

**THE ROLE OF TEACHER UNDERSTANDING IN ALIGNING
ASSESSMENT WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SETSWANA
HOME LANGUAGE**

by

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I declare that, **THE ROLE OF TEACHER UNDERSTANDING IN ALIGNING ASSESSMENT WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SETSWANA HOME LANGUAGE**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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SUMMARY

The study investigates Setswana Home Language teachers' conceptions of assessment and assessment standards and determines to what extent teachers ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned. The achievement of the overall aim is facilitated by the achievement of a number of objectives, mentioned under Chapter 1 section 1.5. In order to answer to these questions; namely, How did curriculum changes influence teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa?, What does assessment entail and what are the principles of high quality assessment practices?, What is meant by the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?, Do teachers understand the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning, teaching, learning and assessment?, To what extent do Setswana teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and what challenges do they face in this regard?, What can be done to help teachers to ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices in the teaching of Setswana Home Language are aligned?, the study utilizes qualitative research methodology specifically sampling and the three data collection strategies, namely, interviews, observations and document analysis, to obtain data from the research participants. The research acknowledges the educational changes that have been implemented in South Africa through Curriculum 2005, which was later revised and led to the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10-12. The study highlights that the problems with these curricula led to the development of yet another curriculum, namely the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements.

The study recognizes the new assessment approach as an important component in the teaching and learning process because assessment provides teachers with information that is significant in decision making in the classroom. The study also discusses the launch of the modern standards movement and its roots in the back-to-basics movement and the reasons behind its formation. It also discusses the concept of alignment and its links with the two well-known taxonomies of learning. The study also embarks on data

analysis which brings forth findings that help develop recommendations and future research possibilities.

Key concepts: alignment, outcomes-based education, teaching, learning, assessment, assessment standards, learning outcomes, curriculum, Setswana home language, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Cheng (2003:202) states that because of drastic impacts from economic globalisation, advances in information technology, international market competition and rapidly increasing local socio-political demands, numerous educational and curriculum reforms have been initiated in nearly every country. Most of these reforms are government-directed and applied top-down with the sole aim of improving school arrangements and educational practices and to enhance their efficacy and effectiveness. The most important target of educational and curriculum reform has been the improvement of the standards of teacher and learner performances as well as assessment systems. In the South African context curriculum reforms have not only been directed at raising these identified standards up to the required levels, but have also been directed at addressing questions of equality, equity and commonality of standards. This emanates from the fact that, for many years education authorities in South Africa implemented a policy of separate systems of education. Schools used to be divided across race, ethnicity, and culture and in the process, discriminated against the majority of learners in the country.

After 1994, the first democratically elected government of South Africa had a different set of priorities from the previous government and it developed a programme of educational reform to help it achieve those priorities (Killen, 2002:1). In its attempt to transform educational practices, the South African government sought to address social issues which included equity, access and redress. This resulted in the introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa which led to many changes in the education system. Although outcomes-based education was widely criticised and will be phased out over the next couple of years, it succeeded in making South African teachers aware of the importance of a learner-centred approach to teaching and in moving them away from a “talk and chalk” approach to one of teaching and learning (Blignaut, 2008:115). This was mostly because one of the underlying philosophies of outcomes-based education is constructivism (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:204-205). The theory of constructivism is,

however, not only restricted to outcomes-based education, but lies at the foundation of all good teaching, learning and assessment practices.

According to Badders (2007:1), Gravett (2005:19) and Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russell (2006:34), the basic point of departure of constructivism is the idea that learning is an active process of building meaning for oneself. Therefore learners fit new ideas into their already existing conceptual frameworks. Scholnik, Kol and Abarbanel (2006:12) support this view when they refer to constructivism as a theory of learning which posits that learners learn by actively constructing their own knowledge. According to Von Glasersfeld (1995:5), concepts cannot simply be transferred from teachers to learners – they have to be conceived. Learning then becomes a process that involves active construction and not merely passive acquisition (Scholnik, *et al.* 2006:12). According to Scholnik, *et al.* (2006:12) in constructivism, the familiar and inaccurate metaphor of the mind as a container waiting to be filled is replaced by the metaphor of the mind as an agent actively seeking to satisfy its curiosity and resolve troubling issues. In this regard, knowledge under constructivism is not seen as a commodity to be transferred from expert to learner, but rather as a construct to be pieced together through an active process of involvement and interaction with the environment. It is worth mentioning that under the constructivist theory, learners would use available building blocks to construct knowledge that is viable and meaningful for them in an ongoing process of construction, evaluation, and modification of constructs (Von Glasersfeld, 1995:5). The learners' developing knowledge is shaped by the activities and the context as well as the enveloping culture. According to the constructivists, knowledge and truth are constructed by people and do not exist outside the human mind (Tam, 2000:3). Therefore learning is personal and not a purely objective process.

