THE ALIGNMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 10 IN DISTRICT 9, JOHANNESBURG

MARINA BURGER

THE ALIGNMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 10 IN DISTRICT 9, JOHANNESBURG

by

MARINA BURGER

submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION –WITH SPECIALISATION IN CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF MM NIEMAN

FEBRUARY 2008

I declare that

THE ALIGNMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE IN GRADE 10 IN DISTRICT 9, JOHANNESBURG

is my own work and that all the resources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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MS M BURGER   **DATE**

SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to examine the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in English home language in grade 10 in Johannesburg District 9. A literature study investigated the theoretical background to Outcomes-based education, the definition of outcomes, Outcomes-based assessment and the role of feedback in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition this alignment in English home language was explored. For the qualitative investigation teachers from three schools participated in individual interviews and a content analysis. Major findings included: the teachers were intuitively aware of the importance of the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, the implementation of the alignment was also intuitive and not explicitly planned. The teachers did not understand the assessment standards attached to each learning outcome. Continuous assessments were not used for learning. The study concludes with recommendations to improve the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in English home language.

KEY TERMS

Outcomes-based education
Outcomes-based assessment
English home language
Aligning teaching learning and assessment
Learning outcomes
Assessment standards
Continuous assessment
Feedback
Planning teaching, learning and assessment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND, PROBLEM FORMULATION AND AIMS

1.1   INTRODUCTION

South Africa adopted an outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning in 1997. The curriculum that was used as the vehicle to introduce this approach in schools was initially called Curriculum 2005. This curriculum was later streamlined and resulted in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (2002). The National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12 followed a year later (2003).

Outcomes-based education (OBE) focusses on the learning outcomes to be achieved rather than on the content to be learnt. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7), OBE is a learner-centred, results-orientated approach to learning. Botha (2002:364) also states that OBE is a learner-centred approach where the emphasis is not on what the teacher wants to achieve, but rather on what the learner should know, understand, demonstrate and become.

In an outcomes-based approach teachers and learners focus on certain predetermined results or outcomes to be achieved by the end of the learning process. Outcomes have been defined as a clear observable demonstration of student learning that occurs at or after the end of a significant set of learning experiences (Mahomed, 2001:16). Mahomed further explains that the word demonstration implies an outcome and not a mark. The outcomes are typically demonstrations or performances, which reflect three things:

1.   what the learner knows;

2.   what the learner can actually do with what he/she knows; and

3.   the learner's confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration (Mahomed, 2001:16).

OBE and the emphasis on outcomes are very different from the traditional education approach used in South Africa prior to the introduction of OBE. In the past, most South African schools adopted an approach to learning and assessment that placed strong emphasis on the accumulation of isolated facts and skills (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122). After an analysis of the work done by Botha (2002), Coetzer (2001), Du Toit (1999) and Mahomed (2001) the following summary of the main differences between the traditional approach to teaching and OBE could be made: The traditional content-based approach is teacher-centred and the learners are passive participants. The content is a given body of knowledge and only the teachers know the outcomes and criteria for assessment. The knowledge is driven by test and examinations that are content-based. Norm referenced assessment is used. In a traditional approach, teachers are mainly concerned with the completion of the curriculum; assessment takes place at the end of instruction as a means to collect marks.

OBE, on the other hand, is learner-centred. The learners are actively involved in their own learning and education. The teacher is the facilitator of learning and uses group work to consolidate the new approach. The outcomes to be achieved and the criteria against which they will be assessed are known by all and assessment takes place on a continuous basis and in different ways. Criterion-referenced assessment, which implies that an individual's performance is measured against a predetermined standard of acceptable performance, is preferred. Learners are motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their progress.

As can be seen from the above distinction between the two approaches, the implementation of outcomes-based education in South Africa did not only necessitate a different approach to teaching, but also influenced assessment practices. Assessment is integral to OBE and should form part of the learning process – it should definitely not be seen as an add-on at the end of the learning process. In outcomes-based education (OBE) the value of assessment for

learning, as opposed to merely assessment of learning is recognised. Put differently: In OBE learning for assessment and learning from assessment are equally important (Barnes & Hunt, 2003:2).

Siebörger and Macintosh (2004:5) note that whenever new ideas about teaching or learning are mentioned, it seems that assessment is always part of them. This statement indicates the importance of the connection between teaching, learning and assessment. The role of assessment is to measure learning, and what has been learnt. Furthermore its role is also to assess what can be remembered, what is understood, or what can be applied from what is being learnt in a different context. It is thus clear that assessment plays a vital role in successful learning.

Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:5) explain that in OBE the focus is firstly on the desired end results of each learning process. These desired end results are actually the learning outcomes and learners need to demonstrate that they have achieved them. This implies that they need to be assessed continuously to determine whether or not learners have achieved the stated outcomes. Effective assessment therefore demands that there should be an obvious and direct link with the learning outcomes. Secondly, the focus is on the instruction and learning process that will guide the learners to these end results. This explanation by Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:5) clearly depicts the close link between teaching, learning and assessment: The teaching and learning process needs to enable the leaner to achieve the end result and the assessment process indicates to the teacher and learner whether the end results (outcomes) have in fact been achieved.

It is thus clear that learning, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. Cowdroy and Williams (2007:89) very aptly explain this close relationship by stating that **what** we teach and **how** we teach it are often derived from **criteria for assessment** (assessment standards). According to them, "what we teach is that which will be assessed" (Cowdroy & Williams 2007:89). Assessment has a

developmental and monitoring function to fulfil. It is through assessment that efficacy of the teaching and learning process can be evaluated. In addition, feedback from assessment informs teaching and learning and as such assessment practices can have a profound impact on the process of teaching and learning in that they set standards which guide these activities (Curriculum framework for general and further education and training, 1996:11-12). The alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment process is instrumental in the achievement of the outcomes; therefore the instruction (teaching and instruction will be used interchangeably) must be planned in such a way that there is a clear link between what is taught, learnt and assessed. Assessment is part of the learning process and assessment takes place continuously. Shepard (2000:4) notes that assessment should be used as part of instruction to support and enhance learning. This function of assessment works towards the successful alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

According to Biggs (1996) as quoted by Campbell, Frost and Logan (2007:445), one of the most important aspects of the assessment principles for enhancing learning is the concept of alignment. That includes the alignment of objectives, teaching practices, learning activities and assessment.

1.2   EXPLORATION OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1   Awareness of the problem

I have been involved in teaching since 1986 and have experienced at first hand the introduction of OBE, Curriculum 2005 and the National Curriculum Statements. Many teachers felt initially that OBE was not that much different from their own teaching methods. Most teachers, however, were overwhelmed by the demands the OBE curriculum placed on them, especially as far as assessment is concerned. At cluster meetings held in each region where teachers meet to exchange information and for moderation purposes many teachers express their

frustration with OBE and outcomes-based assessment (OBA) (Onwu & Mogari, 2004:167). As the deputy principal at a secondary school in Johannesburg, I have first-hand experience of Onwu and Mogari's observation.

According to Vandeyar and Killen (2003:119), teachers were required to follow some new approaches to planning, teaching and assessment. This was very stressful for many teachers who felt they were ill prepared for the paradigm shift, and who found it difficult to navigate through the maze of new jargon that accompanied OBE and OBA. Even though more and more teachers received training, some teachers at present still find the implementation of the assessments to be a challenge. Vandeyar and Killen (2003:120) state in this regard: "One of the greatest areas of concern for teachers and, therefore, an area of strong resistance to change, centred on the issues of assessment and reporting of learning". Siebörger and Macintosch (2004:38) express the concern that if outcomes cannot be assessed properly it will be difficult to promote curriculum development. Furthermore Siebörger and Macintosch (2004:38) explain that looking at the list of attributes of assessment using outcomes, it seems obvious that there is more work involved for teachers. However, although it will initially increase in volume, it will become easier as more and more learning materials become available.

Onwu and Mogari (2004:162) state that the assessment that is at present occurring in many OBE classrooms does not appear to be that different from the pre-OBE norm. Shepard (2000:8) feels that, although promising models have been developed, it cannot be claimed that common assessment practice has moved significantly beyond the end-of-chapter test.

Shepard (2000:6) discusses the shift teachers have to make in their thinking about how learners learn and the role and function of classroom assessment. The teachers have to move from the traditional forms of assessment to more "holistic evaluation" and she suggests that before any change is introduced the

power of the teachers' hidden beliefs regarding assessment should not be under-estimated (Shepard, 2000:6).

In the traditional approach assessment rarely formed an integral part of the learning and teaching process and many teachers are still struggling to adapt to the outcomes-based curriculum approach to assessment, in which the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are closely integrated. It is evident that teachers find outcomes-based assessment (OBA) a major challenge and in my experience curriculum discussions in staff meetings often turn to the heavy workload OBA brings and the perceived complicated nature of the assessment of learning outcomes. Teachers find it very difficult to plan their teaching and assessment to align with the learning that will take place. Many teachers still prefer to use a textbook as the point of departure for their teaching and assessment.

Presently I am teaching English home language in grade 10 with three colleagues. Even though we teach under favourable circumstances, which allow us to meet and communicate frequently, and we have access to support and resources, the assessment process still brings a certain amount of panic regarding the outcomes we need to cover in our assessment practices. We work closely with colleagues from neighbouring schools who echo our concerns. Therefore I chose to focus my study on English as a home language because my involvement in the teaching of it has given me inside knowledge of the process and problems encountered by the teachers. As indicated above, the link between what is taught, learnt and assessed is very important and my own experience brought to light the fact that one of the challenges teachers face is the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

1.2.2   Background to the problem

OBE demands that teachers identify the outcomes as the first step in planning their teaching. The desired outcomes so identified should determine the teaching and assessment that follow to the extent that the resultant learning could also be easily assessed via performance. Teaching, learning and assessment are inextricably related and their alignment has been crucial for achieving the goals of education (Birenbaum, 2003:13).

The cycle of teaching, learning and assessment of learning presented in the Programme Guidelines Languages (Department of Education, 2005b:26) indicate how teaching, learning and assessment are linked.

- The teacher starts by identifying the outcomes the learners will achieve at the end of the cycle.
- The teacher plans the teaching and learning activities and chooses the tasks to be assessed.
- The teacher indicates to the learners the tools and criteria to be used to assess their performance.
- Assessment of the tasks takes place and the teaching and learning process is reviewed.
- The teacher evaluates what the assessment shows about learning and reports the assessment.

Assessment reveals information regarding the outcomes achieved and the success of the teaching and learning process, therefore assessment is powerful. Reineke (1998:9) explains that because it is powerful, the delivery of assessment information requires our attention. The assessment context and climate include attributes related to those who provide assessment information, those who receive assessment information, and the interplay between the two. Attention to these attributes illuminates student and teacher characteristics that impact on

learning and teaching (Reineke, 1998:9). Popham (2000:11) states that assessment, if properly conceptualised, can have a powerful impact on teaching. He also argues that the single most important dividend of assessment is that it can contribute to improved instruction. Assessment is inter alia used to obtain an accurate idea of current knowledge and to determine suitable progress. Teachers can find out whether their teaching worked (Popham, 2000:12).

In OBE learning is a process in which the learners are actively involved. In this process assessment is used to facilitate learning and not only to grade the learners. Reineke (1998:6) observes in this regard: "Assessment for learning is fundamentally a process, an attitude. Effective classroom assessment emphasizes learning, not testing; competence not selection; teaching not accountability." When assessment for learning (formative assessment) instead of assessment of learning (summative assessment) takes place, assessment is used to inform the learning and teaching process. Teachers use the information gathered from formative assessment to give feedback to the learners regarding their strengths, weaknesses and how to proceed with their studies. Teachers also use the information to adapt their teaching to the learners' needs. Assessment is more than a way to ascertain learner achievement; results of evaluating the assessment can be used to inform the teaching process as well as the learning process (Reineke 1998:6).

1.2.3   Statement of the research problem

In the light of the preceding discussion it is evident that the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is very important, but at the same time very problematic. It is a new approach and it seems that teachers struggle with this process. This results in an apparent lack of alignment between teaching, learning and assessment. Language teachers and English home language teachers in particular used to assess along the lines of comprehension and grammar, orals, literature and creative writing, whereas in OBA the focus is on the assessment of

integrated learning outcomes. Therefore the problem of this study centres on the following issue: To what extent do English home language teachers align teaching, learning and assessment in OBE?

The question gives rise to further sub-questions, which include:

- What is outcomes-based education and what are the implications of this approach for teaching, learning and assessment?
- What does outcomes-based assessment entail and how does it impact on teaching and learning?
- To what extent do teachers succeed in aligning teaching, learning and assessment in English home language and what problems do they have with this process?
- What can be done to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned?

1.3   AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The research aims to investigate to which extent teachers of English home language align teaching, learning and assessment. The objectives of this research are:

- to provide a theoretical background to the principles of outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment;
- to examine the prevailing literature on aligning teaching, learning, and assessment;
- to determine to what extent teachers of English home language align teaching, learning and assessment and what problems they experience with the alignment; and
- to make recommendations with a view to improving the alignment of teaching, learning, and assessment in English home language.

1.4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A brief outline of the research methodology together with the instruments of data collection and data analysis is provided in this subsection of Chapter 1. A more detailed exposition of the research method is covered in Chapter 3.

1.4.1   Literature study

In an attempt to determine the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in English home language, a literature study of a wide range of policy documents, journals, books, websites and in-service training material was undertaken. The focus of the literature study was on previous findings on the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment as well as current policies and national guidelines regarding this issue. OBE, educational taxonomies, in particular Bloom, Anderson-Krathwohl and Biggs and the teaching, learning and assessment cycle in English home language were explored.

1.4.2   Empirical investigation

To investigate the extent to which teachers manage to align teaching, learning and assessment in English home language, and to determine the problems they experience with the alignment, a qualitative research approach was used. Individual interviews and focus group interviews were used to collect data.

Qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research. It emphasises the importance of looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found (Key, 1997:1). Phenomenological inquiry, or qualitative research, uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings (Hoepfl, 1997:2). According to Hoepfl (1997:2), qualitative research differs from quantitative research: "Where

quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations. Qualitative analysis results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative inquiry." The rationale for this choice of research methodology and design was based on the following comment by Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133): "...all qualitative approaches have two things in common. First they focus on the phenomena that occur in natural settings – that is the 'real world'. And second, they involve studying these phenomena in all their complexity." Qualitative methods can be used to gain new perspectives on something that has been researched already, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively. Qualitative methods can on the other hand also be used to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known. Research problems tend to be open-ended questions that will support discovery of new information (Hoepfl, 1997:3).

In this particular case the researcher investigated the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in English home language. The investigation focussed on how teaching and assessment are linked and how teachers know what to assess as well as how teachers know what the learners have learnt. Furthermore to investigate the complexities of the phenomena, the teachers' experience and attitude towards the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment were included in the study.

1.4.2.1   Data collection

The methods that the researcher used were individual interviews, and content analysis of the teachers' assessment packs. Interviews are the centrepiece of qualitative research (De Vos, 2002:339). According to Denscombe (2005:165), interviews are used by researchers as a source of information. Interviews in a qualitative study are rarely as structured as the interviews conducted in a

quantitative study. Instead they are either open-ended or semi-structured, in the latter case revolving around a few central questions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005:146). The semi-structured interviews also imply that "the interviewer is free to probe and explore within the predetermined inquiry areas" (Hoepfl, 1997:7). With the semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, with semi-structured interviews the interviewer is more flexible about the order in which the topics are considered and lets the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher (Denscombe, 2005:167).

In this study individual interviews were used. The individual or one-to-one interviews involved a meeting between one researcher and one informant. One of the advantages of these interviews is that the opinions and views expressed throughout the interview stem from one source: the interviewee (Denscombe, 2005:168). The individual interviews were conducted with the teachers. The assumption was that the teachers are information-rich participants and that during a semi-structured interview information regarding teaching, learning and assessment from the teachers' point of view could be gathered.

The interviews were conducted at a time and place agreed to by the teachers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then analysed for common categories and sub-categories.

According to Mayring (2000:3) qualitative content analysis defines itself as an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models. Mayring goes further to explain that the material must fit into a model of communication. It must be decided on what part of the communication inferences shall be made. The material should be analysed according to a step by step procedure, devising the material into content analytical units. Categories form the centre of the analysis. The aspects of text interpretation are put into categories,

which are carefully founded and revised within the process of analysis. Criteria of reliability and validity are that the results are compared with other studies in the sense of triangulation and to carry out checks for reliability (Mayring, 2000:4).

The research was designed to be exploratory and descriptive. The primary aim of the study is to understand and describe how successful teachers are in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

1.4.2.2 Sampling

In this study purposeful sampling was used because "it seeks information-rich sites that can be studied in depth" (Hoepfl, 1997:6). The specific sites and participants in this case study were preferred because they are appropriate for the research problem and purpose where the research focus is on complex micro-processes. This is in line with McMillan and Schumacher's (2006:318) point of view.

The research sites for this study focussed on three specific schools in Johannesburg. The three schools fall under the jurisdiction of District 9 (Johannesburg East) of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). These schools belong to one cluster group and the teachers have access to the same information and training from the department. The reasoning behind the specified research sites was to investigate a variable spectrum of interpretation and implementation of OBE in terms of aligning teaching, learning and assessment.

The context of the three schools varies considerably. One of the schools is an underprivileged GDE school with a high learner-teacher ratio and staff that struggle against all odds. The second school is a large well-managed GDE school. The teachers are motivated and have access to resources. The learner-teacher ratio, however, is also high. The third school is a large GDE school with a high learner-teacher ratio where, although the school functions reasonably well, a

high staff turnover and a new principal have had an influence on curriculum delivery. Three teachers were interviewed. The teachers taught English as a home language in grade 10.

Assessment packages were collected from the teachers, the packages contained their planning of the teaching and assessment as well as the assessment instruments and tasks. A content analysis procedure was carried out on the assessment packages for the purposes of triangulation. The assessment packages were analysed to determine whether what the teachers expressed in their interviews regarding teaching, learning and assessment took place in practice.

1.5   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

The concepts defined briefly below are concepts that appear repeatedly in this study. These initial definitions serve to introduce the concepts while more in-depth descriptions are provided later in the study.

1.5.1   Outcomes-based education (OBE)

Outcomes-based education can be defined as an achievement-orientated, activity-based and learner-centred process; in following this approach, the aim is to encourage lifelong learning (Gillespie, 2004:150).

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7), OBE can be described as an approach which requires teachers and learners to focus on two things: the desired end result of each learning process and the instructive and learning processes that will guide the learners to these end results.

1.5.2   Home language

Home language is the language first acquired by children through immersion at home; the language in which they learn to think (Department of Education, 2003:72). In South Africa the majority of parents choose English as the language of instruction for their children; therefore the children also have to take English at home-language level, even though English is often not the language first acquired.

1.5.3   Outcomes

Outcomes are the results at the end of the learning process in outcomes-based education; these outcomes help shape the learning process (Gillespie, 2004:150).

The outcomes are further categorised as critical outcomes and learning outcomes. Critical outcomes are broad, generic cross-curricular outcomes that underpin all learning recognised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (IEB, 2006:56).

A learning outcome is a statement of an intended result of learning and teaching. It describes knowledge, skills and values that learners should acquire by the end of a particular phase or band, for example the Further Education and Training band (Department of Education, 2003:7). Learning outcomes are specific to each subject or learning area and these outcomes specify for each area what the desired outcomes at the end should be. In English home language in the Further Education and Training band there are four learning outcomes and attached to each are assessment standards.

1.5.4   Assessment standards

Assessment standards are criteria that collaboratively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade. They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the learning outcomes. Assessment standards within each learning outcome collectively show how conceptual progression occurs from grade to grade (Department of Education, 2003:7). According to Siebörger (2004:34) the wording of a learning outcome has an important effect on the way it is assessed, therefore it is necessary to provide more detailed guidelines of what is expected and these details are contained in the assessment standards. Teachers will teach and assess the learners' achievement of the assessment standards and therefore measure the learners' achievement of the learning outcome.

1.5.5   Assessment

Assessment is a continuous planned process of gathering information on learner performance, measured against the assessment standards (Gillespie, 2004:149). Assessment is the practice of collecting evidence of student learning (Carless, 2005:42).

Assessment is a process, which involves:

- generating and collecting evidence of learner achievement;
- evaluating this evidence against outcomes; and
- recording the findings of this evaluation (IEB, 2006:55).

Assessment takes place over time in each learning area and is conducted by the teacher or the learner (self-assessment or peer assessment).

1.5.6   Learning

Learning is a process of integrating new subject matter into the learner's world of sense and meaning (Killen, 2000:xxi). Learning in OBE is a process. OBE is

learner driven and aimed at achieving outcomes. The teachers facilitate learning, and through instruction and carefully planned activities the learners learn new knowledge, skills and values.

1.6   ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study was arranged into separate chapters for the sake of logical exposition and presentation of data.

Chapter 1 deals with the exploration of the problem, the statement of the research problem, and the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 deals with the literature review. Local and international literature on OBE and assessment is reviewed.

Chapter 3 deals with the qualitative research design that was used to investigate the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in grade 10 home language teaching.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of the data gathered during the empirical research and a discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the chapters, synthesis of findings and conclusions, as well as recommendations for future assessment implementations.

CHAPTER 2

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT: A THEORETICAL EXPOSITION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a paradigm shift for most teachers as it is a departure from the content-based, test-driven traditional curriculum most teachers were trained to teach. In contrast to the former curriculum, outcomes-based education focusses on what learners know and can do. The point of departure for any outcomes-based curriculum or lesson is therefore not the learning content, but rather the intended results of learning, i.e. the knowledge, skills and values expected from learners. Learning programme and lesson design is done to help the learners to achieve the desired outcomes. In an OBE approach assessment forms an integral part of the teaching process. Without valid and reliable assessment procedures, teachers will simply not know whether learners have or have not achieved the outcomes.

This chapter, which attempts to explain what outcomes-based education entails, starts with a discussion of the theoretical roots of OBE before the most important features of OBE and the National Curriculum Statements are discussed. Thereafter OBE is discussed in greater detail, the link between teaching, learning and assessment is explained and the discussion moves on to outcomes-based assessment. Lastly the chapter ends with a discussion on English as a home language and how the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment can be effected.

2.2   THE THEORETICAL ROOTS OF OBE

OBE has, just like any other approach to education, theoretical and philosophical roots. Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203-205) identified the following theories as the theoretical basis of OBE: behaviourism, critical theory, pragmatism and social constructivism.

2.2.1 Behaviourism

According to Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203), **behaviourism** is a philosophy with a strong inclination to focus on external human behaviour that can be observed. It is a philosophy which deliberately breaks away from previous interpretations that explain human behaviour as driven by deep-seated internal motives. A further assumption of the behaviourists is that the observable, measurable behaviour is dependent on stimuli from the environment. Joyce, Weil and Showers (1992) are quoted by Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:204)as saying that: "...the procedures for encouraging new behaviours involve setting specific individualised behavioural goals". An integral feature of behaviourism is the formulation of specific objectives.

The behaviouristic roots of OBE can clearly be seen in the following quote by Spady (1994:18) in which he explains that learners are expected to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by means of observable behaviour: "The focus of OBE is the outcomes to be achieved, and it can be described as high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context."

2.2.2 Critical theory

Critical theory has as key focus areas the change and emancipation of societies and individuals from being regulated and indoctrinated; it does so by liberating

them to be questioning. By implication truths are therefore not only accessible to the privileged elite (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204).

In OBE the emphasis is on the broader development of the learner: knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are acquired. Participatory, learner-centred and activity-based teaching (Department of Education, 2002:13), that provides the opportunity for learners to discover self-knowledge, to formulate and to have critical thought, is emphasised. The development of critical thought is made explicit in both the critical outcomes and the learning outcomes. The type of learner produced by an outcomes-based education should amongst other things have the ability to participate in a society as a critical active citizen (Gillespie, 2004:29).

2.2.3 Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophy which emphasises usefulness with the effect of underplaying the value of principle. Whatever works in practice, as well as what is useful, is of the utmost importance. This approach came into being as a reaction against idealism, which cannot be implemented practically (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:205). One of the problems with content-based education systems is that the learners are not able to apply the knowledge they acquired in school. OBE in contrast expects learners to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge and claims that learners are intellectually stimulated to participate fully economically and socially, furthermore learners will be able to reach their full potential and will be equipped for life-long learning (Department of Education 2002:13). A life-long learner should be confident, independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled (Gillespie, 2004:29).

2.2.4 Constructivism

An understanding of the constructivist roots of OBE is important as it explains the importance of measuring or rather determining the learner's thinking and process of learning through the assessment process. **Constructivism** rests on the assumption that learning is an active process of constructing meaning and transforming understanding (Schulze, 2003:6). Constructivism is defined by the following four principles:

2.2.4.1 Connecting with existing knowledge
Twomey-Fosnot (1989:19) explains that philosophically constructivists assert that we can never know the world in an objective sense separate from our experiences and ourselves. In other words we integrate our new experiences with what we already know. The learner's existing knowledge serves as an interpretative framework for knowledge construction and for understanding new information.

2.2.4.2 Relationships between units of understanding
Constructs come about through assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation refers to the logical framework or scheme used to interpret or organise information. When this assimilatory scheme is contradicted or found to be insufficient we accommodate, we develop a higher-level theory or logic to encompass the information. We adapt and alter our old concepts (Twomey-Fosnot, 1989:19). On acquiring new knowledge learners go through a process of connecting it with existing knowledge and assimilating the knowledge to develop meaning and understanding. Claassen (1998:34) explains that the learner interacts with the source of knowledge by way of problem solving and the discovery of skills and thus reconstructs knowledge. Learning becomes life-long and knowledge is negotiable. The learner accepts responsibility for learning.

