

**POLICY CHANGE AND CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT: EXPLORING THE  
PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT HEADS IN SWAZILAND'S  
UNDERPRIVILEGED SCHOOLS**

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**Policy change and curriculum alignment: Exploring the perceptions of language  
department heads in Swaziland's underprivileged schools**

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## **DECLARATION**

The work contained in *Policy Change and Curriculum Alignment: Exploring the perceptions of Language Department Heads in Swaziland's Underprivileged Schools* was completed by me whilst enrolled at the University of South Africa. The work is original and due reference has been made wherever the work of others has been quoted or referred to. This research has not, nor will it be, submitted for award from any other University or institution. Copyright of the thesis is vested in the University of South Africa and neither the thesis nor any extensive extracts from it may be printed or reproduced without the University's written consent.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**M. GAMEDZE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**DATE**

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## **DEDICATION**

To Philile, Ntombikayise and Ntombifuthi, my late sisters (all Gamedze):

If only you had stayed...

But you gave up.

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## ACRONYMS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| ACE-SML | Advanced Certificate in Education, School Management and Leadership |
| CIE     | Cambridge International Examinations                                |
| CLT     | Communications Language Teaching                                    |
| ECoS    | Examination Council of Swaziland                                    |
| EFL     | English as a Foreign Language                                       |
| ESL     | English as a Second Language  |
| GCE     | General Certificate of Education                                    |
| HIGCSE  | Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education     |
| HoDs    | Heads of Departments  |
| IGCSE   | International General Certificate of Secondary Education            |
| INSET   | In-service Training   |
| MOET    | Ministry of Education and Training                                  |
| MoE     | Ministry of Education   |
| MPs     | Members of Parliament   |
| NDS     | National Development Strategy                                       |
| NERCOM  | National Education Review Commission                                |
| NCC     | National Curriculum Centre  |
| OVC     | Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Fund                               |
| PGCE    | Post Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education                    |
| SGCSE   | Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education                |
| SNAT    | Swaziland National Association of Teachers                          |
| SWAPA   | Swaziland Principals' Association                                   |
| UK      | United Kingdom  |
| UNDP    | United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture      |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Development Programme                                |
| UNICEF  | United Nations Children's Fund                                      |
| USA     | United States of America  |
| UNISWA  | University of Swaziland   |

## **GLOSSARY**

Curriculum: A plan for guiding learning in schools which ensures that the most valuable aspects of culture are passed on to the next generation (Lawton, 1989). In this study, the term refers to the plans made for guiding learning in schools and the implementation of those plans in the classroom.

Curriculum alignment: A degree of congruence between the expectation of a school system for students' performance and the various elements of the system's assessments (Barnes et al., 2000:645; Fuhrman, 1993). The term refers here to coherence among the three elements of instructional policy which include curriculum, standards and assessment that empower teachers to interpret and act on policy-makers' demands.

Language department: The English language departments in the schools.

Policy: That which government does officially through legislation or court decisions to determine how education is used so as to cultivate the educational skills needed to meet national priorities (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). The term refers here to principles that have been established, which inform decision-making on what choices to make about different national goals.

Underprivileged schools: Sutton (2005) mentions that the existence of a high proportion of disadvantaged students, a high proportion of less experienced teachers, poor financial conditions, and overall grade point averages and test scores that are significantly lower than surrounding schools are characteristic of underprivileged schools. In addition to Sutton's conception of underprivileged schools, this paper uses the term to refer to schools where there is little or no financial commitment by the school board and government, and where there is little organisational support and leadership by the school principal, which leads to a lack of behaviour change in teachers and learners in the event of curriculum reform.

## ABSTRACT

The notion of a curriculum that is relevant, aligned and properly implemented has prevailed in Swaziland as indicated by the change from a content-led curriculum to a skills-driven one. The process of curriculum alignment as being the cornerstone of educational relevance and development has prevailed since the country's independence. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the process culminated in the development and implementation of the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education curriculum at senior secondary school level. This thesis traces the process of ensuring that the SGCSE curriculum is aligned in local contexts through descriptive analyses of the critical post-implementation developments of eight schools in the Shiselweni region. The perceptions of language heads of departments (HoDs) in underprivileged settings are described. Established constructs for the curriculum to be aligned in the contexts are reviewed and local language department heads' perceptions on curriculum alignment are analysed. The strengths and shortfalls of their attempts in aligning the curriculum in their contexts of implementation are highlighted. Recommendations for future development are then suggested.

The purpose of the study was to describe the perceptions on policy change and curriculum alignment of language department heads from underprivileged schools in Swaziland. An examination of their documents showed that the HoDs applauded curriculum alignment. After interviews, it was revealed that the HoDs viewed alignment of the curriculum in the local context to be a strategy of ensuring that the curriculum was successful in the context of implementation. Language department heads in the schools believed that the government had a major role to play in ensuring institutional commitment towards the directives that the government itself was issuing, before the school principals could do anything. The HoDs also believed that there was a need for administrative support in the form of support from the principals of the schools, followed therein by a fundamental need for cross-departmental cooperation and support from the community within which the schools are located. Departmental teamwork was also considered essential for success.

It was therefore concluded that aligning the curriculum was extremely frustrating in that while the HoDs were aware of the local needs of students, it was also clear that local curriculum decision-making could not take place effectively without external support from the governing body, the Ministry of Education. It was recommended that the Ministry of Education should deal directly with the HoDs with regard to issues relating to curriculum interpretation and implementation.

**Key words: curriculum, alignment, underprivileged schools, English language department heads**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1.BACKGROUND AND SETTING

This study explores the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland's underprivileged schools to policy change and curriculum alignment. Since independence in 1968, a number of attempts have been directed towards bringing harmony between the country's curriculum and its educational goals. To a larger extent, these attempts have been centred on the localisation of the curriculum as a vital tool for enhancing the relevance of the curriculum. Aligning policy change and curriculum implementation is a question that has concerned curriculum reviewers and educationists since independence in Swaziland (Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto, 1972). Secondary education relied on the South African Joint Matriculation Board until the beginning of the apartheid era in South Africa in 1948 when Swaziland was compelled to find alternative curricula (Booth, 2002; Malinga, 1980). When the adverse effects of the apartheid period were felt in the 1970s, this necessitated a change in educational policies and led to numerous documents which tended to characterise the nation's curricular decision-making. The first was the Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto (1972) and it was followed by the Report of the National Education Commission (1975), and the National Education Review Commission (NERCOM) Report (1985). These documents recognised the need for Swaziland to stand on her own and put in place a curriculum that would be relevant in terms of its origins. Today the secondary education system relies on the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). They are the sole provider for curricula in public schools in the country. Secondary schools have incorporated western curricula changes, the most prominent of which are from the General Certificate of Education (GCE), O-Level and the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE). The latter has since been replaced by the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (SGCSE).

This chapter presents a background to curriculum alignment in Swaziland. It traces the major developments in the curriculum that precipitated the need for a review of curriculum alignment. The major constructs of curriculum alignment in the context of a newly introduced curriculum are reviewed. This background ultimately builds up to the problem statement that the study seeks to address. An outline of the study's objectives is presented, as are the

research questions. A discussion of the significance of the study follows, and the organisation of the whole study is highlighted at the end of the chapter.

The following section provides the background to the study. It focuses on an analysis of the attempts made by the Swaziland government to ensure that curriculum practice was aligned to newly introduced curriculum policies. Curriculum alignment here refers to the lessening of discrepancies between the standards laid and the actual delivery of the curriculum as determined by the circumstances of a given context.

Currently, education in Swaziland aims to provide opportunities for learners to develop themselves in order to improve the quality of their own lives and the standard of living of their communities. It also aims to foster the skills necessary for transformation and ensuring that individuals participate in the development of the country (Ministry of Education, 1999). At junior and senior secondary level, the aim is to provide of a diversified curriculum that will enable learners to exploit all opportunities available to them on graduation (NERCOM Report, 1985; Examinations Council of Swaziland, 2013).

The opportunities of learners to develop themselves are determined by the economic standards of the country. Improving the quality of students' lives includes educating and providing them with skills which are in sufficient demand to secure employment or enable self-employment and income generation upon graduation (NERCOM Report, 1985). However, the O-Level education system that was adopted after independence was exam-based and focused heavily on testing, which created the impression that examinations were the most important part of teaching, and not the imparting of knowledge and skills to learners (Matsebula, 1996). Learning activities relied on content derived from the context of the provider of the exam, in this case the CIE, and Swazi students were not familiar with it (Matsebula, 1996). This initiated the need for an education system which emphasised the development of qualities and skills which could benefit an individual and society (NERCOM Report, 1985). When CIE informed Swaziland that it was phasing out the O-Level curriculum in 1999, it led to a transformation which introduced a skills-based education system (the IGCSE) which focused on achieving the nation's educational aims referred to above (The Ministry of Education Performance Report, 2007). It was not, however, until 2006 that the IGCSE was finally launched.

IGCSE offered subjects that fell under nine broad categories: core, technical, agriculture, commercial subjects, home economics, social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and other supplementary subjects. It promoted the development of problem-solving skills and child-centred approaches to learning, whilst also catering for a wide range of abilities (Ministry of Education, 2007). Teaching approaches utilised were directed towards ensuring learner engagement in the learning activities selected, so that learners' different abilities and talents could be improved. However, the shift from O-Level to IGCSE saw English educators struggling to improve the approaches previously used, and the Ministry of Education received substantial criticism over the perceived centralised control of curriculum decision-making. This stemmed from its failure to sensitise teachers as to what the shift meant of teachers' roles (Mdluli, 2003; Mndzebele, 2009). As with the O-Level system, teachers still complained about learning activities being too removed from the immediate context of the learner. For example, in English as a Second Language (ESL), the reading comprehension topics would include ice-skating, table tennis, surfing, the Olympics etc., many of which were not understood by the learners. This did not elicit the expected outcome because learners lacked the pre-requisite knowledge which would help sustain the learning process through the generation of an interest in the process. This resulted in some of the IGCSE teaching policies not being implemented because they were misunderstood (Gamedze, 2010; Mndzebele, 2009). Some of the policies which were not implemented are discussed below.

The introduction of the SGCSE curriculum in 2008 aimed to make up for the limitations of the previous curriculum and to develop learners' thinking in order to enable them to be inventive. It was guided by the localisation policy, which meant that content derived from the immediate environment of the learner was to be used to teach skills and concepts of international significance. It also required that examinations be locally prepared and submitted to the CIE for official approval (IGCSE Consultative Report, 2005). However, the ESL syllabus formulation was criticised as lacking innovation since seventy five percent of the syllabus relied on IGCSE material due to what decision-makers cited as a lack of local sources from which to draw content (Gamedze, 2010). The materials (i.e. the textbooks used to teach SGCSE) were still of IGCSE origin, and the localisation policy proved difficult to implement (Gamedze, 2010). Furthermore, there was heavy reliance on behavioural objectives to guide lesson planning and evaluation, and this did not meet the aim to encourage creative mindedness (Gamedze, 2010; O-Level English Language syllabus, 2004). This was problematic because the teaching of a language cannot be prescribed in precise

behavioural terms because learners have unique and personalised responses to language experiences. A discrepancy between policy standards and the implementation of curriculum content therefore exists. This is partly due to the existence of two different types of schools in the country, which will be dealt with in the subsequent pages.

### **1.1.1. The process of curriculum alignment through the years**

It might help to develop understanding of the process of ensuring curriculum holistically. As already highlighted, the search for a relevant curriculum continued in the present era (post-independence), the IGCSE programme was introduced in Swaziland in 2006. This was after a series of meetings were held on the need for the replacement of the GCE O-level programme which was more teacher-based. The IGCSE programme was seen as an ideal curriculum because it focused on the learner rather than the teacher (IGCSE Factsheet, 2015). It was also adopted because it was in line with the national and educational needs for a curriculum which could diversify the talents and aptitudes of students.

The Registrar of the Examinations Council of Swaziland (ECoS) at that time believed that the IGCSE programme was going to be helpful to learners, but noted that it came with challenges, most of which could be attributed to the concept of change rather than to the IGCSE curriculum itself (*The Times of Swaziland*, 18 February, 2008). The implication was that in order for the change to be effective, a set of alignment strategies ought to be put in place. In his view, IGCSE provided the opportunity to develop learners who were independent and critical thinkers. The Registrar held the view that the curriculum promoted progressive and child-centred teaching and learning methods. This was opposed to the traditional ones used under the O-Level programme which promoted the regurgitation of knowledge, with very little understanding. In his opinion, the IGCSE programme was supposed to make learners better human beings because the skills acquired at school would be skills required at tertiary level and generally in adult life (*The Times of Swaziland*, 18 February, 2008).

The content of some of the meetings held on the transition from GCE O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum are discussed in Mndzebele (2009). A meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1999 aimed to explore several examination systems, and the IGCSE emerged as the ideal option but prompted disagreements among the participants, especially with Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) and the Swaziland Principals Association (SWAPA), due to

the demands that surrounded the need to align the curriculum, such as the financial demands and resource configuration (Mndzebele, 2009). In another meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2000, there was deliberation on the challenges that needed to be addressed to successfully implement the IGCSE. This was when the task of developing a local syllabus was suggested. It was given to the Inspectorate to ensure that these would be compatible with the standards of the IGCSE curriculum. At the Staff Conference of 2001, deliberations were held on changing the educational programme to include vocational training in order to give Swazi scholars an opportunity to diversify their career paths. This on its own suggested a move from a purely academic orientation to the inclusion of vocational subjects. Stakeholders clearly viewed the IGCSE as being the best option for Swaziland. On the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005, a symposium on IGCSE was held to launch the IGCSE curriculum in the country. It became clear in that meeting that the IGCSE would have a huge impact on the country's financial resources and needed to be monitored closely (Mndzebele, 2009). The endorsement of the IGCSE curriculum was therefore given grudgingly, and when the IGCSE programme was actually implemented, it was only perceived to be ideal for the country if its financial requirements were met.

The question of the financial resources required to implement the IGCSE often created tension among the stakeholders. This was especially so among teacher associations who often viewed the financial implications from the perspective of parents. It became clear that the success of the programme was going to depend largely on effective, quality alignment strategies. Since it was clear that the alignment strategies were going to be costly for parents, this rendered the relevance of the IGCSE curriculum questionable (Gamedze, 2010).

### **1.1.2. Introduction and implementation of IGCSE**

The ultimate result of the search for a replacement of the O-Level curriculum saw the MoE replacing the GCE O-Level Curriculum with the IGCSE at the senior secondary school level in 2006. IGCSE was a curriculum originally set by the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), and was designed as a two-year curricular programme leading to a certificate that was pronounced by CIE to be internationally recognised and equivalent in standard to the British GCSE and international GCE Ordinary Level Examinations. The main feature of IGCSE was that students were rewarded for positive achievement, that is, for what they knew, understood and could do, rather than being only penalised for their errors (IGCSE Factsheet, 2015). IGCSE courses were renowned for developing vital educational skills, including team work,

the recall of knowledge, initiative, and the development of oral, problem solving and investigative skills (IGCSE Factsheet, 2015).

The period between 2006 and 2009 was important for the IGCSE and the process of implementation of the curriculum was characterised by major achievements and challenges. Most of the developments were highlighted in the local press. By examining these, a need for the aligning of the curriculum becomes evident. Such an achievement would ensure relevance of the curriculum in the country and address the dire need for change in decision-making so as to accommodate the numerous concerns that became synonymous with the implementation of the IGCSE programme.

The Ministry of Education Performance Report (2007) refers to the fact that the country continued to provide a curriculum that enabled students to develop motivation and interest in the academic and non-academic fields to which they were exposed through a variety of learning experiences that schools offered. The document recognised the adoption of the IGCSE curriculum as being one of the most notable curriculum innovations for the year under review, a point-of-view that had been fostered by CIE. The review also observed that teachers were being sensitised and capacitated on what the change from the GCE O-Level meant in terms of their roles and responsibilities (The Ministry of Education Performance Report, 2007).

One of the most significant achievements of the IGCSE was seen in February 2008 when the results of the first group of students who were examined on the curriculum were released. The *Times of Swaziland* (18 February, 2008) reported that the results of this first group indicated a high pass level that was above eighty percent. This was a significant rise from the O-Level examination results which did not exceed twenty percent.

### **1.1.3. Alignment concerns from the press**

In spite of the significant rise, it became evident that there were more challenges than achievements. One of the key challenges that came with the implementation of the IGCSE programme was the lack of textbooks. The programme required sufficient textbooks if its implementation was to be properly handled. The *Times of Swaziland* (28 February, 2008) referred to the fact that the 11 475 students who passed the Junior Certificate Examination in 2007 could not secure textbooks under the IGCSE curriculum. The reason given for the

failure to obtain the necessary books was that they had to be ordered from overseas and that this attracted shipment costs and other taxes. The textbooks were therefore not only inaccessible, but when they did come, they proved to be expensive. This issue tarnished the general image of the IGCSE curriculum as it rendered questionable the degree to which it was cost-effective. Most local bookshops did not have the textbooks, and some of the bookshops even lacked the full list of the books to be ordered. To exemplify the lack of affordability of the textbooks, *The Times of Swaziland* (28 February, 2008) printed an example of the ESL textbook which retailed for E209.00 and required a workbook which cost E156.00. This could be viewed as an undermining factor to the curriculum in the educational context of Swaziland. This happened in spite of the fact that the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) had emphasised the need for the simplistic procurement of teaching materials for the IGCSE. The document had stated that core teaching materials for the IGCSE were to be available at bookshops and published by large publishers such as Macmillan, Heinemann, Longman and the Oxford University Press. As stated, the Times of Swaziland reported that a large percentage of bookshops did not even have the full list of the textbooks required and so some of them were not available (ibid).

The local press also documented the concerns of Members of Parliament (MPs) on the IGCSE curriculum. The curriculum was considered expensive and time consuming by the MPs because of the number of papers which learners had to write under each examination syllabus. There was to be, for instance, three papers that a candidate had to sit for in Physical Science (IGCSE Science Syllabus, 2008). The *Swazi Observer* referred to the expense of the programme and quoted the example of it demanding equipment like radio sets for oral lessons, and the obligation to write numerous examination papers under each examination syllabus (*The Swazi Observer*, 5 June, 2008). Trying to curb these challenges was the Minister of Education at that time who continued to emphasise the need to forge ahead with the changes because Swaziland, together with Lesotho, were the only countries still using the GCE O-Level system (Gamedze, 2010) and therefore needed to accept the phasing in of the IGCSE.

On another occasion, the Minister of Education said that removing the “contentious IGCSE [curriculum] would create a chaotic situation in schools,” (*The Swazi Observer*, 29 July, 2008). He further expressed the need to have an alternative curriculum if IGCSE had to be phased out. Swazis were urged to consider dealing with the challenges rather than posing an

outright rejection of IGCSE. He also said that whatever concerns teachers and principals had would be dealt with as they were identified (*The Swazi Observer*, 29 July, 2008).

The era of the implementation of the IGCSE curriculum had engaged the country in a debate, especially with legislators generally expressing comments on how the IGCSE was ineffective because it lacked proper alignment standards. The *Times of Swaziland* embodied the outcries of the MPs over the IGCSE issue. Following a report conducted by the MoE on the new programme, the newspaper published an outright statement to the effect that the MPs wanted to see the system of education stopped with immediate effect (*The Times of Swaziland*, 3 June, 2008). Some of the highlights of the report concerned the discrepancies that ensued among the various entities that surrounded the IGCSE. One was that out of 9860 candidates who sat for the 2007 examination, only 1180 qualified to enrol at institutions of higher learning. Other discrepancies touched on the fact that IGCSE specified no more than thirty learners per class, whereas in reality most schools did not have the necessary infrastructure and equipment to implement this. In addition, there were few inspectors available to monitor the progress of the programme, and many teachers still used to the old system of education. Moreover, the Examination fees were higher than those for the GCE O-Level (*The Swazi Observer*, 3 June, 2008).

Following these reports, MPs noted that the standard of education in the country was declining at a time when it was expected to improve. One MP went to the extent of saying that Parliament had been lied to when it was told that the IGCSE was the best system for the country. He continued saying that other nations were using a different programme, the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary education (HIGCSE), and that this was reported to be better than IGCSE. His exact words (*The Times of Swaziland*, 3 June, 2008) were “*We have now wasted two years. What will happen to our children who have been used as guinea pigs when this system is discarded in another two years? Why don't we just move towards the HIGCSE?*”

These thoughts were echoed by the *Swaziland Solidarity Network* who published an article on its website which revealed that IGCSE was not taught in state schools in the United Kingdom (UK) because it had not been approved by the relevant qualifications authority. *The Swazi Observer* reported that MPs were wondering about its promulgation and why the MoE had hailed the IGCSE curriculum as being cost-effective when it was in fact more expensive than

the previous GCE curriculum in terms of its need for alignment at the local schools(*The Swazi Observer*, 3 June, 2008).

On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008 a demand was made by the Sidla Inhloko Forum held at St John Bosco, which came to be known as the Manzini Declaration. This demand was to scrap the IGCSE and the need was highlighted for the implementation of wide ranging educational reforms that would bring Swaziland in tandem with the demands of a rapidly advancing, technologically complex, globalised economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the development of an educational system with quality and content that measured up to international standards (Sidla Inhloko Forum, 2013). This also spelt the need for improvement in the alignment of the educational curriculum in the country.

#### **1.1.4. Concerns from the Swaziland National Association of Teachers**

The president of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) at that time lamented the lack of laboratories, libraries and computers to ensure internet connection for pupils to undertake research. He nonetheless conceded that an alternative curriculum needed to be put in place before the removal of IGCSE. He urged government to workshop teachers and principals on the IGCSE curriculum since there was a general lack of understanding as to how its alignment ought to be done in the circumstances of the local schools, and how it should be taught.

It became clear that the majority of Swazis had specific expectations on the results of the IGCSE. They expected that the choice whose culmination was the IGCSE was guided by the needs of the country and addressed the needs of the Swazi people. It had to be less expensive but still up to international curriculum standards and be able to respond to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It also had to address the specific needs of Swazis and teach students skills that would lead to self-employment. Government was therefore seen to have failed to live up to its promises and recommendations for offering a relevant curriculum as documented in the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005);(*The Times of Swaziland*, 24 September, 2008). The IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) gave a comprehensive list of the pre-requisites for the effective implementation of the IGCSE curriculum, and the contents of the list formed the framework for the expectations of the majority of Swazi citizens, especially parents and teachers. The document stated clearly that without some structures and decisions, the curriculum would be improperly aligned in the context of Swaziland.

It stated that the Inspectorate needed to carry out in-service training for teachers on the new teaching strategies that were demanded by the new curriculum, and that class sizes had to be revisited in schools as IGCSE required a maximum of thirty pupils per class, due to the new teaching strategies. The document also spelt clearly that heads of department should be appointed to help subject teachers with materials and teaching methods, and that there was a need for capacity building of all educational organs related to school performance and improvement. It was also mentioned that there was need to develop the school infrastructure in order to meet the needs of the new curriculum, as well as the need for well-resourced libraries and laboratories (e.g. science, computer, and language laboratories). The combination of these were considered necessary for the curriculum to be aligned in the circumstances of the schools in Swaziland since the strategies that the curriculum was coming with were more learner centred than content-driven (IGCSE Consultative Document, 2005).

Following the need for staff development, *The Swazi Observer* reported on an attempt by the Examination Council of Swaziland (ECoS) and MoE to workshop teachers on the IGCSE curriculum (*The Swazi Observer*, 9 May, 2007). The two institutions had engaged the services of three examiners from Cambridge University to educate teachers on the IGCSE. Teachers were reportedly taught to administer oral examination by the Principal Examiner from Cambridge. He worked closely with Stuart Marriot and Ray Daniels who, at different occasions where the teachers were grouped, told teachers that oral examination was part of IGCSE and so should be mastered by teachers in order for them to examine pupils the right way. This indicates that although not comprehensively followed, the suggestions by the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) were followed. However, a year later in July 2008, *The Swazi Observer* reports on the request made by teachers through SNAT to be workshopped on the IGCSE (*The Swazi Observer*, 29 July 2008). This is an indication that the 2007 workshop and other workshops that might have been held did not capture the essence of how the new syllabuses were to be implemented.

It could be noted that aligning the curricula given the circumstances of both the country and its local schools was demanding. Not only was it demanding in terms of the need for change in the infrastructure and mindset of those who were supposed to implement the curriculum, but also because textbooks were scarce, unavailable or very expensive. Furthermore, there were significant implications for careful and systematic decision-making, planning, and

procurement and utilisation of resources to improve all aspects of curriculum alignment constructs. *The Times of Swaziland* (9 June, 2009) reported on the fact that the contentious IGCSE programme which had been introduced only two years before, had been phased out in 2009. It referred to the fact that government had localised the high school examination in an endeavour to reduce costs that were charged on exam fees. When the IGCSE curriculum was discontinued, it was to be replaced with the Swaziland General Certificate of Secondary Education (SGCSE), which was a localised version of the IGCSE. There was therefore to be an abrupt end to an educational curriculum that had seen only two years of implementation. Its replacement was mainly due to its demand for expensive materials that were not readily available and in some cases not fit for the circumstances of the country. This meant that it did not embrace the required alignment strategies for the curriculum.

#### **1.1.5. The Localisation policy**

One most recent educational policy, which is perhaps vital to the understanding of this study, is the localisation policy. This policy involves bringing in concepts of international significance in local contexts by using local material to teach those concepts. *The Development of Education National Report on the Kingdom of Swaziland* (2008) outlined that localisation was going to bring in a local flavour, reduce the cost of teaching and learning materials, and reduce dependence on UK systems. The document noted that the localised curriculum would reduce the number of examination papers required in some subjects without compromising quality. Consequently examination costs would be reduced. This meant that the examinations would be locally developed but were still going to enjoy international recognition, and allow students to study and work outside Swaziland. This proved to be the main strategy through which alignment could be brought about.

The localisation policy as it ensued in the Swaziland curriculum context has been researched by Gamedze (2010) and its major strengths and weaknesses identified. The study observed that localisation was going to be an advantage since it was going to ensure that concepts and skills of international significance were going to be taught using familiar content, in a learner-centred fashion, thus reducing the misunderstanding of those concepts and ensuring that the curriculum and the examinations were cost-effective and relevant to the learner and the circumstances of the country. The study also observed that there were challenges inherent in the need for external accreditation of the content and examination. The localisation policy could not always be properly implemented due to the need to satisfy the accrediting party's

desires and demands of what content ought to be included in order for them to accredit that curriculum. The study revealed that in the Swaziland context, this became the major weakness in implementing the localisation policy and it also undermined the alignment of policy in the circumstances of the country (Gamedze, 2010).

#### **1.1.6. Introduction of the SGCSE curriculum**

While the IGCSE curriculum was understood by the majority of Swazis to have failed the educational system in the country, major changes were evident in the education system, particularly in the schools. A new curriculum, the SGCSE was introduced in 2008. The Second Annual Review Meeting on the implementation of IGCSE and SGCSE referred to the SGCSE as a forthcoming localised version of the IGCSE curriculum (The Second Annual Review Meeting on the implementation of the IGCSE and the SGCSE, 15-16 May, 2007).

The introduction of the SGCSE in 2006 aimed to fulfil the need for localisation of the curriculum. It was aimed at the development of skills and of a critical and creative mind. The SGCSE was, however, not a locally brewed curriculum, but was a localised version of the IGCSE curriculum. It offered subjects under similar categories as the IGCSE, but it's the most notable achievement in the secondary school sector was that the examinations were going to be locally prepared whilst still receiving official approval from CIE (IGCSE Consultative Document, 2005). It also meant that local content was going to be incorporated in teaching skills of international significance (Mndzebele, 2009). However, language teachers struggled to implement the localisation policy because the IGCSE – SGCSE shift was not very inventive for the English Language subject. Seventy five per cent of the syllabus formulation relied on the IGCSE for its material due to what decision-makers cited as a lack of local sources from which to draw content (Gamedze, 2010).

The teaching material (textbooks) used to teach the language are still of IGCSE origin, but the teacher is required to ensure that the concepts are taught to the learner using local content (Gamedze, 2010). Furthermore, there is still heavy reliance on behavioural objectives as a guide towards lesson planning and evaluation, and this lacks consistency with the aim towards creative mindedness. A learner who exhibits a form of behaviour different from the one stated in the objectives 'has not learnt' and so the lesson is deemed unsuccessful. Researchers have noted that the educational experiences in the teaching of a language cannot be prescribed in precise behavioural terms because the learner may make unique and

personalised responses to that experience (Walker, 1990). Discrepancies between policy standards and implementation of curriculum content therefore exist.

The acquisition of English Language skills is a determining factor in the improvement of learners' academic achievement in all the subjects in the schools (except SiSwati, the first language). English is a passing subject. Consequently the success of English language teachers greatly affects that of learners who endeavour to improve their lives through quality education. A lack of understanding of policy directives over the years has culminated in a failure of implementation practices and so curricula is viewed as something that is not tailored for local school level circumstances (Lukhele, 2006; Nxumalo, 2007). Taba (1962) believes that if teachers are to use the curriculum intelligently, they need to understand the theoretical basis for the system of curriculum planning as well as to master the special teaching skills for implementing it. She believes that teachers ought to be responsible for the selection of content, learning experiences and organisation of learning activities.

Heads of Departments (HoDs) who are school-based are faced with an unenviable dual role since they have to be interpreters of policy intent as well as teachers in the schools (Wang, 2010), a dual role for which they have not been prepared (Gamedze, 2010; Mndzebele, 2009). Interpreting the curriculum means being a forward planner in the implementation context. It is therefore not clear how department heads from low socio-economic school settings (i.e. schools that struggle financially and have little support from government) should align policy standards and implementation. These schools are overcome with a low morale among learners and educators, and they lack the capacity for competitive curricular activities (such as debates and spelling competitions among themselves and with other schools), which are activities that relate to the goal of education to produce learners who are more knowledgeable and could compete in the world of work (NERCOM Report, 1985). In language education, it is natural that the learner would want to compare his or her progress with that of others, hence the need for schools which could promote this desire among individuals (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). Also, the problem of curriculum implementation that has been identified throughout the years in the country persists because no researchers are studying it in order to generate recommendations for change.

The SGCSE curriculum was designed to be a two year programme leading to an examination in Form 5. Learners under the programme normally fall in one of two categories: the core and

the extended levels (SGCSE English Language Syllabus 6873, ECoS, 2014). One of the most important reasons for the introduction of the SGCSE curriculum was the need for cost-containment of the educational curriculum (*The Times of Swaziland*, 3 June, 2008). There was also a need to align senior secondary school curriculum with the broad national development aims, and in particular with the need to draw inspiration from the country's vision for education as stated in the NERCOM Report(1985). This includes the need to redirect education to the cultural inclinations of the country. The cultural basis for the SGCSE curriculum implied that while the reform was still in its initial stages, there was a very strong potential for success. This is because the process of curriculum reform was then largely, if not entirely, linked to the overall introspection of senior-secondary education. This was articulated in many educational reviews, for example the NERCOM Report (1985).

#### **1.1.7. General aims of the SGCSE curriculum**

The SGCSE curriculum had a uniqueness that was deemed to be relevant to the situation in Swaziland. The curriculum intended to enable learners to develop essential skills and provide a broad learning experience. According to the SGCSE English Language Syllabus (2014), the curriculum:

- inculcates values and attitudes as well as knowledge and understanding;
- encourages respect for human rights and freedom of speech;
- develops desirable attitudes and behaviour towards the environment;
- respects the values and beliefs of others, relating to issues of gender, culture and religion; and
- provides insight and understanding of global issues which affect the quality of life in Swaziland and elsewhere, e.g., the AIDS pandemic; global warming, misdistribution of wealth; and technological advances.

The last policy directive led to an understanding that the curriculum was made to respond to the problems of the time, and that it was especially dedicated to the improvement of the quality of life of Swazis.

The SGCSE curriculum considered the following to be the compulsory subjects: SiSwati (First or Second Language), English Language, Mathematics and Science (SGCSE English Language Syllabus (2014). By virtue of being the only compulsory subjects, these subjects

should work towards the fulfilment of some of the national goals of education. These goals were outlined in the Swaziland Nation on the Development of Education: 1994-1996 (1996), and are:

- (i) development of the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, emotional, and practical capacities of Swazi children;
- (ii) equipping people with capacities needed to shape and adapt to a fast changing, complex and uncertain socio-economic environment;
- (iii) engenderment of a sense of civic mindedness and fostering of a democratic society that reflects the socio-cultural context of Swaziland;
- (iv) creation of a population of lifelong learners and creative minds.

From the general aims of the SGCSE curriculum it could be noted that relevant education in the context of the country was driven by a need to inculcate a spirit of patriotism whilst still ensuring the ability to live in a dynamic global world. The implication was that through the localisation policy, the programme would be properly aligned with the circumstances of the country. The implementation strategies were clearly spelt out in the localisation policy which introduced both the IGCSE and SGCSE curriculum programmes (IGCSE Consultative Document, 2005).

### **1.1.8. Differences between IGCSE and SGCSE**

The shift from the IGCSE to the SGCSE curriculum implied new innovations which were supposed to bolster the relevance of the curriculum to the circumstances of the country and its peoples. A natural occurrence was to anticipate differences in the two curriculum programmes.

Considerable differences in the principles and aims of teaching the SGCSE and IGCSE syllabuses are apparent. In order to highlight the consideration of the main constructs of curriculum relevance in the development of the SGCSE curriculum, it is best to highlight some of the differences in the aims of the teaching of the English Language.

It is important to note that the rationale for teaching ESL under the IGCSE curriculum was guided by the widespread use of the English Language as a medium of instruction and as the language of commerce and entertainment. It therefore assesses students' ability to use English as a medium of practical communication, and is aimed at students for whom English

is not a first language or mother tongue, but for whom it is a *lingua franca* or language of study. It could be noted that the rationale for the teaching of English under the two programmes differs considerably. The rationale for teaching English Language, according to the SGCSE Curriculum is guided by the National Policy Statement on Education (1999), which aims to provide a curriculum and assessment system that, on completion, equips learners to meet the changing needs of the nation whilst ensuring that they have attained internationally acceptable standards. It is also noteworthy that in the SGCSE curriculum, English is not designated a first or second language. As mentioned above, the *Swaziland's National Education Policy Directives* which inform the SGCSE curriculum aims are based on the desire for a curriculum that enables learners to develop essential skills and provide a broad learning experience which:

- Inculcates values and attitudes as well as knowledge and understanding;
- Encourages respect for human rights and freedom of speech;
- Respects the values and beliefs of others, relating to issues of gender culture and religion;
- Develops desirable attitudes and behaviour towards the environment;
- Provides insight and understanding of global issues which affect the quality of life in Swaziland and elsewhere.

The rationale for teaching IGCSE English was based on the need for every citizen to compete on the global market economically, technologically, commercially, politically, culturally and socially, and to provide a language foundation for continuing education (See Appendix 1). The role of English regarding that is the status that it holds internationally as a language of commerce, a second language in Swaziland, an internationally acceptable language, and a *lingua-franca* (Tomlinson, 2010).

A major difference between the English Language offered by IGCSE and SGCSE curriculum respectively is based on the assessment criteria. A student of SGCSE English Language is supposed to write four compulsory papers. The IGCSE ESL syllabus requires a student to be examined on the basis of subjects taken either from a core curriculum or an extended curriculum. It is important to note the difference between IGCSE English and the same subject as offered in the SGCSE curriculum. SGCSE English Language is not designated as First or Second Language, but only as English Language, while in the IGCSE curriculum it is

designated as a First or Second language. This is a significant difference. The syllabus does, however, observe that there is a difference between students of English who use the language frequently in their social environment and those who only have contact with the language at school. This shows that the syllabus has been informed by the IGCSE and has moved forward to use that information in the context of the country. It embraces the social use rather than a teaching of the technique of language usage. The following section discusses the assessment weightings of papers under the two programmes and the aims of the syllabuses. They share many similarities and the differences are minimal.

### 1.1.8.1. Weighting of examination papers

#### (a) *SGCSE English Language*

| Paper                          | Weighting |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Reading and Directed Writing | 35%       |
| 2 Continuous Writing           | 35%       |
| 3 Listening                    | 15%       |
| 4 Speaking                     | 15%       |

#### (b) *IGCSE ESL*

|                                     | Duration of Examination  | Weighting  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| PAPER 1 (Reading and Writing ) CORE | <b>1 hour 30 minutes</b> | <b>70%</b> |

**OR**

|   |                |            |
|---|----------------|------------|
| PAPER 2 (Reading and Writing ) EXTENDED | <b>2 Hours</b> | <b>70%</b> |
|---|----------------|------------|

**AND EITHER:**

|                          |                                |            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| PAPER 3 (Listening) CORE | <b>Approx. 30 – 40 minutes</b> | <b>30%</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|

**OR**

|                              |                           |            |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| PAPER 4 (Listening) EXTENDED | <b>Approx. 45 minutes</b> | <b>30%</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|

### 1.1.9. Major implications for curriculum alignment

While the shift from the O-Level to the IGCSE curriculum had its own challenges since the education fraternity and the general public were very sceptical about the then new IGCSE programme, the introduction of another shift to a localised version of the not-so-much understood IGCSE was going to demand redress of the issue by the MoE. The MoE had the

responsibility to clarify issues to the public so that the right perceptions about the programme were communicated. The overall paradigm shift, which incorporated a move from a content-driven curriculum to a skills-driven one also demanded a shift from teacher-to child-centred teaching approaches. This on its own had implications for the teacher in-service and pre-service training required. The teachers had to focus on those approaches that were going to involve the learner in the learning process so that graduates could be able to treat the new SGCSE curriculum properly.

When the SGCSE curriculum was introduced, two broad, diametrically opposed categories of schools existed in the country: privileged and underprivileged schools. These and their significance in the study are defined below.

#### **1.1.10. Privileged schools**

There existed those schools which derived lots support from government in the form of funding for support staff and for the day-to-day running of the school. Such schools enjoyed the privileges of financial commitment by the school board and government, and also lots of organisational support and leadership by the school principal. This led to the complete change of behaviour in teachers and learners demanded by the curriculum reform (Sutton, 2005).

#### **1.1.11. Underprivileged schools**

Some schools which existed in the country are underprivileged. Sutton (2005) lists the main characteristics of underprivileged schools as follows: they have a high proportion of disadvantaged students, a high proportion of less experienced teachers, poor financial conditions, and overall grade point averages and test scores which are significantly lower than surrounding schools. In Swaziland, Gamedze (2010), looking at the pre-implementation stage of the SGCSE curriculum, reported that some schools were going to have difficulty implementing the SGCSE due to the deprived circumstances they existed under when the SGCSE was introduced. In such schools, as Sutton (2005) generally observes, there is very little or no financial commitment by the school board and government, and little organisational support and leadership by the school principal. These conditions lead to a lack of change of behaviour by teachers and learners.

It becomes an issue of interest therefore to establish the behaviour of underprivileged schools in the event of a curriculum reform. This would assist those who translate the curriculum

standards into practice to ensure that it can be properly implemented according to the received directives.

#### **1.1.12. Responsibilities for heads of departments**

School level HoDs are faced with an unenviable dual role since they have to be interpreters of policy intent as well as teachers in schools (Wang, 2010). Their success and that of the teachers they lead rests on how well they (HoDs) understand policy. The chances for the successful implementation of a curriculum reform are much better if there is one person who is an experienced, respected member of the school staff. This person can act as a supporter of the reform, defend its more costly and risky features and speak up about its benefits (Mndzebele, 2009; Walker, 1990). Since curriculum interpretation means being a forward planner in the implementation context, HoDs could use any support to their advantage. However, HoDs from schools which struggle financially due to a lack of support from government, are plagued by a low morale among learners and educators; they find their role challenging. These schools lack involvement in within-curricular competitive activities which could provide a platform where they could help one another. It is not clear what strategies HoDs from such underprivileged schools in low socio-economic settings have used to align policy standards and implementation. Furthermore, the problem of curriculum implementation has persisted because of the lack of research around it.

The success of educational practice depends largely on department heads because they negotiate policy mandates in local situations (Wang, 2010:132-140). For this reason, the subsequent review documents the studies which researchers in Swaziland and elsewhere in Swaziland undertook in order to understand the process of aligning policy intent with the implementation of curricula. These sources are complemented by literature from other settings where curriculum implementation was aligned with standards.

### **1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The issue of lack of knowledge on how HoDs have implemented curriculum changes in underprivileged schools has resulted into HoDs facing challenges in the Shiselweni region. Most teachers and HoDs in the region are aware that the acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL) skill is a determining factor in the improvement of learners' academic achievement in almost all the subjects in the schools, since all subjects are taught in English (Tomlinson, 2010). Teachers, on the one hand, are faced with the challenge to improve the

ability of learners to improve their lives through quality education. On the other hand, HoDs are located at a position where they ought to be translators of the curriculum in the schools (Wang, 2010). Misunderstanding policy directives over the years has culminated in the failure to successfully implement the requirements of ESL, such that the curriculum is viewed as not being tailored to meet school circumstances (Gamedze, 2010: 169; Mndzebele, 2009; Nxumalo, 2007). Whilst the Development of Education: National Report of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2008) clearly stated that there was a need for developing a system that was going to make a complete diagnosis of the state of the education system including student enrolment, learning conditions, infrastructure, teaching staff, costs and education performance in order to ensure that policy formulation, management, planning, budgeting and evaluation of the education system were informed by relevant, timely and accurate education data and information, this is yet to be realised.

The implications for the shift from a content-led curriculum to a skills-based one requires that numerous changes take place in both the teaching and learning strategies: changes in infrastructure, teaching approaches, numbers of students, administrative measures etc., are required (IGCSE Consultative Document, 2005). This, in turn has led the researcher to inquire about how process of curriculum alignment has been handled by HoDs from underprivileged schools, especially with the alignment of the new English syllabus. In the process of curriculum alignment there seems to be glaring challenges, as it is not clear what strategies ought to be used by department heads to align curriculum implementation with the standards laid down in the accompanying documents (e.g. the syllabus).

Challenges of this nature that derive from lack of defined curriculum alignment procedures have been well- documented in Swaziland. Qualitative studies undertaken on secondary school education in Swaziland on different curricula over the years reveal a considerable amount of discrepancies between policy formulation and curriculum implementation. Nxumalo (2007) investigated how rural school teachers of the English Language at junior secondary level implemented the subject and the measures they had in place to address the challenges they encountered. The study revealed that there was a lot of improvisation on the part of the teachers and that they lacked language teaching models. In his study, Mdluli (2003) draws attention to the lack of understanding of policy directives regarding the implementation of the received IGCSE History syllabuses by teachers. He showed that this misunderstanding remains a major challenge in achieving desired behaviour by learners. In

the same fashion, Lukhele (2006) points to the complexity of the implementation problem in the country when she reports the existence of conflicting and unclear voices regarding what is supposed to be taught and what is actually taught by teachers. In a similar vein, Mndzebele (2009) points out the lack of involvement of relevant stakeholders in policy development and suggests that this is the basis for a lack of psychological ownership of the then newly introduced IGCSE curriculum.

Contrary to the above studies, Gamedze (2010) focused on the pre-implementation stage of the SGCSE curriculum since the programme was being phased-in in stages and, when the study was conducted, it was still too early to focus on the implementation stage. The study revealed that the lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders led to the fact that the conditions necessary for successful implementation were not accorded the necessary consideration. According to Gamedze, the programme had implications for resources configuration, in terms of channelling resources towards time, infrastructure and capacity building, which were not catered for due to a failure to diffuse information to the relevant stakeholders or elicit their ideas. As can be seen, a trend of not involving relevant stakeholders or incorporating their expectations in policy formulation has been documented. It is noteworthy that the tendency of teachers to fail to perform to the best of their capabilities when they have not been involved in the development of the curriculum makes the curriculum to be treated purely as a government directive and therefore perceived as a received curriculum.

Wang (2010) lends credence to the observations made in Swaziland education when he claims that the success of policy implementation was dependent on the extent to which those who translate policy do their job. He called upon policy-makers to interact with those who translate policy in order to obtain relevant feedback. He further claims that to do otherwise is "...akin to playing a game of 'broken telephone', where the possibility exists of passing a distorted version of policy, as well as the further possibility that the delivery agents may lack a clear understanding of the central reasons for the implementation" (Wang, 2010: 128). Equally important is a study conducted in South Africa by Msila (2010). He reports that a willingness and vision gained from professional development schemes enabled school principals to successfully lead change in implementation. This provides the most compelling evidence that local level administrators have to be involved in the process of curriculum development, and to be capacitated whenever the need arises.

Studies also predict that opportunities to learn are often context-embedded and involve class size, resource availability, expertise and available authority (Honig, 2004; Naidoo & Green, 2010; Penuel, Fishman, Gallagher, Korbak & Lopez-Prado, 2008; Walker, 1990). It is important to realise something observed by Mavhunga (2006), namely that the challenges that engulfed implementation in Zimbabwe stem from a curriculum which lacks the attributes of the context in which its delivery is to occur. He called for an 'Africanisation' of the school curriculum in order to lessen the discrepancies that come from an externally initiated curriculum.

The aforementioned studies focus on how the curriculum was shaped by the dynamics related to new policy requirements, and how implementers responded to these changes through the use of new approaches to assessment, and sometimes, an alteration of beliefs. It has been noted that the curriculum field in Swaziland has challenges which reside mainly in its continued obsession with only procedural and prescriptive matters, and the lack of practical solutions on how HoDs ought to ensure curriculum alignment. The curriculum field has also failed to generate new theoretical lines of understanding that could help bring about successful implementation (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 2000). The lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders in curriculum development has resulted in theoretical changes in the form of policy changes which become a source of frustration for school level teacher administrators, and most importantly HoDs. All things considered, a gap exists in research into how department heads have implemented the new SGCSE curriculum in Swaziland and how they have ensured the adaptation to new curriculum standards, and therefore desirable levels of performance. It is the existence of this gap that prompted the researcher to find out from the HoD show they carried out their middle management role of ensuring that alignment works effectively as a strategy for implementation.

### **1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to describe the perceptions of English Language department heads from underprivileged schools and their attempts to adapt new curriculum reforms and incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices. Furthermore, it aims to find out the route that curriculum implementation has followed in terms of the HoDs interpretation of policy demands and their putting them into practice. The views of the HoDs are significant as they are deemed to be vital in the translation of policy into practice. The change in the

English Language syllabus from O-Level to IGCSE and then SGCSE requires that a number of changes take place at practice level.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study sought to answer the major question which is:

- i. How have English Language HoDs from underprivileged schools adapted new curriculum reforms to incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices?

Sub-questions are:

- ii. How have HoDs struck a balance in bridging policy contexts and protected learning situations against potential, external adverse effects? and
- iii. What are the challenges facing the HoDs in the actual implementation of the curriculum?

#### **1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study describes how English Language department heads from underprivileged schools have adapted new curriculum reforms in their schools and incorporated policy changes in their instructional practices.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Describe how English Language HoDs from underprivileged schools have adapted to the new curriculum reforms so as to incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices.
2. Describe how HoDs have struck a balance by bridging policy contexts and protected learning situations against potential, external adverse effects.
3. Describe the challenges facing the HoDs in the actual implementation.

#### **1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

This study is situated in the Grounded Theory theoretical approach introduced by Glaser & Strauss (1967). This approach provides a viable means for scholars and participants to generate a new and emic perspective, and also to develop theory that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experiences (Elliot & Higgins, 2012).

The researcher was able to identify the problem of alignment in the country from the participants themselves. The main contributions of the theory are drawn from Glaser and Strauss (1967); Byrant & Charmaz (2007); Charmaz (1996, 2000, &2012); and Corbin & Strauss, 1998 & 2008). The contribution Glaser makes to this study is the emphasis on grounded theory approaches as being a viable means for scholars and research participants to develop new theories and understandings generated from the researcher's ability to identify the research problem from the research participants. Glaser discovered that there is theory in data, and that this emanates from the participant's lived reality and the sense they make of their diverse, multiple perspectives.

In addition, the study subscribed to the notion by Charmaz (1996, 2000, 2002 & 2012) that grounded theory is not only inductive as Glaser & Strauss (1967) had, but is also constructivist in nature. Although the prescriptive measures of grounded theory that were introduced by Corbin & Strauss (1998 & 2008) are also used to the benefit of this study to ensure that the study followed a particular structure, this study is largely constructivist. The researcher was involved in a number of creative responsibilities in ensuring that theory did not only "emerge" from the data (as scholars Glaser & Strauss (1967) had postulated), but that it was an outcome of her active involvement in the research through engaging in constant comparison of the data during preliminary analysis. The researcher was engaged in the coding and categorisation of the data, and the theory which was still grounded in the circumstances of the participants did not only emerge, but was an outcome of researcher involvement in the research setting (Charmaz, 2012).

It is believed that the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and that its findings will be looked into by future researchers in order to build upon the knowledge that will exist at that time. The conclusion and recommendations of the study contribute to the development of school level policy implementation strategies and curriculum implementation strategies in underprivileged schools.

## **1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study can contribute to educational research and knowledge in Swaziland with regard to the localisation of curricular, and can bring insights to the issues that HoDs are grappling with in their professional lives. It was worth conducting since it documented the activities undertaken by teachers who come from middle management in schools, who are expected to

take the instructional lead and yet are more often than not forgotten in the conceptualisation of curriculum policy change. It was envisioned that it would serve as an eye-opener to the Ministry of Education and Training and other relevant stakeholders such as curriculum designers and teachers of English on the manner in which alignment was carried out and on the factors required to achieve the broader aims of education. It was also envisaged that the study was going to help the MoE in reassessing its strategic plan on the responsiveness of the curriculum implementation standards to the policy directives. This in turn would inform other aspects of planning education, for example, policy formulation, education management, budgeting, and evaluation of the curriculum goals.

As it has already been stated, in an endeavour to answer the research question the study followed a grounded theory perspective. This was due to the absence of literature which could establish a framework through which the circumstances surrounding department heads could be understood in the country. The inductive approach utilised required that the researcher ascertain the perceptions of the department heads themselves from their official documents and from their word of mouth. It is these perceptions that then point out to the need for a specific analysis of documents, which were then treated purely as data and integrated into the analysis of findings. The emerging theory is therefore a result of the perceptions of school level department heads on how the issue of the implementation of the English Language was done, and how they think it could be improved to ensure that the directives are implemented positively in their underprivileged circumstances. The usefulness of a grounded theory approach to this study is that it explains the realities that engulf teacher implementation of curriculum standards. The teachers themselves shared their opinions on how the alignment of standards and implementation could be improved.

### **1.8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It was hoped that there would be adequate literature on the phenomenon under study, but it proved to be a major challenge that such literature on aligning policy and curriculum implementation was minimal. The researcher therefore conducted a primary study investigating perspectives of participants. Extra care not to observe actual teaching practice and to include those teachers who play a monitoring role in the implementation phase was taken though. This is because assessing curriculum implementation should not begin with an examination of teacher action and practice since teachers might then adopt a defensive

posture (McKernan, 1988). The nature of the information sought required the use of HoD documents and unstructured interviews.

Given sufficient time and finances, the researcher would have solicited the views of teachers, students, and industry concerning the alignment of the curriculum to the needs of the country. This would have allowed for the collection of other data using different collection methods. Worth noting again is that the use of the grounded theory approach interfered with the presentation of findings. This was due to highly qualitative nature that was evident in the findings, which posed challenges for the researcher as she manoeuvred her way into a presentation of findings that could also be usable to practitioners. Had more time been available, the researcher would have cross-referenced the findings with the perspectives of stakeholders on the relevance of the curriculum. This would have indicated whether the MoE had ensured that the introduction of the SGCSE was driven by the need for curriculum relevance. A comparison of the similarities or differences in these views with the decisions taken by the MoE would be enlightening to both educationists and curriculum specialists. Such a study could therefore be conducted in the future.

## **1.9. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided the background to curriculum alignment in Swaziland. It has also classified schools in Swaziland under two categories: underprivileged schools and privileged schools. Underprivileged schools strive to harmonise education policy change and instructional practice in Swaziland's senior secondary schools. Literature drawn from Swaziland suggests that underprivileged schools lack the necessities enjoyed by privileged schools. These include support which aids the smooth running of the school and helps to ease the demands of the teaching of the newly introduced SGCSE syllabus. The researcher thus sought input from the department of English heads in underprivileged schools on how they endeavoured to meet the demands of the subject in their local schools. It has been noted that a number of scholars have focused on how decision-makers should strive towards acceptance of change without neglecting the practice level. The study makes use of qualitative data to gain insight into the focus of the research. The next section outlines the organisation of the study.

## **1.9. ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

Chapter 2: Introduction and Implementation of curricular changes

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

Chapter 5: Data Presentation

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULAR CHANGES

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to the process undertaken in aligning curriculum implementation to policy standards, policy change, and their effects on curriculum implementation. The literature review in this section is classified into four categories: *policy change*, *curriculum alignment*, *English Language teaching*, and *underprivileged schools*. Journal articles, monographs, reports, and dissertations were all reviewed in order to describe the past and current state of information available, and in order to organise and document the need for the present study (Creswell, 2005).

The endeavour to review such literature is based on the existence of a group of clean, well-cared for schools, in terms of their infrastructure, where qualified teachers, physically and mentally capable students, and a concerned, supportive group of parents all co-work to ensure that learning is carried out properly. In these schools, as policy has it, the following vision is boldly stated on a board: “ACHIEVING EXCELLENCY THROUGH A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH AND THE FULL UTILISATION OF THE LOCALISATION POLICY.” (Idea of policy change and lack of change in practice borrowed from Eckel, Green & Hill, 2001).

This is opposed to what was in existence when the O-Level curriculum was in place. It was a content-driven approach that required teachers to effectively deliver their lessons and so the vision of all the schools reflected this. When the IGCSE replaced the O-Level, the vision was to use learner-centred approaches to achieve excellence. Thereafter, it was deemed necessary to use local content and material to teach the concepts of international significance which came with the IGCSE. This localisation policy then changed the curriculum from IGCSE to SGCSE, and the vision was to teach through the policy of localisation. Now just suppose that the vision board was the only thing about the school which was ever changed! What would this mean for policy standards and the implementation of the curriculum, what would it mean for classroom instruction? (Eckel et al., 2001).

There are a number of factors that may contribute to this possibility. A study conducted by Gamedze (2010) speculated that the success of the localisation policy was never going to be realised since a number of structures which were supposed to be put in place for the success

of the policy were never put in place when they were supposed to be. The present study sought to reveal how the actual process of implementation proceeded.

Basing on a different curriculum context, Eckel, et al. (2001:73) make the following important statement on American curricular changes:

*...A curriculum cannot be assumed to be implemented because the teachers refer to it by a particular name, and have boxes and shelves of purchased materials by the same name. There are many conditions which must be present for a curriculum to be implemented. Some of these are: an understanding of the design of the curriculum, a valuing of the curriculum by staff; financial, personnel, and policy commitment by the school board; organisational support and leadership by the school principal; in-service support and skills and understanding of supervisors; and perhaps most critical to outcomes, new or changed teaching behaviour by instructors, and new or changed classroom behaviour by learners.*

The suggestion by the above scholars is that the understanding of curriculum alignment is based on an initial comprehension of a number of factors that ought to take place during the process itself. Literature on policy change and curriculum alignment in the country and elsewhere is therefore reviewed with an attempt to understand what has happened previously in the country and elsewhere concerning the alignment of curricula with policies.