The constructivists hold the view that we can only know the world objectively through ourselves and our experiences. This means that learning occurs through the complex interplay among the existing knowledge of learners, their social context, and the problem to be solved (Tam, 2000:4; Newby *et al.* 2006:35). Therefore, it can be stated that meaning-making activities of individuals do not occur in isolation but are shaped by context, culture and tools. Good teaching requires of learners to use their knowledge to solve problems and problems provide learners with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and accept responsibility for their learning (Newby *et al.* 2006:35). The next step in the process is where learners learn through association with other learners.

Learners work together as peers and in small as well as large groups, applying their individual knowledge to the solution of the problem at hand. When this happens, learners participate actively in the learning situation and apply their knowledge in order to interpret and solve problems. Even when the learners work in groups, they might be exposed to the same new knowledge, but each uses his or her own interpretative skills to solve the problem and contributes to the group understanding of the solution to the problem.

Because of a more constructivist view of learning (as explained above) and the implementation of outcomes-based education, teaching practices have changed over the past few years to include and involve the learner more in classroom activities (Fraser 2006:6; Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:5; Gravett 2005:24). As teaching, learning and assessment are inextricably linked, these changes have led to considerable changes in assessment practices as well (Dreyer 2008:12). Many constructivists believe that assessment should not constitute a separate activity, but should rather be integrated into the task that the learners are performing (Mergel 1998). Badders (2007:1) asserts that constructivists believe that the learners' preconceptions and ideas about a specific subject are critical in shaping new understandings of the subject specific concepts. Therefore, assessment based on constructivist theory should link with three related issues of learner prior knowledge (and misconceptions), learner learning styles (and multiple abilities), and teaching for depth of understanding rather than for breadth of coverage (Badders, 2007:1).

Before the curriculum changes were effected in the new South Africa assessment used to focus on content, was done by the teacher and was used to determine a pass or fail. The emphasis was on summative assessment and in many cases resulted in examination coaching (Dreyer 2008:4).

1.2. ALIGNING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

One of the most important implications for assessment brought about by curriculum changes, was the notion that assessment should be seen as an integral part of all planning and preparation and that it should be mainly formative, which implies that it should help to shape or form the learner through the learning process (Van der Horst & McDonald 2003:166).

Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:166) explain that it is important that assessment procedures should give a clear indication of what learners are learning. Dreyer (2008:7) states in this regard that it is essential to determine if the teacher's instruction is assisting learners in their progress towards the achievement of learning aims or learning outcomes and to eventually establish whether learners have learned what was expected of them. This calls for carefully designed assessment activities and requires that the teacher should know in advance exactly what it is that they want learners to learn and why they want them to learn it. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:166), this is sometimes called curriculum alignment: "What is taught must directly link up to what is assessed and vice versa".

Biggs (2003:18-19) proposes the theory of constructive alignment, which according to him will help to ensure that teaching is effective in actively engaging students in learning. Biggs (2003:11) states that a good teaching system aligns teaching and assessment to the learning activities stated in the objectives, "so that all aspects of this system are in accord in supporting appropriate student learning". In order to ensure alignment between teaching, learning and assessment, Biggs (2003:18) proposes the 3P model which involves *presage*, (before learning takes place) *process* (during learning) and *product* (the outcome of learning). *Presage* factors involve taking the learner's prior knowledge into consideration and teaching context based, which implies considering "what is intended to be taught, how it will be taught and assessed, the expertise of the teacher". The *process* involves the "learning focused activities" that the teacher should facilitate and the *product* refers to the desired learning outcome. Biggs (2003:25) further explains that the blueprint for the design of teaching lies in clarifying our objectives, aligning assessment to those objectives and getting students to engage in appropriate learning activities, by teaching them effectively. Biggs (2003:26-27) goes on to state that teachers have to be careful to seek compatibility between the curriculum objectives, the teaching and learning activities, and assessment procedures, because: "When there is alignment between what we want, how we teach and how we assess, teaching is likely to be much more effective than when there is not".