2.2.4.3 Construction of meaning

The construction of meaning is an individual process and a personal
responsibility. It is also a social process that leads to shared meaning or
the construction of it (Gravett, 2005:21). Social constructivists claim that
meaning-making activities of individuals do not take place in isolation
but are shaped by context, culture and tools (e.g. language and
computers in the learning situation) (Gravett, 2005:21). The social
context learners find themselves in will therefore influence the way they
construct and assimilate information. Because we are social beings,
learning and the acquisition of knowledge cannot be seen in isolation;
the social context and interaction will influence the construction of
knowledge and meaning.

2.2.4.4 The world of the individual learner

The individual constructivist views do not ignore the social interaction and
interpretation in learning. However, learners actively construct
knowledge for themselves by forming their own interpretations (Killen,
2000:xviii). Gravett (2005:22) explains that cognising activity concerns
the experiential world of the individual learner. Therefore, two learners
exposed to the same new knowledge will construct and process
knowledge in their own unique way depending on their experience,
existing knowledge and their own way of seeing the world.

OBE is aimed at the individual learner; it is a learner-centred approach (Botha
2002:364; Killen, 2000:xi; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:7). In OBE the
teachers acknowledge that learners learn in different ways and that it is important
to recognise the existence of prior knowledge and that allowance must be made
for the learner to build on the existing knowledge, find connections and construct
new knowledge.

Constructivism has two mainstreams. Cognitive constructivism focusses on the cognitive processes people use to make sense of the world around them. It is "an approach to learning in which learners are provided the opportunity to construct their own sense of what is being learned by building internal connections or relationships among the ideas and facts being taught" (Borich & Tombari 1997:177). Social reconstructivism is a philosophy which is strongly orientated towards social transformation (Steyn & Wilkinson, 1998:204). Social constructivists claim that the meaning-making activities of the individual do not take place in isolation but instead are shaped by the context, culture and tools in the learning situation (Gravett, 2005:21). Each learner comes to the classroom with his or her unique set of experiences which will determine how he or she will integrate new information with existing knowledge to reach a new understanding. Therefore OBE emphasises the concept that learners do not passively receive information but construct knowledge; teachers are not seen as the only sources of knowledge but as facilitators in the learning process.

2.3   OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

OBE as a teaching approach radically breaks away from past traditional teaching practice (Mahomed, 2001:15). Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:7) explain that OBE is an approach to learning which is based on the beliefs that all individual learners must be allowed to learn to their full potential. Positive and constructive ongoing assessment builds the learners' self-esteem. Teachers must create a positive learning environment to promote the culture of learning. All stakeholders, teachers, parents and learners share in the responsibility for learning and must communicate regularly regarding problems and progress of the learners. According to Siebörger and Macintosch (2004:33) OBE is a learner-centred, result-oriented approach based on the belief that all learners can learn and succeed. OBE is from my point of view an inclusive approach to learning: everyone can learn. The community of teachers, parents and learners shares the responsibility for the learning and everyone becomes life-long learners.

OBE is a method of curriculum design and teaching that focusses on what students can actually do after they are taught (Acharya, 2003:1; Mahomed, 2001:16). It answers questions such as what and why learners should be able to learn and do, and the teachers make decisions about the intended learning outcomes. Killen (2000:vii) sets out four questions which guide decisions about planning, teaching and evaluation:

1.   What do we want learners to learn?
2.   Why do we want the learners to learn these things?
3.   How can we best help learners to learn these things?
4.   How will we know when learners have learnt?

The teachers are able to make these decisions because OBE is not content driven. The outcomes are determined by relevant real-life needs, and ensure an integration of knowledge, competence, and orientations needed by learners to become thinking, competent and responsible future citizens (Botha, 2002:364). Therefore OBE is able to measure the achievement; it demands of the learners to practice and demonstrate their abilities to think, question and make decisions.

Killen's four questions do not only provide guidance regarding the planning, teaching and evaluation but also guides the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The first two questions are related to the learner and what he is supposed to learn. The third is connected with the instruction and how teachers will facilitate the learning. The fourth question addresses assessment and how teachers will determine whether the learners have learnt what they have been taught.

2.3.1   What are outcomes?

According to Spady (1994:1-2), the keys to an outcomes-based system are the following:

- developing a clear set of outcomes around which all the system's components can be focussed; and

- establishing the conditions and opportunities that enable and encourage all students to achieve those essential outcomes.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) defines outcomes as "The contextually demonstrated end-products of a learning process" (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2002:22). Siebörger and Macintosch (2004:33) explain an outcome as the results expected at the end of a learning process. It refers to the knowledge, skills and/or attitudes which learners should be able to demonstrate that they can understand and apply within particular contexts. Spady (1994:49) adds that the expected learning results are **clear** and not simply vague statements about values, beliefs, attitudes or psychological states of mind. Outcomes are what learners can actually do with what they know and have learnt. This means that outcomes are **actions** and performances that reflect learner competence in **using** content, information, ideas and tools successfully.

2.3.2   Different kinds of outcomes

There are two types of outcomes, namely critical cross-field outcomes and specific (learning) outcomes (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2002:23). Critical cross-field outcomes are broad generic and cross-curricular outcomes which apply across all learning fields. They describe critical or essential outcomes identified for all candidates across all fields of learning. Critical outcomes as set out in the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General) English Home Language (Department of Education, 2003:2) are:

1. identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;

2. work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community;

3. organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively;

4. collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

5. communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in oral or written form;

6. use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and

7. demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

SAQA also identified five critical outcomes that relate specifically to personal development. These outcomes require learners to be able to:

1. reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;

2. participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;

3. be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;

4. explore education and career opportunities; and

5. develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

Learning outcomes (which were originally called specific outcomes) are specific to certain occupations and fields of learning. It is the ability to use knowledge, skills and values specific to a particular learning field or occupation (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2002:22).

2.3.3   How are learning outcomes (LOs) defined?

As mentioned before, outcomes are clear about the actions or performance expected; therefore they must be defined according to the actions or demonstration processes sought. Siebörger and Macintosch (2004:34) explains that the verb in an outcomes statement indicates the performance, competency or achievement expected and the words which follow it describe the object

intended. Spady (1994:58) states that the observable action verb in an outcome statement defines the processes the learner is expected to carry out in the end. For example, LO 1 in English home language in the FET band is: "The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts." (Department of Education 2005a:18). The verbs *listen* and *speak* indicate the performance expected and the object is the *variety of purposes, audiences and contexts.* The way in which the outcome statement is written has an effect on the assessment of the outcome, but more about this later.

Assessment standards are criteria used to assess a learning outcome (Department of Education, 2005b:53). As explained in Section 1.5, assessment standards represent the knowledge, skills and values learners need to demonstrate to achieve a learning outcome. When an activity is planned the teacher will use the assessment standards to plan what the learners must be taught. The assessment of the task will assess the learners' achievement of the assessment standards. For example, English home language learning outcome 1 reads:

> *Listening and speaking. The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of*
>
> *purposes, audiences and contexts.*

The assessment standards are:
We know this when a learner is able to:
- identify and use persuasive techniques; and
- recognise arguments and assumptions and distinguish between facts and opinions. (Department of Education, 2003:20)

The teacher will plan teaching and learning activities with assessment standards as a guide. In turn the assessment will measure the learners' achievement of the assessment standards (see Section 2.8).

2.3.4   Four basic principles of OBE

There are four basic principles to OBE and according to Killen (2004:67), the key to making OBE successful is to apply these fundamental principles espoused by Spady in 1994 systematically and consistently. According to the Department of Education (2002:3), assessment should also be based on these four basic principles.

2.3.4.1 The clarity of focus on outcomes of significance

The teacher and learners focus clearly and consistently on the desired outcomes of achievement. There is no element of surprise and the criteria of assessment are known beforehand (Acharya, 2003:3; Killen, 2004:67; Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72; Mahomed, 2001:17). According to Mahomed (2001:19), one of the advantages of OBE is the clarity of focus because teachers and learners know exactly what to expect. Teachers align their teaching with outcomes and learners know what criteria are used to assess performance and where they stand in terms of goals achieved. This means that the teachers and learners share the responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes.

2.3.4.2 Design down

This principle is also called planning backwards (Mueller, 2006:2) or design down (Killen, 2004:67). Teachers plan, and design the curriculum backwards from the outcomes the learners need to achieve. Killen (2004:67) describes the 'design-down' principle as short-term outcomes derived from the significant long-term outcomes that educators want their learners to achieve. In other words, the teacher's planning start with the desired outcomes and from there assessment and teaching are planned.

2.3.4.3 High expectations

Teachers should have high expectations for all students; they should expect all students to achieve significant outcomes to high standards (Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72). There has to be a high level of performance to achieve high expectations. Teachers establish clear 'criterion-defined' standards of performance which all students are expected to reach or exceed before judging the work to be completed. The performances are measured against a set of criteria as opposed to a set of norms. All learners have access to a challenging curriculum (Mahomed, 2001:17).

2.3.4.4 Expanded opportunity

Teachers have to take into account that learners do not learn the same things in the same way. Learners have different rates of learning and employ a variety of memory systems and learning strategies. Learners need to have more than one opportunity to learn and to demonstrate their learning (Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72; Mahomed, 2001:17).

The four underlying principles have direct implications for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, which form the focus of this study. Teachers are challenged by the fact that they need to report on learning and this has implications on the assessments carried out. To ensure successful teaching, learning and assessment demand that teachers start with a clear alignment between the outcomes the learners are expected to achieve and the methods used to assess and report learning. Teachers must establish by means of assessment whether their teaching was successful in guiding the learners through the process of knowledge construction and the acquisition of skills.

Clarity of focus means that learners should be aware of the criteria and methods which will be used to assess them. They should know exactly what they are expected to demonstrate and how it will be assessed. Learners and teachers share the clarity of focus and work towards the same goal; this enables the learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

High expectations, according to Killen (2004:67), demand that teachers align their teaching and assessment strategies with high standards that are set for all learners. It implies that a variety of assessment methods and opportunities should be implemented to accommodate learner differences and to allow them to demonstrate their full potential. If teachers expect learners to only achieve outcomes and not aim for high achievement or challenge the learners constantly in assessments to extend themselves, the teaching will be aimed at an average level. Teachers teach to a certain level, therefore the level must be set at a high standard and the expectation must be that all learners can achieve high levels of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.

Design down implies that when planning, teachers must start by identifying the outcomes that need to be assessed and must then choose the best assessment methods and activities for the specific outcomes. The outcomes drive the planning. The teaching and learning activities and assessment must emanate from the planned outcomes.

Expanded opportunity implies that learners must have multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement of outcomes. These opportunities must be varied in order to accommodate multiple intelligences and learning styles. Multiple intelligences and learning styles in turn demand that a variety of assessment methods should be used to assess the achievement of outcomes.

2.3.5 Teaching, learning and assessment in OBE

In OBE teachers plan teaching as part of a transformational process as opposed to the traditional view of the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. The learners construct knowledge in a process facilitated by the teacher. Although the teacher plays a central role in the planning and facilitation of learning, the teaching approach is learner-centred. Learning (and therefore the learner) should always be at the centre of all teaching. Killen (2000:xi) even argues that teaching is not teaching unless learners learn.

There are three interactive components of educational instruction, namely: planning or pre-instructional phase, teaching (which implies learning) and assessment of outcomes (Airasian, 1994:66; Mau, 1997:163). During the planning, or pre-instructional phase, the learning outcomes are identified and the instructional activities and assessment procedures are planned. The activities should enable the learners to achieve the identified outcomes. The broad outcomes of intent do not provide detail regarding the role of the teacher and the learners in the learning activity or how long it will take the learners to achieve the outcome. Planning instruction requires that the teacher thinks about the more specific goals on the path to the achievement of the learning outcome. The teacher will plan and describe what the learners must be able to do at the end of the instruction and learning process and how the achievement thereof will be assessed. Dillon, Reuben, Coats & Hodgkinson (2007:283) depict this teaching and learning triad as follows:
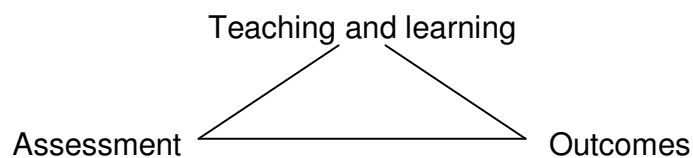
Figure 2.1: The learning and teaching triad

Dillon et al. (2007:283) explain that this figure "… emphasises that outcomes, assessment and teaching and learning are mutually connected, and should be seen as complementary aspects of quality enhancement."

Selecting the appropriate teaching strategy means that teachers should keep in mind that in the OBE approach, knowledge is constructed and the focus is on learner understanding. Teaching becomes a facilitation process through which learners follow a guided process towards constructing knowledge and developing understanding. Teachers therefore facilitate learning through a range of experiences.

The teacher will specify the performances learners must produce to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome (LO) and also indicate how assessment will be done to determine the extent to which outcomes were achieved. Designing down is clearly the strategy used by the teachers as instruction and assessment are planned with the desired outcomes in mind (Criticos, Long, Moletsane & Mthiyane, 2002:35). By focusing on the LO the teachers link their teaching to what is expected to be learnt (Mau, 1997:167). This focus will facilitate the alignment of the intended outcomes with the learning and assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment are closely linked, the link or alignment between learning, teaching and assessment is, however, not arbitrary and can only be achieved by careful planning. Rust (2000: 2) explains that there are three stages to a course or model design, or in this case a work schedule. Stage 1 is to decide on the intended learning outcomes. Stage 2 is devising the assessment tasks and stage 3 the learning activities. Rust (2000: 2) continues to stress that these stages should be conducted in such a way that each stage is informed by the others, ensuring coherence. In other words, they should be aligned.

Effective or meaningful learning is conceived as occurring when a learner constructs his or her own knowledge base that can be used as a tool to interpret

the world and to solve complex problems. This implies that learners must be self-dependent and self-regulating, and that they need to be motivated to continually use and broaden their knowledge base. Learners need to develop strategic learning behaviour, which means that they must master effective strategies for their own learning (Segers, Dochy & Cascallar, 2003:1).

Campbell, Frost, and Logan, (2007:445) explain that assessment affects how learners learn. According to them, assessment paradigms are often discussed in terms of traditional assessment versus alternative assessment. The purpose of traditional assessment is to document learners' learning and as such learners are seen as passive recipients of knowledge and teachers as the ones responsible for delivering this knowledge. Alternative assessment, in contrast, views students as inquirers into knowledge, "…who are active, deep learners, collaborating and using higher level thinking skills" (Campbell et al., 2007:445). In OBE alternative assessment methods are favoured.

From the preceding discussion on teaching, learning and assessment in OBE, it can be concluded that the learning experience should allow learners to develop understanding and construct knowledge. Therefore teachers need to know how their learners learn and how they know what they understand. The design of the learning activity must enable the learners to engage with the learning material. The assessment must measure the learners' level of competence and understanding.

2.3.6   Learning for understanding

Knowledge and skills in themselves do not guarantee understanding (Perkins, 1993:2). A "performance perspective" on understanding based on the theory of constructivism, says that understanding something is a matter of being able to carry out a variety of "performances" concerning the topic (Perkins, 1993:5). Furthermore, Perkins points out that to teach for understanding, learning must be

made a long-term, thinking-centred process. According to him assessment must be ongoing and rich and learners must be helped to make connections and carry over facts and principles they acquire in one context into other contexts, in other words they must get opportunities for transferring their knowledge.

The question is: how do we know that the learners know and understand? Tileston (2004:16) explains that often learners do well in an assessment test but a week later they do not remember or understand the information. They may have held the information in working memory long enough to understand and answer the test question, but because they did not process it, their brains promptly discarded the information.

Pellegrino and Chudowsky (2003:114) set out the components of cognitive architecture. Working memory, sometimes referred to as short-term memory, is what people use to process and act on information. Working memory refers to the currently active portion of long-term memory. Long-term memory, a potentially limitless store of information, contains two distinct types of information: semantic information about "the way the world is" and procedural information about "how things are done" (Pellegrino & Chudowsky, 2003:114; Tileston, 2004:31).

In the learning process there is a distinction between domain-general knowledge and domain-specific knowledge. Domain-general procedures for problem solving are known as weak methods; these procedures are by definition not tied to any specific context and they may reveal people's underlying ability to solve problems in a wide range of novel situations. Strong methods are used to solve problems that are tied to a specific context and in most domains of instruction learners are expected to use strong methods of problem solving. People use schemas to organize knowledge in memory in ways that are useful for solving problems. Schemas help move the burden of thinking from working memory to long-term memory (Pellegrino & Chudowsky, 2003:115).

According to Tileston (2004:27), there are three activation systems in the brain: semantic, episodic and procedural. Semantic memory, sometimes called declarative or linguistic memory, is the least efficient of the three, which is one of the reasons students often forget information they are taught. This system is activated by associations, similarities and differences. To learn semantic information, students need high intrinsic motivation and must find an association with the new information.

Episodic memory is location or text driven, it is a powerful memory system that requires little intrinsic motivation and when the experience is combined with emotion, the learning will last indefinitely. The memory is activated based on places and the context of learning.

Procedural memory is the strongest of the three systems. Performance tasks used for teaching and assessment use procedural memory. To access the procedural memory, learning is practiced often enough to become a procedure, and procedures are set up to create strong memories (Tileston, 2004:31).

Learning for understanding means that the learners will be able to use their knowledge and skills in different but appropriate contexts and that they will be able to access the information from their memories. Many learners acquire only surface declarative knowledge (Birenbaum, 2003:15; Tileston, 2004:27), rather than deep conceptual understanding. Learners are more likely to be able to transfer knowledge if they have opportunities to practice and receive feedback. (Feedback is discussed in Section 2.6.) Teachers will be able to plan teaching and provide feedback if they understand how learners think and learn. To provide expanded opportunities for learning, different learning styles must be taken into account. The process of gathering information to determine whether the learners understand and are learning is called assessment.

2.4   EDUCATIONAL TAXONOMIES AND ASSESSMENT

Taxonomy is a system that describes, identifies and classifies groups. According to Bloom (1956:10), the major purpose in constructing a taxonomy of educational objectives is to facilitate communication. The use of the taxonomy as an aid in developing a precise definition and classification of such vaguely defined terms as "thinking" and "problem solving" would enable educators to discern similarities and differences among the goals of their different instructional programmes. They could, therefore, begin to understand more completely the relation between the learning experiences provided by these various programmes and the changes which take place in their students. Bloom (1956:10) further explains that taxonomy is a classification of educational outcomes.

Educational taxonomies classify three domains of learning: cognitive (mental processes), affective (attitudes, values and emotions) and psychomotor (physical actions) (Killen, 2004:69; McDonald; 2002:34; Popham, 1995:81). Educational taxonomies describing the cognitive domain are used to establish educational goals and "are especially useful for establishing objectives and developing test items" (McDonald, 2002:34). Killen (2004:69) explains that thinking about these broad groupings of outcomes helps educators to see that different types of learning require different approaches to teaching and assessment. The use of taxonomies allows for the alignment of teaching strategies and assessment. In other words taxonomies are used to make sure that the assessment planned will be on target in terms of the teaching that took place. Imrie (1995:176) argues that although it is customary to write educational objectives as outcomes, the lack of a systematic framework (taxonomy) means that quality assurance is not evident or verifiable and that there could be a mismatch between the stated (intended) outcomes and the actual behaviour of the students.

Three educational taxonomies dominate the literature, namely: Bloom's Taxonomy, developed by Benjamin Bloom and published in 1956, a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy by Anderson-Krathwohl (2001), and Biggs's SOLO taxonomy (1982).

Bloom (1956:12) stresses that in building a taxonomy it is important to be clear about what it is that is to be classified. In the case of an educational taxonomy student behaviour which represent the intended outcomes of the educational process, is classified. What is being classified is the *intended behaviour* of students – the way in which individuals are to act, think or feel as the result of participating in some unit of instruction. Bloom's taxonomy organises cognitive processes involved in learning and in demonstrating learning into six levels of increasing complexity. The objectives in one class are likely to make use of and be built on the behaviours found in the preceding classes on the list (Bloom, 1956:18). The levels are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom, 1956:18). According to Huit (2004:2), there is agreement that there is a hierarchy of levels with the exception of synthesis and evaluation. It is uncertain whether synthesis and evaluation are on the same level or whether the order should be reversed.

Bloom's taxonomy is by far the most widely used in education and is most often quoted. The taxonomy is a framework within which the learning process can take place. For example, in an English literature essay writing process it would mean that the teaching is aimed at the top levels of the taxonomy, which is application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Because teaching, learning and assessment should be aligned, it requires that the assessment should be directed at the learners' ability to apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate.

The Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy of learning, teaching and assessing is a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy. This version focusses on four questions

that are fundamental to teaching in general and to outcomes-based education in particular:

- What important things should children learn?
- How can teaching be planned and delivered so that all learners achieve high levels of learning?
- What assessment instruments and procedures will provide accurate information about how well learners are learning?
- How can educators ensure that outcomes, teaching and assessment are aligned with one another? (Killen, 2004:71)

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001:4) explain that in a taxonomy the categories lie among a continuum which becomes one of the major organising principles of the framework. Their taxonomy is a revised version of Bloom's original taxonomy which has a single dimension. The Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy has two dimensions namely the cognitive process and knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001:5). The cognitive process dimension contains six categories: *Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate* and *Create.* The knowledge dimension contains four categories: *Factual, Conceptual, Procedural* and *Metacognitive* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001:5).

Table 2.1: The Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy

The Knowledge dimension	The Cognitive Process Dimension					
	1. Remember	2. Understand	3. Apply	4. Analyse	5. Evaluate	6. Create
A. Factual						
B. Conceptual						
C. Procedural						
D. Meta cognitive						

(Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001:28)

If teachers want to understand how learners learn, they have to consider the knowledge the learners need to acquire as well as the cognitive processes needed in the acquisition process.

The taxonomy is applied in three steps:

1. Place each outcome onto the grid by asking:
   - What type of cognitive processes does the outcome require?
   - What type of knowledge will learners be dealing with when demonstrating the outcome?
2. Select instructional procedures that will enable the learners to achieve the outcome.
3. Select an appropriate assessment procedure. (Killen, 2004:74)

To facilitate the achievement of the learning outcome, the learning outcome is placed on the grid and consequently placed in context of the knowledge and cognitive dimensions. The teaching, learning activity and assessment must be appropriate; the assessment standards as well as the knowledge and cognitive dimensions must be assessed. The Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy allows for the alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment because the planning of the intended outcome is placed in context with the knowledge and cognitive dimensions.

The third taxonomy is the SOLO Taxonomy. SOLO is an acronym for Structure of Observed Learning Outcome (Bolton-Lewis, 1995:145; Chan, Tsui, Chan & Hong, 2002:511; Killen, 2004:78; Leat & Nichols, 2000:113). The SOLO Taxonomy is not content specific and provides descriptions of structural organisation of knowledge at increasingly more complex levels across modes of

learning. The five levels range on the basis of the structural organisation of the knowledge in question, from incompetence to expertise in hierarchical order.

- Prestructural (incompetence)
- Unistructural (one relevant aspect is known)
- Multistructural (several relevant independent aspects are known)
- Relational (aspects of knowledge are integrated into structure)
- Extended abstract (knowledge is generalised to a new domain)

The SOLO taxonomy addresses knowledge levels and does not include the cognitive levels as the Anderson-Krathwol taxonomy does.

The taxonomies are extremely important in the planning and in particular the teaching of higher order thinking skills. Taxonomies can be used as a framework around which teaching, learning and assessment are planned. McDonald (2002:35) expresses a word of caution with regard to the use of taxonomies: taxonomies are useful as a guide to align educational objectives with teaching, learning and assessment but should not be rigidly applied as learners use several thinking skills in completing complex tasks and thinking skills may not be hierarchical. The descriptions of structural organisations of knowledge enable the teacher and learner to work towards a higher level. It is necessary to first determine the level the learners are functioning on to plan the achievement of the next level. Learners could, however, be on several levels at the same time (McDonald, 2002:35). In English first language a learner may be on the prestructural level regarding the literary novel being dealt with but multistructural in terms of writing a literary essay. The learning outcomes and the cognitive levels must be clearly defined before teaching and learning take place. In the assessment the assessment standards and the cognitive levels must be represented.

2.5 OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT (OBA)

Effective assessment should improve teaching for all learners, emphasise progress and not merely measure success or failure (Shea, Murray & Harlin, 2005:9). The ultimate goal of educational reform is to use assessment to improve teaching and learning (Pelegrino & Chudowsky, 2003:108). According to Johnson (2000), assessment of learning should be scrutinised by those who seek to ensure that assessment strategies, methods and approaches link closely together with learning outcomes and are fully integrated with effective student learning.

According to Spady (1994:189), assessment is a generic term for the process of gathering information on the quality of a product, performance, or demonstration. Assessment typically implies the use of methods other than traditional paper and pencil testing.

2.5.1 Purpose of assessment

The different purposes of assessment are:
- Baseline assessment is used to establish learners' levels of skills and knowledge at the beginning of a section.
- Diagnostic assessment is used to identify problems learners have so that interventions can be made.
- Formative assessment is used to identify the progression of learning and the next steps for learners.
- Summative assessment mainly focusses on assessing the final product, e.g. marking an essay or giving a mark at the end of a writing process (Department of Education, 2005b:55).

At the beginning of the year or phase in the curriculum, baseline assessment is used to identify gaps in the learning and it gives the teacher an indication of

where the learning programme should start. During the implementation of the learning programme diagnostic assessments are used to identify problems learners may have and to implement intervention strategies. Formative assessment identifies the progress of the learners and the next step in the learning programme. Summative assessment is used to provide a global picture of the achievements and it summarises the learners' performance collected and recorded over time.