## **2.2. THE ROOTS OF THE LOCALISATION POLICY**

It is important to gain an understanding of the decisions made on the localisation of the curriculum. The concept of localisation as defined by the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Hornby, 2005) is the act of limiting something or its effects to a particular area. The principal aim of the localisation policy was therefore to ensure that the content of the curriculum development process was limited to the context of Swaziland.

When the O-Level curriculum was phased-out, it was replaced by the 'stop-gap' IGCSE programme which was to make way for a supposedly new, relevant curriculum whose content was to be drawn from the immediate context of the learner using the then newly established localisation policy.

The localisation policy on its own emanated from the country's need for a locally produced curriculum which was cited in a number of documents and research studies to be the ideal curriculum in the context of the country. It was cited as ideal for a number of reasons. Lawton (1989) referred to the idealism of a local curriculum which would lend credence to

the local culture by ensuring a full utilisation of the local material easily understood in the immediate context of the learner. It became evident that it was important to gain insight into the formal and authoritative decision that was previously taken in Swaziland and elsewhere regarding the implementation of the new SGCSE curriculum programme. It was hoped that such insight was going to provide a clue to the extent to which the government and other various stakeholders were involved in ensuring that the outcomes of the curriculum programme were going to be positive. In other words, the review of various documents by government was done with the aim to understand the procedures and undertakings by government and relevant stakeholders directed at ensuring that challenges were minimised when the SGCSE was actually implemented.

The need for a locally produced curriculum began way back in 1985 when the NERCOM Report (1985) suggested that in order for the curriculum to be relevant to the needs of Swazis, the local culture had to be used as a source for educational objectives. There was a strong perception that a properly aligned and relevant curriculum was going to be based on the localisation policy. The reason for this government perspective was that the local context had vastly more resources that could lead to the proper derivation of curriculum content. Further, such content derived from the vicinity of the learner, in government's view, was going to lead to the improvement of learner academic performance since they were going to learn concepts of international significance using material that was familiar to them. Thus there was a recommendation by the review that the schools should participate in community activities and local old men and women were to come to the schools and talk to the pupils about Swazi customs and traditions. These recommendations actually were a revisit of the main considerations of the Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto (1972). Of key relevance to our concern for the basis of a local curriculum is Section 2.2.6 of the review, which states that:

*Culture could further be introduced into the curriculum through the use of local materials. Syllabi could have a lot of local content – for example in Home Economics pupils could learn to prepare and serve traditional dishes; the teaching of traditional crafts could also be included.*

The quest for a local curriculum in the country over the years has been grounded on the need to bring together the curriculum and the national objectives of the country's education system.

In the same fashion, the NERCOM Report (1985) proposed to establish permanent machinery based at the Department of Economic and Planning to ensure an adequate link between the supply and demand for trained manpower on the one hand, and to relate school curriculum to national employment prospects. This shows that the MoE was concerned about ensuring that the education did not only have short term goals such as engaging students in activities that were to keep them from criminal activities, but that it was also, largely concerned about the long term lives of individuals.

The Draft Policy on Curriculum Reform in Secondary Education in Swaziland (2007) recognised the following to be the main strategies for curriculum reform in the country: Policy, curriculum, implementation (time frame), monitoring (assessment etc.), staff development, accreditation, finance, and marketing. The document recognised that the school leaving certificate in place then (the O-Level) was fraught with a number of elements that were considered to be archaic when compared with curriculum practices implemented internationally. It was common knowledge that the curriculum was content-based, and that it catered for a narrow ability range, while at the same time it was considered mainly reliant on engaging the learner in written work. At that time, the learners in the country were still clinging to the O-Level system. After a comprehensive survey of various curriculum models, the MoE advocated for a curriculum which is skills-based, learner-centred and would be suitable for a wider range of ability. Research that was conducted on this endeavour pointed to the IGCSE or HIGCSE which was then utilised by other countries in the SADC region. The MoE then took it upon itself to be the chief proponent of the bold step to raise education from the "...doldrums of archaism to a level where it would be relevant, competitive, and internationally viable" (The Draft Policy on Curriculum Reform in Secondary Education in Swaziland, 2007).

It is noteworthy that the need to change from a content-based curriculum to a skills-based and learner-centred curriculum occurred at a time where the country was preparing itself to localise the curriculum. The document *First Meeting of the sub-Committee on the Possible Direction for Education* (1996) which reported on a meeting held at the University of Swaziland on the possible curriculum programmes that Swaziland could choose from referred to five curriculum options that were then available for the country to choose from.

The first option was to ensure that the O-Level was a local one "... *This option was*

*eventually ruled out since at the time there were rumours that the O-Level would be phased out”* (Examinations Council Officer, personal interview, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. The second syllabus option was the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) which was then utilised in Namibia. This option meant that the learners were going to write an examination after five years of secondary schooling. Its advantage was that it was aligned with the Cambridge Examination with which Swaziland was familiar, and was recognised by the South African universities for the purposes of entry into their programmes.

The third option was that the country should develop its own curriculum and examination systems of higher complexity which would be of the same level as the HGCSE of Namibia. The main advantage that was cited for this option was that the MoE was going to adopt and then adapt an examination system that already existed rather than re-invent the wheel. Again, it was a likelihood that such an examination system was going to be recognised by the Examination Board of South Africa.

The fourth option put forward was that students should be prepared for the Independent Examination Board examination directly and not to go via the local O-Level examination. This examination was supposed to be written after five years of schooling. The last option was that students be made ready for the Senior Certificate examination conducted by one of the provinces in South Africa. It was also going to be written after five years of Secondary schooling. It is also noteworthy that the confusion regarding curriculum changes in Swaziland were a result of the need for localising the curriculum at the same time when the only curriculum which was in place, which was the option the country could localise, was being phased out. It is important to note that when the country changed from the O-Level system, a clear direction was taken to ensure that a curriculum that was going to utilise the resources found within the country (both human and structural) was put in place.

An aligned curriculum therefore meant one that localised the examination. Structurally, it also meant better provision for the maintenance of buildings, provision of laboratories and libraries, and training of head teachers in administration. The localisation policy, or simply put, the quest for the localisation of the curriculum guided the activities that surrounded the curriculum. What this meant was that when it came to producing reviews and other educational policies and documents, protocols and procedures, the localisation policy, as an alignment strategy, proved to be the main guide. The perception from many educational

stakeholders was a “Localisation of the curriculum”, where all directives, decisions and documents were going to be guided by the environment of the learner (Gamedze, 2010). The documents analysed below expand on the idea of an aligned curriculum in terms of the policy of localisation.

### **2.2.1. The IGCSE Consultative Document (2005)**

The only challenge in achieving localisation was that there was no pre-existing curriculum to work with. In other words, since 2007 when the O-Level finally stopped setting examinations for Swaziland, there was to be no examination, and nothing in place to localise. The IGCSE was finally adopted as a bridging programme towards localisation and it was agreed by the educational stakeholders that it would take only two years to formulate the localisation of the different syllabuses. These new syllabuses would be gradually phased in. In 2005, there was a document that accompanied the IGCSE programme to the schools, which was supposed to introduce it. The IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) referred to the fact that the implementation of the IGCSE syllabuses was going to take two years. After this, there was to be a localisation of the IGCSE. The document referred to the fact that while adopted syllabuses were to be introduced in 2006, locally produced versions were currently being developed to replace the adopted IGCSE syllabuses. The locally produced versions were to be introduced in a staggered manner as the syllabuses were being approved. The IGCSE Consultative Document spelt clearly that the locally produced versions of the curriculum would start being introduced in 2009 and then be fully operational by 2011. This was to be governed by contractual agreements that the two parties, CIE and ECoS, were to enter into.

At the Staff Conference of 2001, deliberations were held on changing the educational programme to include vocational training in order to give Swazi scholars various options for formal employment by diversifying their career paths. This on its own suggested a move from a purely academic orientation to the inclusion of vocational subjects, which made the IGCSE to be viewed by the stakeholders in that conference to be the best option for Swaziland.

IGCSE implementation in Swaziland saw a number of ventures directed towards ensuring that the MoE effectively implement the curriculum. The document IGCSE Implementation in Swaziland: Examinations Administration/Processing Requirements Specification Exercise (2005) referred to the implementation process of the IGCSE as having two strands. The first

involved the localisation of the marking and moderating functions in the country, based on an agreed schedule at syllabus component level following the training of local personnel by Cambridge International Examinations and supervision of the process of a new curriculum and examination. The second strand to the implementation of the programme was the localisation of the administrative function to support examinations processing in-country. This meant that CIE could no longer develop examinations for the country, but a replacement examination processing system was put in place, using local resources.

On 12 October 2005 a Symposium on IGCSE was held which was supposed to launch the IGCSE curriculum in the country. It became clear from that meeting that the IGCSE had huge implications for financial resources and needed to be monitored closely (Mndzebele, 2009). The endorsement of the IGCSE curriculum was therefore done grudgingly, and when the IGCSE programme was actually implemented it was only perceived to be ideal for the country only if its financial requirements could be met.

The implication for the demand of financial resources in the implementation of the IGCSE often created tension among the stakeholders during the deliberations, especially the teacher associations who often viewed the financial implications from the perspective of the parents. They then questioned the relevance of the IGCSE curriculum if it was going to demand more money than what the parents were used to paying for the education of their children (Mndzebele, 2009).

The question of alignment in local settings in Swaziland has not been addressed in scholarly literature. Consequently a gap exists in so far as a need exists to know how teachers have implemented the new curriculum (SGCSE) in Swaziland. This can help to ensure the adaptation to curriculum standards which could achieve desirable levels of performance. Presently there is a shortage in the implementation theory which considers the specific conditions of the country, and even more importantly, those schools which are underprivileged. It could also be noted that the study aims to describe the experiences and perceptions of the HoDs as they spearheaded curriculum alignment in the schools. It can also provide them with a platform where they can contribute to what they felt could help them in their situation.

### **2.2.2. Second annual review meeting on the implementation of IGCSE and SGCSE in Swaziland (2007)**

One of the most important progress monitoring meetings took place in the UK on 15 and 16 May 2007. It is necessary to look at the decisions made in that meeting to understand how they addressed the notion of relevance and alignment and how they focused the MoE on the need for a local curriculum. It is also important to note that this was a follow-up meeting from the *First Annual Review Meeting* which was held in Swaziland on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

The *Second Annual Review Meeting* was held in Cambridge, United Kingdom, and it addressed the implementation of the IGCSE and the SGCSE in Swaziland. One of the chief objectives of the meeting was to address a number of policy issues related to the IGCSE and SGCSE implementation programme in Swaziland. In that meeting, Swaziland received the Examination Administration Schedule for 2007 on the IGCSE programme. The list of syllabus options available to Swaziland schools was confirmed, a development that was seen as a major move towards ensuring that the MoE could give appropriate feedback to schools. It was also agreed that the review of the grades for the IGCSE syllabus components that were going to be marked in Swaziland in November 2007 would be subjected to monitoring, supervision, and standardisation by CIE. This was to ensure that these grades were in harmony with international standards.

The decision to adopt the IGCSE established it as the most important development in the history of education in the country, and also in the quest for a relevant Swazi curriculum that was acceptable nationally and globally. It was also affirmed that CIE was going to ensure that the country developed local syllabuses and that CIE was going to ensure that localised Swaziland Examinations System and Qualifications maintain international recognition in accordance with Swaziland's desire.

It is important to note that the meeting of 15-16 May 2007 promised that CIE would make all efforts to maintain a low level of examination fees for the next few years in light of the concerns expressed by the Swazi representatives in that meeting regarding the poor socio-economic status of parents in Swaziland. It was also agreed that there would be reimbursement of ECoS by CIE based on activities that would be undertaken free of charge by the CIE. This also established the IGCSE curriculum as being relevant, cost-effective to

administer, and not too expensive for the parents of learners (Second Annual Review Meeting on IGCSE, May 2007).

The process of making the curriculum relevant was therefore informed by the views of the educational stakeholders who were meant to adapt the IGCSE to the circumstances of the country. This was to be done both in terms of the relevance of the concepts taught for self-employment, and also in terms of the economic circumstances of the country.

### **2.3. INTRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF IGCSE**

This section will focus on the period between 2006 and 2009, and will highlight the major achievements and challenges encountered during the process of implementation of the IGCSE curriculum. Most of the developments were reported on in the local press. Examining these reports highlights the direction that the curriculum process took, as well as the suggestions, demands and implications for decision-making.

The Ministry of Education Performance Report (2007) referred to the fact that the country was continuing to provide a curriculum that enabled students to stay motivated and interested in the academic and non-academic fields to which they were exposed through a variety of learning experiences that schools offered. The document recognised the adoption of the IGCSE curriculum as being one of the most notable curriculum innovations for the year under review, a point-of-view that had been fostered by CIE. The review also observed that teachers were being sensitised and work-shopped on what the change from the GCE O-Level meant in terms of their roles and responsibilities.

One of the most significant achievements of the IGCSE was seen in February 2008, when the results of the first group of students who were examined on the curriculum came out. The Times of Swaziland (*I brought IGCSE to Swaziland, 2008*) reported that the results of this first group indicated a high pass rate. This figure was far above the percentage of passes under the O-Level system which was very low. At the same time, it was reported that there were challenges which impacted negatively on the implementation of the IGCSE. These included an inadequate inspectorate and supervisory system to monitor this and other government programmes like the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Programme which funded destitute children, and the Prevocational Programme which had then been piloted and established in sixteen schools in the country. It was also reported that there was a shortage of

Math and Science teachers, and that this undermined the performance of learners in those schools which were affected.

Gamedze (2010) focused on the pre-implementation stage of the SGCSE curriculum since the programme was still being rolled-out, but revealed that the lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders led to some major conditions necessary for the successful implementation of a curriculum to be overlooked. It was going to be difficult to achieve successful implementation since the programme had implications for resources, time, infrastructure, and capacity building which were not catered for due to the failure to diffuse information to the relevant stakeholders. A trend of not incorporating the views of relevant stakeholders in policy formulation is therefore documented. The study revealed that there was a need for involvement of all the relevant stakeholders even during the pre-implementation stages in order to provide a base for psychological ownership. The study also revealed the need for pre-service and in-service training if the IGCSE curriculum was to be successful.

Even more important, it transpired from the above-mentioned study that there was a need for an evaluation exercise to see if the programme was consistent with the needs of Swazis, and there was also a need for a trial-test to see if the programme was suitable in the context of the country. The present study focuses on the perspectives of language department heads on the introduction of changes and their attempt to align the teaching of the English language syllabus under the new policies of localisation and learner-centredness.

It is now apparent that there was a lack of institutional commitment when the SGCSE was established since the formal and authoritative decision making process overlooked the necessary stakeholders in curriculum deliberations (Gamedze, 2010; Mndzebele, 2009). The focus of the present study is to describe how English Language department heads from underprivileged schools have adapted to new curriculum reforms in their schools and incorporated policy changes in their instructional practices.

#### **2.4. STUDIES ON THE STRUCTURAL CONTEXT**

In this section, the studies which document the organisational, staffing, professional development and resource configuration of the programme, that is, the structural context, are analysed. This basically means the extent to which administrators tried to ensure that resources (e.g. financial) were directed towards curriculum delivery with the aim of ensuring

that the curriculum was aligned with the implementation circumstances. Resource configuration of the programme includes textbook alignment and alignment of the content of instruction. There is a widespread use of textbooks to guide instruction and, in some cases, the assessment process as well. Early studies done on the relevance of the curriculum showed a lack of alignment between the textbooks used for teaching and the policies and state standards.

The IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) described the process that localisation of the curriculum underwent in Swaziland. It observed that the search for improved quality and relevance through curriculum change proved to have been a dynamic force in education in the country since mid-eighties. The document observed that a relevant curriculum was equivalent to promoting a home-grown curriculum. The desire for a local curriculum saw the O-Level examination being localised from the Cambridge Examinations syndicate, and the A-Levels being introduced in some of the schools soon after the localisation of O-Level.

UNESCO (2000) observed that the relevance of curriculum content is a crucial dimension of quality education, and that the promotion of localised curricula is a way of encouraging such relevance in a very different local, cultural and socio-economic context. It is also an important component of the decentralisation of education, governance, and management. Curriculum localisation is also deemed to be a pivotal process in providing greater flexibility and allowing learning to become more meaningful and relevant. UNESCO also referred to the importance of curriculum localisation as deriving from its support for policy formulation and standard setting for the reform of curriculum and the impact of this on teacher skills and knowledge. UNESCO also realised that localisation should involve the use of local materials as both the subject and the object of instruction. It also involves making the local culture an integral part of the curriculum. Worthy of note is the massive number of constraints that can work against the proper implementation of the localised curriculum. These may include a lack of local expertise and material resources, the fear of the unknown, and resistance to change among teachers and local educators (<http://www.ibe.unesco.org>).

On the same level, Gamedze (2010) revealed that in the development of the SGCSE curriculum there was too great a dependence on the Cambridge International Examinations. The CIE were meant to be involved solely for the purpose of attaining accreditation of the certificate. The study revealed, however, that such reliance was not going to aid the smooth

running of the localisation process since the accrediting body removed whatever content they did not deem fit to accredit. Although the 2010 study was done before the curriculum had been given time to show its life in terms of its successes, the study revealed that too much reliance on external assistance was going to undermine the local initiative. The present study is an attempt to complement the 2010 study in terms of revealing the extent to which the curriculum was aligned with standards in the light of the large part of it being grounded on foreign concepts and foreign aid.

It is significant that a similar observation was made by Samonte (1981), even before the strongest educational review was ever made in the country in the form of The NERCOM Report (1985). Samonte (1981) analysed the curriculum used in Swaziland basing her analyses on the view that curriculum development should be regarded a self-correcting and an on-going process that could be refined, strengthened and made more relevant through a continuing examination of its assumptions, and its means and expected outcomes. She observed that curriculum development should, to a large extent rely on the use of local resources, although she also recognised the fact that a degree of external assistance may be necessary. She noted that external assistance such as the use of foreign curriculum experts, overseas training of the teaching staff, and use of imported teaching aids should be done to the extent where the development of the local initiative was not undermined. It is worth noting that in 2013, when this study was conducted, Samonte's position was still relevant, largely because, while the same observation was made in the NERCOM Report (1985), the localisation of the curriculum was only done in 2006, when the localised versions of the IGCSE curriculum were introduced in Swaziland schools.

## **2.5. CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT**

As seen above that there was the introduction of the SGCSE due to the need for a programme that was going to be a localised version of the IGCSE curriculum, this chapter presents a discussion of literature on curriculum alignment as it developed in Swaziland and elsewhere. The term curriculum refers to elements such as course learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching and learning activities and resources (Sebate, 2011; Squires, 2005). "Alignment" itself is defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as descriptive of the act of something being made congruent and appropriate in particular circumstances (Hornby, 2005). For curriculum implementation to be successful there is need to design all the above elements in a way that will lead to the achievement of the appropriate course outcomes. In other words,

an aligned curriculum is able to demonstrate that all courses teach and assess the skills, knowledge and attitudes as described in the course and programme documentation. While each course needs to be aligned, it should also meet the needs of stakeholders external to the school itself. This suggests that curriculum alignment is decision making. Seen from the perspective of the teacher, alignment refers to how he or she sets up a learning environment that supports the learning activities that are appropriate to the achievement of the desired outcomes (Biggs, 2003). Biggs further suggests that teacher activities that should ensure that the learner will learn ought to be determined through the categories of teaching and learning activities, the assessment standards, and the assessment means of the learners. However, a study conducted by Penuel et al. (2008) revealed that what alignment meant to policy makers and to teachers largely differed not only from state to state, and district to district, but also from school to school, which suggests that “desired outcomes,” as Biggs (2003) suggests, ought to be determined locally. Following Honig & Hatch (2006), the study suggests therefore that alignment strategies are successful in affecting teachers’ perceptions and implementation of curriculum materials when the local places are treated as independent places of implementation.

Previous research concedes that alignment is a fundamental step towards the achievement of educational outcomes. Researchers of the Second International Mathematics and Science Study attributed the poor performance of U.S. students to uneven exposure to mathematics topics in their classrooms. These and other findings indicate that local schools are missing out on some potentially significant benefits of curriculum alignment. An analysis of international studies shows that implementing and monitoring an aligned curriculum results in a measurable impact (thirty-one percent) in student achievement (Squires, 2005).

However, when talking about student achievement, previous research is consistent in suggesting that alignment prevails over its traditional predictors of teacher age, socioeconomic background, gender, teacher characteristic, and race (Msila, 2010; Sebate, 2011; Burger, 2008).

Squires (2005) posits that curriculum alignment should include congruence between and among several education variables, including state standards, state-mandated assessments, resources such as textbooks, content of instruction, and instructional strategies. Elsewhere in the discussion, these have been referred to as levels of reality during curriculum

implementation. In essence, curriculum alignment viewed in the light of the education variables listed above, becomes a multi-faceted process that can either lend life to the educational context, or not. Largely, this is due to the varying aspects of the educational context itself which consists of different kinds of educational institutions when seen from the perspective of the privileges and/short-comings that they have. Schools, as educational contexts, may either be privileged or underprivileged.

## **2.6. PRIVILEGED AND UNDERPRIVILEGED SCHOOLS IN SWAZILAND**

The terms *privileged* and *underprivileged* can be tricky to define as it can change radically when one moves from one country to another. Criteria used to refer to a place as being privileged or underprivileged depends upon a number of aspects. This is because the terms are compatible. For instance *underprivileged* suggests that there are those schools which are *privileged*. These also depend on the location of the school since a privilege in a rural school might be considered a norm in an urban school (Fleisch as quoted in Msila, 2010). Also worthy of note is that the term *privileged* on its own does not necessarily equate to *urbanised*, as it has often been misunderstood. Some underprivileged schools studied in this research were located in urban and semi urban areas.

It was therefore realised that there are two groups of schools in the country and that both are similarly affected by policy change at the same level. There are those schools which enjoy the privileges that are enjoyed by government offices in the country, and which receive a share in the budget that is allocated to the MoE. For such schools their personnel such as teachers, secretaries, librarians, and even grounds men are all civil servants and therefore receive their salaries from the government. A grounds man working in one of these schools may be swapped one day for a postman and be taught on-the-job skills, or may be easily be transferred to a government ministry to carry out the similar duties of a grounds man. The night watchman can be transferred to guard the offices of the ministry since the school is also largely run as a government office (Sutton, 2005).

The privileges that are enjoyed by such schools are such that the classroom construction and maintenance and all other infrastructural activity is undertaken by the government. The head teacher can easily request for workmanship for repairing the school grounds, or for a lawn mower to neaten up the yards. For these schools, there is the privilege of a school van, with a governmental registration number which carries the day-to-day activities of the school like

buying hostel food, fetching stationery from the book shops, and ensuring that the on the job social needs of teachers are catered for. There are resources available to ferry them to mourn if one of them is bereaved, and rush them to places where the school prom nights are held, or to venues where staff parties will be held. For such schools, the work ethic is inculcated by the efforts of the government itself, which ensures that at least once in a year, a motivational speaker is sent to inspire the students.

The process of admitting students into forms one and four is also very different in these schools. Very few or no second class passes are admitted into these grades and so their performance standards are maintained. They are therefore considered “the” schools due to their performance. Whilst their admitting and streaming procedures differ naturally from other schools, these have not been documented anywhere. The lack of documentation regarding their selective criteria has led to a number of calls for clarification from the general public whose children have often been denied space for learning due their “poor” performance. In this study, these schools are referred to as *privileged schools* (Sutton, 2005).

There are, however, other schools which do not enjoy the privileges that are enjoyed by the above-mentioned schools. They do not receive a share in the budget that is allocated to the MoE. For such schools their personnel such as, secretaries, librarians, etc. are not civil servants and therefore their cheques come from the school administration. Only the teachers of these schools receive their pay cheques from government.

Building of classrooms and all other infrastructural activity is undertaken by the schools themselves. The head teacher can only request for sponsorship and grants from Non-Governmental Organisations, although a little general maintenance is received from government for Science and Computer laboratories and prevocational stores since these are a prerogative of government. Such schools cannot request for workmanship for repairing the school ground, or for a lawn mower to neaten up the yards. Neither do they afford the privilege of a school van to run the day-to-day activities of the school. There is therefore a heavy reliance on teachers’ private transport, for instance to ferry the school children to sports or choral event. For such schools, the morale is low and there is no work ethic inculcated since there is no extrinsic motivational support from government (Davidson, 2013).

Commenting on a political perspective on the privileges accorded to government and non-government schools in Australia, Davidson (2013) argues that dividing up education funding between government and non-government schools blatantly subsidized social privilege at the expense of public schools, which were increasingly becoming a residualised system for the poor who could not afford the alternative. He argued that middle-class students would therefore transfer from government schools to non-government ones, a situation which did not only impoverish the students who remained in the public system but also undermined social solidarity and promoted an ugly form of class consciousness.

Although Davidson's observation relates also to non-government schools, some of his observations also relate to Swaziland, where the process of admitting students into forms one and four is also very different in these schools. It is largely affected by the admitting procedures used by privileged schools. Very few or no first class students seek admission in underprivileged schools. The performance is therefore largely affected since the learners themselves are not very capable. Davidson (2013) would refer to this as impoverishing the students. These schools have often been criticised as underperforming when compared to privileged schools.

Contrary to the EFA goals as espoused in The Swaziland Education For All (EFA) Review Report, 2000-2015 (2015: 35), in particular goal six which sets out to improve all aspects of quality education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential skills, government only focused on how she was going to do this at the primary school level, thereby disregarding the senior secondary level where a number of curricular changes have occurred, and where a number of discrepancies already exist regarding the privileges accorded to different government schools. Government focused on a number of areas which included the recruitment of qualified teachers, improving the quality of teaching and learning, improving access to education inputs on time and their effective use, and providing facilities, infrastructure and support structures to make schools child-friendly. Similarly, goal number three of the implementation of the EFA strategies in the EFA Review Report 2000-2015 (2015: 23) also sets to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes, which implies consideration of the diversity of the learner, their background and family circumstances. However, one of the challenges highlighted in the document is that of the absence of an

implementation plan for this goal, an issue which discriminates between schools which already enjoy government privileges and those which do not.

Building of classrooms and all other infrastructural activity is undertaken by the schools. The head teacher can only request for sponsorship and grants from non-governmental organizations, although a few general maintenance is received from government for Science and Computer laboratories and prevocational stores since these are a prerogative of government. Such schools cannot request for workmanship for repairing the school ground, or for a lawn mower to neaten up the yards. Neither do they afford the privilege of a school van to run the day-to-day activities of the school so there is heavy reliance on teachers' private transport, for instance to ferry the school sports of choral, or stationery from the book shops. For such schools, the morale is low and there is no work ethic inculcated since there is no extrinsic motivational support from government.

Again, the admission procedures followed in these schools differ greatly from those of privileged schools. These schools are largely affected by the admitting procedures used by privileged schools, such that very few or no first class students seek admission here. The performance is therefore largely affected since the learners themselves are not highly capable. These schools have often been largely criticized as underperforming when compared to privileged schools, which enjoy minority status. The main reasons that have cited when people talk about such schools have been poor attendance of lessons by learners. In this study, these schools are referred to as *underprivileged schools*. 'Schools' refers to underprivileged schools since they are the subject of this discussion.

Given this historical situation, there is a need to study how curricula ought to change in both policy and practice, and how it changed when it did. The researcher consulted primary and secondary sources, journals, dissertations, and theses in order to delve deeply into the recesses of the major issues considered when the school curriculum is aligned to policy standards and when it is implemented. Research studies that document the implementation of specific subjects in the country were reviewed. An in depth understanding of the major considerations was helpful to understanding the overall considerations, strategies and approaches adopted by underprivileged schools in their implementation of the curriculum and in ensuring that the teaching practice reflected the newly prescribed approaches. This was helpful in laying the basis for a critical synthesis of the documentation in this regard. This study viewed the following, earlier mentioned considerations which The IGCSE Consultative

Document (2005) put forward to be the main constructs for curriculum alignment: in-service training for teachers on the new teaching strategies; revisiting the class size in schools, the appointment of HoDs and nominal heads to help subject teachers with materials and teaching methods; the need for capacity building of all educational organs related to school performance and improvement; the need to develop the school infrastructure in order to meet the needs of the new curriculum; the need for well-resourced libraries and laboratories such as those for science, computer, and language laboratories; and lastly the relatedness of the curriculum to the broader aims of education. These broader aims include cost effectiveness, diversification in the curriculum, inclusiveness of the curriculum, the use of relevant textbooks and their accessibility and affordability, the reflection of the roles and relationships of the major stakeholders in the education system, and responsiveness to the emerging social problems and issues of the time.

These constructs form the ‘truth’ or the ideal type of implementation that ought to be expected when curricula that has been aligned to standards is being implemented. These have been categorised by Eckel et al. (2001) into four broad categories which he refers to as the levels of reality during programme implementation, namely:

*Institutional commitment.* This is the formal and authoritative decision and commitment to pursue a programme. Institutional response to curricular reform by academics, administrators, and students refers to the institutional autonomy to make curricular changes and related incentives or the consideration of the process as an opportunity for change, thus devising strategies for overcoming inhibiting curricular innovation at national institutional, and programme level (European Commission, 2006). In the context of Swaziland, institutional commitment could be seen through the analysis of the relevant documentation by the MoE to find out the levels of commitment that were designed to ensure that once the curriculum reached the centres of implementation (the schools), it was going to succeed. This could therefore be uncovered through an educational review, such as the National Education Review Commission of 1985.

*Structural context.* This is the organisational, staffing, and resource configuration of the programme. This has been reported on in the IGCSE Consultative Document of 2005, wherein the details as to how configuration was going to be specially carried out were not provided.

*Role performance by staff.* These are the behavioural changes and functions of teachers as they actively plan and teach. Although these are highlighted in the Ministry of Education guidelines and regulations procedures (1978), these are general roles of HoDs in the school system. They are not directly linked to any particular curriculum change, and are specifically not related to a localised curriculum.

*Learning activities.* This refers to the behaviour and experiences changes of the learners themselves. Behaviour change and experiences of learners due to being exposed to a new curriculum programme have been generalised in the case of Swaziland. Documents like the Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto (1972) and the NERCOM Report (1985) suggest that after being exposed to new curriculum programmes, the learner ought to develop a critical mind, patriotism, and should be generally be able to face the world of work. Again, the behaviour change of the learners who has been exposed to a learner of a localised curriculum has not been described in Swaziland.

Highlighting the need for quality decision-making regarding the levels of reality for a new curriculum, Grimmett & Chinnery (2009) postulate that policy must be understood as a framework of values that are imbued into the curriculum decision-making environment of schools, as distinct from a regulatory function dictating what teachers must do. It is policy initiatives that ought to “redesign the workplace so that innovation and improvement are built into the daily activities of teachers.” Grimmett & Chinnery (2009) further highlight the need for policy that permits teachers and teacher educators to exercise their professional expertise and judgment in order to ensure that teachers are in charge not only of curriculum making, but also and largely, of learning. These scholars argue for strong professional collaboration between and among teachers and administrators among those norms that are considered suitable for the implementation of an innovative programme.

Qualitative studies undertaken on secondary school education in Swaziland on different curricula over the years reveal a considerable amount of discrepancies between policy formulation and curriculum implementation. These studies revealed that there was a lot of improvisation on the part of the teachers, and that they lacked language teaching models in the rural junior and secondary level schools. The lack of understanding of policy directives regarding the implementation of some of the received IGCSE syllabuses by teachers

remained a major challenge to achieving the desired behavioural changes in learners (Mdluli 2003, Nxumalo, 2007).

The complexity of the implementation problem in the country is a well-documented trend as other studies have reported the existence of conflicting and unclear voices regarding what was supposed to be taught and what was actually being taught by teachers (Lukhele, 2006; Mndzebele, 2009). Similarly, Msimango (2010) postulated that strategies that governed the teaching of English in the Hhohho region of Swaziland were largely determined by the contexts where implementation ought to occur. Mndzebele (2009) complemented this when she referred to the lack of involvement of principals in policy development as the basis for a lack of psychological ownership of the then newly introduced IGCSE curriculum. This curriculum proved to be a major player against the employment of successful strategies in various contexts of implementation. Contrary to the above, Gamedze (2010) reported that a lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders led to some major conditions being necessary for the successful implementation of a curriculum. She focused her research on the pre-implementation stage of the SGCSE curriculum. Gamedze (2010) further revealed that the programme had implications for resources, time, infrastructure, and capacity building which were not catered for due to the failure to diffuse information to the relevant stakeholders and amass their ideas. As can be seen, a trend of not involving the relevant stakeholders or their expectations in policy formulation has been documented. What is noteworthy is the tendency of teachers to fail to perform to the best of their capabilities when they have not been involved in the development of the curriculum (P.N. Dlamini, 2010; Mavimbela 2011). When implemented in this way, the curriculum is treated purely as a government directive.

Similarly to the observations made on Swaziland, Wang (2010) states that it is the extent to which those who translate policy do their job, which critically determines success in policy implementation. He called upon policy-makers to interact with those who translate policy in order to obtain feedback. He further claims that to do otherwise is “akin to playing a game of ‘broken telephone’, where the possibility exists of passing a distorted version of policy, as well as the further possibility that the delivery agents may lack a clear understanding of the central reasons for the implementation” (Wang, 2010: 128). Equally important, is a study conducted in South Africa by Msila (2010) which complements Wang’s findings. He reports that the willingness and vision gained from professional development schemes enabled

school principals to successfully lead change in implementation. This provides the most compelling evidence that local level administrators have to be involved in the process of curriculum development, and to be capacitated whenever the need arises.

Studies also predict that opportunities to learn are often context-embedded and are impacted by class size, resource availability, expertise availability and authority given (Honig, 2004; Naidoo & Green, 2010; Penuel et al., 2008; Walker, 1990). Mavhunga (2006) realised the important fact that the challenges engulfing curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe stemmed from a lack of understanding of the contexts in which its delivery ought to occur. He called for 'Africanisation' of the school curriculum in order to lessen the discrepancies that came from an externally initiated curriculum. Garner & Barnes (2013) felt that in aligning the curriculum, one ought to consider the realities of the workplace, and prepare learners to live in the community. They called for the introduction of communication education in order to prepare learners for the realities of the work place since it was realised that academia is disconnected from the realities of organisations.

The understanding provided by the above scholars is that policy change is a process that involves the policy makers, the school local level administrators, and the teachers in their respective workstations. The teacher is part of the process, as he or she is the one who is supposed to transmute policy into practice (Wang, 2010). Referring to the curriculum situation in Hong Kong, Kennedy (2005:128) offers the view that policy makers ought to develop a greater understanding of teachers:

*Policymakers need to understand that different policy actors are likely to construct different meanings for single policies. These differences can affect policy implementation in any number of ways. While government have a responsibility for agenda setting, policy agenda setting, policy agendas cannot be divorced form the context in which policies are to be implemented. There needs to be an appreciation of the interaction between policy agendas and their implementation and the theoretical frameworks that drive both the agenda and its implementation contexts.*

This observation was also made by Wang (2010) when he explored the perceptions of middle-level administrators of the implementation of English as a Foreign Language curriculum policy in the Chinese tertiary context. The study interviewed department heads of six universities in western city in China on their perspectives on the national language policies and their roles in ensuring the implementation of these policies. The study revealed that there was a discrepancy between policy-makers intentions and administrators'

implementation. This resulted from policy-makers designing abstract policies which could be interpreted from multiple levels. While the policy-makers were designed as such in a bid to provide the universities a considerable degree of autonomy in their implementation, this reportedly led to the department heads interpreting the policies differently from the policy-makers expectations. For instance, instead of using methods that were going to help learners gain proficiency, they focused on ensuring that learners got good scores in the national test. The study therefore concluded that department heads had to play a critical role in translating policies into practice, as well as in providing the necessary motivation and resources for the implementation to occur.

While the present study will also adopt some of Wang's approaches in the sense that it will focus on how English language teaching policies are translated into practice to ensure that implementation is informed by policy, it will treat English as a Second Language (ESL) unlike Wang's which focused on English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The perspective of department heads concerning the subject of focus in this study will be guided by their interpretation of the context of implementation, which in this case is the second language context. This study therefore focuses on the perceptions of school-level department heads.

The aforementioned studies focus on how the curriculum was shaped by dynamics related to new policy requirements, and how implementers responded to those changes through the use of new approaches to assessment, and sometimes, the alteration of beliefs. It has been noted that the curriculum field in Swaziland has challenges which reside mainly in its continued obsession with only procedural and prescriptive matters. The curriculum field has also failed to generate new theoretical lines of understanding that could help bring about a successful implementation of changes (Pinar et al., 2000). This implies that information regarding how to implement new curricular changes is inadequate, hence the challenges that are usually associated with curriculum change. The lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders in curriculum development has resulted in theoretical changes in the form of policy changes which further frustrate school level teacher administrators.

In order to do justice to the study, it became important to view the existing literature alongside the main constructs of curriculum alignment. The above constructs provided a yardstick for answering the research questions about what curriculum alignment entailed in the country with regard to the SGCSE as part of a larger process of making the curriculum

relevant in Swaziland. The literature reviewed was also related to important concepts within the context of an educational curriculum. These are: curriculum change, curriculum localisation and policy change.

## **2.7. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the concepts related to the idea of policy change and curriculum alignment nationwide and elsewhere were discussed. Various standpoints on studies which attempted to develop an understanding of the process of curriculum alignment were also established.

The success of educational practice depends largely on department heads because they negotiate policy mandates in local situations (Wang, 2010). For this reason, the subsequent review documents the larger ecology from which teachers in Swaziland drew in order to align policy intent and the implementation of a curriculum. These sources are complemented by literature from other settings where curriculum implementation was aligned with standards.

It can be seen that the curriculum was shaped by dynamics that related to new policy requirements, and that implementers responded to those changes through the use of new approaches to assessment, and sometimes, the alteration of beliefs. It has been noted that the curriculum field in Swaziland has challenges which reside mainly in its continued obsession with only procedural and prescriptive matters. The curriculum field has also failed to generate new theoretical lines of understanding that could help bring about successful implementation (Pinar et al., 2000). The lack of involvement of the relevant stakeholders in curriculum development has proven problematic and results in significant frustrations for school level teacher administrators.

It is clear that an attempt to understand how language department heads actually implement the new curriculum (SGCSE) in Swaziland in order to ensure adaptation to curriculum standards and achieve desirable levels of performance will be a significant contribution to the available literature.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the case of qualitative studies, a theoretical framework may not be explicitly articulated since qualitative inquiry typically is often oriented toward grounded theory development in the first place (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This suggests that qualitative inquiry endeavours to develop theory from the lived experiences of social groups and individuals.

This study is crouched under the Grounded Theory theoretical approach introduced by Glaser & Strauss (1967). Glaser and Strauss (1967) felt that the world of research was misdirected through the prevalent use of frameworks which pre-framed phenomena that were being studied. It was due to this reason that they demanded that instead of reducing social realities into pre-framed realities, the understanding of social problems be induced from the affected individuals, which might then help uncovering theory that already exists for solving that social phenomenon under investigation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Using the premises of grounded theory is considered ideal in the exploration of integral social relationships and the behaviour of groups where there has been little exploration of the contextual factors that affect individuals (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Crooks, 2001). It provides viable means for scholars and participants to generate a new and emic perspective, and also to develop theory that is grounded in the realities of the participants' daily life experiences (Elliot & Higgins, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The main contributions of the theory are drawn from Glaser and Strauss (1967); Byrant & Charmaz (2007); Charmaz (1996, 2000, 2002, & 2012); and Corbin & Strauss, 1998 & 2008). The contribution Glaser and Strauss make to this study is the emphasis on grounded theory approaches as being a viable means for scholars and research participants to develop new theories and understandings generated from the researcher's ability to identify the research problem from the research participants. Glaser discovered that there is theory in data, and that this emanates from the participant's lived reality and the sense they make of their diverse, multiple perspectives.

##### **3.1.1. Major debates around grounded theory**

While this theoretical framework was originally developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm

Strauss in 1967, due to the need to break away from the existing theories that dominated sociological research, a number of grounded theorists have emerged over the years. It was therefore a framework that was designed to open up a space for the development of new, contextualised theories. Charmaz (2000) defines grounded theory as a set of systematic inductive methods for conducting qualitative research aimed towards theory development. This suggests that the methodological strategies of grounded theory are aimed towards the construction of theory.

There are different versions of grounded theory nowadays, as described by Willig (2013). They arose as time went by and when it became clear that the method could be used in a number of ways. This also resulted in the original developers of the theory disagreeing on what entailed the method and how it originated. This signalled the emergence of different versions of grounded theory, which include the classical or the Glaserian version, Corbin and Strauss's structured approach, and a constructivist version by Charmaz (1996).

Three major contested issues have led to the development of the three versions of grounded theory. The first debate includes the role of induction in grounded theory, as manifested by the production of step-by-step guides, and the specific coding paradigm. This means that during analysis, the researcher will be looking for manifestations of particular patterns in the data, which therefore makes the method prescriptive. Glaserian grounded theorists feel that such a prescriptive element makes the method a prescriptive one, whereas it was originally intended to break away from that element. (Willig 2013: 77).

Another debate by grounded theorists is based on discovery versus construction. The original grounded theory purported to discover theory from the data, which suggested that they subscribed to the view that theory is already there in data. This is complemented by the use of emergence of categories and of theory, which suggest that these occur on their own without any effort by the researcher to construct these. It was due to this debate that Charmaz (1990) introduced a social constructivist version of grounded theory (Willig, 2013:77).

The last issue that aroused a debate among scholars of grounded theory is centred around a focus on social experiences versus individual experience. Grounded theory was aimed at describing social experience with the emerging theories. Researchers nowadays tend to use grounded theory to interpret individual experience, which scholars argue that it is more

psychological in that it focuses on the thoughts, feelings and memories of the participant (Willig, 2013:78).

Three versions of grounded theory therefore exist. These include the classical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which emphasized on inducing theory from data; the structured version by Corbin & Strauss (1998) which emphasizes on following a particular structure in the collection and analyses of findings, and the constructivist grounded theory by Charmaz (2000), which emphasizes on the role of the researcher in constructing theory through the use of categories that emerge from the data.

### **3.1.2. The use of grounded theory in the study**

Grounded theory provided the study an inductive inquiry, which enabled it to generate new theory and new understandings. The researcher was able to identify the problem of alignment in the country from the participants themselves. When a literature study was conducted on the alignment of policy standards and curriculum implementation, as seen in the preceding chapter, it was revealed that there are gaps in the body of knowledge explaining how teachers of ESL make curriculum alignment decisions in underprivileged contexts in Swaziland schools. It is the guidance received from the gaps in literature that determined the line of inquiry for the research study. Formulation of interview questions and the whole data gathering process was not informed by the literature study conducted as a full literature study was only done after the data collection process was over, as per the dictates of grounded theory that a full literature study, done before data gathering, has the potential to taint data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Even more important, Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Byrant & Charmaz (2007) felt that scholars and research participants ought to develop new theories and understandings generated from researcher ability to identify the research problem from the research participants, a premise on which this study is based. Glaser (1998) discovered that there is theory in data, which emanates from the existence of a reality as lived by participants made of their diverse, multiple perspectives.

In addition, the study subscribed to the notion by Charmaz (1996, 2000, & 2012) that grounded theory is not only inductive as Glaser & Strauss (1967) had put it, but that it is also constructivist in nature. Although the prescriptive measures of the structured grounded theory

that were introduced by Corbin & Strauss (1998 & 2008) are also used to the benefit of this study to ensure that it followed a particular structure, this study is largely constructivist. The researcher was involved in a number of creative responsibilities in ensuring that theory did not only “emerge” from the data (as scholars Glaser and Strauss had postulated), but that it was an outcome of her active involvement in the research through engaging in constant comparison of the data during preliminary analysis. The researcher was engaged in the coding and categorisation of the data, and the theory which was still grounded in the circumstances of the participants did not only emerge, but was an outcome of researcher involvement (Charmaz, 2012).

The main features of grounded theory as described by Charmaz (2002) include the simultaneous collection of data, the creation of analytic codes and categories developed from the data not by pre-existing conceptualisations but through theoretical sensitivity, the discovery of basic social processes in the data, inductive construction of abstract categories, theoretical sampling to refine categories, writing analytical memos at the stage between coding and writing, and lastly, the integration of categories into a theoretical framework. These will be explored in detail elsewhere in the chapter.

### **3.1.3. Influence of Grounded Theory on methodology**

It has already been stated that this study followed constructivism as introduced by Charmaz (2000). Grounded theory, (and in particular structured grounded theory by Corbin & Strauss (1996), provided considerable contribution to this study because of its explicit and sequential guidelines for conducting qualitative research, for offering specific strategies for handling data analysis, and for the integration of data collection and data analysis. Scholars argue that grounded theory is itself a method that enables the researcher to develop a theory which offers an explanation about the main concern of population of your substantive area and how the concern is resolved or processed (Charmaz, 2002; Elliot & Higgins, 2012; Scott, 2009). As in other qualitative approaches, the data for a grounded theory study can come from various sources (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 162-184). As a methodology; it influences the sampling methods, the data gathering methods and the data analysis methods. As a result, the goal to develop theory that is grounded on the lived experiences of the participants in a study which uses grounded theory impacts in many ways to how literature review is conducted.

When conducting data collection, the potential risk that the initial review of literature on curriculum alignment could taint data analysis is recognised. Following Higgins (2007) that effort ought to be made towards avoidance of such, researchers working on a grounded theory framework are always conscious of the place and sequence of literature in their researches. A limited review of literature is conducted as an overview to find gaps, followed by the collection of data. A full literature study, whose need is supposed to be indicated by the data, is data together with data analysis and then integrated with the data. The research problem could therefore not be pre-conceptualized since doing so has the potential to contaminate the emerging theory and can result in forcing both the problem and the data into a preconceived model (Glaser, 1998:67). Instead, literature can be used as data, and be constantly compared with the emerging categories to be integrated in the theory (Glaser, 1992).

Higgins (2007) conducted her doctoral study using grounded theory. As a clinical student, she realised that the review of the clinical decision-making literature could colour data analysis, and therefore only carried out a scoping exercise which enabled her to identify the gaps that existed in the body of knowledge. Other scholars working on grounded theory premises argue that the approach made them ensured the research process of an inductive line of inquiry, and assisted in ensuring that the participants' main concerns came to the fore rather than emanating from the extant literature (Urquhart, 2007).

Furthermore, researchers working on a grounded theoretical framework do not use an interview schedule. Glaser (1998) equated using the interview schedule to pre-framing the problem instead of letting it emerge from the participants. Data collection therefore begins with an open and broad statement which enables the participants to talk freely about issues that surround their work experiences. Again, Glaser (1998) makes a contribution to this study as he emphasises on the need for reliance on participants' perspectives as the ideal strategy in which theory can be deduced to understand their situation and therefore contribute in their liberation.

In grounded theory, an initial sample of people who have experienced the phenomenon under study has to be identified and data gathered from them. Thereafter, analysis of data from this group ought to put the researcher in a position to identify a group of individuals which is key

to the phenomenon under investigation. This second group has been referred to by grounded theorists as a theoretical sample, and the sampling method as theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 1990). This also made a contribution to the study in that the researcher was given a platform to initially sample participants who gave her direction concerning who to involve in the larger sample through theoretical sampling.

#### **3.1.4. Constructivist Grounded theory**

Charmaz (2012) argues that grounded theory coding is inductive, comparative, interactive, iterative and later- deductive. She breaks away from the classical viewpoint by Glaser & Strauss (1976) that grounded theory is inductive only, and that it involves discovery of meaning from data. Rather, this study subscribes to the constructivist notion of grounded theory, that is, it believes that as researchers we are also engaged in constructing meaning. We do so when we code, categorize and engage ourselves in the formulation of theory. The data therefore are not in themselves expected to yield theory without the involvement of the researcher in all the research stages and processes (Charmaz, 2012: 4). This study therefore followed the Constructivist framework.

#### **3.1.5. Contribution of Structured Grounded Theory in this study**

The contribution that Corbin & Strauss (1998) make derives from their design of a structure which research ought to follow under the grounded theory approach. They felt that grounded theorists could do with a certain structure in their attempt to uncover theory that exists in data. Sampling, data gathering, and data analysis therefore followed defined structures, which Glaserian or classical grounded theorists view as prescriptive. Corbin & Strauss felt that the researcher ought to combine data gathering and analysis through what they referred to as constant comparative analysis. This, in grounded theory allows for the researcher to move back and forth between the identification of similarities and differences between emerging categories. The researcher needs to focus on differences within a category in order to be able to identify any emerging categories (Dey, 1990: 117).

#### **3.1.6. Grounded theory as methodology**

In order to ensure that the data was organised, the researcher created cards for initial interviews at the four schools. On it emerging themes and categories were written and stored under the pseudonyms that were used for each researcher.

Reading and writing memos involves the act of taking reflective notes about what the researcher is learning from the data. The researcher therefore kept a record of the meanings derived from the data, and each memo consisted of one idea.

Coding has been defined as “...the process of sorting your data into various categories that organise it and render it meaningful from the vantage point of one or more frameworks or sets of ideas.” Lofland, et al. (2006:200). Coding the data from interviews was done in three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open coding in grounded theory means generating initial codes from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Here, the “breaking down, examining, comparing conceptualization and categorizing” of data is done, following Bryman, (2008: 543) that researchers ought to begin categorising the data into similar groupings and to form preliminary categories of information about the phenomenon being examined (Bryman, 2008; Elliot & Higgins, 2012). The researcher should engage in the creation of chunks of data that summarized what was seen happening, based on meaning that emerged from the data. Examples of participants’ words are used to establish the properties of the codes that were given to the data (Gallicano, 2013).

Furthermore, grounded theorists postulate that there has to be a stage which they refer to as axial coding. This is the stage where there is the development and linking of concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). Here, the researcher begins to bring together the categories she had identified when conducting open-coding. Groupings that resemble themes are then formulated using the categories, and they shed new insights for the researcher concerning the phenomenon under study. Relationships are also identified among the open codes (Corbin, & Strauss, 1998; Gallicano, 2013).

In the last coding stage known as selective coding, the researcher re-reads the transcripts and selectively code any data that relate to the core variable identified (Gallicano, 2013) at this stage, the researcher then organises and integrates the newly developed themes in a way that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation. Corbin& Strauss (1998) posit that at this stage of data analysis, the relationships that have been identified are developed into a theoretical framework.

In order to ensure that the analysis of data does not contain bias from the literature, the researcher ought to refrain from the use of a structure of questions and therefore should use neutral questions (Glaser, 1998; Wu & Volker, 2009). This is done to ensure that theory becomes the outcome of the research and is not determined by the structure of questions that was set.

The relevance of this theoretical framework in the study is that it is considered ideal for exploring integral behaviour individuals, which therefore helped in the understanding of groups, HoDs of languages in general. This happened in the context of lack of exploration of the contextual factors that affect individuals (Crooks, 2001). In the present study, it focused on putting teachers, who are implementers on the ground, at the forefront of curriculum development process. Their story was heard from them, and was not determined by questions, as it will be seen in the next chapter that there was no interview schedule, but that there were research prompts which were meant to guide the interviews towards the focus of the study as determined by the research questions.

### **3.2. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the researcher has moved from a phenomenal discussion of the framework of the study to its relevance in qualitative research in order to induce the problem faced by HoDs of English language departments from themselves. The methodological contributions of grounded theory to this study have been highlighted.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical perspective underpinning the study. It was shown how the study relied on a grounded theoretical perspective and how it was going to be used to guide the researcher towards the understanding of the perceptions of school level department heads pertaining to the alignment of policy standards and the implementation of the curriculum. The present chapter focuses on the research design followed, provides a brief explanation of how the theory that influenced the methodological processes of data collection and data analysis. It also defines the population of the study and the choice of instruments that were utilised in outsourcing the data. The choice of research methodology, selection of a qualitative approach, type of sampling and data analysis used, and how ethical clearance was achieved, are also discussed.

#### **4.2. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this study was to investigate Swaziland English Language department heads' perception of the alignment of implementation of curriculum policy and to determine to what extent they ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned.

In attempt to achieve its aim, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. How have English Language HoDs from underprivileged schools adapted new curriculum reforms to incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices?
2. How have HoDs struck a balance in bridging policy contexts and protected learning situations against potential, external adverse effects? and
3. What are the challenges facing the HoDs in the actual implementation of the curriculum?

#### **4.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

Mouton (2004) states that, a research design is necessary and that this is the plan or layout of the way the researcher intends to conduct the research. This includes all the actions that go into what ought to be done in the research, or the procedural plan that is adopted to answer the research questions objectively, accurately, and economically (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh 2006; Kumar, 2005:84). This is echoed by Leedy & Ormrod (2005) who make reference to

research design being a layout of the entire structure. They say that it is the ‘procedural ways’ that the researcher is going to follow, including how the data will be collected, and how analysis of the data will be conducted. The research design of a particular study is determined by the focus of the study, and each researcher develops his or her design as the research progresses (De Vos, 2003). Thus it can also be referred to as a research strategy, a research method, or a research approach.

This research was designed to study school level department heads who manage English Language Departments in Swaziland. Generally, the research refers to teachers of English as a Second Language within the context of Swaziland. Therefore, the department heads who were invited to participate in the study were required to be able to provide insight into the dynamics of their specific situation (Creswell & Clark, 2010).

#### **4.3.1. The emancipatory paradigm**

When Kuhn (1962 & 1970) used the term “paradigm” he was referring to a “worldview.” Morgan (2007) has identified three other senses in which the term has been used: an epistemological stance, shared beliefs among a community of researchers, and models for examples of research. Scholars Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009:84-85) define a paradigm as being a worldview, together with the various philosophical assumptions associated with it. Creswell & Clark (2007:21) also refer to a paradigm as a worldview.

The emancipatory paradigm includes a broad group of researchers including critical theorists, participatory action researchers, Marxists, Feminists, those from ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities (Mertens, 1998:15). The history of emancipatory or critical theory can be traced back to the thinking of German scholars from the 1920s known as the Frankfurt school (Creswell, 1998). This paradigm was born out of dissatisfaction with the dominant research paradigms and practice, particularly with the observation that theories which were presented as neutral had hidden power relations and perspectives on knowledge represented the position of the dominant group. Emancipatory research is the outcome a group of researchers who have criticised traditional research for its objectification of participants. Traditionally, participants in research were not allowed a platform where they could work out means towards their freedom (Creswell, 1998). Emancipation is the recognition of this power imbalance in research and works towards ensuring that the participants are empowered in research.

Seeing that classical Marxism had not solved societal problems, scholars like Horkheimer and Adorno (cited in Mouton, 1993) questioned the modernity of the occidental world and argue that mythology and tradition feed the process of men alienation. Out of their perspectives came Critical Theory, in which Jurgen Habermans links philosophy with anthropology; from this emerged the dimension of emancipation. Emancipation therefore seeks to develop a critical theory that connects theory and practice in addressing the problems of society. The contribution made by Habermans to this study is his focus on the theory of communicative action and the process of emancipation. He noted that knowledge has a liberating and ethical character rather than a dominating and technical one. This suggests if given a platform to communicate about their problems, participants are ultimately involved in the formulation of their own plan towards freedom. The present study was therefore informed by this contribution.