This close link between teaching, learning and assessment can also be found in the discussion of assessment in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for English Home Language (Department of Education, 2011:65):

- Assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings; and using this information to understand and thereby assist the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching. Regular feedback should be provided to learners to enhance the learning experience.

This explanation not only emphasises the close link that should exist between teaching, learning and assessment, but also hints at the important role of teachers in ensuring that assessment improves the process of learning and teaching.

De Jesus and Moreira (2009:195) justify the importance of “aligning assessment with learning and instruction by explaining that assessment is at the centre of student learning experiences and that the demands of assessment tasks and activities often determine student engagement in learning”. The implication is that assessment in turn will influence the quality of learning. Ensuring alignment between teaching and learning activities and assessment procedures calls for a need to design more coherent assessment processes within learning and instruction (De Jesus & Moreira 2009:195).

1.3. TEACHERS' CONCEPT OF ASSESSMENT

According to Meyer, Lombard, Warnich and Wolhuter (2011: v) the table was not properly laid for the implementation of outcomes-based education. Teachers were not properly trained and were unprepared for the paradigm shift from content-based, objective-driven education to outcomes-based education. In addition they were confronted with unfamiliar didactic challenges with regard to teaching, learning and assessment. Meyer et al (2010:v) state that there still seems to be much confusion about the implementation of outcomes-based assessment in particular. They explain that this could have serious implications for effective teaching and learning, especially because assessment can never be separated from the teaching and learning process. Assessment practices have the capacity to enhance or deter student learning (Harris & Brown 2009:365). Because of this, Harris and Brown (2009:365) state that teachers' understanding of assessment is of the utmost importance as their concept of assessment will determine the way in which teachers

implement assessment practices. According to Brown, Kennedy, Kwan Fok, Chan and Yu (2009:347) teachers are a key factor in turning assessment information and processes into improved learning and therefore it is important to understand what teachers think about assessment and how they make use of it. They (Brown, *et al.* 2009:347) found a clear alignment between teachers' conception of assessment and their assessment practices. This implies that teachers' understanding of assessment and the role of assessment in the teaching and learning process, will determine their assessment practices.

Van Laren and James (2008:301) declare that teachers' beliefs in what and how to assess is fundamentally interwoven with their understanding of assessment. They explain that teachers' construction of assessment knowledge and practices is not just a technical, mechanistic process that can be developed during large-scale workshop sessions. It is grounded in highly personal, individual and emotive experiences.

The role that teachers' understanding of a particular concept plays in ensuring the implementation of policy and new developments, is alluded to by Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203-208). According to them (Steyn & Wilkinson 1998:203), understanding the theoretical assumptions of outcomes-based education is a condition for meaningful implementation of this approach. Likewise, Taylor and Vinjevoid (1999:21) are of the opinion that teachers are very important in the realisation of the visions of policy or curriculum documents because they are true "street level bureaucrats, active agents in shaping policy", as their understanding and interpretations of policy are translated into classroom practices. It is therefore within this context that the role of teachers in curriculum development and the shaping of policies towards the realisation of the vision of the country become significant. This stands to reason, then, that teachers must be thoroughly developed and trained to be proficient and competent in the execution of their duties. As Taylor and Vinjevoid (1999:21) say, learners cannot acquire high-level content knowledge and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills if the teacher's knowledge is not sufficiently deep and sophisticated to understand his/her subject and the subject's accompanying assessment requirements, and if teacher training is not performed with the most appropriate rigour it deserves.

Vandeyar and Killen (2003:119) declare that if teachers understand the fundamental principles of high-quality assessment, they will be able to adapt their assessment practices

not only to outcomes-based education, but to any future curriculum framework. It, however, seems that South African teachers' knowledge of sound assessment practices is not up to standard. Van Laren and James (2008:288) found that many of the teachers, who participated in a research project, in which their understanding of the new Assessment Policy that was introduced in 2003 was investigated, still understood assessment as being the assessment of learners' knowledge only. They also found a difference between the teachers' own understanding of assessment and their understanding of the Assessment Policy and suggest that teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of assessment and the assessment process should be afforded more consideration in order to facilitate effective assessment practices.

