clarity and counteract the assumptions on which the researcher's initial ideas were constructed. In the case of contentious or contradictory responses, entire responses can be captured. A qualitative approach, therefore, facilitated the researcher's task in exploring the experiences of teachers during the process of curriculum change.

### **3.3 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Drew, Hardman & Hosp (2008: 82) suggest that researchers should consider the following relevant aspects when selecting participants for a study. The participants must be appropriate for the research question. The researcher has to consider whether the participants are a representative sample of the population being studied. Thought must therefore also be given to the sample. Most importantly, the choice of participants must be appropriate to the topic being studied.

Springer (2010: 383) asserts that qualitative sampling usually focuses on a few individuals who are likely to be informative, because of who they are, and because the researcher anticipates the opportunity to interact with them extensively. In order to be eligible to form part of the sample in this study, the following sampling criteria had to be met:

- a) The two schools had to be under-resourced.
- b) Teachers who have followed the CAPS curriculum in 2013.
- c) Intermediate phase teachers.

Purposive sampling is suitable on the basis that this method is used to approach individuals who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues as a result of their professional experience (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011: 157). The researcher chose to conduct this study in two primary schools in Kwazulu Natal. Since the researcher was interested in examining how teachers cope with curriculum change, despite a shortage of necessary resources such as text books, computers, libraries and vital infrastructure, schools that are under-resourced were identified by the researcher based on the allocation of funds by the DBE as evident in Table 3 in Chapter 4.

This study targeted intermediate phase teachers from each school on the basis of their active involvement in the implementation of curriculum change in 2013. The researcher selected experienced teachers for this study as she believed that unlike novice teachers, seasoned teachers had a better grasp of curriculum change issues. Furthermore teachers were selected on the basis that they are the primary role players in curriculum implementation as indicated by the literature review in this study.

Mason (2010: 1) indicates that in qualitative studies the samples are usually much smaller than those used in quantitative studies. The reason for this distinction is that in qualitative studies, as the study proceeds, further data collection does not lead to more information. Merriam (2009: 10) and Drew, Hardman & Hosp (2008: 187) concur that the sample in qualitative designs may be effective using small or large numbers of participants. Since the schools selected for this study were small schools with only three or four classes in each phase, interviews were conducted with a sample of ten respondents comprising of six intermediate phase teachers, two heads of department and two principals. The researcher believed that a small number of participants will be sufficient to reach saturation. Mason (2010: 1) explains that saturation is where data is gathered to the point that further data does not provide any supplementary information on the research problem being investigated. This final number is then the sample size.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.4.1 Observation**

According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011: 456), observation has its merits in the fact that it provides the researcher with the opportunity to obtain 'live' data from "naturally occurring social situations". Instead of relying on indirect accounts, the researcher observed directly what took place on the field. Creswell (2009: 181) acknowledges that in qualitative observations the researcher notes the behaviour and activities of the participants in the research site. Observational data may be functional in

reporting non-verbal behaviour and behaviour in natural or created settings. Observations can serve as the central method for data collection in a study, but they can also supplement interview-based research when the researcher notes body language and setting as well as other contextual features that may be overlooked in the recording and transcription process (Bogdan & Biklen 2007: 203).

Since the researcher is an educator who is involved with the CAPS curriculum, the researcher's role was that of participant observer. Creswell (2012: 213) describes a participant observer as one who is active in the setting that they observe. The researcher obtained permission to make and record observations of lessons. The researcher spent one day in each of the participant teacher's classrooms observing all the lessons for the day. In this study the researcher attempted to verify the information that the teachers presented at the interviews by observing them in the classroom. The interactions between teachers and learners were observed to establish the extent to which the curriculum was being implemented. The researcher focused on the strategies that teachers used to implement the CAPS curriculum in their teaching and ways in which teachers supplemented the shortage of essential resources like text books and computers to facilitate their task in the classroom.

Notes were made regarding the behavioural cues of the participants, their attitudes and responses to the interview questions. Since this study focused on under-resourced schools, the researcher used naturalistic observation to note the general condition of the school and visible amenities within the school environment. Field notes drawn from an observation schedule (Appendix 9) complemented data obtained from in-depth interviews (McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 454).

### **3.4.2 Review of documents**

Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2010: 719) refer to documents as written scripts and cultural artefacts, evidence that indicates the gender, culture,

social, and political composition of a group. The interpretation of these written texts and artefacts provided the researcher with meaningful data relating to the nature of the cultural group or individual. Hancock (2002: 18) indicates that a variety of documents can yield qualitative data. Merriam (2009: 13) suggests that the fact that documents already exist in a situation renders them beneficial as a data source. Creswell (2012: 223) indicates that both public and private documents may be used to enable researchers to understand central phenomena in qualitative research. Documents can include newspapers, minutes of meetings, personal journals and letters. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011: 252) maintain that documentary corroboration may be problematic in respect to education. Educational documents may reflect a top-down view of education as they tend to favour the insights of policy makers and administrators. In education documentary sources have often been denounced for their failure to create a link between the classroom, the learning context, and the interface between teachers and learners.

In this study the researcher examined the Department of Education's CAPS policy documents as a basis for developing a general background of the official requirements for educators in the implementation of the CAPS curriculum. The knowledge obtained from analysis of the policy documents assisted the researcher in determining the extent to which educators were compliant with requirements of the Department of Education. By examining teachers' files, assessment files and learners' classwork books the educator was able to corroborate findings with details in the policy document as well as observations in the classrooms. At the same time, the researcher was able to determine if teachers have managed to cover adequate work as required by the policy.

### **3.4.3 Semi-structured one-on-one interviews**

Cohen Manion & Morrison (2011: 267) report that interviews give participants, the interviewer as well as interviewees, an opportunity to discuss their understanding of the world in which they live, and to convey

their interpretations from their personal perspectives. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were held with three teachers, one HOD and the principal in each of the two schools. Semi-structured interviews, as evident in appendices 1, 2 and 3, make use of open-ended questions to encourage meaningful responses (cited by Patton in Biggam 2008: 102). Open-ended questions allow for a variety of responses, thereby creating an opportunity for respondents to express themselves freely. Since the interviewer was engaged in dialogue with the interviewee using a paper-based schedule, it would have been difficult for the interviewer to conduct the interview and make notes at the same time, so the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to facilitate subsequent data analysis.

#### **3.4.4 Data analysis**

Creswell (2012: 237) identifies six steps in the qualitative process of data analysis:

- Collection of data;
- Preparation of data for analysis-transcription of field notes;
- Reading through the data to obtain a general sense of the material;
- Coding of data to locate text segments and assign a code label to them;
- Coding text for themes to be used in the research report; and
- Coding of text for descriptions to be used in the research report.

The aforementioned steps ensure that, through a process of discovery, the qualitative researcher can identify relevant sections and meaningful patterns and relationships in the data. These steps served as effective guidelines for the researcher in data analysis for this study.

The recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and data was coded and categorised into emerging themes and patterns of responses to facilitate analysis and findings of the study. Observation notes were sorted into relevant categories consistent with the corresponding categories in the

interviews. Data triangulation helped to establish validity in the study. Transcribed interviews and classroom documentary observation notes were read carefully and examined further for specific themes, namely contextualisation, the implementation of CAPS, availability of resources, learner performance and anticipated changes. Themes were determined according to ideas generated by the literature review as well as the researcher's personal experiences with the implementation of CAPS in the intermediate phase. The researcher was aware of aspects that needed focus for the successful implementation of the curriculum. Data collection, analysis, and reporting were not conducted in isolation but as an 'iterative process'. This means that data analysis and data collection were conducted concurrently so that the researcher could obtain a gradual understanding of the research question in a way that could not be envisioned during the design phase of the study (Drew, Hardman & Hosp 2008: 337). The 'iterative' process leads to a point in the data collection and analysis when no new themes emerge, resulting in saturation.

The data was interpreted and the findings presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS**

Creswell (2008: 207) defines limitations as shortcomings that the researcher identifies in the study. Although accepted qualitative research materials were used in this study, it was noted that the validity of the findings may be affected by certain limitations.