The assessment is transparent with the learners participating in the process and the criteria known to them. A very important part of OBA is the fact that the assessment is for the learner and not only for the teacher.

The National Protocol on Assessment (Department of Education, 2005c:5) describes assessment as a process of collecting, synthesizing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners. Classroom assessment should provide an indication of learners' achievement in the most effective and efficient manner by ensuring that adequate evidence of achievement is collected using various forms of assessment.

As set out in the National Protocol on Assessment (Department of Education, 2005c:5), there are two levels of assessment, namely formal and informal assessment and classroom assessment should be both. In both cases feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience. Informal assessment is the daily monitoring of learners' progress. This is done through observations, informal classroom interactions, etc. Informal assessment may be as simple as stopping during the lesson to observe learners or to discuss with the learners how learning is progressing. The assessment here is highly formative, it is continuous and an integral part of the teaching and learning cycle. Baseline, formative and diagnostic assessments would be regarded as formative.

The second level is formal assessment. Formal assessment provides teachers with a systematic way of evaluating how well learners are progressing in a grade and in a particular Learning Programme / Learning Area / Subject. Examples of formal assessments include projects, oral presentations, demonstrations, performances, tests, exams and practical demonstrations (Department of Education, 2005c:6). The assessment is planned and carried out according to the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG). The assessments are rich tasks and a cluster of ASs is assessed. Learners are expected to demonstrate applied competence (in other words that they can transfer their learning) and the tasks must be such that every child is able to succeed.

2.5.2   Validity and reliability of assessments

Assessments must be valid and reliable (Johnson, 2000; Reddy, 2004:35) and transparent (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2002:34).

2.5.2.1 Validity

There are two aspects to validity, namely:

1.   Is what you expect from your learners to learn justifiable and reasonable?
2.   Do the methods of assessment achieve what they set out to do?

Curricular validity requires that there is a clear idea of the expected learning outcomes and these outcomes need to be justifiable in terms of the curriculum (Reddy, 2004:35).

Construct validity requires a test to test what it is meant to test and not something else (Reddy, 2004:35). In terms of criterion-related validity the criteria developed are valid in terms of the outcomes for the course. The criteria set for the assessment must be linked to the outcomes taught (Reddy, 2004:35). With

regards to content, validity means that the assessment focusses on what was taught and emphasised (Reddy, 2004:35).

2.5.2.2 Reliability

Reliability in a sense implies consistency in assessment. Reliability can be achieved by creating and communicating clear criteria against which learner performance is measured. Triangulation (triangulation means that a variety of forms of assessment is used to assess a certain outcome) also contributes to reliability as direct evidence of achievement gained in different ways can be compared (Reddy, 2003:36).

2.5.2.3 Transparency

According to Van Rooyen and Prinsloo (2002:34), something is transparent if it is clear and open to everyone making use of it. Standards should be accessible, easily understood and have real meaning to the users. The assessment process should be clear and open to candidates. Dillon et al. (2007:280) state in this regard: "Clearly identifying outcomes leads to *transparency*. Teaching and assessment intentions are made explicit, and both tutors and students work with the same set of criteria to assess progress and to focus on ways to improve."

Transparency ties in closely with the clarity of focus and expanded opportunity principles of OBE. The teachers and the learners know what the goals are and the learners have a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their achievement. The teachers and learners also know what kind of performance will be accepted in the achievement of the outcome.

2.5.3   Continuous assessment

One of the most important aspects of assessment in the OBE paradigm is that it is continuous and takes place before teaching commences, during teaching and at the conclusion of teaching. According to Van Rooyen & Prinsloo (2002:93), continuous assessment (CASS) is an approach that makes teaching, learning and assessment part of the same process. The traditional cycle of assessment was one of 'teach – test – teach – test, whereas CASS aims to achieve three main results, namely to:

3   gather a wide range of evidence of learning that can be used for assessment;
4   provide different and varied opportunities to gather evidence; and
5   spread assessment activities throughout the learning process and not leave them all for the end of the process.

When CASS is implemented successfully it enables the teachers to assess the learning and it gives the learners opportunities to demonstrate learning. CASS helps teachers to plan more effective, useful and fair assessment strategies so that teachers can gather different kinds of evidence at various times to show learning (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo 2002:93).

2.5.4   Authentic assessment

According to Reddy (2004:37), OBE is a trigger and a trend towards 'authentic' assessments. Authentic assessment supports classroom instruction and it promotes learning and teaching among the participants. Learners engage in real world tasks and scenario-based problem solving activities that reflect local values, standards and controls (Moon, Bighton, Calahan & Robinson, 2005:120; Paris & Ayres, 1994:9).

The following are characteristics of authentic assessment:

1. The focus is on content that is essential.
2. The assessment is done in depth and leads to other problems and questions.
3. The assessments are feasible and easily done.
4. The focus is on the ability to produce a quality product or performance, rather than a single right answer.
5. It promotes the development and exhibition of learners' strengths and expertise.
6. The criteria are known, understood, and negotiated between the teacher and the learner before the assessment begins.
7. Assessment provides multiple ways in which students can demonstrate they have met the criteria, allowing multiple points of view and multiple interpretations.
8. The assessments require marking that focusses on the essence of the task and not what is easiest to mark (Moon et al, 2005:120).

Authentic assessment requires learners to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Mueller, 2006:1). It includes a task to be performed with a rubric (see Section 2.5.7) by which the performance on the task will be evaluated. Teachers teach to the assessment and the learners know which rubric will be used for the assessment. This ties in with the clarity of focus goal of OBE because the learners know which assessment tool will be used for assessment and the teachers teach to the assessment. The learners know what is expected to perform the task and to achieve the outcome. More importantly, the learners can make sense of the task because it is relevant to their own experience.

Performance tasks are considered to be examples of authentic assessments.

2.5.5 Performance assessment

As explained in Section 2.3.5, performance tasks make use of the strongest memory system namely the procedural memory. According to Nitko (2004:237), performance assessment presents a hands-on task requiring students to do an activity that requires applying their knowledge and skills from several learning targets. It also uses clearly defined criteria to evaluate how well the student has achieved this application. In other words, the learner must apply the knowledge to carry out the task and must work towards a clear goal.

Performance tasks, learning journals and portfolios are the tools used in the assessment culture for collecting evidence about learning. Performance tasks tap higher-order thinking and are meant to elicit understanding performances (Birenbaum, 2003:23). According to Killen (2004:77), all assessments can be seen as performance tasks in which learners demonstrate their ability to remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create when working with different forms of knowledge. Performance tasks require learners to use their procedural knowledge to execute the task and as explained earlier in this Chapter, the procedural memory system is the most powerful of the three available.

When teachers plan a performance assessment they should ask what learners could do to demonstrate how well they have achieved the task (Killen, 2004:78). Performance assessment must measure a truly measurable and teachable skill (Popham, 2000:285). Teachers teach towards the skill and the assessment. Rubrics (see Section 2.5.7) therefore serve not only to measure the task but to guide teaching as well. According to Khattri, Reeve and Kalle (1998:141), schools using portfolios and extended performance tasks showed the greatest impact on teaching and learning.

2.5.6   Formative assessment

Formative assessment is used when a teacher wants to find out what progress the learners are making. The outcome of the assessment will assist the teacher to adjust or revise the lesson plan and to give the learners advice on how to improve their work (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2003:90). As part of informal, continuous assessment, formative assessment is used to guide and measure the learning process. Formative assessment is also referred to as assessment for learning. Assessment can be regarded as formative only if it leads to actions by teachers and/or learners that improve learning (Boston, 2002:1; Carless, 2005:44; Malcolm et al., 1999).

Key elements of formative assessment are:
- identification by teachers and learners of learning goals, intentions or outcomes and criteria for achieving these;
- rich conversations between teacher and learner that continually build and go deeper;
- provision of effective, timely feedback to enable learners to advance their learning; and
- response by teachers to identified learning needs and strengths by modifying their teaching approaches. (Ministry of Education, 2006:1)

The task, assessment and feedback associated with formative assessment is geared towards the readjustment of the teaching as well as the learners' own interpretation of their learning. Formative assessment therefore plays an important role in the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment. Formative assessment is divergent and is based on a constructivist view of learning, the idea that development is non-linear and that assessment is accomplished jointly by the teacher and the learner (Ministry of Education, 2006:2). For the learners to be able to respond to the feedback given, Birenbaum (2003:24-25) has identified the following stages:

Stage 1: Getting the task

- Interpret the task in congruence with the teacher's intended goals.
- Understand the task requirements and the standard that it is addressing.
- Have a clear idea of what an outcome that meets the standard looks like.
- Know what strategies should be applied in order to successfully perform the task.
- Perceive the value of the task and be motivated to perform it to the best of his/her capability.
- Be confident in his/her capability to perform the task successfully

Stage 2: Performing the task

- Effectively apply the relevant cognitive strategies.
- Effectively apply metacognitive strategies to monitor and regulate performance.
- Effectively manage time and other relevant resources.
- Effectively control and regulate his/her feelings.
- If given a rubric, appropriately interpret its benchmarks.
- Be determined to invest the necessary efforts to complete the task properly.

Stage 3: Appraising performance and generating feedback information

- Accurately assess his/her performance.
- In case of a gap between the actual performance and the standard – understand the goals he/she is failing to attain.
- Understand what caused the failure.
- Conceive of mistakes as a springboard toward growth rather than just a sign of low ability.
- Posses a mastery orientation towards learning.
- Feel committed to close the gap.
- State self-referenced goals for pursuing further learning in order to close the gap.

Formative assessment encourages interaction between the learner and the teacher regarding the learning outcomes and the learner's performance. The emphasis is on development and closing gaps identified, which could be knowledge or skills gaps. Feedback will not be effective if it is given in an ad hoc fashion. The three steps outlined above embrace the underlying principles of OBE. The first step leads to clarity of focus as the intended goals and outcomes, as well as what needs to be done to reach the outcomes, are clear. The task is in line with the teacher's planned goals. During the second stage the learners are expected to apply the strategies outlined and the expectations are high and the same for all the learners. In the third stage the learners are given the opportunity to close the gap if there is one and encouraged to master their own learning.

2.5.7   Assessment rubrics

Rubrics can be defined as specific sets of criteria that clearly define for the learners as well as for the teachers what a range of acceptable and unacceptable performance looks like. Criteria define descriptors of ability at each level of performance and assign values to each level. Levels referred to are proficiency levels which describe a continuum from excellent to unacceptable product (Glossary of useful terms, 2006:12). According to the learning programme guidelines for English (Department of Education, 2005b:62), rubrics are particularly useful for Languages as they eliminate subjectivity through firm adherence to benchmarks and clearly defined standards. There are three types of rubrics, namely holistic, analytical and annotated rubrics (Nitko, 2004:264). However, all rubrics are based on an analytical approach (Department of Education, 2005:62). The analytical rubrics are simple and designed to assess certain parts of the process or product; the sum of these parts adds up to a total mark (Department of Education, 2005b:62; Nitko, 2004:264). Rubrics assess a learner's performance based on a set of criteria which represents a range of marks rather than a single numerical mark.

A rubric is a tool for assessing learner performance that:

- describes a continuum of performance quality that ranges from poor to excellent;
- consists of a set of criteria that defines a task in its entirety and by which a task will be evaluated, considering both the process and the learning outcomes;
- lists the criteria needed to perform a task and describes exactly what constitutes acceptable performance for each element;
- describes excellent performance that exceeds the level of acceptable work and inadequate performance that does not yet meet the minimum level of performance;
- usually uses a grid or table format; and
- can be adapted to individual styles and needs as there are many different ways to create a rubric (Department of Education, 2005b:62).

One of the advantages of rubrics is that the learner knows what is expected and how his work will be assessed. This tie in with the clarity of focus principle of OBE (see Section 2.3.4). Rubrics as an assessment tool allow for objectivity and consistency as the criteria are clearly defined.

2.6   FEEDBACK

Feedback is information about how we did in the light of some goal (Wiggens, 2006:20). Harlen and Winter (2004:400) explain that feedback from their teacher is the means by which learners find out how their work matches up to expectations, i.e. to what extent they have met intended goals. Metaphorically speaking, if we liken alignment of teaching, learning and assessment to a spin top, then feedback is the force that spins the top (Birenbaum, 2003:23).

Teachers use assessment to feed back information to their learners regarding their strengths and weaknesses. Feedback helps learners to identify gaps between the desired outcomes and their current knowledge, understanding or skills. Furthermore, feedback provides the teacher with valuable information regarding the learning and teaching process. When the teacher identifies gaps in the learning, there could be a gap in the acquisition of knowledge or skills; the teacher can then review the teaching plan or strategies accordingly. Therefore, the value of formative assessment is in the feedback that can lead to the improvement of teaching and learning.

Race (2006:1) concurs that feedback is vital in just about all learning contexts. He argues further that feedback develops competence and that there are a number of ways that feedback can take place, be it written or verbal feedback. Feedback should be timely, intimate and individual, empowering, opening doors and lastly manageable (Race, 2006:3).

Feedback takes place at all levels and probably all the time; it is the quality of the feedback, however, and what the learner and the teacher do with the information that contribute to the powerful role feedback can play in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

2.7   ALIGNING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Biggs (1999) is quoted in Birenbaum (2003:15) as saying that it is commonly acknowledged that in order to meet the goals of education an alignment or a high consistency between teaching, learning and assessment is required. I believe the importance of this alignment cannot be emphasised enough; it is crucial in curriculum delivery and in assisting the learners to achieve the intended outcomes. Biggs (1999:27) coined the term constructive alignment and describes a process of taking a strategic and integrated approach to curriculum design and teaching. Biggs's theory has three basic tenets:

- The overall process of learning is built on a framework of curriculum design in which intended learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment and evaluation are all interdependent and only by truly integrating these components can efficient student learning be attained.

- Staff involved in teaching must develop a reflective practitioner approach to their work and must be prepared to learn from their mistakes and successes.

- Meaning is not imposed or transmitted by direct teaching – it is created by the student's own learning activities.

Advantages of constructive alignment are that it encourages clarity in the design of the curriculum, and transparency in the links between learning and assessment. Clarity and transparency are two of the features of OBE.

As Biggs (1999:28) puts it, adopting an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment should bring about a match between what is taught, what is assessed and what is intended to be learnt. Spady (1994:87) uses "matchmaking" as a synonym for alignment. He explains that alignment basically means the "perfect match" of four things, namely:

1. what is important for the learners to learn;
2. what we teach them;
3. how we teach them; and
4. what we assess when we ask them to perform.

What is important to learn will be determined by the expected learning outcomes to be achieved. What the learners are taught and how the learners are taught will be contained in the assessment standards and the learning activity. The learning activity must be appropriate for the intended learning outcome and assessment standards. The learners must be assessed on what they have been taught and what they have learnt. Therefore the assessment must match the assessment standards.

2.8   ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

There are four learning outcomes in English home language in the FET, namely:

1. *Listening and speaking.* The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts.

2. *Reading and viewing.* The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts.

3. *Writing and presenting.* The learner is able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conventions and formats appropriate to diverse contexts.

4. *Language.* The learner is able to use language structures and conventions appropriately and effectively. (Department of Education, 2003:14-41)

Each learning outcome (LO) has a range of assessment standards (AS) attached to it. The teachers identify the LOs and ASs to be attained and choose tasks that will allow the learners to achieve the LOs and ASs. For example, in a narrative essay the learners' ability to demonstrate appropriate style, point of view and format will be assessed. The focus is on the lesson objective, the outcomes the teacher wants the learners to achieve, and the teaching and learning process must be aligned to the assessment task. Each assessment standard is a statement of what learners should be able to do. For example, one of the assessment standards of LO3 is: "Decide on and apply the appropriate style, point of view and format of texts" (Department of Education, 2003:30). An assessment standard is a statement and usually the noun describes the knowledge required by the learner and the verb the skill. For example, in English home language grade 10, learning outcome 3, one assessment standard reads: "Develop coherent ideas and organise these by using techniques such as mind-maps, diagrams, lists of key words, flow-charts" (Department of Education, 2003:30). This assessment standard requires the teacher to teach the learners to

develop coherent ideas, list key words and how to use an organising technique. In the assessment these skills will be assessed.

2.8.1 Aligning teaching, learning and assessment in English home language

There are different ways to describe the process of teaching, learning and assessment in English home language. The English Learning Programme Guidelines (Department of Education, 2005b:51) offers an example of the cycle of teaching, learning and assessment (fig. 2.2). The FET workshop developed by the International Examinations Board (IEB, 2006), has examples of a learning spiral (fig. 2.3) and an assessment pathway (fig. 2.4).

According to the Learning Programme Guidelines provided by the Education Department, there are three planning stages:

1. The FET teachers will work together to develop a **Subject Framework,** designing a structured and systematic plan that focusses on the conceptual progression of the key skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (SKVA) of the learning outcomes (LOs) and assessment standards (ASs) across the three grades. Contexts, National Curriculum Statement principles, relevant policies, assessment and resources need to be considered in the development of a Learning Programme for Languages (Department of Education, 2005b:26).

2. A **Work Schedule** describing the teaching and learning that will happen in a grade over a period of a year is developed. A work schedule interprets the LOs and ASs in the National Curriculum Statements into planned learning activities. It takes into account the time available, outlines the SKVA to be attained, outlines the assessment, considers the learners' specific needs, and identifies resources and priorities.

3. A **Lesson Plan** will describe the teacher or classroom planning; it will show how each item of content will be included during the year to achieve the

intended LOs. A lesson plan will show what learners will learn, key questions which will guide the learning experience, resources needed, teaching strategies and assessments to provide evidence of learning (Department of Education, 2005b:26).

The focus in this study is on the lesson plan as it describes the implementation of the teaching, learning and assessment plan. During this planning stage the teacher chooses the LOs and ASs that will be assessed. The teacher outlines the learning experience: what the teacher will do, facilitate, demonstrate, instruct or observe, and how the learning outcome will be achieved, i.e. the activities the learners will be involved in and the assessment. The assessment plan will indicate the LO and assessment standards that will be assessed as well as the method, e.g. peer or self-assessment, and the assessment tool, e.g. a checklist or a rubric. The learners know what the LO and ASs are as well as the assessment method and tool. During the learning experience and assessment, the teacher reflects on the process and may review the plan and go back to the planning stage. The assessment results are fed back to the learners to inform the learning process, the learners learn what their strengths and weaknesses are and their learning progress. The teacher reflects on the teaching, learning and assessment process and determines the success and possible interventions to be implemented. The process is characterised by reviewing and reflection. The learning programme guidelines by the Department of Education (2005b:43-44) sets out a five point plan on how to design a lesson plan using the work schedule to plan from. The plan is as follows:

1. Indicate the content, context, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards.
2. Develop activities and select the teaching method. Teachers have to decide how to teach the learning outcomes and assessment standards and develop activities that will facilitate the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. Thereafter the most suitable teaching method for the activity

must be determined and a description given of how the learners will engage in each activity. When designing assessment tasks the teachers must consider the following:

- **The learning outcome.** The teacher must ensure that there is a direct connection between the task, the intended learning outcome, and the behaviour learners are expected to display.
- **The task.** It should result in a product or performance that could be used in the real world. It should be engaging and require learners to use knowledge creatively.
- **The audience**. Who the learners are for whom the product or performance is intended.
- **The procedure.** The teacher gives a step-by-step method to achieve the task. The procedure requires learners to use processes that may be similar to those used in the real world.
- **Criteria.** The teacher must communicate the assessment standards for the product or performance that are derived from the stated learning outcomes and linked to the curriculum and assessment.

3. Consider diversity. Expanded opportunities must be available to learners that require individual support. Teachers must consider what competence will be assessed, the knowledge required, any barriers presented by the learners, and whether assessment practices will minimise exclusion. Different assessments must be used to allow all learners to learn optimally. Environmental influences should also be taken into account.
4. Indicate the details of the assessment strategy and resources to be used in each activity.
5. Allocate time to spend on each activity.
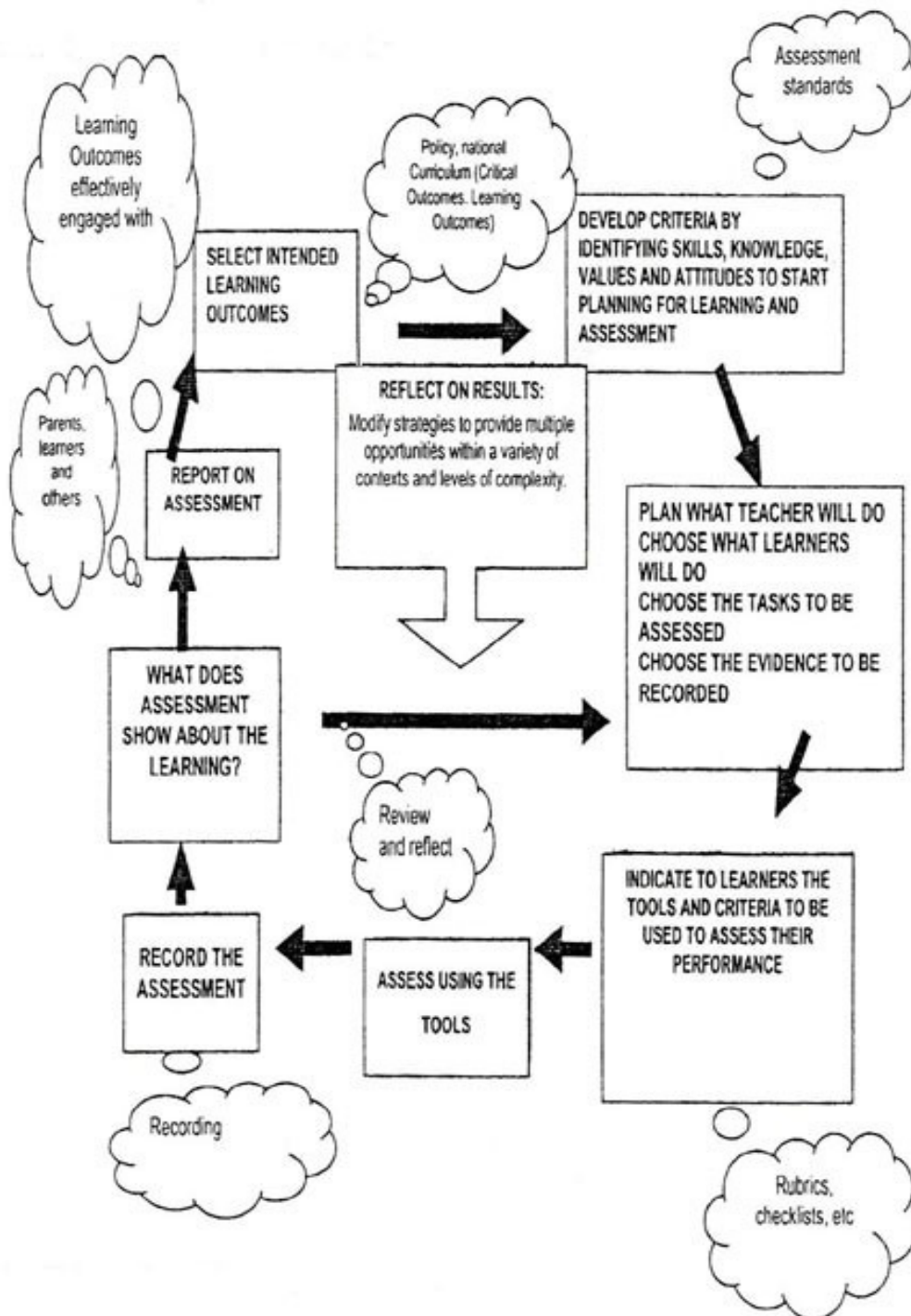
FIGURE 2.2: CYCLE OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSING

The example provided in an FET workshop developed by the Independent Examination Board (IEB) of a learning spiral (refer to fig. 2.3) illustrates the repetitive pattern of plan, do, assess and review.