1.4. THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT STANDARDS IN THE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The outcomes-based approach to education (this approach is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) is a way of teaching and learning which clarifies what the learners are expected to achieve. It uses a principle which presupposes that the teacher must state beforehand what the learners are expected to learn and achieve (Killen, 2002:4). During the teaching process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and guides the learners towards the achievement and consolidation of predetermined outcomes through specified assessment standards.

Assessment standards within each learning outcome are criteria that collectively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade. These assessment standards embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the Learning Outcomes. Assessment Standards are grade specific and indicate how conceptual progression occurs from grade to grade (Department of Education, 2003b:7). The assessment standards are used to assess whether the learners have achieved the learning outcomes. Within the teaching, learning and assessment process, it is imperative that the assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning. The learners must also be provided with constant or continuous feedback on the learning that has taken place. This is confirmed by Burger (2008:3) when she points to the important connection between teaching, learning and assessment. When learners are assessed and provided with

feedback, what learners have learnt as a result of teaching is measured, guided and directed.

The National Curriculum Statement places the assessment standards at the heart of the assessment process in every grade. These assessment standards give a description of the expected level of performance and the range of performance for each of the learning outcomes for every grade. They serve as relevant means of achieving learning outcomes and as measurements of the performance of learners in the learning outcomes. Assessment standards specify the manner in which the learning outcomes should be achieved and they also provide a description of the minimum level, depth and breadth of what it is that has to be learnt. Assessment standards are most importantly benchmarks that are fashioned for assessment tasks to establish the realisation and achievement of a learning outcome.

Although the focus in OBE is on the learning outcomes as Webb, N.M., Herman, J.L. & Webb, N.L. (2007:45) argue, the important role of assessment standards in guiding teaching, learning and assessment cannot be over-emphasised. The teaching, learning and assessment process cannot be achieved without the proper direction given by the assessment standards because they indicate to both the teacher and the learner the right path towards the achievement of the learning outcomes. In brief, assessment standards serve as linkages between teaching and learning and learning and assessment. Cowdroy and Williams (2007:89) confirm this when they state that what we teach and how we teach it, what learners learn and how they learn it, as well as what teachers assess and how they assess it are guided by the assessment standards. As Vandeyar and Killen (2003:123) put it, what teachers teach is that which they will assess and what is assessed is that which is derived from the assessment standards. This reveals that learning, teaching and assessment are inextricably linked. It is only in the context of the other that each has meaning: without learning, assessment has relatively little value; without assessment, the effectiveness of learning and the accountability of teaching cannot be determined (Department of Education, 1996:47).

This brings us to one of the most important aspects of the assessment principles in the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment process, namely, alignment. Burger (2008:4) states that alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment process is key to the achievement of the learning outcomes; that instruction must be planned in such a

manner that there is a clear link or alignment between what is taught, learnt and assessed, and the most prominent role player in this regard is the assessment standards.

In view of the preceding discussion, the focal point of this study is teachers' understanding of current assessment practices and how they ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned. The study focuses on Setswana home language teachers in the FET phase, in particular, grade 12. Teaching, learning and assessment in the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-9 are currently guided by outcomes and assessment standards. The new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) that will be phased in over the next couple of years, however, does not refer to assessment standards, but to aims and objectives. The current study was, however, conceptualised and conducted during 2008 – 2011 and consequently had to focus on the curriculum in use during this time. Because the current (2011) curriculum still focuses on outcomes and assessment standards, these two aspects played a key role in the empirical study that was conducted. This implied that assessment standards played an important role in this study. The researcher, however, agrees with Vandeyar and Killen's (2003:119) statement that if teachers understand the principles of high-quality assessment, they will be able to adapt to any curriculum framework. Although this study focuses on teachers' understanding of assessment and the role of assessment standards in ensuring alignment between their teaching, learning and assessment activities, it is assumed that the findings will be equally applicable to the role of aims and objectives in ensuring alignment between teaching, learning and assessment when the new CAPS are introduced.

1.5. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher has been involved in teaching and assessment since 1992, specifically in the formulation of learning outcome six (language study) of the General Education and Training Band as well as in the versioning of the National Curriculum Statement into Setswana during Prof Kader Asmal's period as Minister of Education. The researcher is also involved in UMALUSI external moderation of the Setswana Grade 12 Continuous Assessment portfolios, the Independent Examination Board's examination and internal moderation of the Grade 12 summative, oral and practical assessments. In brief, the researcher has enjoyed firsthand experience of the introduction of outcomes-based education, the Revised National Curriculum Statement and the National Curriculum

Statement. The introduction of the current system of education came not only with new approaches to planning, teaching and assessment, but also with a number of policy and guideline documents, a different terminology, and many form-filling activities.