The study included two under-privileged schools in the Durban area where teachers had been trained to implement CAPS. This was a reflection of how teachers in under-resourced schools implemented curriculum change effectively and may therefore not be representative of all primary schools but the issues raised could be generative. Since there was interaction between the researcher and the participants, it was hoped that the presence of the researcher did not affect the response of the participants.

To counter this, participants were given freedom to express themselves rather than being forced to respond to a series of questions. The methods used were open-ended and exploratory.

### **3.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

In qualitative data, validity might be addressed through honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data, the participant's approach, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Winter as cited by Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011: 179). McMillan & Schumacher (2010: 330) outline various strategies to enhance validity. The researcher found triangulation, member checking, verbatim accounts and mechanically recorded data to be effective techniques in ensuring validity in this study.

#### **3.6.1 Triangulation**

According to Creswell (2009: 191) triangulation occurs when the researcher scrutinizes details from the data and uses it to construct a meaningful argument for the emergent themes. Since this study used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, observation and document analysis to collect data, the researcher used triangulation to ensure credibility. The use of multiple data sources (in this case observation notes, individual interviews and documentary analysis) allowed the researcher to corroborate the findings from one method of data collection to the findings of another and in this way provide greater clarity on the research findings. Creswell (2012: 259) describes triangulation as a process in which evidence from various individuals, types of data and methods of data collection is verified and organised into themes for the purposes of accuracy and credibility.

Using more than one method in the study I gave the researcher the confidence to analyse the data from different angles.

### **3.6.2 Member checking**

All participants signed a declaration of consent. Transcripts were taken back to the participants for them to check to ensure accuracy of the issues that arose. The researcher constantly verified her interpretations with participants to ensure veracity. Interviews were audio recorded in order to contribute to the dependability of the research. Validity was ensured in order to reduce bias by identifying gaps in the interview through the recording and transcripts made after interviewing.

### **3.6.3 Verbatim accounts**

By using verbatim accounts, the reliability of the findings were ensured. Direct quotations were used from the data collected, to express the participants' understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Descriptions and terminology used by the participants were included in the descriptions of the findings. In this way reliability was ensured (MacMillan & Schumacher 1993: 136).

### **3.6.4 Mechanically recorded data**

McMillan & Schumacher (2010: 360) are of the view that recording interviews on tape or digitally guarantees that the verbal interaction between the interviewee and the respondent is complete and provides the researcher with substantial material for reliability checks. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Situational aspects like the failure of equipment were noted.

The researcher made an effort to provide a factual account of the study to ensure validity. All phenomena found were explained in terms of theory, and all sources are provided (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011).

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Mouton (2011: 15) indicates that issues related to ethics stem from peoples' communication with each other, other beings such as animals, as well as the environment, particularly when there is possible or tangible conflict of interests. In this research ethical considerations were taken into cognisance. Right at the outset there was a meeting with the school management teams and relevant educators in the two schools where the aims of the study were explained in detail. Questions that participants had were clarified. Permission was obtained from the Department of Education, school principals, heads of department as well as teachers to conduct this research.

Signed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the project was based on informed consent and on a voluntary basis with the right of withdrawal at any time.

Interviews were planned after school activities to avoid any disruption of learning. The teachers' schedules were considered so as not to disturb extra-mural activities, marking and preparation the teachers had to do. The identities of both schools and the participants were kept confidential. All participants were assured of anonymity. Participants' consent were sought to allow the researcher to use an audio-recorder during the interviews.

Ethical clearance was obtained from all stakeholders including the College of Education's Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of South Africa to undertake this study.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology used in this study. The researcher acknowledged the merits of using the qualitative approach in this study. The methodology includes strategies to select participants, data collection and data analysis. Special care was taken to ensure that ethical issues were considered as they are representative of effective research. The next chapter will delineate the findings procured from the stated methodology.

# **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter Three provided a description of the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter analyses and interprets the findings acquired through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis.

The research question is: “What coping mechanisms do intermediate phase teachers in under-resourced schools use to enable them to adapt to curriculum change?” Repeated curriculum change may be quite challenging for teachers in under-resourced schools. Some teachers may view the shortage of essential resources as a major setback that could hinder the successful implementation of a new curriculum. On the other hand, many teachers rise to the challenge and learners produce outstanding results despite the shortage of essential resources. The question, however, is whether the lack of resources is a contributing factor to poor curriculum implementation.

The collection and analysis of data at the selected schools enabled the researcher to develop a data base that would attempt to provide an understanding of ways in which teachers implement change, with limited or no resources. To facilitate the analysis and discussion of the findings, the chapter is organised according to specific themes emerging from the data.

At the outset, a brief background of each school is provided to give the reader an orientation of the context within which the research problem exists. The researcher first reports on the interviews with the principals, who shed light on the socio-economic status of their schools. This provides the reader with a vivid idea of the reasons the schools in this study fall within the under-resourced category. An analysis of interviews with teachers and

heads of department, who also function as teachers, has been tabulated according to themes and sub-themes. The results of the observation of lessons, teacher-files and learners' work will be followed by a synopsis of the document analysis.

Because of confidentiality, schools are identified with pseudonyms. To facilitate presentation, schools are listed as School A and School B; teachers in School A are indicated as T1 to T4 and those in School B as T5 to T8. The HoD from School A is identified as HOD 1 and School B as HOD 2. Similarly the principal of School A is named P1 and School B, P2.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with a sample of ten respondents comprising of six teachers, two heads of department and two principals. The aim of these interviews was to identify the coping strategies of teachers in schools that are under-resourced. Since the researcher found herself with huge quantities of data after the interviews, she resorted to coding to facilitate analysis and presentation of data. Mahomed (2004: 1), Mafora & Phorabatho (2013: 118-119) and Badugela (2012: 21) concur that the socio economic status of the school and the availability of resources are determining factors on how teachers perceive curriculum change. The researcher therefore focused on related themes (Table 2) to determine the experiences of teachers in the intermediate phase during the transition to CAPS. Data obtained from interviews was read and broader themes were identified. Further analysis highlighted the following main themes with corresponding sub-themes as represented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Themes and sub-themes from the interviews**

Theme	Sub-theme
4.2.1 Contextualisation	4.2.1.1 Funding and support
4.2.2 The implementation of CAPS	4.2.2.1 Success of implementing CAPS
	4.2.2.2 Challenges experienced when implementing CAPS
4.2.3 Availability of resources	4.2.3.1 Policy documents and workbooks
4.2.4 Learner performance	4.2.4.1 Impact of LTSM shortage on learner performance
4.2.5 Anticipated changes	4.2.5.1 Overcoming challenges

## **4.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.2.1 Contextual setting of the schools in the study**

School A is a public school that is situated in Chatsworth. There are 420 learners and a total of 10 state-paid teachers. Learners attending this school are from the lower socio-economic strata where many parents are unemployed. This school is ranked as a Quintile 5 school, meaning that there is minimal funding from the DBE and the school has to depend on the school fees of learners to cover expenses. Expenses range from water and electricity, paper, text books to the hiring of governing body paid teachers. Quite often the school fees are not paid and as a result the school has to depend on fund-raisers and sponsorships to supplement its expenses.

School B is a public school situated deep in the rural area of Gillitts. This is an underprivileged school serving the needs of 347 learners from surrounding townships. The school has a staff compliment of 11 educators and two support staff. This school is ranked as a Quintile 3 school, which means that learners do not pay school fees in this school. As a result the school receives money from the Department of Education to supplement the fees they would have charged. Despite the DoE allocation, the school still depends largely on fund-raisers and sponsorships from non-governmental organisations for its resource acquisitions and additional staff salaries.

#### **4.2.1.1 Funding and support**

The principals provided the researcher with background knowledge regarding funding at their respective schools, support from the Department of Education and their efforts to ensure that teachers are adequately equipped to teach in the classroom.