In responding to George Demetrian's attack on the emancipatory paradigm, King (2004) argues that research that seeks to empower the subjects of inquiry is fundamental since power is a fundamental aspect of all research relationships. He further argues that the reality of the emancipatory paradigm lies in its recognition of the psychological-cognitional-moral-social-political reality component of all research, researchers, and the data under review, and that its interpretive stance determines whether research is fundamentally political, emancipatory or democratic. This suggests that research carries with it the ability to raise awareness of the various components that inform the individual's consciousness of the society that surrounds him or her.

While the phenomenological and emancipatory paradigm share the same views regarding the nature of reality and human beings, advocates of critical theoretical or emancipatory paradigm argue that phenomenologists tend to aim at 'objectivity' which does not interrogate power relationships in issues of understanding and knowledge claims (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The tendency to see meanings as individual or local constructions or interpretations without interrogating their social nature or origins makes research a futile exercise and does little to transform people's conditions (Goodman, 1992). They argue that research should be relevant to the social life of the people and should aim at transforming their circumstances (Creswell, 1998). In the light of this, critical emancipatory research is aimed at exposing the ideological embeddedness of knowledge and at disrupting patterns of power which hold together the status quo (Reason, 1996). Its purpose is to transform and heal the world, and to

restore human dignity by creating awareness of the ideological patterns which determine their lives. Human beings who have therefore been previously marginalised are empowered to engage in a process whereby they will be emancipated from their marginalisation.

Although the emancipatory paradigm represents a diversity of adherents, it is distinguished by its specific agenda which places central importance on the lives and experiences of the diverse groups that traditionally have been marginalised on the basis of gender, race and other things Mertens (1998:18). It also analyses how and why inequalities based on gender, race, ethnicity and disability are reflected in asymmetrical power relationships. It further examines how results of social inquiry or inequities are linked to political and social action and it uses as emancipator theory to develop the programme theory and the research approach.

In other words, this research paradigm is driven by a commitment to make an effort to end the discrimination of people in research. It serves to assist people who are affected to speak out, to advance their practical expertise into a credible and meaningful knowledge base, and to gain access to much needed resources in order to better self-manage the needs of their working environments.

Research, according to this paradigm, is about a critical evaluation of existing reality via an ideological critique in terms of its role in perpetuating oppressive social structures and policies (Mertens, 2010). This paradigm is aimed at producing knowledge which encourages the attitude and spirit of self- reflection among participants. Researchers need to engage in research which purports to benefit them and the society not only in terms of knowledge production, but also and largely in terms of empowering the participants who are members of the marginalised and excluded groups. If the purpose of positivistic research is to explain and predict in order to control human behaviour, emancipatory research aims at a restoration of freedom and agency to human beings and therefore emancipates them. It encourages a deeper understanding of the various forces at play in determining their lives through empirically grounded theoretical knowledge (Mertens, 2010). This paradigm is oriented towards the eradication of false-consciousness, that is, it also serves as an eye-opener to the participant since he or she gets the opportunity to interrogate the issues that surround his or her life. It aims at the production of knowledge to free and empower the research participants to engage autonomously in action which arises out of authentic critical insight into the social

construction of 'reality' (Mertens, 2010). This is what makes the paradigm appropriate for the phenomenon under study, to give participants a platform where they will interrogate the issues that surround their daily lives, thereby making them conscious of whatever issues of marginalisation that might be there. This enables the participants to be pioneers of their own emancipation.

#### **4.3.1.1. Use of the qualitative approach**

Emancipatory researchers employ diverse methodological approaches to deal with their questions. They use both qualitative and quantitative methods. They engage in interactive relationships with respondents either as participants or partners in the research. Integration between research and practice and between theory and practice is considered ideal. The study followed a qualitative design. This is because it sought to interpret the social meaning of events by finding the values and beliefs of participants. This is also largely due to the nature of the phenomenon under investigation which is contemporary (Ary et al., 2006). The study was both descriptive and exploratory since there was a general lack of information on how teachers from underprivileged schools in Swaziland attempted to adapt curriculum reforms to incorporate policy change, and there was need for a method that will bring these methods to light (Creswell, 2003). The researcher enlisted participants to yield verbal and other data (words, expressions, gestures, etc.), (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Siegle, Radulescu, Le Borgne, Veber, Ouy & Lagarrigue, 2006). The collection of data depended on the personal involvement of the researcher in the setting which meant that a subjective understanding was utilised advantageously (Creswell, 2003; O'Leary, 2012).

When the study was conducted, the SGCSE curriculum programme was a relatively new phenomenon, and there was general lack of information concerning its implementation and alignment therein. A qualitative design was considered to be necessary for research which had very little support from existing literature. The study therefore assumed a qualitative approach. The following reasons determined the adoption of the qualitative approach. Firstly, there was general lack of information on the SGCSE curriculum which can largely be attributed to the fact that it had only recently been introduced in the country. A qualitative research design was considered to be viable for studies of this kind because it allowed for an exploration of the information which was perceived to be generally lacking, and helped to fill in the gaps to existing information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Secondly, in order to establish the views of the department heads on curriculum relevance, a qualitative method was

considered suitable since it illuminated the dynamics of a situation which was often invisible to the outsider (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Curriculum is viewed as a social process since it establishes the interaction of individuals in settings. Burgess (1985) also observed that qualitative research is concerned with social processes and with meaning. Due to the nature of the above-mentioned observations, the study adopted a qualitative approach.

Most importantly, the study sought to look at the larger picture and searched for a comprehensive understanding of the process of curriculum implementation and the alignment of the curriculum to the standards stipulated in the country. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) suggested the use of qualitative design for a holistic, comprehensive understanding of a phenomena or processes, especially if the information that the researcher will get is unpredictable. The researcher holds the belief that there are multiple constructed realities surrounding phenomena, and that phenomena are complex and can be viewed in more than one way. Ary et al. (2006) suggest that if the researcher believes in multiple constructed realities, then they should use the qualitative design since it accommodates the notion that phenomena are complex, and that they can be viewed in different ways.

To a large extent, no control was planned over the phenomena, that is, the variables could not be defined operationally and neither could they be controlled or measured. This was more so because the research investigated human, creatures which are dynamic and autonomous, and who therefore cannot be controlled or manipulated (Ary et al., 2006).

As the researcher engaged with an exploration exercise to try understanding the process of aligning the curriculum in local schools, no guidelines could be stipulated for the study. The researcher tried to understand what was going on and therefore could not fix particular guidelines in terms of setting out interview questions, but let the participant story unfold only with the use prompts which are described elsewhere in the study. This on its own warranted the use of qualitative research design. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) noted that guidelines cannot be established in qualitative research because they stretch and narrow at anytime due to the exploratory nature of the research methodology. Burgess (1985) also noted that the flexibility in research guidelines warrants usage of a qualitative research design. Even more important is the personal view process that characterises qualitative research. This is explained by Bogdan & Biklen (2003) when they observe that ‘qualitative’ implies a direct concern with experience as it is lived, felt or undergone. They argue that as opposed to treating experiences

as similar by adding or multiplying them together or quantifying them as quantitative researchers do, qualitative researchers aim to understand experiences as nearly as possible as it is felt by the participants.

Even the nature of the data sought and the data collection measures that were used in this study justified the use of a qualitative research design. This study sought to understand the process of aligning the curriculum by using textual information from the participants. The participants were required to yield data in the form of words, and /or gestures, which were used in analysing the process. They were therefore engaged in interviews since the data that was sought was verbal. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) observe that, if the data required to understand events, processes or phenomena is textual, then the research should follow a qualitative research design. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) elaborate on this position when they posit that qualitative research is best communicated when the research results are written in such a way that they contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation of the participants.

Another justification for a qualitative research design is that in this study, the researcher was the primary research instrument. The collection of data was dependent on the personal involvement of the researcher in the research setting. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) observed that being a primary research instrument is advantageous, since researcher presence in the field can add insight and therefore can be fully utilised as a source of data, as means for generating new hypotheses, and as a way to help the researcher develop a fuller appreciation of the phenomenon of interest by questioning his or her assumptions (O'Leary, 2012). For instance, the presence of the researcher conducting fieldwork herself enabled her to question some of her taken-for-granted assumptions, which arose from the conversations that were held with the participants.

Lastly, a qualitative research design was ideal for the study since it allowed for the use of a small representative group of the entire population. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) observe that rather than sample a large number of people with the intent of making generalisations, qualitative researchers tend to select participants purposively. This is advantageous since it warrants an insight into the range of behaviour that is related to the focus of the research, and which then leads to an understanding of the complex, sometimes sensitive, issue. The design of the study was descriptive since its key concern was to explore and interpret the views of

selected stakeholders regarding the object of the study (the relevance of the SGCSE curriculum in Swaziland).

#### **4.3.1.2. The use of grounded theory as a method**

In an endeavour to answer the research question, the study followed a grounded theory, through which the circumstances surrounding department heads could be understood in the country. The inductive approach utilised required that the researcher ascertain the perspectives of the department heads themselves. It is these perspectives that then pointed out to the need for a specific analysis of documents, which were then treated purely as data and integrated into the analysis of findings. The emerging theory is therefore a result of the perceptions of school level department heads on how the issue of the implementation of the English Language was done, and how they think it could be improved to ensure that the directives are implemented positively in their underprivileged circumstances. The usefulness of a grounded theory approach to this study is that it explains the realities that engulf teacher implementation of curriculum standards. The teachers themselves shared their opinions on how the alignment of standards and implementation could be improved.

Scholars argue that grounded theory is itself a method that enables the researcher to develop a theory which offers an explanation about the main concern of population of your substantive area and how the concern is resolved or processed (Scott, 2011). As in other qualitative approaches, the data for a grounded theory study can come from various sources (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 162-184).

As in other qualitative approaches, the data for a grounded theory study can come from various sources (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 162-184). As a methodology, it influences the sampling methods, the data gathering methods and the data analysis methods. As a result, the goal to develop theory that is grounded on the lived experiences of the participants in a study which uses grounded theory impacts in many ways to how literature review is conducted.

Glaser (2003) argues that grounded theory as an approach can neither be interpretive or positivist, and that it deals with conceptually abstract of issues that are subject to modification by constant comparison. What Glaser means is that the researcher working under grounded theory as a methodology refrains from looking for objective interpretations of the data, but rather formulates meaning upon comparing data from different participants.

Charmaz (2000) argues that the varying perspectives tend to espouse a wide range of epistemological stances, thus making it necessary for the researcher to declare his or her epistemological premise. The present study was therefore qualitative and emancipatory since it placed central importance on the lives and experiences of the diverse groups that traditionally have been marginalised on the basis of being based in underprivileged settings of curriculum delivery. Other qualitative approaches also have a place in the emancipatory research paradigm, such as ethnography, narrative and the case study approaches to research (Creswell, 2003).

#### **4.3.1.2.1. Researcher's reflexivity**

The researcher is a teacher of the English Language at tertiary level, a part-time lecturer at the University of Swaziland focusing specifically on the assessment of practising teachers, and also a marker of the Junior certificate and SGSCE external examinations herself. In fulfilling these roles, the researcher often has face-to face interactions with the department heads and also regularly has the opportunity to view learners' interpretation of curriculum delivery during marking.

As an English language instructor, there has been continual involvement in the teaching and assessment of the English Language since 2004. Being involved in the supervision and assessment of teaching practice for teachers of English who are doing the Secondary Teacher's Diploma, Bachelor of Education Secondary (B.Ed) Degree, and those who are doing the Post Graduate Certificate of Secondary Education (PGCE) at the University of Swaziland and one of its affiliated colleges, it has been observed that a majority of B.Ed holders have taught under the O-Level curriculum and have been hard hit by the paradigm shift. This shift, as mentioned earlier, signalled a move from a content-driven curriculum, to a curriculum that focused on imparting not only knowledge, but also skills to the learner, as required by the change in teaching approach. It therefore touched on the change in teaching, learning and assessment strategies, among many.

During teaching practice supervision visits, it was noted that that many teachers could not understand how the new SGCSE curriculum ought to be taught. They either focused on the keeping of documents or the analysis of policy standards, or had very little understanding of how these policies suggested a change of behaviour. As a result, the performance of these teachers in the practice of teaching was blurred by misplaced values on misunderstood policy

directives which P.N. Dlamini (2010) associated with a need for proper in-service training. Both these and their inexperienced PGCE counterparts could not properly plan to create a relationship between their lesson objectives and the lesson development. When they did, the focus was still placed on the teaching of content rather than the imparting of skills.

As an individual who was close to the incidents of language practice, but not a language department head herself, the researcher realised that her position was partially insider position, but was also considerably outsider position. Adequate effort was made to ensure that previous experiences do not taint the data and the emerging theory, as scholars have warned that the researcher working with qualitative research has to maintain the position of an outsider looking in (O’Leary, 2012). Within the insider space, the advantage that was received was that the researcher was able to question some of her taken-for-granted assumptions, while as an outsider, which the researcher largely was, she was able to gain knowledge about the culture, structure, politics and language within the research setting (O’Leary, 2012: 3-6; Hurley, van Eyk & Baum, 2002).

Scholars also argue that one can make the most out of being an outsider. For instance, O’Leary (2012) suggests that there are three key areas for reflection which a researcher can utilise and these include; developing critical awareness of one’s position within a group, critically reflecting on power within and outside a group and lastly, focusing on promoting positivity and developing trust interactions with insiders (O’Leary, 2012: 3).

#### **4.4. RESEARCH METHODS**

This section describes the research questions and the research methods that were used in this study.

##### **4.4.1. Research sites and participants’ sampling**

This section describes the strategies employed in the selection of the research contexts, and the participants in the study.

###### **4.4.1.1. Geographic location**

One strategy that was employed in the selection of the participants in the study was the geographic location. All eight schools are found in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland. This region is located in the southern part of the country, and is very close to the Mpumalanga and

KwaZulu Natal regions of the neighbouring South Africa. It is the furthest region from the capital city, Mbabane, where most of the Government Ministries and Parastatal institutions that undertake the smooth running of education are situated. By virtue of its location therefore, this region is underprivileged. According to statistics received from the Examinations Council of Swaziland, the Shiselweni region of Swaziland is one region that has performed poorly over the last six years (2009 to 2014). In the History of educational curricula in the country, the year 2009 marked the first year in which the first results of a skills-based curriculum examination syllabus were released. Since then, the region has lagged behind in terms of performance standards in external examinations. It is interesting therefore to find out how the teachers in the region manoeuvre their way into trying to ensure that the broad national aims of education are achieved.

#### **4.4.1.2. Population**

This study recognised the HoDs to be the main stakeholders in the decision-making about the relevance of the curriculum in the country and so they were the research population. This study also recognises the HoDs for English Language to be the main players at the implementation level of the curriculum. Posner (1995) observed that a logical place from where to start uncovering the story behind a curriculum is with the people involved in developing it. Posner's position is therefore the basis for the criteria of selection of the participants. Although not the developers of the curriculum, the participants in this study are involved in a similar way in shaping curriculum. This is especially so at the most critical level of curriculum practice – the implementation and monitoring levels.

In addition to Posner's observation is an observation made by Papier (2008) who monitored South African teacher education and recognised that academics were assumed to 'just know' and would therefore not be told by the HoD what to do. The misunderstanding of the role of HoDs therefore seriously called for attempts at bringing coherence to teacher education programmes in the light of new policies. In Swaziland, there was also need to bridge the gap that existed between policy and implementation. Posner's word of caution on the challenges that could be encountered in identifying the respective roles of the people who are involved in the development of the curriculum was taken into consideration. They guided the investigation on the strategies to be employed in identifying the actual respective roles and responsibilities of the participants in curriculum implementation.

An important part of defining the population in a study is the selection of a representative sample. This is a group which shares equal characteristics with the group of interest (Anderson, 2009). Rather than sampling a large number of people with the purpose of averaging their responses in a planned questionnaire, qualitative researchers enter the world of the people they plan to study. They get to know, are known, and are trusted by them; they systematically keep written records of what they hear or observe (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In qualitative research, the researcher attempts to identify key informants who are part of the case and have inside knowledge of what is going on by virtue of having a greater experience in the setting, and by being insightful about what goes on. These individuals are critical in enhancing the quality of the conclusions drawn (Anderson, 2009; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Moreover, this study drew its sample purposively, and later, theoretical sampling was conducted. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality (Bryman, 2008: 415). In this way, they build a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs. Because the study aimed to generate an in-depth analysis, issues of representativeness were less important. Scholars have noted that the concept of sampling involves taking a portion of the population, collecting data associated with it or from that sample, and then making generalisations to the larger population. They have noted that there are a number of sampling methods which include random sampling, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, systematic sampling, and purposive sampling (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Brink, 2000, Ary et al., 2006). This study therefore drew its initial sample purposively as supported by (Marshall, 1996: 523) that “...qualitative researchers recognize that some potential participants are richer than others and that these people are more likely to produce a representative sample only if the research characteristics are distributed within the population.” The second type of sampling that was used is described later in the study.

The research population was drawn from fifty-four (54) secondary schools in the Shiselweni Region of Swaziland and comprised department heads of English Language. Schools were sampled purposively due to their typicality and representativeness of the phenomenon being studied, and later a theoretical sample was drawn from the same population.

#### **4.4.1.2.1. Purposive sampling**

A typical case sampling of department heads was done from schools which lacked benefits such as opportunities and allowances (e.g. grants and payments for schools-support staff)

which could put them at a disadvantage when trying to achieve the goals of education. Table 1 below presents the choice of schools.

**Table 1:** *The four rural schools that formed the purposive sample*

| School | Size   |
|--------|--------|
| B      | Medium |
| C      | Large  |
| D      | Small  |
| H      | Large  |

\*Small – single stream per grade

\*Medium – double stream per grade

\*Large – multiple streams per grade

It is important to note that the schools that were drawn were representative of all the school sizes that exist in the region, in the sense that small, medium and large schools were included. What these sizes meant in the context of the schools has been described as seen above.

The research began with the researcher asking herself one major question, “How do teachers of ESL in underprivileged settings manage to deliver the SGCSE curriculum?” It was this that led to the feeling that there was need to go to underprivileged schools and request a document analysis from the HoDs of English. This group of participants formed the initial sample and it was from them that the researcher requested and then analysed documents. Data from four HoDs were analysed until the data reached saturation and no new forthcoming themes were recognised. It transpired that this group were the HoDs of English from schools which were based in the Shiselweni region, a region that had consistently underperformed in English. The document analysis was conducted with the aim of uncovering what was happening at the ground. Thereafter, a theoretical sample was drawn.

#### **4.4.1.2.2. Theoretical sampling**

Even more important, grounded theorists posit that the researcher working on a grounded theoretical framework always conducts an investigation with an initial sample. This process is supposed to give rise to a theory which the researcher has to work on in attempting to understand the issues that happen at ground-level (Elliot & Higgins, 2012). These scholars further argue that it is this initial theory which helps the researcher to understand the ground-level issues and which assists him in selecting which specific group to include in the study. It

also guides the choice of data collection strategies. These scholars also refer to this new or second group to be investigated as the theoretical sample.

Theoretical sampling refers to the iterative process of qualitative study design which means that samples drawn are theory driven. Marshall (1996: 522-526) argues that drawing a theoretical sample requires the researcher to build interpretive theories from the emerging data and then selecting a new sample to examine and elaborate on this theory. The sample size was not pre-determined, as scholars warned that the researcher can only stop adding participants to the study upon discovering that no new information was forthcoming from the new units, that is, when data collection has reached saturation (Ary et al., 2006). By the time data saturation was achieved, the theoretical sample size was eight. Eight department heads of English language at school level were therefore interviewed. It is worth-noting that the schools which were initially sampled purposively were also indicated by the document analysis as a typical theoretical sample the research, and thus formed part of the participants.

Table 2 below presents the schools that formed the theoretical sample.

**Table 2:** *Summary of the eight selected schools\* from the Shiselweni region (N = 54)*

| <b>Rural</b> | <b>Urban</b> | <b>Semi-urban</b> |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| B            | A (medium)   | E (small)         |
| C            | F (large)    | G (medium)        |
| D            |              |                   |
| H            |              |                   |

\*pseudonyms used to maintain the confidentiality of the participants  
Please note: The sizes of B, C, D, and H are mentioned in Table 1.

Table 2 presents the eight selected schools from the Shiselweni regions that were part of the sample in the study. The table categorises the schools according to the important sub-categories of rural, urban and semi-urban. Specifically, the researcher used the emerging theory that was arrived at after a document analysis was conducted to select eight schools from the region, which represented the population of 54 schools.

The participants were selected due to their key role in the implementation of English Language in Senior Secondary schools. Department heads are the people who possess

knowledge on the ways in which the localisation policy that guides the change in implementation strategies, is implemented at the local schools. They are also tasked with the interpretation of new curricula or policy changes for the teaching staff in order to ensure that teaching yields positive results. They are, therefore, managers of the departments and are supposedly knowledgeable on the way the implementation is conducted in every grade level. Their profiles are outlined below.

The HoD from school A is a female teacher with twenty eight years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Diploma in Secondary Education with major teaching subjects being English Language and SiSwati Language.

The HoD from school B is a male teacher with five years of teaching experience. He graduated with a Degree in Humanities and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with major teaching subjects being English Language, Literature in English and History.

The HoD from school C is a female teacher with seventeen years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Degree in Humanities and has a Concurrent Certificate in Education with major teaching subject of English Language only.

The HoD from school D is a male teacher with sixteen years of teaching experience. He graduated with a Degree in Humanities and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education and has a Certificate in Education with on English Language as a major teaching subject.

The HoD from school E is a female teacher with fourteen years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Degree in Humanities and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with major teaching subjects being English Language, Literature in English, and SiSwati Language.

The HoD from school F is a female teacher with twelve years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Degree in Humanities and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with major teaching subjects English Language, Literature in English, and SiSwati Language.

The HoD from school G is a female teacher with nine years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Degree in Humanities and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education with major teaching subjects English Language, Literature in English, and SiSwati Language.

The HoD from school H is a female teacher with thirty five years of teaching experience. She graduated with a Secondary Teacher’s Diploma with her major teaching subject being Literature in English only. All the teachers had received training in the implementation of the four components in the English Language teaching. They are Component 1: Reading and Writing; Component 2: Continuous Writing; Component 3: Listening; Component 4: Oral Language Usage.

The profiles of the participants have been summarised in Table 3, as seen below.

**Table 3:** *The profiles of participants in the HoDs interview*

| <i>Department Head</i> | <i>Gender</i> | <i>*Age</i> | <i>Years of teaching</i> | <i>Educational Qualification</i> | <i>School size</i> |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| A                      | F             | 50          | 28                       | STD                              | M                  |
| B                      | M             | 32          | 5                        | BA Hums + PGCE                   | M                  |
| C                      | F             | 42          | 17                       | BA Hums + CDE                    | L                  |
| D                      | M             | 40          | 16                       | BA Hums + PGCE                   | S                  |
| E                      | F             | 37          | 14                       | BA Hums + PGCE                   | S                  |
| F                      | F             | 37          | 12                       | BA Hums + PGCE                   | L                  |
| G                      | F             | 35          | 9                        | BA Hums + PGCE                   | M                  |
| H                      | F             | 60          | 35                       | STD                              | L                  |

S- Small  
M- Medium  
L- Large

\* Ages are based on estimates.

#### **4.4.2. Data gathering methods**

The study used document analysis and individual interviews as methods of data collection. Initially, Focused Group Discussions were proposed to be conducted after the individual interviews due to their ability to engage participants in deliberative settings (Walker, 1990). However, data collection with the initial sample indicated the need for an in-depth document analysis in order to gain insight into how the HoDs actually interpreted these documents, most of which came as directives from the governing body and the MoE. Qualitative researchers are concerned with making sure that they capture perspectives accurately, and the methods of data collection they use show the authentic language used by the informants or

the actual actions of those observed. This is supposed to enable the researcher to check his or her own interpretations with those of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

#### **4.4.2.1. Document analysis**

The first group of HoDs who formed part of the study, and were sampled purposively, were engaged in a document analysis. It should be noted that department heads in Swaziland schools have to keep the following files: a teacher file, a records book, a departmental stock book, a subject framework, a test file, schemes of work, a lesson preparation book, a classwork file, control of absenteeism form, and a minute book and a master file. All these documents were analysed with the aim of finding out how they shed light on the decisions made by the department head concerning strategies adopted to ensure that the teaching produced a learner who was going to compete well in society. Forms which reported the data were designed as is seen in Chapter 5.

The documents that HoDs in Swaziland ought to keep are outlined in the document, “*A Guide to School Regulations and Procedures* (1988).” The document highlights that the HoD shall be a member of the head teacher’s senior advisory staff; supervise teaching staff within the department including; allocate of teaching loads, Department of teaching staff, Testing, Recording results of testing, Maintenance of academic records within the department be a leader of a team of teachers work with the deputy to maintain sound discipline in the school chair regular departmental meetings and ensure proper departmental records are kept, such as Time book, Minute book, Scheme book, Lesson preparation book, Departmental stock book; keep the administration informed of the activities of the department; be responsible for requisitioning books and materials on a timely basis through the Deputy (after consulting with members of the department); and ensure that departmental stock and material is stocked safely and used appropriately.

The same document outlines the professional responsibilities of the HoD. They are: To ensure that the departments remain as organs of the school (they may never operate in isolation); To liaise with other departmental heads; and to be empowered to advise colleagues, check lesson plans, scheme books and student books/exercise books for the respective departments. The academic responsibilities require that the HoD shall be responsible for curriculum development within the department; shall be empowered to advise colleagues, check lesson plans, scheme books and student books/exercise books for the

respective departments; and shall supervise teaching staff within the department including allocation of teaching loads and deployment of teaching staff, testing, recording results of testing, maintenance of academic records within the department, shall interpret the curriculum for inexperienced teachers, and shall modify for different levels of pupils' ability 1. Textbooks 2. Teachers' scheme books and lesson preparations; and 3. Standardised tests and Ministry requirements. The following documents of the HoDs were therefore going to be analysed:

**a) Teacher file**

This document contains professional information about the teachers in the department, such as the classes they teach, the number of allocated periods they have, and their general professional conduct. It is kept in order to control the administrative responsibilities of staff members in the department.

**b) Departmental stock book**

This is a document where the departmental inventory is recorded. Such may include the textbooks; other stationery material like chalk, staplers, etc; the furniture, etc are recorded and followed up. This is kept in order that the HoD may assist in the planning and management of school stock in terms of budgeting for the department.

**c) Subject framework**

This is also referred to as the syllabus. The purpose of this document is for the HoD to use in coordinating guidance to staff members on to use it plan their work.

**d) Test file**

This is where tests that have been written and will be written are filed for safe-keeping and for reference purposes.

**e) Schemes of work**

The scheme of work is the document where the HoD is supposed to plan for the subject. Planning in the scheme of work involves breaking content into units that can be taught weekly.

**f) Lesson preparation book**

During lesson planning, the HoD is supposed to prepare the lesson that he or she is going to

teach per day. The HoD is supposed to engage in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

**g) Records book**

A records book contains learner performance scores in both tests and examinations they have written. Its purpose is therefore to assist in the monitoring the progress of the learners taught.

**h) Classwork file**

In this document, the HoD has to keep all the classwork that is or will be given to the learners for reference purposes.

**i) Control of absenteeism form**

As an administrator in his/her own right, the HoD has to ensure that the movements of the teachers he is supervising is controlled by recording all their movements outside the work context if they take place during work hours.

**j) Minute book**

The HoD is supposed to record all minutes of meetings that the department holds and to produce in cases where needed by the administration or the inspectorate.

**k) Master file**

In this file, the HoD documents all other activities that he is involved in at the school. It may include one or more teaching activities such as being the chairperson of the school's disciplinary committee, time tabling, collection of fess and monies, secretary to general staff meeting, etc.

**N.B.** These responsibilities have been adapted from The Ministry of Education Guidelines and Regulations Procedures (1978) and from the Terms and conditions of employment of educators determined in terms of section 4 of the Employment of Education Act (1998).

These documents were grouped into six to cater for the focus of the study. The documents that were ultimately requested from the HoDs were those that discussed 1. The teacher's role, and these included the scheme of work and the lesson plan; 2. The teaching context, which included the teaching material and library material; 3. The learning context, which included

text books; 4. The administrative context, which included local language policy and parental involvement policy; 5. The Structural context, which included national tests and whether the HoD was being paid for the post; and 6. The departmental context, which included scheming, inventory control and control of absenteeism. Data is presented in chapter 5.

#### **4.4.2.2. Individual Interviews**

The second group, which formed the theoretical sample, was interviewed. The research interview has been defined as a ‘two-person’ conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, normally guided and held along the lines of the content specified by the research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Interviews are preferred by qualitative researchers because they involve the collection of data through direct, verbal interaction between individuals. They also allow for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection. Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2007) referred to the interview as an unusual gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals for data collection. They observed that as a distinctive research technique, the interview may serve a number of purposes. Firstly, it may be used as the basic means of collecting data that is related to the research objectives. Secondly, it may be used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones, or as an explanatory device to help identify relationships among factors and causes. Lastly, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods of data collection in a research undertaking. This may be advantageous since the use of the interview may be regarded as an attempt to validate other methods, to make a follow up, or to triangulate the researcher’s sources of data.

The individual interviews were used as the dominant method of data collection due to the nature of understanding that was sought. This view finds support in literature when Bogdan & Biklen (2003) posit that in qualitative research, interviews may be used in different ways. They can be a dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques. Of chief importance is that in all these cases, the interview is directed towards the gathering of descriptive data in the participants’ own words. The authenticity of the data helps the researcher develop insights on how the phenomenon of interest is viewed by the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Following that the participants were also qualified teachers of English as a second language, the interviews were conducted in English. However, participants would switch to SiSwati from

time to time, but no challenge was posed for the researcher as SiSwati is also one of her main languages. Participants were informed that the interviews were going to last between 45 minutes and one hour to allow them time to talk freely about their perceptions. Considerable work is done on the area of data collection instruments (see Burgess, 1985; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; and Ary et al., 2003), but the interview, together with observations, are the main data collection methods used in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This study therefore used interviews as the principal method of data collection.

The nature of the understanding sought in the study was such that the researcher needed to understand how policy change has been aligned with implementation in the schools from the point of view of the participants. In order to understand the story that each participant had on the focus of the research, there needed to be a conversation between the researcher and the participants. The study therefore relied on individual interviews.

In addition, interviews were unstructured. This study sought to understand the perspectives on ensuring curriculum alignment the same way the participants understood or structured the process. There was need to fit in the world of the participants and gain insight into their own perspectives, the ideas they held, and their general interpretations of what they perceived was going on when the curriculum was in the process of being made relevant. The researcher therefore did not require a structured set of questions to ask the informants during the interviews, but rather required the informants to structure the process themselves by yielding freely any information relevant to the focus of the study.

In order to ensure freedom in the yielding of information, a set of prompts as follow-up questions were used to redirect the discussion to the specific focus of the study without a structured set of questions. Burgess (1985) observes that in using the unstructured interview, the researcher uses at most an *aide me moiré* as a brief set of prompts to him or herself to deal with a certain range of topics. There may be just a single question asked and the interviewee is then allowed to respond freely, with the interviewer simply responding to points that seem worthy of being followed up on. Unstructured interviews seem to be very similar in character to a conversation. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) hold a similar view when they outline that the unstructured interview is an open-ended interview where the researcher encourages the subject to talk in the area of interest and then probes more deeply, picking up on the topics and issues that the respondent initiates. Bogdan & Biklen (2003) suggest that the unstructured

interview be used if the researcher wants the structure of events to come from the interviewees themselves. These scholars argue that once the interview is structured or semi structured, the opportunity to understand how the participants themselves structure the topic at hand is lost.

Similarly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) posited that information that might be useful in the focus of the research which would otherwise be obscured if the interview was structured. The unstructured interview enables the researcher to re-order, digress, expand, and explore new issues and probe further into the views of the participants (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Scholars also concede that researchers ought to design data collection prompts which might help the researcher during the interviews. Hence, in the present study the questions which served as prompts were designed in a way that addressed the research questions, as suggested by scholars (De Vos, 2002; Anfar, Brown and Magione, 2002). These scholars also pointed out that preparing data collection prompts also helps in the handling of the wording of questions in those areas which might be sensitive to the participants.

The researcher did not stick to the order of questions presented in the set interview prompts below, and the sequence of questioning and the direction of the conversation depended largely on the information yielded by the participants. The question set remained a prompt and a touchstone to ensure that the research interview was in line with the objectives of the research. Questions that were asked arose mostly from the participants' speech as the conversations ensued, and were asked so as to gain insight into HoDs' perceptions. The researcher asked for permission to use a tape recorder. Note-taking was done when it was felt that the conversation was adding more value to the research questions than could be captured on the tape-recording. For instance, the gestures of the participants would at times not be kept on record, so when they were made, they were note down and integrated with the interview transcripts. Table 4 below presents the interview prompts.

**Table 4: Interview prompts**

| <b>Questions</b>  | <b>Justification for the prompt</b>  |
|---|--|
| 1. How do you ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned?  | Policy research has pointed to a lack of alignment of curriculum, standards of implementation and standards of assessment as a failure for particular policies intended to change teachers' practice (Penuel et al 2008).  |
| 2. Explain your prior knowledge and understanding of the ESL syllabus.  | Teachers prior knowledge and understanding of curricular purposes and standards can affect how they interpret the demands of policies on them and how they enact curricular materials, even when they receive professional development aimed at helping them change their practice (Penuel et al., 2008:659)   |
| 3. How does the teaching of English differ from what it used to be during O-Level?  | Curriculum scholars have posited that policy change is by nature meant to change practice (Eckel et al., 2001)   |
| 4. What sort of motivation and resources do you provide the teachers in your department with in order to ensure that the morale of curriculum delivery is positive? | Department heads have to play a critical role in providing the necessary motivation and resources for implementation to occur (Wang, 2010).  |
| 5. What aspects of the local setting have ensured the success of alignment as a policy instrument in promoting curriculum implementation?                           | Scholars argue that improving alignment between curriculum, standards, and assessment produces clear policy guidelines that teachers can follow (Penuel et al. 2008; Herman and Webb, 2007). Researchers have conceded that local actors often misinterpret the intentions of policy makers (Spillane, Diamond, Burch, Hallet, Jita, & Zoltners, 2002; Sebate 2011).   |
| 6. How do you ensure that learners are aware of the intended outcomes?  | Learner commitment becomes a major level of reality when curriculum is being implemented (Burger 2008; Eckel et al., 2001). Sebate (2011) refers to the need enshrined in the Department of Education (2003) that in order to ensure that policy change is aligned with instruction, the learner ought to be made well aware of the assessment standards in order that he or she can take charge of his or her own learning. Sebate revealed that the most fundamental classroom principle of clarity of focus was not adhered to because learners were not made aware of the outcomes and assessment standards they ought to achieve to exhibit competence. Earlier research has shown that prior knowledge about a topic assists in developing comprehension and retention (Duffelmeyer, 1994). Letting learners know about what is expected of them proves to be a useful alignment strategy since learners will measure their progress in terms of the course outline. |
| 7. How have you benefited from the in-service workshops where the localisation policy was introduced?   | The IGCSE Consultative Document spelt clearly that programmes were going to be introduced to ensure that teachers were empowered to deliver the then newly introduced SGCSE.   |
| 8. To what extent do you find the teaching of English Language easier/ more difficult compared to the times when it was taught under the O-Level curriculum?        | Policy change can pose a difficulty to teachers, especially if in-service workshops are also not beneficial (Monyooe, 2004).   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>9. To what extent do you find the textbooks used to be in line with policy objectives?</p>                             | <p>Lukhele (2006) holds the same view as Lebrun et al. (2002) that textbooks provide the ideological spectacles through which the learner begins to view the subject matter. They may also provide conceptions and orientations by means of which the purposes undergirding the act of learning are articulated and developed. The study therefore viewed textbooks as an important dimension of curriculum relevance in terms of their accessibility and affordability. Hopkins et al. (2008) reported that the success of alignment policies depends on teachers' construal of the relationship between standards and curriculum materials and on the allocation of time for planning at the school level.</p>  |
| <p>10. How do you reduce discrepancy between the state's policy intentions and your interpretation of policy demands?</p> | <p>Wang's (2010) study revealed that there was a discrepancy between policy-makers intentions and administrators' implementation. This resulted from policy-makers designing abstract policies which could be interpreted from multiple levels. While the policy-makers were designed as such in a bid to provide the universities with a considerable degree of autonomy in their implementation, this reportedly led to the department heads interpreting the policies differently from the policy-makers expectations. For instance, instead of using methods that were going to help learners gain proficiency, they focused on ensuring that learners got good scores in the national test. The study therefore concluded that department heads had to play a critical role in translating policies into practice.</p> |
| <p>11. What effort is made to ensure that curriculum materials are adapted to the local context?</p>                      | <p>What alignment means to policy makers and teachers differs from state to state, district to district, and school to school (Penuel et al., 2008). Alignment strategies yield success in affecting teachers' perceptions and the implementation of curriculum materials that policy makers promote when the local places are treated as independent places of implementation (Honig, 2006).</p>   |

Using the unstructured approach enabled the participants to talk as much as they wished about what they knew, understood or experienced. This was done with each of the participants, respectively. The researcher visited each of the HoDs at their respective offices on a schedule agreed upon by the two. The researcher asked for permission to use a tape recorder, she set it for recording and posed an open-ended interview question that did not confine the informant to a single straight-forward response. Open-ended questions enabled the participant to go on with the story of making the curriculum relevant in the country and bringing in other information that the researcher had previously not considered to be of importance to the research.

#### **4.4.3. Pilot- testing of data gathering instruments**

A pilot interview was conducted with the HoDs of schools with practising teachers. This was conducted during the times when the researcher was conducting teaching practice of students

from the University of Swaziland. This was a convenient time for her because she had the opportunity to go to the schools and talk with the HoDs. The purpose of this was to trial-test the use of language and concepts. This helped to re-check her ideas and if the wording of probes and prompts that were going to be used later to guide interviews was actually going to investigate what the study sought to address (Willig, 2013). Through the feedback from the pilot-test, the wording used in prompts, the techniques to be used, coding and data analysis strategies were improved. For instance, the note-taking was put aside as the main technique, but it was ultimately decided that the tape recorder be used in order to capture the essence of the interviews. Notes were to be taken only during times when it was felt that gestures had to be recorded down because of the contribution they were making in the study.

#### **4.4.4. Recording**

In using a tape recorder, the aim was to ensure that she every word that the participants presented was captured. This instrument was used following Bogdan & Biklen (2003), who recommended the use of the tape recorder for collecting interview data, but cautioned that there could be problems if it malfunctions during the data collection session. To avoid a situation like this, notes were taken when it was felt that the conversation was adding more value to the answering of the research questions. This did not detract from the researcher also concentrating on the verbal expressions of the participants. Asking open-ended questions encouraged the participants to use their own words at some length and also provided in-depth information. This helped towards the gathering of loaded information in the form of words that are accompanied with facial expressions which add more value and meaning to the verbal information. Scholars have also pointed the need to establish a rapport which could then form the basis for a sound, informative communication between the researcher and the participant (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Best & Kahn, 2006). The tape recorder enabled the researcher to maintain eye contact with the participants and in using non-verbal cues to show that she was attentive. During transcribing, the researcher easily associated the words with the gestures of the participants, and this helped in the reconstruction of the views and experiences of the HoDs.

The researcher had allocated time to interview the informants more than once if the need arose. This was to be done if some aspects of the initial encounter needed further exploration. In qualitative interviewing, the interviewee may be interviewed on more than one and sometimes even several occasions. This is done because the researcher is bent on

understanding the phenomenon of interest in considerable detail, how they think, and how they develop the perspectives they hold (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). However, it was discovered that the initial Interview encounters yielded adequate and clear data, and so only one interview was conducted with each HoD. Individual interviews were therefore unstructured and were don in-depth.

#### **4.5. CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

To enhance credibility, or the ‘truth value’ of the study (De Vos, 2003) the researcher relied on referential or interpretive adequacy, which Johnson and Christensen (2000) in Ary et al., (2006) refer to as an assessment of the degree to which the researcher accurately portrayed the meaning attached by participants to what was being studied by the researcher and the degree to which the participants’ viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences were accurately understood and portrayed.

In addition, the use of the previously mentioned data collection techniques was meant to lend truth value to the data through the reduction of the likelihood of researcher bias (Creswell, 2003). Moreover, instrument triangulation also made up for the limitations of each method. The tape recorder and taking notes during interviews formed part of instrument triangulation, as scholars suggest (Creswell, 2003). Transferability of the data was ensured by offering rich and detailed descriptions of the context so that potential users could make the necessary comparisons and judgments about similarity and hence transferability (Ary et al., 2006). Dependability and confirmability of the data was ensured through the use of an audit trail which the researcher built by keeping records of sampled schools, contextual descriptions, data collection methods, tape-recordings, and other descriptive material that could be reviewed by other people(Ary, et al., 2006). These research materials are kept safely so that they could be produced in case of need, to support the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Consistency of the responses was ensured through a reliance on host verification or member checks. In member-checking, the researcher solicited feedback from the participants themselves on whether the collected data and the researcher’s interpretation of the data were free of miscommunication. Verbatim reporting, where the participants’ exact words are used in reporting the findings, was utilised so as to help the reader experience the real world of the participants (Ary et al., 2006). Ary et al. (2006) posit that for purposes of achieving validity

and reliability of the research findings, the researcher should frequently check the experiences he or she has had against the experiences and understanding of the members of the interviewed group by soliciting feedback from the participants themselves about the findings of the study. The researcher demonstrates a courtesy to the participants by letting them see what has been written about them (Bryman, 2008). When doing member checking, the researcher returns the transcribed data to the participants who review and critique it. This helps to clear up miscommunication, and it aids the identification of inaccuracies, thereby assisting the researcher to gain more useful data. The researcher therefore requested four of the participants to read the transcripts to find out from them if she has accurately portrayed their experiences concerning the process of making the curriculum relevant. Time factor could not allow for all the participants to be engaged in the process. Ary et al. (2006) further observe that feedback from the participants may help the researcher gain further insight and call attention to something that he or she might have missed during data recording.

When member-checking was conducted, participants appreciated seeing researcher transparency and a few inaccuracies were identified. These inaccuracies were attributed to the transcription process, which was re-done to confirm with member checking feedback. It also served as a strategy towards ensuring that participants were fully knowledgeable of the nature of the research and the implication of their participation in the study (Bryman, 2008).

#### **4.6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this study, the collection of data was governed by the code of ethics to ensure that participating in it did not harm the participants in any way (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The researcher ensured participant protection in three major ways, namely: informed consent voluntary participation, and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

One of the most important ethical responsibilities of the researcher is to obtain permission from the appropriate authorities. Before the researcher could continue with the interviews as the first data collection method, the researcher requested applied for ethical clearance from the College of Education at the University of South Africa (Unisa), whereby she was granted permission to conduct the research. Permission from Unisa came in the form of an Ethical Clearance Certificate (See Appendix 10). The researcher also sought permission from the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Swaziland. The research site specified was the schools based in Shiselweni. The researcher wrote a letter to the MoE and stated the title and focus of the research clearly. The MoET required that the researcher provide a list of the

schools which were going to form the study sample. The researcher then received a positive response in the form of a letter which granted her approval to conduct the research in the stated schools. It should be noted that permission for conducting research in the different regions in Swaziland schools lies solely with the Ministry of Education and Training(not the regional education offices themselves) (See Appendix 8). Upon getting approval, the researcher set out to the field.

Upon receipt of the response from the MoET, the researcher then wrote letters of request to the head teachers of the schools that formed the study sample. In these letters, permission to do research in their schools was sought. Entry into the schools proved challenging and it took a long time to get the permission required, much longer than the researcher had planned. Some of the head teachers were very busy with their administrative duties and could not be seen soonest. However, when the researcher finally met with them and explained the focus of the study and its purpose, all the head teachers granted their permission to the researcher to conduct the study in their respective schools.

The researcher then telephoned the various participants using the list that was provided by the MoE. The researcher explained the objectives and focus of the study, and ensured them that the prospective participants were informed of its purpose and their roles. Although it proved difficult at first to attain their consent as most of them cited their busy schedule, when they understood the intentions of the study (the improvement of their academic performance), the participants readily agreed to participate. Their verbal consent gave the researcher the go-ahead to send each of them the informed consent form. Even then, effort was made to ensure that the participants were aware of the liberty they had in participating in the study. That there would be use of a recording gadget to record the interviews was mentioned explicitly on initial contact with the participants, and it was also mentioned in the consent form which all the participants signed. The researcher then set off to the schools where three weeks were taken to interview the participants. It should be noted that a week after the document analysis, interviews were conducted in the schools.

Another ethical measure that was considered was informed consent. Wierma & Jurs (2009) state that a written consent for participation in a study ought to be obtained from the participants after they have agreed to participate in a research study. Participants ought therefore to be informed about the roles they are going to play in research. Principally, the

researcher ought to inform the participants of the purpose and procedure that the research will take, and explain any risks or negative consequences that may be forthcoming. The researcher therefore sought the informed consent from the participants. She firstly communicated the aims of the research to them, as suggested by Radnor (2002). Consent to analyse participants' official documents was given by the participants themselves since they were all major individuals. A letter was written to them explaining the objectives of the study, the nature of participation sought, and the risks inherent therein. This was done a few weeks before document analysis started. Permission to further conduct the interviews was also sought before the interview data collection began. This was done in order to ascertain the awareness of the participants concerning the extent and levels of their participation in the study. A consent form which explained all the above was designed by the researcher and signed by the participants.

Permission to record the interviews was sought from the participants themselves. Bogdan & Biklen, (2003) advise that doing so without requesting the permission of the participant is unethical. The researcher was granted permission in the form of letters and verbal responses. It is important to note that four (4) of the school principals gave verbal consent because they were too busy to write letters, but promised the researcher to come for the latter when she got time. Participants' letters of permission were not attached in the study, save for the one from the MoE since it cannot compromise the anonymity of the participants. This was done to preserve the anonymity of the participants, but form part of the audit trail that has been described elsewhere in the study.

The researcher also assured participants of their voluntary participation in the study. This was ensured following McMillan & Schumacher's (2010) remark that there is need for adequate honesty and openness from the researcher's side through explaining the purpose of the research clearly to the potential participant. The researcher ensured voluntary participants through a clear disclosure of the purpose of the study in the informed consent form, and also stated clearly that the participant could withdraw at any time without penalty or consequences.

The place for confidentiality and anonymity is of fundamental significance in qualitative research. In order to ensure the anonymity of the participant, the researcher avoided location threats by conducting the document analysis and interviews privately in a place suggested by

the participants (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Participants therefore consented that the interviews be conducted in their offices. Anonymity was also ensured through the use of pseudonyms to represent the schools where the HoDs are based, and also for the HoDs themselves. Alphabetical letters (such as A, B, C, etc.) were used to differentiate between their views. This was done in order to ensure both the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants so that the data could not be associated or be traced back to them.

Participants were also assured that the study had no foreseeable risks and that in the event of risk occurrence, the College of Education at Unisa, from which ethical clearance was sought, was going to be informed and then strategize towards curbing the risk. They were assured that the data were going to be kept securely so that they do not fall in wrong hands, thereby interfering with their anonymity in the study. Since the data collection process involved narratives of HoDs, it was recognised that some probing questions were going to be asked from the participants. They were therefore assured of their right not to respond to questions that made them feel uncomfortable. In short, ethical measures were undertaken in order to protect the participants in the study.

#### **4.7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The following section describes the approaches that were followed in the interpretation of data that was gathered from the participants. These approaches were guided by grounded theory, as scholars mention that researchers working under a grounded theory framework are also guided by approaches that assist in the discovery of meaning from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Charmaz, 2015).

##### **4.7.1. What is data interpretation?**

Data interpretation refers to the practice of transforming the data collected into credible evidence as far as some the description of the phenomenon under investigation is concerned (Ary et al., 2006). It includes organisation of the data, describing the data, and analysing the findings using particular criteria. Such an analysis involves grouping similar findings into classes, thereby identifying common patterns that are useful in bringing meaning and understanding to the behaviour of the research participants.

#### **4.7.2. Why is it necessary to interpret data?**

It is necessary to interpret data in order to be able to respond to the research questions. Interpretation of the data enables the researcher to determine the nature of the perceptions of language department heads in underprivileged schools, and also whether there has been change in the manner in which the teachers teach ESL. Data interpretation assists in the understanding of the extent to which there has been a change in teacher behaviour after the change from a content-led curriculum to a skills-driven one. It should be noted that the data interpretation was not left until the end of the interviewing process; it was done concurrently with the data collection process. This enabled the researcher to challenge herself with questions like:

1. Why do the participants act the way they do?
2. What does this focus mean?
3. What else do I want to know?
4. What new ideas have emerged?
5. Is this new information?

Data analysis has been described by Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland (2006: 195) as a process in which raw data are turned into findings or results. The researcher analysed the data with all of its richness, keeping it as close as possible to the form in which it was recorded or transcribed. The findings are communicated in a descriptive form which is substantiated by direct quotations from the raw data. This is done to highlight the critical perspectives of the participants. Anderson (1990) is of the opinion that data analysis is one of the most interesting aspects of the research since it includes the possibilities of discovery and re-conceptualisation of the research question. As qualitative researchers do not search out data to prove or disprove hypotheses, abstractions tend to build from the information obtained from the participants. Researchers therefore tend to analyse their data inductively.

Data analysis was done so as to increase the broader understanding of the process curriculum alignment by HoDs in Swaziland. Analysis of the data included:

- Observations of behaviours, situations, interactions and environments;
- Scrutinising these observations for patterns and categories; and
- Answering research questions based on what could be deduced from the findings.

Two data analysis procedures were utilised (content analysis and descriptive analysis) so as

to increase the broader understanding of the implementation of educational policies in the country (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1999). Communication content such as speech, written texts, and interviews, were categorised. The reading and re-reading of transcripts to identify similarities and differences and then to further develop themes and categories were done in order to facilitate data analysis.

#### **4.7.3. Organising data**

In order to ensure that the data was organised, the researcher created cards for initial document analysis conducted with the four schools. On the cards, emerging themes and categories were written and stored under the pseudonyms that were used for each HoD.

#### **4.7.4. Preliminary analysis**

The researcher transcribed the tapes after each interview. The researcher analysed the data by first reading the transcripts in their entirety several times in order to understand the essence of the entire interview before coding and breaking them down into parts to determine emerging themes and sub-categories. All the data was transcribed immediately after they were recorded as explained earlier in this chapter. The researcher heeded advice by Bogdan & Biklen (2003) that a tape recorder often creates the illusion that research is effortless, and that when using it, one can easily let recording sessions go on for too long, thereby leading to the accumulation of data that can be difficult to transcribe. They further provided a stern warning that the accumulation of interview tapes without an adequate system to transcribe them can spell the project's failure.

#### **4.7.5. Reading and writing memos**

Reading and writing memos involves the act of taking reflective notes about what the researcher is learning from the data. The researcher therefore kept a record of the meanings derived from the data, and each memo consisted of one idea.

#### **4.7.6. Content Analysis**

Content analysis was conducted in this study. Content analysis involves the detailed and systematic examination of the content of data for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or bias (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:142). The analysis of participant data in this way ensures that the conclusions made by the researcher are not misinformed. The themes which are formulated from the data are normally supported by the actual words of the participants

which are presented as quotations in the text. During data analysis, content analysis was done whereby similar responses from the same category were clustered together in all the interviews and differing responses were identified. This led to abstractions arising from the data itself (Ary et al. 2006). Content analysis involves a detailed systematic examination of the content of a particular body of material in order to identify patterns and biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Mayring, 2004). This analysis procedure proved effective in the study as it ensured that the data was analysed with all of its richness, as close as possible to the context where the utterances were made. When conducting content analysis, the data was coded.

#### **4.7.6.1. Coding the data from interviews**

Coding has been defined as “...the process of sorting your data into various categories that organise it and render it meaningful from the vantage point of one or more frameworks or sets of ideas” (Lofland, et al., 2006:200). Coding the data from interviews was done in three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

##### **a) Open coding**

Here, the “breaking down, examining, comparing conceptualization and categorizing” of data was done, following Bryman, (2008: 543) that researchers ought to begin categorising the data into similar groupings and to form preliminary categories of information about the phenomenon being examined. The researcher engaged in the creation of chunks of data that summarized what was seen happening, based on meaning that emerged from the data. Examples of participants’ words were used to establish the properties of the codes that were given to the data (Bryman, 2008; Elliot & Higgins, 2012; Gallicano, 2013).

##### **b) Axial coding**

Here, the researcher began to bring together the categories she had identified when conducting open-coding. Groupings that resembled themes were then formulated using the categories, and they shed new insights for the researcher that pertained to the issue of policy change and curriculum alignment in as far as underprivileged schools in the country were concerned. Relationships were also identified among the open codes (Gallicano, 2013).

##### **c) Selective coding**

In selective coding, the researcher re-reads the transcripts and selectively code any data that relate to the core variable identified (Gallicano, 2013) at this stage, the researcher then

organised and integrated the newly developed themes in a way that demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the issue under investigation. Tables 5, 6, and 7 illustrate how coding was conducted.

**Table 5: Open coding and its properties (for the first research question)**

Research Question one: How have you adapted new curriculum reforms to incorporate policy changes into your instructional practices?

| Open code     | Properties                              | Examples of participants' words  |
|---------------|---|--|
| Being groomed | Team work<br>Workshops have been useful | <p>In my department we scheme together, which helps if you are less knowledgeable in what to do;</p> <p>The inspector calls us for workshops on how to do the scheming;</p> <p>We recognise talent among our selves so that the one who is knowledgeable in a component of the syllabus can help us all.</p> |
| Improvisation | Using own internet<br>Photocopying      | <p>You use your own money and internet to download passages that you could use to teach the learners;</p> <p>You end up photocopying from the few available sources so that they can at least all have the material</p>  |

Research Question three. What are the challenges facing the HoDs in the actual implementation of the curriculum?

**Table 6:** Open coding and its properties (for the last research question)

| <b>Open code</b>         | <b>Properties</b>  | <b>Examples of participants' words</b>  |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Lack of library material | Too many OVCs in the school<br>Government not paying in time | There are too many OVCs and they cannot afford to buy textbooks<br><br>Learners cannot read on their own  |
| Lack of textbooks        | Too many learners<br>Textbooks not affordable                | There are too many learners in the school, they do not have textbooks<br><br>We do have the rental system but the textbooks are just not enough<br><br>The textbooks which are relevant for this curriculum are expensive |

**Table 7:** Axial and selective coding

| <b>Open codes</b>  | <b>Axial codes</b>   | <b>Selective code</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| Believe they could be aided by the relevant governing body to provide in-service training and the administration to ensure proper enrolment. | Believe they could do with constant monitoring and follow - up;<br>Could do with provision of adequate learning material | Poor enrolment policy and lack of government commitment towards new curriculum programme |
| Need for adequate teaching learning material   | Believing they could do with reduced numbers of students and with intervention from government                           |  |

It is important to note that the above tables only serve to illustrate how the process of data analysis was conducted. Otherwise, a number of themes were derived from the data, leading to a number of categories which responded to the research question. Evidence of these thematic and categorical relationships between the data from document analysis and the data from interviews is evident in chapters five and six.