During the planning phase teachers recognise prior learning which is usually established through baseline assessment. The intended learning outcomes are identified whereafter the assessment standards are incorporated and the assessment planned. The instruction phase follows; here the learners are given opportunities to engage with the learning material. For example, in an English narrative writing lesson, the structure of a narrative essay may be discussed and explained and in the process of writing the essay learners are assisted and given opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcome. The teachers will use appropriate methods and tools to assess the learning and the achievement of the outcome. During the review process, which is characterised by reflection and evaluation, the learning process as well as the achievement of the objectives is reviewed. The learners' progress is recorded and if learners did not achieve the desired outcome the process or part of it is repeated. The review and evaluation lead to the next level's process of plan, do, assess and review. Each plan builds on the skills and knowledge already achieved and the learning progresses to the next level.
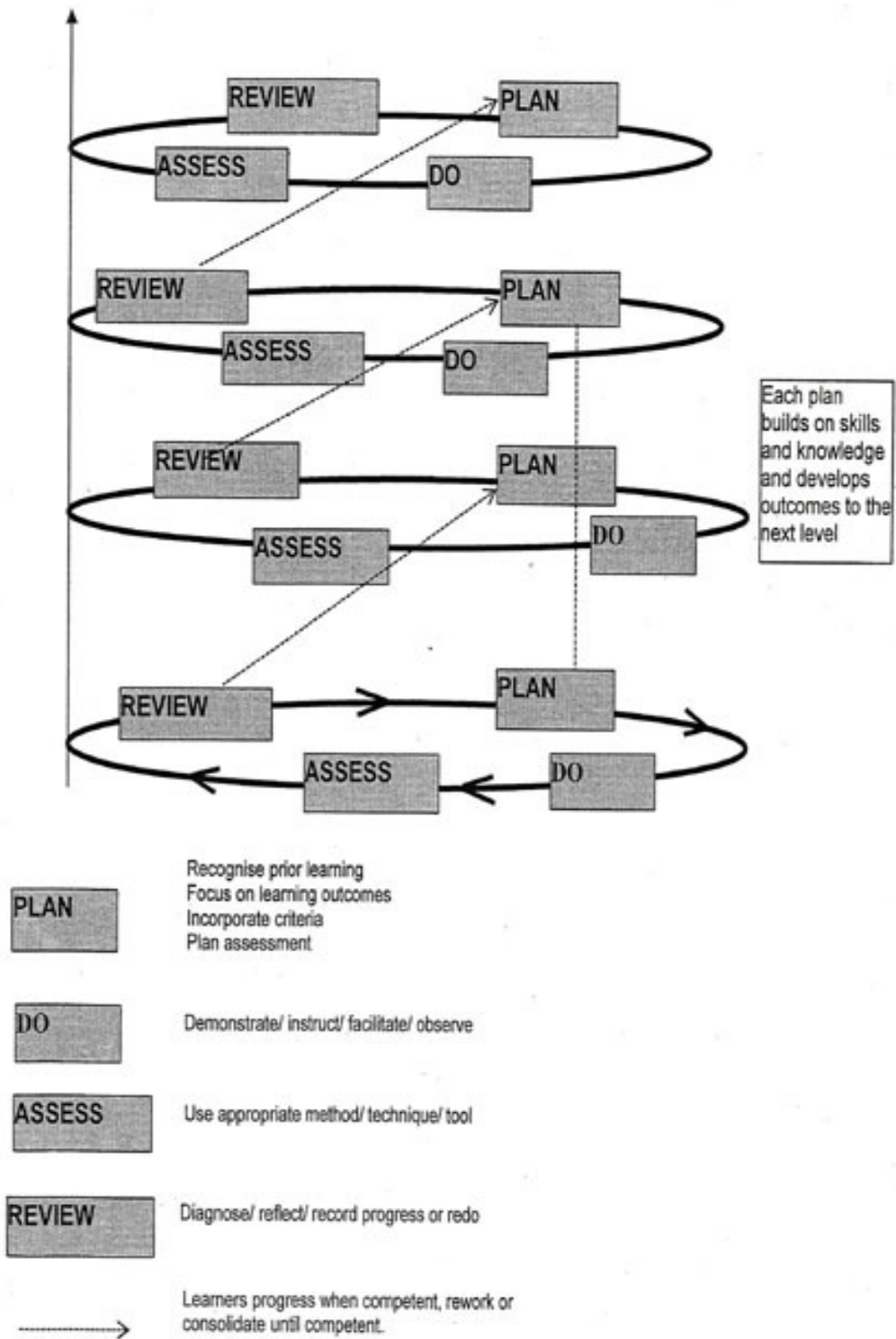
FIGURE 2.3: THE LEARNING SPIRAL

The assessment pathway (refer to fig.2.4) maps out a possible way a teacher could go about planning, implementing and reflecting on assessment. The process starts with a reflection on what the learners have already achieved in terms of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. A baseline assessment would be used and then the teacher would focus on the new skills, knowledge, values and attitudes the learners have to acquire. An appropriate activity or learning experience is planned and a suitable assessment is prepared. The activity and assessment are implemented. The activity or learning experience has to be designed in such a way that it gives the learners the opportunity to learn the skills that the activity require. At first the assessment is done informally and mainly through observations. When the teacher judges the learners to be ready a formal assessment takes place. The teacher analyses the assessment results and reflects on the success of the learning programme and assessment. Depending on the result of the analysis learners may progress to the next level or interventions may be needed. Reporting on the learning takes place and is discussed with the learners.

Reflect
| What do my learners already know?
| What can my learners already do?
| What attitudes and values do my learners have?
→ Check previous records
→ Do baseline assessment

| What knowledge, skills, attitudes and values do I want my learners to acquire next?
→ Focus
→ Build

Plan
| I design a learning experience that allows my learners to progress.
| I prepare for assessment.
→ Theme
→ Topic
→ Cater for different levels

Implement
| I create the appropriate learning environment and allow my learners to engage in the learning opportunities
→ Resources

Assess
| I assess my learners informally.
| I gather evidence of the progress of my learners towards the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
→ Planned observations
→ Incidental observations
→ Informal records

| I assess more formally when my learners are ready.
| I allow them to engage in an assessment task that provides concrete evidence of their achievement of the intended knowledge, skills, attitudes and values
→ Formal records

Reflect
| I analyse my records to find out which of my learners has not achieved the expected level of performance and which have exceeded it.
| I ask myself why?
→ Formal and informal records
→ Talk with learners

| I plan for learners to progress to new levels of knowledge, skills and values.
| I provide remediation for learners who are struggling.
| I provide consolidation for learners who need more opportunities

Report
| From time to time I talk with the learners about their progress and I summarise and interpret the records I have kept. I describe the level of achievement of my learners so that I can report appropriately

FIGURE 2.4: THE ASSESSMENT PATHWAY

The three examples of an teaching, learning and assessment plan have a common pattern of planning, implementation, assessment, reporting of performance, reflection, evaluation and review. Reflection and review play important roles in the alignment of the assessment with teaching and learning. The teacher has to reflect constantly on the process and make sure that the assessment and the teaching are aligned and that the learning activity is appropriate to the learning outcomes and the assessment.

2.9   SUMMARY

The alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is complex; however, the success of learning depends on such an alignment. Taxonomies are powerful tools that, if utilised correctly, contribute in a significant way in aligning teaching, learning and assessment as it targets cognitive levels and development in the achievement of the instructional objectives. This Chapter attempted to help the reader understand what teaching and learning mean. The role of assessment is explained, which is to monitor learning and understanding. In OBE the clarification of the outcomes is important because teachers need to identify outcomes and then teach towards them. Assessment needs to be aligned with the outcome because assessment is used to determine whether the outcome has been achieved. Formative assessment plays a particularly important role in the alignment of teaching and learning as it provides the opportunity for feedback. The teacher and learner use the feedback to determine where the gaps are and can then plan toward bridging the gaps. The feedback information is used to plan the next instructional objectives and to review the teaching, learning and assessment cycle.

The alignment of teaching, learning and assessment relies on a combination of strategies. The learning outcomes must be clearly defined and the assessment should assess the learners' achievement of the assessment standards. The taxonomies provide a framework for the alignment of teaching, learning and

assessment. Formative assessment and feedback provide a way to work towards alignment with the involvement of the teacher and the learners.

The next Chapter deals with the research methodology, the research design and strategies that are followed in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In order to answer the research questions, relevant research data are necessary. Research data can be secured and collected by using various techniques. The process of data collection and analysis in this study is based on qualitative research methodology. In this Chapter the research design employed in order to acquire information on the topic under discussion is explained. What follows therefore is a brief discussion of the qualitative research approach as well as the research design.

3.2   THE USE OF A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO RESEARCH

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers a variety of social research, drawing on a variety of disciplines such as sociology, social anthropology and social psychology (Denscombe, 2005:367). Qualitative research is a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:202). Creswell (1998:20) defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.

3.2.1   Characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative research emphasises the importance of looking at variables in the natural settings in which they are found (Key, 1997:1). Qualitative research broadly defined means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or means of quantification (Hoepfl, 1997:2). According to Denscombe (2005:267), what actually separates qualitative research and gives it its distinctive identity is the fact that it has its own special approach to the collection and analysis of data, which marks it out as quite different from its quantitative counterpart. Qualitative data are products of a process of interpretation, the data are produced by the way they are interpreted and used by researchers (Denscombe, 2005:268). Therefore qualitative data, which are very often 'words', have meaning in terms of the research once the researcher's interpretation has taken place.

Qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon and uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are (Hoepfl, 1997:3). The researcher works from the assumption that reality is socially constructed and dynamic (Key, 1997:1; Siegle, 2006:2). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:4), qualitative research has actual settings as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. Therefore the researcher will spend time in the natural setting to be able to understand the context in which the phenomenon occurs.

Qualitative research is descriptive, and qualitative researchers do not take anything for granted. In addition the qualitative research approach demands the assumption that nothing is trivial. In other words, the researcher will not filter any information, or immediately decide on the relevance of data and no assumptions will be made. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process and ask how people negotiate meaning. In qualitative research the data is analysed inductively (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998:6), in other words, the picture develops as the

research proceeds. Qualitative researchers do not know all the answers at the outset of the study; instead meaning takes shape as information is gathered. As opposed to quantitative research, in qualitative research the study concludes with hypotheses and does not begin with hypotheses and theories (Siegle, 2006:2). Qualitative research makes minor use of numerical indices; this approach rather searches for patterns and seeks pluralism and complexity (Siegle 2006:2).

According to Siegle (2006:2), the purpose of the qualitative approach of research, as apposed to the quantitative approach, is contextualisation and interpretation. The researcher seeks understanding of the different perspectives.

In this study the data were gathered by interacting with the research subjects in their own school environment and by getting their perspective on the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The researcher was not trying to verify a predetermined conclusion; however, the researcher investigated emerging patterns in a natural setting to conclude with hypotheses.

3.2.2   Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research

Key (1997:2) argues that some of the advantages of qualitative research are that it produces more in-depth, comprehensive information. It uses subjective information and participant observation to describe the context, or natural setting, of the variables under consideration, as well as the interactions of the different variables in the context. It seeks a wide understanding of the entire situation. Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study because they are concerned with the context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998:5). Some of the disadvantages may be that the subjectivity may bring the reliability and validity into question. Researcher bias is difficult to detect and the scope is limited due to the in-depth, comprehensive data-gathering approaches required (Key 1997:2).

According to Key (1997:4), there are several ways to maintain the validity of qualitative research. The subjects should provide the majority of the research input and it is the researcher's task to interpret the responses. Recording must be done accurately and the subjects must be given the opportunity to verify the transcripts. In this case great care was taken to record the data accurately and transcripts were checked by the researcher and the subjects and all data have been included.

3.2.3   Research design

A research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting your research (Mouton, 2004:55). According to De Vos (2002:271), some authors refer to "design" as all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the study. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:85) explain that the research design provides the overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects, and the data analyses that are conducted. According to Fouché (De Vos, 2002:271), it is important to differentiate between the research design and research methodology. Qualitative researchers almost always develop their own designs as they go along, using one or more of the available strategies or tools as an aid or guideline. Fouché (De Vos, 2002:271) further explains that in this context terms such as strategies, methods, traditions of inquiry, and approaches are related to the term "designs".

In qualitative research the researcher's choices and actions will determine the design (De Vos, 2002:272). In other words, if the researcher chooses to conduct an ethnographic study, then the inquiry will be characterized by observation, interviews and document study. The data analysis is mainly interpretive, involving descriptions of the phenomena (De Vos, 2002:274). The researcher investigates a natural setting and seeks to find patterns, which the researcher will interpret to describe the phenomenon.

3.2.4   The role of the researcher

In qualitative research the researcher is personally involved and therefore at risk of being partial (Siegle, 2006). Key (1997:1) agrees that the viewpoint is that from an insider, the reality is what people perceive it to be.

Humans are responsive to environmental cues and are able to interact with the situation; they have the ability to collect information at multiple levels simultaneously; they are able to perceive situations holistically; they are able to process data as soon as the data become available; they can provide immediate feedback and request verification of data; and they can explore atypical or unexpected responses. Therefore humans are instruments of choice for the naturalistic enquiry that qualitative research demands (Hoepfl, 1997:5).

The researcher observes and gathers information and seeks constantly to make meaning of the natural setting. The researcher is thus the primary instrument, which means the researcher must be empathetic in approaching the subjects. The researcher attempts to understand the world from the participants' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences (De Vos, 2002:292). The roles of participant-observer or interviewer are the typical research roles for most forms of qualitative inquiry McMillan & Schumacher (2001:435). The researcher needs to develop a rapport with the participants that will allow for the gathering of information from them. In this study the researcher attempted to approach the schools and participants with no predetermined conclusions about what might be found. The researcher made great efforts in establishing a favourable rapport with the participants by explaining that the aim of the study is to describe and interpret their reality.

3.2.5   Statement of subjectivity

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:411), disciplined subjectivity is the researcher's self-questioning and use of personal experiential empathy in data collection. Disciplined subjectivity reminds many researchers that the enquirer is part of the setting, context, and social phenomenon that he or she seeks to understand (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:41). The researcher should constantly be aware of the influence the researcher's presence may have on the participant. The teachers in this respect may feel they are "under investigation" and similarly the learners may feel the need to protect their teachers or their own actions. McMillan & Schumacher (2001:411) state that the progress of the study often depends primarily on the relationship the researcher builds with the participants. The researcher should rely on interpersonal skills to build trust and to be non-judgemental.

3.2.6   Validity and reliability in qualitative research

Validity and reliability of research are crucial in social research regardless of the disciplines and methods employed (Sherman & Webb, 1990:86). Regarding the validity or soundness of qualitative research, De Vos (2002:351) quotes Marshall & Rossman (1995) as follows: "… all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated." This implies that one has to ask the following questions:

- How credible are the particular findings? By what criteria can we judge them?
- How transferable and applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?

- How can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than a creation of the researcher's biases or prejudices? (De Vos, 2002:351).

According to De Vos (2002:351), Lincoln and Cuba (1985) refer to these questions as establishing the "truth value" of the study, i.e. its applicability, consistency and neutrality. Lincoln & Cuba (as referred to in De Vos, 2002:351) propose constructs that are more suitable to the qualitative paradigm than the conventional positivist paradigm – internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. These four constructs are:

- Credibility is suggested as an alternative to internal validity (De Vos, 2002:352). Internal validity, according to Freebody (2003:77), is the extent to which researchers concerned with the same data and constructs would be consistent in matching them. Hoepfl (1997:12) states that the naturalistic researcher assumes the presence of multiple realities and attempt to represent these multiple realities adequately, and credibility becomes the test for this. Validity in qualitative research is dependent on an in-depth description showing the complexities of variables and interactions.

- Transferability is an alternative to external validity. Freebody (2003:77) explains that internal validity involves the extent to which independent researchers working in the same or similar context would obtain consistent results. De Vos (2002:352) notes that transferability or generalization of a qualitative study may be problematic and is seen as weakness by some. However, the researcher may refer to the theoretical framework to demonstrate data collection and analysis strategies.

- Dependability is the alternative to reliability. Positivist notions of reliability assume an unchanging universe where inquiry could, quite logically, be replicated (De Vos, 2002:352). A qualitative study has a natural setting as its focus; therefore it has to take into account that "the social world is always being constructed." (De Vos, 2002:352).

- Confirmability captures the traditional concept of objectivity. In qualitative research the emphasis is on the data and the question to be answered is: do the data help confirm the general findings and lead to the implications? (De Vos, 2002:352).

During the data-gathering phase of this study the three schools under investigation represented the multiple realities that are present in a naturalistic setting. The biographical information on the teachers and the context of the schools were described in detail; during the data analysis the complexities came to the fore and triangulation was used as a form of verification of the data. The literature study provided the theoretical framework for the questions used during the interview process and the data analysis. The data collection and analysis strategies were based on a qualitative theoretical framework. The natural setting under investigation was treated as that: a setting that can change with time and circumstance. At the completion of the data analysis the conclusion that the researcher came to was that the general findings were confirmed and that recommendations could be made on these findings.

3.3   DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

Qualitative data collection is primarily in the form of words rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:41). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:106), the term "data" refers to the rough materials researchers collect from the world they are studying: they are the particulars that form the basis of the analysis. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:106) go further and explain that data include materials the researcher actively records as well as what others have created. Therefore the data collected may be in the form of interview transcripts and official documents as well as documents and work created by the participants.

The data collection strategies used in this study, namely individual interviews and content analysis, are discussed in detail in the following Section.

3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews may be used either as the primary strategy for data collection or in conjunction with observation and document analysis (Hoepfl, 1997:6). One-to-one interviews and focus groups as interviewing methods are commonly used; however, the one is not superior to the other (De Vos, 2002:291).

The qualitative interview is about the participants' stories, and the researcher is interested in these stories. The interviewer becomes part of a conversation. The interview is not one-sided as the researcher is constantly trying to understand the participant's world and this involves reflection on the description of the world (De Vos, 2002:292). The interviewer uses open-ended questions that do not predetermine the answers and that allow room for the participants to respond in their own terms (De Vos, 2002:293; Hoepfl, 1997:7). Bogdan and Biklen (1998:97) add that the goal of understanding how the person you are interviewing thinks is at the centre of the interview. The researcher chooses the data collection strategies based on the information that is required.

In this study, the researcher chose to conduct interviews as they allow the researcher to interact with the participants and to probe for more information.

3.3.1.1 Individual interviews

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:93), an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people but sometimes involving more, that is directed by one in order to get information from the other. There are three basic approaches to interviews in qualitative research: the informal, conversational interview; semi-structured interviews; and the standardised, open-ended interview (De Vos, 2002:297; Hoepfl, 1997:7).

The interviewer prepares an interview guide or "schedule" (Hoepfl, 1997:7). This schedule is a list of the questions the researcher wants to ask, however, it is only a guide as the researcher will respond to the answers and ask follow-up questions. Interview guides ensure good use of limited interview time; they make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic; and they help to keep interactions focussed (Hoepfl, 1997:7).

According to Borg and Gall (1989:452), the semi-structured interview has the advantage of being reasonably objective while still permitting a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions. The semi-structured interview is generally most appropriate for interview studies in education. It provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth and often permits gathering valuable data that could not be successfully obtained by any other approach.

In view of the above, the researcher chose to conduct semi-structured individual interviews with the teachers teaching grade 10 English as a home language. The researcher chose interviews because of the direct contact it provides with the participants. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:95) point out that good interviews are those in which the subjects are at ease and talk freely about their point of view. The researcher was of the opinion that the teachers would feel more at ease sharing their documents with the researcher after an interview has been conducted.

3.3.2   Content analysis

Content analysis was used because it is a valuable tool for obtaining certain types of information useful in identifying or solving educational problems (Borg & Gall, 1989:520). A content analysis is a detailed systematic examination of the content of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:142). Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analysing the content of text.

Mayring (2000:4) developed procedures of qualitative content analysis amongst which two approaches are central: inductive category development and deductive category application. Mayring (2000:4-5) goes further to explain that classical qualitative content analysis has few answers to the question from where the categories come, how the system of categories is developed. Within the framework of qualitative approaches it would be of central interest to develop the aspects of interpretation, the categories, as near as possible to the material.

3.3.3   Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the strategy of using several different kinds of data-collection instruments, such as tests, direct observation, interviews and content analysis, to explore a single problem or issue (Borg & Gall, 1989:393). De Vos (2003:341) adds that the most common type of triangulation is of measures. Researchers take multiple measures of the same phenomenon and are therefore more likely to see all aspects of the phenomenon.

In this study triangulation was achieved by using two methods of data collection, namely individual interviews with the teachers and content analysis of their lesson planning. The content analysis was used as a form of triangulation to verify the findings of the individual interviews. As Borg and Gall (1989:522) put it, content analysis is a useful tool to check research findings obtained from studies using other methods, such as interviews.

3.4   CHOICE OF SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

Schools where the research was conducted were chosen according to the area in which the researcher works and lives. The area covers an inner city area, a socio-economically poor area, and a suburb where there is a mix of affluence and poverty. The three schools that were purposively selected all fall in District 9 of

the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The relevance of this is that the schools and teachers have access to the same information from the department. The three schools also fall under the same cluster group, which means their portfolios are moderated by the same group of people and the same criteria are used for all the schools.

The three schools vary in size and class sizes. All three schools are co-educational schools. The researcher chose the schools because of their proximity to the researcher, which made it practical. Furthermore, the researcher has had contact with some of the teachers, and therefore accessibility was not problematic. The schools presented variables in terms of composition, size, class sizes and academic results.

The researcher has obtained permission from the principals to conduct research in their schools. The principals and teachers were given information regarding the purpose of the research. It was explained that the results would be reported on anonymously, furthermore that the results would be made available to the schools.

The teachers were provided with information regarding the research; that it meant that they would participate in an interview and that the researcher would like to establish how they go about the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in the teaching of English home language.

3.4.1   The three chosen schools

For the purpose of the research the schools are referred to as schools A, B, and C. School A is a co-educational secondary school with a learner population of 1 250 ranging from grade 8 to grade 12. There are 310 learners in grade 10 and there are 9 English classes with an average of 34 learners per class. There are six teachers teaching English in grade 10. This is a very well established school

with a history of good results; therefore this school sets its own preliminary matric examination papers, as opposed to the majority of the schools in the district that choose to write the GDE preliminary matric examination. The English department is motivated and keeps up with the latest developments. The teachers attended GDE training courses.

School B is also a co-educational secondary school with a learner population of 1 200 from grade 8 to 12. There are 248 learners in grade 10, and there are six English classes with an average of 42 learners per class. There are four teachers teaching English in grade 10. At the time of the interview there was a lot of pressure on the teachers to make up the time lost during the strike action; therefore the school day was lengthened. The teachers attended the GDE training courses.

School C is a co-educational secondary school with a learner population of 1 100 from grade 8 to 12. There are 200 learners in grade 10, and there are six English classes with an average of 33 learners per class. There are four teachers teaching English in grade 10.

3.4.2   Choice of participants

The participants were chosen because they are considered to be information rich. The researcher wanted to have access to information about teaching, learning and assessment in grade 10 and needed to interview teachers who would be knowledgeable about OBE and prepared to share information regarding teaching, learning and assessment in grade 10. To be able to make the choice, the researcher asked the cluster leader for advice regarding information-rich participants. The researcher then approached the schools and spoke to the English Heads of Department and principals regarding the grade 10 English teachers to be interviewed. On their recommendation a teacher was approached.

3.4.3. The participants

The teacher from school A is a female teacher with four years teaching experience. She teaches English home language to grades 9 to 12 and Computer Applications Technology to grade 10. Her qualifications are a B.A. (Honours) degree and a Higher Diploma in Education; she is in the process of completing a Master's degree in English Literature. She has received training in OBE and OBA in the General Education and Training (GET) phase and the Further Education and Training (FET) band from the GDE.

The teacher from school B is a male teacher with 10 years teaching experience. He teaches English home language from grade 8 to 10. He has a B.A. degree and a Higher Diploma in Education. He has received training in OBE in the GET phase and FET band from the GDE.

The teacher from school C is a female teacher with 19 years teaching experience. She teaches English home language to grades 8, 10, 11 and 12. She has a B.A. (Honours) degree and a Higher Diploma in Education and has received training in OBE the Further Education and Training Phase offered by the GDE and NAPTOSA.

Table 3.1 Teacher information

Teacher	A1	A2	A3
Gender	Female	Male	Female
Age	30	36	42
Academic qualifications	B.A. (Hons)	B.A.	B.A. (Hons)
Professional qualifications	HDE	HDE	HDE
Further field of study	Masters in Eng.	-	-
Years of experience in teaching	4	10	19
Training in OBE	GDE	GDE	GDE Naptosa

In Section 4.2 a more detailed description is provided of each of the participants.

3.5   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher chose to use individual interviews and content analysis as data collection strategies. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:95), good interviews produce rich data filled with words that reveal the respondents' perspectives. The researcher made use of semi-structured interviews guided by an interview schedule. As De Vos (2002:302) explains, "the method gives the researcher and participant more flexibility. The researcher is able to follow up particular interesting avenues that emerge."

3.5.1   Individual interviews with teachers

Individual interviews were conducted with teachers teaching grade 10 English. At each of the three schools one teacher was interviewed. The teachers were interviewed to determine whether in planning teaching and assessment and in the delivery of teaching and assessment, alignment is consciously managed. The researcher also needed to establish whether feedback of learning is used to inform the planning and delivery of instruction and assessment.

The researcher asked the participants to indicate which date and time would be most suitable for an interview. The researcher was not prescriptive about the setting as it was important for the participants to feel comfortable and able to communicate freely.

The researcher used an interview guide to direct the interview but also responded to the interviewees' responses. The interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed verbatim. The researcher also made notes on the conversation during and after the recorded interview.

3.5.1.1 The interview guide

The interview guide was drawn up to ensure that the interview stays on track and to keep to the limited time available. Producing a schedule beforehand forces the researcher to think explicitly about what the interview might cover, it also forces the researcher to think about the wording of questions or sensitive areas (De Vos, 2002:302).