Principals were asked to describe the level of funding provided by the DoE. The principals of both schools provided the researcher with the DoE school

allocation for the period 1/04/2013 to 31/03/2014. P1 indicated that although his school is classed as 'fee-paying,' the school is situated in an under-privileged community where parents are unemployed so most children do not pay their fees. A study of Tables 3 and 4 show that School A finds itself in a worse situation than School B, which enjoys a 'no fee' status and a higher budgetary allocation from the DoE. The departmental allocation is therefore totally inadequate for the efficient running of the school. Furthermore, both principals indicated that although an amount was allocated for learner stationery, neither the money nor the stationery was received by the schools in question. This in essence explains the need for schools to embark on vigorous fund-raising campaigns for additional costs like salaries for additional staff, stationery and additional supplies.

**Table 3: Department of Education allocation of funds for School A (fee-paying school)**

SCHOOL ALLOCATION		R64 400
LTSM (a)	60% of total allocation	R38 640
Textbooks	40% of (a)	R15 456
Other LTSM	30% of (a)	R11 592
Learner Stationery	30% of (a)	R10 335,6
Non LTSM (b)	40% of total allocation	R25 760
Repairs and maintenance	20% of (b)	R5 152
Office furniture and equipment	30% of (b)	R7 728
Consumable items	20% of (b)	R5 152
Domestic and security services	30% of (b)	R7 728
Less: over expenditure 2012 financial year		0

Source: DoE (2013a: 1)

**Table 4: Department of Education allocation of funds for School B (non-fee paying school)**

SCHOOL ALLOCATION		R35 470
LTSM (a)	60% of total allocation	R21 082
Textbooks	40% of (a)	R7 658,91
Other LTSM	30% of (a)	R6 384,6
Learner Stationery	30% of (a)	R6 384,6
Non LTSM (b)	40% of total allocation	R 14188
Repairs and maintenance	20% of (b)	R28 037,6

Office furniture and equipment	30% of (b)	R42 056,4
Consumable items	20% of (b)	R28 037,6
Domestic and security services	30% of (b)	R42 056,4
Less: over expenditure 2011 financial year		0

DoE (2013b: 1)

Both schools depend on organisations outside the school for support. School B was declared a dysfunctional school at parliament level in 2008/9. As per profile, with the sponsorship of the local non-governmental organisations, a substantial amount was raised to supplement the income of the school.

Although both schools receive an allocation for textbooks and workbooks, the amount received is not sufficient for the number of learners. In both schools learners share textbooks and this creates a further challenge for the teachers when setting homework and giving learners an opportunity to learn for examinations. The lack of funds to purchase LTSM is regarded by P2 as a serious setback when trying to assist teachers to implement the new curriculum. Principal 1 pointed out that the shortage of qualified teachers is a setback when implementing change at school. To complicate matters, new teachers have not attended CAPS training. As a result this puts pressure on other teachers who have to orientate inexperienced teachers whilst at the same time implement a new curriculum in their classrooms. P1 commented on the quality of workshops for CAPS:

Our knowledge is limited as we were poorly work-shopped. We couldn't do much to assist our teachers. We had to work out the needs of the curriculum as a staff. There are too many changes to the curriculum.

P1 also pointed out that according to the post provisioning norms (PPN), the teacher-learner ratio is 1:42. This means that there is one teacher for every 42 learners. There are too few teachers and consequently teachers are overloaded with work. Despite the effort of the DoE to minimise the

work load of teachers it appears that CAPS has its own set of requirements that still burden teachers with copious planning and filing.

Principals were asked to describe the support and guidance they offered teachers in the implementation of CAPS. The responses of both principals indicate that every effort is being made to assist teachers to achieve success in the classroom.

P2 arranges Phase Committee Meetings to allow teachers to work together and discuss the curriculum requirements for the various subjects. Sponsorships are obtained to purchase more LTSMs. Both schools network with colleagues in local schools to discuss potential problems and exchange ideas related to the curriculum.

One of the goals of the DBE in the Action Plan To 2014 – Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 (DBE 2010b), is to ensure a high quality and frequency of monitoring which should be provided by district offices to schools. Furthermore, the DBE has undertaken to produce a new, streamlined policy, to conduct workshops, and to provide workbooks and stationery as well as to provide maximum support to schools in the implementation of CAPS. Although provincial subject advisors have received training in CAPS, the support offered by the subject advisors to the participating schools in this study is minimal.

There was insufficient information due to lack of support from departmental officials.

Subject advisors have not visited our schools. (P2)

The principals of both school A and B emphasised the need for workshops to provide teachers with on-going support. The changes to the curriculum have been implemented in a top-down approach and it is acknowledged that it is crucial that information is cascaded efficiently to the teachers at school-level.

There is a need for workshops to be conducted by competent facilitators. Educators often report back that facilitators impart no new knowledge. There is also a need for support from subject advisors. The curriculum will also succeed if resources are supplied to schools as per allocation. (P2)

Both P1 and P2 indicated that a new curriculum cannot be implemented successfully after a few workshops. More time is required for training of teachers. The DoE therefore needs to honour its commitment to prepare educators at all levels of the system to ensure common understanding (DBE 2011b: 16).

## **4.2.2 The implementation of CAPS**

### **4.2.2.1 Success of implementing CAPS**

Intermediate phase teachers first implemented CAPS in 2013. It is now the second year that this curriculum is being followed. By now many teachers are able to evaluate the merits of this curriculum against the failures and successes of the previous ones. Although there have been challenges, teachers were able to identify the positive aspects of this curriculum. Participants were asked to what extent they were succeeding in implementing CAPS.

Teachers in both schools in the study appeared to have achieved a level of success with the implementation of CAPS now that it is in the second year of implementation in the intermediate phase. Teachers and HoDs have expressed appreciation for the workbooks for Mathematics and English as they are aligned to the requirements of the curriculum.

The year plans and lesson preparation is done so that makes it possible for me to simply organise the work for each term. It saves me time as I no longer have to sit for hours trying to complete term plans

and work schedules. I also appreciate the workbooks from DBE. I wish we could receive workbooks for all subjects! (T3)

The CAPS policy documents were regarded as a useful tool in the preparation and planning stage as teachers felt that they had more direction in terms of what to do in the classroom and when to do it. This guideline in the policy document gave teachers greater confidence to explore the CAPS curriculum as they knew exactly what to teach at a particular time of the year.

In both schools HoDs reported that the initiative of the DoE to supply workbooks and a more detailed policy document was beneficial to teachers and ultimately to learners. Now teachers know exactly what to do and when to do it. This guidance facilitates the teachers' task when planning and preparing.

#### **4.2.2.2 Challenges experienced when implementing CAPS**

Although teachers had experienced some degree of success in the classroom, this study found that there were many challenges teachers encounter that prevent them from teaching effectively. Similar challenges were reiterated by HoDs and principals of both schools. As pointed out before School A has 420 learners and 10 teachers, this means that for every 42 learners there is one teacher from Grade R to Grade 7. School B has 347 learners and 11 teachers. Although the teacher: learner ratio of 1:32 is acceptable in terms of the post provisioning norms recommended by the Department of Education, it is not practically possible as the classrooms in School B are much smaller than the average classroom and as a result teaching and learning occurs in cramped conditions. In both schools the classes are not graded so learners are of mixed ability, making it difficult for all learners to progress at the same level. The policy statements specify the content to be covered at a specific time and teachers have difficulty in getting all learners to complete tasks at the same time as learners perform

at different rates. Large numbers in each class create a problem as indicated by T2.

Large classes create a problem. Some of the children need individual attention and because of large numbers this is not possible.

The inability of teachers to provide individual attention to struggling learners is of concern as these children are just 'pushed' through the system either because of age or quota. This situation could explain the reason learners fail in the senior phase at high school.

Teachers have complained that they are unable to complete the work planned for the year by curriculum designers as there is an overload of content for each subject. This is consistent with the point made by T3:

CAPS is quite fast paced. There is a huge amount of content to be covered. For example in English there are 5 cycles per term which have to be completed before the final assessment. There is no time for remediation or correction of work. We seem to be working towards assessment all the time.

It seems that the focus on quantity rather than quality may have a debilitating effect on the performance of learners as sometimes there may be too much information to absorb. It is crucial that teachers be given the time to do remedial work with learners to ensure that learners have grasped what has been taught before moving on to new learning material.