Many teachers could not understand the new terminology introduced, were burdened by the paperwork and the different policy and guideline documents with which they had to contend. The training and development that most teachers had received was minimal, if not non-existent, to effectively implement the demands and challenges of the outcomes-based system (Burger, 2008; Killen, 2003; Botha, 2002 and Berlach, 2004). A move from a more traditional form of teaching and assessment to a more formative and holistic form thereof proved an insurmountable task for most teachers. Even in the researcher's assessment of assignments on lesson plans at UNISA, the researcher has discovered that both experienced and inexperienced teachers still find it very difficult to plan their teaching and assessments to align with the learning that will occur. It appears that they do not understand that assessment standards play a key role in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. As an examiner, internal moderator and external examiner of the Setswana Home Language papers, Setswana First and Second Additional Languages with different Assessment Bodies, the researcher has come to obtain firsthand information into the process and problems met by teachers, examiners and chief examiners in the teaching and assessment of Setswana. The researcher has since realised that teachers, examiners and chief examiners, not to mention internal moderators, all meet with serious challenges determining the role of assessment standards as linkages between teaching, learning and assessment.

Over the years, the researcher has realised that there is an urgent need to develop a clear understanding of teachers' concept of assessment and the implications of assessment standards for the teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana in the Further Education and Training Band, in particular, in Grade 12, and what it means to teach, learn and assess within the confines of specified assessment standards. It is therefore important to determine teachers' understanding of the new approach to assessment and the extent to which they use the assessment standards to guide or align their teaching, learning and assessment activities.

As an UMALUSI Grade 12 Setswana external examiner, the researcher often does face-to-face individual interviews with examiners and chief examiners who agree with the

statements of Chisholm and Taylor that the National Senior Certificate offered under the National Curriculum Statement of South Africa “emphasises learner-centred goals of the outcomes-based education” (Chisholm, 2008:195), but that practice centres on the “pass rate as a primary indicator of performance and quality” (Taylor, 2009:2). Some of the examiners pointed out that previous question papers and their memoranda are often sent to schools in order to prepare learners for the examination. This then defeats the process of quality teaching, learning and assessment. When the pass rate tends to be over-emphasised over and above learner performance and quality education, the end result becomes the “read-regurgitate-recite learning cycle” (Chisholm 2008:195), which gears learners more towards preparation of examination writing, in particular the grade 12 examination in the FET phase, than preparation for the real-life challenges of the world of work. This means that the teachers teach to the examination papers and do not emphasise learning outcomes nor understand the role that the assessment standards play in guiding teaching, learning and assessment.

The apparent campaign to improve the quality of learner education through pass rates has been adopted by successive post-apartheid Ministers of Education who “were triumphant, declaring victory for their policies and claiming that schools were now operating more effectively” (Taylor, 2009:2). However, Taylor (2009:2) argues that, in its analysis, UMALUSI has discovered that the bulk of these effects were achieved through manipulation of the results which included: elimination of high risk learners, encouragement of learners to register for lower grade levels, lowering of the standards of examination questions, usage of political arguments to raise raw scores during the moderation, and the standardisation of marks. The UMALUSI findings, culminated in the DoE “embarking on a process of improvement of curriculum and assessment standards” (Taylor, 2009:2) in order to ensure that school quality is determined through the cognitive standard of the curriculum and assessment system. This suggests that pass rates alone cannot be seen as measurable standards that indicate the quality of the learner produced through a specific curriculum and indicates a serious problem with the quality of teaching and assessment in South Africa.

1.6. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

South Africa has introduced a national curriculum in its schools to ensure that all learners are taught with a view to achieve specific standards without any form of exclusion. Therefore, it is imperative that all the facts that are vital to the success of this venture are investigated. The teachers as people competent in the transmission of knowledge, skills and attitudes; and, as assessors of the learners' learning are, therefore, seen as the key figures for the successful implementation of a curriculum. If teachers, however, do not clearly understand what assessment and assessment standards entail and how these standards should be used to ensure alignment between teaching, learning and assessment activities, effective teaching and learning cannot take place.