Table 3.2: The interview guide

Questions	Validating the question
1 Please describe the process that you follow when you plan teaching and learning activities.	Design down This question relates to the design-down principle. This principle is also called planning backwards. Teachers plan and design the curriculum backwards from the outcomes the learners need to achieve. The 'design-down' principle is described as short-term outcomes derived from the significant long-term outcomes that educators want their learners to achieve. In other words, the teacher's planning starts with the desired learning outcomes and from there assessment and teaching are planned. (See Section 2.3.4).
2 Please explain to me how you go about to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned.	As Biggs (1999:28)) puts it; adopting an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment should bring about a match between what is taught, what is assessed and what is intended to be learnt. Spady (1994:87) uses "matchmaking" as a

		synonym for alignment. He explains that alignment basically means the "perfect match" of four things, namely:
		1. what is important for the learners to learn;
		2. what we are teaching them;
		3. how we are teaching them; and
		4. what we are assessing when we are asking them to perform. (See Section 2.7).
		When teachers plan a performance assessment they should ask what learners could do to demonstrate how well they have achieved the task (Killen, 2004:78). Performance assessment must measure a truly measurable and teachable skill (Popham, 2000:285). Teachers teach towards the skill and the assessment. (See Section 2.5.5)
3	How do you ensure that learners know exactly what the intended outcomes are?	The clarity of focus on outcomes of significance.
		The teacher and learners focus clearly and consistently on the desired outcomes of achievement. There is no element of surprise and the criteria of assessment are known beforehand (Acharya, 2003:3; Killen, 2004:67; Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72; Mahomed, 2001:17). According to Mahomed (2001:19), one of the advantages of OBE is the clarity of focus because teachers and learners know exactly what to expect. (See Section 2.3.4)

4	Explain how you ensure that learners know exactly what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes.	The clarity of focus on outcomes of significance.
		The teacher and learners focus clearly and consistently on the desired outcomes of achievement. There is no element of surprise and the criteria of assessment are known beforehand (Acharya, 2003:3; Killen, 2004:67; Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72; Mahomed, 2001:17). According to Mahomed (2001:19), one of the advantages of OBE is the clarity of focus because teachers and learners know exactly what to expect. Teachers align their teaching with outcomes and learners know what criteria are used to assess performance and where they stand in terms of goals achieved. This means that the teachers and learners share the responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes. Teachers should have high expectations for all students; they should expect all students to achieve significant outcomes to high standards (Killen & Hattingh, 2004:72). There has to be a high level of performance to achieve high expectations. Teachers establish clear 'criterion-defined' standards of performance that all students are expected to reach or exceed before judging the work to be completed. The

		performances are measured against a set of criteria as opposed to a set of norms. All learners have access to a challenging curriculum (Mahomed, 2001:17). (See Section 2.3.4)
5	How do you use assessment FOR learning as opposed to assessment OF learning?	Formative assessment is used when a teacher wants to find out what progress the learners are making. The outcome of the assessment will assist the teacher to adjust or revise the lesson plan and to give the learners advice on how to improve their work (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2003:90). As part of informal, continuous assessment, formative assessment is used to guide and measure the learning process. Formative assessment is also referred to as assessment for learning. Assessment can be regarded as formative only if it leads to actions by teachers and/or learners that improve learning. (Boston, 2002:1; Carless, 2005:44; Malcolm et al., 1999) (See Section 2.5.6)
6	How do you decide WHAT to assess and what ASSESSMENT METHODS to use?	The learning experience should allow learners to develop understanding; therefore teachers need to know how their learners learn and how they know what they understand. The design of the learning activity must enable the learners to engage with the learning material. The assessment must measure the learners' level of

		competence and understanding.
		When teachers plan a performance assessment they should ask what learners could do to demonstrate how well they have achieved the task (Killen, 2004:78). Performance assessment must measure a truly measurable and teachable skill (Popham, 2000:285). Teachers teach towards the skill and the assessment. (See Section 2.5.5)
7	How do you use assessment to plan the next step or phase in your teaching?	Formative assessment is used when a teacher wants to find out what progress the learners are making. The outcome of the assessment will assist the teacher to adjust or revise the lesson plan and to give the learners advice on how to improve their work (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2003:90). Formative assessment identifies the progress of the learners and the next step in the learning programme. (See Section 2.5.6)
8	How do you use feedback information given to the learners to improve the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?	Metaphorically speaking, if we liken alignment of teaching, learning and assessment to a spin top, then feedback is the force that spins the top (Birenbaum, 2003:23). Feedback provides the teacher with valuable information regarding the learning and teaching process. When the teacher identifies gaps in the learning, there could be a gap in the acquisition of knowledge or

		skills; the teacher can then review the teaching plan or strategies accordingly. Therefore, the value of formative assessment is in the feedback that can lead to the improvement of teaching and learning. (See Section 2.6).
9	Is there anything you would like to share with me with regard to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?	Biggs (1999) is quoted in Birenbaum (2003:15) as saying that it is commonly acknowledged that in order to meet the goals of education an alignment or a high consistency between teaching, learning and assessment is required (See Section 2.7).

3.5.1.2 Transcribing the data

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:130), the typed forms of the recorded interviews are called transcripts and transcripts are the main data of many interview studies.

The researcher recorded the interviews on a tape recorder and made notes immediately after the interviews. Regarding the recording of interviews, Bogdan & Biklen (1998:130) point out that long interviews are difficult to recapture fully; therefore, when a study involves extensive interviewing, the use of a tape recorder is recommended. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim and checked the transcripts against the tape recording to ensure that it was transcribed correctly.

3.5.1.3 Analysis of the data

Qualitative research produces large volumes of data in non-standard format and one way of interpreting the data is to become immersed in the data and to make

an intuitive attempt to identify key categories and connections (Denscombe, 2005:271). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:461) qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patters (relationships) among categories. Most categories and patterns emerge from the data, rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection. Qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing, and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:462).

3.5.1.4   Data analysis procedure

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:464) analysis begins as soon as the first set of data is gathered and runs parallel to data collection because each activity (data collections and interim analysis) informs and drives the other activities.

The process of preserving the data and meaning on tape and the combined transcription and preliminary analysis greatly increase the efficiency of data analysis (De Vos, 2002:343). The researcher conducted a preliminary analysis by transcribing the data. Thereafter the researcher thoroughly analysed the transcripts and searched for topics and patterns. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998:171), you search through your data for regularities and patterns as well as for topics covered in your data, and then you write down words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. The main intellectual tool is comparison. The technique of *comparing and contrasting* is used in practically all intellectual tasks during analysis: identifying data segments, naming a topic/category, and classifying (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:464). Apart from searching for regularities and patterns the researcher also analysed the data for subtleties in the interviews; the subtext as it were. De Vos (2002:344) explains that as a popular form of analysis, classification involves identifying five or six general themes. These themes in turn consist of sub themes represented by segments of

data. The themes or categories are tentative in the beginning, and they remain flexible, not rigid schemes.

3.5.1.5 Coding and categorising the data

Coding is the process of dividing data into parts by a classification system (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:467). Denscombe (2005:271) explains that coding the data involves breaking the data down into units for analysis and categorising the units. In analytic coding the researcher decides on the units that will be used for the analysis; in interview transcripts the units might consist of specific words that appear or are used. More commonly, qualitative researchers will be on the lookout for the occurrence of particular ideas or events in the data (Denscombe, 2005:271).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:144), Creswell (1998) identified the following steps that a researcher takes in data analysis:
1. Identify statements that relate to the topic.
2. Group statements into "meaning units".
3. Seek divergent perspectives.
4. Construct a composite.

In this case the data were analysed to find statements or phrases that related to the themes that emerged from the literature study. The statements and phrases were then grouped into units or categories. Major categories were identified and from there sub-categories emerged. The manifestation of these categories and sub-categories was recorded and analysed.

3.5.2 Field notes

Observations of what occurs while the researcher is in the field are recorded as field notes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:422). Denscombe (2005:175) explains

that under certain circumstances researchers will have to rely on field notes written soon after the interview took place or actually during the interview. A crucial advantage of taking field notes at an interview is that the researcher can fill in some of the relevant information that the audio tape-recording alone might miss. Field notes can cover information relating to the context of the location, the climate and atmosphere under which the interview was conducted, clues about the intent behind the statements and comments on aspects of non-verbal communication as they were deemed relevant to the interviews. The notes are dated and the contexts are identified; detailed descriptive fields notes are recorded that are not vague or judgemental. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:442)

The researcher made notes during and after the interviews regarding the context of the interviews and the participants. The information in the notes is in addition to the information gathered from the interviews.

3.5.3   Content analysis

For the purpose of triangulation the researcher made a content analysis of the teachers' assessment packages. The contents of the assessment packages are discussed in detail in Section 4.6.1.

3.5.3.1 Content analysis of the assessment packages

The criteria of definition were the following:

3.5.3.1.1 There is clarity of focus

The clarity of focus on outcomes of significance

The teacher and learners focus clearly and consistently on the desired outcomes of achievement. There is no element of surprise and the criteria of assessment are known beforehand (Acharya, 2003:3; Killen, 2004:67; Killen & Hattingh,

2004:72; Mahomed, 2001:17). According to Mahomed (2001:19), one of the advantages of OBE is the clarity of focus because teachers and learners know exactly what to expect. Teachers align their teaching with outcomes and learners know what criteria are used to assess performance and where they stand in terms of goals achieved. This means that the teachers and learners share the responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes (see Section 2.3.4).

3.5.3.1.2 Instructional activities enable learners to achieve outcomes and perform assessment tasks

Instructional activities include a task to be performed with a rubric (see Section 2.5.7) by which the performance on the task will be evaluated. Teachers teach to the assessment and the learners know which rubric will be used for the assessment (see Section 2.5.4)

According to Nitko (2004:237), performance assessment presents a hands-on task requiring students to do an activity that requires applying their knowledge and skills from several learning targets. It also uses clearly defined criteria to evaluate how well the student has achieved this application. In other words, the learner must apply the knowledge to carry out the task and must work towards a clear goal (see Section 2.5.5).

3.5.3.1.3 Details of the assessment strategy are clear

Assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning. A **Work Schedule** describing the teaching and learning that will happen in a grade over a period of a year is developed. A work schedule interprets the LOs and ASs in the National Curriculum Statements into planned learning activities. It takes into account the time available, outlines the SKVA to be attained, outlines the assessment, considers the learners' specific needs, and identifies resources and priorities (see Section 2.8.1).

3.5.3.1.4 Formative assessment facilitates the learning process

Formative assessment is used when a teacher wants to find out what progress the learners are making. The outcome of the assessment will assist the teacher to adjust or revise the lesson plan and to give the learners advice on how to improve their work (Van Rooyen & Prinsloo, 2003:90). As part of informal, continuous assessment, formative assessment is used to guide and measure the learning process (see Section 2.5.6).

3.5.3.1.5 Assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities

Feedback is information about how we did in the light of some goal (Wiggens, 2006:20). Harlen & Winter (2004:400) explain that feedback from their teacher is the means by which learners find out how their work matches up to expectations, i.e. to what extent they have met intended goals. Metaphorically speaking, if we liken alignment of teaching, learning and assessment to a spin top, then feedback is the force that spins the top (Birenbaum, 2003:23).

When the teacher identifies gaps in the learning there could be a gap in the acquisition of knowledge or skills; the teacher can then review the teaching plan or strategies accordingly. Therefore, the value of formative assessment is in the feedback that can lead to the improvement of teaching and learning (see Section 2.6).

3.5.3.2 Content analysis procedure

As a general rule content analysis is systematic, and measures are taken to make the process as objective as possible (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:142). The specific body of material to be studied is identified (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:142), a criterion of definition, derived from theoretical background and research questions that determine the aspects of the textual material to be taken into

account (Mayring, 2000:6). Following this criterion the material is worked through and categories are deduced tentatively and step by step (Mayring, 2000:6). The material is studied to determine these categories that are revised and reduced to main categories and checked in respect of their reliability both formatively and summatively (Mayring, 2000:6). In the case of this study the formative and summative checks of reliability were performed by a moderator. The results of the content analysis were reflected in table format.

3.6   SUMMARY

This Chapter discussed the use of qualitative research. The data collection, which consisted of individual and focus group interviews as well as document analysis were described. The research design and choice of participants were described and issues regarding validity and reliability as well as subjectivity were addressed. The themes that emerged from the data collected will be discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter the data generated from the individual interviews and the assessment packages are presented. The participants are the three teachers who were selected. These teachers teach grade 10 English as a home language in three different government schools in district nine of Johannesburg. Biographical data of the participants are given to create a clearer picture of their situations and to place their responses in context. The perceptions of the participants are given in narrative form and thereafter interpreted. Planning and assessment documents were analysed as a form of triangulation to verify the findings of the interviews.

4.2   BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPANTS

The biographical data of the three participants are clarified to provide a clearer picture of their responses. For the purpose of anonymity each participant is given a code that serves as reference for the rest of the study. The code for the first participant will be A1, the second A2, and the third A3.

4.2.1 Teacher A1

A1 is a 28-year-old female teacher and English is her home language. She has a B.A. (Honours) degree and a teaching diploma; she is in the process of completing a Master's degree in English literature. She has been teaching for four years and said that she enjoyed teaching. She expressed some negativity towards the Education Department in terms of the expectations of teachers, the very high teaching loads and the high number of assessment tasks. She was also concerned that the subject matter was not always relevant and that she was not "getting to all the learners". She also expressed her frustration about the fact

that the learners were not "interested in learning" and that the big classes made everything more difficult.

4.2.2 Teacher A2

A2 is a 36-year-old male teacher and English is his second language. He has a B.A. degree and a teaching diploma. He has been teaching for 10 years. He explained that he saw his role as teacher not only to teach English but also to make the learners aware of what is going on around them. It is also very important to him that the lessons are relevant to the learners' experiences and that he connects with the children. He struggles with the fact that the classes are big and that there are so many different academic abilities in one class. He does, however, seem to cope with the situation by using groups and peer assessment. He was a very willing participant and made himself readily available for the interview even though the teachers at his school were under tremendous pressure at the time to catch up time lost during the teachers' strike in June. At first he was a little defensive and the researcher got the impression that he wanted to give the right answers but he became more relaxed as the interview progressed. He expressed his frustration with the fact that they do not have an English Head of Department at his school and that they do not have set works in grade 10 and that literature is only introduced in grade 12. He was very eager to share resources and to cooperate with the researcher.

4.2.3 Teacher A3

A3 is a 42-year-old female teacher and English is her home language. She has a B.A. (Honours) degree and a teaching diploma. She has been teaching for 19 years. She was a very willing participant and was prepared to fit the interview in with a very busy family life. A3 indicated that she was a teacher who thought about her teaching and what she wanted to achieve. She confessed to the fact that she did not think that OBE was working. She felt that "teachers know in their

heads what the end product must be and they teach to that". She is extremely well organised and said that she was constantly marking. She has a focussed and methodical approach and said that she had no discipline issues.

4.3 PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The interviews with the teachers were conducted at a time and place convenient for the teachers, namely at their schools immediately after school. At the beginning of each interview the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the teacher as a way of introduction. Great pains were taken to assure the teachers that the content of the interviews would remain confidential.

The interviews were recorded in their entirety on audiotape to help the researcher with the transcription and the review of the interviews. During the interviews the researcher made notes regarding the teachers' expressions and attitudes that might be useful in the final analysis. The researcher's observations were also recorded by means of field notes that were written during and immediately after each interview. Complete transcripts were made of the interviews (see Appendix A).

The researcher used the questions on the interview guide (see Section 3.5.1.1). Open-ended questions were used and where necessary the questions were rephrased when the researcher sensed that the teacher did not understand the question. Follow-up questions were asked and the teachers were encouraged to elaborate or to use examples.

4.4 PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The researcher did a content analysis of the planning documents and assessment packages of the three teachers that were interviewed. The purpose

of the content analysis was triangulation (refer to Section 3.3.3) to verify the findings of the interviews. The packages included at least three examples of lesson activities used by the teachers. Each assessment package typically contained the instructions to the learners, the purpose of the activity and the assessment of the activity.

The researcher analysed the content according to the criteria for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment as discussed in Section 3.5.3.1. Each teacher's planning documents and assessment package were analysed and the data were recorded on a chart (see Appendix B).

4.5 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The individual interviews with the teachers provided information regarding how they aligned teaching, learning and assessment in teaching grade 10 English as a home language and the challenges they face in doing so.

4.5.1 Analysis of the individual interviews

The individual interviews produced valuable information about the teachers' ability to align teaching, learning and assessment. The report of this information is presented in the following sections.

4.5.1.1 The process that is followed when planning teaching, learning and assessment

All three teachers referred to a plan that must be followed in order to align teaching, learning and assessment. Their responses were confident and direct. The teachers themselves do not come up with the planning but follow a plan drawn up by a coordinator or Head of Department. The plan consists of the work

to be covered per term, the types of tasks to be completed as well as the common tasks. The common tasks are the tests, examinations and writing tasks to be completed by the learners in the grade. The common tasks for assessment are used to record marks. In the case of A2 where there is no Head of Department the syllabus is followed. A2 was the only teacher to refer to the curriculum, or syllabus as he called it, which must be followed. From the curriculum requirements he would then plan a theme and activities and identify the objectives for each lesson. He maintained that he did not follow stereotypical activities but did refer to essay-writing activities as well as comprehensions and worksheets based on the theme.

A3 referred to a theme that was developed by the grade 10 coordinator as well as the set work and activities. The term plan is developed from that. During the term she would respond to problems that she would pick up when assessing the learners' work and plan her teaching according to the learners' needs.

A1 was the only teacher to mention that she "works backwards" from the assessment to see what should be taught in order for the learners to be assessed. She looked at the assessment that needed to be done and chose an appropriate task: "...what needs to be assessed and then work backwards, basically I'll say I need to do a piece on descriptive writing...what do I need to teach them and develop a lesson out of that."

Conclusion

The teachers did not refer to the learning outcomes or assessment standards in their planning of teaching, learning and assessment. The impression is that their planning was task orientated, that they had to do a certain number of tasks per term and that their planning was guided by that. The teachers felt that as long as the plan was followed effective teaching, learning and assessment would take place. Although OBE practice requires that teaching, learning and assessment

form a tight unit, it is evident that assessment is regarded as an activity to be added on to the end of teaching and as a means to collect the required number of marks per term. The assessment tasks are used to assess the learning, in other words assessment of learning takes place but not assessment for learning. When planning teaching, learning and assessment teachers are required to consider how the assessment tasks will contribute to effective teaching and learning. Formative assessment, for example, is used to find out what progress the learners are making (Section 2.5.6). Teachers analyse the assessment results, which will lead them to adjust their lesson plan, and give the learners advice on how to improve their work, thus aligning teaching and learning. The teachers did not make use of educational taxonomies to plan teaching, learning and assessment at the various cognitive levels.

4.5.1.2   Ensuring that learning, teaching and assessment are aligned

The three teachers responded differently to how they ensure that learning, teaching and assessment are aligned. A1 was the only one to mention the learning outcomes and assessment standards that are used to indicate what should be taught, learnt and assessed. She referred to the assessment tool (the rubric) and said that "the rubric explains what I am looking for." Planning teaching backwards from the assessment task was again mentioned as important.

A3 had a more analytical approach. She used baseline assessment to plan the teaching. She indicated that after determining what the learners knew the teachers usually knew how and what they would teach. Content, in terms of set work, is tested to see if "what we have taught them has been correctly taught."

A2 took a long-term view of teaching, he saw grade 12 as the end goal and felt the learners needed to understand that that was what they were working towards. The researcher got the impression that this teacher was not too sure about what alignment meant; he was very practical in his response and made mention of

specific things the learners needed to know and how he used peer assessment to assist them in their learning.

Conclusion

Not all the teachers are consciously working towards aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It seems as if it is something they intuitively know has to be done, however only one teacher was aware that the learning outcomes and assessment standards with the rubric play a role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. To align teaching, learning and assessment the learning outcomes and assessment standards must be taught and assessed. Teachers choose appropriate activities that will allow the learners to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment standards. Consequently the assessment task will be designed to assess the learners' achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment tasks. Two teachers planned backwards from the required assessment task but not from the required learning outcomes and assessment standards.

4.5.1.3 Ensuring that the learners know exactly what the intended outcomes are

Two teachers felt that there was no point in explaining to the learners what the intended outcomes were because the learners are not interested and the learning outcomes meant nothing to them. There was evidence of a more practical approach where the learners were told what they have to do to complete the task. The learners are told what will be assessed and they are given a guideline in terms of a checklist and examples in the case of A3. If the learning outcomes and assessment standards are listed for the learners it is merely because it is required by the Gauteng Education Department and it is not used to inform the learners of what the intended outcomes are as such. The learning outcomes and assessment standards are not used to help with the alignment of teaching,

learning and assessment. A1 admitted that her negative attitude towards the outcomes and assessment standards and the learners' lack of interest have had an influence on the way she taught.

A2 concentrated on the lesson objectives. He felt that although he does not tell the learners what the intended outcomes and objectives are, the learners know most of the time what the objectives are through the questions given to them before the activity. He is a traditional teacher by his own admission and he gives them "the scope of the assessment", which means that he tells them what to learn for the assessment.

Conclusion

With all three teachers interviewed there was a clear sense that the learners knew "what they had to do" without having to be told explicitly. This knowledge of what they have to do is however not equal to knowing what the intended outcomes are and which assessment standards are at stake. If a learner knows that an essay should be written it is not clear whether the learner knows which learning outcomes and assessment standards will be achieved and the teachers interviewed clearly did not think it was necessary to educate the learners in terms of the learning outcomes and assessment standards.

4.5.1.4 Ensuring that the learners know exactly what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes

The teachers again responded differently to the request, "Explain how you ensure that the learners know exactly what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes." A2 repeated what he had said, namely that he gave the learners "a scope" of what they needed to know and informed them that "at the end you will be acquainted with the following issues."

One teacher used feedback after assessing their work to show the learners what to do to achieve the outcomes. She discussed the work after handing it back to the learners and gave verbal feedback. She points out to the learners where they have gone wrong and feels that she constantly reminds the learners of what they have to do to achieve the outcomes. After the learners' work has been assessed and returned to them the teachers point out to the learners what they should have done to achieve the outcomes. A3 used her focussed teaching approach, which she calls workshopping, where she guides the learners step by step through a process and by showing the learners good examples.

Conclusion

The teachers make use of a guided approach; the learners are told what to do and this is reinforced verbally. The teachers seem to focus on the tasks that the learners need to do and preparing them for the tasks. For the teachers the outcomes are embedded in the task. After the completion of the tasks the learners receive feedback and only then does it become clear what they should have done to achieve the intended outcomes.

The teachers do not use the assessment tool as a means to explain to the learners what they have to do to achieve the outcomes before they commence with the task. There is no clarity of focus in terms of the intended outcomes (Section 2.3.4). The learners may know how to complete the task, for example how to write an essay; the learning outcomes and assessment standards are however not made clear and this is lacking in all three cases investigated. If the assessment tool is explained to the learners before they perform the tasks, the learners will understand what the expected outcomes are and what they have to do to achieve the outcomes. The assessment tool plays an important role in informing the learners what the learning outcomes and assessment standards are. If, for example, the learners have access to the rubric before the assessment takes place and if the rubric is explained to the learners, the intended outcomes

and the criteria to assess the achievement of the outcomes are made clear by the assessment tool. The assessment tool will indicate to the learners what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes.

4.5.1.5 Using assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning

A1 admitted that it was a weakness in her teaching and felt that because of the required number of tasks she did not have the time to concentrate on assessment for learning. A3 said that the learners had the opportunity to look at the rubric when their work was returned to them to see where they went wrong. A2 felt that he used questions that the learners could relate to which the researcher understood to mean that he used questions they could understand. He again referred to peer assessments and presentations by the learners. The teacher felt that by using peer assessments the learners learnt from one another, as they would ask probing questions, asking their peers to explain or elaborate and thus contributing to the learning process.

Conclusion

Most of the tasks and assessments were geared towards assessing learning and not a great deal of attention was paid to assessment for learning. The researcher felt that the teachers are not really aware of the difference between assessment for learning and assessment of learning. The teachers did not make use of feedback to the learners to help the learners assess their own achievements and learn from their mistakes. Follow-up activities would also be a way to assess for learning, as the learners would have an opportunity to correct their mistakes. The assessments are used to accumulate the required number of marks per term to be used for recording, teachers are not using assessments to assess learning or for learning. Formative assessment is assessment for learning (Section 2.5.6), as

it is a way to readjust teaching based on the assessment result and the learners are able to interpret their own learning.

4.5.1.6 How teachers decide what to assess and what assessment methods to use

All three teachers mentioned that they looked at the mistakes the learners made and planned their assessments from there. Two teachers also said that they looked at the plan, be it the assessment planned for the term or the planned theme, and then decided on their assessments.

The assessment methods used varied from different types of essays, for example narrative essays or literature essays, written tests or examinations on literature and comprehension and language, oral presentations, discussions and prepared speeches.

Conclusion

The teachers responded to the learners' weak areas, in the sense that mistakes identified become part of the plan for the next assessment. The methods varied and they did not explain why they used a particular method, which could mean that the method is not used as a tool to align teaching, learning and assessment but forms part of the continuous assessment requirements from the Gauteng Education Department.

The teachers' decisions regarding what to assess are governed by the tasks that the learners are required to do. In language teaching these tasks would typically mean a certain number of essays, transactional writing pieces, orals and tests per term. The decisions regarding what to assess were not determined by the learning outcomes and assessment standards that needed to be addressed. The assessment methods were dependent on the tasks planned.

Ideally the decision on the assessment method should be based on the learning outcomes and the assessment standards. The assessment method should be suitable; it must allow the learners to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcome and assessment standards. The characteristics of authentic assessment are that the learners engage in real-world tasks, which will allow them to demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Section 2.5.4). This is absent in the teachers' answers. When planning assessments it is important to know at which cognitive levels assessment will take place. The teachers did not mention the cognitive levels in their decisions regarding assessments and educational taxonomies were not mentioned.

4.5.1.7 How teachers use assessment to plan the next step or phase in their teaching

The teachers were unanimous in their response that they analysed the learners' work and identified the mistakes that the learners made and planned the next phase of teaching from there. One teacher said that she identified their weaknesses and that "honing in on what is a weakness in their work" becomes her next teaching activity. A3 said that after looking at the learners' work; "whatever is missing, you teach next".

Conclusion

The teachers made it clear that they responded to the mistakes that they identified in the learners' work. It was evident that they felt it was important that the learners' mistakes were addressed and the gaps filled before they moved on with their planned activities. In this sense the teachers aligned teaching, learning and assessment by focussing on the gaps in the learning. This alignment is however intuitive, the alignment is not formally planned or part of the planning of learning, teaching and assessment. The teachers respond to the mistakes the

learners make, therefore the filling in of the gaps and teaching to the mistakes identified occur in an unstructured manner.

According to the cycle of teaching, learning and assessing (Figure 2.2), teachers reflect on the results after the assessment and from there select the intended learning outcomes for the next phase of teaching. The teachers then look at the mistakes and respond to that in the next teaching, learning and assessment cycle.

4.5.1.8   How feedback information given to the learners is used to improve the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment

Two teachers responded by saying that they identified the common mistakes made by the learners in a certain activity and discussed these errors with the learners after the work had been given back. One teacher mentioned that he would then do another exercise and look for development in the learners. A3 said that she would also indicate on the rubric where each learner went wrong. She would, in addition to the individual feedback, also do a general or generic feedback with the whole class.