Another major challenge at school is the shortage, and in some cases, the lack, of resources which is a major setback for teaching and learning. This is discussed in the section that follows.

#### **4.2.3 AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES**

##### **4.2.3.1 Policy documents and workbooks**

Policy documents are regarded as essential resources for teachers in the planning and preparation of lessons, yet some teachers claim that they had not received policy documents to date. Only those teachers who had gone to the workshops had received these documents and some teachers who were involved in this study were not even aware of these workshops so they had not received these important documents. Although some teachers downloaded the CAPS policy documents from the internet, others do not have printers at home and were unable to do so.

Initially I had no copy so I downloaded from the internet. I read through on my own and became familiar with what was required. I found that reading the teachers' guide in the different learning areas helped. (T1)

I engage with the policy documents daily when I am preparing my lessons. The policy documents inform me about what aspects I need to focus on for a specific week. In this way I know I will cover all the recommended topics of the syllabus before a test. (T2)

The HoDs were asked how the policy documents were interpreted for the different subjects.

The one-day workshops for most of the subjects were inadequate. Some teachers did not even attend. At school we had phase committee meetings where we discussed aspects of the policy document for each subject in detail. Peer assistance and networking with neighbouring schools assisted greatly. (HOD 2)

Basically teachers engaged in self-study of the policy document with HoDs co-ordinating meetings in the respective phases.

When basic LTSM resources are lacking, any ideas relating to more advanced resources may be luxury in under-resourced schools, as evident in the viewpoint expressed by T5:

I will not even talk about computers and projectors as we cannot even afford paper and ink for the duplicating machine. If we want to make worksheets we will have to hand them in two days ahead of the lesson.

In both schools teachers felt that the workbooks for learners were a tremendous boost as it ensured that all learners were compliant with the requirements of the curriculum. At the same time learners obtain maximum benefit from what the curriculum has to offer. School A depends mainly on the Rainbow Series workbooks that the DoE has provided for English and Mathematics in the intermediate phase. Since the DoE tends to work on the previous years' statistics regarding the number of learners in each grade, some grades experience a shortage of workbooks. As a result learners share books and this brings about its own set of problems in terms of discipline and homework.

The school cannot afford to purchase textbooks for each learner. For Mathematics and English we have workbooks from the DBE but in other subjects we don't have text books at all. Teachers have teacher guides and learner books which were given by the different publishers in orientation workshops in 2012. (T4)

Although the Department of Education created these workbooks as supplementary study material for learners, School A cannot afford to buy textbooks so the work-books serve as the sole resource for the learners.

School B is a 'no fee' school so textbooks have been provided but this year the budget only allowed for 25 books, which means that almost half the learners in the class do not have books. This creates further complications as indicated by T5:

With insufficient workbooks for English and Maths, children share. When they share, one child does corrections while the other looks on. Quite often this leads to boredom and discipline problems. For the other subjects a specialist teacher has a set of books which she takes to each class when she is teaching there. When the duplicating

machine is out of order, I write notes on the chalkboard and this can be quite time-consuming.

The anticipated goal of the DoE to provide a text book for every child has not succeeded for various reasons. This failure has been attributed to budgetary constraints, inefficient delivery services and improper monitoring by DoE management to ensure that schools were equipped with the necessary resources.

We have excellent sample copies of text books and together with the CAPS documents we are able to deliver effective lessons. However we do require individual text books for learners which will help us teach learners more efficiently. (T3)

#### **4.2.4 LEARNER PERFORMANCE**

Respondents were asked to describe the progress of learners in their respective grades. HOD 2 stated:

A small percentage of learners are coping. The pace seems to be too fast-CAPS is very prescriptive when it comes to managing time.

T2 explained that the policy does not cater adequately for the weak learner.

It does not consider re-teaching time or other contextual factors that teachers experience on a daily basis. It is a one-size-fits-all policy.

Thus-far, HOD 1 reported that progress in the intermediate phase is not satisfactory due to the poor level of reading and writing of learners. Absenteeism of learners is also a contributory factor. HOD 2 in School B reported that progress was average, although every effort was made to ensure that learners passed at the end of the year.

Ultimately it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that learners progress from one grade to the other and from one phase to the next. It is for this reason that teachers in both schools do make a concerted effort to ensure that learners gain from the curriculum and are able to pass learners from year to year. This will be discussed in the ensuing section.

#### **4.2.4.1 Impact of LTSM shortage on learner performance**

Given the poor socio-economic background of learners in both the sites, many children are not exposed to computers and modern technology. School B has just received 20 computers from the DoE due to a special project. However these computers are not being used by the learners as there is neither time to incorporate computer literacy into lessons nor adequate staff to teach learners how to use the computers.

Although we have computers at school, computer lessons are not offered so learners do not have exposure and as a result the assignments and projects are quite limited. Our library is very limited and we couldn't afford to equip it with up-to-date books. The lack of exposure to more up-to-date resources is also reflected in learners' written and oral presentations and the quality of their overall performance. (T5 in School B)

The DBE has undertaken to ensure that all learners have the necessary text books and workbooks to achieve a successful education. The failure by the DoE to deliver books to some schools has a negative effect on learners in both schools. T2 concurs:

The shortage of text books has an adverse effect because some weak learners do not complete copying all the work from the board. Some learners are easily distracted and do not listen when others are reading if they have no text books.

It becomes time-consuming when individual tasks are set and learners have to wait for each other to complete their work when sharing.

The shortage of text books has an adverse effect on the work being completed on time. It makes it difficult, especially when learners are required to work with maps and pictures. (T3)

#### **4.2.5 ANTICIPATED CHANGES**

Although teachers are in the midst of a transition in the curriculum there are some areas that they are still not satisfied with. Teachers were asked about aspects of the curriculum they would like to change. Like the principals, the general feeling was that there was a need for more intensive in-service training, instead of short workshops. This would ensure better preparation for the different aspects of the curriculum. Some teachers felt that more workshops would allow them to network with other teachers and express their queries to the facilitators together.

CAPS expects us to do a lot in a term, especially in Maths and English. It would be beneficial if it was a little less in terms of the content to be taught. There's no time for remedial work. (T4)

Teachers have expressed concern for the fact that there is no time to do remedial work with slow learners as CAPS is quite fast paced. One teacher called for

a review of the curriculum to accommodate weak learners - be less prescriptive on time allocation. (T7)

HOD 2 pointed out that, ideally

every child should have their own text books and workbooks, provided by the department of education. These books should be well

researched and well-structured according to policy to facilitate the teachers' job.

This statement supports the view of both principals who maintain that better publications of text books are more expensive so in order to ensure that they get the maximum number of books at an affordable price, the cheapest books are purchased. This practice will in no way balance the disparities that already exist in the performance between the learners in under-privileged and those in more affluent schools. Any effort to achieve uniformity in the performance of learners in all schools may therefore result in failure.

Teachers in both schools have also supported the need to specialise at school as subject specialists excel in the field of their expertise and at the same time focus on one subject instead of three or more.

In my school we do not specialise so it is difficult to extend our expertise. Teaching all the subjects in one class can be boring and exhausting for both the teacher and learner. (T3)

The DBE has undertaken to address the challenge of resources but in the absence of essential resources, it is incumbent upon the teachers to find ways and means to ensure that lessons are taught as effectively as possible. The Natural Science curriculum calls for many practical experiments and Technology requires more practice than theory, but both schools in this study lack equipment to conduct practical work. Teachers have therefore indicated that

resources for natural Science and Technology should be provided by the DoE. (T4, 5, 7)

#### **4.2.5.1 Overcoming challenges**

Although teachers in both School A and B experience challenges related to resources, they make various efforts to ensure that learners acquire the

knowledge required for them to progress. In the absence of essential LTSMs some participants incur their own expenses to purchase materials for science experiments, charts, etc. Participants also improvise and create their own worksheets and use magazines and newspapers to teach subjects like English. Participants were asked to describe some measures that they take to ensure that their learners progress. Responses were as follows:

We have extra remedial classes in the afternoons. However not all learners can attend as their transport arrives as soon as school finishes. (T2)

There are learners of different levels in my class. I pair the weaker learners with the high achievers so that they can help them wherever they need help. Consolidation is done through frequent homework. I also adopt peer teaching. (T1)

I utilise the different forms of assessment. Sometimes a learner may be weak at written tests but he may be strong with orals or at practical tasks. I therefore look for the strengths of each learner and endeavour to plan my assessments accordingly. (T3)

For reading we have NGOs who come in and teach the weaker readers in the library on a withdrawal basis and there has been an improvement. (T5)

We do a lot of revision. For example in preparation for ANA we go over exemplars and follow the workbooks closely so that we are in keeping with the requirements of the syllabus. (T4)

The preceding comments indicate that experienced educators adapt their methodologies in an effort to conform to the requirements of the curriculum whilst at the same time ensuring that learners are performing to their maximum abilities regardless of the circumstances of the teaching-learning environment. Whether it is remedial work, withdrawal for reading, or peer

teaching, every minute effort made by teachers benefits the learners and ensures that their performance improves.