In the current educational dispensation, teaching is learner-centred and learners are actively involved in their learning while assessment facilitates learning. Therefore it is imperative that there should be an alignment of teaching, learning and assessment even though it is rather difficult for teachers to achieve this. The fact that teachers do not seem to have a clear understanding of the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in guiding and aligning the teaching, learning and assessment process is problematic in the achievement of quality education. Therefore the problem of this study can be narrowed to: What is the Setswana Home Language teachers' concept of assessment and to what extent do they ensure proper alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language?

The following sub-questions derived from the main research question were formulated towards addressing the research problem:

- How did curriculum changes influence teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa?
- What does assessment entail and what are the principles of high quality assessment practices?
- What is meant by the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?
- Do teachers understand the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning, teaching, learning and

assessment?

- To what extent do Setswana teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and what challenges do they face in this regard?
- What can be done to help teachers to ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices in the teaching of Setswana Home Language is aligned?

1.7. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate Setswana Home Language teachers' understanding (concept) of assessment practices and to determine to what extent they ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned. The achievement of the overall aim will be facilitated by the achievement of a number of objectives, namely:

- To determine how curriculum changes influenced teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa;
- To determine what is meant by assessment and to investigate sound assessment principles and practices;
- To establish what is meant by the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment;
- To determine teachers' understanding (conception) of the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning, teaching, learning and assessment;
- To find out to what extent Setswana teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana
- To provide guidelines for ensuring alignment between teaching, learning and assessment practices of Setswana Home Language.

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section provides a brief discussion of the research methodology and instruments of data collection and data analysis. A more detailed discussion of the research methodology will be covered in Chapter 5.

1.8.1. Literature Review

A literature study of both local and international sources was undertaken. A variety of authoritative books, journals, dissertations and theses on the role of assessments and the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment as well as national guideline and policy documents and directives were consulted. Because this study knows of no other studies conducted, of a similar nature, this study opens new ground in this field in Setswana Home Language and in other languages.

1.8.2. Empirical Study

1.8.2.1. Qualitative Research

While a more detailed explanation of the methodology, the rationale for the choice of methodology and the research design are presented in Chapter 5 a preliminary overview is presented here.

In its nature, the research design that has been adopted in this research study is qualitative. Creswell (2007:128) argues that qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field or participant observer research and that it emphasises looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. In brief, this research will be conducted in the real world of teachers and learners in a school setting. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:398) explain this further when they say that qualitative researchers investigate in depth small, distinct groups as the researcher is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the research participant's perspective. In this inquiry, qualitative research allows the researcher to determine Setswana teachers' understanding of assessment and to what extent they use the assessment standards to ensure the alignment between teaching,

learning and assessment in Setswana in the Further Education and Training phase. The research study will also investigate the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the versioned policy and guideline documents.

1.8.2.2. Sampling

In conducting this research, use is made of sampling. Although there are two types of sampling techniques in the social sciences, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling, the researcher made use of non-probability sampling. Maree (2011:79-80) suggests that probability sampling is based on the idea that the people or events are chosen as the sample because the researcher has some notion of the probability that these represent the cross-section of the people or events in the whole population under study, while on the other hand, non-probability sampling is conducted without such knowledge about whether those included in the sample are representative of the overall population. As the researcher does not have sufficient information about the sample to adopt probability sampling, nor does he know how many people make up the population, the researcher will use the non-probability sampling in his selection of the sample.

The crucial and defining characteristic of non-probability sampling is that the choice of people or events that are included in the sample is definitely not a random selection (Descombe, 2005:15). In the context of this research, the researcher uses purposive sampling in that the sample is hand-picked for the research. This type of sampling is chosen because it allows the researcher to home in on people or events, which are well grounded in what they believe (Creswell, 2007:129-130). Therefore, it is essentially not feasible to include a large number of samples in the study as the "aim of the research is to explore the quality of the data and not the quantity of the data" (Creswell, 2007:131). Purposive sampling permits the selection of interviewees whose qualities or experiences permit an understanding of the phenomenon in question, and as a result, are of great importance. Therefore, this research purports to use teachers who have taught Setswana as a home language for more than two years.