A1 said that she did not have time to use the feedback information because there were too many tasks to get through. She also added that the learners had no desire to change. She said that she felt she had some success with certain individuals who showed the inclination to focus on their weaknesses and improve their mistakes.

Conclusion

In terms of feedback the teachers also alerted the learners to their mistakes and on correcting the mistakes. Feedback plays a major role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment (Section 2.6). It is used to identify gaps

between the desired outcomes and the learners' current knowledge. Furthermore feedback is used to provide the teachers with important information about the learning and teaching process. The two teachers who did use the feedback information for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment focussed on the mistakes the learners made and worked towards filling the gaps. There is no indication whether the gaps are between the outcomes that had to be achieved and the learners' current knowledge. Even though identifying mistakes and correcting them is an important part of the teaching and learning process, it is not an adequate way to align teaching, learning and assessment. In the light of this it can be concluded that the teachers do not use feedback consciously to align teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers are aware of the importance to align teaching, learning and assessment, however they do not reflect on the assessment result or the feedback from the assessment. If teachers reviewed the assessment they would reflect on the feedback and perhaps plan a following teaching and learning activity where the work is explained again or a different teaching approach is used. The review process is important as it gives the teacher an indication of what he must start doing, what he must stop doing and what he must continue to do. The review process will influence the teaching, learning and assessment process.

4.5.1.9 Additional information provided by the teachers on the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment

Two teachers focussed on the difficulties they encountered. A1 felt that the difficult teaching conditions and the fact that the learners were not really interested made it difficult to align teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers felt that the large number of learners per class made it very difficult to pay attention to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, as the marking alone took up so much of their time. The teachers also mentioned that the number of tasks expected to be completed as part of the continuous assessment was excessive and they simply moved from the one task to the next.

They did not have enough time to give feedback to the learners and did not have enough time to work through the curriculum. The teachers do not have enough time to plan assessments adequately and their teaching became task driven. A2 struggled with the fact that the learners had such a wide range of capabilities as he felt he could not respond to all their needs.

A3 said that to align teaching, learning and assessment, frequent assessment and quick feedback is the answer. She felt that the learners needed a lot of structure and that they needed to know what the term plan was. Because she followed a plan in an organised way, it worked towards the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

Conclusion

The alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is not at the forefront of the teachers' minds. The teachers go about their business of teaching and monitoring the learners' learning. The circumstances around their teaching such as the big classes, the number of tasks expected of the learners and the fact that not all the learners were interested in learning influenced them.

To align teaching, learning and assessment there needs to be clarity of focus in terms of what the intended outcomes are and what the learners have to do to achieve the outcomes. The teachers should in their planning of teaching, learning and assessment first identify the desired outcomes and from there plan backwards what the teaching and learning activities will be and how the learning will be assessed (Section 2.3.4). Ideally the learners should have access to the assessment tool before attempting the task so that the criteria for achieving the task will be clear to them.

Formative assessment and feedback play very important roles in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Formative assessment allows the teachers to

track the progress in the learning process. Formative assessment is assessment for learning, as the learners are able to interpret their own learning and the teachers can readjust their teaching to align teaching, learning and assessment. Feedback is associated with formative assessment and is pivotal in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

The teachers who participated in the research project did not use these strategies to align teaching, learning and assessment. Their planning did not start with the identification of the outcomes and their teaching lacked clarity of focus; consequently the desired outcomes were not the focus of the teachers or the learners. The assessments were not necessarily formative as the tasks were completed to comply with the expectations from the Gauteng Education Department and not used as a means to align teaching, learning and assessment. The assessments were not used for learning and in most cases the learners received the assessment tool only when their work had been marked and given back to them.

It can thus be concluded that the teachers are not always successful in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers are aware that teaching, learning and assessment should be aligned but it is an intuitive aspect of their teaching and not necessarily planned.

4.6   PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The content analysis, which the researcher did by studying the lesson planning and assessment packages of the teachers, provided insight into the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Triangulation was the main purpose of the content analysis.

4.6.1 The composition of the assessment packages

The teachers were asked to make available to the researcher some of their planning documents and teaching material for three assessment activities. The teachers were asked to include two examples of planning for writing activities and one of an oral activity. The activities included the instructions given to the learners and a worksheet if one was available, as well as the assessment plan.

4.6.1.1 Planning documents and assessment package Teacher A1

The planning and assessment dealt with the following three activities:

- Prepared speech

At the top of the worksheet the theme "understanding our world" is indicated as well as the learning outcomes and assessment standards (LO1, AS1, 2, 3 & 4, LO4, AS2 & 3). The learning outcomes and assessment standards are not described but numbered. The instructions are detailed, including the topics to choose from, the length of the speeches, the cue cards needed and the preparation needed. There is no reference in the instructions to the assessment tool but the rubric is given to the learners before the activity starts.

- Creative writing

At the top of this worksheet the learning outcomes and assessment standards are reflected in number form (LO2, AS1-4, LO3, AS1-3, LO4, AS2 & 3). The learners had completed the first draft of a creative essay and with this activity they had to do the final essay. The learners had to edit their essays by looking at the errors they had made, the teacher's comments, their peers' comments as well as their own observations. A self-assessment checklist and peer-assessment checklist are included. There is no reference to the assessment tool;

however, the rubric is included in the pack. This creative writing activity is a very good example of assessment for learning, as the learning took place through the editing process, which enabled the learners to assess and learn from their own mistakes.

- Literary essay

The pack consists of a worksheet on how to write a literary essay set out systematically. The learners are told what their teachers are looking for: knowledge, understanding and opinion. The learners are guided through the process and the introduction, middle section and conclusion are explained to them. They are given some questions to respond to in preparation of writing the essay. The next worksheet is the last step in guiding the learners; there are a few general points, such as:

- Make sure you understand the question.
- Plan your answer.
- Use a three-point system (Point-evidence-explanation).
- Use the mark allocation as a guide.
- Edit your writing.

The learners are given an example and again a few questions to guide them. The assessment rubric is included but not referred to.

4.6.1.2 Planning documents and assessment package Teacher A2

Three activities were chosen from the teacher's file:

- Transactional writing – a letter

The teacher made use of a form for the planning of the lesson. On the form the following are outlined:

The lesson theme: Letters.

The lesson aim: To teach pupils to write English appropriately according to circumstance.

Lesson objectives: Pupils should be able to give two types of letters. They should also mention three characteristics of each type of letter.

A second form outlines the instruction:

Teaching content: Letters as communication skills.

Teaching actions: Two letters, formal and informal and the learners must name the characteristics of each.

Learning actions: Pupils answer questions asked. Pupils will give characteristics. Medium used is the chalkboard and teaching skill actualising general knowledge.

There is no indication of the assessment that will take place or of the assessment tool to be used.

• An advertisement with questions (BP Advert)

On the planning, which resembles a weekly forecast of activities planned for the week, the actual activity is not named. It is reflected as: Read and understand. The objective is: To be able to analyse an advert, critical analysis. The advert has a picture of children waiting at a bus stop. The questions ask the learners to identify, describe, discuss. There is no reference to the assessment and the teacher made rough notes on the advert, which looks like a memorandum.

• Listening exercise

The activity is reflected on a "Progress of lesson" form with "procedural moments". The teacher's description reads: I will play a tape recorder where two characters are speaking the same words but differently. The essential skills are audible speech, i.e. tone. The learners are asked to recognise differences in meaning and to say what the cause of different meanings is while words are the

same. They must write down their answers. The learners must try to rectify each other's mistakes.

4.6.1.3 Planning documents and assessment package Teacher A3

The following activities were included:

•   Literary essay workshop

Planning made provision for teaching learners step by step to write a literary essay. The planning document outlines the planned activity, what the teacher will do, what the learners will do and what task they are expected to perform. The activity consists of possible essay topics to choose from, the learners discuss the topics before they write their introductions. The activity is geared towards a guided approach to essay writing. The learners are given a checklist and both self-assessment and peer assessment occur. On the planning documents there is no reference to how the essay will be assessed and the learning outcomes and assessment standards are not reflected.

•   Transactional writing

The process is exactly as with the literary essay. The learners have a chance to edit their work before it is handed in. Again no mention is made of the learning outcomes, assessment standard or the way it will be assessed. The teacher said that she uses the standard GDE assessment rubrics for both the literary essay and the transactional writing piece, but learners do not receive these documents beforehand.

- Unprepared oral

A description of this activity entails what procedure is followed and how the learners go about the unprepared oral, which is a group activity. The learners have an opportunity to learn from one another and the standard GDE rubric is used. There is no mention made of the learning outcomes or assessment standards.

4.6.2   Analysis of the planning documents and assessment packages

In this Section the assessment packages are discussed according to the criteria that were identified in Section 3.5.3.1.

4.6.2.1 There is clarity of focus

In most of the cases it was clear what the planned activity was. For example: "Writing is a process. A good writer understands the importance of editing her or his own work. Earlier in the term you wrote a narrative essay on an extreme moment in your life. Now it is your task to rewrite that essay." In another example: "The aim of this exercise is for you to be as creative as possible."

In the case of one teacher the lesson theme, aim and goal are clear in the planning of the activity. There is no indication whether this is shared with the learners or whether the learning outcomes and assessment standards are made clear. In the case of the teacher who has displayed the learning outcomes and the assessment standards, it is not clear whether the information is used to align teaching, learning and assessment or whether it is simply expected of the teachers to display this information.

Conclusion

Clarity of focus means that the teachers and the learners focus clearly and consistently on the desired outcomes of achievement (Section 2.3.4). The desired outcomes were however not the focus of the teachers and therefore not of the learners. It is not made clear what is to be achieved by writing several drafts of an essay or what it means to be as creative as possible. The learning outcomes and assessment standards played no role in focussing the teaching and learning in the planning phases of the teachers. It is therefore not clear whether there is clarity of focus in terms of the learning outcomes and assessment standards. The clarity of focus is not used to align teaching, learning and assessment.

4.6.2.2 Teaching activities enable learners to achieve outcomes and perform assessment tasks

To verify this criteria the researcher analysed the planning documents and assessment packages to establish whether the learners were clearly informed what they had to do as well as whether the assessment tool was part of the teaching activity.

In the case of the prepared oral task the instructions were clear in terms of topic choice, the length of the speech and the presentation. The rubric was given to and discussed with the learners in preparation of the speech.

Teaching activities related to the teaching of literary essays were clearly aimed at guiding and assisting learners systematically to write a literary essay. Checklists and notes were handed out to the learners with the activity to guide them through the process. Two teachers indicated that they made use of rubrics, only one teacher handed the rubric to the learners with the task and instructions.

Teacher A2 had clear activities: the recognition of the differences between the informal and formal letters, the questions on the advert and the listening exercise. The instructions were clear therefore the assumption is that the learners were able to perform the task; however, it is not clear whether the learners would be able to achieve the learning outcome, as the assessment tool was not available to the learners. The question is how the teacher and the learners would know whether they have achieved the outcome, as there is no indication of how it would be measured.

Conclusion

Teaching activities are very important in helping the learners to achieve the intended outcomes. The teaching activities must be planned carefully; the learners must be informed what they have to do to achieve the intended outcome. The assessment tool must also be part of the teaching activity as the learners must know how their work will be assessed and by looking at the assessment tool they will know what to do to achieve the outcomes. The teachers explained to the learners what the activities were and what they had to do. The checklists were probably helpful in guiding the learners to complete the tasks, however, the checklists did not necessarily enable the learners to achieve the intended outcomes. The rubrics were not discussed with all the learners before they started with the activities, therefore they did not know what to do to achieve the intended outcomes. The teachers made no indication in the planning phase of how the teaching activities will enable the learners to achieve the intended outcomes.

4.6.2.3   Details of the assessment strategy are clear

Details of an assessment strategy would include the assessment method and tool as well as who will do the assessment. In the case of two teachers their assessment strategy included the use of checklists and rubrics. The teachers

also mentioned in the interviews that the learners use the rubrics to identify where they have made mistakes.

Teacher A1 made the assessment strategy clear in the planning documents and the checklists and rubrics formed part of the initial planning.

Teacher A3 used checklists in the teaching of the literary essay and the transactional writing activity. The learners were guided by the checklists. When the marked essay or transactional writing piece was returned to the learners the rubric was attached to it with notes on the rubric. The learners were then able to see how their work had been assessed.

Teacher A2 showed no clear evidence of an assessment strategy. With the advert, the letters and the listening exercise the learners responded to questions. In the interview the teacher mentioned that he made extensive use of peer assessment. Rubrics are not used and the assessment is clearly intuitive and norm referenced.

Conclusion

The details of an assessment strategy are the assessment method and tool and who will carry out the assessment. The assessment strategy should form part of the planning and are part of the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The teaching, learning and assessment cycle (Figure 2.2) indicates that after the teachers have chosen the tasks to be assessed they must inform the learners what the assessment tool and criteria are that will be used to assess their performance. Only one teacher shared the details of the assessment strategy with the learners. The other teachers did not have these details as part of their planning and there is no evidence that they make the details of the assessment strategy clear to the learners.

4.6.2.4   Formative assessment facilitates the learning process

Formative assessment enables the teacher to track the progress of the learners and to readjust the teaching plan if necessary (see Section 2.5.6). Not all the activities represented in the assessment package can be considered as formative assessments; the assessments were of learning and not for learning. With the assessment of the activities the teachers are able to give feedback to the learners and to indicate to them where they went wrong.

With the use of a checklist (teachers A1 and A3) the learners are able to assess themselves by checking whether their work measures up to the expectations made clear by the checklist. The self and peer assessment checklist would serve the same purpose. The teachers are able to look at the checklist and to indicate to the learners where the gaps are. The use of rubrics and the fact that the teachers indicate on the rubric where the learner went wrong would aid the learning process.

The teachers mentioned in their interviews that they made use of verbal feedback in addition to the marking of the work. Their feedback often includes more explanations or teaching to ensure that learners do not make the same mistakes or to clear misunderstandings. Feedback to the learners and comments on what they got right and what they can improve on would facilitate the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment. Very little evidence that assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities could however be found (see Section 4.6.2.6).

Although teacher A2 had no evidence of marking rubrics or checklists as in the case of teachers A1 and A3, the teacher mentioned that he would look at the mistakes the learners made and would give verbal feedback and plan a next activity to address the issue.

Conclusion

Formative assessment is used to guide and measure the learning process. Assessment can only be regarded as formative if it leads to actions by teachers and/or the learners that will improve learning (Section 2.5.6). Even though some teachers made use of checklists and rubrics, and they looked at the mistakes the learners made, it is not clear to which actions it would lead. The aim should be that the learners must be able to achieve the intended outcomes and formative assessment should enable the learners to do that. Formative assessment is for learning. The purpose of the assessments are not to be formative but the main aim seems to be to accumulate marks for reporting purposes.

4.6.2.5 Assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning

Two schools included the assessment rubrics in their assessment packages. With the oral activity included by teacher A1 it was clear that the learners were given the rubric with the instructions. In the case of the literary essay the learners from teacher A1 were instructed to look at the assessment rubric as a guide to answering the question. Teacher A1 indicated the learning outcomes and the assessment standards on each activity and each activity had its own rubric.

A3 had a checklist to be used for the literary essay and the transactional piece. The checklist indicates that assessment may be part of the planning of teaching and learning, as the learners are encouraged to check that their work measures up to the expectations. The rubrics used in this case are the standard rubrics for each of the activities issued by the GDE. Whether generic rubrics are suitable for each activity is questionable. Assessment may be considered during the planning but then only the assessment tool. It is doubtful whether the teacher makes sure that the teaching, learning and assessment are aligned, as the rubrics are not uniquely designed for each activity and do not match the checklists used.

With the apparent extensive use of peer assessment and the absence of assessment tools in the assessment package of A2, it is evident that the specifics of assessment are not considered during the planning of teaching and learning. The forms the teacher used to plan his teaching do not have a component for assessment and therefore is not reflected in the planning.

Conclusion

The design-down principle of OBE (Section 2.3.4) requires the teacher to identify the learning outcomes to be covered and to plan teaching, learning and assessment that would be appropriate to the learners' achievement of the outcomes. The importance of the assessment is that it should enable the learners to demonstrate their achievement of the outcomes. During the planning phases the assessments must be decided upon and thus teaching, learning and assessment would be aligned (Section 2.8.1). The assessment and assessment tool must be given to the learners before they commence with their task. Therefore the conclusion is that in the case of teacher A1 assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning. The other teachers did not show overwhelming evidence that assessments are considered during the planning process, assessment tasks are seen as part of a number of tasks to be completed and marks to be collected in order to comply with the Gauteng Education Department requirements.

4.6.2.6   Assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities

The teachers' planning and activities did not show overwhelming evidence that assessment is used to inform the subsequent teaching activities. A1 used the second draft of an essay as an activity and the learners had to respond to their own assessment of the first draft as well as their peers' assessment and the comments by the teachers. In their interviews all three teachers indicated that they looked at the learners' work to see which mistakes the learners made, they

identified the gaps in the learning and planned their next activities around that. This is not evident in the planning or in the assessment activities. It is possible that the teachers intuitively know what they have to include or emphasise in the subsequent activities without planning it explicitly. If this is in fact the case, it confirms the conclusion that was made in Section 4.6.2.1, namely that there is very little clarity of focus and that teachers tend to teach intuitively.

Conclusion

The teachers do in fact respond to the mistakes the learners make but it is not in keeping with the focus on the desired outcomes. According to the three examples of the teaching, learning and assessment process (Section 2.8.1), teachers must assess the learning that took place and reflect on the results. After the teachers have reflected on the results they identify the learning outcomes to be achieved in the next phase or cycle of teaching, learning and assessment. To simply respond to the mistakes the learners make as the teachers indicated they do, implies a haphazard response to mistakes. The teachers do not use the information gathered from the assessments regarding the learners' achievements to identify the outcomes to be achieved in the next teaching, learning and assessment phase. Therefore the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is not effective.

4.6.3   Summary of the results of the individual interviews and the content analysis

From the interviews and the content analysis of the assessment packages it is evident that the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is not something that the teachers who participated in the research project make conscious decisions about.

Planning for the year or term is very important to the teachers. Two of the teachers receive a plan from the coordinator or Head of Department at the school, whereas the third teacher consulted the National Curriculum Statement to compile his own plan. The planning is important because the teachers want the learners to perform the required number of tasks that need to be assessed as stipulated in official documentation. From the interviews and the analysis of the teachers' planning documents and assessment packages it became clear that the teachers do not take the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment consciously into consideration when doing their planning.

The planning and the teaching are focussed on the tasks that the learners are expected to complete rather than on the outcomes that need to be achieved. The tasks are often vaguely formulated and although the outcomes the teachers and the learners work towards are embedded in the task these outcomes and the accompanying assessment standards are mostly not clearly spelled out and are not communicated to the learners. The assessment standards are the pivot on which all lesson and assessment activities hinge, however, teachers do not rely on the assessment standards when planning their lessons or developing assessment tasks. The learning outcomes and assessment standards are not considered in the planning or the teaching, learning and assessment in the way they should be. The completion of the task is more important than the achievement of the learning outcome or the skills learnt. It seems as though teachers rely quite heavily on their intuition when it comes to the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment.

Assessments are not used to align teaching, learning and assessment; the assessments are not referred to and not incorporated in the teaching and learning process. The checklists may play a role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment as it guides the learner in knowing what the expectations are. However, if the assessment tool, the rubric, is generic and not specific to the task, it is not clear whether the checklists and the rubric are

compatible or whether they focus on the learning outcomes and assessment standards.

The teachers do not use feedback to align teaching, learning and assessment. They look at the mistakes the learners make and respond by pointing out the mistakes and in some cases by a follow-up activity. The teachers focus on what is "missing" before moving on to the next activity. The learners receive feedback on their tasks and are encouraged to look at their mistakes as the mistakes are pointed out to them in written and verbal feedback.

4.7   SUMMARY

The empirical study provided insight into the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in English Home language in grade 10. The individual interviews and the content analysis of the assessment packages showed that the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is limited. Teachers who participated in the research project mostly do assessment of learning, in other words they assess to see whether the learners are able to carry out a task. Assessment for learning is limited to checklists that learners receive and to rewriting (and assuming improving) their own written work after it has been self and peer assessed.

The individual interviews revealed that the teachers focus on the tasks that the learners have to complete. Two teachers admitted that the learning outcomes and assessment standards are of no use and are written on the activity because it is expected of them. The one teacher felt that the learners had no interest in the learning outcomes and that her negative attitude could contribute to that. The teachers felt that the learners knew what was expected of them, but only in terms of how to complete the activity, not in terms of achieving the learning outcomes or what the accompanying assessment standards entail. The learning outcomes

and assessment standards are not used sufficiently to align teaching, learning and assessment.

The assessment tool, in most cases a rubric, is not instrumental to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Especially if a generic rubric is used it is doubtful whether the teaching and learning will be sufficiently aligned with the assessment. Learners do not always have access to the assessment rubric when they start the assessment task. The assessment rubric should form part of the teaching phase to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned.

Feedback to learners on assessment activities was not effectively used to inform future teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers mentioned frequently in the interviews that they looked at the mistakes the learners made and planned subsequent activities, however, these activities did not focus on the appropriate learning outcomes and assessment standards. The learners also look at the feedback on their tasks to learn from their mistakes. Although teachers claimed that assessment results and feedback to learners on assessment activities were used to inform teaching and learning, very little evidence of this was found in the planning documents and assessment packages.

The final Chapter presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations resulting from the empirical study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This Chapter begins with a general overview of the investigation in order to show that the aims of the research expressed in Chapter 1 have been achieved.

This research focussed on establishing the extent to which teachers of English home language align teaching, learning and assessment. In Section 1.3 it was indicated that the fundamental purpose of the research is to investigate:

- the theoretical background to the principles of outcomes-based education and outcomes-based assessment;
- prevailing literature on the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment; and
- the extent to which teachers of English home language align teaching, learning and assessment and the problems they experience with the alignment.

The research problem was investigated in Chapters 2 and 3 through a literature study and an empirical investigation (by means of interviews and a content analysis of planning and assessment packages).

The fourth Chapter described the findings of this study after an analysis of the data gathered had been done. The purpose of this last Chapter is to present a summary of the study, to draw conclusions and to make recommendations for future research based upon the findings.

5.2   SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The research is divided in five Chapters as stated in Section 1.6. The gist of each of the preceding four Chapters is briefly discussed below.

In **Chapter 1** the background to the study was discussed. The discussion entailed examining the background to the problem and a description of the research methodology. With the introduction of outcomes-based education the teachers had to make a paradigm shift regarding teaching, learning and assessment. In the traditional way of teaching assessment did not form an integral part of teaching and learning and learners' abilities were mostly measured by means of norm-referenced assessment. Outcomes-based assessment entails assessment for learning and not just assessment of learning. Each learner is assessed according to set criteria and it is expected that every learner will be able to achieve the outcomes. Despite measures by the Education Department to train teachers, many teachers still maintain that outcomes-based education is not very different from what they had always done and they still regard assessment as an add-on to teaching and learning instead of an integral part of learning. The intention of this study was to investigate the way teachers align teaching and learning with assessment.

Chapter 1 stated the key research problem: To what extent do English home language teachers align teaching, learning and assessment in OBE? A number of further questions were provided to delineate the problem:

- What is outcomes-based education and what are the implications of this approach for teaching, learning and assessment?
- What does outcomes-based assessment entail and how does it impact on teaching and learning?
- To what extent do teachers succeed in aligning teaching, learning and assessment in English home language?

- What can be done to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned and that assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning?

The remaining Chapters comprise the bulk of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 constituted the literature study. The aim of this study was to consider the alignment of instruction, learning and assessment of English home language in grade 10. With respect to this aim, a review of literature was presented in Chapter 2. The following aspects were considered, namely the theoretical roots of OBE (Section 2.2) by means of which an understanding could be gained of the nature of OBE as an education system; the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in OBE (Section 2.3.5), which explores how such an alignment can be achieved in OBE. The question of how learners learn and how it can be determined whether they understand what they have learnt was addressed in Section 2.4 because OBE is also about what learners are able to do. Educational taxonomies (Section 2.4) are used to align teaching, learning and assessment by looking at the cognitive levels and planning teaching and assessment according to the cognitive levels. In Section 2.5 outcomes-based assessment was explored in detail. In OBE the focus is not on the content but on the outcomes and the assessment of the outcomes. Assessment plays a significant role in the alignment of teaching and learning. Lastly the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in English home language was explored with reference to planning guidelines provided by the GDE and the IEB.

The theoretical roots of OBE (Section 2.2) were discussed; behaviourism, critical theory, pragmatism and social constructivism form the basis of OBE. OBE encourages the construction of knowledge. Behaviourism focusses on human behaviour that can be observed; OBE expects learners to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through observable behaviours. Critical theory proposes the emancipation of societies to allow individuals to be critical and questioning and

therefore participatory, learner-centred and activity-based teaching is emphasised. Pragmatism as an approach came into being as a reaction against idealism. Knowledge must be applied and learners must be able to participate fully economically and socially. Constructivism supports active learning and the notion that knowledge is constructed. Learners become life-long learners and take responsibility for their own learning.

The emphasis of OBE is on two outcomes, namely broad critical cross-field outcomes that apply to all learning fields, and outcomes specific to a learning area called learning outcomes (Section 2.3.1). Outcomes have to be clear about what is expected in terms of the actions or performance. Each learning outcome has a set of assessment standards against which the performance will be measured. The clarity of the outcomes and assessment standards for both the teacher and the learner contributes to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

There are four basic principles to OBE (Section 2.3.4), which have direct implications for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The first principle is clarity of focus: the teachers and the learners must focus consistently on the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment standards. According to the second principle, teachers should plan backwards from the outcomes and accompanying assessment standards that the learners are expected to achieve. The third principle states that the learners and teachers should have high expectations, all learners should be expected to achieve outcomes of high standard. The fourth principle is expanded opportunity; the learners should be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement.