HoDs have the task of motivating and encouraging teachers to maintain a positive attitude towards the curriculum and changes thereof. Participants were asked how they motivated teachers. Responses were as follows:

With such frequent changes, we ask teachers to make the best of the situation. I encourage them to network and communicate with other teachers. (HOD 2)

We make use of whatever resource is available to us. The idea is to turn the positive aspects of the curriculum to our advantage. Therefore we should be grateful for the fact that CAPS is more clearly outlined. We know what to do and when to do it. We also have workbooks to guide and assist us. (HOD 2)

### **4.3 Lesson Observation**

The researcher observed teaching and learning activities in both schools in Grades 4, 5 and 6 classes to corroborate teachers' input in the interviews. In school A, the lessons were generally well prepared. Lesson material was drawn mainly from the workbooks as there were no additional textbooks. In the Grade 6 class the teacher made use of media in the form of magazines, newspapers and pamphlets to supplement the shortage of books. However, as teachers in School A reported, there was a shortage of The Rainbow Series workbooks supplied by the DoE and learners had to share. The researcher observed an English lesson in a Grade 4 class based on Adverbs. The class has 33 learners; however there were 25 workbooks and as a result eight learners shared books. This meant that while the teacher reviewed answers, one learner would do the corrections whilst the other looked on. It was obvious to the researcher that learners who shared seemed distracted and disinterested. Of concern was the disinterest of some learners. One learner had his head on his desk whilst another sat

idly. Learners were given an opportunity to write answers on the board and they then completed an activity from the workbook in their class work books. In School A the general feeling of educators was that if they followed the workbooks then they were complying with the requirements of the curriculum so teachers did not necessarily extend themselves in an effort to be creative and innovative in their choice of LTSMs in the classroom. Teachers seemed deflated and exhausted and lacked the impetus to extend themselves in the classroom. The Grade 6 social science lesson observed by the researcher started ten minutes late as learners had to go to another teacher's classroom to fetch the text books which were shared between two classes.

School B has very large numbers of learners in each class. The Grade 5 class has 44 learners, allowing minimal opportunity for group work or even for movement, for that matter. Although the teacher presented the lesson effectively and clearly, it was basically teacher-centred. The method used was question-and-answer, verbal feedback and class discussions. Resources used were chalkboard and the prescribed text book which learners shared. The time allocated for the lesson was appropriate as learners were able to complete an individual task in their class work books within the specified time. The classroom atmosphere was warm, open and accepting. However, learners who were very well behaved were passive listeners and their responses were prompted by the teacher's questions. The idea of sharing ideas with peers was remote as conditions were cramped. T4 indicated that even the use of the overhead projector was not possible because of the lack of space.

The lessons observed in both schools A and B suggest that teachers make an effort to implement CAPS despite the under-resourced conditions of their schools. Methods and conditions may not be perfect but teachers adapt their teaching to ensure that learners benefit as much as possible despite difficult circumstances.

#### 4.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Documents such as learners' workbooks, teachers' planning and preparation files and the curriculum policy documents were analysed to provide information related to the focus of the study. These documents indicate the extent to which the teacher is implementing the policy and safeguards the teacher against disciplinary action.

Learners' English, Natural Science, Social Science and Mathematics books were examined to corroborate data obtained from teachers. The researcher looked at the number of activities per term, learner compliance and feedback given. In School A, learners completed many tasks from the Rainbow Series workbooks for Maths and English. It was evident that teachers had covered the required number of tasks for the term. However for Social Science and Natural Science, learners had been writing copious notes. The researcher wonders how much time is spent on the actual teaching of the lessons if learners are writing notes most of the time. Teachers in School A indicated that there is a shortage of text books and worksheets are limited so they have no option but to give learners notes so that they can learn at home. School B seemed to cope better as learners had text books. Learners had completed a substantial number of activities and although self-marking and corrections were done, there was no evidence of remedial work for weaker learners. This again raises the question of quality versus quantity as it would stand to reason that sections where learners encountered difficulties should be re-taught so that learners understand, before moving on to a new section. Herein lies the problem of poor learner performance due to the lack of consolidation and understanding.

Teachers' files were examined to determine whether teachers were following the relevant curriculum and whether written work incorporated the different cognitive levels. Using a checklist, the researcher also checked files for the inclusion of the annual teaching plan, assessment plan, formal assessment tasks and memoranda, indication of textbook(s) and any

resources used, record sheet containing learners marks for each formal assessment task and informal notes or any intervention that is planned by the teacher to assist learners who require additional support.

In School A and B there was evidence of the use of the policy documents to plan and prepare lessons. In two cases teachers complained that they found the need to date the year plan and the lesson preparation to be a duplication of work and unnecessary administrative work. Some teachers pointed out that there was too much to file so they kept two files for the year. Some teachers had separate assessment files and subject files. The annual teaching plan and assessment plan reflect that teachers are complying with the CAPS requirements. Assessment files clearly show the annual assessment plan, term plan and breakdown for the assessments for each grade. The number of assessments for each grade per subject is in keeping with the requirements of the curriculum policy. The absence of proof of moderation in some files makes the researcher wonder if all internal assessment is moderated at school as this is an assessment policy requirement. Although teachers in both schools pointed out that some learners are really struggling, files in both schools had little or no information on intervention efforts at school. This may be attributed to the fact that the information was not included in the files or that there is simply no time for intervention programmes at school.

Many teachers kept immaculate records and ensured that all relevant details required by the DoE were included in their files. It is evident that compiling and updating the files is a time-consuming and labour-intensive task. In School B lesson preparation and mark-sheets were regularly signed by the HOD demonstrating that teachers' work was constantly monitored and supervised by the SMT.

The researcher examined intermediate phase policy documents in the different subjects. The CAPS policy document encapsulates everything that teachers need to do in the curriculum in a single manual. Unlike the Revised National Curriculum Statements, where teachers had to study

various documents in the planning and assessment phase, the CAPS policy document encompasses the different subjects, the programme requirements for the grade in a particular phase, the promotion requirements for the phase, guidelines for assessments, recording and reporting and indications of time allocations. The policy document clearly stipulates the content to be taught and when it should be taught. The researcher is a teacher who has implemented CAPS in the Senior Phase this year so the researcher concurs with teachers in the study on the practicality of the policy documents for planning and preparation of lessons. However, one questions the volume of content to be taught within the allotted time. Teachers in this study complain that the policy document may be over-ambitious in prescribing the content and time frames as many learners are in mixed level classes and not all can grasp the same content at the same pace. This point is buttressed by the Catholic Institute of Education that found that in some subjects like Mathematics, the excessive content within a limited timeframe “may impact on the thoroughness of teaching and learning” (Catholic Institute of Education 2010: 10). The emphasis on time in the policy document also leaves little room for innovation and creativity on the part of the teacher.

Since the policy document is quite a compact document with a lot of information contained within, the researcher is of the opinion that it is important for the policy document to be ‘unpacked’ in an intense workshop for teachers before they implement the changes to the curriculum. An individual study of the policy document without any guidance, may lead to much confusion and misunderstanding regarding the requirements of the new curriculum.