Given the aim of this research, it is necessary to select high schools where Setswana is taught as a home language. The six research subjects that were selected are teachers of

grade 12 (in the Further Education and Training band) of the two districts, namely, Tshwane West and Tshwane South of the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The researcher wishes to make the respondents as representative as possible in terms of gender, geographic location and age. It is envisaged that one teacher from each district will be a principal or a deputy principal or a head of department so as to determine the intensity of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring that assessment standards are used in aligning teaching, learning and assessment in their schools.

The teacher and learner portfolios containing teacher lesson planning, assessment instruments and tasks as well as feedback on learners' performances were collected from the teachers responsible for the teaching of Setswana Home Language. The researcher will also analyse the content of the portfolios of both the teacher and the learners in order to determine consistencies and inconsistencies, teacher interventions, authenticity and reliability. This will be performed to also determine to what extent the teachers have practised that which they mentioned in the interviews, in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

1.8.2.3. Data collection strategies

McMillan & Schumacher (2010:322) maintains that qualitative research involves a holistic inquiry carried out in a natural setting. This research, therefore, purports to use three strategies to obtain data from the research participants, namely interviews, observations and document analysis. Interviews, be they structured or unstructured, are at the heart of qualitative research because they are used to obtain information from interviewees or informants. Teachers will be interviewed individually on a face-to-face basis in order that the individual must be free to express their opinions, ideas, concerns and challenges. As McMillan and Schumacher (2001:41) aver, it is hoped that through this exercise, rich information will be collected in the form of words and an in-depth verbal description of phenomena will be provided. The main purpose of the verbal description is to obtain and capture the richness of behaviour that occurs in a natural teaching, learning and assessment setting from the participant's perspective. Therefore the researcher aims to observe teachers in action in their classrooms, teaching and assessing learners; learners learning and responding to teacher assessment activities to determine whether there are

linkages; and whether there are few or no omissions, misinterpretations and misrepresentations.

In order to gather data, the researcher listened attentively, questioned participants closely, and observed and recorded all the details obtained. Creswell (2007:136) argues that observation is a data gathering technique that occurs through direct contact with an object, usually another human being. Here the emphasis is placed on understanding how people in a situation make sense of what happens to them. Within the context of this research, interviews clarify the 'What', the 'How' and the 'Why' of the teacher, learner and teacher as an assessor in relation to their interpretations of the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

The qualitative approach permits the researcher to both subjectively and objectively, investigate and understand the teachers' perceptions, interpretations, knowledge and understanding with regard to assessment and the role of assessment standards in guiding teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language in the FET phase.

Although this research purports to use interviews, a list of topics and aspects of these topics on the given theme which the interviewer will mention during the course of the interview will be prepared beforehand. While the researcher agrees that it is necessary that interviews be unstructured, it must be kept in mind that the unstructured interview is a qualitative research method based on the phenomenological paradigm (Maree, 2011:87) and thus varying degrees of structure will be possible. This means that although all respondents will be asked the same questions, the interviewer may adapt the formulation of questions, including terminology, to suit the background and level of education of the teachers. According to Maree (2011:88) the order in which the topics are broached may vary from one respondent to the next, depending on the manner in which the interview develops, and the level of understanding of each respondent. However, the interviews will be conducted at a time and place agreed by both participants, namely, the researcher and the interviewee, to avoid pressure on their part, and also in a language of their individual choice or preference.

1.9. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In order to understand the key concepts of this study, it is necessary to clarify them to avoid misinterpretations and misrepresentations. The following concepts will be used quite frequently in this research study. This concept clarification serves as a mere introduction of terms, to be discussed in further detail in ensuing chapters.

1.9.1. Outcomes-based Education

Outcomes-based education was introduced in South Africa at the beginning of 1998. It involves a movement away from a content-based system towards an outcomes-based system. Outcomes-based education is seen as a comprehensive approach to organising and operating a curriculum that is focussed on the successful demonstration of learning that is sought from a learner. The term, “outcomes-based education”, means focussing and organising every activity in an education system around “what is essential for all learners to be able to do what is essential successfully at the end of their learning experiences” (Spady 1994:1). An outcomes-based curriculum includes all indicators of the cognitive demands, frequency of performance and time frame, as well as the expected teacher and learner performances as listed and reflected in the curriculum statements. While it is clear from the above statement that higher-order thinking skills are emphasised in an outcomes-based curriculum, Perna and Davis (2007:4) maintain that the instruction and assessment of the upper-level thinking skills should not solely constitute the domain of the upper grades. In our context, this would be the grades of the Further Education and Training band. According to Nolet and McLaughlin (2000), the elements of assessment standards includes higher content standards; the use of assessment aimed at measuring how schools help learners meet the learning outcomes and assessment standards, and an emphasis on holding teachers and learners accountable for learner achievement.