#### **4.8. WRITING THE REPORT**

In writing the report, the researcher made sure that she fully understood the topic and the research questions. She therefore analysed her brief carefully, and ensured that the research purpose guided the writing process. The main purpose of the research was to describe the perceptions of HoDs on how curriculum alignment occurred in their schools. Throughout, the writing process, the researcher reminded herself about the objectives, in order to ensure that the content was responsive to its rationale.

#### **4.9. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented the methodology that was followed in conducting the study. The research population was defined and the selection techniques were described. The design of the study was also discussed, and focus was placed on the researcher's preferences for the unstructured interview, which is the major method of data collection that was used. How the researcher obtained permission to conduct research was also discussed, together with how ethical measures were taken in order to ensure that the participant was fully protected. A description of how entry into Shiselweni schools was gained and initiated was also described.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter described the research design and methodology adopted. The chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from selected department heads on their perceptions of how the curriculum was aligned with policy standards to ensure effective implementation. The data reveals their views on the process of ensuring that the curriculum be aligned in the country's underprivileged schools. It particularly shows changes after the SCGSE curriculum was introduced as part of the fulfilment of a process that began long before independence. The data consists mainly of document analysis reports and transcripts of taped interviews in which the department heads' views were captured.

#### **5.2. DATA FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The section that follows presents the data from document analysis. The data which were collected from the document analysis are documented in the table below according to the different participants. It was noted that some HoDs had additional documents that they had designed because of circumstances that arose in their particular contexts. Findings from the document analysis were categorised into themes and analysed in order to identify what was happening on the ground. These data were subjected to constant comparison, as scholars have advised that the researcher working on a grounded theoretical framework always compares data from multiple sources in order to determine if there are emerging patterns, and in order to triangulate the data. This sub-section discusses the themes that emerged from the document analysis.

**Table 8: Results from document analysis**

| Commitment             | Document. Requested  | Document. Justification   | HoD A | HoD B | HoD C | HoD D | HoD E | HoD F | HoD G | HoD H | Level of commitment | Interpretation |        |
|------------------------|--|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------|----------------|--------|
| Teacher's role         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scheme book</li> <li>▪ Lesson plan</li> <li>▪ Syllabus</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are teachers committed</li> <li>▪ Teachers' commitment</li> <li>▪ Guides followed</li> </ul> | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | 24                  | High           |        |
|                        |  |   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***   | ***                 | 24             | High   |
|                        |  |   | **    | **    | **    | *     | **    | **    | **    | **    | **                  | 15             | Medium |
| Teaching context       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Library material</li> <li>▪ Teaching material</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevance</li> <li>▪ Relevance</li> </ul>  | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 8                   | Low            |        |
|                        |  |   | ***   | **    | ***   | *     | **    | ***   | *     | **    | 17                  | Medium         |        |
| Learning context       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Textbooks</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relevance</li> <li>▪ Accessibility affordability</li> </ul>                                  | ***   | *     | **    | *     | ***   | **    | *     | *     | 14                  | Medium         |        |
|                        |  |   | *     | *     | *     | *     | **    | **    | **    | *     | 11                  | Low            |        |
| Administrative context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language policy (local)</li> <li>▪ Parental involvement policy</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarity of local focus</li> </ul>  | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 8                   | Low            |        |
|                        |  |   | *     | *     |       |       |       |       |       |       | 2                   | Low            |        |
| Structural context     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National tests</li> <li>▪ Posts</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are they localised</li> <li>▪ How far is HoD motivation sustained</li> </ul>                 | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 8                   | Low            |        |
|                        |  |   | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | *     | 8                   | Low            |        |
| Departmental context   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scheme book</li> <li>▪ Inventory book</li> <li>▪ Control of absenteeism book</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of teamwork</li> <li>▪ Commitment towards book material</li> </ul>                  | **    | **    | ***   | *     | ***   | **    | **    | **    | 17                  | Medium         |        |
|                        |  |   | **    | **    | **    | **    | ***   | **    | ***   | ***   | 19                  | High           |        |
|                        |  |   |       | ***   | ***   |       | ***   |       |       |       | 9                   | Low            |        |

From the presentation above, there are three key areas that touch directly to the purposes of this research, which are therefore going to be discussed. These include: The scheme of work and the lesson plan; Teaching and learning material and library material; and lastly, local school policies.

### 5.2.1. The scheme of work and the lesson plan

Findings from the analysis of HoDs documents revealed that teachers planned for their work. For instance, since the researcher ended up doing document analysis with all the eight participants, all of them demonstrated that they had planned their work. Those that had not fully planned argued that it was because they plan for term one and finish the rest later according to the dictates of the scheme as laid down in the document itself. They argued that they had also not received a fixed plan from government that could work for their circumstances, and were therefore waiting for workshops which they were to attend. For example, objectives were not stated in measurable terms for some of the HoDs.

The schemes of work of the observed teachers revealed that there was a greater commitment on the part of teachers to ensure preparedness before lesson delivery. They showed that an effort was made by the teachers to translate directives into practice. In part, as it was revealed during the interviews, this level of commitment that could be seen could be attributed to teamwork between the departmental members.

Similarly, HoD G commented that:

*We do have departmental meetings, whereby we agree on which material is appropriate for our students, and discuss how we can get that material and how we can get it for our students... It's quite difficult because as human beings we've got different opinions and different characters, so to say, so you find that some members do not cooperate with me and I have a difficult time trying to make them see things my way.*

Findings from the data revealed that the HoDs preferred that the overall planning of lessons be done together as a department in order that individual weaknesses could be diagnosed and be countered. They believed that teachers were good in some topics but not in others. HoD C reported:

*We do, we work together and plan for our school as a department and scheme for form 1,2,3 together, even if one does not teach that class, everyone has to be part of the scheming exercise so that everyone would be aware of what is expected in that particular class. We should all know what must be done at this class by this particular time. Even the books, we order them together and sometimes there are books I find about and ask the head teacher to buy but most of the time the books are those that we decide as a department...*

Similarly, HoD A recognised the demand for teamwork in order to ensure the success in teaching. This ought to involve helping one another to teach the components where one feels both comfortable and uncomfortable. This was revealed when she said that,

*It happens that the teacher is more oriented in one component of the language. For instance, I find paper 1 very interesting to teach because they read and they see the answer and they pick it and put it down, so he (another teacher in the department) doesn't see it, he thinks that the composition paper is very easy. Usually people differ like that, when you scheme, you must know the individuals weakness so that you can ask someone to help. If you are good in paper 1 and 3 and 4, then you must invite someone to help you or get to his class and see how she/he develops a topic sentence and how does he make a paragraph...*

The HoDs concurred that the success of alignment as a strategy depended largely on how the department emphasised teamwork. A number of team working activities were cited, as seen above. The data therefore reveals that there was teamwork in the HoDs planning for their work. The lesson plans did reflect the major content areas that a lesson plan ought to reflect

and emphasise on. Through the constant comparison method suggested by grounded theorists (Elliot & Higgins, 2012), it was easy to recognise that the HoDs had no serious problems in planning their lessons. When compared, their lesson plan did reflect that they had been workshopped on how to plan their work. However, learner activities were not thoroughly reflected, save for the stage when learners were supposed to classwork. The following extracts are from the lesson plans of HoD D and G.

### **HoD D**

**Class:** Form 4

**Lesson title:** Reading comprehension

**Lesson objectives:** By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Identify new words as used in the passage
2. Work in pairs to find the contextual meanings of the words
2. Use the new words in sentences of their own

**Teaching resources:** Passage: you are what you eat: from Enjoy English Practice Book

**Teaching methods:** Question and answer

**Lesson development:** Step 1: teacher introduces the lesson by mentioning the objectives.

Step 2: teacher gives the learners the passage and asks one learner to read for the rest of the class.

Step 3: learners to sit in pairs and brainstorm the words that are new to them.

Step 4: In pairs, learners find the meanings of the words as they as they are used in the passage and write them down.

Step 4: teacher goes around marking learners' work

It could be noted though that HoD G's second lesson objective could not be immediately measurable. It was therefore not totally taught using the CLT approach as learners were not engaged in activities that could make them utilize the given passage to gain insight into grammatical structures, meaning in context and therefore vocabulary, etc.

### **HoD G**

**Class:** Form 4

**Lesson title:** Reading comprehension

**Lesson objectives:** By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Identify new words as used in the passage
2. Respond to the questions based on the passage

**Teaching resources:** Passage

**Teaching methods:** question and answer

**Lesson development:** Step 1: teacher reminds learners about the previous lesson and states the lesson the objectives.

Step 2: teacher gives the learners the passage and asks learners to read in turns.

Step 3: learners to sit in pairs and brainstorm the words that are new to them.

Step 4: learners to respond to questions which are based on the passage.

When compared with the interview data, it could be noted that the teachers had been workshopped around scheming and lesson planning. This was revealed when HoDs said that they relied on the support from the regional workshops which were held from time to time.

HoD C remarked on the importance of workshops

*They are very useful, they are helpful, more especially when you are new and you don't know what to do and where to start, they provide a good guideline so it's important that the teachers attend those workshops, in fact I make sure that in my department each time there is a workshop I want all of us to attend. So unless they have specified numbers, if not, all eight members of the department have to attend. I don't want anyone to be left out not unless there is a valid reason that will deter anyone from attending, so they always attend and we come back and help each other because we have strengths and weaknesses.*

Similarly, HoD A remarked on the benefits of workshops:

*We have benefited a lot, we have marked the workshop papers, we have marked the examination together as a department – the teachers of English, and everyone is exposed to marking... together we mark exercise 1, attend the problem – we do it together so that the teachers who is having a problem sees how it must be done and then he/she goes to teach it in class, so we have benefited a lot.*

It was revealed that there was a need for good inspection roles. HoD A remarked that, “... we are able to make them pass because when we do these workshops, the inspector we have is very good, he teaches us how to mark the paper.”

The same view was also held by HoD B when he said that

*We also call our resource persons to come and help us, for instance, we recently invited someone to come and help us with literature and our inspector of English in Nhlanguano is always there for us, we sometimes call for a meeting with him and it makes a difference because we might be together and lack knowledge and you tend to share information that is not up to date.*

It was also revealed that the regional inspector from the Shiselweni region gave the teachers a guideline and samples on how they ought to prepare their work schemes. When analysed, all their work schemes bore a similar framework. There were, however, questions of adaptability to local settings, whether the HoDs made attempts to adapt this to local circumstances.

#### **5.2.1.1. Lesson planning in the schools**

As seen in the example of HoD G, most of the HoDs could use the help of locally designed strategies to ensure that they maintained class discipline. Instead of giving group work, pair work or projects that suited their environmental circumstances in order to ensure that learners did not get out of hand during lesson delivery, the HoDs focused on giving individual work to learners. This was partly due to the need for local models for lesson planning, models that could better suit the local circumstances that the HoDs were working under.

In one of the four lesson plans, participation was compulsory for all students and this was indicated in their scheme books. It was noted that in this school (School C) there were very few learners in the class and that the learners generally performed better than other schools. For instance, School C had sixteen learners in a class while School F had forty-two learners. The researcher noted this as it appeared to her that it might be raised as a prompt during further discussions concerning the strategies for ensuring proper class management in schools

#### **5.2.1.2. Need for a follow-up or aiding tool after workshops**

Findings from the data showed a need for government to provide appropriate follow up tools after the workshops which the teachers could use from time to time. This, according to HoD D, could be used to collect data on how the teachers have interacted with the implementation context. He remarked that:

*When we return from the workshops, you see everyone beaming with confidence as if there is something new they are going to do at work, but when we begin working, it becomes very difficult, even when you ask them to practise what was mentioned in the workshops it becomes difficult... maybe when they reach the workshops they feel that*

*teaching is easy, and when they have to practice it they find that with the type of learners in front of them, it's very difficult.*

The same view was held by HoD F who remarked that:

*The Regional Inspector does emphasise on teaching communicatively, for example using a paragraph to teach language instead of teaching language in isolation. But over time it does not work... you find that it has not been helpful when the learners write their external examinations... they just can't compare with learners from urban areas who have grown up using the language. They are way below... it's like they are doing EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The largest de-motivator is the lack of textbooks... you find yourself being the only one carrying the textbook to class and giving the learners photocopied material which they lose the next hour. Yeah, we do emphasise on filing the papers but there is just no money to buy that so there is generally no filing.*

There was also a recognised intersection between professional development and the successor the syllabus. HoD were aware of the role that developmental workshops on curriculum delivery, especially with a newly introduced programme. HoD B revealed that the work of the department heads to interpret the syllabus was made manageable by the workshops which were held annually in the region.

*We have benefited a lot, they open our minds because this syllabus when it came we were scared and we were reluctant to accept change easily, so these workshops help us identify our strengths and weaknesses in our teaching. I find them very useful because even though the syllabus has been in place for quite some time now when you come from these workshops you come up with something new every time.*

This was an indication of the need for the government to follow up on what the teachers learnt during their workshops, with a view to assist those who had difficulty applying workshop lessons in practice in the local contexts.

### **5.2.1.3. Use of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach**

It was worth-noting that the HoD had prepared their lessons in accordance with the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) propounded by Brown (2000), and this was evident in their schemes. This approach sought to break away from the traditional methods of teaching utilised in the O-Level syllabus, which followed the Grammar Translation and Audio-Lingual Approaches respectively. For instance, in the teaching of comprehension, the HoDs' teaching strategies would include the teaching of vocabulary, appreciation of grammar, meaning in context, etc, before learners could respond to questions

that required comprehension of the passage. See appendices section for a sample of the scheme of work that was used.

However, the CLT approach was not always well-understood by some of the participants, as it is evident in the interview findings. Findings from interview data revealed that the participants were aware that the success of the syllabus depended largely on their interpretation of policy demands in local situations in order to ensure that policy was put into practice. There was generally a recognised need by the department heads to acquaint themselves with the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. This approach was described by Brown (2000) as being the cornerstone for the implementation of ESL teaching. It was however, revealed during the interviews that although they were aware of this need, most of the HoDs lacked in-depth understanding of this approach. When talking about what it entailed, HoD C remarked that,

*I believe it's something like English for specific purposes. I think it's that for a particular purpose I will use this sort of English. So I am learning because I want to use this English somewhere in my life. Not just learning the structure just to know, for instance, a verb-using a verb to communicate a message across, that is why even the answers are not just answers, there must be questions before there are answers but they should be conveying a message. The main idea is to convey a message in a certain situation.*

HoD B observed that,

*By CLT I understand that at O-Level for instance, the teacher would enter the class and teach the learners about verbs but the CLT approach says let the learners use verbs in speaking, help the learners communicate in the Language and then if you identify lacks then teach them. We don't teach the structure in isolation.*

There was also poor understanding of communicative language teaching, with HoD A, as she generally confused it with the general rubric of responding.

*The syllabus is too communicative, as a teacher you should be able to teach them successfully and get credits when in fact in the past there were too many questions. As I have given an example of "about" 400 million people formed the quorum'- then the question asks 'how many' and 400 million is given as an answer, its wrong because the 'about' means it's not exactly 400 million but it's close to, so that's not an exact answer. Once you teach them that they become aware and watchful, why communicative, it's for warned that the answers starts from here to there, so it has not been well communicated without the ' about' so if you have trained them properly in class even if it's one exercise, they will always see it and get 100%, we are able to make them pass because when we do these workshops, the inspector we have is very good, he teaches us how to mark the paper.*

On a similar vein, HoD F displayed lack of adequate understanding of the concept. This was revealed when the participant remarked that,

*... You see with this syllabus when it was introduced it came with a host of changes and challenges therefore... (Long pause) they say we have to teach language in use instead of teaching it in isolation, but with the kids here it's difficult. You find yourself moving alone because they just don't have the language base. So if you want to have at least a few credits you put the communicative whatever aside and teach grammar.*

There was also lack of teacher understanding of the CLT approach, for example teachers using the word 'communication' to mean 'speak.' This misunderstanding of the CLT approach to language teaching was revealed when HoD D reported that, *"I think it (CLT) has to do with giving students exercises where they will be compelled to speak the language; it's like using discussions as a teaching method so that they can communicate amongst themselves."*

The strategies utilised by the teachers to ensure discipline and orderliness of class varied greatly as is seen in their lesson preparation books. These fell under the following categories:

1. Class discipline
2. Individual attention
3. Child-centred approaches
4. Teacher-centred approaches (absolute control of the learning process by the teacher)
5. Instructional styles

#### **5.2.1.4. Utilisation of teacher-centred approaches**

The lesson plans of the HoDs indicated that they were not aware that they were supposed to employ student-centred approaches to teaching. Teachers did not employ class discussions, cooperative work, brainstorming and presentation during their lessons. Only two of the lesson plans indicated that they had to change their approach to a more informal one, but even then, the plans did not make an effort towards any remediation of the content.

The lesson plans indicated that the teachers utilised teacher-centred approaches whereby the teacher took it upon him or herself to deliver the lesson without soliciting the aid of the learner in ensuring that the objectives were met. In two of the four lessons, the teachers indicated that they ultimately turned to formal lecture style, even though the teacher had indicated in their plan that they would be using brainstorming or using the question and

answer methods. This discrepancy between what was planned and what actually took place proved a major challenge in ensuring that the outcomes were achieved. It is quite normal that learners provide misleading lesson feedback that cannot be used, for example when they respond “yes” to a question, it might not mean that the learners understand what they are supposed to.

### **5.2.2. Teaching and learning material and library material**

It was also necessary to view the textbooks that the HoDs had in place for implementation of the curriculum. These included material that was designated as teaching material, learning material, and material that was available in the library.

The analysis revealed that most of the HoDs were using material which was designated for the teaching of the IGCSE curriculum and which was therefore not localised. They also used had their own “teacher’s copy” which were designed as a guide for the teacher. This also means that the learners were supposed to have their own “learners’ copy” or any related learning material, but in most cases this was not the case. During the interviews, a lot of issues were raised which concerned teaching and learning material.

#### **5.2.2.1. Need to incorporate a wide range of texts**

There is evidence to support that SGCSE ESL called for the incorporation of a wide range of texts in order for the teaching and learning to proceed smoothly. HoD C remarked that while it was evident that there was a need to incorporate a wide range of texts, the current reading material was not easy to access. She revealed that,

*In my school, there is a library, and in the library we have books and we also get a copy of a newspaper everyday so they get access to the newspaper but we have about 600 learners with only three copies. Can you imagine, is it easy for them to access them?...In this syllabus, the kids need to know the things, they should be exposed and you cannot just drill them and channel them to a certain story but the exposure is very important, so I think giving them access to these newspapers and these magazines is helpful but still there is a challenge, they don't want to speak the language and when it comes to orals, they shake and shiver and sweat and at the end of the day, the final result, especially on the listening aspect and the speaking, is badly done.*

All the participants in the study realised that there was lack of textbooks for teaching the curriculum. HoD B remarked that,

*Learners are much orphaned in the underprivileged schools –that is pushing us back, it's different from where they have books because they will do well if we had all the material. It's not that bad, but the OVC's are too many in the school and you find that the money comes very late, they don't have exercise books. I was thinking in the morning – actually I was saying to myself that if I can come home with at least one quire exercise book so that they could write for enjoyment.*

Findings from the study revealed that current reading material for the ESL syllabus offered under the SGCSE curriculum was not easy to access, which led to a reliance on photocopying. This was done in order to improvise for the lack of textbooks in the underprivileged schools. One major challenge was how to ensure that learners kept the photocopied material.

A different perspective was held by HoD E, who felt that there needed to be incorporation of non-localised language material in teaching of SGCSE to teach language structures. HoD E remarked that,

*We use that book (non-localised material), but most of the time you find that if there is need for helping learners in understanding the structures. Most of the time, we are using these newspapers and magazines, things which the kids can relate to, so these books that we are ordering in bulk are those books that have music, travel, education, sports and so on, those things which are the in things these days at their age.*

It was revealed that it was even challenging for learners to return with the material for use during the next lesson. Learning material such as English passages could be used in many productive ways in the teaching of ESL. For instance, one passage could be used to teach learners how to observe grammaticality, increase their vocabulary, improve their oral and listening skills, and encourage continuous writing. This means that one reading passage could be used for several subsequent lessons, and could be recalled when the need arose.

Similarly, HoD D remarked that “*You end up photocopying those that you need to use.*”

HoD B remarked that,

*During O-level times, the teachers mostly did the work but this time it is the students who have to be practically involved in doing all the work even though it is difficult because they don't have the books so you have to do it for them but if the rules are followed, they learn widely when they are doing the job themselves and they learn to communicate well.*

All the participants revealed that their schools had a book rental system in place to ensure that learners had low cost access to book material. All the participants in this study revealed, however, that this attempt to achieve low cost access to book material was frustrated by a failure of government to pay in time for learners who are registered under the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC). Government was not thoroughly supportive in the running of the OVC programme. Teachers complained that the failure by government to pay in time for children registered under the OVC programme frustrated the smooth running of their educational operations.

It was noteworthy though, that the participants were geared towards creating platforms where teaching material could be improvised. They referred to failure by government to launch all programmes that were fundamental for the implantation of ESL in time, which included the launching of relevant textbook for implementing the curriculum. The data analysis revealed that there was a lot more improvisation in the teaching of SGCSE ESL than there was when the O-Level system was in place.

Most of the participants revealed that there was a lot of improvisation in the teaching of the SGCSE ESL syllabus. They revealed that this was done in the form of making copies of the textbooks that were available to ensure that all learners had access to learning material.

HoD B remarked:

*Problem here is with the resources, let's say you are teaching about descriptive writing, we were told that the learners must see a text that has descriptive language e.g. describing a beautiful person, the child should see a text where a beautiful person has been described. We don't have the books and at times we don't have those kinds of resources. At times I would use my own phone to download some of these texts, type them and photocopy them for learners so that they can see the descriptive language in use, so internet has all that to complement the shallowness of some of the text books. You have to find it yourself as a teacher, sometimes they are given compositions like i.e. to describe a busy shopping mall. They have never seen a mall and have never been to one so it is disadvantageous, on the other hand there might be a picture of such or a description which might help them.*

Similarly, HoD D commented that:

*There is this book they are using now, Enjoy English which requires the learners to write in it, we don't have that book yet the learners should have a copy so that they could practice on their own at home. But we have teachers' copies only and we end up photocopying it.*

It was also revealed that the alignment of the SGCSE curriculum was frustrated by the dysfunctional tendencies of the book rental systems in the schools. The book rental system was not easy to maintain, a shortage of books required that the teachers rent out books out for brief periods of time and so learners did not have the material for any length in time. This increased the work of the teachers because they had to ensure that the learning material was accessible. It also increase liability as learners who have damaged books could no be identified easily. HoD B remarked:

*...It's not easy because you find that there are not enough books, the teachers have to carry the books with them during that English period. This makes it difficult to give learners homework because they don't own the books, e.g. in Form 1, we have very big numbers and they don't even keep the books because after the period they have to take them back. So it is also difficult to note who has ruined a book because the advantage of the rental system ensures that the book is liable to the student, who will be expected to pay for it when it has been damaged. In the system of lending the books to learners during English time only, one disadvantage is that it's difficult to identify the culprit at it becomes the expense of the school to replace the book.*

HoD A noted that with the number of learners per class, it was difficult to run the book rental system. She put her perceptions as follows:

*... Our current principal has tried it so the few books that she manages to buy I take them to class with me and I come back with them, so I can be able to state how good a book is, especially at Junior level. Even at high school, she says we should photocopy as much as we can.*

As noted during document analysis that there was a challenge that related to textbooks that could be used specifically to teach the SGCSE curriculum, the perspectives of the HoDs also substantiated this finding. Lack of relevant textbook material therefore posed a challenge for the HoDs and frustrated the smooth running of the SGCSE curriculum.

The general impression gained during the interviews was that there was a scarcity of administrative support in the schools. The English HoDs could not get the Principals to help ensure that there was a smooth implementation of ESL in most Shiselweni Region schools which were underprivileged. This was evident in the lack of textbooks which ought to be used by learners on a daily basis and it forced the teachers to rely on photocopied material. This on its own had a lot of shortcomings since the learners had no means to safe-keep the photocopied material for use during subsequent lessons.

Findings from the study revealed that current reading material for the ESL syllabus offered under the SGCSE curriculum was not easy to access. This led to a reliance on photocopying. This was done in order to improvise for the lack of textbooks in the underprivileged schools. A major challenge stemming for this was how to ensure that the learners kept their photocopied material. It was even revealed that it was challenging for learners to produce the material for use during the next lesson when it was needed for lesson continuation. Learning material such as English passages could be used in many productive ways in the teaching of ESL. For instance, one passage could be used to teach learners how to observe grammatical accuracy, teach new vocabulary, encourage oral and listening skills, as well as promote continuous writing. This means that one reading passage could be used for several lessons but it would be necessary that the learner keep the text for use in each class.

All the participants revealed that their schools had a book rental system in place to ensure that learners had low cost access to book material. However, all participants said that this attempt to achieve low cost access to book material was frustrated by a failure of government to timeously pay for learners registered under the OVC Fund. Government was not thoroughly supportive of the running of the OVC programme. Teachers complained that this frustrated the smooth running of their educational operations.

Findings from the analysis of data revealed that the alignment of the SGCSE curriculum was frustrated by the dysfunctional tendencies of the book rental systems in the schools. A shortage of book material led to the teachers giving the learners the book material for brief periods of time. This meant that learners did not own the material and it increased the work of the teachers because they had to ensure that the learning material was accessible. HoD B remarked that:

### **5.2.3. Local language policies**

The HoDs were requested to produce the policies that they as a department have prepared in order to ensure that implementation of the subject became a success in their circumstances. It was revealed that the HoDs had language policy, but it was not documented. All HoDs stated that their policy was for the learner to speak in English at all times around the school premises. However, during the interviews, they mentioned that learners failed to do the latter. Below are the reasons that they gave for the failure if learners to utilize English language in the school.

Findings from the study have revealed that it also became a challenge for the HoDs to know how to enforce a proper work ethic among the teachers they were in charge of. They complained about negative forces which were working against them and which were disadvantageous in creating an atmosphere where they could enjoy their work. HoD E remarked that:

*The only thing they can be able to...Ok they listen to things in English just at school only, but the other thing which is so much pathetic is that the culture is lacking, you find that most teachers who teach in rural schools... are even lazy to use the language for the students to be inspired. They say that the students don't understand the language, what's the use of using it when teaching other subjects – you English teachers use the language; it is your duty to teach the students to speak English.*

HoD D spoke about the low morale in the school and the lack of administrative support, specifically the failure to provide the English department with the necessary teaching material:

*The head teacher has a soft spot for other departments, he is interested in Math and Science textbooks, for those departments, books come quickly and when we order ours he drags his feet... When they watch TV, you find others watching the action; they are not interested on what is being said in the presentation. He/she (learner) watches what he's watching you will see him/her laughing otherwise he doesn't understand. When you say something funny, they won't smile or laugh up until you say it in the mother tongue, otherwise you will laugh alone and they will be surprised.*

There is, therefore, evidence to support the existence of a low morale in the schools, which resulted mostly from the lack of a defined local language policy which could be followed. The next section presents the findings that came out specifically from interview data.

### **5.3. DATA FROM INTERVIEWS**

Analysis of interview data is organised and discussed based on the stakeholders' responses to the research questions. It is from these ten main questions that the main categories and sub-categories were developed. During data analysis, interview data was analysed for emerging themes which were related to the major research questions. Interview data was also compared to the data from document analysis, as seen above. The researcher did this following advice from Elliot & Higgins (2012) that the researcher working on a grounded theoretical framework engages in a constant comparison of data from multiple sources to check for emerging themes and for purposes of data triangulation. The data was therefore analysed in the order outlined below.

1. Perspectives of participants on the aspects of the local setting that have strengthened the success of alignment as a policy instrument in promoting curriculum implementation
2. Perspectives of participants on the extent to which they find the teaching of English Language easier/ more difficult when compared to it being taught under the O-Level curriculum
3. Perspectives of participants on the extent to which governmental support is required in the implementation of SGCSE ESL
4. Perspectives of participants on the extent to which cross-departmental cooperation is necessary in the teaching of ESL.
5. Perspectives of participants on how the administration could support the teaching of ESL
6. Perspectives of participants on what the change meant in terms of their role
7. Perspectives of participants on the aspects of the local setting that have challenged the implementation of ESL

Responses of the department heads to each of these questions are presented in the form of a display table after which findings from the responses are discussed with the use of the participants' own words. This was done following the view of Maykut & Morehouse (1994) that emphasis should be placed on understanding through looking at people's words, actions and records. In this way, patterns of meaning emerge from the data and can be presented using the participants' own words. Consequently the understanding of alignment as a strategy for improving curriculum performance was understood as it was constructed and experienced by the informants. The findings under each main category are discussed in sub-categories that emerged from the interview data. Participants were asked to establish what their point of views were pertaining alignment of the curriculum in the country. This question generally served as the prompt to all interviews that the researcher held. As the interviews were unstructured, department heads took it from the question and proceeded to talk about other issues which were of concern to the study. Where such was not the case, the researcher used the research questions to re-direct the informants to the focus of the study. Each table categorises the perceptions of the questions under study.

This section presents the data generated during the in-depth interviews conducted as this was the major data gathering method used.

### 5.3.1. Aspects of the local setting that have strengthened the success of alignment as a policy instrument in promoting curriculum implementation

**Table 9:** *Perspectives of participants on the aspects of the local setting that have strengthened the success of alignment as a policy instrument in promoting curriculum implementation*

| HoD's position | Perceptions   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. HoD A       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the Communications Language Teaching (CLT) approach</li> <li>▪ All new teachers be introduced as foreigners</li> <li>▪ Making learners aware of the intended outcomes</li> </ul> |
| 2. HoD B       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ A supportive Principal</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the CLT approach</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> <li>▪ Making learners aware of the intended outcomes</li> </ul>  |
| 3. HoD C       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ A supportive Principal</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> <li>▪ Making learners aware of the intended outcomes</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the CLT approach</li> </ul>  |
| 4. HoD D       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the CLT approach</li> <li>▪ A supportive Principal</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> </ul>  |
| 5. HoD E       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> <li>▪ Making learners aware of the intended outcomes</li> </ul>   |
| 6. HoD F       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ A supportive Principal</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the CLT approach</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> </ul>  |
| 7. HoD G       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ A clear understanding of the CLT approach</li> <li>▪ Teachers bringing their own reading material to help learners</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> <li>▪ Making learners aware of the intended outcomes</li> </ul>                   |
| 8. HoD H       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use of local material</li> <li>▪ Adapting foreign material to local settings</li> <li>▪ A supportive Principal</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that marking of learners' work is done every day</li> </ul>   |

The responses of the participants to this question were different but had a single perspective. They were all centred towards those aspects which were geared towards the inculcation of a proper work ethic, which included largely the need for the teachers of the subject to ensure

that the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) was clearly understood before the implementation of the subject took effect. The following sub-section presents the data from the participants using the participants' original words.

### **5.3.1.1. Combining localised and non-localised material**

The HoDs concurred that success of the curriculum depended largely on the use of material that was produced locally. It was generally agreed that such material was that which incorporated all the four language skills within one cover. This was largely cited as a positive thing for the learners, as they found it hard to keep different pieces of material.

It was also felt that there was need for the teacher to ensure that teaching and learning material was triangulated to ensure that all the four language skills were taught. This view was shared by all eight HoDs interviewed. HoD B remarked that:

*Yes, there are texts we are using, for instance in form 1 we have Language for Life but we do not stick to one text because you find that there are important things that are not there in that text so we end up using other texts to complement the prescribed texts which students have. You find that there are a lot of photocopied handouts which you have to carry to class.*

Consequently, there was the incorporation of foreign material that HoDs of SGCSE ESL felt that had to be adapted to their local teaching context, in order to ensure that the learners were familiar with the concepts which they were learning. It was revealed that the main challenge that came with the triangulation of book material and other resources came with the major challenge which indicated the need for the HoDs to work effectively in trying to ensure that the materials were made relevant in the circumstances where the implementation was taking place. HoD B remarked that: *"It becomes a problem, but we try, for instance we teach according to the themes, themes like sports, technology etc. So you find that from those foreign text, we only pick what is relates to the particular theme..."*

HoD C said that ensuring the relevance of the texts that were picked proved a challenge mainly because according to her,

*... These kids do not have access to many of the things which students in urban schools have so it becomes the teacher who brings everything. We have so many books, so they use the newspapers and the books; it's a matter of picking up relevant ones not saying that this is the prescribed one.*

Even more important, ensuring curriculum through harmonising the use of local and non-localised material also touched on the dire need to ensure that there were locally deduced ways and strategies for teaching. It was revealed that there was need for schools to devise their own locally deduced strategies to ensure that the learners found themselves compelled to speak English. HoD A remarked that,

*...As a school our head teacher frequently holds meetings with us and encourages all the teachers to pretend as if they are foreigners, so that every student speaks English in the school. You see we are foreigners, she is introducing that and it is working. So when I come they speak in English, [laughs] Oh! We have suffered for a very long time.*

One major finding from this category was that it became a challenge to ensure that non-localised materials (those textbooks which not inscribed ‘SGSCE’) were incorporated in a way that still assured that the local contexts and environments were understood.

### **5.3.1.2. Marking of learners’ work**

The HoDs agreed that the success of alignment as a strategy for implementation depended largely on the extent to which the marking of learners’ work was done. This also meant giving the learners more work to practice the four language skills. The HoDs therefore recognised that their task in this regard was huge as they were the ones who were supposed to monitor that the teachers under their supervision were actually committed to ensuring that learners were given classwork and that the classwork was thoroughly marked and indications for areas of improvement given by the teacher. HoD D pointed out

*Oh! You see that one is difficult, because when we return from the workshops you see everyone beaming with confidence as if there is something new they are going to do at work, but when we begin working it becomes very difficult, even when you ask them to practise what was mentioned in the workshops, it becomes difficult... Ah! Maybe when they reach the workshops they feel that teaching is easy, and when they have to practise it they find that with the type of learners in front of them, it’s very difficult.*

The data also revealed that there were implications for the need of government to teach the HoDs on some of the policies that are meant to support the implementation of the programme. During the interviews, it was recognised that the localisation policy on its own was misunderstood, when in fact its implementation was fundamental in the implementation of SGCSE ESL. HoD D understood localisation as being an effective tool for government, geared towards curriculum implementation, but did not quite understand its implications for teaching. The implications that are carried by this are significant for the teaching of ESL,

particularly their interpretation of policy demands to teachers and ultimately for teaching as well.

The HoDs understood localisation as being a cost-effective tool for the government to manage the production of examinations, but did not refer to the implications of the policy for teaching. This was seen in the case of HoD D who remarked that, *“I think they want us Swazis to be able to do things on our own so that we do not rely on England like we did in O-level times and to cut down the expenses because taking the exams to Cambridge was an expense – it becomes cheaper when we do it on our own.”*

### **5.3.1.3. Proper interpretation of government policies**

It was revealed that one of the major strengths that alignment of the teaching of English in underprivileged schools could draw from was the proper understanding and interpretation of policies that surround the teaching of English in the country. These include the government’s language policy and other policies governing the education in the country. However, as HoD C remarks below, these policies in themselves were not clear.

*We do have an English committee in the school and it encourages the students to speak the language, but seemingly there is also the propaganda from government, I don’t know whether I’ll call it propaganda or what, but there is the idea from the Ministry that the children should not be forced to speak the language, they feel that SiSwati is also official, so both of them should be given equal importance. And it is to the detriment of these kids because you know kids; they normally take the wrong path... I feel there should be something in policy form even though I have not seen it. There is one which says the medium of instruction in the country is English and it is only SiSwati that should be taught in SiSwati. And to make matters worse, there is this idea that if you fail English you cannot be admitted to colleges and also into the scholarship board even if you are admitted in the college...*

It was revealed that the language policy of the country as stipulated in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland was clear. It states that both SiSwati and the English Language are equally important for students, and that the medium of communication in schools is English. However, in actual practice this presented a challenge to HoDs of English in underprivileged settings. There is therefore evidence to prove that HoDs from underprivileged schools found the lack of clarity on the teaching medium to be used in schools could be an issue. This could in turn influence the implementation of ESL teaching in ways that are not favourable in terms of educational goals.

Part of the proper interpretation of policy demands meant that HoDs needed to acquaint themselves with the social happenings and generation trends of the learners if the curriculum was to be aligned properly in the circumstances of their teaching. They needed to do a proper interpretation of government policies in terms of ensuring that learners were aware of the intended outcomes. Ensuring that learners are aware of the outcomes required by a lesson is supposed to be addressed at the beginning of the syllabus, that is, in Form 1. The HoDs realised that learners forget during the course of the syllabus and so the teacher needs to remind them about the intended outcome. It was also mentioned that when every new exercise was given, the teachers were supposed to lay the theoretical grounds relating it to the skill which learners were supposed to learn, and the paper which they were supposed to write. The participants therefore concurred that the outcomes of the syllabus, if explained well by the teacher, and mastered well by the learner, provided a checklist from which both the teacher and learner could refer to ensure that the teaching/learning task was a success. HoD C remarked that,

*I do draw a course outline and the expectations of the exam, so I discuss each of the papers with them before we start learning. I tell them there is paper 1 with so many exercises and this is what happens in paper 1, and so on. So before we start learning, in fact even when we are learning I ask them which paper is this, exercise what, so to make them familiar with the examination...In most cases I make them raise topics of their own for the composition, we discuss the types of compositions and then I ask for topics they would like to write about on that type of composition, so they give me the topics and then I tell them to choose one from these, those they have come up with themselves. I can include some of mine but most of the time I want them to give me the topics. I give them one as a guide and they come up with different, exciting topics. I say choose one and write something about this topic. They feel like they own it and they write interesting compositions that way because it's something they can relate to. In that way you are putting them into a corner.*

Interviews with the HoDs revealed that it was necessary for teachers to explain the scope of the syllabus to learners. HoD A remarked that “*The teachers must explain the scope of the papers when they get to class – they must know that the four basic skills are a priority everyday in class, everyone must be able to talk, read and write.*”

HoD G viewed the use of teacher commitment in her context when she said that,

*I would say we are doing better because of the commitment from the members of the department in the sense that they bring their own material and we photocopy it and use it for the students, sometimes they dedicate themselves and come to teach during the holidays. They bring their own pacesetters and loan them to the students so that they improve and do better in the language.*

It was concluded that the HoDs were aware of the contextual elements that strengthened the implementation of the SGCSE curriculum.

### 5.3.2. The extent to which the teaching of SGCSE English Language is easier or more difficult when compared to it being taught under the O-Level curriculum

The table below presents the data gathered from the participants on the above theme.

**Table 10:** *Perspectives of participants on the extent to which they find the teaching of English Language easier or more difficult when compared to it being taught under the O-Level curriculum*

| HoD's position | Perceptions   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. HoD A       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> <li>▪ Assessment methods proved challenging since learners have to write four papers, compared to O-Level when they had only two</li> </ul> |
| 2. HoD B       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul>   |
| 3. HoD C       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for improvisation</li> <li>▪ SGCSE ESL is demanding on the part of the learners who are from underprivileged settings</li> <li>▪ Need for a culture of reading</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ Current reading material not easy to access</li> <li>▪ Requires a supportive language policy in place</li> <li>▪ Need for a Principal who is supportive</li> <li>▪ Challenge is to pick texts which are relevant</li> <li>▪ Requires well-equipped language laboratories</li> <li>▪ Requires teamwork, e.g. in scheming and planning for daily lessons, and research on those textbooks which are relevant for the learners</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> </ul>                    |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul>  |
| 4. HoD D | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul>  |
| 5. HoD E | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Calls for improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul> |
| 6..HoD F | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul>  |
| 7. HoD G | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A lot of improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading.</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> </ul> |
| 8..HoD H | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need for improvisation</li> <li>▪ Need to incorporate a wide range of texts</li> <li>▪ Reliance on photocopied material</li> <li>▪ Could use an efficient book rental system</li> <li>▪ Requires a lot of support from government</li> <li>▪ Too many OVCs in the school</li> <li>▪ Difference in approach</li> <li>▪ More work for the teacher</li> <li>▪ Easier to teach with the availability of the right material</li> <li>▪ Need for a well-established department of English</li> <li>▪ Suitable for modern environments</li> <li>▪ Requires a compulsory culture of reading</li> </ul>  |

Participants' perspectives on the above theme were centred on the learning and teaching context as described earlier when participant perspectives were compared with documents analysed. Participants also felt that implementation of SGCSE required support from government, it was more work for the teacher, and was suitable for modern environments. Their views have been categorised under the themes that occurred when their views were categorised. To avoid repetition, perspectives of participants which shared similarities and which differed directly were discussed under the presentation of data from document analysis and will not be repeated here.

### **5.3.2.1. SGCSE better for English teaching**

One observation that was made by the HoDs was that the English teaching was better for the learners and teachers when compared to the times when they were teaching O-Level ESL. HoD E remarked:

*I think the students benefit a lot because when we were doing O-level you find that a student passes the exam but she is not confident, cannot be able to articulate his/her own ideas, say he goes to varsity, he is unable to do well in research and projects, but as for now the students gain a lot of confidence in a lot of areas, in terms of what the outside world requires.*

HoD D remarked that, *"Yeah it is better now, they know that they have to speak English and they end up understanding that English is practical or rather that any other language is practical, you don't just read and write only."*

One has reason therefore to believe that HoDs felt that implementation of the SGCSE curriculum was of benefit to the students.

Nevertheless, other HoDs still felt that teaching the SGCSE increased their own workload. It is worth noting that fifty percent of the teachers felt that teaching English demanded an extra commitment and passion from the teacher as the amount of subject work required was more than that of other subjects.

HoD B remarked that, *"I think O-Level was a bit easier for the teacher because the work was not that much, but I recommend this curriculum it gets learners more involved, even though it means more work for the teacher's. O-Level is for those teachers who cannot mark every now and then."*

The interviews show that there was a lot of marking required and that it had to be done everyday. It was revealed that there were a great many reading exercises which were supposed to be given to learners. They had to work on them and submit them back to the teacher for marking.

HoD G complained that, *“It’s giving me quite a difficult time because you have to be on your feet almost the whole day trying to organise information for the following day.”*

Similarly, HoD D remarked that

*The O-level syllabus was a bit easier to teach because it did not include all the skills of language. It was reading and writing only so the time was enough for teaching and the kids did not find themselves being forced to speak in English because there was no component which required them to speak.*

One has grounds therefore to believe that while the teaching of the SGCSE curriculum was beneficial to learners, it also demanded a lot from the teacher.

### **5.3.2.2. Research required in helping the teacher assist the learners**

It was revealed that in order to ensure that the SGCSE curriculum was delivered properly, a lot of research needed to be done to help the learners. HoD C remarked:

*Yes, if there is something in the book that you need, let us say in Language for Life, you can take the copies with you to class and the students are able to use it. So we do have a number of these books, at the moment we have three different books and we are still scouting for more because we do not want the principal to buy something that we will not use. So we make sure that we get the teachers’ copies first and all the teachers check, and if they are interested in the book, we order it.*

Similarly, HoD A also remarked,

*Even though I am older and no longer interested in music, I make sure that I stay up to date with what music they like, so that when we start talking about music I can relate to the things they know or to their level. At times I even say to them, “educate me you know I am old” so I don’t understand your language, so they will tell me.”*

On a similar note, HoD C noted that maintaining a friendly atmosphere in class became a useful curriculum alignment strategy, saying:

*... At times I even use their language so that they will feel like I have become their friend and I understand their language. They become excited that even though I am old I understand their language so I want to know what they want and what they think. In most cases I make them raise topics of their own for the composition, we discuss the types of compositions and then I ask for topics they would like to write about on that type of composition, so they give me the topics and then I tell them to*

*choose one from these, those they have come up with themselves. I can include some of mine but most of the times I want them to give me the topics. I give them one as a guide and they come up with different exciting topics. I say choose one and write something about this topic.*

This view was also shared by HoD H when she mentioned that even the material that learners are exposed to in class ought to be friendly. She said,

*Our children do not like to read. The only thing they are interested in is the newspapers, and that's all. So if you ask them about the novels that they have read they would just mention the Literature in English staff. Yeah, maybe we need some more books in the library because the ones that we have are kind of abstract. Maybe they are not interesting to them.*

HoD E elaborated on the issue;

*As an English teacher you need to infuse all these four skills, probably in the lessons that you carry out in class, you cannot just go to class and expect that the learners will probably do the reading...you have to prepare the students in all components, you prepare them in speaking, reading and listening, so I think it's a lot of work especially for schools in rural areas where more often than not, they rarely listen to the news in English, and they don't have radios and TVs.*

From the data above, it is evident that HoDs were aware of the demands that came with the curriculum on their role. They were aware that being an English HoD and teacher meant that one was also entrusted with the role of the researcher, and at times the insider type of a researcher who needed to be aware of the existing culture of the participants (the learners in this case) in order to utilise subjective understanding for the benefit of all. In part, this is also a realization by the HoDs that they had a responsibility to explore different ways to ensure that the SGCSE curriculum was delivered properly.

### **5.3.2.3. Requires a compulsory culture of reading**

HoDs complained that they unlike in with the O-Level curriculum, with the SGCSE there was a necessity for culture of reading in the schools, and that they felt as if the SGCSE curriculum was not suitable for their rural and underprivileged environments. HoD B remarked;

*Schools like ours are not like those in towns, we struggle so much because our pupils are short in vocabulary. I am aware that it is the teachers' duty to try but the culture of reading is lacking amongst our pupils. Even knowing things, for example in the compositions you find that there are things which can only be seen in town, you have to explain it to the learners and this makes our work extremely difficult.*

He proceeded to say that:

*This is a rural school, if you can look at the syllabus, over the years I've been teaching it, children who come from homes where there is TV for instance better than children from homes where there is no TV. We have a very few number of students who come from homes that have TV, so listening passages, when responded by learners, it becomes easy to tell that the learner is used to listening but with the others it becomes difficult. When you play the tape for them to listen and respond and the same time you find that sometimes they haven't written anything at all until time is up. So the environment is working against us, it is difficult to even find a newspaper here. There are very few TVs here and it shows in the learners' performance in English because those with TV perform quite well. For instance, those learners who reside in the teacher's quarters do well in listening, reading and writing and other exercises as well.*

HoD C noted that textual understanding was lacking in the schools

*... I do have a lot of challenges. I don't know maybe it's because we are in the rural areas. Even if you ask them what is the problem they just tell you that you have taught them and guided them well, giving them enough practice but they don't know what is wrong. I think the problem is that they fail to understand a particular text, so what we have done in our school is that for every class we don't have a library period but we decided as a department that each teacher should ensure that his/her students are reading something from the period we have, take one of them because going to the library is going to help them in all four language skills. So we take one of the periods, go to the library and maybe once a month they write a report about what they have read.*

Similarly, HoD G remarked that,

*Another problem we come across is that even our learners are de-motivated. You know, when you tell them about the English Language, so to say, they think about something like a monster, they don't like reading. The reading culture is not there, so as the language teacher you have a big task of even trying to change the mind of the learners before even you get into class. And they are also even de-motivated towards the learning itself.*

Similarly, HoD G remarked that:

*In our situation, we are in a – what can I call it, an underprivileged community where the kids do not hear anything in English, they do not have radios, they do not have TVs, they do not have anything to listen in English, so the only time when they listen is at school.*

The same view was held by HoD H when she remarked that,

*Our children do not like to read. The only thing they are interested in is the newspapers, and that's all. So if you ask them about the novels that they have read they would just mention the Literature in English staff. Yeah, maybe we need some more books in the library because the ones that we have are kind of abstract. Maybe they are not interesting to them.*

HoDs also complained that the learners they were teaching lacked the means to express themselves. This was revealed when HoD D remarked that, *“My observation is that the students from underprivileged settings are not observant, if they are, they lack in expression. When you start discussing the topic with them they can’t express themselves well.”*

The culture of reading that was seen as necessity in the SGCSE curriculum propelled one HoD to suggest that schools from underprivileged settings be accorded the status of special school. This was revealed when HoD C said that;

*I don’t know what could be done especially with the rural schools, I wonder why they are compared with the urban schools because we don’t begin in the same footing, these schools in the rural areas are way behind but then the expectations of the examination are the same. We are deprived even though we are fortunate in my school...*

HoDs were therefore aware of the demands that the SGCSE curriculum had on the learners compared to the expectations of the O-Level curriculum. The lack the much needed exposure to the English language environment was seen by HoDs to be a major factor that led the learners to fail the language despite teachers’ efforts and commitment. Findings from the study revealed that the teachers were de-motivated by the consistent under-performance of learners in spite of their efforts to teach them. This was revealed by HoD C when she said that:

*It’s really hurting to work so many years but you can count the credits of the children who have gone through your hands, when you see them even today they say you were a good teacher but you can’t be satisfied because there are no results. I wonder what they can do about that if there was something that can be done because at IGCSE program our kids were not failing speaking but now with SGCSE they do.*

Findings from the data revealed that the success of the implementation of SGCSE ESL in underprivileged settings relied on the clarification that the teacher ought to bring to the learners at the beginning of the academic year. All the participants mentioned that they believed this to be a yardstick to refer back to and a checklist which could help both the teachers and learners. The learners especially could easily refer back to the outline of the syllabus and fit whatever language material was taught to the specific outcomes of the syllabus. In this way they could be acquainted with the expectations of the examination. According to HoD B, *“We interpret the assessment, objectives and papers but we don’t give them anything in the form a paper as this curbs misunderstanding of new foreign material (e.g. magazine articles used for teaching descriptive writing).”*

In the light of the need to inculcate a culture of reading, HoDs had a feeling that it was necessary for learners to be allocated time to go the library, as in the case of HoD C who commented that:

*We don't have a library period but we decided as a department that each teacher should ensure that his/her students are reading something from the period we have, take one of them because going to the library is going to help them in all four language skills. So we take one of the periods, go to the library and maybe once a month they write a report about what they have read. Usually here like I am saying we photocopy, this year we intend to photocopy the past exam questions, they just had to have the past exam questions. They have to practice because there is no time, this syllabus is very long.*

On a similar note, HoD A remarked that:

*Now that the library is open all teachers are encouraged to stress the importance of using the library to the kids for research purposes... During my revision class – if I decided to have one, I sometimes ask the kids to go to the library and read and then compile a report about what they have read – I have taught them how to write the report. It's the duty of every teacher to schedule what the kids will do at the library.*

It was also revealed that in some of these schools, the library was not well developed. In the case of schools D and G, the library was not helpful. On this, HoD D remarked, “*There is a minor library which is a white elephant, there are those donated books only and they are not useful... there is no period allocated to the library.*”

It should be noted that the extent to which teaching under the SGCSE was easier or more difficult was determined by the strategies the departments of English had in place to ensure that policy objectives were attended. These included new strategies which they were supposed to explore, and the inculcation of a reading culture among learners in their schools.

This section has presented the views of the participants on the extent to which they find the teaching of English Language easier or more difficult when compared with when it was taught under the O-Level curriculum. Their views have revealed that the views relating to the relationship between the two curricula in so far as responsibilities of teachers are concerned are multi-faceted. In short, through document analysis, triangulated with interview data through comparison, this study has revealed that there are factors that have a bearing on the subject discipline on itself, that is, when curriculum alignment is concerned.

### 5.3.3. Perspectives of participants on the extent to which governmental support is required in the implementation of SGCSE ESL

Below is a tabulation of the perspectives of the participants on the extent to which governmental support is required in the implementation of SGCSE ESL.

**Table 11:** *Perspectives of participants on the extent to which governmental support is required in the implementation of SGCSE ESL*

| HoD's position | Perceptions  |
|----------------|--|
| 1. HoD A       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops useful for the success of the syllabus</li> <li>▪ Government does not pay for OVC's in time. which leads to financial difficulties in the school</li> </ul>   |
| 2. HoD B       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficult since the department is not fully fledged</li> <li>▪ Create posts for HoDs so they can be motivated to do their job</li> </ul>  |
| 3. HoD C       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encouraging the teacher</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that there is the appropriate infrastructure to launch the programme</li> <li>▪ Listening to the teacher and helping where there is need</li> <li>▪ Government ought to prepare tests based on the circumstances of various types of schools</li> </ul> |
| 4. HoD D       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops are helpful</li> <li>▪ Depends on the willingness of the teacher to be aided</li> <li>▪ Government has to ensure that there are appropriate facilities to launch a programme</li> </ul>   |
| 5. HoD E       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that qualified librarians are hired to relieve HoD</li> </ul>  |
| 6. HoD F       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops are helpful</li> <li>▪ Depends on the willingness of the teacher to be aided</li> <li>▪ Government has to ensure that there are appropriate facilities to launch a programme</li> </ul>   |
| 7. HoD G       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops are helpful</li> <li>▪ Depends on the willingness of the teacher to be aided</li> <li>▪ Government has to ensure that there are appropriate facilities to launch a programme</li> </ul>   |
| 8. HoD H       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workshops are helpful</li> <li>▪ Depends on the willingness of the teacher to be aided</li> <li>▪ Government has to ensure that there are appropriate facilities to launch a programme</li> </ul>   |

The findings have revealed that the HoDs viewed alignment as a strategy to achieve an appropriate implementation of the curriculum. Furthermore they saw it as a concept that is largely informed by the actions of government, and particularly the MoE which is the body governing the entire education system. The HoDs had numerous expectations of the role that government ought to play in ensuring the ease of their task in changing policy into practice. Their expectations are categorised under the following: ensuring that there were enough facilities to launch the programme; motivating teachers; Commitment to its programmes; Doing a follow up after workshops and other monitoring programmes; It is important to note that the findings on workshops and other monitoring programmes were integrated with

document analysis data, as discussed under findings from document analysis. Therefore, this section describes two major findings that were made under this category. These include: commitment to programmes; and sustaining teacher motivation.

### **5.3.3.1. Sustaining teacher motivation**

Findings from the study revealed that as middle level administrators, the HoDs found their work to be too onerous. There were a lot of class assessment exercises that had to be done to ensure by the end of each assessment period. This was revealed when a number of them mentioned that there was a lot of work to do, and that this was due to the number of papers which had increased since the O-Level examinations. The English language syllabus under the SGCSE curriculum consists of four papers (Papers 1 to 4). HoD B remarked that:

*During the lesson we do class assessment, group work and we do give them class work everyday to test their understanding. At the end of a unit we give them monthly tests because the administration requires them, even if there is a test you have already given, for instance, let's say you have given them a narrative composition test, and now by the month end you still haven't finished teaching them the descriptive composition, then we try to test them on what they have done already. But monthly tests are there.*

It was revealed in spite of the heavy load that teachers had on their shoulders; they at times had to sacrifice their own money for the benefit of learners. The lack of teaching material in the schools drove the teachers to the point where they found themselves required to rely on their personal resources. Examples of this include them using their mobile phones for school work and giving of their time during weekends and on holidays.