The process of instruction in OBE (Section 2.8) has three components, which take place in an interactive process of planning, teaching and assessment. It is also described as three stages to instructional design: In stage one the intended

learning outcomes are identified, in stage two the assessment tasks are planned and in stage three the planning of the learning activities takes place.

Teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned and the successful alignment is only possible through careful planning and implementation. The outcomes need to be identified and the teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks carefully planned. Through the learning experience the learners develop understanding and therefore the learning activity should allow the learners to engage actively with the material. The assessment in turn measures the learners' competence and understanding.

To teach in such a way that the learners develop understanding (Section 2.3.6) means that learning must be a long-term thinking-centred process. The assessments must be ongoing and learners must develop the ability to make connections and transfer knowledge. For learners to learn effectively they must be taught to utilise their long-term memory system and use schemas to organise knowledge in ways that are useful to solve problems.

Of the three memory systems that humans have the procedural memory is the strongest and to access this system learning must be practised enough to become a procedure that will create strong memories. Therefore performance tasks (Section 2.5.5) where learners are required to apply their knowledge and skills are used in OBE. Performance tasks require learners to use their procedural knowledge, higher-order thinking skills and are meant to elicit understanding performances. Authentic assessment means that the learners engage in real-world tasks where they have to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Performance tasks are examples of authentic assessment. Learners learn to transfer knowledge if they are given the opportunity to practise and receive feedback. Assessments are used to determine whether the learners understand and are learning. OBE focusses on what learners can actually do. As learners perform tasks they strengthen their procedural memory, develop an

understanding of the subject at hand. By providing feedback the learners and the teachers are able to determine what the level of understanding is. This underlines the importance of acknowledging learning <u>for</u> assessment and learning <u>from</u> assessment as the two complementary purposes of outcomes-based assessment.

Taxonomies (Section 2.4) are useful as a guide to align educational objectives and can be used as a framework around which teaching, learning and assessment are planned. Educational taxonomies describing the cognitive domain are used to establish educational objectives and develop test items. The use of taxonomies allows for the alignment of teaching strategies and assessment.

Outcomes-based assessment strategies, methods and approaches link closely together with learning outcomes, are fully integrated with effective learning, and are therefore important for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment needs to be valid, reliable and transparent (Section 2.5.2). Validity means that the expectations are justifiable and reasonable. Assessment tasks also have to test what it set out to be tested. Consistency in assessment will contribute to reliability which means that clear measuring criteria must be created and communicated to the learners. When teachers and learners know what the learners must be able to do to achieve the outcomes then the assessment process is transparent.

In OBE assessment serves different purposes such as to establish the learners' knowledge and skills levels at the beginning of a section, to identify a problem, to identify progression and to summarise learners' performance collected and recorded over time (Section 2.5). OBA is continuous; it is not just continuous in the sense that assessments are done throughout the year but that assessment takes place before, during and after teaching.

The type of assessment most commonly used is formative assessment (Section 2.5.6). As part of informal continuous assessment formative assessment is used to guide and measure the learning progress. Formative assessments allow the teachers and learners to take action to improve learning. Formative assessment boils down to assessment for learning and learning from assessment and contributes as such to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment because the teacher can revise the teaching plan according to the results and give the learners feedback on how to improve their work.

Assessment rubrics (Section 2.5.7) are specific sets of criteria against which performances are measured. The use of rubrics allows teachers and learners to focus on the achievement of the desired outcomes.

Feedback to learners let them know whether they are on the right track. Assessment provides feedback to both the learner and the teacher. Feedback takes place on different levels and most of the time; however, the effectiveness of feedback depends on what is done with the feedback information. The learners get feedback from their teachers regarding how successful they were in reaching an intended outcome and what the teacher wants them to do to improve. Teachers and learners are then in a position to act on that information; learners know where they went wrong and how to improve and teachers are able to adjust their teaching to address gaps if there are any.

English home language (grade 10) has four learning outcomes with assessment standards attached to each outcome (Section 2.8). The teachers use the identified learning outcomes and assessment standards to plan their teaching, the learning activities and the assessment tasks. Three different strategies to plan teaching, learning and assessment were discussed (Section 2.8.1) by means of diagrams. The diagrams illustrate the patterns of planning, the implementation of the teaching and learning activities, the assessment and the review of the process. The process is similar in all three examples and the

successful implementation of any of these strategies will lead to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

The findings from the literature review provided a theoretical direction for the empirical investigation of the present study. For the purpose of this study a qualitative research framework was chosen because it was a means by which the opinions of the teachers on the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment of English home language as well as their actual practices in this could be obtained.

Chapter 3 focussed on the research design and methodology of the empirical study. The researcher provided the rationale for choosing a qualitative research plan that has a multi-method approach and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative research is descriptive and the researcher seeks to understand the phenomenon using the natural setting as the source of data. Qualitative research produces more in-depth and comprehensive information.

Qualitative data are collected primarily in the form of words. The data collection strategies used in this study was individual interviews and content analysis. During the interviews with the three teachers the researcher used open-ended questions and the participants were able to respond in their own terms. The interviews were purposeful conversations; the researcher used a prepared list of questions as a guide, but follow-up questions were asked as well. The questions were based on the information gathered from the literature study.

Participants from three Gauteng Education Department schools in the same district, District 9, were approached for interviews. The teachers were randomly selected. The three teachers are grade 10 English home language teachers. Interviews were conducted with the teachers after permission had been obtained from the Principal and from the teachers. The interviews took place at the

teachers' convenience. The data were analysed to find similarities and discrepancies and major categories were identified.

For the purpose of triangulation a content analysis of the teachers' planning documents and assessment packages was conducted. From the information obtained in the literature studies criteria were developed to analyse the planning documents and assessment packages. The content was examined to identify patterns, themes or biases.

A detailed description and discussion of the findings were provided in Chapter 4 but the three major categories are discussed below.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the empirical study. The individual interviews and content analysis revealed the three teachers' views and practices regarding the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. This information is important for the teaching, learning and assessment of English home language in grade 10. However, the findings also have implications for other subjects and learning areas in outcomes-based education.

The data which were collected from the three participants in the individual interviews and the content analysis of the assessment packages revealed that the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is not entirely successful in practice as it is not something that the teachers make conscious decisions about. Planning and teaching are focussed on the completion of the required number of tasks and not on the achievement of the desired outcomes and assessment standards. The desired learning outcomes and assessment standards do not form the starting point of the planning and there is no evidence of backwards planning from the learning outcomes and assessment standards to the teaching and learning activity.

Feedback information is not used to align teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers respond to the learners' mistakes by pointing them out and in some cases by introducing follow-up activities. The gaps in the learning may be identified; however, the feedback information is not used to identify learning outcomes and assessment standards for the next teaching phase, which will address the gaps identified in the learning. Assessment of learning takes place instead of assessment for learning and learning from assessment.

5.3   SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

The findings of the qualitative investigation are presented and integrated with the findings of the literature study of outcomes-based education and assessment as discussed in Chapter 2.

•   Planning plays a very important role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. Section 2.8.1 discussed the three planning stages set out in the Learning Programme guidelines provided by the Education Department. It was found that the teachers do follow a plan drawn up by a colleague or the Education Department or that the National Curriculum Statements for English home language grade 10 is used to plan a teaching and learning cycle. The teachers' plans do not, however, indicate the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The teachers' plans focus on the required activities or tasks to be completed per term or per year. The plans do not focus on the achievement of the learning outcomes and the assessment standards are not mentioned or referred to. The focus is on the tasks to be performed. In the planning documents very little attention is given to the assessment activities. It became clear that assessment is not seen as an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment is added at the end of teaching and learning as a means to collect the required number of marks needed for recording and reporting.

• The first basic principle of outcomes-based education (Section 2.3.4) is the clarity of focus on outcomes of significance. It was found that because the teachers focus on the task the learners have to perform, the actual outcomes and their accompanying assessment standards are not the focus of the teachers or the learners. The teachers plan activities such as a literary essay or an oral exercise; however, the focus is not on the achievement of the learning outcomes. The focus is on the completion of the task and included in this is the awareness that the learners must, for example, be able to write an essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. The skills, knowledge and values to be acquired are not specified. When the learning outcomes were reflected as in the case of two of the teachers, then it was because it is an expectation of the Education Department. The stated learning outcomes and assessment standards are mostly not communicated to learners and as such they do not play a role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

• The second basic principle of outcomes-based education (Section 2.3.4) is design down, also called planning backwards. According to this principle, the teachers should look at the outcomes the learners must achieve and from there plan the assessment strategy, the learning activity and the teaching activities. Only one teacher referred to backward planning. This teacher looked at the assessment task first and then planned the activity. The assumption is that the outcomes are embedded in the assessment task. However, it is not clear whether the outcomes form the focus of the backward planning. The interviews with the teachers and the analysis of the planning and assessment packages revealed that the focus is still the content that must be taught and there is no real evidence of backward planning. Even though the learning outcomes are mentioned in the planning it is perfunctory because the learning outcomes are not the starting point of the teaching and assessment process.

- All the teachers were not aware of the need for teaching, learning and assessment to form a close unit. From both the interviews and the assessment packages it transpired that the teachers were not clear on what the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment means. The teachers act intuitively regarding aligning teaching, learning and assessment and do not pay attention to the alignment in the planning stages of their teaching.

- Continuous assessment is an important part of assessment in outcomes-based education (Section 2.5.3) as it helps teachers to give the learners frequent opportunities to demonstrate learning. Continuous assessment includes formal and informal assessments. The teachers who took part in the study carried out assessments continuously. In fact, one teacher mentioned that the number of tasks expected of the learners was a problem. She felt that she could not teach properly and align teaching, learning and assessment because there were too many tasks to do. Another teacher mentioned that she was marking constantly but she felt that frequent assessments were essential in her teaching to ensure teaching, learning and assessment are aligned. Teachers carried out the continuous assessment tasks in order to collect the required number of marks for the term and not because continuous assessment is regarded as a learning opportunity.

- Formative assessment is part of the continuous assess process and is used to guide and measure the learning process and is also called assessment for learning. One of the key elements of formative assessment is that teachers respond to the identified needs and strengths of the learners by modifying their teaching approaches (Section 2.5.6). The identification of mistakes and the actions taken to correct the mistakes came through strongly in the interviews with the teachers. The planning and assessment packages proved, however, that the teachers do not modify their teaching activities based on formative assessment results.

• Outcomes-based education prefers criterion-referenced assessment and not norm-referenced assessment as a traditional teaching approach would do. An assessment rubric is used because it is a set of criteria that clearly defines for the teacher and for the learner what the expected performance should look like (Section 2.5.7). Rubrics are assessment tools but also teaching tools as the teachers and the learners refer to the rubrics to see what is expected of them. The use of rubrics facilitates effective assessments particularly in the teaching of languages as subjectivity is eliminated. Although teachers do make use of assessment rubrics they tend to use generic assessment rubrics which raise the question whether the rubric is suitable for the particular activity. Not one of the teachers made use of customised rubrics that are task specific. Apart from using rubrics as assessment tools, teachers also made extensive use of peer assessment and the question-answer method. Teachers clearly do not recognise the important role the assessment rubrics play in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

• Feedback is an important factor in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment (Section 2.6). Teachers used feedback information from the assessments to inform teaching and learning activities. The teachers gave verbal feedback to the learners, both individually and to the whole class. Feedback was also written, either on the rubric or a comment on the task. Learners were encouraged to look at the written feedback to see where their weaknesses were. The teachers made use of feedback to align teaching, learning and assessment, albeit in different ways. The feedback allowed the teachers and the learners to identify the weaknesses and helped to focus on the gaps in their learning. The focus on the gaps was however ad hoc; the teachers did not reflect on the assessment results in order to identify the learning outcomes and assessment standards so that they could address the weaknesses in the learning.

- The assessment activities used by the teachers were very vague and in some cases superficial. It was not made clear to the learners what was expected of them and what they should do to complete the activities successfully. The fact that the activities were vague contributed to the lack of alignment between teaching, learning and assessment.

- The teachers did not indicate in the interviews or in their planning and assessment packages that they made use of educational taxonomies to align teaching, learning and assessment. Taxonomies play an important role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment as discussed in Section 2.4. The absence of taxonomies in the teaching, learning and assessment process also indicates that the development of the learners' abilities to operate on various cognitive levels is neglected. The learners' ability to develop higher order thinking skills is not addressed.

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

This Section presents the recommendations based on the research question as well as conclusions arrived at from the literature study and the empirical research.

5.4.1   The need for effective assessment plans.

Teachers need guidance and intensive in-service training in the drawing up of proper teaching, learning and assessment plans. The focus of the plan needs to be the learning outcomes, assessment standards and the assessment activities. The teaching, learning and assessment activities must focus on the achievement of the learning outcomes and the accompanying assessment standards.

5.4.2   Teachers need to understand the assessment standards.

It is essential that the teachers engage the learning outcomes and assessment standards. The fact that the assessment standards have been numbered and that the planning documents display assessment standards only as numbers has resulted in a situation where the teachers are not intimately aware of the meaning that the assessment standards represent. Engaging the learning outcomes and more specifically the assessment standards will enable the teachers to judge whether the assessment tool is in fact assessing what has been taught and learnt.

5.4.3   Teachers should choose appropriate assessment tasks.

If the teachers understand the meaning of the assessment standards in particular, and the role assessment standards play in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, they will be in a better position to choose appropriate tasks as teaching, learning and assessment activities. The purpose of the task and the assessment will be clear.

5.4.4 There is a need to evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment process.

Teachers must be encouraged to evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment to determine the success of the process. Formative assessment can be used to a greater extent as assessment for learning, and also to inform subsequent teaching and learning activities.

5.4.5 The use of educational taxonomies

The taxonomies did not feature anywhere. The teachers did not indicate in their interviews or their assessment packages that they were aware of the educational

taxonomies. Taxonomies should be used to align teaching, learning and assessment and in particular to map the teaching of higher order thinking.

5.4.6   The use of an assessment plan

An assessment plan used as part of a term plan will prove effective in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The following is a suggested plan of how teachers can adjust their focus to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are synchronised.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

English Home language   **Date:**

Theme:

LO:

AS:

Type of assessment	Teaching activity	Assessment task	Assessment tool	Cognitive levels	Evaluation and intervention

FIGURE 5.1: ASSESSMENT PLAN

A completed assessment plan will be as follows:

ASSESSMENT PLAN

English Home language   **Date**: 15-03-08

Theme: Our world

LO: Writing and presenting

AS: Apply appropriate style, and format of text. Develop coherent ideas and organise these using a mind-map.

Type of assessment	Teaching activity	Assessment task	Assessment tool	Cognitive levels	Evaluation and intervention
Formative assessment to monitor progress learners are making in writing a narrative essay.	Learners shown examples of appropriate style for a narrative essay. Learners taught how to draw a min-map and how to use it to develop coherent ideas and to organise their ideas.	Narrative essay using the correct style and format. Coherent ideas organised appropriate to a narrative essay.	Rubric The rubric will make provision for the assessment of appropriate style and format of text and the development of coherent ideas and organisation of the ideas using a mind-map.	Knowledge Application Synthesis Create	Application of mind-map needs attention. Plan a teaching and learning activity on how to effectively apply the mind-map in writing an essay.

FIGURE 5.2: COMPLETED ASSESSMENT PLAN

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Outcomes-based education emphasises the importance of the learner's involvement in his or her own education. Further research is recommended to determine:

- the influence of outcomes-based assessment on the learner's perspective of his or her own learning.

Greater emphasis is placed on higher order thinking skills in teaching and learning and although this issue was only touched on in this study it is recommended that further research be done on:

- the use of educational taxonomies in the alignment of learning and assessment and the development of higher order thinking skills.

The research was based on a small sample because this study is a dissertation of limited scope. Although a small sample was used the researcher suspects that similar problems manifest at other schools. A further recommendation is that

- a similar study is conducted at a wider sample of schools from different provinces.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The extent to which teachers align the teaching, learning and assessment of English home language in grade 10 is limited. Teachers rely on formative assessments to identify the gaps in teaching and addressing those as well as giving feedback to the learners to affect the alignment. Teachers also rely on their intuitive knowledge of how they have to go about teaching the learners so that they will learn what they have to learn by the end of the year. A greater focus

on the learning outcomes and assessment standards is needed as far as the teaching, learning and assessment activities are concerned.

The study has already proved to be invaluable to the researcher who was able to alert the teachers at her school and in cluster meetings with other schools of the need to align teaching, learning and assessment. The assessment plan has been presented to the teachers in the researcher's school and cluster and has been favourably received. Teachers became aware of the need to work with the learning outcomes and the assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment as well as the importance of the cognitive levels in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment.

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APPENDIX A: Transcripts of interviews

School A:

QUESTIONS	Response	NOTES
QUESTION: 1 **Please describe the process that you follow when you plan teaching, learning and assessment.**	I think, obviously, the biggest thing I [look at is the assessment programme that's the first thing I need to do and then decide what needs to be assessed according to the tasks given] and then [work backwards basically I'll say I need to do a piece on descriptive writing] and I'll make sure, I'll try and organise topics that will interest the children and .. and then [work backwards and say ok what do I need to each them and then develop a lesson out of that. It may be explicit as in ok we need to learn how to write a descriptive essay] [but it might also be I'm going to "lets look at this poem and now write a response to it". and teach them that way.]	**year plan: what to teach** **year plan: what to teach** **goals: learners know which activities have been planned**
QUESTION: 2 **How do you go about ensuring that learning, teaching and assessment are aligned?**	Hmm, I think you do it through the [planning process really , if you start with assessments and work backwards then everything is focused;] I think instead of just saying what can we do today slapping a lesson on and then and then having to work some kind of an assessment out. [It is just planning an assessment task.]	**year plan: what to teach** **year plan: what to teach**
So you plan backwards from the assessment tasks.	Ja, from the assessment tasks.	
Generally per assessment task, how many learning outcomes do you get to assess? **Or maybe more the**	Hmm..	

assessment standards? Because the LOs in English are clearly defined?	Ja, quite clear, generally, I find it land up being two roughly because for example if it's hmm a speaking and listening piece, then it will be that L.O. and the language usage , the language usage one comes up virtually everywhere. So most of the time it is two. For an exam obviously it's obviously all of them, except the speaking.	
Ja, how do you make sure that he learners how exactly what the intended outcomes are?	Hmm,,, [I think at the top of my notes most of the time I have a little block that says L.O. whatever.and AS whatever by the end of the section you should be able to and then I give a description and then on the exams as well they have the L.Os and ASs also written there and the rubic if they are doing a writing piece or anything that uses a rubic if written out what I am looking for.] So, ja..	**Goals: learners know what to do to achieve the task**
How do you find their reaction to that?	They are not interested, of course they just want to do the work. Or not do the work at all.	
QUESTION 3: How do you ensure that learners know exactly what the intended outcomes are?	[Not explicitly I think I don't do it enough. I don't say to them "listen we are doing L.O.1. I honestly , I, I have been wanting to make a poster of it probably for the last three years. That's my attitude kind of think, and their attitude – they, they, they are not interested in the theory behind it and they don't understand it either.] So I don't think there is value in explaining that to them. Maybe that's an error but [I think more my thing is if they understand that they need to change a noun to a verb or they need to …. As long as they get that,] I don't need to teach them...	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the task**

Do you feed that back to them, Do you constantly refer to the learning outcome. And they understand, they understand that that is the outcome.	Yes,	
QUESTION 4: **Explain how you ensure that learners know exactly what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes?**	Well, I think two ways the kinds of notes we put together and the kinds of work that we do and then way that I teach. For example I am doing a section on styles and tone at the moment and so the notes that I give them are on extracts, they have to.. the nature of the question requires them to dig deeper into the passage but then also <mark>[when I go through the work with them and I explain and when I assess what they have done and mark it just in class then I, verbally, then Ill say – look carefully at how you have answered the questions, have you done this or that so I think by pointing out , I hope eventually they will actually remember to focus on that.]</mark> Constant that's all I do, all I do.	**identify mistakes: for learning**
There is a constant reminder?	Ja. Yes, and focussing them on that.	
QUESTION 5: **How do you use assessment FOR learning**	This I have actually realized is a weakness of mine and I think it also because of the <mark>[number of tasks]</mark> that we have and the amount of work that we have because what <mark>[I should really be able to do is do a descriptive writing</mark>	**year plan: planned activities** **identify mistakes: for**

as opposed to assessment OF learning? **Why is it impossible?**	piece and then literally sit next to each of them and so that this is your weakness in your writing and focus on this, look at how you have used that,] but it simply impossible in the class.. due to the size of the classes and with so many classes, the amount of time we have with each of them is so limited, the [number of tasks, its literally as they hand in one, they virtually have to hand in another task.]	learning year plan: planned activities
How many tasks do they do?	In Grade 10 they do nineteen, I think it is. And even though they are varied and it is much better than it used to be the number of tasks but [still there is not enough time to address the problems and so it really just lands up being an assessment of learning and not for learning – its not that I can say, alright these are the weaknesses, lets do another exercise because by that time we have to write another task, and I have another thing to teach.]	identify mistakes: for learning
How do you think you could change that?	I have thought about that but I think all I could really do is maybe [focus less on volume and getting through things and rather focus on the mistakes] and say that right you, you know, you wrote this piece and it didn't work we are going to write it again now focus on this …… I tried to do this once or twice especially with essay writing because they are weak in that But, I find there is no conception of consequence and [they are not able to identify a mistake and then knowing how to correct it.] All the chances I have given them they just repeat the error over and over and I think this is a compound problem of years and years of never being able to go back and fix the problem. So I think, maybe, the best way would be to just slow down and try to do less but to do with more quality. Yes, I think so, but I think in the current situation teaching somebody in Grade	identify mistakes: for learning identify mistakes: for learning

Maybe then after years of doing that they will be able to do it themselves or understand it better?	10 we do not have two years to slow down and do that because they are expected to have a certain capacity by the time they get to Matric. So it needs to happen earlier, but it is not happening earlier for all those reasons.	
QUESTION 6: **How do you decide WHAT to assess and what ASSESSMENT METHODS to use?**	I use the [Assessment Plan that we were given the NCS Plan,] hmm in, in terms of tasks and I also,[what to assess I do try to look at the common mistakes and pick up on them and then test a couple of times and try and fit in handing back a test and going through the test and saying these are where your mistakes are and asking the same thing but in a different way later on so that it is reinforced.] That way, I think that's how I would focus for the assessment.	**year plan: what to teach** **identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
And methods?	I try to use as many different methods as I can, obviously [most of it is written because that's the best. We do a lot of oral tasks as per the assessment tasks such as speeches.] I try to make them do at least one speech because they have a fear of that, they don't like it so I think they need to go do something that they don't want ot do, and then there's reading I try to do a role play something that involves a group talking together so that many varied ways. And then the written forms I try to do group work, I try to do [peer assessments as well and then they can look at one another's mistakes but again they can't identify a mistake so that's not what I like to do too much.] I try to use rubrics and just ordinary marking.	**year plan: what to teach** **identify mistakes: for learning**
Which one do the pupils respond to best? The rubric or the ordinary marking?	You know I think the ordinary marking because of the tradition – that you want to see a number oh you got this out of this – but doesn't mean anything but they want to see it because they always have wanted to see it. And I think because its easier in the end you	

	don't have to take responsibility as you would if it was a skills based thing If I said listen you can't get up and say a speech I think that is a very intimidating way to be told but if you can say you've got 3 out of 10 "oh well that doesn't matter then"	
Question 7: **How do you use assessment to plan the next step or phase in your teaching?**	As I said earlier I think it is the same thing that I don't do this enough but what..for example [I recognize there are still elementary mistakes that they make in spelling, homonymns] and that kind of thing so at the beginning of this term I photocopied a note literary from a junior primary text book and handed it out to them so it is just repetition of trying to give the right information constantly.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
And when you have marked an essay or test how do you use what you have picked up there? **So it is repeating the same thing in a different way?**	I think [it affects what I am teaching] because obviously the topic that we are dealing with doesn't really matter. But the kinds of questions that I have asked will affect it. So . We have done a novel at the beginning of the year, we have done poetry and we have done Shakespearian plays and a film version of it so even though genre has changed I am still asking the same questions what it tone, how do we understand tone, so [I think honig in on what is a weakness in their work so I can see in the assessment. I can see that the majority of them just do not have any idea how to answer a particular question. Then I have to think how can I put this question into what I am doing now. So it is a matter of repeating it] And also choosing work that will lend itself towards asking those kinds of questions.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching** **identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
QUESTION: 8	(Sigh) I don't, honestly I just do not have the time. There is also the sense	

How do you use feedback information given to the learners to improve the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?	that they don't take the responsibility for their mistakes and don't isn't the desire to change so the information is just written on a piece of paper and put into a portfolio folder and it is forgotten about so I don't really think I use it as much as I should to improve it. Hmm but I think there are individuals especially one who are passionate about your subject where you can say to them listen [this is a weakness in your writing focus on it and because they have desire to do better they do focus on it and they do improve so maybe in individual cases the feedback has an effect and it does change how I teach them because then I'll make sure that I include questions or kind of work that will speak to those children in particular] but I don't think that it is a broad scale difference.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
Does it make a significant difference with those children?	I think so ja,	
What kind of feedback to you give them? It is notes, or scaffolding or suggestion?	Hrmm, it is probably written feedback on the task that they have done and it is verbal as well definately [I walk past and say that that was really a good essay that you wrote or your essay was so good for the first half but then but you forgot the second half]... that kind of thing and then it might be scaffolding in some cases if I have got very weak children then I will rather bring in something else to bring them up to speed and then build but that lands up being more of a personal developmental issue than a subject issue..	**identify mistakes: for learning**
Something the learner struggles with across the board?	Yes..I think one could help out where there is a need.. it depends on the child.	