#### **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The research participants, namely the principals, heads of department and teachers were all willing to participate in the study and they provided valuable data that was relevant to the research question. From the study, the researcher was able to determine the impressions of teachers regarding

curriculum change in under-resourced schools. The positive aspects of the curriculum were highlighted and teachers accentuated the challenges, such as large classes and the shortage of human and material resources that inhibited the smooth transition to CAPS.

Although the DoE made an effort to ensure that schools received workbooks and text books, the shortage of these essential resources created further challenges for the teachers in this study and impacted on teaching and learning in their classrooms. In both schools teachers adopted alternative measures to ensure that learners benefitted from the changes, and progress was assured. Some teachers used the workbook as the only teaching resource, yet these books were intended to be supplementary material for homework and consolidation.

Teachers have a need for workshops so that they could always approach the setbacks that they experienced with confidence. However, it is important that the DoE honours its commitment to support the teachers by cascading information about the curriculum as effectively as possible. Frequent in-service training will empower teachers and keep them abreast of the needs of the curriculum.

An analysis of learners' workbooks and teachers' files revealed that teachers are making every effort to implement CAPS despite the difficult circumstances in which they teach. Issues such as time frames, remedial work and administrative workload need to be addressed for more effective performance on the part of teachers.

The researcher found this study to be most enlightening and beneficial to her as well as the participants. The following chapter concludes the study. The key findings, implications of this study and recommendations for further research will be presented.

# **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

CAPS is currently being implemented for the second year in the intermediate phase. At this stage teachers are able to determine the merits and demerits of the curriculum as they have put CAPS into practice repeatedly. One of the features of CAPS is the focus on text books as a vital resource in the classroom. This study has therefore focussed on the experiences of teachers in under-resourced schools where resources like text books may be lacking.

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the findings of this study. This final chapter provides an overview of the study, conclusions based on the findings and recommendations for improvement. The chapter also reflects on the possibilities for future research.

## **5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

Chapter One provided an orientation to the study which included the introduction, background to the problem, the problem statement, research question and the aims and objectives of the study. The aim of the study was to develop an understanding of the coping mechanisms intermediate phase teachers in under-resourced primary schools use to adapt to curriculum change.

The main question considered in this research study is: What coping mechanisms do intermediate-phase teachers in under-resourced primary schools use to enable them to adapt to curriculum change?

From this the following sub-questions were derived:

- a. Why are teachers central agents in curriculum change?

- b. How are teachers developed in preparation for change?
- c. Are learner support materials adequate for effective implementation?
- d. What qualities do teachers need to embrace for effective curriculum implementation?
- e. Currently, what are some of the problems teachers experience in implementing the new curriculum?
- f. How do teachers manage to achieve positive results in under-resourced schools despite frequent curriculum changes?

Chapter Two focussed on a review of literature on curriculum change in the South African context. This literature review began with a study on the need for curriculum change before engaging in global perspectives on curriculum change. Education in South Africa was highlighted and special attention was given to CAPS, which is the current policy in South African schools. Factors that would contribute to successful curriculum implementation were explored in detail. Conditions in under-resourced schools were examined as a focus for this study.

Chapter Three outlined the research design and methodology used in this study. The researcher highlighted the merits of using the qualitative approach in this study. The methodology included strategies to select participants, data collection and data analysis. Special care was taken to ensure that ethical issues were considered as they are essential for effective research.

Chapter Four presented the data that emerged from the empirical study. To this end, the current chapter concludes the study, makes recommendations and outlines the implications for the effective implementation of a new curriculum in under-resourced schools.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN RELATION TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In the proceeding section the researcher endeavours to provide answers to the research questions outlined in 5.2 above that would culminate in the conclusions drawn in this study. Each question is examined individually.

### **5.3.1 Why are teachers central agents in change?**

Findings from the literature review, as well as data collection, reaffirm the fact that teachers are the driving force behind the success of the curriculum. Although policy is imposed by higher authority, teachers are responsible for applying the policy and putting it into action. The successes and failures of the curriculum should therefore be measured against the input of the teachers. To ensure that success is attained it is imperative that teachers are adequately equipped so that they are able to teach with minimal distraction.

### **5.3.2 How are teachers prepared for change?**

Teachers have attended one or two day workshops that were held by the Department of Education. In the case of the schools in this study, different teachers were sent for different subjects as the schools are short staffed and could not send all intermediate phase teachers at once. However, teachers found that the workshops simply informed them about CAPS and the actual know-how was obtained through teachers' reading and phase meetings at school. Teachers have complained that their questions at the workshops were left unanswered and they were told that the change was policy and it had to be implemented. A new curriculum cannot be advocated by means of a few workshops as there is a need to obtain a thorough understanding of exactly what is to be done and how to do it.

### **5.3.3 Are learner support materials adequate for effective implementation?**

Much emphasis has been placed on the value of text books as learning and teaching resources in the classroom. However, despite the undertaking by the Department to ensure that every child receives a text book, this is not

the case at the schools. In schools that receive funding from the DoE, books are insufficient because of limits to the allocations from the DoE. Schools that receive minimal funding from the DoE rely on school fees to purchase books. The schools are unable to purchase enough books as funding is low. In both schools learners share text books and this creates further problems for the teachers. Learners are unable to take books home to complete homework or study so teachers revert to worksheets and writing of copious notes for this purpose.

### **5.3.4 What are some of the problems teachers experience in implementing the new curriculum?**

#### **5.3.4.1 Lack of time**

There is not enough time to complete all work for a given week or theme. Teachers appear to be grappling with the limited time that is available to complete certain tasks especially in subjects like English and Mathematics. Furthermore, because of its rigorous time frames, the curriculum does not allow for other activities like sports or galas at school. There is very little time for re-teaching or remediation of common errors as teachers rush to complete the syllabus before an assessment at the end of the term. The time allocation does not allow for aspects like reading skills and there is no allowance for individual needs. In the process, slow or struggling learners are neglected and this may also be a contributory factor to poor performance of learners in both school-based as well as Annual National Assessments.

#### **5.3.4.2 Multi-level classes and slow learners**

The NCS CAPS Grade R-12 (2011c: 4) acknowledges diversity in the classroom and the need for teachers to modify, change, adapt and vary teaching methodologies, teaching and assessment strategies and curriculum content. Although many guidelines are provided in the guidelines for diversity, when put into practice, teachers find that catering for multi-

level classes is time-consuming and since the content to be taught within a particular time is stipulated in CAPS, teachers find themselves under pressure to complete the syllabus rather than ensure that every child clearly understands the content to be taught. Different levels also mean that all the tasks given are not completed by all learners at the same time.

#### **5.3.4.3 Support from subject advisors**

Although the Department of Education has undertaken to provide maximum support to the schools, teachers in both schools in the study expressed the need for more guidance and assistance from DoE officials in terms of subject-related problems. Although some subject advisors have been trying to assist the teachers, others are unavailable or unable to assist teachers with their queries.

#### **5.3.5 How do teachers manage to achieve positive results in under-resourced schools despite frequent curriculum change?**

Teachers have realised that the CAPS curriculum is here to stay and they have to come to grips with it. As a result teachers are making an effort to work with CAPS and to make CAPS work for them. Frequent curriculum change can be quite costly in terms of time, money as well as material and physical resources. Although schools have limited or no resources, teachers still follow the curriculum and ensure that learners continue to work. If there are limited text books, teachers create worksheets or give learners written notes, at the expense of valuable teaching time. In the case of mixed level classes, many teachers stay after school and during the breaks to assist learners who experience learning difficulties.

One of the most difficult challenges is large class numbers, especially in schools that are under-privileged. As a result, sharing of text books can cause much disruption. Educators have to maintain strict discipline during teaching, to retain the attention of learners.