It revealed that in order to sustain teacher motivation, there was need for support from the administration, in the form of funding, could be utilised. Talking about teacher motivation, HoD D said, “*Yeah, as a head of department, I am willing that something like that could happen, but you need support from the administration, which doesn't come very easily.*”

HoD A remarked on the role of the administration:

*... As a school, English must be taught and the admin must be very loving to these kids... They (the administration) have a role to play because we need him to encourage the other teachers, to make them feel they are also English teachers because all subjects are taught in English – the SiSwati is our mother tongue and is also well appreciated, it is well done you find that we have a culture day, he just loves everything and also we make trips.*

It can be concluded that there was a need for the principals of the schools to be very supportive to the department of English in order for the teaching of SGCSE ESL to be successful in its implementation. There was also a recognised need for ensuring the proper establishment of the departments in the schools. This view was held by HoD A when he said that:

*The problem is that our departments are not fully-fledged and that makes us Acting HOD's not being able to execute our duties, for instance when asking for official books, the teachers might ask you, "Who are you to ask for official books." The problem is with posts so you will have a limit due to this, you find yourself doing the not important duties.*

HoD G revealed that:

*... Most of the students are under the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Fund (OVC), whose fees are paid for by government. So he would complain that the government has not yet paid. So you find that almost by the end of the year the government has not yet paid, you find yourself having a difficult time because there's no money, there's no material. It's quite challenging.*

Moreover, it became clear during the interviews that teachers from underprivileged circumstances in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland had attempted to ensure that the teaching of English was improved. This was revealed by HoD G, who said that, "*Sometimes they (the teachers) dedicate themselves and come to teach during the holidays. They bring their own pacesetters and loan them to the students so that they improve and do better in the language.*"

HoD H also remarked that, "*Although we do have it in policy, teachers do make time to come and teach during weekends and holidays. They sacrifice their precious time.*"

It also became a challenge to ensure that teaching material was adequate in print, a factor which would, from time to time, propel teachers to use their hard earned cash to purchase airtime in order to fuel their mobile phones and capacitate them to download teaching material from the internet. This was revealed by HoD G who reported that,

*... Most of the students are under the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Fund (OVC), whose fees are paid for by government. So he would complain that the government has not yet paid. So you find that almost by the end of the year the government has not yet paid, so you find yourself having a difficult time because there's no money, there's no material. It's quite challenging.*

In spite of their hard work and efforts to ensure the smooth running of the curriculum, HoDs faced de-motivating challenges which played to the detriment of the success of curriculum alignment in the schools. HoDs found that the support from the other departments in the schools was lacking. It was revealed that the teachers of English thought that they could execute their responsibilities better when they received cooperation from other departments. This possibility followed the current state of affairs in the schools and was revealed by HoD G when she remarked that:

*... It's even worse because you find that a teacher who is teaching maybe Science will come and address the students in SiSwati. That also de-motivates the students, not only the students, but the English language teachers as well, because there is no one to help them motivate the students to speak the language. And even when it comes to motivating them, the teachers from the other departments would say it should be allocated to the English Language teachers, that is, encouraging the students to speak the language.*

HoDs were also de-motivated by the poor performance of the learner in English, which, in spite of all their efforts, showed no signs of improvement. HoD C observed:

*... It's killing the English teachers, really – it's destroying them such that they no longer have the self-esteem. For all the work that they do, you will find them with loads of marking – piles and piles of work – they are always busy – they are looking for resources from newspapers and magazines – they are creating things but they are not rewarded.*

The participants also cited the scarcity of financial resources as another de-motivating factor. The data gathered showed that teacher motivation was dependent on a scarce resource, money. The HoDs complained that the lack of money for use on academic matters (such as the procurement of textbooks) meant that there was also a scarcity of resources to support and sustain a positive morale in the schools. This was evident in what HoD G said:

*Oh, that's quite difficult, especially because we have no funds in the school. Really there isn't much you can do for them, but if funds were available maybe they would have been taken for a picnic, maybe an outing to motivate them. But at the present moment there isn't much I do, other than encouraging them.*

In the light of the above, it was concluded that government needed to sustain devise strategies with which to sustain HoD motivation, taking into consideration their efforts and dedication in ensuring that learning continued despite the underprivileged circumstances they worked under. Furthermore, HoDs felt that support from government ought to come in the form of the latter's commitment to the programmes. This is further discussed below.

### 5.3.3.2. Commitment to programmes

In showing her commitment to curriculum programmes, government had to ensure the availability of the necessary infrastructure, and to fund the OVC programme in time to allow smooth running of the schools' operations.

Findings from the analysis of data revealed that there was a need for the administration of the schools to ensure that the infrastructure that was necessary for the implementation of ESL was provided. This was largely viewed to be dependent on the upper level administrator, in other words, the principal since principals are the ones who are supposed to channel the resources of the school into areas where they have identified the need. Concerning this, HoD C remarked that:

*I don't know what could be done especially with the rural schools, I wonder why they are compared with the urban schools because we don't begin in the same footing, these schools in the rural areas are way behind but then the expectations of the exam are the same. We are deprived... there is one school in our cluster last year who I heard have not exposed their children to oral and listening exercises because they don't have electricity, with the oral exam I understand, maybe it's like you are expected to roll or something when you are talking. How do they fail when they have said something? It's challenging for the teachers...*

This major drawback that was reported by the HoD was linked to the schools admission policy and the issue of the government not being absolutely supportive of the OVC Fund. HoD H observed that:

*They are teaching the four skills, e.g., there is Enjoy English, in which you find that each and every unit accommodates the four language skills, e.g. you find that there is a task on reading, a task on writing, a task on speaking, as well as on listening... we can suggest that the government prescribe them for the learner, but you find that they cannot afford them.*

It is clear that the attempts of HoDs to ensure the success of alignment as a strategy to implement the programme was influenced by the issue of finances. It was revealed that the numbers of learners who were registered under the OVC almost exceeded half of the whole enrolment in the schools. This posed a challenge to the schools that were forced to procure the funds to run all the teaching programmes required by the government. This was compounded by the fact that the government paid the monies due from the OVC Fund late and fixed the school fees according to its own specifications and not the demands of the needs of the school. On this, HoD F said that:

*... Financially we are crippled. It's probably even due to the way we admit. More than half the school, actually  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students are paid for by government, under the OVC*

*scheme. So you can only imagine what a disaster this is. Government has standardised the fees, which is not helpful as the fees that she pays are never enough to cover for the expenses. Worse still, payment sometimes comes very late during the third term when debts have been made. This in turn frustrates us; we have to make things happen, when in fact government is not trying.*

A major finding from this category was that the HoDs from underprivileged settings had difficulty ensuring that the curriculum was aligned in the implementation context due to the lack of textbooks in their schools. It was also revealed that the HoDs had difficulty ensuring that policy was translated into practice due to this critical lack. Because of the above, teachers resorted to improvisation and made personal sacrifices to ensure that they had some material which they believed could help the learners.

HoD H remarked:

*Most of the students are under the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Fund, whose fees are paid for by government. ... So you find that almost by the end of the year the government has not yet paid, so you find yourself having a difficult time because there's no money, there's no material. It's quite challenging.*

Another major area where HoDs from underprivileged settings felt the government ought to meet them halfway was the lending of clarity on the procedure to be followed when marking oral examinations. The body responsible for this is a Parastatal that falls under the MoE, namely the Examinations Council of Swaziland (ECoS). HoD C complained that the oral examinations marking procedure was unfair for the schools situated in the rural areas:

*... even the guidelines of marking, it means there is something wrong with the guidelines because... the problem is that you mark the oral and the kid has said something and the guidelines say that you don't give a zero because they have said something, and then when results come back, there are no results and to make matters worse, there are no comments, they didn't add and didn't minus anything – what is the explanation then, we no longer know what we should do to help the kids in speaking, we don't know really.*

It is evident from the above findings that governmental backing could be utilised to assist the HoDs to handle the implementation of the different subject components. In general, this category has revealed that the HoDs require the full support of the principals of their schools. Another major finding in this category was that there was need for the government to lend clarity on the issues such as the language policy; examination's marking procedures; and the issue of the OVC. Findings from the data revealed that these three were working against the

efforts of the HoDs to ensure proper alignment. This study has, therefore, revealed that there were government-embedded factors in so far as curriculum alignment is concerned.

### 5.3.4. The extent to which cross-departmental cooperation is necessary in the teaching of ESL

The table below presents the data which was gathered from the HoDs on their perceptions on the extent to which they felt cross-departmental cooperation was necessary in the teaching of ESL.

**Table 12:** *Perspectives of participants on the extent to which cross-departmental cooperation is necessary in the teaching of ESL*

| HoD's Position | Perceptions   |
|----------------|---|
| 1. HoD A       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Devising positive ways to punish the students</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all subjects are taught in English</li> <li>▪ Punishing the students</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all strategies for ensuring communication are monitored effectively</li> </ul> |
| 2. HoD B       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Devising positive ways to punish the students</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> </ul>  |
| 3. HoD C       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> </ul>   |
| 4. HoD D       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all subjects are taught in English</li> <li>▪ Punishing the students</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all strategies for ensuring communication are monitored effectively</li> </ul>  |
| 5. HoD E       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Allocation of other teachers to supervise library material</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> </ul>   |
| 6. HoD F       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Devising positive ways to punish the students</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> </ul>  |
| 7. HoD G       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Devising positive ways to punish the students</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all subjects are taught in English</li> <li>▪ Punishing the students</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that all strategies for ensuring communication are monitored effectively</li> </ul> |
| 8. HoD H       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allocation of teachers to supervise the speaking of English in the school</li> <li>▪ Teaching all subjects in English, save for SiSwati</li> </ul>   |

Findings from the study revealed that the participants considered support from the other departments a necessity. They revealed that the support ought to come in a number of ways,

two major ways. These included the supervisory roles of monitoring the speaking of English in the school and the devising of positive ways to punish the students and secondly, utilising English as the medium of teaching in the schools. These are further discussed below.

#### **5.3.4.1. Supervisory roles**

The participants in this study shared the view that cross-departmental cooperation was necessary in strengthening the use of English as the mode and medium of communication around the schools. It was felt that this could be one department's responsibility, but that all departments assume the role for effective monitoring of the strategies that were to accompany it.

##### **5.3.4.1.1. Strengthening the use of English as the mode and medium of communication**

A need was identified for staff from other teaching departments to help encourage and ensure that the medium of communication in the school was English. This was revealed by HoD G when she remarked that:

*It's even worse because you find that a teacher who is teaching maybe Science will come and address the students in SiSwati. That also de-motivates the students, not only the students, but the English language teachers as well, because there is no one to help them motivate the students to speak the language*

HoD A confirmed that there were strategies which could ensure that English became the medium of communication in her school:

*She (the principal) normally combines all the departments... hmmm, that is what she does, and she tells all of us to teach in English. She doesn't make it sound like an English department thing. She calls the whole school because I as an HOD of English cannot be able to execute anything as an individual. All I need to is to point out the problem, i.e. that we need to have a culture of speaking English, let us decide and agree on something, i.e. like the idea of having teachers behave as foreigners to encourage the speaking of English.*

Findings from the study revealed that there was need for all the teachers (except the SiSwati ones) to teach their subjects in English. They revealed that the prevalence of the SiSwati language in the schools did not do justice to the teaching of ESL. HoD E remarked that:

*We do have strategies, and teaching your subject or any other subject in English is one other strategy that we expect the teachers to do – that other teachers of other subjects should assist us. Ahh! We have other rules, such as using English as a medium of instruction in the school, so we at least expect them to converse in English when they get to school because we know that in their homes the language that they use very often is SiSwati. Then the other thing, we try to hold debates so that they can*

*be motivated. In other cases, they may have Spelling Bee competitions, having writing competitions so that at least they are motivated to use the language... at the beginning of this year we also tried to have them present in the morning, anything that they think is valuable and is going to help their peers in the assembly...*

It was, however, revealed that the other departments did not thoroughly support English teaching in terms of the strategies that were put in place. During the interviews it became apparent that the English departments had difficulty ensuring support of other teaching departments. Teachers from the other departments taught in the vernacular. The HoDs therefore had a challenge in soliciting help in this regard. HoD D shared his view like this:

*We are supposed to be receiving support from the other departments but it is not well done. In our school we have monitors who monitor the speaking of English but when the monitor write them down you find that the learners have excuses, they normally say but teacher so and so was talking to me in SiSwati, in class teacher so and so teaches in SiSwati etc. In staff meetings they normally say let's support the English department, that there shouldn't be a teacher who teaches in SiSwati but it does not happen.*

Similarly, HoD G responded to the negative when probed about cross-departmental support,

*Argh, not at all, it's even worse because you find that a teacher who is teaching maybe Science will come and address the students in SiSwati. That also de-motivates the students, not only the students, but the English language teachers as well, because there is no one to help them motivate the students to speak the language. And even when it comes to motivating them, the teachers from the other departments would say it should be allocated to the English Language teachers, that is, encouraging the students to speak the language.*

It can therefore be concluded that the HoDs from underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland would appreciate the support of other teachers to help them align the curriculum appropriately in their contexts. This would also assist them in establishing the new curriculum.

#### **5.3.4.1.2. Devising positive punishment strategies**

Participants also cited the need for the help of the other departments in the schools in as far as devising ways in which the learners who failed to speak in English could be punished.

HoD A remarked that:

*Usually we use positive punishment, for instance, we ask them to rewrite the sentence that he/she got wrong ten times, you know rather than beating them. Positive punishment is encouraged rather than corporal punishment... Any child who doesn't speak English would be severely warned. Or maybe go to detention on Fridays, or maybe clean toilets... There is another strategy that I adopted from Mr Dlamini, another teacher in my school*

*who came up with a strategy in a meeting and I was impressed – he made the kids to write poems which they will present in front of the whole school, so that’s how they are punished now, they must recite this poem and go and present it – you are the presenter and everyone is looking at you... The more she writes it, it will never come out wrong so then you have shown her /him how it must be done and you have to mark it – make sure that you have checked those papers, even though you might not do it perfectly due to lack of time but you have to make sure that the learners see that you have checked the work.*

The HoD s felt that the all forms of punishment in the schools ought to be a means towards helping the learner achieve a certain level of competence in English language. According to HoD A, learners who fail to communicate in the English language ought to be given punishments which will provide them with learning opportunities. This is what she said:

*Yeah and he/she presents it “it will be cloudy and warm, with showers” – whatever you punish the child with is educational and this is what you call subject intersection, when you intersect the subjects. I usually use literature and language in my own subjects... When I have to teach literature and language, the sentences and paragraphs that I use are picked on the other subject in the exam, same thing applies to Geography – when they have grasped the concept of communication – we are exposing them so that they will be able to listen to TV and also improve their English and they become wiser – they are able to adapt to technology mostly in the positive punishment – teachers must bring up a wise way of doing it – the administration must love it – she is a very good woman and I am very much impressed otherwise if the administration didn’t allow us...*

It is evident therefore that HoDs from underprivileged schools could use a lot of support from the other departments in their locations. It also becomes clear that the lack of such support when it was needed became a source of frustration to the HoDs of English, in that it hampered, at most, the development of oral skills in the learners.

The issue of learner accessibility to book material was deemed to be critical in ensuring that there was learning taking place in the schools. All of them mentioned that it was imperative for the learner to own their own textbooks.

### **5.3.5. Perspectives of participants on how the administration could support the teaching of ESL**

The table below presents the perceptions of the participants on how the School Principal could support the teaching of ESL.

**Table 13:** *Perspectives of participants on how the administration could support the teaching of ESL*

| <b>HoD's Position Perceptions</b> |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. HoD A                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>   |
| 2. HoD B                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the enrolment is not excessive</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>   |
| 3. HoD C                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>  |
| 4. HoD D                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>  |
| 5. HoD E                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>  |
| 6. HoD F                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support the English department by creating an environment of</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul> |
| 7. HoD G                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Strategise towards ensuring that completing classes are well taken care of</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>  |
| 8. HoD H                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enrolment</li> <li>▪ Promotions policy</li> <li>▪ Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as electricity and rooms are available</li> </ul>  |

It was revealed that HoDs required the support of the principal administrators in the schools in order for them to execute their duties properly. There are three major ways in which the administration could support alignment of the implementation of English. Evidence suggests that this includes modifications of the schools admission policy, modifications of the school promotions policy, and ensuring the availability of teaching material. Some of the views shared by the HoDs in this regard are outlined in this sub-section.

The HoDs viewed the success of alignment as a policy for effective implementation to be largely dependent on the principals of their schools. Findings from the data revealed that

those department heads who found their work to be successful, gave credit to the principals of their schools. Those who were not as successful cited the lack of the principal's support as a major drawback in the execution of their duties.

The major finding from this category was that the department heads were important to the effort to ensure that their interpretation of policy helped the teachers they were supervising. They understood that the material which they were using, if interpreted well according to the dictates of policy within the implementation context, could lead to a properly aligned curriculum. This could ultimately lead to success of alignment as a strategy for the implementation of SGCSE ESL. A number of indications for support by the principal were revealed in the data and are discussed below.

#### **5.3.5.1. Local school policies**

Findings from the data also revealed that the success of alignment as a strategy to ensure implementation in underprivileged schools was attributed to how the administration of the schools handled the issue of local school policies. One such policy that the HoDs felt needed to be put in place concerned the admission of learners. The participants noted that in schools where an admissions policy was in place, the HoDs found their responsibilities easier to execute. They also observed that in their schools, either there was no defined policy in place, or the principal was the sole custodian of such a policy, which rendered the ineffective in the light of the large numbers of students that ended up being admitted. HoD F mentioned that:

*Most learners have come here for school purposes. It's not their normal place of residence. They come from all walks of life and get admitted here. If you come here even during the second term you can still have a place... that's how our admin is. So the learners rent some space from the nearby homesteads and there are no parents there at all. No one can monitor them so they do as they please. It's very difficult to help them... Ahem... we have a problem. We don't have an admission policy, so as I have said we admit anyone and everyone... even learners who we are not sure whether they have passed or not. We simply admit anyone... that's what I can say. And you find that generally those learners are not capable because maybe they did not pass in their previous school. So, most of them do not progress well in English.*

Findings from the analysis of data revealed that there was need for the school administration to make crucial decisions on how many learners were supposed to be enrolled per class. This was guided by the HoDs understanding of the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) which is the document that introduced both the IGCSE and SGCSE programmes in the country. The document states that there ought to be a reduction in the numbers of learners per class, and

recommends no more than 30. It is noteworthy that some of the schools actually put this directive into action, and their English language department heads attributed their success in ensuring alignment to this change.

A different, positive experience was held by HoD A, who remarked on her positive experiences concerning the admission policy in her school. This was revealed when she said that, *“We have thirty; in fact we were lucky with the present head teacher. She constricted Form 3 to be one class and took the best to Form 3; we started like that this year.”*

Another observation made by HoD F was that the English department in her school could use the support of an administration which in ensuring that if there was a promotion’s policy in place, it was one which made sure that the learners were aided instead of being destroyed. The HoD lamented that there was no promotions policy in her school, and said that it was the decision of the Principal as to who would be promoted and who not:

*You see, the learners who receive undeserved promotion are just like that... they can’t do anything worthwhile... And we also promote the students even if they have not done quite well enough to deserve a promotion. You see, the head teacher would cite a lot of policies by government that demand that a certain number of learners move to the next class per year. But we say move ahead and do what because the learner has not passed? But in the end that is exactly what happens and in the end the teaching of the language suffers... and we suffer.*

It is evident from the data that there was need for the improvement of local policy in the schools. The understanding of the HoDs was that the administration of their schools was responsible for that as it tended to interfere with the progress of the students.

#### **5.3.5.2. Get the necessary teaching material for the teaching of ESL**

Findings from the data showed a need for the principals of the schools to support the department of English in their effort to ensure that alignment was effective enough to ensure that implementation was successful. The procurement of the necessary material for teaching and learning was an important factor. It was noteworthy that those HoDs whose principals were supportive in this regard highlighted this as being the major means of support that the principal could provide to help the translation of policy into practice. HoD C remarked that:

*... we are fortunate, our principal makes sure that we get everything, in fact it’s because English is a problem in the school at times we are so flooded with literature material, everywhere he goes if they say this is good for English, he makes sure he brings it back, even if you go to him and tell him about a particular book that I am interested in, he makes sure that you get it, because he is making every effort to help*

*us improve the results, thus he feels that if we need something we should get it because if we don't maybe it's one thing that is stopping us from obtaining good results.*

Contrary to this, HoD G lamented that:

*The administration is not quite supportive and not quite cooperative, you find that the head teacher has a lot to do and you ask for the material and the following day he's forgotten or he's saying there isn't enough money to purchase that material or to purchase that book.*

A similar observation was made by HoD D concerning the realities of his school when he said that, *"The head teacher has a soft spot for other departments; he is interested in Math and Science. Textbooks for those departments come quickly and when we order ours he drags his feet."*

On a both complimentary and complementary note, HoD A also felt that the administration had to principal to develop strategies to ensure that the classes which were going to sit for external examinations were given all the attention they deserved by the teachers.

*... she knows what she is doing, I could have known but I wouldn't have been able to suggest this change or block the class so that there is less visitation and more work done, and energy in the teachers, than energy exhausted because there is too much talking – too much work to do. The finishing class ends up being deprived when you have to mark for the other classes, Form 1 for instance, I had a language class in Form 1 and she had to find another teacher and I felt relieved. If I had language in Form 1 or 2 at least it would be one class, I will be taking of the new teacher while I do MM then there will be one Form 3. Those are the strategies to help because the teachers could not be tired. You cannot expect teachers to overwork then you expect good results or rather reach the end of the syllabus. I can know but I can fail because I don't have the strength to reach the end of the syllabus. Also we try to make the timetables, we keep guard of the timetable, like I am telling you like I am telling you that we have constricted Form 3 in order to balance up everything, we don't want to have too many periods as they end up being a burden. The syllabus is very long with the four papers. I don't know whether there is also paper 5 at senior secondary.*

The major finding in this sub-category is that department of English viewed their success to be largely intertwined with how the principal or the administration of the school perceives and handles all issues regarding the English department. There was need therefore, for the administration of the schools to accord issues regarding the need for successful implementation of ESL the seriousness, understanding and fairness that was considered deserving. Thus, this study recognises the role of the administration in ensuring alignment in

their schools as a context-embedded factor since whatever practices the administration would engage in the process would be determined by their circumstances.

### 5.3.6. Perspectives of participants on what the change meant in terms of their role

The following table presents the perceptions of the participants on what the change meant in terms of their role.

**Table 14:** *Perspectives of participants on what the change meant in terms of their role*

| HoD's Position Perceptions |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. HoD A                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials, including those which are foreign</li> <li>▪ Being innovative</li> <li>▪ Marker of the subject</li> <li>▪ Motivator to teachers in your department</li> <li>▪ Facilitator since more work is done by the students</li> </ul> |
| 2. HoD B                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Motivating teachers in the department</li> </ul>  |
| 3. HoD C                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Encouraging teachers in the department</li> </ul>   |
| 4. HoD D                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Helping teachers in the department</li> </ul>   |
| 5. HoD E                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Encouraging teachers in the department</li> </ul>   |
| 6. HoD F                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Motivating teachers in the department</li> </ul>  |
| 7. HoD G                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Motivating teachers in the department</li> </ul>  |
| 8. HoD H                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring localisation of teaching materials</li> <li>▪ Facilitator</li> <li>▪ Motivating teachers in the department</li> </ul>  |

The above table has documented the participants' perspectives on what they felt the change in policy meant in terms of their roles. It was revealed that the change from a content-led curriculum to a skills-driven one meant one major change in terms of the role of HoDs, i.e. that their role had also largely shifted. This section documents the views that the HoDs shared in this regard concerning the shift in their roles.

#### 5.3.6.1. A shift in the role the HoD

All the HoDs were aware that the teaching under the SGCSE curriculum meant that there was

a shift in their original role of delivering content to the learner. They realised that in addition to this, they were supposed to be facilitators, motivators, middle-men, innovators, and researchers in their own right. This shift in their roles is further discussed below.

In an attempt to foster an alignment of the curriculum, HoDs were aware that their roles had shifted significantly. During O-Level implementation, their role had been that of the traditional teacher, imparting knowledge to the learners, thereby being the central focus in teaching. HoDs realised that implementing the SGCSE meant being the facilitator of the learning process. Notably, HoD A said that,

*Ah! It's easier because most of the work is done by the students and they are learning more to understand the syllabus, automatically when they do more of these things everyday – at the end of the day you'll find that they know paper 1, because this thing is there in the paper, you see.*

A different sense of awareness was revealed by HoD, who felt that as a HoD, one was also a motivator in the department, with the responsibility to motivate the staff in their schools. HoD C remarked that they are supposed to be motivators to the teachers in their departments.

HoD C said that:

*It's difficult due to the large numbers, it's just encouraging them and showing you gratitude and helping them whenever they need assistance anytime. If there is this teacher who has indicated that she/he has a problem, I don't just leave him/her like that even if I have to go to class what I do is to try and help him/her before I go to class. I ensure that they don't feel neglected, and when they have done something good you have to acknowledge it.*

Moreover, participants revealed that as a middle-level administrator, the HoD has a number of roles to play. They cited that they had the general responsibility of being a middle-man, which involved reducing discrepancies between state policy and the interpretation of the demands being made on them. They also had to be able to adapt the curriculum materials to suit the local context.

HoD A remarked that,

*... what I have discovered as the HoD is that once you drill them in paper 1, make them do listening, definitely they will try – just teach them the article and letter writing they will try their best in composition and the performance won't be that bad – rather than when they have learned only one aspect – the composition-they tend to fail too much because that is only one section of paper 2 – if the child knows composition only he/she doesn't know everything. We do expose the learners to debates to improve their communication.*

HoDs also realised that they had a responsibility to be innovative in terms of introducing new teaching strategies in the department. This was revealed by HoD A who said that,

*Usually it's a SiSwati trip, for culture – so in the SiSwati trip for me I usually gain a lot, when I get there... So when I get there I find that when we come to orals, we talk about marriages in Swaziland because the things that they have learnt are the ones that usually appear in the cards for oral exams, they might ask your opinion on polygamy – where does it baffle you up, you see and you find that this is the exact thing that we have learnt at the Museum – and also the advantages of an extended family, or marriage, polygamous marriage, monogamy – the vocabulary words for family – they should know them because they are familiar with those words, having found out their meanings in the dictionary and these words tend to appear in the orals and if you have not done vocabulary with them they will not know what is going on – one thing that makes me recommend the text because it is formed by the themes that are part of our everyday life – things that we live by, families, sports, technology, statistics you know, weather and so on, the books are formed by our life – things that we see.*

Citing a different perspective concerning his role as the middle-man in his department, HoD D commented,

*The problem which is common is that the teachers do have problems in teaching but they don't say, when you say, "how is it going?" which is something I usually ask now and again, they will say everything is fine in class. It's difficult to help someone like that, the person should come out with the problem. In my school the teachers do not make an effort to ask, so everyone goes alone and you find that I don't have a way to monitor that.*

It is evident that while some of the HoDs were aware of their role as a middle man who had the responsibility to interpret policy to the other members of the department; this was not always an easy role to play. Teachers on themselves had to develop a willingness to be helped. Again this touched on issues of motivation to perform their duties.

This willingness was recognised in the case of HoD B when he remarked that:

*... Often you find that someone amongst ourselves has been chosen to do a descriptive composition etc., it doesn't mean that the person will be telling us but he leads the discussion and we all make an input especially those who are well versed in the subject in discussion.*

This does reveal that for other department heads, their role as middle-men was sometimes not as demanding as that of HoD D. HoD A also shared the a similar perspective which indicated that her role as a middle-man was encouraged by teamwork in the department when shae daid that,

*Together we mark exercise 1, attend to the problem – we do it together so that the teacher who is having a problem sees how it must be done and then he/she goes to teach it in class, so we have benefited a lot.*

It can be concluded that to a certain extent the participants were aware of their role in ensuring that the curriculum was aligned in the context of implementation. They were aware that they were supposed to be the middle-man tasked with ensuring that the job of the teachers they led was a lot easier. Even more important, the HoDs were aware of their role as researcher. It was revealed that in order to ensure that the SGCSE curriculum was delivered properly, a lot of research needed to be done to help the learners. HoD C remarked that, “*We are still scouting for more because we do not want the principal to buy something that we will not use. So we make sure that we get the teachers’ copies first and all the teachers check, and if they are interested in the book, we order it.*”

This view was also shared by HoD H when she mentioned that even the material that learners are exposed to in class ought to be friendly. She said,

*Our children do not like to read. The only thing they are interested in is the newspapers, and that’s all. So if you ask them about the novels that they have read they would just mention the Literature in English staff. Yeah, maybe we need some more books in the library because the ones that we have are kind of abstract. Maybe they are not interesting to them.*

It is evident from the above analysis that the HoDs were aware of the role implications that came with the implementation of the SGCSE curriculum. They were aware that the success of implementation as strategy for curriculum alignment also meant that they needed to be embracing of their newly assumed roles, and do whatever it took to motivate, introduce new strategies, interpret the curriculum, and to conduct thorough research on material that could be usable in their circumstances. HoDs were aware that the discipline had automatically intensified their role. Thus, this study recognises that there are discipline-embedded factors which are associated with curriculum alignment in under-privileged schools.

### **5.3.7. Perspectives of participants on the aspect of the local setting that have challenged the implementation of ESL**

The table below documents the perceptions of the HoDs on the aspects of their contexts that posed a challenge to the implementation of ESL.

**Table 15:** *Perspectives of participants on the aspects of the local context that have challenged the implementation of ESL*

| <b>HoD's Position Perceptions</b> |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. HoD A                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of a culture of reading</li> </ul>   |
| 2. HoD B                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ English Department not fully fledged; HoD temporarily holding the fort</li> <li>▪ Learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ We have a language laboratory</li> </ul>   |
| 3. HoD C                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have a language laboratory</li> <li>▪ Challenge is being in a rural area since learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ Lack of a culture of reading</li> </ul>  |
| 4. HoD D                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of administrative support</li> <li>▪ Lack of a language laboratory</li> <li>▪ Challenge is being in a rural area since learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ Lack of a culture of reading</li> <li>▪ Teachers de-motivated towards teaching on holidays and weekends</li> <li>▪ Lack of cooperation among the teachers</li> <li>▪ Lack of cross-departmental cooperation</li> </ul> |
| 5. HoD E                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of administrative support; some departments are given more support than the English department</li> <li>▪ Lack of a language laboratory</li> <li>▪ Challenge is being in a rural area since learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ HoD Doubling as a librarian</li> </ul>  |
| 6. HoD F                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of administrative support</li> <li>▪ Lack of a language laboratory</li> <li>▪ Challenge is being in a rural area since learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ Lack of a proper library</li> </ul>  |
| 7. HoD G                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of administrative support</li> <li>▪ Lack of a language laboratory</li> <li>▪ Learners are not exposed to language in use; there is a serious lack of textual understanding</li> <li>▪ Learners de-motivated towards learning itself</li> <li>▪ Learners de-motivated towards ESL</li> <li>▪ Sacrifices made by the teachers to teach on weekends and holidays</li> </ul>  |
| 8. HoD H                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learners do not attempt to speak the language</li> </ul>  |

The above table documents the perspectives of participants on how the local environment of their schools impacted on the implementation of English language as a subject. It was revealed that there were elements of their local contexts which frustrated the implementation of ESL. These, as seen in the table above, are summarized as lack of support from the administration, a low teaching and learning morale in the schools, and lack of communal support. These are further discussed below with the help of direct quotes from the interviews.

### 5.3.7.1. Lack of support from the school administration

From the data that has been presented under Table 11, it is evident that the HoDs could do with the support of the administration, which was lacking. It is important to note that there were overlaps in the interview data, as there are relationships in the different views of the participants. For this reason, these views were not repeated. However, other views that relate to the same are discussed below.

HoDs felt that the administration in their schools could help in soliciting means through which the infrastructure in their schools could be aligned with SGCSE implementation. It was revealed from the data that the lack of language laboratories in the schools detrimentally affected the students' competence in the English language. This was mentioned by seven of the eight HoDs interviewed. This is necessary because the SGCSE curriculum requires improvements which necessitated the use of a language laboratory to address the speaking and listening components of the syllabus.

This shortage of infrastructure, most importantly the language laboratories did not do justice to curriculum delivery, especially with the oral and listening components. At the same time, it was clear that HoDs also felt that it was a responsibility of both government and the school administration to erect such structures. It is noteworthy that of all the HoDs who formed part of this study, only three reported that they had a language laboratory in their school and that even they were incomplete. HoD C said that, *"It's still work in progress, we are in the process of fitting in the necessary equipment because the room has been identified and burglar proofing has been done now we are buying the equipment."*

Worth-noting is that HoD B viewed the completeness of the language laboratory in his school in terms of more than just the availability of the equipment and the room to work in. He observed this when he said that,

*We do have an English laboratory but...what I have noticed is that internet is very necessary for this syllabus. But we don't have it here, we don't have even a line, maybe we would have tried using dongles. But even the computers have arrived two years ago, before then the learners had no access to computers.*

It was apparent that there were needs that went beyond the availability of structures, but which related to how information sharing ought to occur in those structures. The school administration, as seen in the case of HoD C, was responsible of ensuring that the structures

were complete, but ensuring the alignment of those structures with implementation of English language was observed by HoD B.

In addition, it was apparent after the interviews that some of the departments were not fully operational in that the HoD had no permanent post available as an HoD in that department. One participant realised the many disadvantages that came with this in as far as commitment towards their work was concerned. HoD B expressed a sentiment that the lack of well-established departments undermined the unity and respect that could be used to ensure the smooth running and supervision of the department. In some of the schools, there were only acting HoDs. Examples of such sentiments are shared by HoD B below.

*The problem is that our departments are not fully-fledged and that makes us acting HOD's not to be able to execute our duties, for instance, when asking for official books, the teachers might ask you, "who are you to ask for official books." The problem is with posts so you will have a limit due to this, you find yourself doing the not important duties.*

Worth noting is that the HoDs had a feeling that it was the role of the school administration to ensure that those HoDs who were acting got permanent posts as HoDs, so that they could be remunerated accordingly. This would then in sustaining the motivation of the HoD more ways than one, mainly in ensuring the respect of his or her role by other members of staff, and also by encouraging the HoD to do the work for which he or she is paid.

### **5.3.7.2. A low morale of teaching and learning**

Findings from the analysis of the data revealed that there were factors which contributed to low morale at the schools. Learners were not motivated to learn. This was the result of a number of factors, namely: 1. Peer pressure; 2. Learners not being keen to speak in English; and 3. Poor prioritisation.

Peer pressure was cited as one of the factors which negatively affected the ability of learners to stay motivated to learn. According to HoD G, "*Students are mocked when they attempt speaking the language.*"

This was revealed by HoD G when she mentioned that:

*Very few students speak the language, more especially because of, I would say, peer pressure. Yes, teachers do try to encourage the speaking students to speak the language, but then you find that those who are attempting to speak are made a mockery by the others. So you find that at the end of the day they drop it, they no longer speak it. And that's a big problem because when it comes to the oral examination, when it comes to writing as well, because language learning is all about practice, so the students will definitely perform poorly because they don't use the language.*

It also became evident that another obstacle to ensuring that the curriculum was successfully implemented arose from learner factors. Learners were reportedly not supportive of speaking of English in the schools. Learners that did attempt to speak the language were mocked by the others.

On a different note, the data revealed that poor prioritisation on the side of learners on its own did not support the implementation of the curriculum. Worth-noting is that this had a bearing on the context of the schools, as HoDs complained that there was very little environmental support (This lack has been further discussed below under 'lack of environmental support'). Learners did not apply themselves in their schooling and made no effort to ensure that their own learning was effective. This was revealed by HoD F when she said:

*To make an example, we tried, in fact we did this, we made a booklet for past examination papers for them to buy so that we can use it anytime in class. I'm talking about Form 5 here. In my class I have forty-two students but only three have bought it. They others have no money, or so they say. I'm saying that because there are series of trips to watch the soccer and netball teams. The learners do pay for those trips. Some of them cost twice the booklet but they still do pay... and you are like, what is happening here? The very same students who couldn't afford a booklet that will help them can afford an entertainment trip which is twice the book. Funny. There is no culture and respect for education at all. Maybe they lack role models.*

The speaker noted with concern that there might be lack of role models in the community which the learners could emulate. It could therefore be mentioned that there is a need for community support for the work of the HoDs. Their success is partly dependent on specific communal roles, such as parental involvement in and support of the learning process. The community should encourage learners to speak in English, without fear of ridicule, in places other than school. If they don't there is a chance that the only place the learner will speak English is under oral examination conditions.

It could be noted that some of the factors that could contribute or frustrate curriculum alignment in schools relates to how learners themselves are keen towards learning and all the activities that are associated with it. There are, therefore, factors which this study will refer to as learner-embedded factors when curriculum alignment is considered.

### **5.3.7.3. Lack of environmental support**

HoDs complained that unlike with the O-Level curriculum, with the SGCSE the community where the school is based ought to be involved in the school's language activities. They felt as if the SGCSE curriculum was not suitable for their rural and underprivileged environments. HoD B first realised the predicaments that the location of the school posed towards language learning;

*Schools like ours are not like those in towns, we struggle so much because our pupils are short in vocabulary. I am aware that it is the teachers' duty to try but the culture of reading is lacking amongst our pupils. Even knowing things, for example in the compositions you find that there are things which can only be seen in town, you have to explain it to the learners and this makes our work extremely difficult.*

He proceeded to say that:

*So the environment is working against us, it is difficult to even find a newspaper here. There are very few TVs here and it shows in the learners' performance in English because those with TV perform quite well. For instance, those learners who reside in the teachers' quarters do well in listening, reading and writing and other exercises as well.*

Similarly, HoD G remarked that,

*Another problem we come across is that even our learners are de-motivated. You know, when you tell them about the English Language, so to say, they think about something like a monster, they don't like reading. The reading culture is not there, so as the language teacher you have a big task of even trying to change the mind of the learners before even you get into class. And they are also even de-motivated towards the learning itself...In our situation, we are in a – what can I call it, an underprivileged community where the kids do not hear anything in English, they do not have radios, they do not have TVs, they do not have anything to listen to in English, so the only time when they listen is at school.*

Differently, HoD B felt that there was lack of textual understanding in his school;

*This is a rural school, if you can look at the syllabus, over the years I've been teaching it, children who come from homes where there is TV, for instance, do better than children from homes where there is no TV. We have a very few number of students who come from homes that have TV, so listening passages, when responded to by learners, it becomes easy to tell that the learner is used to listening, but with the others it becomes difficult. When you play the tape for them to listen and respond and*

*the same time, you find that sometimes they haven't written anything at all until time is up.*

HoD C remarked that,

*I do have a lot of challenges. I don't know maybe it's because we are in the rural areas. Even if you ask them what the problem is they just tell you that you have taught them and guided them well, giving them enough practice but they don't know what is wrong. I think the problem is that they fail to understand a particular text.*

Findings from the study revealed that the HoDs were aware that language learning could use environmental support. This support, as most of the participants observed, would be realised if the community members exposed their children regularly to various forms of information technology such as the television, reading material like newspapers, and to radio channels that were deemed relevant for learning. There was also a need for learners to practise the speaking of English at home and for them to use it socially. Learners lacked the much needed practice which would provide them with the necessary immersion in the language environment. It could be said therefore that the HoDs also felt that the communities had a role to play in the learning of the children through addressing issues of poor environmental factors, which tend to hamper learner achievement, though indirectly. It is evident therefore that although the community members in themselves could not be said to be directly involved in the learning of their children, there are issues which touch directly to the community, such as its lack of resources like cinemas, gyms etc, places where learners could socialise in the English language, that relate directly to learner improvement. These may sound far-fetched when associated with the reality of underprivileged circumstances, but there are near-influences of learner achievement which also relate to issues of environmental support as promoted by community commitment, such as speaking English language at home, at the shop, at the clinic, etc, which was not given consideration.

In short, one fundamental need for language learning as recognised by the HoDs during the interviews pertains to the conditions necessary for language learning. It was generally recognised that language learning derives benefits from the environment where learning occurs. For instance, those learners who had micro-language environments (staying at the teachers' quarters) inside the macro-language environment that was provided by the community were observed by the HoDs to be exhibiting better levels of language performance than those who came from the wider community. There are, therefore, factors

which this study will refer to as context-embedded factors in as far as curriculum alignment is concerned.

#### **5.4. CONCLUSION**

In general, the participants in the study shared several viewpoints concerning their role in the alignment of the curriculum with the standards in the country. It should be noted that according to the participants, a number of systems were supposed to work together in an effort to ensure that the curriculum was aligned in the circumstances of the schools. It was concluded that some of the strongest adverse factors playing against the implementation of SGCSE ESL had strong bearings on five important aspects of curriculum alignment. These include factors which are 1. Teacher-embedded; 2. Learner- embedded; 3. Government-embedded; 4. Context-embedded; and 5. Discipline-embedded. These are further discussed in the next chapter. The following chapter examines this empirically grounded theory within the literature study in an attempt to gain insight into the extent to which existing theory supports the experiences of the HoDs.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

In chapter five, the data collected from interviews conducted with the main department heads of English Language in underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region in Swaziland were presented. Some of the findings from the analysis were also discussed. The data, collected from eight department heads, were collected in order to achieve the objectives of the study which were to:

1. Describe how English Language HoDs from underprivileged schools have adapted to the new curriculum reforms so as to incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices.
2. Describe how HoDs have struck a balance by bridging policy contexts and protected learning situations against potential, external adverse effects.
3. Describe the challenges facing the HoDs in the actual implementation.

The findings that have been presented in the previous chapter will now be subjected to a literature control. This will lead to the refinement of the grounded theory. Once again, this blending of the empirical work with the literature study will enable the researcher to provide a theory that is grounded on the individual circumstances of the HoDs from underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region in Swaziland.

During interpretation, the researcher asked herself the above-mentioned questions as these related to the importance of the data and identified what could be learnt from it. These questions were asked so as to extend analysis to the data. Through selective coding of the themes that emerged from participants' perceptions which were authenticated through the use of their own words, the researcher subjected the emerging themes to theory in order to ensure that new experiences were described in the light of existing literature. The discussion begins with the findings from the participants' documents, which is followed by a discussion of the findings from the interviews. It is also important to note that the employment of constant comparison as an analysis strategy, as seen in the previous chapter, did not allow for a clear demarcation between the descriptions that were drawn from document analysis and interview data.

## 6.2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

When the documents and perspectives of participants were subjected to selective coding, a number of codes were derived which explained the characteristics that surround the success of implementation as an alignment strategy in under-privileged schools. The table below presents such characteristics.

**Table 16:** *Characteristics of a successful implementation strategy in underprivileged schools*

| Factors contributing towards a harmonized curriculum context | Teacher-embedded factors  | Learner-embedded factors  | Government - embedded factors  | Context-embedded factors  | Discipline – embedded factors  | Community - embedded factors   |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation among the teachers in the department</li> <li>• Cross-departmental cooperation</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Innovation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation to read material in English</li> <li>• Practising oral skills both at home and at school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full operationalisation of departments</li> <li>• Appropriate infrastructure</li> <li>• Commitment to OVC programmes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A supportive principal</li> <li>• Committed staff</li> <li>• Appropriate Library</li> <li>• Innovation among the teaching staff</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative teaching/leaning strategies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language environmental support</li> </ul> |

## 6.3. DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion of the findings of the study. The discussion is organised by category and follows the major focal points that arose during the analysis of the data. The findings revealed the perceptions of the HoDs on the following: 1. The manner in which they adapted their teaching strategies to suit new curriculum reforms in order to incorporate policy changes into their instructional practices; 2. The manner in which they attempted to strike a balance in bridging policy contexts and protected learning situations against potential, external adverse effects; and 3. The challenges that they faced in the actual implementation.

It was revealed that the above was largely determined by the following factors:

1. Teacher and learner-embedded factors
2. Government- embedded factors
3. Context- embedded factors
4. Discipline-embedded factors

## 5. Community- embedded factors

### **6.3.1. Teacher and learner-embedded factors**

There is evidence that some of the characteristics of implementation as a successful alignment strategy depend on the teacher and the learner. This relates to how the teacher is willing to engage in professional development, and also, to a great extent, the extent to which the learner is willing to learn.

In exploring the contribution that teacher knowledge, perceptions and experiences make in improving learner performance, scholars have uncovered the need that language teaching policies to ensure that teachers are capacitated to expose all learners to English as second language learning early in lower levels of primary school, to ensure that those who attended English medium schools were not over-privileged.

Mavimbela (2011) revealed that teacher of English language at secondary school level needed INSET since they were mandated with the role of translating teaching goals into reality and so were the key implementers of new programmes that affected teaching and learning in the schools. The study further reported that teachers could not acclimatise naturally to new teaching strategies, hence the need for nurturing whenever a new curriculum programme was put in place. Scholars have indeed acknowledged that if teachers must prepare new curriculum materials for learners to use, they will need to be open to new skills in order to enlarge their repertoire of teaching styles (Walker, 1990).

There is evidence that the SGCSE curriculum requires the learner to be welcoming to the new strategies that the members of the English department will decide on, such as the speaking of English at all times in the school. Previous research on the alignment of learner activities with policy showed that the learner ought to know and understand that which is expected of him under the new policy or approach. This is necessary in order to ensure that the learner takes responsibility for his or her own learning, as a lack of such knowledge cannot guarantee that the teacher will take full responsibility. Sebate (2011) refers to the need enshrined in the Department of Education (2003) that in order to ensure that policy change is aligned with instruction, the learner ought to be made well aware of the assessment standards in order for him or her to take charge of their own learning. In his study, Sebate revealed that the most fundamental classroom principle, which was clarity of focus, was not adhered to because

learners were not made aware of the outcomes and assessment standards they ought to achieve to exhibit competence. The study revealed that learners did not know what was expected of them at the end of the learning activity. In the process, slow learners, received minimal or no attention since they were not aware of what was expected of them. This is in contrast to the instance where they would act upon their own progress due to their knowledge of the expectations. Earlier research has shown that prior knowledge about a topic assist in developing comprehension and retention (Duffelmeyer, 1994). Letting learners know about what is expected of them proves to be a useful alignment strategy since learners measure their progress in terms of the course outline.

Viewed from the standpoint of curriculum specialist and scholars, it is the role of government as the body that governs the education system in the country to ensure curriculum alignment at different levels (Hopkins, et al., 2008). This also touches on the role that the teacher and the learner has to play in ensuring success of the curriculum. This therefore suggests that while HoDs and learners might have been aware of their roles, they could play these beneficially with the direct or indirect help from government. For instance, evidence form the data points out that HoDs were aware of the additional role that new curricula reforms have brought in their profession, such as their role to explore new teaching and learning material. This evidence suggests that governmental support is required aligning HoDs' role performance with the demands of their profession. As one scholar puts it that, "Teachers who strategically manage their policy demands develop 'focusing frameworks' that enable them to draw resources from external environments 'without being overwhelmed with the complexity of information, requirements, and other features of resource-rich environments'" (Grimmett & Chinnery, 2009:126), it becomes clear that the government is tasked with a mammoth role to ensure that these policy demands are clearly understood by the HoD who will implement innovative programmes. Delimiting whatever demands that are made by the new policies that accompany that particular programme to ways that should see to it that their specific programme goals are realised (Grimmett & Chinnery, 2009:126), is a responsibility of both government and the HoDs.

In describing the role of the teacher, Grimmett & Chinnery (2009) also states that it is a two-fold one. It is twofold in the sense that it is not only that of bridging, but also one of buffering. Bridging, in their view, is the act of selectively engaging environmental demands to inform and enhance the implementation of programme goals and processes. They argue

that involving the environment could lead to the procurement of additional resources that permit innovation for improved performance. They also say that good to pull in outside forces to “co-opt and lobby them for the purposes of shaping compliance with policy demands.” What they mean is that in trying to act out his or her role as a teacher, one might amass information that will lead to improved performance, while one may also include material from outside the curriculum field while still trying to achieve policy goals. Buffering, on the other hand, involves strategic sieving of external demands to engage rather than adhere to whatever external demands that policy makes. It is buffering that leads to the platform for internal deliberation at the local level and encourages innovation. This also ensures that the teacher is aware of, and can ignore whatever negative feedback may result from those ignored policy demands (Grimmett & Chinnery, 2009: 126- 143).

A different perspective about the extent to which policy change affected the teacher’s role in implementation is put forward by Sebate (2011), who conducted a qualitative study on the role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home language. In his study, there was lack of understanding of the role of assessment standards but it was revealed that policy change, specifically the introduction of the outcomes-based education policy, exerted a tremendous influence on teachers’ classroom practices. Research also shows that the relationship between the curriculum decision-making and its enactment is usually one of collision and is defined by confusion regarding the role of teachers (Hartman & Samet, 2007; Hilferty, 2007; Papier, 2008; Wojcik, 2010).

It has been recognised that the HoDs in Swaziland could use the services of an appropriate follow-up tool after workshops. In the Republic of South Africa, Sebate (2011) revealed that the teachers who taught Setswana Home Language lacked the relevant training needed to implement outcomes based education system. Teachers revealed that they did not understand the new approach to assessment because they had only attended a course which lasted three weeks and which was therefore not very enlightening due to its scope and timing. There was a need for intensive and on-going training and for guidance by policy and subject experts, in order to enable the assimilation of the newly introduced ideas into existing knowledge frames. The study therefore concluded that there ought to be rigorous, relevant and regular in-service training (INSET) by qualified experts in the form of workshops. These should impart information on both policy and subject content. This issue had to be dealt with in order to ensure that there was understanding of the teaching and assessment practices required of the

teacher under the introduction of the outcomes based education system and the learner-centred approach to teaching and learning.

Schmidt, McKnight, Houang, Wang, Wiley & Cogan (2001) focused on learner achievement in the United States in Mathematics. They concluded that the more time a teacher spent on teaching subject matter, the better the achievement score of the learners. Their conclusion was that the amount of additional time dedicated to teaching learners impacts on improvement and learning. A significant relationship was also found to be existent between achievement gains and a positively configured teacher schedule.

### **6.3.2. Government-embedded factors**

It is also important to mention that a major characteristic the success of alignment as a strategy for implementation drew largely on the extent to which there was governmental intervention in the schools. The following sub-section discusses these factors.

There are grounds to believe that the HoDs require the support of the governing body, in this case which is the Ministry of Education. The department heads from underprivileged schools had high expectations when the SGCSE curriculum was introduced, and they expected the government to fulfil their promises. They expected this support to come in the form of financial aid or ensuring that some policies which are supposed to support the SGSCE programme implementation were rolled out and sustained for the duration of the adoption of the curriculum. These include: suitable infrastructure being put in place (e.g. appropriate language laboratories and well equipped libraries); timely funding of the OVC programme; ensuring that the Department of English is fully fledged (e.g. posts are available and staff members are suitably remunerated); and workshops being followed-up with appropriate structures.

There is evidence that exposure to new curriculum programmes ought to be a learning curve for school administrators. This is especially realised if programme implementation is accompanied by capacity building activities. In South Africa, Msila (2010) revealed that principals who were exposed to the ACE-SML programme gained a sustained vision to be able to lead change and share leadership with others.

The inattention of the MoE on ensuring that these requirements were put in place was a major contravening factor affecting the alignment of the curriculum with policy standards. This falls short of what the literature suggests when it says that the governing body ought to ensure its commitment to the alignment of the curriculum at programme level. Eckel et al. (2001) refers to this as *Institutional commitment* and says that it is the formal and authoritative decision and commitment to pursue a programme. Institutional response to curricular reform by academics, administrators and students refers to the institutional autonomy to make curricular changes and related incentives or the consideration of the process as an opportunity for change, thus devising strategies for overcoming inhibiting curricular innovation at national institutional and programme level (European Commission, 2006). A need therefore exists for government to show the extent to which it is committed to ensuring that the ESL syllabus is a success when implemented by ensuring that all fundamental mini-programmes, which were supposed to support the teaching of the ESL programme, were launched when the major SGCSE curriculum programme was introduced.

There was also a need for the MoE to explicitly discuss its new education policies with the HoDs. This was very important because the curriculum had to conform to newly introduced policies. The MoE did not deal directly with the HoDs in matters regarding the interpretation of the curriculum. Scholars believe that it is the state's responsibility to ensure that the sense that schools make of newly introduced curricula is appropriate and in line with policy (Hopkins et.al. 2008). This therefore proves that there was need for government to ensure that it was committed to its programmes and newly introduced changes.

A trend by government not to thoroughly address issues of programme implementation and alignment to local circumstances has been documented in literature. A number of studies have been undertaken in the country concerning making the curriculum respond to the specific needs of people. Qualitative studies undertaken on secondary school education in Swaziland on different curricula over the years reveal a considerable amount of discrepancies between policy formulation and curriculum implementation. In particular, P.S. Dlamini (2010) reported that teachers in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland felt that there was a need by government to consider making the teaching of Literature in English to be compulsory at senior secondary level in order to align the SGCSE curriculum the demands of the local universities.

It was therefore revealed that not including the subject under the compulsory list of subjects undermined the idea embedded in The NERCOM Report (1985) that education should serve the economic sector. Education ought to do this by ensuring that school leavers are properly equipped to participate in the various facets of the economy, for example by being qualified to enter universities. These findings suggest a need for better strategies and approaches to establish policy alignment among local level administrators or school principals. These employees interpret policy differently and so it is important to ensure that what the national reviews and policy documents state in theory is made practical in the schools.

Similarly, Nxumalo (2007) revealed that there was a lot of improvisation of teaching material in the teaching of junior certificate level English language. It transpired from this study that teachers encountered challenges in the implementation process which included an inability of students to do homework, the lack of a culture of reading by students, a need for language models, and a need for teaching materials. There is, therefore a trend that has been documented in this regard. At a same level, Msimango (2010) reported that teachers had difficulty implementing English at junior secondary level due to a lack of clarity and understanding of the approaches that were stipulated by the new curriculum. As the current study focuses on documenting the new approaches used to ensure the effective teaching of the English language under the localisation policy, in 2015 when this study was conducted, HoDs of English Language still encountered many challenges regarding the appropriate teaching approaches that could successfully drive home the localised content which is the basis for the skills-based SGCSE. The disregard of curriculum delivery issues by government is therefore well-documented.

In Swaziland, the National Education Policy (1996) referred to the importance of the growing concern for the relevance and quality of education, which resulted from the discrepancies between the type of education which was attained at senior secondary school and the requirements of the job market. High school leavers had no employment prospects and no way to earn a living wage. The document's claims are an indication of the dire need for a properly aligned curriculum, which in turn refers back to the need for research not into what the curriculum ought to offer in order to respond to the job market, but largely to ensure that effective implementation standards are laid in order to ensure the realisation of the educational goals. Further, the NERCOM Report (1985) in Swaziland stated that the

education process was meant to develop the individual so that the individual in turn was able to contribute effectively to the development of the entire society, and the country at large.