QUESTION:9 **Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regard to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?**	Hmm...not that I can think of I just think in the conditions that we teach under it is very difficut to align teaching learning and assessment and it is idealistic in an ideal world we could, it would work out perfectly and then you know I always grew up with the image of having, you as a teacher being a mentor, somebody you would go to and suggest an idea and then you would have a dialogue and a conversation and you learn from that and it would affect what they spoke about in future. And I think maybe it is all teachers what we would really like to do but unfortunately because of the numbers and because of the time we don't have the opportunity to do so.	
So if you had a class of 16 learners what would you do differently?	Ah, I think my whole approach would be different I think I could be more myself and wouldn't have to be so guarded and then I think they would be more willing to speak to me on a on a one to one level and bring up [topics, suggest topics and from that we could create lessons that were relevant to them that were interesting.] Umm but you know we are kind of stuck in a tension of what the government has told us to do what topics they want us to cover what we think the children will be mildly interested in uhmm you know what has to get done in terms of assessment what is feasible in terms of fascilties and photocopying and budgets and all of that kind of thing so uhmm so ja it is that kind of the tension between all of those is is what holds us back. If there were only 16 people in a class there would be greater resources.	**year plan: what to teach**
Do you think the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is something that teachers are aware of? Something they think about?	I think it is something that we are trained in but in the real world it is something that slips just because of the pressures of teaching and of everyday life. But think everybody does have, everybody does realise that they are supposed to go together I think it depends on your personal motivation and your amount of training as to how they do go together.	

School B

Question	Response	Notes
QUESTION 1: **Please describe the process that you follow when you plan teaching and learning activities.**	[Firstly I check the whole curriculum and the syllabus] that I am supposed to cover and I make sure that my theme would be more or less covering that material of the curriculum] especially for a week, Mon to Fri maybe my theme would be environment so I put that theme so my lessons would be more on the environment whereby I will start my lessons, talk to the learners go out or try to indicate the protection of the environment then we would discuss, then the [objectives], obviously the [objectives would be learners will be able to go outside, get information about the environment.] Then the content of the lesson itself would be more on the experience, I think that will be more important. Then the [assessment task,] how, class work formation and then role play. [I don't usually follow more of stereotypical kind of activities what I do is I just take what is supposed to be covered and thereafter put out a theme on that.]	**year plan: what to teach** **goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity** **Year plan: what to teach**
When you say you more or less look at what needs to be covered, is that in terms of an activity, for example an essay?	Yes	
So in a week what kind of activities do you cover?	Let me say, O.K. [essay writing and then discussions around that whereby they will	**year plan: planned activities**

	come and explain what they talked about, more or less what is in the essays and then class work formations where I give them comprehension..]	
What do you mean by class work formations?	I give them more [worksheets and we chat about the environment and sometimes I just bring in a comprehension so that after reading silently they answer questions and thereafter we correct the, we do corrections.]	**year plan: planned activities**
QUESTION: 2 **Please explain to me how you go about to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned?**	[Teaching as I indicated is to make them aware what is happening around them especially knowing well that the main goal is not only grade 10 but up to grade 12 whereby things like parts of speech, figures of speech they are supposed to know that] so that coming back to the environment because it is easy for them to start on the things that they know rather than the unknown. So even their personal experience will not be textbook method where they answer questions from nowhere questions will be linked to what they did in the classroom or what they were doing outside investigating. And then [I give some form of assignment where they have to go out themselves in groups of four and find information and then come back and explain to the class their task as a form of an assessment] and then other learns will be more of rubrics, will ask them; O K so do you think this investigation was well done? Others will have more	**goals: activities planned** **year plan: planned activities**

	comments about whether they presented well. Those who have questions will ask questions.	
Do you use peer assessment a lot?	Ah I do.	
Why?	I think it is easier for them to learn that way in a double period and then boredom, the learners they don't usually concentrate for longer , I don't know whether they eat too much usually I find the more they participate, I find peer assessment , it works a lot I attempt to use it.. It is very interesting to them. Others tend to use difficult words The one interesting thing with peer assessment they don't only concentrate on the matter that's where you can say the objective of the lesson has been achieved or not cause they end up having so many things around what others have done, other learners tend to make fun of those who are presenting, they ask them questions that they don't understand themselves, one or the other you know. Terminology, concepts..	
So you feel it makes your lesson	Yes controllable	
Controllable..? Because of the 40 children in your class?	Yes	
Would you then say that you use peer assessment to make sure that you align your teaching and learning in the class room situation?	Yes	
When you do peer assessment, how do	It helps a lot because most of the answers are from first	

the learners react? How do they interact with what they are learning? How does it help them?	person experience. They tend to link whatever formative answer to their own everyday lives. Even if you are dealing with a difficult task, or content like figures of speech, they relate to their everyday experience Immediately they relate that to themselves it becomes easier. And then I also learnt that peer assessment helps because let us say lets tackle this and it becomes far better when it is explained by other learners. I don't know whether we don't get into their issues. We don't get into something and then you ask that learner to come up and explain what you were saying so we understand much better that way.	
Because of the language	Yea.	
QUESTION: 3 **How do you ensure that the learners know exactly what the intended outcomes are?**	Most of the time [I do tell the pupils what the objectives are,] even though you are going out or explaining in group forms, at the end of the day you [I am like giving them questions about the activity before they actually go out so that whenever they go out and come back in to discuss they know exactly what they were supposed to achieve at the end of that.]	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the task** **goals: learners know what to do to achieve the task**
Can you give me an example?	The learners would go out into the environment and then the advantages and disadvantages of the environment, maybe the types of soil and decide how can we try to make the environment more safe for each and everyone. [So I put down all those kind of questions, I write them on the board] so there are	 **goals: learners**

	discussions around these questions [giving them more of the scope of the assessment] and then when they come back they have some form of answers in the form of a discussion.	know what to do to achieve the task
How do you link that with English?	I link that with English one form of let me say presentation, presenting themselves, secondly orally because they will be discussing in the classroom. And then also it does link to something like spelling because even the pronunciation of words things like homophones or homonymns same sound but different spelling cause I would have already given them something on the board more like questions and answers . Not for them always to have this one as a group leader.	
QUESTION: 4 Explain how you ensure that learners know exactly what they have to do to achieve the intended outcomes?	I think it goes back again to [giving them the scope] or a platform that people [at the end of this I will be expecting you to be more acquainted or more fluent with regard to the following issues.] And then also by making sure that each and everyone in the classroom participates like we expect one way or another a contribution from each and every member of the group. And allowing each and every learner to talk or say something or write something down. And then by allowing each and every learner to talk or say something, or write something down and not for them to always...	goals: what to do to achieve the task
So you do a lot of group work?	Yea	

Do you also explain to them how the assessment will take place?	Yes, yes like [I tell them let me say a poetry for instance or an elegy ballad, we are going to write about elegy today] or we talk about elegy and [I will explain what elegy is] and they always listen quietly and then after I would ask them to write their own poems and then taking time into mind, because time is very much important. When they write their own poems their own creation, I don't allow them to go over the specified time. I don't allow them to take whatever home as a form of a homework. In that specific time they have to complete so they have to think very fast. I would ask them to present their own poem in the classroom if the period ends while they are still writing I would just assit them see ok fine, majority completed the task or majority did not complete the task. I'll collect their papers. They would write their names and I would tell them that tomorrow you must know that I will give you a few minutes to finish they whole poem.	**goals: learners know which activities have been planned** **clear outcomes: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
Then how is that poem assessed?	Relevance to what....	
And you tell them that before?	Yea	
You tell them this is an elegy therefore your poem will...	[Yes, it must be about Olive Tambo who passed away, they will also ask things like; does it have to rhyme, figures of speech because of time again I tell them no it is not necessary when it comes to that.] But if I see that i have double period then I allow them to use more the	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**

	figures of speech in their poems and they write them.	
So they then know exactly what an elegy is?	Yes	
QUESTION: 5 **How do you use assessment FOR learning as opposed to assessment OF learning?** **How do you make use of assessment to help the children learn something in stead of just getting them to write an essay and then assessing the essay?**	OK let me say by explaining and allowing to, so they get used to that type of assessment. I feel it does work. Because I always tell them that what they are learning in Grade 10 will be more of a reflection when they are in Grade 11 and Grade 12 because in other classes you don't find they will be listened to. Because whatever they do in 10B. Next year they won't be in 10B anymore they will be in 10A mixed up with other learners so I make sure that whatever we do in the classroom sticks to their brains they can use that information next year and the year after.	
How do you make sure it sticks to their brain?	I put down most of the questions on the board so they are also relating to those questions.	
So how do you make them relate to those questions?	Explaining or allowing some of them to explain especially for the rest of the class some learners of the class and then I give them a form of assessment as I have indicated earlier, I believe peer pressure work wonders maybe having my questions handy and giving to other groups whereby those groups will ask the same group that is presenting different questions even though it is more or less the same thing this makes it easier for them to relate to the questions. Expecting some form of a let me say	

	response from other groups I think that it will work for them.	
So the fact that they are assessed by their peers do you feel that is where the learning also happens?	[Exactly, you know they are expecting the certainty that at the end of my presentation my fellow classmates will be coming up who are attentively listening because some of the questions are not exactly written, after the presentation if they did not understand something they will also ask what do you mean when you say this and that from what they have presented.] So that whatever comes in the form of a question they will be able to relate to it in an answer. They won't ever write something they don't understand themselves. They will make sure everything is accordingly.	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the task**
QUESTION: 6 **How do you decide WHAT to assess and what ASSESSMENT METHODS to use?**	[Let me say spelling, correct usage of words...]	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
How do you decide on that and why is that important?	Firstly, with regard to writing let me say I give them a task before they present orally just a task in the classroom by writing forms, maybe say paragraphs about a certain topic. Yes, No 1 [I realize that the learners fail to put in full stops in the correct order and the punctuation, commas] and so on they find it hard to relate to that so [I do get them to write and after writing then read so that they can even hear that no this is not the right place] or [there is a very long	**identify mistakes: for learning to plan teaching**

	sentence you will find their paragraph is one whole long sentence. There is no full stop there are no commas so again I make them aware of this.]	**identify mistakes: for learning**
Do you then based on...	[My next assessment according to their mistakes] more like what do you call this or a remedial kind of education. [You firstly check where they mostly lack. Reading writing spelling.Then most of your assessments would be based on that.] A simple one, traditionally you stand in front you want to attend to spelling would be 1 to 10 you will give them names that you are aware of that you mark that.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching** **identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
And the assessment method?	Mostly in the form of question answer, peer and then class work like reading and answering the questions and then it is more like peer based.	
QUESTION: 7 **I think you hare already answered my question how do you use assessment to plan the next step or phase in your teaching?**	[By looking at mistakes say they are writing an essay, that essay will lead to something like spelling test.] Because I underline them all their mistakes, spelling errors and then later on we will go through them and come in the form of a spelling even if it was originally an essay and I will explain and we will talk about it.	**Identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
QUESTION: 8 **After a discussion, or after an essay or a poem you give them feedback on their work, how do you use that kind of feedback to try to keep the teaching**	Ja, basically I make sure that [I put everybody on the board so that they can understand that the mistakes we encountered earlier can sometimes be avoided. We all try to improve from there.] [Then we do another exercise which will be more	**Identify mistakes: for learning** **Identify mistakes: to**

learning and assessment in line?	or less the same as the previous one but now looking at the level of their development or giving them the short paragraph now and then it is specifically related to the previous mistakes they had,] they write and quickly in that particular period we mark all of us in the classroom situation. [Then we see again whether we are growing or not.]	**plan teaching**
How well do the children respond to that?	They do because some of them get embarrassed to get the same thing wrong again and again.	
QUESTION: 9 **Is there anything else you would like to share with me regarding the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?**	I personally believe that a traditional method OK now fine the Government the what-you-call-it the GDE insist whereby all the learners in one class room. You have all the learners with different IQs in one class, you find that one learner is through it does give problems. You have in one class about three activities taking place because you can't leave the one learner behind, even though you give the one learner extra work, you have to give that work to the one who takes one period to finish, it makes it difficult, very hard. Ja, ja, I think that is more or less it.	

School C

Question	Response	Notes
Question: 1 **Please describe the process that you follow when you plan teaching and learning activities?**	We have it co-coordinated as per grade and then that [co-coordinator meets with other teachers to discuss and decide on a theme and the sort of set work and different activities that they should do in common and then from that there is a term plan] and the term plan everyone sticks to. So say the term plan has five poems you might do ten but you will do five in common with every one else. And at that same meeting they decide not narrowly but more or less what will be in the cycle tests and what sort of class tests will be done in common. But obviously [if you find that during the term your class is struggling with spelling, you might decide to do more spelling tests and less writing until they are ready to write so it will shift.] So there are some things we do in common and there are some things we deviate in your individual classes.	**year plan: what to teach** **identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
So the tests are planned around the cycle tests and the tests?	Yes, and around the learner as for example our timetable has shifted and I have new grade 8's and [they don't know the parts of speech so I can't do paragraphs until they know what nouns, then we will do sentences,] you know what I mean, and some cannot do paragraphs [It depends on what the learners need] so my class might have very different tests until they are ready to do the common tests	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching** **identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
How many common activities or tests do you have per term?	[There is always the cycle test and last term which was the June exam and then I would say probably four to six common	**year plan: planned activities**

	assessment activities,] some might be tests, say the posters will differ but usually most English teachers have about eight to twelve columns of marks. But there are different ways of assessing like there might be unprepared reading, which would differ as per class.]	
It is a lot...	Ja we do a lot. [But some would be little like write a paragraph about your hero and now read it to me. And then others might be research about a Greek myth and then do a poster] some are probably more in-depth than others.	year plan: what to teach
Question: 2 Please explain to me how you go about to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are aligned?	It is hard, well, it depends, we might [assess where they are at and then that will determine how we will teach] or if they – that's what we usually do if there is no cycle test early. We might do more analytical ones – [how much they know, how is their writing, how are their sentences] in class or how their primary school level or how their grade 9 knowledge if when coming into grade 10. But if the cycle test is later on, like now we would probably test more [content because they have done a set work.] They have done five poems and [test them to see if what we have taught them has been correctly taught.]	identify mistakes: to plan teaching identify mistakes: to plan teaching year plan: planned activities identify mistakes: to plan teaching
So if your tests is later, your common assessments, if they come up later you are able to test your teaching. How do you make sure that he	We teach study skills always because near to when they do a cycle test or June exam you will say to them that this is how you summarize a set work and this is how you summarize your poems and this is a list of commonly miss spelt words so we give them tactics to prepare for the	

learning is also tested?	exams which should help.	
Question:3 **How do you ensure that learners know exactly what the intended outcomes are?**	Now this is a problem because the GDE states that you have to list your LOs and ASs and all of that but it means nothing to learners and even less to parents. [So we list them but I find it is easier to say this exam is going to test paragraph writing skills or argumentative skills or tomorrow this is what we are going to do.] But the terminology is so unfriendly.	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
Regardless of what the terminology is, the outcome is paragraph writing? How do you make sure that they know exactly what to do?	[Oh I give them a little checklist]	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
Oh, ok, how do they respond to that?	They respond to that perfectly and, in fact, when you mark its something like literary essay which is a difficult thing to do ; [we might do like a mind maps like what is an intro and what is a body etc and before they hand it in they are able to assess have I got an opening sentence, have I got a definition have I got a statement of intent] and then when you get it you can see if they have lied because often they just put a question mark and then that is the weak point of the essay. So they know exactly what the outcome is.	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
Question:4 **Explain how you ensure that learners know exactly what they have to do to**	Because [we never just teach the product – the process is first do this, then your next step is this so we accumulate] we never so O.K. we are going to write an essay on this topic for tomorrow, we will say O.K. look outside the	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**

achieve the intended outcomes?	window and describe what you see and write it down. Then listen to what you hear and write it down that would be your second paragraph. Now we are going to some figure of speech so each element of the assessment of the essay might be does it have an intro, does it have a body paragraphs have they used all five senses, have they used all four figures of speech and they know that.	
So the learners know that?	Yes, so [its quite guided and is not a scary thing. Because it is step by step by step.]	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
How do the learners respond to that?	No that's good. [They know where it is leading] and we say so by the end of this week we are going to have an essay but before that we will look adjectives, but before that lets look at verbs etc.	**goals: learners know which activities have been planned**
How do you make sure that they know exactly what that essay must be like?	Um, well it depends on the class like sometimes you don't want to change their creativity by giving them an example. But for a lit essay example [I would show them a good example and let them do it together.] Or show them a terrible example and let's assess it together "why would it not pass in terms of content and why is this just a plot summary and not an argumentative essay". But for creativity you would kind of might want them to create their own style and then they, they know that the end result is an essay and they have to trust me on the steps to get to the essay.	**goals: learners know what to do to achieve the activity**
How successful to you think you think it is in your teaching, the	No, it is so much better. I promise you. Because otherwise what you do is you just mark what is wrong.	

learners, do they understand that you prepare them..?		
So what do you do now?	Well now you've said, many people are going to do the summary. [Reread your body paragraph, are you just giving a summary or are you mentioning whether Shylock is a hero or not. Then they look and then they swop with their neighbour] now are their link words in that body paragraph or is it just sentence after sentence, this happen then this or have you got however in contrast , have you used linking words and they can see no they haven't then give it back they can put in the link words. [So by the time you get it in there is much less red pen, you know, and then it's quicker for you to mark because it had four pre-edits before you have even looked at it.]	**identify mistakes: for learning** **identify mistakes: for learning**
Question: 5 **How do you use assessment FOR learning as opposed to assessment OF learning?**	[How do I assess for learning....I suppose one is a diagonistic approach where before you teach you assess what they know and then you only teach what is missing,] you don't reteach everything they have done, uhmm, but some of the time you have to assess what they have learnt because you have now taught Gastby and you want to know if they know the characters and they know the theme, so I don't think its as opposed we do, we do to both.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
How do you use assessment to help the learners improve for example on the essay that they have done?	Uhm, ja , if despite that workshop which it killing, I'm telling you, it really kills me, I keep saying to myself keep persevering your results will be better. But sometimes they still	

	mess up, some don't listen, some are distracted. Or might be absent on the intro day. And then, hmm, then [I always give the rubric with the marking so they can see Oh my content wasn't so good but my style is quite good and if they totally missed the point, I do ask them to redo it and they can redo or they can accept that mark.] So they do get a chance to edit. Also if they just miss an A or they just miss a B then they might want to refine a few things and then resubmit. But I don't let them just submit everything like if someone was just lazy then I don't let them resubmit. Because now after the end of the week after we have done the little steps they must respect that and learn or else suffer the consequences. If you don't fill in your tax return properly you must suffer the consequences.	identify mistakes: for learning
QUESTION: 6 **How do you decide WHAT to assess and what ASSESSMENT METHOD to use?**	[It depends on our theme so say for Merchant of Venus they might do they do it in Grade 10 they might do prejudice as a theme and you might then decide well we can to a poster about a different sort of prejudice so they might do racisms or sexism or whatever but it will be theme dependant] and also we try to have a variety so some reading some writing some speaking whatever it might be and we have all the different English criteria and then also if we notice that this particular group their grammar was neglected in the previous year then we might make their grammar count a little less until they are at the correct level. Say that their cycle test is a comprehension test, and they	year plan: planned activities year plan: planned activities

	flounder we might let an oral make, give them a chance to improve the mark. So it sort of tapers to the learner. You don't want to have a terrible group average ,you know what I mean, just because one area was neglected so you try to shift it.	
To cater for all their needs.	Ja. Like I find now the group that I have now from junior grade OBE they love group work, group work is just the biggest fun and they love poster and mind maps but [sentences are a huge problem] because the discipline of sitting and [writing like dictation... they can't take notes while someone is speaking], they haven't done that in OBE and that's a skill forever. So [now I set a few dictations and a few spelling exercises not too much until they are ready and able to use this skill]	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
So you are looking at skills gaps.	Ja.	
QUESTION 7: **How do you use assessment to plan the next step or phase in your teaching?**	Ja, I have sort of answered that. [Whatever is missing, you teach that next] so if for a cycle exam they do a [literacy essay and it's a disaster O.K. so that is going to be your key area focus next term.] Or if the comprehension shows that they can't spell or do common errors, you must fix that by next term.	**identify mistakes: to plan teaching**
QUESTION 8: **How do you use feedback information given to the learners to improve the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?**	Not everyone, but I personally, they have got [their rubic and then it always got a plus and a minus, so things they did very well and things they must fix.] So even if its rubbish you can say very sincere you can try and say something nice so as not to depressing. And then I try to make it positive so that if like my	**identify mistakes: for learning**

	little grade 8 class are floundering and really struggling but they get their spelling right and they know their parts of speech then the top learner gets a prize and you might get a smiley face or a funny face, or a girl with a bad stutter did a prepared reading ….. learner in grade 11 it was her first one but every other one she did at break. So I gave her a little certificate of achievement and phoned home. So you just try and make it about a learning experience but mustn't just be about Oh I failed but I messed up but I failed this component but you know what I can use figures of speech, so I always try and give them ….. I don't know if I am right or if I am answering your question.	
Yes you are, explain to me how you make sure you have expected them to write, you have taught them how to write a paragraph and you mark it and you give them feedback how do you use that to make sure you are still focusing on the outcome.	[When I mark, I write down what's been done wrong and what's been done right so that then as I hand it back in general, I say now in general all had topic sentences but not everyone used figures of speech. And they write down the feedback tips. You give your personal feedback tip like your spelling is nice or you're sincere or whatever and then there is also the generic in general this class did this well] so now I find that the matrics their intros are spectacular they don't always measure up to what the intro promises but so they write their flashy opening sentences, they define their terms, they state their intentions. Now what we must fix is the body paragraphs so they match the intro. But its progress because before they just started with waffle, so now it is a bit more stylish.	identify mistakes: for learning

QUESTION 9: **Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regard to the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?**	I think, for me, if you don't [assess frequently,] I don't think you need to assess big things that's why I don't like June exams I think they are hideous because it is halfway through the year and they under prepare or they don't prepare at all and they just give back these red blotted pages so [I prefer smaller frequent assessment and very quick returns] so if they do their paragraphs they must get them back the next day not two or three weeks later because they have then lost the purpose they can not even remember what the question was. So for me if the [assessment is frequent and the feedback is quite immediate after the deed then you can build and build] but if you are taking a month to give back a test I think you have lost them.	**identify mistakes: for learning** **identify mistakes: for learning** **identify mistakes: for learning**
Do you think you are successful in aligning learning, teaching and assessment?	[I hope so, I am very purposeful so I just don't just let's , I like structure and I think learners like knowing that this is the term plan.]	**goals: learners which activities have been planned**
How do you share it with them?	I tell them that I say this is your set work for the term they often might not have the money to buy the book, so they can photocopy, then we are going to do poetry and then move on to the radio	

	play. By the beginning of August you must all have play. And they know what is coming and we will do some poems, and then we'll do intro to the play and what is a radio play and all of that and by this date we are going to do a plot test, so theu know, they know what's coming. And even when I am take in notebooks because I think if you can organise your note book you can succeed but if you have everything in a file and loose sheets forget it. So I will mark notebooks and they get a book mark and an organization mark and a neatness mark I might mark a few questions here and there and then there will are no mysteries. They know its coming that they are going to be assessed. It shouldn't be a surprise. I mean I often get then to write their own comment slips which gets attached to their report. They are often very hard on themselves – I didn't meet the deadline and my book is disorganized, my marks have gone down and they know – I just sign and say agreed.	
So in terms of correcting and in terms of the content curriculum the skills organisational skills all of that you are clear you set clear expectations.	<mark>[No they know what's coming.]</mark> Now, for example this term we finished their little radio play very early it was about 40 pages, we spoke about radio and we spoke about the characters and we started doing poetry and they just loved poems so because we are ahead in literature we just said OK we are just going to do poetry they bring me something I play them Cat Stevens and they brought Tupac and we just do poems They took that little feed and and just flew, so we deviate – it is	**goals: learners know which activities have been planned**

| | not a rigid plan and if I found they weren't even getting what a sonnet is there is no way we would go of the beaten track. I think you must be flexible but there must be a goal.
And they knew that the cycle exam was going to based on poetry so the core focus was on poetry and we could be a little quicker with lit. and then linger on the poem. | |

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APPENDIX B: Content analysis

School A

Criteria	Task 1 Prepared Oral	Task 2 Essay 2nd draft	Task 3 Literary essay	Summary
There is clarity of focus				0
Instructional activities enable learners to achieve outcomes and perform assessment tasks	●	●	●●●●	6
Details of the assessment strategy are clear	●	●	●	3
Formative assessment facilitates the learning process		●	●	2
Assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning	●	●	●	3
Assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities				0

School B

Criteria	Task 1 Letter	Task 2 BP Advert	Task 3 Listening exercise	Summary
There is clarity of focus				0
Instructional activities enable learners to achieve outcomes and perform assessment tasks	●●	●	●●	5
Details of the assessment strategy are clear		●		1
Formative assessment facilitates the learning process			●	1
Assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning				0
Assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities				0

School C

Criteria	Task 1 Literary essay	Task 2 Transactional writing	Task 3 Oral activity	Summary
There is clarity of focus				0
Instructional activities enable learners to achieve outcomes and perform assessment tasks	●●●	●●●	●	7
Details of the assessment strategy are clear	●	●	●	3
Formative assessment facilitates the learning process	●●	●●	●	5
Assessment is considered during the planning of teaching and learning			●	1
Assessment is used to inform subsequent teaching activities				0