The lack of specialist rooms and equipment for subjects like natural science, art and music mean that teachers have to improvise all the time. This puts greater pressure on the teachers during the planning phase as teachers must consider alternatives at that stage. Some teachers go beyond the call of duty to ensure that learning takes place. For example, in a school in this study teachers incur personal expenses to purchase material for Natural Science experiments. Others use their personal time to teach basic reading to slow learners who are struggling to grasp English at a basic level.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study show that the teacher's role in curriculum development must be considered. For this reason, teachers should not be expected to merely implement the curriculum. They must be involved in the development of the curriculum in terms of subject matter and practical application. Experienced teachers at different schools, both rural and urban, should be invited to make an input when the curriculum is being developed as they would have the expertise to make contributions that would be practical and user-friendly. At the same time, teachers need to make every effort to remain up to date with curriculum developments and they must make suggestions whenever they can.

Teachers have expressed the need to attend more curriculum-related workshops. It is important for the DoE to organise workshops on an on-going basis to keep teachers abreast with the changes and requirements for successful curriculum implementation.

Presenters at these workshops should be specialists in their field and should display expertise in guiding and assisting teachers wherever possible. The DoE must send prior notice of the workshops to schools at least a week ahead so that teachers can diarise and make arrangements to attend. Even if these workshops are during the holidays or on a Saturday,

teachers should be incentivised by awarding them with attendance certificates which they can use to enhance their qualifications.

More time is required for training of teachers. Therefore, the DoE should organise mini-workshops based on the requirements of the teachers at the schools. These mini-workshops should focus on aspects like assessment, remedial work, coping in multi-level classes and managing curriculum time effectively. Such workshops will allow teachers to network with others from surrounding schools and they can share ideas and discuss common problems. This will motivate them and provide them with greater impetus to try new approaches in the classroom.

The DoE's undertaking to provide a text book for each learner must be carried out. Systems need to be organised by the authorities responsible for distribution of workbooks to ensure that schools are equipped with adequate workbooks for each grade before the new school year begins. Monitors from the DoE should follow up and address the needs of schools to ensure that the new school year begins with all learners in possession of the necessary workbooks. Workbooks should be ordered on a projected number for the following year and not on the current year's figures. Allowance should be made for changes and new learners so that every child receives a workbook for the term.

Since teachers are grappling with the load of content to be taught in a specified time, it is important for the DoE to revisit the amount of material to be taught within the instructional time. Bunce, Flens & Neiles (2010: 1438) maintain that a typical learner's attention span is about ten to fifteen minutes long. Based on this curriculum developers need to reconsider the aspect of time in relation to the attention span and memory retention of learners. Since primary schools operate on a fixed timetable, the amount of content should be reduced to enable teachers to complete work within the allocated time.

Whilst the DoE's effort at recognising diversity and providing guidance to teachers and other stakeholders on how to accommodate diversity in the classroom may be applauded, more time must be provided to teachers to accommodate learners with different needs. Quality teaching and learning can only take place if teachers are given adequate time to ensure that learners have grasped the important concepts in a particular subject. At the same time the DoE needs to review the policy to create opportunities for remediation and intervention of learners who are experiencing learning difficulties. This should be incorporated into the teaching time for each subject. In this way the teacher would be able to cater for different learners of different levels.

The DoE must create opportunities for better communication of information to the schools. Guidelines and instructions from the DoE should be uniform in all government schools so that all teachers are duly informed. Subject advisors have been trained extensively for CAPS and they have displayed expertise in their respective fields in relation to CAPS, but they need to be more effective in responding to the needs of the teachers at the schools. It is critical that subject advisors visit the schools to assist and guide teachers as well as to identify potential challenges teachers experience and to monitor the level of success of the curriculum. Communication between all relevant stakeholders, i.e. parents, teachers, SMTs, subject advisors and the DoE is necessary for effective curriculum coverage. Teachers should invite subject advisors to their schools if they have a query.

If greater success in curriculum coverage is to be achieved in under-resourced schools, it is necessary for the DoE to revisit the allocation of funds to these schools. Although teachers improvise and ensure that the necessary content is conveyed to learners, providing schools with enough funds to purchase additional LTSMs like natural science equipment and library books would facilitate the teaching and learning process.

## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Given the broadness of any topic related to the curriculum, there are many aspects that further research could focus on.

Teachers should be encouraged to conduct on-going action research to identify the merits and demerits of the curriculum and the system should be flexible enough to allow schools to implement changes in relation to individual school needs. Constant feedback of findings to the DoE will ensure that the curriculum is hands-on and in keeping with the changing needs of learners over a period of time.

Since this study was confined to just two schools, it could be extended to more schools, both secondary and primary. Research could also be done to establish the experiences of teachers in more advantaged schools. A study could be based on learners' responses to the curriculum, or to determine what additional aspects learners need for high school readiness.

Individual subjects like English could be researched to examine the teaching of formal grammar and whether it should be taught more progressively at primary school level, so that by the time learners are ready for high school, they would have covered all the basic aspects of formal grammar.

Since assessment forms a major component of the curriculum, future research should also focus on whether the number and types of assessments per subject per term are adequate to determine the level of knowledge of the learners. Further research should also establish whether teachers are using the different cognitive levels of questioning in assessments.

## **5.6 CONCLUDING STATEMENTS**

Although curriculum review is necessary due to dynamic changes in the political, social and economic needs of a country, various factors should be considered when developing a curriculum that will cater for all individuals in

society. The availability of human and physical resources in a school is vital for effective teaching and learning. Without essential resources like text books and workbooks, the task of the teacher becomes more challenging, as the burden of supplementing shortfalls in the classroom adds to the trials of enforcing a new curriculum.

The literature review highlighted the need for changes to the curriculum, which is a global phenomenon. What is evident is that various stakeholders are responsible for the success of the curriculum. The plight of under-resourced schools was examined and it was found that not all learners are in possession of the required text books due to a lack of funds. Lack of resources can impede the progress of both learners and teachers. This study shows that there is a need to ensure prompt and organised delivery of workbooks and stationery so that all learners are able to proceed with work at the beginning of each term.

Much of the frustration for teachers is the lack of communication with the DoE. There is a need for closer liaison between the DoE and schools so that clarity may be obtained with regards to any curriculum-related issues that may arise. The study also emphasised the need for more frequent workshops to monitor the progress of teachers and address any queries that they may have.

Teachers have acknowledged the merits of the curriculum in terms of policy documents which are better structured than previous ones. The fact that there is a clear indication of what to teach and when to teach it, is beneficial to teachers as they know what is expected of them each term. Teachers also acknowledge the benefits of obtaining clear guidelines on the number of assessments per term.

One can conclude that with greater support and assistance, teachers' experiences of implementing new ideas in the classroom may be a more positive one. With constant review of issues commonly encountered by teachers and minor adjustments to CAPS, one may realise the benefits of

such an amendment to the curriculum. Greater support and a more affirmative approach to change will allow teachers to envision the benefits of the curriculum. This would motivate teachers to make every effort to ensure that learners achieve the desired policy statements for progress and the ultimate success of CAPS.

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## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

1. To what extent are you succeeding in implementing CAPS?
2. Describe some of the difficulties you have encountered that prevented you from teaching effectively.
3. How did you manage to alleviate the problems described in the previous question?
4. Describe the orientation workshops that you attended. How was information filtered to staff at school?
5. How au fait are you with the policy documents? Please describe how you engage with the documents?
6. Describe the availability of text books and other teaching materials for the implementation of the NCS.
7. What alternative measures do you adopt to facilitate your task in the classroom?
8. Explain how you formulate an assessment policy for your school.
9. Please describe the results of learners in your school.
10. Describe the support that you get from your HOD and SMT.
11. Describe the support that you get from the Department of Education.
12. Describe measures that you have taken to ensure that your learners perform to their maximum?
13. What are things you are dissatisfied with and you would like to see changed? Why is that?
14. What are some of the ways you have extended yourself to ensure that your learners are benefitting from the changes in the curriculum?
15. How does the shortage of learner and teacher resource materials affect learners 'academic achievements at this school?
16. What are some of the things you would like in order to implement the curriculum more effectively?
17. What is your attitude to curriculum change at school?
18. Would you like to mention anything further before we wind up?