HoDs also felt that government had to develop means to motivate the teachers of English language. This resulted from what HoDs called a heavy workload due to the demands of the SGCSE. Studies reveal that teacher motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and their behaviour towards subject matter. Teacher motivation, which can come in the form of regular payment of salary, fringe benefits such as allowances and bonuses and a good working environment have been found to have a direct impact on learner performance (Adelabu, 2005:14-18).

HoDs also felt that governmental support ought to come in the form of commitment towards training programmes. It could be noted that curriculum alignment is also largely reliant on the Commitment of government to programmes which have been put in place to address issues of staff development. Capacity has to be built to monitor alignment between curriculum standards and the implementation of classroom instruction (Blank, Porter & Smithson, 2001). In Swaziland, Mdluli (2003) draws attention to the lack of understanding of policy directives regarding the implementation of the received HIGCSE and IGCSE History syllabuses by teachers. These problems remain a major challenge to establishing the desired behaviour in learners. He also described their understanding as to how the challenges that came with the change were addressed. The study revealed that the majority of History teachers did not have adequate information about the IGCSE curriculum. The study concluded that there was a need for a proper alignment instrument to ensure that the teaching of the subject was aligned to local circumstances. Kopang (2004) argued that resources in the form of time, expertise, planning support, and professional development were necessary in order to help teachers incorporate the changes required in the alignment process. In this study, focus was placed on how the in-service department ensured that teachers were trained on the skills which were relevant to the effective implementation of the curriculum.

On a different note, Gamedze (2010) reported that some of the loopholes that existed at the pre-implementation stage of the SGCSE were seen as potential sources of frustration when the SGCSE curriculum was actually implemented in the schools. Some of the challenges that were singled out in the study are: lack of preparedness for the reforms which have been introduced; insufficient involvement of the stakeholders in the process; curriculum demands

such as facilities, laboratories, electricity, textbooks were expensive even though some were produced locally; the unavailability of that implementation materials were not readily available when SGCSE SiSwati was implemented for the first time; lack of specialised teaching rooms such as laboratories, among others.

It is also evident from the findings that underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region in Swaziland engaged students in national tests, despite their underprivileged circumstances. While previous research studies concede that national curriculum testing ensures consistency and uniformity in what learners get in terms of content and skill, it has not been ascertained whether this is ensured in schools which lack privileges that are enjoyed by others (Msila, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2008). A case study that was conducted by Hopkins et al. (2008) on the implementation of new curricular reforms in New Zealand revealed a widespread agreement that the national curriculum provided a means of ensuring consistency across the nation, whilst still allowing for flexibility in schools to meet the needs and interests of their students and communities. School leaders and teachers viewed the newly introduced curriculum in the country as a broad common scaffold that gave more choice for schools and afforded greater ownership of the curriculum to local communities. While Hopkins reports that this increased flexibility for schools meant that teachers could align and personalise learning to the school community as well as to the individual, P.S. Dlamini (2010) argued that flexibility in the policy documents led to teachers interpreting policy documents in a way that differed from what the policy makers intended. This in turn undermined policy intent.

In New Zealand, the introduction of national testing also meant that students would not be too disadvantaged if they moved school, neither would the teachers (Hopkins et al., 2008). In Swaziland, recent studies postulated that, despite their abilities, novice teachers lacked the prerequisite knowledge to link the new curriculum to the more detailed content of the curriculum documents that preceded it (Msimango, 2010; Mndzebele, 2009).

Educational assessment is viewed as a pivotal strategy around which national educational reforms should be anchored. Forms of assessment that have been used by English teachers have been criticised for failing to establish a link between classroom methodology and what the external examinations purport to test and evaluate (P.S. Dlamini, 2010). It is against this backdrop that P.S. Dlamini (2010) argues that assessment practices used in English Literature tend to fail learners during the external national examinations because of their traditional

orientation. This use of state designed assessment strategies has been criticised to ignore contextual circumstances (Darling-Hammond, 1994). To address this challenge, Darling-Hammond (1994: 5) argues:

*The equitable use of performance assessments depends not only on the design of the assessments themselves, but also on how well the assessment practices are interwoven with the goals of authentic school reform and effective teaching.*

Darling-Hammond's observation illustrates the dire need to align curriculum and assessment policies and practices at the schools to ensure that delivery systems are congruent with the assessment objectives designed by the policy makers and the institutions of external assessment.

In the light of the shortcomings of a received curriculum, advocates of the deliberative approach to curriculum development see curriculum development as a process which requires involvement in decision making, and being able to defend ones' beliefs (Naidoo & Green, 2010; Pinar et al., 2000; Walker, 1990). These scholars further draw attention to difficulties faced by school level administrators when exercising control of curriculum implementation. This results from the considerable change in the curriculum content due to research by local and national agencies and sometimes by the school themselves. Such a change has modified many subjects opened up different paths for the individual teacher. This means that only the teacher concerned can claim with authority what the right path forward is for his class (Naidoo & Green, 2010; Pinar et al., 2000). Walker (1990) warns that such a teacher would still need to deal with opposition to change from colleagues and superiors, and sometime also students and parents.

The issue of localisation of the curriculum is a very important one in curriculum implementation. Honig & Hatch (2006) posited that the success of alignment strategies in shaping teachers' practice of education as promoted by policy makers is likely to depend on people and places where curricular performance occurs. They suggest that a curriculum implementation strategy that has been developed for one group in one vicinity may not be successful in another. Where the focus is not on the teacher as an individual, pedagogy and practices are rooted in critical humanist traditions (Papier, 2008). Penuel et al. (2008) found that implementation was related to the availability of curriculum materials and the teachers' understanding of what standards could be taught with these materials.

Perceptions of the HoDs have revealed that in order for them to function properly at their level, there is need for the curriculum to be aligned with their teaching responsibilities and with policy standards. This is largely consistent with whether the curriculum is in line with national goals and with both national and international educational and developmental goals. In a local study, Langa (1980) suggested that the values or norms used by the educator to guide the operation of making the curriculum relevant and properly aligned should emanate from the socio-cultural milieu of the child in question. It could be noted that from the perceptions of the HoDs, that there is need for government to investigate the extent to which its enacted curriculum, national goals, and curriculum at local levels, are aligned. Such a view is supported by numerous researchers (Blank, Porter, Smithson, & Zeidner, 2007).

### **6.3.3. Context-embedded factors**

The analysis of the data revealed that one key issue in ensuring that the curriculum is properly aligned in underprivileged schools is the support that the department of English required from other teaching departments, and from the administration of the school. This support was further categorised into administrative support and cross-departmental support.

Based on the findings, there is reason to believe that the success of the actions that HoDs to ensure that SGCSE ESL is implemented according to policy standards depended largely on the support of the administration of the school. In support of administrative support, Eckel et al., (2001) reported that there ought to be some organisational, staffing, and resource configuration of the programme by the administrators of a programme. This he terms the *structural context* of a programme. Hopkins et al. (2008) amassed evidence that leadership is indeed necessary if the curriculum is to be successfully aligned.

Evidence also points to the necessity for cross-departmental collaboration in the schools. The other departments in the schools ought to make it their responsibility too to ensure that the learners spoke in English and that they read in the language. It was revealed that the HoDs of English did not think that this duty was solely theirs, but that it belonged to all teachers, except for those teaching the SiSwati language. The HoDs believed that because learners use English as a medium of learning in their other subjects, it did not help the learning of such subjects if the learners and the teachers engaged in the vernacular in their teaching activities. It was therefore imperative for all teachers to deliver their lessons in English.

To support the above, Grimmett & Chinnery (2009) postulate that policy must be understood to be a framework of values that are imbued in the curriculum decision-making environment of schools, as distinct from a regulatory function dictating what teachers must do. They posit that policy initiatives ought to redesign the workplace so that innovation and improvement are built into the daily activities of teachers. These scholars further highlight the need for a policy that permits teachers and teacher educators to exercise their professional expertise and judgment in order to ensure that teachers are in charge not only of curriculum making, but also of learning. They argue for strong professional collaboration between and among teachers and administrators among those norms that are considered suitable for the implementation of an innovative programme. The situation of lack of cooperation among teachers from the different departments towards the teaching of ESL therefore falls short of what the literature suggests.

Based on the findings, there are grounds to believe that there is a need for cooperation within the department members themselves if the curriculum is to be aligned in the circumstances of the context. The participants in the present study cited that their success depends largely on teamwork. Without this, their scheming, planning and their general departmental responsibilities seemed to be futile activities. In the case of some of the schools where departmental cooperation was either minimal or lacking, the output, as seen in the performance of learners, was below average. This was borne out in the documentary analysis. There is evidence that effective schools engage in compulsory teamwork activities. Glaze (2014) observed that it teamwork provides the department members with opportunities for making meaningful connections, and to work together and improve their performance.

Findings from the analysis of the HoDs' documents have revealed that they generally had poor filing and record-keeping strategies in place. It was noted that most of them lacked class work files and documentation which could help them trace the daily progress of the learner in terms of performance scores. The documents revealed that the teachers only recorded test scores and class work was not recorded. This means that it would be a frustrating endeavour to grade the progress of the learners they were teaching. The teachers they were supervising apparently also did not keep good records. Once again, this falls short of the accepted literature.

Studies also predict that opportunities to learn are often context-embedded, involving contextual elements such as such as class size, resource availability, expertise and authority (Honig, 2006; Naidoo & Green, 2010: 7-36; Penuel et al. 2008). Supporting this observation is Mavhunga (2006), who saw the challenges engulfing implementation in Zimbabwe from the perspective of a curriculum which did not complement the context where its delivery ought to occur. He called for an ‘Africanisation’ of the school curriculum in order to lessen the discrepancies that came from an externally initiated curriculum. In the light of these observations, it has been pointed out that policy implementation is an interpretive process where those who implement ought to figure out policy meaning, and also whether the policy applies to their institution and warrants its adoption, adaption or rejection (Spillane, et al., 2002). It is not surprising that the confusion regarding what teachers should implement is closely linked to the failure of administrators to comprehend the intentions of curriculum policies as received from the national policy-makers (Wang, 2010). Chances for the successful implementation of a curriculum reform are therefore much better if there is one person who is an experienced, respected member of the school staff, who can act as a champion of the reform, and defend its more costly and risky features, in other words, someone who can speak up for its benefits and in general advocate it (Walker, 1990).

In looking at the implementation of a new curriculum, Eckel et al. (2001) suggested that levels of reality during programme implementation such as institutional commitment, role performance by staff, and structural commitment ought to be given careful consideration. These speak into the situation in Swaziland as not all of them were adhered to, as the evidence suggests. Considering the departmental and cross-departmental cooperation among HoDs, it becomes clear that the HoDs still have a lot to in order to ensure that role performance serves its intended purpose, that of improving curriculum alignment and therefore maximising learner performance.

#### **6.3.4. Discipline-embedded factors**

This section describes the characteristics of a successful implementation strategy as envisaged by participants in this study. There is evidence of the need for improvement in the following areas: (a) what it is possible to achieve with the subject in the local context; (b) teaching/learning strategies; (c) assessment strategies; (d) learner commitment; and (e) the

identification of specific weaknesses and challenges in assuring that curriculum is aligned in the schools. These are discussed further below.

One such characteristic that relates to the success of the SGCSE curriculum is the utilisation of local content in the teaching of concepts of international significance. Based on the findings, one has grounds to believe that the department heads were aware that they were supposed to rely on localised material in order to ensure that the learners in their schools were taught the language through concepts with which they were familiar. Teaching/learning and assessment strategies were all supposed to be geared towards fostering learner commitment. However, evidence from the conducted study indicates that much to the attempts of HoDs to ensure that the strategies in place fostered learner commitment did not succeed because of factors such as lack of financial aid to launch motivational programmes for learners.

A study conducted by Gamedze (2010) reported that success of the localisation policy was largely dependent on a number of structures which were supposed to be put in place for the success of the policy. This problematic aspect therefore finds support in the literature. A number of the department heads concurred that there was an overall shortage of classrooms to be supposed to be used for teaching. This meant that it was not possible to meet the demands of the SGCSE curriculum to have not more than thirty learners per class.

The department heads also concurred that there were large numbers of students in the classrooms, a factor which seriously undermined the teaching of the subject. This in turn led to a shortage of the classrooms which were supposed to accommodate the learners. Contrary to this observation, the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005) which introduced the IGCSE and its localised version, the SGCSE, documented that success of the SGCSE curriculum requires not more than thirty learners per class.

Another important characteristic of successful alignment, as evident from the data, is accessibility and affordability of textbooks. The participants in this study also lamented the shortage of textbooks in their schools. While the teaching of the subject determined that all the learners carry their individual copies, this was reportedly an ideal that was hard to achieve since a large percentage of learners in the schools were reportedly registered under the OVC programme. The UNICEF Report Card (2000) refers to the importance of the need for a

harmonious relationship between the content of a curriculum and the content of the textbooks.

This observation made on textbooks in underprivileged schools is not consistent with literature. It has been documented that the concept of curriculum alignment has greater implications for the kind of textbooks needed in order for the curriculum to be said to be properly aligned. There ought to be congruence between by the textbooks in place and the broad aims of the curriculum (Gamedze, 2010). There is a need for the evaluation and updating of textbooks, according to a regular curriculum cycle. Subsequent editions need to be pilot-tested before their wide distribution to the schools is effected. This implies that for a local curriculum, the whole curriculum package is considered aligned in terms of textbooks if the textbooks which will be used by students and teachers are to be consistent with the curriculum. Consistency of textbooks with the curriculum implies that textbooks should follow a clear, well organised scope and sequence of the curriculum. UNICEF also recognises the importance of the availability of the textbooks when the new curriculum is introduced and published. This on its own establishes the curriculum as being relevant, as it largely reflects that proper planning has been done and executed.

Lebrun, Lenoir, Laforest, Larose, Roy & Spallanzani (2002) hold the view that textbooks provide the ideological spectacles through which the learner begins to view the subject matter, and even more, they may begin to provide conceptions and orientations by means of which the purposes undergirding the act of learning are articulated and developed. Textbooks are therefore an important dimension of curriculum alignment in terms of their accessibility and affordability. This on its own suggests that in order to ensure that a proper alignment of the curriculum is achieved with regard to textbook formulation; material ought to be produced locally. This study attempted to ascertain whether the textbooks used were relevant in the local situation.

The need for the government to pay in time for OVC's was also cited as a major dimension for the success of the implementation of English language in the schools. It was also revealed that when government did not pay timeously for the learners who were registered under the OVC programme, the successful implementation of the ESL was seriously undermined. Participants revealed that this impacted negatively on other programmes that were supposed

to run concurrently with implementation, such as the purchasing of textbooks and the running of the Book Rental System, and the Feeding Scheme.

Scholars have suggested that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken in order to learn from other countries to see what they have done to stay focused and come up with a usable curriculum framework to use in effective programmes (Monyooe, 2004). In Swaziland, the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005:14) outlines eleven constructs of curriculum alignment in senior secondary schools. These are deemed to be the yardstick against which the process of curriculum alignment can be measured. Taken together, these provide a useful theoretical framework for analysing the strengths and weaknesses in the quest of HoDs to ensure that curriculum alignment is achieved. The order in which they are listed below is not of importance.

The following constructs for ensuring that alignment works effectively as an implementation strategy were derived from the literature above. It is worth noting that these constructs were also explicitly outlined in the IGCSE Consultative Document (2005:14) which introduced the IGCSE and SGCSE curriculums. In it, it clearly states that:

- i. There is need to in-service teachers on new teaching strategies to be carried out by the Inspectorate
- ii. There is need to revisit class size in the light of the new paradigm
- iii. Heads of department as well as nominal heads need to be appointed to help the subject teachers with materials and teaching methods.
- iv. There is need for capacity building of all educational organs that are related to school performance and improvement.
- v. There is need to develop school infrastructure in order to meet the needs of the IGCSE programme.
- vi. There is need for well resourced libraries and laboratories such as Science, computer and language laboratories.

It is worth noting though that despite the document clearly stating that there was a need for the above, most of these programmes were not in place when the SGCSE was introduced and the HoDs of English from underprivileged schools were therefore placed in a difficult position.

Participants also revealed that there was need to return to the traditional setup where all teachers in a school were made to share a staffroom. Findings revealed that the lack of a common staff room was equivalent to the lack of a common purpose.

The department heads revealed that the SGCSE curriculum required that the teaching of ESL be conducted within well-constructed language laboratories. Productive skills such as speaking and writing, as well as receptive skills such as listening and reading could only be effectively taught in a language friendly environment, furnished with appropriate equipment. Department heads referred to the need for radios (for listening skills), videos and video players (to demonstrate the conducting of oral examinations), and other gadgets which ought to be used in capturing oral assessment data. Although most of them had a place where they conducted the oral examinations, these places doubled as libraries or offices for staff members. This became a challenge since oral and listening sessions require peace and quiet if they are to be successfully conducted.

Department heads reported that the material which was found in their libraries largely consisted of donated textbooks which were at times incompatible with the level of learners in the school system. There was therefore a need for material which suited the levels of their learners, but according to the department heads, such material was difficult to procure due to financial constraints. Ilomechine (2008) observed that school libraries help children to discover for themselves by independent study and learning how to ask questions.

In a similar fashion, HoD F mentioned that his school was undermined because the library lacked the shelves on which to display the material. He mentioned that the Fundza Association, which normally donated relevant library material, could not donate to his school because they required a proper, well-furnished library in order to be considered in their list of schools that could receive a donation from them. Ilomechine (2008) also observed that in Nigeria the learners who participated in her study were not satisfied with the services and collections of their library, and therefore recommended that all school libraries should provide adequate reading and study space, as well as enhanced resources that should provide adequate recreational and information materials to arouse learner interest.

Again, heads from underprivileged schools were frustrated by their dual roles. Due to the financial constraints that the schools found themselves in, they could not hire a librarian to

execute library duties, and therefore the HoD of English had to double as a librarian. This was the case with HoDs E, G and H. Such evidence points to the need for underprivileged schools to ensure that they raise money or generally devise means to ensure that the department heads are relieved of such unprecedented duties (Ilomechine, 2008). This will enable them to direct their efforts at interpreting the curriculum for both the teachers that they are supervising and the students that they are teaching. In many instances, a relationship between language policy and improvement in the quality of life has been reported (Grimmet & Chinnery, 2009; Naidoo & Green, 2010). Upon studying the English Language policy, these scholars have recognised the role which is played by policy in the improvement of the quality of life through success in education, and the improvement of learners' academic achievement in almost all subjects in the school.

Even worse, learners could not find library material to help them in their studies. Consequently they did not get the much needed exposure to the language and could not immerse themselves in the context of language use through reading. The reality in Swaziland is therefore contrary to what scholars like Brown (2000) have propounded that second language learners need to be immersed in the language through language input that could be provided through extensive reading.

Worth-noting is that the HoDs were battling with local school policies and this was a major drawback in their endeavour to translate policy into practice. One such policy was the promotion's policy. There is evidence to support the fact that many principals assumed sole responsibility for promoting learners from one form to the next. Findings have also revealed that the principals are more often than not very busy, and cannot handle the demands of the decision-making that ought to entail promoting a learner from one class to the next. This often led the principal promoting learners who are undeserving, and this frustrates the fundamental need for learners to have a strong language base before being promoted, for instance, to form 3 or form 5. This reality clearly falls short of what is suggested by scholarly literature.

It was revealed that the HoD was supposed to ensure that the new teachers who had just joined the teaching profession possessed an adequate understanding of the curriculum. This included ensuring that the curriculum was adapted to the local situations. It should be noted that interpreting the curriculum required the HoDs to be open to innovative means of learning

and teaching, since localisation, as a concept of aligning the curriculum with the circumstances of the contexts, was new.

There is evidence that the department heads were not sufficiently flexible and innovative to see the localisation policy through. This was evident in their teaching and planning strategies. They were also ill-organised in their record keeping. In most schools they had no file for past examination material and when the department heads were questioned about this, they would say that the teachers (ordinary staff) kept the papers for their daily use. There were no instances where teachers were made to sign an acceptance for a responsibility allocated to them.

This observation on lack of flexibility is well-documented in literature. Upon analysing the influence of state policy tools and guidance on implementation and fitting multilevel quantitative models of surveys, Penuel et al. (2008) revealed that the policy tools that were used by the state had little effect on implementation or on teachers' perceptions of alignment. Instead, during implementation, teachers relied on whatever curriculum material was available in their schools, and also on the differences between the state's and teachers' construal of what standards could be taught with the materials. How well aligned the policy materials were with their own local materials and also with the goals of their schools was significant. Teachers relied largely on the availability of time to plan and prepare for implementation. They were also dependent on the accountability pressure of the school. It was therefore study reported that the success of alignment policies depended on teachers' construal of the relationship between standards and curriculum materials and on allocation of time for planning at the school level. Therefore, due to their observation, the scholars postulate that the success of alignment strategies is likely to be contingent on people responsible for enacting change and the unique configuration of demands and resources on those people in the places where they work.

It is clear from the above that the department heads are tasked with wide-ranging responsibilities. Mulder & Thijsen (1990) noted that the constant and ever-accelerating developments create a challenge for the institutional adaptation of curricula. They say that this may be facilitated by determining and approving curriculum design specifications in heterogeneous groups of stakeholders in education.

Basing it on a study that was conducted in the implementation of a newly introduced Science curriculum, Penuel et al. (2008) pointed to the complexity of the educational system in that it made it difficult to effect broad changes in instructional practice in the implementation of new curricula. The study called for policy making and programme developers to consider lending congruence between national goals and local standards, while also developing those strategies that would help tailor professional development and implementation support in ways that are certain to advance stakeholders' goals.

The above study suggests that the availability of potential limits to policy alignment as a strategy, and also implies the need for greater consideration of the larger ecology of influence on teachers' practices and to specific aspects of teacher knowledge in order to strike a balance between policy standards and implementation.

It is important to note that the concern for professional and management administration could be seen in governmental documents during the 1970s. In the Report of the National Education Commission (1975), it clearly states that professional development is key to the alignment of the curriculum:

*...in order to reach the national goal of a relevant and efficient education, attention should be given to the staffing situation...in the fields. Important efforts have already been made to train and upgrade the teaching force, and more are being planned; it is time also to think of strengthening the staff of the central administration to bring it to the management and professional level needed for this rapid expansion of the education system (1975: 5).*

Correspondingly, the National Development Strategy (NDS) (1999: 29-30) documents the concerns of the education stakeholders for a properly aligned and therefore relevant curriculum. It proposes the encouragement of intersectoral collaboration between education and training institutions with those organisations who are the recipients of their graduates. This includes collaboration on curriculum design and the procurement of equipment and other resources. The curriculum for basic education must be designed to foster creative and inquisitive minds, and must be relevant to the demands of national development and be sufficiently flexible to cater for the diverse needs of the local community.

In studying the in-service education needs of teachers, P.N. Dlamini (2010) also documents the discrepancies that exist between alignment of the content of instruction and curriculum standards. This was derived largely from observations that the teachers diverged from the

content of the textbooks and used books prescribed under the then phased-out O-Level curriculum.

It is noteworthy that earlier research on curriculum alignment also did not divorce the professional development of the teachers and alignment. Squires (2005) refers to a professional development process that was designed by McGehee & Griffith (2001) to help school and district staff develop a comprehensive understanding of the state and standardised tests and what these implied for teaching, and to reach harmony on the scope of the curriculum and sequence that aligned with the state tests. After alignment of the tests and the curriculum, there was reportedly an improvement in learner grades. This suggests therefore that curriculum alignment ought to focus also on the professional development of the teachers in question.

There is therefore a realised need for the involvement of a cadre of educational specialists in the decision-making process. Of particular note is that most of the data points to the necessity for teacher professionalism as one major characteristic of alignment.

A study conducted by Hopkins et al. (2008) suggests the need for utilising clearly stated theoretical bases in aligning the curriculum. These include the sense that schools make of newly introduced curricula, which suggest that there ought to be contextual interpretations for new curricula. The scholars also view principal leadership being key to success of newly introduced curricula, and also that the nature of professional learning activities ought to be considered.

These theoretical bases are also critical in the current study. In general, the lack of the professional development of HoDs in underprivileged schools in Swaziland undermined the need for innovative power. A lack of this does not find support in literature since scholars have suggested that for curriculum to be successful in its implementation phase; there must be a measure of flexibility for school-based curriculum development (Hopkins et al., 2008).

### **6.3.5. Community-embedded factors**

Based on the findings, there is reason to believe that a lack of communal commitment affected the learning of a second language. The community tended to submerge second language learning in the communities where the participant schools were located. This

frustrated the most necessary support that language learning could enjoy from the community, the instilling of the culture of reading in the learners. The findings revealed that the communities themselves in which the schools were located lacked the resources which could input productive and receptive skills in learners, for example ensuring that the place was modernised and had access to media, particularly newspapers and television. A lack of access to these was a major drawback for the department heads, in the sense that they could not guarantee the success of their measures in interpreting the curriculum to the teachers they were supervising. The community members generally frowned at a person who spoke in English or who could decide to tune into the English channels on the radio. The only place that the learners attempted to listen to something in English therefore was during the listening activities that they were occasionally exposed to in school. It is to fulfil this need that scholars suggest that the engagement with parents and the community is necessary (Hopkins et al., 2008).

Hill & Taylor (2004) emphasized the importance of parental school involvement as a fundamental feature of academic development improvement. These scholars observed that there is a need to enhance parental school involvement in diverse situations. They also noted that patterns of involvement vary across economic, cultural and community contexts. It is important to note that the scholars observed an interaction in the factors that might promote or hinder the involvement of parents in their children's learning. These might include the relationship between community culture and economic conditions. The HoDs in this study also recognised that improvement of learner achievement depended on an interplay of factors, such as the culture that is upheld in the community, and the general economic conditions that prevail in that community.

The position of English language in Swaziland is second language as Swaziland is Britain's former colony since 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1968. The majority of the people in Swaziland speak SiSwati, which is an official language alongside English (*The Constitution of Swaziland Act*, 2005). SiSwati is the native language of the indigenous people, which is also learned as a core subject alongside English, albeit as a first language. The attitude of the commoners is in part a break away from their colonial masters, although this is to the detriment of their school going children who need to attain good passes in English in order to be admitted to tertiary centres.

Ismat (1994) posited that curricula which are relevant to the needs of the people are those which are culturally responsive. He favoured culturally responsive curricula because he saw them as strategies for improving academic performance and enhancing self-esteem among students whose racial, ethnic or language heritage differed from that of the Anglo-European population. This study therefore attempted to find out if the SGCSE curriculum was culturally responsive, particularly through the SiSwati syllabus.

A number of studies have been conducted in the country and elsewhere and they observed that culture is a critical dimension of curriculum relevance. The Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto (1972); NERCOM Report (1985) and Ministry of Education Performance Report (2007) are some of the educational reviews that suggest that culture is a critical dimension of the relevance in the education of Swazis and therefore must be considered. The present study attempts to find out if the SGCSE curriculum is responsive to the cultural demands of the nation and the cultural needs of the learners therein.

Eggleston (1975) observed that the traditional orientations which guided the decision making process embraced beliefs and knowledge, skills and values learned by previous generation. These were supposed to be incorporated into the curriculum in order for it to possess a mystique into which the young are initiated. He observed that the architects of the traditional orientations argued that the incorporation of these values to the young lend a continuing relevance to the curriculum, since these values are to apply even during their adult life. He further noted, however, that recent curriculum developments carried a futuristic orientation, which tended to dislike the traditional orientation. Instead they favour new curricula which are believed to be relevant to the expected and different social conditions in which the young are born. According to him, the distinction between the two orientations was seen as one between 'culture taking' and 'culture preserving' (Eggleston, 1975: 5).

It became necessary, for the purposes of inculcating the commitment of the members of the community towards the learning of their children, to engage them into sessions whereby attempt to make them understand the need for the learners to speak in English was made.

### **6.3.6. Strengths in the implementation of SGCSE ESL**

There is evidence to support the idea that there were positive qualities in the manner in which the HoDs were leading the alignment of the curriculum with the policy standards in the

country. For instance, teacher showed that they were willing to work despite adverse condition. One major strength that is embedded in the HoDs in ensuring alignment as a strategy for the implementation of SGCSE ESL rested on the sacrifices they made to have extra classes during the holidays and on weekends. Such dedication and passion for the job finds support in the literature.

It is also evident that the lack of book material in their schools meant that the HoDs had to improvise to ensure that their staff and learners had access to material. Improvisation has been lauded as a major tool to ensure that learning takes place in a situation where teaching materials are expensive or unavailable.

There is also enough evidence to support the notion that the HoDs relied on their own mobile phones to download passages which could expose the learners to modern concepts which were not thoroughly defined in the available book material. Nxumalo (2007) reported that rural school teachers of the English language at junior secondary level who implemented the ESL did a lot of improvising with their teaching material. Clearly, a trend is starting to emerge in the teaching of ESL in the country.

In general, although the manner in which teachers from underprivileged schools try to align curriculum standards and implementation is clearly a matter of national concern, researchers on the curriculum in Swaziland have not focused on it. Instead they have focused on the management of curriculum change in general. In realising that the implementation of curriculum to achieve standards is a multi-faceted process of external orders being transmuted into practice, Rogan & Grayson (2003) proposed to lay the groundwork for a theory of curriculum implementation for developing countries by drawing from school development, educational change, and science education literature. Similarly, Papier (2008) attributed neglect of policy to the absence of a recognisable knowledge base and the vagueness of policy directives for teacher education. This results in them falling back on their training in traditional education disciplines and adding to them rather than deconstructing what had always been offered to students. A number of studies on curriculum alignment have pointed out the potential limits to policy alignment as a strategy and to the need for greater consideration of the larger ecology of influences on teacher knowledge in order to understand the sources for success in educational practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Grimmett & Chinnery, 2009; Fowler & Poetter, 2004).

#### **6.4. CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that the alignment of the curriculum in underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region in Swaziland relies heavily on government and the HoDs. What they achieve happens with the help of the governing body or the MoE. It should be noted that the principal head teachers in the schools depend on the government for financial support due to the escalating number of children registered under the OVC programme in the schools. When the curriculum was introduced, the IGCSE Consultative Document (MoE, 2005) pointed to the need for several programmes which were supposed to launch the IGCSE/SGCSE in the country. It was pointed out that there would be a need for improvement of the infrastructure in the schools. Evidence, however, indicates that underprivileged schools, which lacked support from government (save for a few workshops), still did not have language laboratories, well-furnished libraries, and electrified classrooms. Despite the attempts made by the HoDs to ensure the success of the localisation policy, evidence indicates that this was not going to be possible.

This conclusion has a bearing on what was observed by Naidoo & Green (2010). These scholars reported that the opportunities available to learn physical science in previously advantaged and disadvantaged South African classrooms were embedded within the differentiated school contexts and dependent on factors such as class size and resource availability. They concluded that notwithstanding curriculum policy goals of equity in quality of learning experiences, actual opportunities for learning the subjects were profoundly unequal, and as a matter of social justice therefore, demanded regulation in order to give fair chances to lower socio-economic schools. The evidence suggests that due to their socio-economic status, schools might achieve different levels in aligning standards, pedagogy and achieving a higher level of performance.

This chapter has described and interpreted the findings. It has concluded that HoDs of English language need to ensure support on various levels. These include: governmental support; community involvement; the support of the Principal; cross departmental collaboration; within-the-department cooperation; and the developing of an understanding for discipline factors.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have described and interpreted the data in an effort to understand the story of curriculum alignment in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland. A summary of the whole study is presented in this chapter and conclusions are drawn from the findings with regards to the process of ensuring curriculum alignment in underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region at the senior secondary school level. Recommendations are then presented in the light of these conclusions.

#### 7.2. CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the conclusions that were made from the interpretation of the data. The major conclusion from this study is that the language department heads were aware that curriculum alignment is a multi-faceted process with a need for full governmental support, community commitment towards the role that learners should play in their own learning, within-the school support, administrative support, cross-departmental cooperation and other discipline factors. It was also concluded that the department heads were aware of a number of factors that supported the success of alignment as a strategy for implementation in their various contexts of implementation.

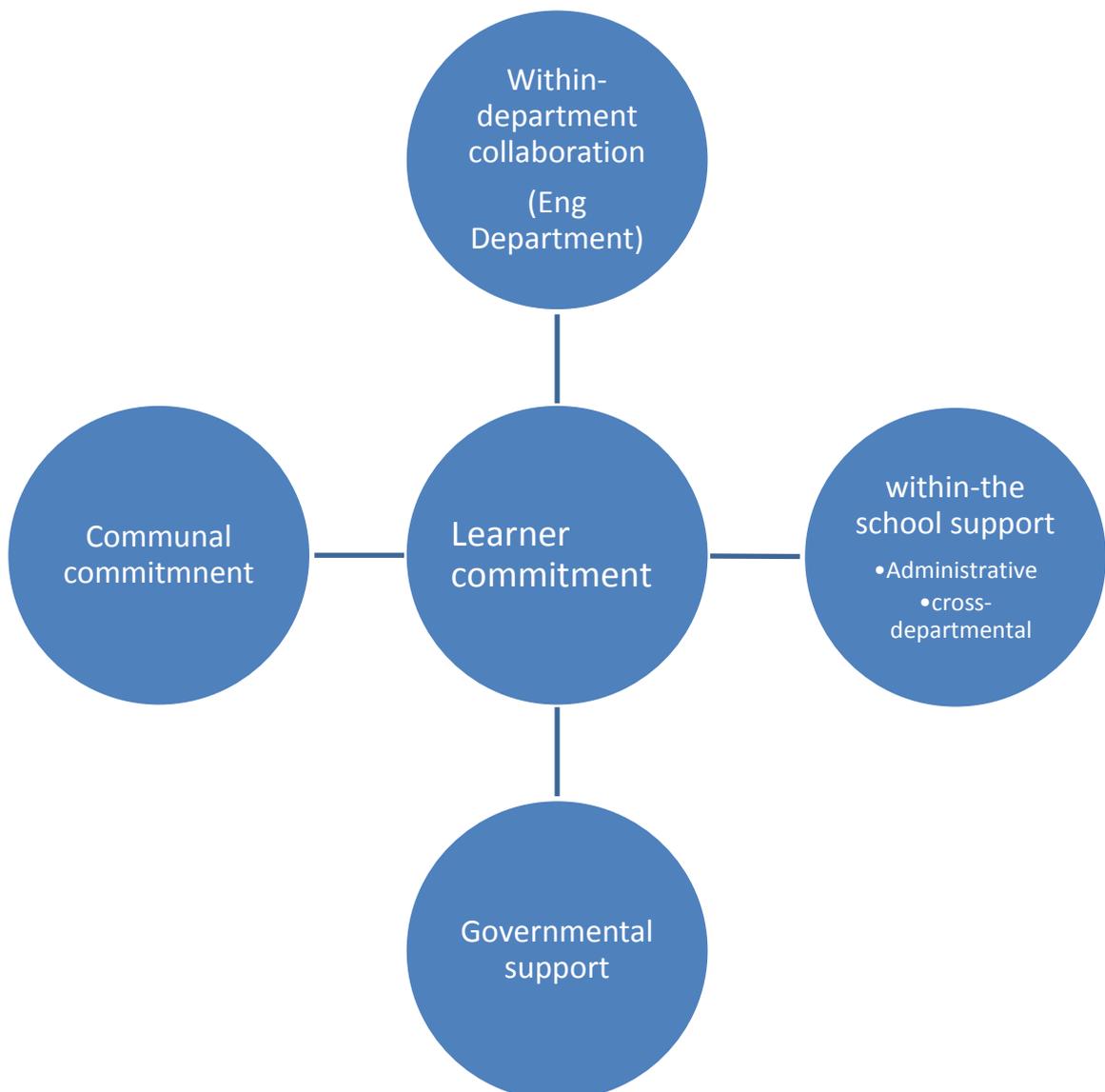
The department heads were also aware of their predicament and the challenges that their various contexts of implementation presented. This was compounded by the evidence that the programmes which were supposed to introduce the implementation of the SGSCE ESL were not given honest consideration and adequate attention by the governing body. There was therefore a perceived disregard on the part of government in ensuring its commitment towards the implementation of the SGSCE in a way in which the HoDs envisaged would lead to an atmosphere that allowed positive implementation.

##### 7.2.1. Four support systems for curriculum alignment

In the light of these findings, the study therefore presents four support systems that the curriculum alignment process should be informed by. These support systems are grounded in

the experiences of HoDs in underprivileged settings. These are: governmental support, community commitment, within-the school support, and language departmental collaboration. Figure 1 illustrates how the support systems interrelate in order to support learner commitment which ought to be the goal in curriculum alignment. Hopkins et al. (2008) suggests the need for utilising clearly stated theoretical bases in aligning the curriculum. These include the sense that schools make of newly introduced curricula, which suggest that there ought to be contextual interpretations for new curricula. The scholars also view principal leadership as being key to success of newly introduced curricula, and also that the nature of professional learning activities ought to be considered.

**Figure 1:** *The four support systems for curriculum alignment in underprivileged school settings*



### **7.2.1.1. Ensure full governmental support**

Much to the misfortune of HoDs, they are not endowed with the powers to request this form of aid, but it is the prerogative of principals. This support on which curriculum alignment depends could come in the form of financial aid or ensuring that some policies which are supposed to support the SGSCCE programme implementation are sustained. These include:

- Providing the requisite infrastructure (e.g. appropriate language laboratories and well equipped libraries);
- Guaranteeing the timely funding of the OVC programme;
- Ensuring that the Department of English is fully fledged (e.g. that posts are available and that teachers are remunerated); and
- Holding follow up workshops through appropriate structures.

HoDs could communicate via the appropriate channels to elicit this form of aid since its availability would translate to a smooth running of most of their operations regarding the implementation of the English language.

### **7.2.1.2. Ensure community commitment towards the role that learners should play in their own learning**

Such support may come in the form of parental involvement, but the involvement of the school governing body is also most necessary. As it has been made evident through the findings, HoDs could use the support from the members of the communities where their schools are based. HoDs need to come up with strategies of engaging the members of the communities in local language policy formulation. This support could be used to the advantage of the learner, thereby improving on the alignment of the curriculum. Lack of such in Swaziland submerged second language learning in the communities where the participant schools were located. This frustrated the essential support that language learning could use from the community; that is, instilling a culture of reading in the learners. The findings revealed that the communities in which the schools were located lacked the resources that could instil productive and receptive skills in learners, in the form of ensuring that the place was modernised with access to media, particularly the newspaper and television. Lack of access to these was a major drawback for the department heads, in the sense that they could not guarantee the success of their measures in interpreting the curriculum for the teachers they were supervising. The community members generally frowned on anyone who spoke in English or who decided to tune the radio to play English channels. The only place that the

learners attempted to listen to anything in English was therefore during the listening activities that they were occasionally exposed to at school. In that

In trying to curb from the experiences similar to those of the participants in the study, Hill and Taylor (2004: 161–164) call for parental school involvement in children's achievement. Institutional response and parental involvement in curricular reform by academics and administrators requires institutional autonomy to make curricular changes and related incentives or the consideration of the process as an opportunity for change, thus strategies need to be devised for overcoming inhibiting curricular innovation at national, institutional and programme level (Oslo, 2006).

#### **7.2.1.3. Within- the-department collaboration (English Department)**

All the members of the English department ought to work together to ensure that their work becomes easier. An English language HoD ought to be able to share the workload a little with various counterparts in underprivileged circumstances. This will mean that the members of the department are performing their roles effortlessly, and that the morale for collaboration stays positive. This was emphasized by the HoDs when they noted that the success of alignment as a strategy depended largely on how the department emphasized teamwork. A number of team-work activities were cited. HoDs ought to devise strategies and make time to help one another.

#### **7.2.1.4. Within-the school support**

Such support can be administrative or cross-departmental and it can play out in many different ways. Some examples are: a combined approach to discipline issues, coordinated teaching/learning strategies, establishing what is possible to achieve with a subject in the local context, coordinated assessment strategies and communal learner motivation strategies. These relate directly to the ultimate goal of learner commitment and achievement. Such support could be realised with the presence of collaboration within the members of the department, and with adequate support from the administration.

##### **7.2.1.4.1. Cross-departmental support**

There is a need for cross-departmental collaboration in the schools. The other departments in the schools also have a responsibility to ensure that learners speak English and that they are readers of the language. The situation in the schools revealed that the HoDs of English did

not think that this duty was solely theirs, but that it belonged to every other teacher who was teaching any other subject in their schools. The HoDs believed that as learners use English as a medium of learning in their other subjects as well, it did not help the learning of such subjects if the learners and the teachers engaged in the vernacular in their teaching activities. It was therefore imperative for all teachers to ensure that they delivered their lessons in English.

To support the above, Grimmett and Chinnery (2009) highlight that policy initiative ought to re-design the workplace so that innovation and improvement are built into the daily activities of teachers. These scholars further point out to the need for policy that permits teachers and teacher educators to exercise their professional expertise and judgement in order to ensure that teachers are in charge not only of curriculum making, but also, as a priority, of learning. They argue for strong professional collaboration between and among teachers and administrators in those norms that are considered suitable for the implementation of an innovative programme. The lack of cooperation among teachers from the different departments in the schools towards the teaching of ESL therefore falls short of what the literature suggests.

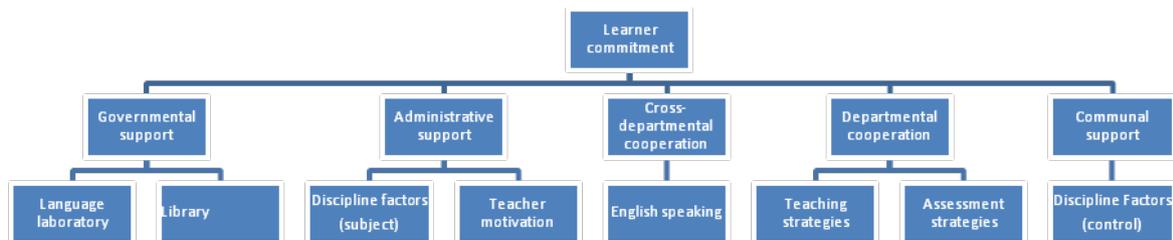
#### **7.2.1.4.2. Administrative support**

There was also an identified need that within the school, the administration ought to take the lead in curriculum alignment, more so because they are better positioned to make requisitions for necessary equipment from relevant authorities. The figure which represents the four support systems in figure 1 therefore recognises the need for HoDs to consider the improvement of learner performance to be the goal of curriculum alignment, i.e. an increase in learner performance standards. This study found that alignment should ultimately foster the commitment of the learner towards his or her own learning. The goal therefore, that all education support systems should strive towards, is ensuring that all motivational dimensions remain positive, in order for the learner to make the necessary effort without being pushed to do so.

From their own views, it is evident that if HoDs are to implement English as a Second Language in underprivileged schools under the SGCSE in Swaziland, the following guidelines (presented in both a linear and graphic format) should be met. It is important to note that this model works effectively if all accompanying facets are given due consideration.

There are five main facets in the model. These are governmental support, administrative support, cross departmental cooperation, language departmental cooperation, and communal support.

**Figure 2:** *Model for ensuring support in underprivileged schools:* The GACDC Model for Curriculum Alignment



### 7.2.2. A theory that is grounded in the circumstances of underprivileged schools in the Shiselweni region of Swaziland

From the above analysis, it is clear that the circumstances in which the English HoDs find themselves working in the schools are largely aggravated by the governing body not performing in accordance with the expected standards. This affects the manner in which the HoDs ought to function as curriculum developers at the local level. The study has therefore relied on the perceptions of the HoDs to develop an understanding of the ground-level issues which surround their daily lives as HoDs in underprivileged circumstances. The model presented in figure 2 above is a visual presentation of the theory that has been deduced from experiences HoDs and what they envisage in improved curriculum practice. It is felt that due to its main facets which include the interaction of government and administration of a school, its need for the cooperation between school departments, its demand for departmental teamwork among members of the languages department, and its demand for community involvement, the model be referred to as the GACDC Model for curriculum alignment. Note that the first letters of the main facets of the model have been used name it. The following section presents the recommendations of the study.

### 7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

This section on recommendations is organised into the following sets of recommendations: for practice, for policy, for theory, and for further study.

### **7.3.1. Recommendations for practice**

Government has a number of practical issues to deal with. These include:

#### 1. Ensuring that National Tests cover all concepts

This means that the tests should not discriminate between learners who come from underprivileged settings and those who are coming from context where the learners have easy access to sources of learning which might give them extra insight and therefore put them at an advantage in the case of a modern-oriented examination.

#### 2. Providing extra workshops based on a needs assessment

Teachers who teach in underprivileged circumstances have different needs from others and should be prepared for their local circumstances. This also ought to be accompanied with incentives to ensure that the teachers who teach under such circumstances remain motivated so as to ensure a positive morale in the schools.

#### 3. Revisiting and holding workshops to explain language policy to teachers

Such workshops can also address the problem of suitable disciplinary measures that can be implemented to tackle teachers who fail to observe the language policy. The teaching of English is not a 'departmental thing' and must be done across the board.

#### 4. Providing storage space for books

There is a need for spacious storage facilities for the textbooks which are required for the successful implementation of a new curriculum.

#### 5. Financing the construction and furnishing of language laboratories

The department heads revealed that the SGCSE curriculum required that the teaching of ESL be conducted within well-constructed language laboratories. It was revealed that, productive skills such as speaking and writing, as well as receptive skills such as listening and reading could only be effectively taught in a language friendly environment, furnished with the appropriate equipment. Department heads revealed that they needed radios for listening, videos and video players to demonstrate the conducting of oral examinations and other gadgets which ought to be used to capture oral assessment data. Although most of them had a place where they conducted the oral examinations, these places doubled as libraries or offices for staff members. It was revealed that this became a challenge since it undermined the need for peace and quiet, especially when oral and listening sessions were held.

#### 6. Financing the procurement of library material and library furnishings

Department heads also revealed that it was a challenge to organise libraries in their schools. They reported that the material which was found in their libraries was donated textbooks which were at times incompatible with the level of learners in the school system. There was therefore a need for additional material which would suit the academic level of the learners. According to the department heads, such material was difficult to procure due to financial constraints.

Evidence also points to the dysfunctional tendencies of libraries which lacked the shelves on which to display the material. It was mentioned that the Fundza Association, which normally donated relevant library material, could not donate to the school because they required a proper, well-furnished library in order to be considered for a donation.

#### 7. Ensuring the availability of trained librarians in the schools

There was also need for the schools and government to ensure that there were trained librarians in the schools. Some of the HoDs in the study also doubled as librarians, which did not do justice to the need for learners to have easy access to the library. The HoDs would now and then attend to classes and to other administrative roles, which left students with no access to the library.

#### 8. Improving and standardising filing and record keeping strategies

It was revealed that there were department heads that were not very organised in their record keeping. In most schools they had no file for past exam material and when the department heads were asked about such they would say that the teachers (ordinary staff) kept the papers for their daily use. No requisition books were available for teachers to sign as acceptance for allocated responsibilities. As a result, as noted in six of the schools, responsibility for the papers was denied by the said teachers.

#### 9. Providing book material for free in order to support the OVC programme

It has been mentioned repeatedly that it was difficult to ensure that there were textbooks in the schools. As books were reportedly not enough, teachers would find themselves having to carry the few available books to class, and this also proved costly since the books got damaged all the time. When the books got damaged, it was difficult for the teachers to establish which learner was responsible. So those learners who damaged the books were

spared unintentionally from replacing the damaged copies. This in turn led to teachers complaining about feelings of overwork, which then lowered the morale of the environment of the operation.

#### 10. Re-inventing traditional common staffrooms

Participants spoke of a need to return to the traditional setup where all teachers in a school were made to share a staffroom. Findings revealed that the lack of a common staff room was equivalent to the lack of a common purpose.

#### 11. Paying in time for OVC's

It was also revealed that the government did not pay the monies due in respect of learners registered under the OVC programme in time. This on its own undermined the implementation of the ESL. Participants revealed that this impacted negatively on other programmes that were supposed to run concurrently with implementation, such as the purchasing of textbooks and the running of the Book Rental System and the Feeding Scheme. The major conclusion from this study is that the language department heads were aware that curriculum alignment was a multi-faceted process which required full governmental support, communal commitment towards the role that learners should play in their own learning, within-the school support, administrative support, cross-departmental cooperation and other discipline factors. The department heads were also aware that aligning the SGCSE ESL curriculum in the context of implementation was challenging. This was especially the case because the programmes which were supposed to introduce the implementation of the SGSCE ESL were not given honest consideration and adequate resources to be established. There was therefore a perceived erratic planning on the part of government in ensuring institutional and structural commitment towards the implementation of ESL. Kopang (2004) suggests that resources such as time, planning support and strategies to provide professional development be afforded to teachers in order to equip them with the necessary base to align their local level teaching with the broader educational aims and standards.

12. All in all, there is a need for the Government of Swaziland to undertake a national education review to ensure that ground-level circumstances are harmonised with the newly introduced policies. This should be the starting point in ensuring that the much envisaged competency-based curriculum is delivered effectively in the context of the country.

### **7.3.2. Recommendations for policy**

There are a number of policy issues which government has to deal with. These include:

#### **1. Designing a curriculum that could utilise on-the-school or local environmental research**

This suggestion includes the usage of concepts which the learners in a particular school are capable of understanding. For instance, students from underprivileged settings fail to understand some concepts that others are able to grasp (e.g. Schools F, G, and H). In particular, students from School F failed to respond to a question on ‘bullying’, and mistook it to mean that a bull has hurt a child. There are, however, concepts that can be easily grasped by learners in underprivileged settings and which can easily be discussed without the help of a TV or an external source of input. Textbooks remain a necessity though.

2. Ensuring that the intensity of the HoDs’ tasks is lessened. Government has therefore to assist the language department heads who work in underprivileged schools so that they can develop their own school-based framework of operation, which ought to encompass local language policy, strategies for parental involvement, and strategies for delivering the curriculum. Therefore, mandates ought to be observed thoroughly; in particular government ought to show commitment to newly introduced programmes. Government needs to consider the following in trying to lessen the intensity of the role of HoDs:

- That Introduction of curricula changes ought to be supported by relevant structures;
- The nature of means towards motivation of HoDs; and this includes the issue of posts which are sometimes not available for the HoDs;
- Exploring the collaborative measures that departments can engage themselves in, in order to assist the voluntary use of English in the schools
- Consider engaging parents and the community in talks about school language policy.

#### **3. Introducing a clearly defined promotions policy for underprivileged settings**

There is evidence that a poorly defined promotions policy undermines the operations of a school. The HoDs made mention of the hardships they faced in the hands of local promotions’ policies which saw undeserving students being made to move to the next class. The lack of proper policies therefore frustrated their operations as they found themselves having to deal with students who were far below the expected standard of that particular grade-level.

### **7.3.3. Recommendations for theory**

There is a need for the MoE to deal directly with the HoDs in issues regarding the interpretation of the curriculum. Currently they rely on the information they give to the head teachers, and on the directives that are issued in order to introduce a curriculum to the schools.

### **7.3.4. Recommendations for further study**

The study had a very limited scope. Due to financial and time constraints it did not concentrate on an in-depth gauging of the strategies that could assist teachers of English to implement ESL successfully, or on finding the promotion strategies schools could adopt to ensure that the curriculum is delivered to a ready group of learners. Another study which looks at the implementation stage of the overall SGCSE curriculum is necessary since it could point out key areas that need modification and therefore inform the revision of the curriculum. This study also did not focus on the perceptions of other stakeholders such as the parents or industry. Their opinions on the relevance of the SGCSE curriculum were not sought. It would therefore be pertinent for researchers and potential researchers to study the perceptions of parents and industry on the relevance of the SGCSE curriculum. Even more important is a study which looks at the available agricultural related sciences in the school curriculum and the extent to which they are relevant to the economy of the country. It may also be worthwhile to study the relevance of the Swaziland Primary Certificate and the Junior Certificate examinations in the education of Swazis using a cost-effectiveness approach and bearing in mind that it becomes a waste of financial resources for parents to pay for a certificate whose utilisation for further study can never see the light of day.

There is a great need to involve the communities in the planning in order to ensure that there is communal support (community and school governing bodies), especially in areas like English speaking and listening. A possible model to spearhead curriculum alignment in the schools will now be discussed. It should be noted that learner commitment towards learning ought to head the hierarchy of curriculum alignment, and that all hierarchical relationships should directly serve the learner. It is important to note that this model is both naturalistic and grounded since it can be continually adapted to each underprivileged setting so that different areas of consideration are addressed. Immediate and non-immediate influences to curriculum alignment are taken into consideration. It is suggested that aligning language teaching in underprivileged schools depends on the involvement of government, school governing

bodies, parents and school committees, school administration, school departments, the language department, and the learners themselves who must stay positively motivated. The model below can suit any underprivileged school setting, if all relationships between the stakeholders are served with the goal to sustain learner commitment.

#### **7.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter has provided a summary of the entire study and has documented the conclusions that were drawn from the findings, together with the recommendations for action and further study. The purpose of the study was to describe the perceptions of language department heads from underprivileged schools in the country on policy change and curriculum alignment. It was revealed that the HoDs viewed alignment of the curriculum in the local context to be a strategy to ensure that the curriculum was successful in the context of implementation. Language department heads in the schools believed that the government had a major role to play in ensuring institutional commitment towards the directives that the government itself was issuing. The HoDs also believed that there was need for administrative support in the form of support from the principals of the schools. This was followed by a fundamental need for cross-departmental cooperation, support from the community within which the schools are located, and then by departmental teamwork.

It is concluded that aligning the curriculum was extremely frustrating in that while the HoDs were on top of the local needs of students, it was also clear that local curriculum decision-making could not take place effectively without external support from the governing body and the MoE. It is recommended that the MoE revisit its strategies to ensure that the SGCSE curriculum is a success.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### *Rationale for teaching IGCSE ESL*

|  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English is one of the official languages in the country, the other being the language of the Swazi people, SiSwati.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English is an international language, which allows the learners to compete and/or participate in the global market economically, commercially, technologically, politically, culturally and socially. It is also used as the main language for entertainment and sport in the world.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English is the medium of instruction in schools in Swaziland at senior secondary level and most texts in Swaziland are written in English. Competence in English undoubtedly enables learners to perform better in all other subjects.</li></ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It provides the English language skills necessary for employment, the world of work and life in general.</li></ul>   |

Extracted from The IGCSE English as a second language syllabus (2008).

## APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE OF AN SGCSE SCHEME OF WORK

### Student Information

Number of students:.....

Age:.....

Gender:.....

Abilities:.....

### AIMS

- a) Develop language skills that learners already have.
- b) Develop an awareness of the usefulness of English language as a medium of national and international communication.
- c) Promote the value of effective language command and use for personal development.
- d) Develop an awareness of the nature of language and language learning skills.
- e) Form a sound base for the effective use of effective English for the purpose of further study and employment.

OBJECTIVES: Learners should be able to do the following

### Reading

- R1– Understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms
- R2 – Select and organize material relevant to specific purposes
- R3 – Recognise, understand and distinguish facts, ideas and opinions
- R4 – Infer information from texts.

### Writing

- W1 – Communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately.
- W2 – Order and present facts, ideas and opinions. Listening
- W3 – Understand and use a range of appropriate vocabulary
- W4 –Use language and register appropriate to audience and context

- W5 – Employ and control a variety of accurate grammatical structures
- W6 – Observe conventions of paragraphing, punctuation and spelling

### Listening

- L1– Understand and respond to information presented in a variety of forms
- L2 – Select and organize and material relevant for specifically .
- L3 – Select and organize material relevant to specific purposes.
- L4 – infer information from texts,

### Speaking

- S1 – Communicate clearly, accurately and appropriately.
- S2 – convey information and express opinions effectively
- S3– Employ and control a variety of grammatical structures
- S4 –Demonstrate knowledge of a range of appropriate vocabulary
- S5–Engage in and influence the direction of a conversation
- S6–Employ suitable pronunciation and stress patterns.

| Target Date | Theme and Resource   | Assessment Objective   | Learner outcome and skill  | Completion Date |
|-------------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| 14 Feb 2014 | Entertainment:<br>For The Love of Dancing (Language for Reality, p.23)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive reading</li> <li>• Reading for gist</li> <li>• Responding to texts written in English</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary appreciation</li> <li>• Observing grammaticality</li> <li>• Skill of describing</li> </ul>   | 20 Feb 2014     |
| 22 Feb 2014 | Technology:<br>(a) The World in 2058 (Language for Reality, p.34)<br>(b) Surrogacy and In Vitro in Our Time (English for Foreign Students, p.90) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening to information presented in a variety of forms</li> <li>• Accuracy of information transfer</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary appreciation</li> <li>• Selecting relevant information</li> <li>• Information transfer</li> <li>• Skill of summarizing</li> </ul>  | 26 Feb 2014     |
| Target date | Theme and Resource   | Assessment Objective   | Learner Outcome and Skill  | Completion Date |
|             | Passage (a) Mauritius Loving: True love  | R1, R2, R3, R4, S1-S4, W1-W4   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanning</li> <li>• Appreciate vocabulary and use it in speech and writing</li> <li>• Observing grammatically</li> <li>• Skill of describing descriptive (place)</li> </ul>   |                 |
|             | Passage (b) Shumbalala Game Lodge  | R1-R4, S1-S4, W1-W4  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanning</li> <li>• Appreciate vocabulary and use it in speech and writing</li> <li>• Observing grammatically</li> <li>• Adjectives</li> <li>• Higher order of using language</li> <li>• Skill of describing place and event (scene)</li> </ul> |                 |
|             | Speech   | W6, W1, W3, W4, W6, W6   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Organizing information</li> <li>-Presenting information</li> <li>-Use a range of vocabulary</li> <li>-Paragraphing</li> <li>-Punctuation, spelling</li> </ul>  |                 |
|             | Listening (past papers)  | L1-L4  | -Responding to information   |                 |

|  |  |                                 |  |  |
|--|--|---------------------------------|--|--|
|  |  |                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Selecting relevant information</li> <li>-Distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions</li> <li>-Inferring information from texts</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Passage 2: Man Man (Certificate in English)  | R1-R4,<br>S1-S4,<br>W1-W6       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scanning</li> <li>-Appreciate vocabulary and using it in speech and writing</li> <li>-Observing grammatically</li> <li>-Use appropriate structures</li> <li>-Adjectives</li> <li>-Skills of describing</li> <li>-Descriptive composition (person)</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Friendly letter Remedial (English as a second language)  | R1-R4<br>S1-S4,<br>W1-W6        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Maintain appropriate register</li> <li>-Maintain appropriate style</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | Types of friendly letters<br>i. Advice<br>i. Recommend<br>i. Describe<br>v. Narrate<br>v. <b>Condolences</b> |                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Write for an audience</li> <li>-Language advice</li> <li>-Language appropriate for recommendation</li> <li>-Descriptive language</li> <li>-Narrative language</li> <li>-Language appropriate for sending condolences</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | Listening  | L1-L4                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Skill of listening</li> <li>-Listen to information presented a variety of forms</li> <li>-Infer information</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Test 2<br>Reports<br>a) Police<br>b) School authority certificate<br>English<br>c) Annual report             | W1-W6                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Write for an audience</li> <li>-Observe grammatically</li> <li>-Use good structure</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | Passage 3: Importance conversation (IGCSE English as a second language, p 82)                                | R1-R3, W1-W6                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Scanning</li> <li>-Appreciate vocabulary and use it in speech and writing</li> <li>-Use appropriate tools for informed writing</li> <li>i) Time fixers</li> <li>ii) Phrases for introducing points</li> <li>iii) Phrases for joining points</li> <li>iv) Phrases for adding support</li> <li>v) Personalizing</li> <li>vi) Making general list at numbers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal language structures</li> <li>➤ Suggestions</li> <li>➤ Opinion</li> <li>➤ View and arguments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |
|  | Articles<br>i Argumentative<br>ii Descriptive  | W1-W6,<br>W1-W6                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use language and style appropriate for descriptive article</li> </ul>   |  |
|  |  | W1-W6,<br>W1-W6                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and clear presentation</li> <li>• Presenting ideas</li> <li>• Awareness of audience and context</li> <li>• Observing grammatically</li> <li>• Vocabulary development</li> <li>• Observing conventions of paragraphing, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Listening  | L1-L4                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selecting relevant information for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) An interview</li> <li>ii) True/false questions</li> <li>iii) Fill in the blanks</li> <li>iv) Statements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Passage 1 (a)<br>Probiotics (past paper, 2011)<br>Passage 1(b)<br>You are what you eat                       | R1-R4,<br>S1, S2, S4,<br>W5, W6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanning</li> <li>• Appreciate vocabulary</li> <li>• Inferring information</li> <li>• Observing grammatically</li> <li>• Skill of arguing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Article</li> <li>➤ Debate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Observing grammatically</li> </ul>  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | Listening 1<br>ADHD Syndrome (New Enjoy, 20-22)  | S1-S4,<br>L1-L4,<br>W1-W3  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening for enjoyment</li> <li>Types of listening exercises</li> </ul> Interviews<br>True /false<br>Filling in the blanks<br>Inferential/comprehension<br>Giving directions   |  |
|  | Listening 2 (full paper)<br>Passage 2  | L1- L4   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>True /false</li> <li>Filling in the blanks</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Continuous writing<br>a) Business letter<br>b) Memorandum<br>c) Minutes<br>d) Annual report                    | W1<br>W2<br>W3<br>W4<br>W5<br>W6   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content</li> <li>Derivation of ideas</li> <li>Relevance</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Style and accuracy</li> <li>Independence</li> <li>Accurate and clear presentation</li> <li>Presenting ideas systematically</li> <li>Vocabulary development</li> <li>awareness of audience and context</li> <li>Observing grammatically</li> <li>Observing conventions of paragraphing, punctuation and spelling</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Test<br>Debates  | S1<br>S2<br>S3<br>S5<br>S6<br><br>S6   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of audience and context</li> <li>Expressing opinions effectively</li> <li>Grammatical accuracy</li> <li>Vocabulary</li> <li>Expressing opinions effectively</li> <li>Grammatical accuracy</li> <li>vocabulary</li> <li>Influencing the direction of a conversation</li> <li>Pronunciation</li> <li>Skill of arguing</li> <li>Skill of describing</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | Composition<br>(a) Narrative   | W1   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate and clear presentation</li> </ul> Chronological<br>Flashback<br>Action-based<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of ideas/facts</li> <li>Vocabulary development</li> <li>Awareness of audience and context</li> <li>Observing grammatically</li> <li>Conventions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Paragraphing</li> <li>-Punctuation</li> <li>-Spelling</li> </ul> </li> <li>Relevance of technique</li> <li>Skill of narrating</li> </ul> |  |
|  | Test   |  |  |  |
|  | 1. Revision<br>a) Reading and writing  |  |  |  |
|  | i. 2009 past paper<br>ii. 2010 past paper<br>iii. 2011 past paper<br>iv. 2012 past paper<br>v. 2013 past paper | R1-R4<br>W1-W5<br><br>R1-R4<br>W1-W5<br>R1-R4<br>W1-W5<br>R1-R4<br>W1-W5<br><br>R1-R4<br>W1-W5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to information presented in various form</li> <li>Select relevant information</li> <li>Distinguish between facts and opinions</li> <li>Inferring information from texts</li> <li>Communicate clearly and appropriately</li> <li>Grammatical accuracy</li> </ul>  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | b) Continuous writing<br>i. 2009 past paper<br>i.  | W1-W6<br>W1-W6<br>W1-W6<br>W1-W6                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and clear presentation</li> <li>-Including dialogue in story telling</li> <li>-Using flashback: chronological sequence in story telling</li> <li>-Awareness of audience</li> </ul>   |  |
|  | c) Listening<br>i) 2009 past paper<br>ii) 2010 past paper<br>iii) 2011 past paper<br>iv) 2012 past paper<br>v) 2013 past paper | L1-L4<br>L1-L4<br>L1-L4<br>L1-L4<br>L1-L4                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select relevant information</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• True/false</li> <li>• Filling in the blanks</li> <li>• Inferential text (spoken)</li> <li>• Distinguish between facts, ideas and opinions.</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | Speech revision (Stephen E. Lucas, The Art of Public Speaking)   | Introduction (types)<br><br>Body<br><br>Conclusion (types) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ways of introducing speech</li> <li>-Relating topic to audience</li> <li>-Stating importance of topic</li> <li>-Startling the audience</li> <li>-Arousing the curiosity of the audience</li> <li>-Questioning the audience</li> <li>-Beginning with a quotation</li> <li>-Telling a story</li> <li>-Number of main points</li> <li>-Strategic order of points</li> <li>-Correctives</li> <li>-Transitions</li> <li>-Internal previews</li> <li>-Internal summaries</li> <li>-Reinforcing the central idea</li> <li>-Summarizing the speech</li> <li>-Ending with a quotation</li> <li>-Making a dramatic statement</li> <li>-Referring to the introduction</li> </ul> |  |

1. Digger, A (2007). IGCSE English as a second language: developing writing skills. Cambridge: Hodder Education.
2. Ngoh, G.L., & Ferreira, D.P. (1980). Understand and Communicate 4: an English course for secondary. Accra: FEP International

### APPENDIX 3: SGCSE/IGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SYLLABUS AIMS

| SGCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AIMS  | IGCSE ESL SYLLABUS AIMS   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. develop awareness of the usefulness of the English language as a medium of national and international communication;</li><li>2. promote the value of effective language command and use for personal development;</li><li>3. develop an awareness of the nature of language and language –learning skills along with skills of a more general application;</li><li>4. form a sound base for the effective uses of English for the purposes of further study and employment.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. develop the ability to use English effectively for the purpose of practical communication;</li><li>2.Promote students’ personal development;</li><li>3. develop an awareness of the nature of language and language – learning skills along with skills of a more general application;</li><li>4. form a sound base for the skills required for further study or employment using English as the medium.</li></ol> |

**Sources:** SGCSE English Language Syllabus (2014)  
IGCSE English as a Second Language Syllabus (2007)

#### **APPENDIX 4: REQUEST TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

REF: 48275611  
ENQ: GAMEDZE M  
CELL: 0926876056378  
0793899568  
08 October 2014

P. O. Box 933  
Nhlangano  
S400

The principal and School Governing Body

#### **APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH: PRINCIPAL**

The above matter refers.

I hereby request for conducting research with the Head of English Language Department on the topic “Policy change and curriculum alignment: exploring the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland’s underprivileged schools.” My supervisor is Dr NMM Mbunyuza - De Heer Menlah who may be contacted at 012 429 4441 or 072 649 573.

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of English Language department heads from underprivileged schools, on policy change and curriculum alignment. The study seeks to capture the views of the HoD’s as they are deemed to be necessary in the translation of policy into practice.

The English Language syllabus has had a number of changes noted in the O-Level, IGCSE, and SGCSE syllabuses, which suggested that a number of changes even at the practice level were to take place. The department head will be requested to participate in interviews and focused group discussions in order to gain insight into the issue. The dates for the interviews and focused group discussions will be communicated well in advance.

The findings of the study will be solely used for academic purposes and may be published in an academic journal. Upon request, the findings will be made available.

I hereby declare to abide by all ethical codes of conduct, and to assure that all information be used only for the purposes of the study. Letters of the alphabet will be used to represent the participants in order to ensure anonymity, e.g. Department Head A, School A. Interviews will be tape-recorded to ensure the quality of data capturing.

Hoping that you will find this in order.

Yours faithfully

---

Makhosazana Gamedze (Student Number: 48275611)

## APPENDIX 5: REQUEST TO PARTICIPANTS

REF: 48275611  
ENQ: GAMEDZE M  
CELL: 0926876056378  
0793899568  
08 October 2014

P. O. Box 933  
Nhlangano  
S400

The Head of the English Department

Mr/ Mrs. / Miss/ Ms/ Dr \_\_\_\_\_

### **RE: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY: YOURSELF**

The above matter refers.

You are kindly requested to participate in academic research study on the following topic “Policy change and curriculum alignment: exploring the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland’s underprivileged schools.” My supervisor is Dr NMM Mbunyuza-De Heer Menlah who may be contacted at 012 429 4441 or 072 649 573.

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of English Language department heads from underprivileged schools, on how they ensure that curriculum implementation is in line with policy demands. The study seeks to capture the views of the HoD’s as they are deemed to be necessary in the translation of policy into practice.

The dates for the interviews and focused group discussions will be communicated well in advance. The Interviews will be tape-recorded to ensure the quality of data capturing. The findings of the study will be solely used for academic purposes and may be published in an academic journal. Upon request, the findings will be made available.

I hereby declare to ensure your anonymity and confidentiality in your participation, and to assure you that your right to withdraw from the study will be fully acknowledged and respected if and when need arises.

Yours faithfully

---

Makhosazana Gamedze (Student Number: 48275611)

## APPENDIX 6: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION-DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

REF: 48275611  
ENQ: GAMEDZE M  
CELL: 0926876056378  
0793899568  
08 October 2014

P. O. Box 933  
Nhlangano  
S400

The Director of Education  
Ministry of Education and Training  
Mbabane

Dear Sir/ Madam

### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SHISELWENI SCHOOLS**

I am conducting research for my Doctorate in Education, curriculum studies with the title “Policy change and curriculum alignment: exploring the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland’s underprivileged schools.” My supervisor is Dr NMM Mbunyuza-De Heer Menlah who may be contacted at 012 429 4441 or 072 649 573.

The focus of the study is to capture the views of the Heads of Departments of English as they are deemed to have a key role in the translation of the policy regarding the implementation of the language into practice, specifically at the local level. The study aims to describe the perceptions of the HoD’s change and curriculum alignment.

The English Language syllabus has had a number of changes noted in the O-Level, IGCSE, and SGCSE syllabuses, which suggested that a number of changes even at the practice level were to take place. The department head will be requested to participate in interviews and focused group discussions in order to gain insight into the issue. The dates for the interviews and focused group discussions will be communicated well in advance.

The proposed times of meeting with the HoD’s will be mid week during and after school hours. During after school hours, focus will be directed towards individual interviews and focused group interviews, while during school hours there will be a documentary analysis. The interview plan is to have individual interviews, documentary analysis and focused group discussions in twelve different schools with the English HoD. The schools will be identified once this application has been approved. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will contribute immensely to a knowledge base of that which underprivileged schools do in an endeavour to achieve curriculum standards, and that which local-level administrators of the subject believe can ensure that the implementation aligned with policy demands. The findings of the study will solely be used for academic purposes and may be published in an academic journal. Upon request, the findings will be made available.

I hereby declare to abide by all ethical codes of conduct, and to assure that all information be used only for the purposes of the study. Letters of the alphabet will be used to represent the participants in order to ensure anonymity, e.g. Department Head A, School A. Interviews will be tape-recorded to ensure the quality of data capturing.

Hoping that you will find this in order.

Yours faithfully

---

Makhosazana Gamedze (Student Number: 48275611)

## **APPENDIX 7: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to participate in the research study on “Policy change and curriculum alignment: exploring the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland’s underprivileged schools,” that is being conducted by Mrs. Makhosazana Mathebula, a student at the University of South Africa.

I understand that my role in the study is to be involved in an individual interview to find out about how policy change has been aligned in Swaziland’s underprivileged schools.” I am aware that there are about eleven other department heads who are also participating in this study. We will discuss how we ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned, talk about the prior knowledge and understanding of the ESL syllabus and the teaching of English differs from what it used to be during O-Level. We will also discuss the extent to which I find the teaching of English Language easier/ more difficult compared to the times when it was taught under the O-Level curriculum and the sort of motivation and resources I provide the teachers in my department with in order to ensure that the morale of curriculum delivery is positive and the aspects of the local setting that have ensured the success of alignment as a policy instrument in promoting curriculum implementation. We will discuss the extent to which I find the textbooks used to be in line with policy objectives, how I make effort to reduce discrepancy between the state’s policy intentions and your interpretation of policy demands. We will also discuss the effort made to ensure that curriculum materials are adapted to the local context and any other issues related to the focus of the research. As a department head and a curriculum developer at the school level, these discussions are going to help me in that I will be part of the solution to the present problem of curriculum alignment in underprivileged schools.

I am aware that my participation in this study is entirely voluntarily, and that I have a right to withdraw if and when I no longer feel comfortable to participate. I understand that any data that will be captured will be for the purposes of the study or for record-keeping purposes and that it will not be meant to violate my anonymity. I understand though, that there could be violations to my privacy if I talk about personal issues or issues that are outside the focus of the study, and that I am free to ask questions regarding the focus of the study or anything that I need clarification on.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by the code of ethics, and that my name in the study will be kept confidential. My understanding is that the interview will last for not more than forty-five minutes. I am also aware that I will be

tape-recorded, and that host verification will be conducted with me to ascertain my views and understanding. The researcher has also assured me that I can access the thesis online and at university libraries.

I understand that these ethical standards shall be followed as determined by the CEDU Research Ethics Committee, UNISA.

I absolutely give my consent to participate in the study.

---

Today's Date

---

Participant's Signature

## APPENDIX 8: PERMISSION LETTERS

### The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland



### Ministry of Education & Training

Tel: (+268) 2 4042491/5  
Fax: (+268) 2 404 3880

P. O. Box 39  
Mbabane, SWAZILAND

14<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

Attention:

Head Teachers:

Hosea High School

Ekuthuleni High School

Jerich High School

Florence Christian High School

Ngwane Central High School

Jerusalem High School

Makhonza High School

Edwaleni High School

Ntjanini High School

Velebantfu High School

Esandleni High School

Nzongomane High School

THROUGH

Shiselweni Regional Education Officers

Dear Colleague,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA  
STUDENT – MS. MAKHOSAZANA MATHEBULA-GAMEDZE

1. Reference is made to the above mentioned subjects.
2. The Ministry of Education and Training has received a request from Ms. M M. Mathebula , a student at the University of South Africa that in order for her to fulfill her academic requirements at the University of South Africa, she has to collect data (conduct research) and her study or research topic is: *Policy Change and Curriculum Alignment: Exploring the Perceptions of Language Department Heads in Swaziland's Underprivileged Schools.* The population for her study comprises of Heads of the English Departments from the above mentioned schools. All details concerning the study are stated in the participants' consent form which will have to be signed by all participants before Ms. Mathebula-Gamedze begins her data collection. Please note that parents will have to consent for all the participants below the age of 18 years participating in this study.
3. The Ministry of Education and Training requests your office to assist Ms. Mathebula-Gamedze by allowing her to use above mentioned schools from the Shiselweni region of Swaziland as her research sites as well as facilitate her by giving her all the support she needs in her data collection process. Data collection period is one month.

  
DR. SIBONGILE M. MTSHALI-DLAMINI  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

cc: Regional Education Officers – Shiselweni  
Chief Inspector – Secondary  
12 Head Teachers of the above mentioned schools  
Prof. K. P. Dzvimbo and Dr. M. Claasens



**N.B.**

1. From the above list, only eight (8) schools formed the population. This was due to saturation of data as explained elsewhere in the study.
2. Permission from the gate keepers was either received verbally or came in the form of signed and stamped letters of permission. Due to issues of anonymity, the letters of permission that was received from the schools are not included, but only form an audit trail.

## APPENDIX 9: TRANSCRIPTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

### Head of Department A

1. I: Can you briefly tell me about your story about teaching SGCSE. How do you find?
2. A: *Learners are much orphaned in the underprivileged schools –that is pushing us back, it's different from where they have books because they would do well if we had all the material. It's not that bad but the OVC's are too many in the school and you find that the money comes very late, they don't have exercise books. I was thinking in the morning-actually I was saying to myself that if I can come home with at least one quire exercise book so that they could write for enjoyment.*
3. I: Don't you have the book loan scheme and the system where you give out all stationery from the school?
4. A: *We don't have it yet, that is why we are having all these problems-it has been very difficult to do it with the past head teachers-the one we have now is new so we have just started scrapping pieces of paper for them to use because there is written work that has to be marked everyday. And that has to be communicated to the learners even if it looks very simple, for instance-subjects like verbs, the fact that the learners have learnt and have written it down they tend to master it. Even if we exchange because there is too much to write, I must sign and check and write the answers on the board neatly so that the student marker can write exactly as the teacher has given them. This helps when he/she gives back the work, the learners should mark exactly as the teacher has given it on the board, and he/she has to be a marker like I would do. So it means that they are doing the work because of their numbers, you find that they are too many, you can't finish the book. I, for instance am in page 26 but they will write the mock exams in November.*
5. I: What grade is that?
6. A: *Form 2.*
7. I: Do you have a specific book for each class?
8. A: *There is a specific book, and for the first time we are trying New Language for Life otherwise they don't have it, they have to write exercises everyday yet they don't have the book.*
9. I: Since you say you don't loan books, how do you do it if you say the books are not enough?

10. A: *It was difficult with the other head teacher. Fraudulent deeds actually surfaced in handling the system. But our current principal has tried it, so the few books that she manages to buy I take them to class with me and I come back with them, so I can be able to state how good a book is, especially at Junior level. Even at high school, she says we should photocopy as much as we can.*
11. I: *What can you say about that in terms of cost-effectiveness?*
12. A: *It is very expensive, but it's the only way. She is new. They say that government has said no extra money is to be added, so she has decided that the little available funds for maintenance be used for photocopying the books. For instance, other schools have copies of the Enjoy English book but we don't, so it makes it very difficult, even the copies that we make, you end up photocopying maybe to teach the learners how to answer exercise 1 because they tend to fail because they do not answer properly. For instance in reading and directed writing exercise, maybe the kids will leave out the most important keyword, for instance if the answer is "about 4000." You'll find the learners saying "4000" leaving out the other part, and you find that the answer is not correct in that way. It is very important to concentrate them on those things because you find that they get a straight zero. Now it's across the grades that, they need just the real answer and it has not been something that the learners have taken notice of, so they would normally fail. It normally appeared as the present and the present is difficult, the syllabus is too communicative, as a teacher you should be able to teach them successfully and get credits, when in fact in the past there were too many questions. As I have given an example of "about 400 million people formed the quorum," then the question asks, "how many," and 400 million is given as an answer, it's wrong because the 'about' means it's not exactly 400 million but it's close to, so that's not an exact answer. Once you teach them that they should become aware and watchful, it's a warning that the answer starts from here and ends there, so it has not been well-communicated without the "about," so if you have trained them properly in class, even if it's one exercise, they will always see it and get 100%, we are able to make them pass because when we do these workshops, the inspector we have is very good, he teaches us how to mark the paper.*
13. Mhm...
14. A: *When you write, it is very important to scheme up your work, you must know the syllabus. I am saying all this because the syllabus is in my head, like you have heard me talking about paper 1. It's because I know all of them, paper 1,2,3,4; so you cannot*

*scheme without seeing the book, which is conducive for learning. You cannot say it's good when you don't know the syllabus. The syllabus is a paper, it's knowing everything before you start teaching. You open the book, you know that there is everything you need, probably reading, listening and communication.*

15. I: By the way have you come across a book that is proper in the sense that it incorporates all the four skills?

16. A: *The one which we have now- New Language For Life, it is my first time to teach it- I haven't been teaching it but it requires all learners to have a copy, then you are able to use all the four skills everyday. Reading, writing, speaking and listening everyday, two skills or three a day, then they take writing for homework. In the following day you mark before you start another topic, the book we have is good, as I say.*

17. I: How does the syllabus differ from O-level?

18. A: *It is different because it is now communicative; it uses the four basic skills daily.*

19. I: During O-level times, what normally happened there? What skills were emphasised upon?

20. *During O-level times the teachers mostly did the work, but this time it is the students who have to be practically involved in doing all the work, even though it is difficult because they don't have the books, so you have to do it for them. But if the rules are followed, they learn widely when they are doing the job themselves and they learn to communicate well. They have so much to learn when they are doing the writing.*

21. I: As an HOD, how do you ensure that the teachers are motivated?

22. A: *We go to workshops, we learn from other people who have been doing well in the subjects and we look at the reports where we are weak so that we can improve in the workshops, why are we weak, for instance in high school my teachers could not do well, the ones who are good in compositions, you find that they are not so good in paper 1, the reading and directed writing, the teacher doesn't like it at all. It happens that the teacher is more oriented in one side. For instance, I find paper 1 very interesting to teach because they read and they see the answer and they pick it and put it down, so he doesn't see it he thinks that the composition paper is very easy. Usually people differ like that, when you scheme you must know the individuals weakness so that you can ask someone to help. If you are good in paper 1 and 3 and 4, then you must invite someone to help you or get to his class and see how she/he develops a topic sentence and how does he makes a paragraph, remember even*

*though this examination is communicative, our students are very poor in constructing sentences. They don't even know what a verb is, so as I said that I am still in page 26.*

23. I: So how do you actually do it?

24. A: *You go back, the inculcation comes when you just take the book, the first thing is familiar, it's as if they have not done anything in form 1. When we started book 2, we discussed families communicatively, they said this is a large family, write about it, they talk, their speech is full of stammering, you correct them, they write, you make little groups and you give them different tasks e.g., how many boys, how many girls, what type of family, what problems is this type of family likely to encounter e.g. poverty due to family being too large, they cannot all go to school. Let them write all this on their own, they are the ones who do the writing. There is wisdom in their minds other than the teachers because the only source of knowledge in the old system would be the one telling them. It does not come from them but the books that we have make them active participants in their learning, also the vocabulary, every unit has vocabulary terms, the new words that will be used in the whole unit. That is one aspect that makes the learning conducive because those words they learn are going to be part of their everyday speech.*

25. I: So, in other words do you mean that they cannot do well without these textbooks?

26. A: *They cannot, even dictionaries are used and the more you make them find words and teach them how to read the dictionary, how to find a word in a dictionary; that probably in the middle there is M, you teach them that this side is AB and that side is Z (indicating right). I give them notes on this, so, it is something that is within the book, which is very important to practically learn how to open a dictionary faster. So they enjoy these things as they can see in their books. They are practically involved and it becomes easy-as now they are looking for the word. When finding the word, it must be used in context. For instance, the context is language, the unit is language so there is a word now, you are looking for it. There are many different meanings you are going to find that pertain to language, you see what I mean, and they judge the right word, so they have learnt. In the unit on sports there is vocabulary for sports, you find the words in the dictionary, their comprehension is in the book and the words are used in the book again and then after they had answered the comprehension question, they had found the meaning from the dictionary using (under sports) the language they have marked for them, many words 30, 20 sometimes because the more they have, the more they learn. The majority of the words will be brainstormed in*

*their minds so that when you come to comprehension before the questions, they already have a trace of understanding the passage because of the vocabulary box at the beginning, the exposure to finding meanings of the words, probably making a few sentences, but in form 1 I usually don't give them sentences. They still have to know the basic sentence. Even in form 2, they are like that but it's better because you can refer them to what they did in form 1 and they quickly grasp and move on. They do write a sentence then but in form 1 you will be very frustrated because the poor schools are like that. In form one, don't hurry to give them sentences, let them learn what a verb is, the structure of the sentence e.g. subject, verb, object, etc, Subject with predicate, with object, or without, then illustrate for them. In that way they have learned. Then you take out a paragraph and make them identify the sentences, how many sentences are there, you can also identify the verbs and write them down or underline them. You know that different sentences will be punctuated by a full stop, so you are making them focus on grammar and punctuation. They will remove conjunctions and write simple sentences, then automatically they have learnt on conjunctions, so they indirectly learn on commas, conjunctions, etc. Use just one paragraph everyday and try to show them that there are so many sentences there. Repetition helps in teaching them, so the teacher must have that in mind so that he knows what he is doing. It's called the syllabus.*

27. I. What sort of motivation are you giving the teachers?

28. A: *We have motivated them by ensuring that whatever Photostat they need, they get.*

29. A: How big are the classes?

30. I: *Argh! 30, in fact we were lucky with the present head teacher. She constricted form 3 to be one class and took the best to form 3; we started like that this year. She knows what she is doing, I could have known but I wouldn't have been able to suggest this change or block the class so that there is less visitation and more work done, and energy among the teachers, better than energy exhausted in multiple class visits because there is too much talking-too much work to do. The finishing class ends up being deprived when you have to mark for the other classes. Form 1 for instance, I had a language class in form 1 and she had to find another teacher and I felt relieved. If I had language in form 1 or 2 at least it would be one class, I will be taking of the new teacher while I do MM then there will be one form 3. Those are the strategies to help because the teachers could not be tired. You cannot expect teachers to overwork then you expect good results or rather reach the end of the syllabus. I can know but I*

*can fail because I don't have the strength to reach the end of the syllabus. Also, we try to make the timetables, we keep guard of the timetable, like I am telling you that we have constricted form 3 in order to balance up everything, we don't want to have too many periods as they end up being a burden. The syllabus is very long with the four papers.*

31. I: What is paper 4?

32. A: *You tape the listeners like we are doing now: ask questions and then you grade the responses. Yeah, the assessment for communication is vocabulary usage, fluency, and attempting to respond, but you do not fail the student; the fact that an attempt to speak has been made, no silence or yes/no responses, means that the learner is 50% at least. We teach them that for paper 4, they must fight as much as they can because we start with the warm up session, hello how are you? I hear that you come from Egypt. Why did you decide to come to USA? I did because... aah-how do you find it?- it's very nice it's a beautiful country... What do you have in Egypt? Yeah, the card has five points, you have heard that this learner is highly technological in the mind from the warm up, then you can give the learner the card that suits him/her, then as an examiner, you keep your silence and let the learners speak on the card.*

33. I: Do you actually train them the speaking before the examination or the training is in the day to day speaking?

34. A: *It's not in the day-to-day speaking because they cannot write proper English but it has to be trained. We hope that this year I will find them, at least I will train them. Usually, before they write exams I will train them once, sometimes they would do none and you find yourself telling them by word of mouth, which is not making an A for these kids. So, they might even express it that they are scared on record, they need the exposure-teachers ought to train them the way it happens in the exam, show them how it is done-let them shake while it's not for the exams, usually they do that.*

35. I: So, is there equipment for that?

36. A: *The equipment is there, we have it, we also have DVD's to see and learn what other teachers are doing so we get what Ebber is saying-there is an Indian teaching Ebber-Ebber what can you say about Egypt.*

37. I: Oh, they actually watch the orals being done?

38. A: *They watch the orals, that is one way we have provided, so once they watch the orals, they can watch those who cannot speak English and say now we have seen it; and they can actually listen to those who cannot speak English. And then you can tell*

*them-see how he is struggling- he is white but he cannot speak English and they end up laughing at him/her. And I will tell them that he does have a mark though. You must also try to say something e.g. you have money-what are you going to do with this inheritance that you have received-the examiner asks him-I'll make building blah blah... it is very difficult to understand (laughs) you cant even predict his nationality. I've got to fly to the United States and I've got to make big business-very poor in English but he cannot fail, his speech will be listened to, so you tell them that we are collecting what you have said, so look at him he also got a mark. But he answered all the questions from the examiner, even though not in good English. Ebber (a character in one of the DVDs) is very fluent. Ebber gets like a star because he is a first language learner, but this one doesn't know English but he got 60 because he has communicated with the teachers. We also have those aspects that we ensure to instrument for the promotion of the curriculum.*

39. I: Now how do you ensure that learners are aware if the intended outcomes?
40. A: *Usually, here like I am saying we photocopy, this year we intend to photocopy the past exam questions, they just had to have the past exam questions. They have to practise because there is no time, this syllabus is very long.*
41. I: Yeah, I do understand, but then do you kind of give them a course outline or a copy of the syllabus so that they can see it or you mention it?
42. A: *That's what I do always, you cannot do work, you know when you scheme, you cannot do without a course outline. To tell them that the papers are communicative, you have to explain that communicative means that the learners are going to do all the work themselves and they are expected to use all the four basic skills everyday. You will be talking, asking me and I'll be answering, keep discussing in groups you see, yeah, so they must be aware of that, that they will be writing a lot of work at the end of the lesson where we shall mark together in the following day. Even if that doesn't happen, they should always know that everything they get, they have to write and be able to finish the syllabus because nowadays there is no time. You find that we teachers have a series of meetings which also limits our time of going to class, so we really don't have time.*
43. I: So do you make it a point that you mark the work together with them the next day?
44. A: *You see, for the beginning, I usually mark it my self so that I can see where they are, by just going through their work, marking and reading you find out what progress are they making because you find that someone gets a simple answer wrong*

*and you learn that there are such students in this class and you get to know the number of the students who are weak and you give them special attention, you mark their work, correct them and in that way you are bridging the gap between them and the other students. Normally, we give the students paragraph tasks with a lot of sentences and then we teach them. You do teach them with the textbook and once they have grasped the concept of sentence construction, they will master it and try to do a few sentences themselves using the way you have taught them and then the whole process of learning starts being easy. You don't go to other topics if they haven't grasped the previous one fully. You try to formulate something that will make them understand, to make the majority of them come to light, especially when it comes to grammatical errors, constructing sentences, speaking and sometimes you can even teach them how to request for information."May I go to the loo, get me a piece of chalk, you see."*

45. I: I'm getting the point that you don't proceed?

46. A: *And when a child makes a mistake, you correct it immediately, you don't proceed, you don't let the child get away with it if it's wrong, and you correct him/her. And this one we usually have, I think it will help this side. As a school, our head teacher frequently hold meetings with us and encourage all the teachers to pretend as if they are foreigners, so that everyone speaks English in the school. You see, we are foreigners, she is introducing that and it is working. So, when I come they speak in English, [laughs] Oh! We have suffered for a very long time.*

47. I: Oh... Ok.

48. A: *So you have to be tough all the time because once a teacher is lax, a teacher teaches in SiSwati like, "hhay suka mani lentfo Lena yentiwa kanjena mani!"(Oh, this is how the thing is done), it becomes a habit and eventually the speaking of English and the whole process of English teaching dies and the entire school becomes infested. Even if a teacher is good in teaching English, he cannot succeed if the culture of English speaking is not strong. But then, he has sent some motivational teachers for us teachers, yeah workshops from teachers from other schools, for us to be motivated.*

49. I: mmmh ok...

50. A: *... and then in the school he calls us to motivate the culture of speaking English.*

51. I: So, other departments how are they helpful, I mean in ensuring that English is spoken in the school?

52. A: *She normally combines all the departments, that is what she does, and she tells all of us to teach in English. She doesn't make it sound like an English department thing. She calls the whole school because I as an HoD of English cannot be able to execute anything as an individual. All I need to is to point out the problem, i.e. that we need to have a culture of speaking English, let us decide and agree on something, i.e. like the idea of having teachers behave as foreigners to encourage the speaking of English. Any child who doesn't speak English would be severely warned. Or maybe go to detention on Fridays, or maybe clean toilets.*
53. I: Ok.
54. A: *Usually we use positive punishment, for instance, we ask them to re-write the sentence that he/she got wrong ten times, you know, rather than beating them. Positive punishment is encouraged rather than corporal punishment.*
55. I: So it's a strategy you are using, how effective because another pupil can deliberately make mistakes because she/he knows that she'll get a light punishment... writing a sentence, ten times, what's difficult about that, and she'll write it.
56. A: *The more she writes it, it will never come out wrong so then you have shown her/him how it must be done and you have to mark it; make sure that you have checked those papers, even though you might not do it perfectly due to lack of time but you have to make sure that the learners see that you have checked the work...*
57. I: Because somebody once told me that she punished kids by ordering them to dig pits. However, the children derived enjoyment; they found pleasure in digging the pits.
58. A: *There is another strategy that I adopted from Mr Dlamini, another teacher in my school who came up with a strategy in a meeting and I was impressed. He made the kids to write poems which they will present in front of the whole school, so that's how they are punished now, they must recite this poem and go and present it; you are the presenter, and everyone is looking at you.*
59. I: The punishment also doubles up as a learning strategy?
60. A: *Yeah it's because as teachers, we are assisting each other, for instance the Religious Education teacher and the English teacher, even a Geography teacher, may ask a student to recite a poem on weather conditions-this is done so that the student focus on the subject that he/she specializes on in that particular class, or the learner is asked to recite a poem on general weather, for instance the weather forecast on TV-like imitating the weather reporters, the children is given what is in their field.*

61. I: Mmh! Ok for that particular class?
62. A: *Yeah, and he/she presents it, "it will be cloudy and warm, with showers"-whatever you punish the child with what is educational and this is what you call subject intersection, when you intersect the subjects. I usually use literature and language in my own subjects.*
63. I: Ok.
64. A: *When I have to teach literature and language, the sentences and paragraphs that I use are picked on the other subjects in the exam, same thing applies to Geography-when they have grasped the concept of communication. We are exposing them so that they will be able to listen to TV and also improve their English and they become wise; they are able to adapt to technology, mostly in the positive punishment. Teachers must bring up a wise way of doing it, the administration must love it. She is a very good woman and I am very much impressed...otherwise if the administration didn't allow us...it would not work.*
65. I: Oh, it doesn't become effective?
66. A: *Yeah, it's for the love of the kids and performance, you can't be able to implement it even if you are the English teacher and even if the books are very good, if the person in command is not concerned it becomes extremely difficult and it becomes the teacher's burden to ensure that the learners pass, you see, but I am glad that you found someone like me, but I cannot be a leader...*
67. I: (laughs) But you are...
68. A: *I am so I could help- I only do for them. Yeah, I only do it for the kids that I teach.*
69. I: How have you benefited from in-service workshops that you have attended?
70. I: We have benefited a lot, we have marked the workshop papers, we have marked the examination together as a department, the teachers of English, and everyone is exposed to marking.
71. I: So you...
72. A: *... together we mark exercise 1, attend the problem, we do it together so that the teacher who is having a problem sees how it must be done and then he/she goes to teach it in class, so we have benefited a lot.*
73. I: Ok I understand, to what extent do you find the learning of English language easier or difficult, when compared to the times when it was taught under O-level curriculum.
74. A: *It is easier because it uses...*
75. I: Is it easier, I mean, than O-level?

76. A: *I mean it's more beneficial for them and more sensible as far as I am concerned because it's not talking about the past.*
77. I: Well it's beneficial and more sensible...
78. A... *and we communicate now and the child can learn to communicate with everyone and about technology and watch TV and understand what's going on, on a daily basis, you see the use of the four basic skills.*
79. I: For you as a teacher, is it... I mean, not very difficult to work on...
80. A: *Ah! It's easier because most of the work is done by the students and they are learning more to understand the syllabus, automatically when they do more of these things everyday, at the end of the day you'll find that they know paper 1, because this thing is there in the paper, you see.*
81. I: Yeah I see, by the way, to what extent do you find the textbooks you are using to be in line with the policy objectives? What textbooks are you using and how helpful are they?
82. A: *We are using New Language for Life at junior level, book 1 at form 1, 2, 3 and at high school, we are using Enjoy English. These books are very good, as far as I am concerned. I have craved to use them for quite a long time but the kids didn't have personal copies because of poverty, so it's only now that I have a few books that I'm taking to class so that we can use them. Though we are slow, I can see we are coming out with something. They don't have the school material and they are not loaning them. I just got hold of some old ones so I am using them, so I always take them back with me and bring them. And the use of class prefects helps too, you must teach them to listen to the class prefects, who are going to collect the books to bring them to class. And there will be none to collect the work done in class to take them there because it's no longer homework now, so we are using mostly class prefects.*
83. I: Oh, so you actually don't give them homework?
84. A: *It's because they don't have the English books, otherwise other schools who have the material write everyday. So, they don't have the books, they write everyday in class and then while they are writing, you mark. They are writing a test like that, they must be something that they write everyday-and marked. And the objectives are also very much important; they are stated in the unit of the books.*
85. I: Oh! The books that they are using?
86. A: *They are using units, the objectives are clearly stated for that unit, there is vocabulary, comprehension, listening, there is sentence construction or maybe*

*language, idiom; there is everything that can be found in a passage and stipulated in the objectives before we can go to see it.*

87. I: So, the books are quite good; how do you reduce discrepancy between state policy and the interpretation of the demands. Well, the policy we are talking about is that of localisation, you see, making everything local; how do you make sure that this demand is effective?

88. A: *Oh! This one is only effective if every unit is touched, you don't skip. Once it says write your own poem, if it says reading for enjoyment in the same unit-reading for enjoyment then you let them identify figurative language, words, repetitions, initial rhyme you know what I mean, and then probably outlining. Trying to say what the meaning of this poem is, things is like that, write your own poem, make them write even if you won't mark and they'll know they must write it. The fact that they have written means that there is something that the child is benefiting and it won't all go bad because every child has got his/her own mind and they have their unique talents.*

89. I: So, actually are you saying you don't skip any exercise?

90. A: *We shouldn't skip – as teachers you should take it step by step because most of the things we communicate are not written down. Let's say you are holding a discussion, using that lesson method to say, we are talking today in class, that's a lesson-we are talking in class then write a poem for home work because they didn't write anything in class, even if it's tomorrow make sure that they write the poem in class because there is a reason – it bridges, it's like making up a good sentence in the mind –it's making up a good person, a whole being of a mind, that is what I mean. The books... as far as I am concerned, do not want you to skip.*

91. I: Are you actually saying that scheming, I mean, when they scheme- are you saying they should just follow the book, is it the same thing... I mean the scheme of work and the book-maybe similar I mean?

92. A: *When we scheme, we don't write everything down, I write only because I am using the book for the first time to make sure that I have everything, especially the four basic skills... everything reading, writing, reading comprehension, listening passages, answering questions, you know and how you are going to manoeuvre about speaking, writing you see that's how scheming of English is done – most of the basic skills are used in each lesson, each day and the book has everything, it has objectives. In listening, there are objectives that guide you on what is happening and how you are going to discuss, coming out from the topic talking about what is a fable before you*

*start reading the passage, you see what I mean. They must say what they know, you know, something like that, there is talking even when you are doing a listening exercise.*

93. I: But then, this New Language for life, how helpful is it, for instance, in the listening and speaking, does it teach those productive skills?

94. A: *Aah! They are trying but there are a lot of exercises which we don't have much time to do, the listening passages, when they cant even construct a sentence. So, we are going to do the listening in the oral laboratory. I will start when they get to form 3, then I'll begin to introduce them to listening to the radio, yet now they just did listening where I read to them with my voice. But since we have a new book which normally comes with its own oral CD's with which we will always go to the laboratory with the form 1's and 2's, there is improvement. It is very good that the learner listens to the voice that will examine them and be used to it rather than letting them get used to my own voice so that the learners experience the changes that are there in the examination oral exercises, because the exercises are different. The first one is very easy and usually students get it right, but when they attempt the second one, third, fourth and so on it becomes difficult for them and it requires the exposure. So you must give them the most challenging exercises when training them before they get into the examination.*

95. I: What effort is made to ensure that the curriculum materials are adapted to the local context, do you have foreign material?

96. A: *Yes, we still use Language for Life, I mean Understand and Communicate, New Horizons because they have beautiful structures to help them, so you pick that one to come and help and then go back to the book because this one is very brief and has simple grammar. So if you want something detailed you go out and get something else, so we use that one, but sometimes we don't come out from the book, especially at Junior level because the kids are clustered too much. At high school they can do very well....what I have discovered as the HOD is that once you drill them in paper 1, make them do listening definitely they will try. Just teach them the article and letter writing, they will try their best in composition and the performance won't be that bad- rather than when they have learned only one aspect –the composition –they tend to fail too much because that is only one section of paper 2. If the child knows composition only, he/she doesn't know everything. We do expose the learners to debates to improve their communication.*

97. I: What type of debate because I understand that nowadays the types of debates vary?
98. A: *It's no longer the debate that it used to be, this one is the debate that is held in class, in their groups, for instance it occurs automatically as each group raises a point which the other group challenges and you find that each group has its members say something in turns, and unconsciously a debate exercise has been carried out. Sometimes, I ask them to go and prepare for a more proper debate, but indeed the structure of debate has evolved...So they just stand up...*
99. I: Oh! By the way is it actually possible to hold a debate in class when you arrive for a lesson without planning for it before?
100. A: *Yeah, you just intrigue them with something and suddenly you find that it's a debate, I actually wanted to introduce it like –I thought I would teach literature in form 2 but they made me stop, so I am going to make the form 1's to hold debates pertaining the issues that are discussed in the books that they are using for literature, like The Pearl , for instance, we are trying to argue about what would they do if they were given the opportunity, how do they feel when they imagine Kino standing there hitting the gate so hard, you know, how is he feeling. This thing makes them understand how they should appreciate the characters as they write, at least they should learn how to express their feelings, especially when they write a composition. You cannot do without any of the five senses.*
101. I: Yeah it's impossible.
102. A: *You cannot say you saw nothing, and you felt nothing, and you heard nothing and nothing happened that chocked you and how did you feel. Once you lack that thing you can't write a composition.*
103. I: Yeah, I see.
104. A: *So you must make them – at least twice –make them know exactly where it starts from, make them learn from the exposition, climax then the dramatic narrative, they must know how to make a shocking experience in the middle, without losing the trend of the composition – that's what it's all about. I had already mentioned that as a school, English must be taught and the admin must be very loving to these kids.*
105. I: Yeah the admin has a role to play...
106. A: *They have a role to play because we need it to encourage the other teachers, to make them feel they are also English teachers because all subjects are taught in English. SiSwati is our mother tongue and is also well-appreciated, it is well-done – you find that we have a culture day, she just loves everything and also we make trips.*

107. I: English language trips?

108. A: *Usually it's a SiSwati trip, for culture-so in the SiSwati trip, for me I usually gain a lot, when I get there...*

109. I: By the way, what's your other major?

110. A: *SiSwati ... .but I only teach English.*

111. I: Oh, ok.

112. A: *So, when I get there, I find that when we come to orals, we talk about marriages in Swaziland because the things that they have learnt are the ones that usually appear in the cards for oral exams. They might ask for your opinion on polygamy – where does it baffle you up, you see, and you find that this is the exact thing that we have learnt at the Museum, and also the advantages of an extended family, or marriage, polygamous marriage, monogamy –the vocabulary words for family – they should know them because they are familiar with those words, having found out their meanings in the dictionary and these words tend to appear in the orals, and if you have not done vocabulary with them they will not know what is going on. One thing that makes me recommend the text because it is formed by the themes that are part of our everyday life, things that we live by; families, sports, technology, statistics you know, weather and so on, the books are formed by our life –things that we see.*

113. I: So they don't have foreign concepts?

114. A: *Yeah they don't have any foreign concepts.*

115. I: Oh I see... concepts like ice skating, skiing things like those which are foreign to them?

116. A: *Yeah most of the time it's not like that, if there is anything foreign, it must be something they see on TV, they must present about it, something which they can identify on the TV and then we ask them what do they say about what they have seen.*

117. I: Ok.

118. A: *At least we have a screen, to help them, so these are the facilities that the school has provided us with. For instance, I once showed them a DVD from church, I took it to school and I was shocked to discover Jesus Christ talking to Nichodemus, yet at school we are Christians – everybody is crying Christ, Christ – so, the first DVD where Jesus Christ is talking Nichodemus...Nichodemus asks Jesus what must he do to be born again, how can this be, must I go back to my mother's womb to be born again. You know, they are watching him speak to him like that. These are the CDs*

*for the temple in my area so I stole it just to show my kids that episode. It looks old, but it's what we live by today, because Jesus wants to make Nichodemus understand the simple truths of what he is saying. He says baptism of water and baptism by the spirit, – he wants us to be baptized by water to wash away our sins and by that we make a covenant with him and we start a new life and then the baptism by the spirit you attain priesthood, your hands are laid...So, he doesn't speak that much about the simple truths, he wanted the people to discover for themselves. So, in other words the spirit must tell us, if we love him... the child must just see, he says let's get to the water...*

119.I: Ok that is quite interesting, but how do you ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned?

120.A: We ensure that the learners have the right books-right? And that the syllabus is complete...

121.I: By the way, how do you assess the kids, what are your assessment methods that make you see whether they have grasped a concept or not?

122.A: *Oh! I give them topic tests; let me tell you what I do. I record every piece of work that I have marked, no matter how simple it is...*

123.I: ... like their class works?

124.A: *Yeah, whether it's a classwork, even if I don't record every single exercise but I ensure that most of them are recorded, even if I record them regardless of how they have performed, the fact that they know every piece of work is recorded makes them to put more effort and take each exercise seriously because it contributes to their final marks. I think this strategy helps me because you find that some kids deliberately absent themselves when they know we are writing a test, so those who have that tendency of not being serious would make up their minds when they discover that every piece of work written counts and they will make up their minds before it really begins to affect them. Sometimes I give take-home tests, which they are required to do at home.*

125.I: So, in other words they can't predict you?

126.A: *Yeah they must not be able to predict my actions, which exercises I am going to consider and which ones I will not, they definitely know that I mark everything and that even if I do not mark I tell them that we will begin with it the following term, that they should keep the work safe because when we find time, we do it together as class.*

127.I: Is there any prior knowledge and understanding of the SGCSE syllabus?

128. A: *You mean the teachers knowledge of the syllabus; they must explain the scope of the papers when they get to class. They must know that the four basic skills are a priority everyday in class; everyone must be able to talk, read and write.*
129. I: Yeah it's that, what aspects in the local setting that you can point out to say this helps in the teaching/learning of English?
130. A: *Oh! It's when all the teachers are strangers....they cannot speak SiSwati so that no kids will talk to them in SiSwati because they simply don't understand it.*
131. I: Do you have a language laboratory?
132. A: *Yes, we do have a language lab where we have a TV, DVD's, we have the listening equipment and machinery, we have everything and also we have a library which opens daily for learners; and now that the library is open all teachers are encouraged to stress the importance of using the library to the kids for research purposes. As for me, I normally use my collection of literature books but the other teachers must use the library. During my revision classes, if I decided to have one, I sometimes ask the kids to go to the library and read and then compile a report about what they have read. I have taught them how to write the report. It's the duty of every teacher to schedule what the kids will do at the library.*
133. I: Well... I think we have come to the end of our discussion, is there anything you would like to add concerning the curriculum?
134. A: *I think we have touched on all the important things, there are some crucial things that I perhaps might have forgotten, but I think we have touched on most aspects during the course of the interview.*
135. I: Thank you so much for your time; it's been a pleasure talking to you.

### **Head of Department B**

1. I: Did you teach O-Level?
2. B: *Yeah, I was there but as a student, but I taught O-level one or two years.*
3. I: How do the two curricula differ? I mean SGCSE and O-Level?
4. B: *I would say maybe the approach is different; content-wise they do not differ much. With O-Level it was more about the teachers telling the students of what should happen but this one is more learner-centred, learners discover things on their own with the teacher only there to guide them.*
5. I: Which one do you think is easier for the teachers amongst the two?

6. B: *I think O-Level was a bit easier for the teacher because the work was not that much, but I recommend this curriculum, it gets learners more involved even though it means more work for the teachers. O-Level is for those teachers who cannot mark every now and then.*
7. I: In other words, do you mean there is too much marking here?
8. B: *Yeah, you have to mark here, the way it is taught you have to give learners work, asses them to ensure that there is progress so that you can move ahead.*
9. I: As a Head of Department do you try to motivate your staff?
10. B: *The problem is that our departments are not fully-fledged and that makes us acting HoD's not being able to execute our duties, for instance when asking for official books, the teachers might ask you, "Who are you to ask for official books." The problem is with posts so you will have a limit due to this, you find yourself doing the not important duties.*
11. I: But then do you encourage them, as a member of the administration, to attend workshops?
12. B: *Yes, we do emphasise the importance of attending workshops, they attend internal workshops and we make sure we do not lose them, we share the information with each other and we work as a team.*
13. I: Do you call somebody to facilitate those workshops?
14. B: *Sometimes we do, but often you find that someone amongst ourselves has been chosen to do a descriptive composition etc, it doesn't mean that the person will be telling us but he leads the discussion and we all make an input, especially those who are well versed in the subject in discussion. We also call our resource persons to come and help us, for instance, we recently invited someone to come and help us with literature and our inspector of English in Nhlangano is always there for us, we sometimes call for a meeting with him and it makes a difference because we might be together and lack knowledge and you tend to share information that is not up to date.*
15. I: The resources you are using, which ones are you using, do you have a specific text- to say we have this for form 1,2,3 up to 5.
16. B: *Yes, there are texts were are using, for instance in form 1 we have English for life but we do not stick to one text because you find that there are important things that are not there in that text, so we end up using other texts to complement the prescribed texts which students have. You find that there are a lot of photocopied handouts which you have to carry to class.*

17. I: From those texts that come in the form of handouts, what effort do you make to adapt them to the local setting e.g. understand and communicate because the localisation policy emphasises local?
18. B: *It becomes a problem, but we try, for instance we teach according to the themes, themes like sports, technology etc. So, you find that from those foreign texts, we only pick what is related to the particular theme, I hope I'm understood.*
19. I: I understand you to say that you incorporate these texts when they are needed. What do you understand about the Communications Language Teaching Approach?
20. B: *By CLT, I understand that at O-Level for instance, the teacher would enter the class and teach the learners about verbs but the CLT approach says let the learners use verbs in speaking, help the learners communicate in the Language and then if you identify lacks then teach them. We don't teach the structure in isolation.*
21. I: Talking about the fact that you are teaching them so that they will be able to use language, now do you give them the course outline, syllabus etc?
22. B: *No we don't, we find ourselves very busy and we forget that we have to make them aware. We interpret the assessment, objectives and papers but we don't give them anything in the form a paper. That is one shortcoming we that we have, we do interpret the assessment and objectives according to the language skills.*
23. I: What aspects of the local setting are helpful in the teaching or learning or make teaching or learning difficult?
24. B: *This is a rural school, if you can look at the syllabus, over the years I've been teaching it, children who come from homes where there is TV, for instance, do better than children from homes where there is no TV. We have a very few number of students who come from homes that have TV, so listening passages, when responded to by learners, it becomes easy to tell that the learner is used to listening but with the others it becomes difficult. When you play the tape for them to listen and respond and the same time you find that sometimes they haven't written anything at all until time us up. So, the environment is working against us, it is difficult to even find a newspaper here. There are very few TV's here and it shows in the learners' performance in English because those with TV perform quite well. For instance, those learners who reside in the teacher's quarters do well in listening, reading and writing and other exercises as well.*
25. I: Well earlier on we talked about books; which one are they using?