## **APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS/SMTs**

1. Describe the socio-economic background of the community in which your school is situated.
2. What quintile rating is your school?
3. Describe the funding that you receive from the Department of Education.
4. Describe any support that you receive from organisations outside of school.
5. Describe the staffing of your school in terms of teacher-pupil ratio.
6. Explain whether the departmental allocation for text books and workbooks for adequate for the learners in your school? In the absence of text books, how does your staff cope?
7. Describe the role of the management team in curriculum change.
8. Describe how you have managed to accommodate all subjects within the specified time allocations in the time table?
9. Describe the support and guidance that you offer to your teachers in the implementation of CAPS.
10. What are some of the challenges you experience in trying to assist your teachers?
11. What kind of support do you receive from the subject advisors with regards to the curriculum?
12. What are some of the things you would like in order to ensure the success of the curriculum?
13. How does the shortage of resources affect the performance of your school? Describe the measures that you and your staff undertake to ensure that the performance of learners in your school is on par with learners in better resourced schools.

## **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT**

1. Describe how teachers in your grade were selected to attend CAPS orientation workshops?
2. How did you ensure that all teachers in your grade understood the policy documents for the subjects that they teach?
3. What methods did you adopt in ensuring that teachers are working according to the given schedule? How has this been unique to your school?
4. Describe the progress of learners in your grade.
5. To what extent have you monitored that both informal and formal assessment tasks are covered by your teachers?
6. How have you motivated your teachers to adopt a positive attitude towards CAPS?
7. Describe some of the challenges that your grade encountered in implementing the CAPS curriculum and how your team has managed to overcome these challenges.
8. What changes would you like to see?
9. What works well?
10. Is there anything else that you would to add?

## **APPENDIX 4: COVERING LETTER FOR SP TEACHERS AND HODs**

Dear Participant

Your voluntary participation in this study is highly appreciated.

I am Inbam Pillay, a Masters student at the University of South Africa, School of Post-Graduate Studies. I am conducting research on the implementation of CAPS in primary schools with limited resources. . My study is entitled ***Teachers' Experiences Of Curriculum Change In Two Under-Resourced Primary Schools in the Durban Area.***

The research entails conducting face-to-face interviews with intermediate phase level one teachers and a head of department. You are kindly requested to answer all questions as honestly as you can.

With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded (audiotape), and the tape will be disposed of upon completion of the study.

I would like to observe at least two lessons in your class at a time suitable to you and your principal.

I humbly also request your permission to examine relevant documents relating to the subject of study such as the NCS, lesson plans, and materials, and learner notebooks.

I have applied for consent to the Department of Education, your school principal for permission to conduct research at your school. I have also applied to the Ethical Clearance Committee of Unisa for ethical clearance.

You and all the other participants in the study will remain anonymous, and any sensitive information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential.

You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point if you so wish.

I can be contacted on 0828626112 (cell phone), or by e-mail [patsypillay@gmail.com](mailto:patsypillay@gmail.com).

Thank you

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INBAM PILLAY

## **APPENDIX 5: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Name of Researcher: Inbam Pillay

Institution: University of South Africa

Degree: Master of Education

Research Topic: Teachers' experiences of curriculum change in two under-resourced primary schools in the Durban area.

The purpose and conditions of participation have been fully explained to me. I understand what my involvement entails and I am aware that my participation is voluntary and freely given. I have read the agreement, and am aware that I can terminate engagement in the interview at any point without penalty.

Signature of volunteer respondent.....

Date.....

Signature of Researcher.....

Date.....

### **Contact Details**

If you are willing to participate and you need further clarification contact Inbam Pillay at 0828626112.

Email: patsypillay@gmail.com or contact Professor JG Ferreira-Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of South Africa on Tel 078120 5798 or by e-mail ferreirajg@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you

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Inbam Pillay



## APPENDIX 6: COVERING LETTER FOR PRINCIPALS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for consent to conduct research at your school

I am a Masters student in the education Faculty at the University of South Africa. My Study is entitled ***Teachers' Experiences Of Curriculum Change In Two Under-Resourced Primary Schools in the Durban Area.*** The purpose of this research is to understand teachers' experiences in under-resourced schools, of curriculum change through examining educators' perceptions and practices of CAPS in the classroom.

My research will involve interviewing four intermediate phase teachers, a head of department as well as the principal. You and all the other participants in the study will remain anonymous, and any sensitive information you provide during the interview will be kept confidential.

Furthermore, I would also kindly request your permission to examine teachers' files and documents that are used for planning, preparation and delivery of lessons and assessments as well as learners' note books. I would also request your permission to observe at least two lessons, by prior arrangement with the teachers concerned, on a date and a time suitable to him/her. I wish to spend at least one week in your school to conduct this study.

Results of the research will be useful to teachers who want to understand their practice in their current context; and to the Provincial and National Department in terms of curriculum implementation and identification of good

practice. It is envisaged that the study will stimulate discussion on curriculum transformation for curriculum developers and planners as well as educators at schools.

I humbly request permission to conduct the study at your school. I assure you that all information gathered will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Pseudonyms will be used for the participating schools and teachers in the study. With your permission the interviews will be tape recorded and the tapes will be destroyed after the study. All data and documents will be shredded once the study has been completed and submitted. A summary of the findings will be sent to your school on completion of the study. Your participation in the study will be purely voluntary and you will be free to withdraw participation at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to yourself or the school. I have also obtained permission from the Department of Education to do the research. An application has been also made to the Ethical Clearance Committee of the University of South Africa for ethical clearance.

I wish to inform you that I will be donating R1000.00 to your school to facilitate the purchase of library books as a token of my appreciation. Should you have any concerns about the study you may contact me or my supervisor at the contact details listed below.

Your participation in the study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

-----

I. Pillay (Mrs)

Researcher: Mrs.I.Pillay (0828626112/031-2665218)

Reference

Supervisor: Professor J.G.Ferreira (012 429 4540)

Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, Pretoria

PO Box 392, Unisa, 3003, South Africa

LETTER OF CONSENT FROM THE PRINCIPAL/TEACHER/SGB

I, \_\_\_\_\_, principal of \_\_\_\_\_do hereby provide consent to Mrs.I.Pillay to conduct her research at my school, as explained in her letter of request. I have read the information contained in the letter and understand its contents.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL/SGB/TEACHER

# APPENDIX 7: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8510

Ref:2/4/8/81

Mrs I Pillay  
1 Highgates Avenue  
Dawncliffe  
Westville  
3629

Dear Mrs Pillay

## PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "TEACHERS EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN TWO UNDER-RESOURCED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE DURBAN AREA", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 April 2014 to 30 March 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Westville Senior Primary  
Gillits Primary  
AYS Memorial

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD  
Head of Department: Education  
Date: 23 April 2014

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance  
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004-Fax:033 392 1003  
EMAIL ADDRESS: [kephlogile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:kephlogile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za); CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363;  
WEBSITE: [WWW.kzndoe.gov.za](http://WWW.kzndoe.gov.za)

## APPENDIX 8: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



### Research Ethics Clearance Certificate

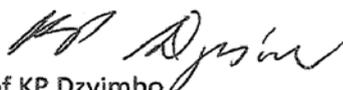
This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by

**I Pillay [05573572]**

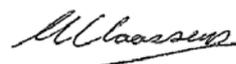
for a M Ed study entitled

**Teachers' experience of change in two under-resourced primary schools in the  
Durban area**

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa  
College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two  
years from the date of issue.



Prof KP Dzvimbob  
Executive Dean : CEDU



Dr M Claassens  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
[mcdtc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdtc@netactive.co.za)

Reference number: 2014 JULY /05573572/MC

16 JULY 2014

## **APPENDIX 9 OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

1. Is the school environment suitable for teaching and learning?
2. Describe the classrooms in terms of sizes, furniture and number of learners?
3. Does the school have a playground/ field for sports? Give a description.
4. Is there a science room/ laboratory, art room, library? If not describe the rooms that are used for these purposes.
5. Does the school have computers? Are they all serviced and maintained? Do the children have access to these computers?
6. Lesson plans, materials, learner note books: How do these reflect alternative measures used by teachers in the absence of core resources?
7. What is the quality of learner teacher support materials? Do all learners have a book? If not how do learners cope with homework?
8. Describe teacher files, lesson plans and assessment plans.