26. B: *New language for life and Enjoy English old and new. In form 4, we have English as a Second Language by Lucantoni and International English, then we also have resource books sometimes from magazines as long as you find it resourceful at that time.*
27. I: Do you have a book rental system?
28. B: *Yes, we do have a book loan scheme but sometimes we carry the books with us to class.*
29. I: Is it easy to maintain a good flow of the books in the rental system, as an HoD?
30. B: *It's not easy because you find that there are not enough books, the teachers have to carry the books with them during that English period. This makes it difficult to give learners homework because they don't own the books, e.g. in form 1, we have very big numbers and they don't even keep the books because after the period they have to take them back. So it is also difficult to note who has ruined a book because the advantage of the rental system ensures that the damage is liable to the student, who will be expected to pay for it when it has been damaged. In the system of lending the books to learners during English time only, one disadvantage is that it's difficult to identify the culprit, and it becomes the expense of the school to replace the book.*
31. I: Now you said that being rural is disadvantaging the school, what about other things, do you have libraries, laboratories etc?
32. B: *Yes, we do have an English laboratory but still the environment is our main down player. What I have noticed is that internet is very necessary for this syllabus, but we don't have it here, we don't have even a line, maybe we would have tried using dongles. But even the computers have arrived two years ago before then the learners had no access to computers.*
33. I: How would internet help in this syllabus?
34. B: *Problem here is with the resources, let's say you are teaching about descriptive writing, we were told that the learners must see a text that has descriptive language e.g. describing a beautiful person, the child should see a text where a beautiful person has been described. We don't have the books and at times we don't have those kinds of resources. At times I would use my own phone to download some of these texts, type them and photocopy them for learners so that they can see the descriptive language in use, so internet has all that to complement the shallowness of some of the text books. You have to find it yourself as a teacher, sometimes they are given compositions like i.e. to describe a busy shopping mall. They have never seen a mall*

*and have never been to one so it is disadvantageous, on the other hand there might be a picture of such or a description which might help them.*

35. I: How have you benefited from the in-service workshops which inspectors normally call?

36. B: *We have benefited a lot, they open our minds because this syllabus – when it came – we were scared and we were reluctant to accept change easily, so these workshops help us identify our strengths and weaknesses in our teaching. I find them very useful because even though the syllabus has been in place for quite sometime now, when you come from these workshops you come up with something new every time.*

37. I: What testing/assessment methods are you using here? Do you maybe divide the lesson give them projects, brainstorming, group work, etc, and then after the lesson then test them by giving them homework or classwork?

38. B: *During the lesson we do class assessment, group work and we do give them classwork everyday to test their understanding. At the end of a unit we give them monthly tests because the administration requires them, even if there is a test you have already given, for instance, let's say you have given them a narrative composition test, and now by the month-end you still haven't finished teaching, then the descriptive composition, then we try to test them on what they have done already. But monthly tests are there.*

39. I: Do you give other tests apart from monthly tests or you just wait up until the end of the month so that you can give monthly tests?

40. B: *No, usually when the month end finds that we are in the middle of a unit and we are not ready to give a test because the unit has not been completed, but we do give tests even before that, the scheme book has many tests. Schools like ours are not like those in towns, we struggle so much because our pupils are short in vocabulary. I am aware that it is the teachers' duty to try but the culture of reading is lacking amongst our pupils. Even knowing things, for example in the compositions you find that there are things which can only be seen in town, you have to explain it to the learners and this makes our work extremely difficult.*

41. I: Thank you so much for your time.

## Head of Department C

1. I: HoD C, can you briefly tell me about your experience of teaching SGCSE, how does it differ from teaching O-Level?
2. C: *I find it an exciting and interesting curriculum, more especially because it involves all the language skills whereas in O-level we only focused on reading and writing, but now it means that the kids are exposed to what is expected in the world. The expectations of the workplace so here the language or the way we teach language is what the learner is going to do once they leave school, presentations at the University, at the job market because you have to write down things, record things and at times you are expected to read, after reading you are expected to make a presentation. So, I feel that the current syllabus is the most appropriate one and it came at the right time with advances in technology. We really needed a new turn in our previous syllabus.*

*When we were teaching O-level, it was easy to drill the students, you will teach them and make them aware such that even if they were not able to speak the language, they got credits in the final marks. And when they got to the University, some of them maybe were not able to go through since at University it's a different level from high school, there they are expected to talk, to make presentations and so on and so forth. So many students were able to obtain credits at that time because it was easier for them and there were so many topics especially in the composition section which was paper 1, you find that there were many questions and it was easier to pass because the choice was wide unlike in the current curriculum where there is a limited number of combinations and there are these expectations of situational compositions which are a problem to our kids, at that time there was only one situational so it was easy to guide them through so that they were able to pass.*

3. I: Are you actually saying it's no longer easy to teach due to this syllabus?
4. C: *I like this syllabus (SGCSE). I feel like it's even easier than the previous, but it's very demanding to the kids and they don't seem to grasp what is expected of them, they are not able to use all the skills as required in a language learner. The previous syllabus, as I have mentioned, focused only on reading and writing yet this one also wants the kids to listen and to speak. Our kids are not good listeners. In our situation, we are in a – what can I call it – and underprivileged community where the kids do not hear anything in English, they do not have radios, they do not have TV's, they do*

*not have anything to listen to in English, so the only time when they listen is at school.*

5. I: Aren't there any newspapers around?
6. C: *In my school there is a library, and in the library we have books and we also get a copy of a newspaper everyday so they get access to the newspaper but we have about 600 learners with only 3 copies .Can you imagine, is it easy for them to access it ? No, but at least, in some cases there is no library, there is no newspaper. In our school, at least something has been done in relation to the new syllabus because in this syllabus the kids need to know the things, they should be exposed and you cannot just drill them and channel them to a certain story but the exposure is very important, so I think giving them access to these newspapers and these magazines is helpful. But still, there is a challenge, they don't want to speak the language and when it comes to orals, they shake and shiver and sweat and at the end of the day, the final result, especially on the listening aspect and the speaking, is badly done.*
7. I: So what are some of the strategies you have tried to put in place in order to make sure that they speak the language?
8. C: *We do have an English committee in the school and it encourages the students to speak the language but seemingly there is also the propaganda from government, I don't know whether I'll call it propaganda or what, but there is the idea from the ministry that the children should not be forced to speak the language, they feel that SiSwati is also official, so both of them should be given equal importance. And it is to the detriment of these kids because you know kids; they normally take the wrong path.*
9. I: I wonder, has government written something down to say that English is the medium of instruction?
10. C: *I am not sure, but even if I am not sure of that, I feel there should be something in policy form even though I have not seen it. There is one 3 which says the medium of instruction in the country is English and it is only SiSwati that should be taught in SiSwati. And to make matters worse, there is this idea that if you fail English you cannot be admitted to colleges and also in the scholarship policy even if you are admitted in the college, if you did not get a credit in English they don't offer you a bursary. So, I think it is there, even if not in black and white so it's the propaganda that the government is pushing, on one side she is saying something else on the other side she is practicing something else. She doesn't practise what she preaches.*

11. I: What are some of the materials that are there in place apart from the newspapers and other library material? Do you have other teaching material which is prescribed?
12. *Yes, we are fortunate. Our principal makes sure that we get everything, in fact it's because English is a problem in the school. At times, we are so flooded with literature material, everywhere he goes, if they say this is good for English, he makes sure he brings it back, even if I go to him and tell him about a particular book that I am interested in, he makes sure that you get it, because he is making every effort to help us improve the results, thus he feels that if we need something we should get it because if we don't maybe it's one thing that is stopping us from obtaining good results.*
13. I: Well, I was asking about the prescribed texts, do you have let us say a textbook to say, for instance we will use this one for form 1?
14. *C: For this syllabus it is difficult to do that, the teachers are resourceful and they are creative so they use anything. They bring to class anything for the kids. Like I have already mentioned, this kids do not have access to many of the things which students in urban schools have so it becomes the teacher who brings everything. We have so many books, so they use the newspapers and the books; it's a matter of picking up relevant ones, not saying that this is the prescribed one.*
15. I: Is it not too much work on your part, getting all these material?
16. *C: It is too much work in the part of the teachers but we have decided as a department that we would not get one specific book, so the strategy is that we asked for copies from the different books that we wanted so the teacher can access the books.*
17. I: So can the teacher take the books to class?
18. *C: Yes, if there is something in the book that you need, let us say in Language for life, you can take the copies with you to class and the students are able to use it. So, we do have a number of these books, at the moment we have three different books and we are still scouting for more because we do not want the principal to buy something that we will not use. So, we make sure that we get the teachers' copies first and all the teachers check, and if they are interested in the book, we order it .*
19. I: I understand. So do you have the book rental system?
20. *C: We do have a rental system.*
21. I: So, these books which come in 50's are just other books which are not for the learners to rent?

22. C: *We used the rental system because we felt that the syllabus needs you to be resourceful, so we have three streams per class, so we ended up with 15 different books. Yes, that is what we asked from the head teacher, we felt that we will be depriving our learners if we ordered one 50 for form 1, same copy and then another 50 for form 2, same copy, but if we have these different 50's we are going to have 15 different books for language, that is what we decided as a department.*
23. I: So you can take one set of 50 to class today, another set the next day?
24. C: *Yes, depending on what you want from that book, so that is what we decided.*
25. I: Now as a Head of Department, what sort of motivation do you have for your teachers?
26. C: *It's difficult due to the large numbers, it's just encouraging them and showing you gratitude and helping them whenever they need assistance anytime. If there is this teacher who has indicated that she/he has a problem, I don't just leave him/her like that, even if I have to go to class. What I do is to try and help him/her before I go to class. I ensure that they don't feel neglected, and when they have done something good you have to acknowledge it.*
27. I: That's quite positive, now are there any aspects you can point out in your local setting that help the teachers of English in their teaching, for instance, do you have a language laboratory?
28. C: *It's still work in progress, we are in the process of fitting in the necessary equipment because the room has been identified and burglar proofing has been done. Now we are buying the equipment.*
29. I: But do you have the equipment for conducting oral exams?
30. C: Yes, we do have the equipment, we have radios which we take to class, we have everything, our principal is good, and he is very supportive to our department.
31. I: Well, I understand, have you benefited from the in-service workshops which are normally called?
32. C: *They are very useful, they are helpful more especially when you are new and you don't know what to do and where to start, they provide a good guideline so it's important that the teachers attend those workshops. In fact, I make sure that in my department, each time there is a workshop I want all of us to attend. So, unless they have specified numbers, if not, all eight members of the department have to attend. I don't want anyone to be left out, not unless there is a valid reason that will deter*

*anyone from attending, so they always attend and we come back and help each other because we have strengths and weaknesses.*

33. I: So, are you saying you also hold internal workshops?

34. C: *We do, we work together and plan for our school as a department and scheme for form 1,2,3 together even if one does not teach that class but everyone he or she has to be part of the scheming exercise so that everyone would be aware of what is expected in that particular class. We should all know what must be done at this class by this particular time. Even the books, we order them together and sometimes there are books I find about and ask the head teacher to buy but most of the time the books are those that we decide as a department. So these that I bring in are those that are suggested by the teachers to be resource materials.*

35. I: Can you please explain your understanding of Communicative Language teaching, what does it mean to you as an English teacher?

36. C: *I believe it's something like English for specific purposes. I think it's that – that for a particular purpose I will use this sort of English. So, I am learning because I want to use this English somewhere in my life. Not just learning the structure just to know, for instance, a verb – using a verb to communicate a message across that is why even the answers are not just answers, there must be questions before there are answers but they should be conveying a message. The main idea is to convey a message in a certain situation.*

37. I: I do understand. Now let us say out of all fifteen sets of books you have just talked about there is one which is not from the Swazi context but which is international, let me give an example of Understand and Communicate, how do you ensure that such a textbook is adapted to the local context, I mean, we talking localisation now.

38. C: *We would use that book but most of the time you find that it's there for helping learners in understanding the structures. Most of the time we are using these newspapers and magazines, things which the kids can relate to, so these books that we are ordering in bulk are those books that have music, travel, education, sports and so on, those things which are the in things this days at their age. Even though I am older and no longer interested in music, I make sure that I stay up to date with what music they like, so that when we start talking about music I can relate to the things they know or to their level. At times I even say to them, “educate me, you know I am old so I don't understand your language,” so they will tell me, at times I even use their language so that they will feel like I have become their friend and I understand their*

*language. They become excited that even though I am old I understand their language so I want to know what they want and what they think. In most cases I make them raise topics of their own for the composition, we discuss the types of compositions and then I ask for topics they would like to write about on that type of composition. So they give me the topics and then I tell them to choose one from these, those they have come up with themselves. I can include some of mine, but most of the times I want them to give me the topics. I give them one as a guide and they come up with different exciting topics. I say choose one and write something about this topic.*

39. I: That's quite interesting; they formulate the syllabus themselves, what is being emphasised on?

40. C: *They feel like they own it and they write interesting compositions that way because it's something they can relate to. In that way you are putting them into a corner.*

41. I: Now, talking about making them formulate them some of their exercises or whatever class work you give to them, now, do you make them aware of the intended outcome of the course?

42. C: *Yes, I do make them aware; I do draw a course outline and the expectations of the exam, so I discuss each of the papers with them before we start learning. I tell them there is paper 1 with so many exercises and this is what happens in paper 1 and so on. So before we start learning, in fact even when we are learning I ask them which paper this is, exercise what, so to make them familiar with the exam.*

43. I: I think that's helpful.

44. C: *But I do have a lot of challenges. I don't know maybe it's because we are in the rural areas. Even if you ask them what is the problem they just tell you that you have taught them and guided them well, giving them enough practice but they don't know what is wrong. I think the problem is that they fail to understand a particular text, so what we have done in our school is that for every class, we don't have a library period but we decided as a department that each teacher should ensure that his/her students are reading something from the periods we have, take one of them because going to the library is going to help them in all four language skills. So we take one of the periods, go to the library and maybe once a month they write a report about what they have read. There is a form which we normally give to them and they are expected to fill it. It asks them about that particular book and there is another idea that I have picked from one of the teachers, he says before he begins to teach, he randomly picks one student and asks him/her to tell the class briefly about what she/he has read and*

*the teacher records down, like an oral assessment giving points for structure, language, etc, and this exercise is done to the rest of the class. I also adopted this strategy and I always tell my pupils to be ready because I am going to pick anyone and the grades will be recorded down and become a monthly test which will show up in the reports. This helps make the students up to date about their work.*

45. I: Ok, that's quite a strategy, so talking about assessment, actually you have already said that you give them monthly tests, is it the only type of assessment you give them?

46. C: *It's not really about monthly tests because the monthly tests means that we need a score as a school every month and it doesn't necessarily mean it is the only thing they write, they write a lot. Our inspector requires that we hand in a report as HoD's every term. I was counting the pieces of work that they have done and it is over thirty, combining all the work which assesses all the four skills.*

47. I: That's quite interesting, I suppose we are through, is there anything you would like to add concerning the syllabus?

48. C: *I don't know what could be done especially with the rural schools, I wonder why they are compared with the urban schools because we don't begin in the same footing, these schools in the rural areas are way behind but then the expectations of the exam are the same. We are deprived even though we are fortunate in my school, there is one school in our cluster last year who I heard have not exposed their children to oral and listening exercises because they don't have electricity, with the oral exam I understand, maybe it's like you are expected to roll or something when you are talking. How do they fail when they have said something? It's challenging for the teachers, what can you teach a child at form 1, can you change their accent? It difficult, the accent is mastered at primary level, so what can you expect from us? It's really hurting to work for so many years but you cannot count the credits of the children who have gone through your hands. When you see them even today they say you were a good teacher but you can't be satisfied because there are no results. I wonder what they can do about that if there was something that can be done because at IGCSE program our kids were not failing speaking but now with SGCSE they do.*

49. I: By the way, what form of English was IGCSE?

50. C: *It was English as a second language extended; even now it's a second language.*

51. I: By the way, with IGCSE where were the oral examinations marked?

52. C: *I don't know, but at least they passed, even the guidelines of marking, it means there is something wrong with the guidelines because...*

53. I: Are they similar to IGCSE's?
54. C: *They are the same, the problem is that you mark the oral and the kids has said something and the guidelines say that you don't give a zero because they have said something, and then when you come back there are no results and to make matters worse, there are no comments, they didn't add and didn't minus anything – what is the explanation then, we no longer know what we should do to help the kids in speaking, we don't know really.*
55. I: My understanding is that maybe it is being in a rural school.
56. C: *That's what I'm saying, it's not fair. It's not fair, kids attend English medium pre-schools; here our kids didn't even attend pre-school.*
57. I: Oh...they didn't?
58. C: *Yeah, it's killing the English teachers really; it's destroying them such that they no longer have the self-esteem. For all the work that they do, you will find them with loads of marking – piles and piles of work – they are always busy, they are looking for resources from newspapers and magazines, they are creating things, but they are not rewarded.*
59. I: Thank you so much for the conversation, it was quite interesting.

### **Head of Department D**

1. I: Tell me briefly about your experience of teaching SGCSE, how does it differ from teaching O-Level?
2. D: *The O-level syllabus was a bit easier to teach because it did not include all the skills of language. It was reading and writing only, so the time was enough for teaching and the kids did not find themselves being forced to speak in English because there was no component which required them to speak.*
3. I: Now that it is SGCSE, there is a component where they are expected to speak. Is it better than before?
4. D: *Yeah, it is better now, they know that they have to speak English and they end up understanding that English is practical or rather that any other language is practical you don't just read and write only.*
5. I: Are you actually saying that the kids do speak the language or they just wait to get into the exam room and that's where they speak, do they speak English around the school premises?

6. D: *Yeah, they have since realised that there is a need to speak the language, they try...well not all of them – some don't even try, those who don't try only realise the necessity during the examination day.*
7. I: Do you have strategies in place to enforce the speaking of English around the school?
8. D: *Yeah, normally we have incentives in place which we give to those kids who are willing to speak the language.*
9. I: Like what?
10. D: Like pens and pencils, etc.
11. I: Oh! Ok. So they are good incentives, so concerning textbooks, which ones are you using now, are you still relying on those texts that you used under O-level?
12. D: *We use those for reference purposes. There are those books which are in line with the current syllabus, those books which incorporate all the skills, we use those but we have not thrown away the older ones because they are still useful, there is a lot of information that we still get from them.*
13. I: How useful are they, for instance, because you are saying you have these ones that are in line with the current syllabus because they incorporate all the four language skills. The other ones which you normally used in O-level, how useful are they?
14. D: *They are, more especially when it comes to paper 1 and 2 they are useful because in paper 1 there is reading and writing...it's just reading comprehension and in paper 2 there are letters and composition which the old books focused mostly on.*
15. I: So you actually used those books for those purposes. And now, the teachers in your department, how do you keep them going, do you have some sort of motivation for them?
16. D: Yeah, as a head of department, I am willing that something like that could happen, but you need support from the administration, which doesn't come very easily.
17. I: Have you asked for it?
18. D: Oh! More than once-we ask for it but nothing comes out.
19. I: Oh! Ok- but then you do realise that other schools do motivate their teachers-maybe take them to faraway places for motivation visits, workshops outside the school and even outside the country?
20. D: *Yeah, I am aware of that but then I wouldn't blame the administration because most of the schools that do that do well and are those that teach even on Saturdays,*

*you see, even on holidays you see that is not done in my school, the teachers are not willing.*

21. I: Is the administration willing, is it mentioning the fact that you have to teach on Saturdays and holidays?
22. D: *The admin does mention that, but it always says it cannot force anyone to do that and when the results come out, nothing good comes out.*
23. I: What aspects of the school are there that you can point out as helpful in the teaching/learning of English, or what aspects downplay the teaching and learning of the language?
24. D: *I can say that it's the books – the books are not easy to get and it's not easy to have enough copies for the students.*
25. I: Do you have a book loan system?
26. D: *Yeah, we do have it.*
27. I: So, if the textbooks are not enough, what happens?
28. D: *The head teacher has a soft spot for other departments, he is interested in Math and Science textbooks, for those departments books come quickly and when we order ours he drags his feet.*
29. I: Then in the end what do you do, here are students in class, maybe they are fifty of so of them and in the book loan system you have twenty books, and how do you handle that situation?
30. D: *You end up photocopying those that you need to use.*
31. I: Oh! You end up not having the books because they are not enough –Oh- that's very challenging.
32. D: *There is this book they are using now, Enjoy English which requires that the learners writes in it, we don't have that book yet the learners should have a copy of that book so that they could practise on their own at home. But we only have teachers' copies only and we end up photocopying them.*
33. I: But isn't it expensive making the copies rather than buying the textbooks?
34. D: *We have never considered that because the admin puts a lot of effort in buying paper and toner, maybe they get discounts there.*
35. I: Oh! Ok I understand, now concerning the local environment, how is the environment? Are there any newspapers around, do learners speak English at home?
36. D: *There is electricity now in the area so I hope there are TV's in most of the homesteads but it's a thought, I am not sure.*

37. I: But I think you can tell by the performance of the learners when you give them work, maybe a composition on a shopping Mall, they should show in their writing that they have seen it.
38. D: *My observation is that the students from underprivileged settings are not observant, if they are, they lack expression. When you start discussing the topic with them, they can't express themselves well. You have to start by discussing the vocabulary of that topic, and then he/she will be able to express him/herself.*
39. I: Oh yeah I see, if English is not practised in speaking, how can the learners express themselves in it?
40. D: *When they watch TV's you find others watching the action; they are not interested in what is being said in the presentation. When he or she watches what he's watching you will see him/her laughing otherwise he doesn't understand. When you say something funny, they won't smile or laugh up until you say it in the mother tongue, otherwise you will laugh alone and they will be surprised.*
41. I: Do you actually take them for trips?
42. D: Yeah this time around there is a trip to the cultural village.
43. I: Is there any special trip for English?
44. D: *Oh! You find that the trip is for SiSwati but it will also help in the other areas, so we end up taking them to those particular places otherwise the trip is normally a SiSwati trip.*
45. I: So they go to other places to do what? Is there anything related to English specifically?
46. D: Aw! *There is none.*
47. I: You can't even take them to River stone to the escalators?
48. D: Aw! *There is none that is specifically English.*
49. I: Well, concerning the strategies for enhancing English speaking, someone has told me that the admin has decided that all new teachers be introduced as foreigners in the school, as non-Swazis so that the learners will converse with them in English, eventually the teachers known as Swazis would be phased out so that English will be spoken throughout the school.
50. D: *Ok, it can work for other schools but with our school you find that as a teacher you are determined to speak English but the learners do not follow and you end up coming back to SiSwati. So, I don't think it can work for us.*
51. I: Ok, do you receive support from the other departments?

52. D: *We are supposed to be receiving support from the other departments but it is not well- done. In our school we have monitors who monitor the speaking of English but when the monitor writes them down you find that the learners have excuses, they normally say, "...but teacher so and so was talking to me in SiSwati, in class teacher so and so teaches in SiSwati," etc. In staff meetings they normally say let's support the English department, that there shouldn't be a teacher who teaches in SiSwati but it does not happen.*
53. I: Ok, concerning class, nowadays we are supposed to teach communicatively, what do you understand about CLT?
54. D: *I think it has to do with giving students exercises where they will be compelled to speak the language; it's like using discussions as a teaching method so that they can communicate amongst themselves.*
55. I: Now, the assessment or testing strategies which you have in your school, are they different from what you normally had during O-level?
56. D: *Yeah, there is a difference, though it's a slight one.*
57. I: Which ones are you using now?
58. D: *Now there is listening.*
59. I: But even with O-level listening was there.
60. D: *It was there but it ended in Junior Certificate (JC), it did not go up to O-level.*
61. I: How do you actually test the end of a lesson, is it similar to O-level, i.e. to test the objectives of the lesson?
62. D: *It depends on the lesson.*
63. I: Let us say you were teaching reading and writing, are the testing methods similar to O-levels'?
64. D: *No, because there is skimming, scanning – where you find that the answers are on the surface. In those exercises, there is lack of discrimination.*
65. I: What did O-level test, comprehension?
66. I: Yeah it tested comprehension; you also find vocabulary lessons, a complete vocabulary lesson, so it's different. Now learners – when we were at varsity – were given a course outline, a shortened version of the syllabus, now do you make the learners aware of the intended outcomes? Or of the syllabus which they should follow?

67. *We explain the contents of the English papers, this is what they should be able to do when they came to the examination and then we try to make our teaching to be in line with that.*
68. I: Eh... earlier on you mentioned that the textbooks that you have now are in line with the syllabus, are they really in line? Does everything fit? Amongst the books, which one would you say if I use this I'll never miss the syllabus?
69. D: *Well the Enjoy English, though I cannot say it's absolutely perfect, but there are other books which are good, for instance, the one by Peter Lucantoni is almost perfect.*
70. I: For which levels?
71. D: *For all levels.*
72. I: Concerning workshops, do teachers attend?
73. Yes, they do.
74. I: Do they say they benefit?
75. D: *Oh! You see that one is difficult, because when we return from the workshops you see everyone beaming with confidence as if there is something new they are going to do at work, but when we begin working, it becomes very difficult, even when you ask them to practise what was mentioned in the workshops it becomes difficult.*
76. I: I wonder what the cause of that might be.
77. D: *Ah! Maybe when they reach the workshops they feel that teaching is easy, and when they have to practise, it they find that with the type of learners in front of them, it's very difficult.*
78. I: Talking about the type of learners, have you ever taught a class where you feel like this new syllabus is not working. You have to put it aside? For instance, just enter the class and just teach grammar.
79. D: *Absolutely, it does happen.*
80. I: What causes that, is it the syllabus or is it for the good of the students?
81. D: *I would say it depends on how you understand the syllabus.*
82. I: Because it signals a problem, it's either the learner is difficult, or the teacher's understanding of the syllabus is erratic, for instance, how do you adapt the material to suit those learners who have difficulty in grasping things.
83. D: *Yeah, it's that...*
84. I: Now, the syllabus comes in the form of a policy, they say this is what you do, even learners call teachers and explain to them what should happen, now the teachers want

- to teach, as an HoD who has heard the policy being interpreted by the inspectors, do you have a way of helping the teachers put the policy into practice?
85. D: *The problem which is common is that the teachers do have problems in teaching but they don't say, when you say, "how is it going," which is something I usually ask now and again, he will say everything is fine in class. It's difficult to help someone like that, the person should come out with the problem. In my school the teachers do not make an effort to ask, so everyone goes alone and you find that I don't have a way to monitor that.*
86. I: But do you realise that this new syllabus wants teachers to work as a team? Like how do you prepare your scheme of work?
87. D: *Oh! There is a model that we receive from the inspector.*
88. I: Do you work together in planning the schemes of work, for instance, do you plan the Form 1 scheme together, Form 2, 3 etc?
89. D: *Yeah we do that with the purpose of helping one another.*
90. I: How many streams do you have per class?
91. D: *Two from form 1 to form 4 then one form 5, the reason being that there are many failures in form 4.*
92. I: In scheming, are some teachers left behind due to the nature of their students?
93. D: *You then check the scores of his/her students that that if he takes both streams them are not going to perform up to standard.*
94. I: How is your streaming strategy?
95. D: *You find that when someone takes form one he takes them both, you only find them sharing only if there is a problem in allocation. For instance, when you find that the teaching load will be too much for the teacher if he takes both streams, otherwise all streams are for one teacher per form.*
96. I: Is it a good strategy, I mean if A fails, B will also fail...
97. D: *Hey it's not, but the admin believes in exposing the teachers' abilities, you see.*
98. I: So, they want to see your performance at the expense of the kids because you see the performance of the teacher at the end of the year when the learners have either passed or failed, yet normally it's good to rotate teachers like for instance, one teacher teaches form 1a and form 3a as this prevents a case where all learners in a grade fail and if they pass it wont be one grade. Now, the localisation what do you understand it to be looking for, hope you have heard about it, i.e. that SGCSE is a localised version of IGCSE, and what does this localisation policy want?

99. D: *I think they want us Swazis to be able to do things on our own so that we do not rely on England like we did in O-level times and to cut down the expenses because taking the exams to Cambridge was an expense. It becomes cheaper when we do it on our own.*
100. I: I understand, but is it really cheaper for instance, for your school, how is it? Now how much money are students paying, how many exercise books do you need for English?
101. D: *Two at most, because listening and reading and writing do not need an exercise book, it's for paper 2 and tests only.*
102. I: Paper 1 doesn't need an exercise book? Or is it because you photocopy for them?
103. D: *Yeah and they answer there.*
104. I: What about the other materials that you incorporate to teach grammar, don't they need an exercise book?
105. D: *They do.*
106. I: So how many exercise books?
107. D: *They are many.*
108. I: And how do you teach listening, or maybe you use the one for grammar. And you need a test book, a vocabulary book, so would you still say it's cheaper?
109. D: *From that perspective I would say it's expensive.*
110. I: Yeah during O-level there were two exercise books, one for language and the other one for test but nowadays you can't combine reading and writing with compositions. So, the demands are great for the teaching of English. Still on that point, do you have a language lab?
111. D: *There is none, we are still developing.*
112. I: So where do you hold your oral exams?
113. D: *In their classroom, where they write all the exams, yeah because each exam has got it's date and time.*
114. I: So, you don't even train them in the library, by the way do you have a library?
115. D: There is a minor library which is a white elephant, there are those donated books only and they are not useful.
116. I: So, there is no period to say learners should go to the library.
117. D: *There is none.*
118. I: Now literature, how do you do it, is it done by one teacher in both streams?

- 119.D: *You find that there is a language teacher and a literature teacher. You find that the form 1 language teacher has literature in form 2 maybe.*
- 120.I: Oh Ok, why don't you make him/her teach language and literature in one class? So that the teacher can point out the language foundation in the literature for them to use in compositions?
- 121.I: They normally complain that if doing completing classes like form 5, he will be completing two subjects and he won't be able to do it properly.
- 122.D: Do you have literature at high school?
- 123.D: *No, not yet.*
- 124.I: If we are not teaching literature at high school, aren't we teaching kids who will not teach our subjects? Do you realise that new policy dictates they should have done literature in order for them to enrol to be teachers of English?
- 125.D: *The problem is the books, they are too expensive for us to afford.*
- 126.I: Ah! Thank you so much HoD, it was interesting talking to you.
- 127.D: *Thank you.*

### **Head of Department E**

1. I: HoD E, can you briefly tell me about your experience of teaching SGCSE. I am aware that you have been a student under O-level. How do you think the two curriculums differ?
2. E: *Mmmmh ok there is a lot that differs in the two curriculums because under O-level we had only –if I remember very well, there were only two papers if I am correct and if I remember well there was just paper 1 which was the composition and then paper 2 which was composition writing but as for now SGCSE is quite different because it tests four skills and the syllabus is changed probably from something that you recall to something that is practical and our students need to be exposed more rather than to be told what to do or memorize what they have to remember. It's just only about skills, you know what I have discovered is that it's something you have to learn, you cannot wake up one day and say, "I am able to speak the language," because there is a speaking examination, you cannot be able to listen if you have never heard someone speaking the language, if you haven't exposed yourself to listening, so there is a lot that is challenging with this one.*

3. I: Ok- you are saying it's challenging –is it actually beneficial on the part of the student?
4. E: *I think the students benefit a lot because when we were doing O-level you found that a student passed the exam but lacked confidence, could not be able to articulate his/her own ideas. Say he goes to varsity, he is unable to do well in research and projects, but as for now the students gain a lot of confidence in a lot of areas, in terms of what the outside world requires. Mmmmh... they can be able to listen to a white man even in the jobs that they get, so it does help them, though it has a lot of work for us.*
5. I: Just tell me about the lot of work. What is it that you have to do as an English teacher?
6. E: *Ok as an English teacher you need to infuse all these four skills, probably in the lessons that you carry out in class, you cannot just go to class and expect that the learners will probably do the reading, won't probably have to listen or speak what you have talked about. And another thing you have to prepare the students in all components, you prepare them in speaking, reading and listening. So, I think it's a lot of work especially for schools in rural areas where more often than not, they rarely listen to the news in English, and they don't have radios and TV's.*
7. I: So, the only place where they listen to something in English is at school?
8. E: *The only thing they can be able to –Ok they listen to things in English just at school only, but the other thing which is so much pathetic is that the culture is lacking, you find that most teachers who teach in rural schools, they are even lazy to use the language for the students to be inspired. They say that the students don't understand the language, what's the use of using it when teaching other subjects-you English teachers use the language; it is your duty to teach the students to speak English.*
9. I: But do you have strategies in place just to ensure that they speak English at the school?
10. E: *Yes we do have strategies, and teaching your subject or any other subject in English is one other strategy that we expect the teachers to do – that other teachers of other subjects should assist us. Ahh! we have other rules, such as using English as a medium of instruction in the school so we at least expect them to converse in English when they get to school because we know that in their homes the language that they use very often is SiSwati. Then, the other thing, we try to hold debates so that they can be motivated in other cases where they may have spelling see competitions, having*

*writing competitions so that at least they are motivated to use the language. At the beginning of this year we also tried to have them present in the morning, anything that they think is valuable and is going to help their peers in the assembly...*

11. I: Just one learner?

12. E: *Yeah, one learner of course – we will ask him/her to go and prepare, consult and pass it by you, if you think its good then you give him/her the go ahead, so he makes a presentation. So it does help.*

13. I: How do you pick the learners? How do you select the one who is going to make a presentation?

14. E: *For now we are using the debates, we've begun with the debates. Last term some students went for a career guidance expositional something... so we are going to ask those who went there at U-Tech to career guidance to make presentations too; but at the moment we have asked the debates and some other form 5 students because we believe they should be well prepared for the exams.*

15. I: How do you maintain discipline- let us say some students do not try –do not even make an effort to speak in English, do you have strategies in place to say – we are going to punish them, we are going to reward those who speak the language?

16. E: *Mhmm... We don't have strategies, the most popular strategy is that of probably, beating the student –its popular but I've realised that you don't achieve a lot in beating the students because they get used to it and they never change. Mmm... so we have decided to reward those classes who speak the language, we are still going to implement it when we open because its something that we discussed at the end of last term, if we don't beat, we maybe give them manual work-some other times we ask them to write a composition and you find that they write horrible compositions-they don't give it any effort-or we give them words and they have to write the meanings of those words, as a motivation so today...*

17. I: Oh! Ok I do understand. Now, as HoD Do you have some motivational activities for the teachers in your department? How do you motivate them?

18. E: *It depends on the administration.*

19. I: Well, talking about the administration, what effort does it make to help you as an HoD, and I believe you've started everything. But then do they allow you to go to workshops?

20. E: *Yeah they do, they support us a lot in that regard, even when we want to take students out for debates, they do support us. Just next we will be probably joining a*

*national debate that will take place at Kwaluseni. So they do try, it's probably that you can never do something as satisfactory as the way we would want it to be done and they do talk about it at assembly, students make sure you converse in English for reason this and that. Mhmm...*

21. I: So do you gain anything there, in the workshops?
22. E: *Yeah we do quite a lot- I myself was new and struggling when it comes to scheming the work. But by attending the workshops, I think I have gained quite a lot, now I can confidently scheme for my classes. Yes, and even, you know being told or sharing certain things, hearing other people telling you how they have done it, how they have made their students pass is also helpful, you come back a changed person.*
23. Thank you so much HoD.

### **Head of Department F**

1. I: Morning. Can you tell me briefly about your experience of teaching SGCSE, how does it differ from teaching O-Level?
2. F: *Well, this syllabus (SGCSE) is a bit challenging. You know, the previous one you could simply go to class, take the book and teach, and I mean teach, without any preparation. With this one you have to be thoroughly prepared, otherwise you won't know what to teach.*
3. I: Preparation?
4. F: *Yeah now, you have to prepare. You have to find the material with which you are going to teach.*
5. I: What type of material because I've always known that learners have their own textbooks?
6. F: *Yeah, under normal circumstances they do have textbooks, but ours here is not a normal situation. For instance, with our senior classes, you have to sweat and research how you are going to work around teaching them the four language skills. Finding the passages is really hectic as you have to be very selective in doing so. Nowadays learners have to speak the language, they have since realised that there is a need to speak the language, not all of them are willing to speak and yet you have to find passages that will also enable them to speak, for instance find a passage with a picture and let the learner describe what is in the picture. It's really frustrating since they don't want and yet it's a full paper, they are not only doing it for fun.*
7. I: tell me more about your source of frustration.

8. F: *Hey, you don't want to know.... you see this new syllabus requires disciplinarians... we lack that very much as staff members. In our situation we have a poor promotion's policy and it really works negatively. We tend to sit around during year end and decide on how we will promote learners who deserve. But for the past ten years that I've worked here learners promote themselves.*
9. I: Can you clarify that?
10. F: *You see, this becomes a source of de-motivation because the learners tend to ask for promotions directly from the Head (principal), and at times even learners who have failed form 3 (external examination) do not want to repeat..*
11. I: Concerning textbooks, which ones are you using now, are you still relying on those texts that you used under O-level?
12. F: *We do use them but for reference purposes. There are lots of those books which are in line with the current syllabus, as they are designed in such a way that you would teach all the four language skills. The most unfortunate thing for us here is that, even though we do have the book rental system, it doesn't operate at high school. We don't even have some of the books ourselves. We just see them being advertised by Macmillan (a publishing company). You do make a requisition that they be bought, but always there is no money... so it's better not to ask because you know the answer.*
13. I: Well, you are saying there are relevant books, how useful are they, compared to the ones you used when teaching O-Level?
14. F: *I have browsed some of them, they are good. Sometimes we just photocopy some sections from our neighbouring schools. You see, for continuous writing exercises they are really good but it's a pity that our learners do not have them. They can't do well without them, plus this poor promotions policy of ours.*
15. I: It seems to me that you could do with some sort of motivation.
16. F: Ahem! That is only wishful thinking, as I've told you, financially we are crippled. Its probably even due to the way we admit. More than half the school, actually  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the students are paid for by government, under the OVC scheme. So you can only imagine what a disaster this is. Government has standardized the fees, which is not helpful as the fees that she pays are never enough to cover the expenses. Worse still, payment sometimes comes very late during the third term when debts have been made. This in turn frustrates us; we have to make things happen, make sure there is learning material, when in fact government is not trying.
17. I: But then, how is the environment here?

18. F: It is also a critical down player. You see, the kids here have a feeling that when they fail they will simply go to South Africa and maybe work in the mines I don't know. They are not willing to learn, not to mention the speaking of English. I don't know as to what their oral exams will be like.
19. I: Well, what do you understand Communicative Language teaching to be?
20. F: *you see with this syllabus when it was introduced it came with a host of changes and challenges therefore... (Long pause) they say we have to teach language in use instead of teaching it in isolation, but with the kids here it's difficult. You find yourself moving alone because they just don't have the language base. So if you want to have at least a few credits you put the communicative whatever aside and teach grammar.*
21. I: How does it compare, I mean teaching using the old style (O-Level) and teaching communicatively?
22. F: *The Regional Inspector does emphasise on teaching communicatively, for example using a paragraph to teach language in stead of teaching language in isolation. But over time it does not work... you find that it has not been helpful when the learners write their external examinations... they just can't compare with learners from urban areas who have grown up using the language. They are way below... it's like they are doing EFL (English as a Foreign Language). The largest de-motivator is the lack of textbooks... you find yourself being the only one carrying the textbook to class and giving the learners photocopied material which they lose the next hour. Yeah, we do emphasise on filing the papers but there is just no money to buy that so there is generally no filing...*
23. I: Mmmmh...
24. F: *To make an example, we tried, in fact we did this, and we made a booklet for past examination papers for them to buy so that we can use it anytime in class. I'm talking about Form 5 here. In my class I have forty- two students but only three have bought it. The others have no money, or so they say. I'm saying that because there are series of trips to watch the soccer and netball teams perform. The learners do pay for those trips. Some of them cost twice the booklet but they still do pay... and you are like, what is happening here? The very same students who couldn't afford a booklet that will help them can afford an entertainment trip which is twice the book. Funny. There is no culture and respect for education at all. Maybe they lack role models.*
25. I: So how do you go about using the booklet if only three managed to buy it?

26. F: *That is the major hindrance, it has become useless. You end up going to the photocopied material which wastes your time now because something was prepared for them to work on. It is really frustrating and difficult to work with such learners. I believe the parents do give them the money but they are unwilling to spend it on textbooks. Too bad. It's a total waste of limited resources trying to help these kids. And another thing, really the environment they are growing in is a major down player... you see here... (Long pause).*
27. I: yeah what happens?
28. F: *Most learners have come here for school purposes. It's not their normal place of residence. They come from all walks of life and get admitted here. If you come here even very late in the term you can still have a place... that's how our admin is. So the learners rent some space from the nearby homesteads and there are no parents there at all. No one can monitor them so they do as they please. It's very difficult to help them.*
29. I: Do you attend workshops as teachers?
30. F: *Yes we do, and they are very helpful...it's just that the circumstances which we work under are not positive for effective learning to occur.*
31. Oh, Ok. Thank you HoD.

### **Head of Department G**

1. I: Can you briefly explain your experience when you were teaching O-Level; is it any different from now that you are teaching SGCSE?
2. G: *Yes it is very different, in the sense that with O-Level the learner was given more information like spoon feeding but with the SGCSE more work has to be done by the learner, he or she has to some reading on his own.*
3. I: How do you feel now that the learner now is the one who is supposed to do a lot of reading on his own?
4. G: *I am really kind of relieved because you can give the reading assignment to the learner, in fact, he does more work.*
5. I: Talking about reading assignments, now do you have a book rental system? How do you assure their accessibility to reading material?

6. G: *Eh, they are not enough, in fact, there is no recommended text for the learners so the teacher has to scout for information and then give it to the learners, try to photocopy and then they will try and do that assignment, that reading assignment.*
7. I: OK, tell me about your time allocation. Where do you get all the time to do all that, researching, making copies, how often do you have to do that?
8. G: *It's giving me quite a difficult time because you have to be on your feet almost the whole day trying to organize information for the following day.*
9. I: Ok.
10. G: *So that area is getting tougher for the teacher.*
11. I: So in other words do you mean you thrived better under O-Level than you are doing now?
12. G: *Yes of course, because at least with O-Level there were those recommended textbooks, unlike now where the teacher has to look for past exam papers for the group and try to make ends meet.*
13. I: Ok, then, how do you manage without the book rental system, how do you ensure that whatever material is made available for the learners is relevant and appropriate for their needs, as the department head?
14. G: *Eh, I try to organize the material from other schools, and it's quite expensive because at times I have to drive there myself, using my own money. I organize those books and past papers and other relevant material that can help the students.*
15. I: Please clarify the role of the administration in ensuring accessibility to material sources.
16. G: *The administration is not quite supportive and not quite cooperative, you find that the head teacher has a lot to do and you ask for the material and the following day he's forgotten or he's saying there isn't enough money to purchase that material or to purchase that book.*
17. I: Does he give the reason for the lack of funds, because I assume that the students are paying, it's not free education?
18. G: *It is not free education, but most of the students are under the Orphaned and Vulnerable Children Fund (OVC), whose fees are paid for by government. So, he would complain that the government has not yet paid. So you find that almost by the end of the year the government has not yet paid, so you find yourself having a difficult time because there's no money, there's no material. It's quite challenging.*

19. I: Now as an HoD, I assume that whatever material that you go out to look for is material that has been agreed upon by all the teachers in your department, material that you and your team members have deemed appropriate. Are there any measures you undertake to ensure that the material which you go out to look for is that which have been agreed upon by the other staff members in your department, that it is not just material that you as a leader think the department ought to have?
20. G: *We do have departmental meetings, whereby we agree on which material is appropriate for our students, and discuss how we can get that material and how we can get it for our students.*
21. I: How do you find your task of being a leader and working with other people?
22. G: *It's quite difficult because as human beings we've got different opinions and different characters, so to say, so you find that some members do not cooperate with me and I have a difficult time trying to make them see things my way.*
23. I: But how do you ensure that they stay motivated to do their work?
24. G. *Oh, that's quite difficult, especially because we have no funds in the school. Really there isn't much you can do for them, but if funds were available maybe they would have been taken for a picnic, maybe an outing to motivate them. But at the present moment there isn't much I do, other than encouraging them.*
25. I: That's understandable. I suppose this place has got some aspects, some things that you would say are promoting the implementation of ESL, or rather those that are downplaying the implementation of the subject. Are there any such aspects of the setting?
26. G: *I would say we are doing better because of the commitment from the members of the department in the sense that they bring their own material and we photocopy it and use it for the students, sometimes they dedicate themselves and come to teach during the holidays. They bring their own pacesetters and loan them to the students so that they improve and do better in the language.*
27. I: That's quite considerate of them. Now, do you have the necessary facilities for teaching the subject, in terms of the infrastructure, the rooms and other relevant facilities? My understanding is that when this curriculum was introduced it was mentioned that there were prerequisite facilities.
28. G: *We don't have them and that is making the performance of the students to drop. We expected that we will have a proper library where the students will get material to read, where the students will get some literature to read, but then we don't have that.*

*I also expected that we will have a language lab, and we don't have it until this moment. That also is contributing towards the dropping of our performance.*

29. I: What is stopping you from having a proper library and a language lab?

30. G: *It's the same problem, lack of funds.*

31. I: How's the speaking of English around here, among the students?

32. G: *Mmmmh... Very few students speak the language, more especially because of, I would say, peer pressure. Yes, teachers do try to encourage the students to speak the language, but then you find that those who are attempting to speak are made a mockery by the others. So you find that at the end of the day they drop it, they no longer speak it. And that's a big problem because when it comes to the oral examination, when it comes to writing as well – because language learning is all about practice – so the students will definitely perform poorly because they don't use the language.*

33. I: Oh, I see. Let's talk about the other departments, how far do they support the speaking of English? Do they support your department?

34. G: *Ah, not at all, it's even worse because you find that a teacher who is teaching maybe Science will come and address the students in SiSwati. That also de-motivates the students, not only the students, but the English language teachers as well, because there is no one to help them motivate the students to speak the language. And even when it comes to motivating them, the teachers from the other departments would say it should be allocated to the English Language teachers, that is, encouraging the students to speak the language.*

35. I: But then, do you have strategies in place to ensure that the learners are at least trying to speak the language?

36. G: *So far we haven't come up with any because in the past we have tried some strategies but they failed due to lack of cooperation among the departments. But we do ensure that learners are aware that they will be examined on the extent to which they can speak the language.*

37. I: On that note, how do you ensure that learners are aware of intended outcomes?

38. G: *Ok, on that note, teachers usually explain the syllabus to the students; they explain the content and the expectations of each and every paper in the language and also explain the objectives.*

39. I: Ok, I see. Is it helpful to the students in terms of their performance?

40. G: *Yes, because when they write the exam they know what is expected of them.*

41. I: Now, have you had any outside help with the teaching?
42. G: *There have been workshops which we have been attending since the introduction of ESL.*
43. I: How far have you benefited from those workshops?
44. G: *We have benefited a lot because these workshops were telling us the difference between O-Level and SGCSE, and they were telling us, giving us new strategies of teaching the new syllabus and what is expected of our learners in as far as SGCSE is concerned.*
45. I: Ok I understand. Now, when you come from those workshops, do you, as the HoD Do a follow up on what the members of your department have learnt?
46. G: *Yes, I do try sometimes to collect their schemes of work and to look at the class work they give to the learners, try to find out if they are implementing what they have learnt from those workshops.*
47. I: Do you have any designated measures which you undertake if they are not doing what they are supposed to do?
48. G: *I try to speak to them, finding out reasons why they didn't imply what they have learnt and try to encourage them that they should try to put into practice what they have learnt.*
49. I: OK, that's understandable, Now when this syllabus was introduced, it was mentioned that going to incorporate new book material since it was supposed to teach different skills and four papers, paper 1, 2, 3, and 4. The books that you are using now, which you and your staff have agreed upon, how far, or rather, to what extent do you think they are in line with those policies such as teaching the four skills.
50. G: *Yes, they are teaching the four skills, e.g., there is Enjoy English, in which you find that each and every unit accommodates the four language skills, e.g., you find that there is a task on reading, a task on writing, a task on speaking, as well as on listening.*
51. I: Ok, I understand. Why don't you maybe prescribe those for the learners, because you are saying that they incorporate all the four language skills?
52. G: *Yes we can suggest that the government prescribe them for the learner, but you find that they cannot afford them.*
53. I: So actually it's a financial problem?
54. G: *Yes, we have a financial crisis?*

55. I: Eh, O.K, earlier on you talked about the fact that there are things that are helping you in this context, and there are others which are not helpful in this local context. If you happen to find material that is not suited to the local context, how do you ensure that it is adapted to the local context, in terms of the localisation policy?
56. G: *I'm thinking of taking the material in the book, say maybe in that unit, and try to break it down into smaller tasks that will address the four language skills.*
57. I: O.K. I do understand. Now, I suppose we've almost exhausted almost everything. But is there anything you would like to add about these underprivileged circumstances you are caught up in?
58. G: *Oh yes, another problem we come across is that even our learners are demotivated. You know, when you tell them about the English Language, so to say, they think about something like a monster, they do not like reading. The reading culture is not there, so as the language teacher you have a big task of even trying to change the mind of the learners before even you get into class. And they are also even demotivated towards the learning itself.*
59. I: Oh I see. Thank you so much. It was interesting talking you.
60. G: *Thank you.*

### **Head of Department H**

1. I: HoD H, can you briefly tell me about your experiences of teaching O-Level compared to now that you are teaching SGCSE? What can you say? Is there any difference?
2. H: *Yes, although I'm not teaching language I'm a literature specialist but I can say I'm an eye-witness of many things that are happening in the department in particular with the syllabus shift. Before it was O-Level, IGCSE and SGCSE, it's almost the same, yes; well the present syllabus is quite good, well because it co-ordinates all the four components. Pupils have a chance to practise all of them, which maybe could give them some kind of credit with obtaining better grades, because some pupils are good in orals, some in writing or reading. That there are these components helps them a lot except that to the teacher it's a lot of work. There is a lot of work for the teacher because of the four components which have to be attempted, especially in these rural areas, there are so many children, the attendance is so large.*
3. I: Okay, what's your enrolment?
4. H: *In Form 4 we normally have about 60 students per class, it's quite large.*

5. I: But how do you manage?
6. H: *Well, I don't know what to say, do we manage? We just try our best. I can't say we manage because they don't all pass obviously.*
7. I: Now compared to O-Level, how's the passing?
8. H: *Eish, I don't see the difference really. The paper seems very easy for this present syllabus, but they don't do well and the language seems to be getting weaker and weaker.*
9. I: Okay, but do they speak in English, do they attempt?
10. H: *Mhn, that's just a challenge. They don't like to speak the language, especially because of political reasons. You know, there's some kind of war between SiSwati and English. Students should be allowed to speak their language, you see, so it's a challenge on our part that if you want them to speak the language you don't have to force them, they have to speak independently. And that is a challenge.*
11. I: Now what strategies do you have in place to at least make them speak in English?
12. H: *Well, we encourage them to speak the language, try some English clubs, but it doesn't work much. We try to organise some tokens of appreciation, make them speak the language, maybe during assembly there are presentations, we start with the certificate students, form 3 and 5. They speak, but most of them are reluctant.*
13. I: Now, how's the motivation among the teachers, are they motivated to do their work?
14. H: *Well, they are motivated to do their work because English is passing subject, so they don't have an option but to work hard. The nature of the subject makes them to be motivated.*
15. I: Do you have support from the other teachers?
16. H: *Well, a few of the teachers are willing to support us, particularly the HoDs; they help us in many, many ways, like encouraging them to speak, to do the presentations.*
17. I: What about the rest of the staff?
18. H: *Well, they don't support us much. You see most of the teachers have a feeling that if they support the English department they are not going to benefit much because it's their subject, they are just interested in their own majors. They feel that if supporting the department they will prosper and what about their departments.*
19. I: Oh, Okay. But then what do you have in place to ensure that the staff in your department stays motivated?
20. H: *Well, I encourage them to work harder.*

21. I: Okay, they work harder and they stay encouraged. I understand. Now about the books that you are using now for both language and literature, by the way, do you have literature at high school?
22. H: *Yes.*
23. I: How do they perform?
24. H: *It depends on the type of student at that particular year.*
25. I: Okay, but then which books are you using for language at senior level?
26. H: *They have Lucantoni.*
27. I: Okay, do you prescribe the books or is it resource material for teachers?
28. H: *At most it's a resource material that is carried by teachers to class. We also have Enjoy English and the other one Practical English Grammar. Well, the books are prescribed but the teachers do not rely on them. Sometimes they photocopy from the typing pool.*
29. I: So why don't you put a book rental system in place?
30. H: *We have it.*
31. I: So do they rent those books you've mentioned? e.g. Lucantoni and Enjoy English?
32. H: *Yeah, it's book rental, they do rent them but I've since found that the teachers do not use it as some kind of a bible.*
33. I: So they mix the books?
34. H: *Yes.*
35. I: Okay, so the Practical English Grammar, I believe is a book that the teachers used even during the O-Level, is it?
36. H: *Yes it is.*
37. I: Okay, so how do they manage to fit such a book into the existing syllabus which demands them to localise? I hope you understand the localisation concept. How do they do it?
38. H: *They normally photocopy some extracts from it and make the pupils answer questions on the given extracts.*
39. I: How else do you help the teachers as an HoD?
40. H: *There is some kind of a team work, sometimes we work as a team in our scheme work and discuss issues.*
41. I: Do you encourage them to attend external workshops or you rely on discussions.
42. H: *Yes, they are encouraged to attend them. The administration is supportive in that regard.*

43. I: Okay. Apart from supporting external workshops, what else does the administration do for you to make sure that your work runs smoothly?
44. H: *Well, normally their hands are open. Sometimes they get us resource persons to come and help us here and there.*
45. I: How far have they helped concerning the infrastructure that is necessary for SGCSE?
46. H: *Yes, we have this present structure as the language lab. Our library is there (points). And our administration normally buys us newspapers for the pupils to read.*
47. I: I understand. So concerning administrative support, would you say it is enough?
48. H: *There is adequate support. But then maybe if they can build us some kind of a small attachment so that during orals the teacher and the student can have some privacy. Because during those times the teachers have to vacate this place yet it also serves as a staff room.*
49. I: So during orals all the teachers have to vacate this room?
50. H: *Yes.*
51. I: HoD, I think we are done now. But is there anything you would like to add concerning the implementation of SGCSE English?
52. H: *Ey, maybe if we can find some strategies as to how we can make them speak the language.*
53. I: But do they read?
54. H: *Our children do not like to read. The only thing they are interested in is the newspapers, and that's all. So, if you ask them about the novels that they have read they would just mention the Literature in English staff. Yeah, maybe we need some more books in the library because the ones that we have are kind of abstract. Maybe they are not interesting to them.*
55. I: Okay I see. Thank you so much, it was interesting talking to you.

## Appendix 10: Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of South Africa

**UNISA**  college of education

**Research Ethics Clearance Certificate**

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

**M Mathebula [48275611]**

for a D Ed study entitled

**Policy change and curriculum alignment: Exploring the perceptions of language department heads in Swaziland's underprivileged schools**

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 Dzvimo  
Executive Dean : CEDU

  
Dr M Claassens  
CEDU REC (Chairperson)  
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Reference number: 2014 SEPTEMBER /48275611/MC      12 SEPTEMBER 2014

N.B. Ethical clearance was sought under the researcher's marital name, Mathebula.