1.9.2. Teaching

Teaching is an attempt by an elder or more knowledgeable person to help a younger or less knowledgeable person to gain knowledge. Gagne and Briggs (in Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis, 2007:2) define teaching as a human undertaking whose aim is to help

people learn while Mellander (1993:5) describes teaching as “the creation of suitable conditions for learning, using different forms of information, exercises, assignments, tasks and portfolios”. This is aptly summarised by Nieman (2004:5) when she says that “teaching is a process through which learners are helped to learn, so that the learner must acquire certain knowledge, skills and attitudes”. It is a process in which a teacher systematically intervenes in a learner’s life and facilitates a construction of knowledge, a change in attitudes, and a development of skills and values in order to empower and change the whole person.

1.9.3. Learning

Learning is a lifelong process of experience that changes the individual. Du Plessis *et al.* (2007:3) state that “learning involves change in a person as regards the individual’s insight, behaviour, perception or motivation”, and that this change leads to added knowledge or the ability to do something that the learner could not do before. From this definition one can say that learning entails a movement from not knowing to knowing, from unacceptable behaviour to acceptable behaviour, from inability to ability. Huba and Freed (2000:48) extend this by stating that learning involves the ability of learners to monitor their own learning; to understand how knowledge is acquired; to develop strategies for learning based on discerning their capacities and limitations and to be aware of their own ways of knowing in approaching new bodies of knowledge and disciplinary frameworks. The UNISA Open Distance Learning (ODL) policy (University of South Africa, 2008:1) gives a more comprehensive definition when it states that learning “is an active process of construction of knowledge, attitudes and values as well as developing skills using a variety of resources which include people, the printed material, electronic media, experiential and work-integrated learning, practical training, reflection, research, etc.” It continues, stating that “learning is also associated with personal change and empowerment as an aspiration to improve oneself in order to help others” (University of South Africa, 2008:2).

1.9.4. Assessment

Assessment is an integral component of teaching and learning as it helps learners succeed by giving them feedback regarding their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is

through assessment that learners are motivated about what they are capable of doing as well as a demonstration of potentialities and progress. This view is supported by Nieman, Swanepoel and Venter (2004:233) when they say that assessment consists of a task or a series of tasks that are set by the teacher to learn more about a learner's knowledge, skills and attitudes, in order to determine whether the learner has satisfactorily achieved all the set outcomes or standards. According to Brown assessment is any act of interpreting information about learner performance, collected through any of a multitude of means or practices, while Gipps, C., Brown, M. McCallum, B. and McAlister, S., (1995:10-11) say that assessment involves a broad appraisal, including many sources of evidence and many aspects of a learner's knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes; or to a particular occasion or instrument, any method or procedure, formal or informal, for producing information about learners: for example, a written test paper, an interview schedule, a measurement task using equipment, a class quiz. It can therefore be concluded that assessment is a process of identifying, collecting and interpreting evidence about a learner's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

1.9.5. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what the learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the Further Education and Training phase. The learning outcomes normally remain the same from Grades 10-12, while the assessment standards change from grade to grade indicating what it is that has to be learnt in order to realise the desired outcomes. The learning outcome can be broken down even further to include assessment standards, assessment criteria and range statements. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will concentrate on assessment standards, particularly because they describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their skills, knowledge, values and attitudes for each grade.

1.9.6. Assessment Standards

Assessment in traditional education concentrated on the written tests or examinations and were passed or failed on the basis of how well learners mastered the knowledge of content. In an outcomes-based system of education assessment of learning is continuous

and is based on the assessment of knowledge, skills and values within the assessment standards of the learning outcome. This derives from the fact that assessment presently forms part of the learning and teaching process and that its purpose is to establish the success of the learner (Olivier, 1998:3). Assessment standards comprise standards and activities by which learners demonstrate the achievement of their learning outcomes as well as demonstrating the depth and breadth of their achievement. This means that assessment standards are benchmarks that are developed for the assessment tasks to establish the achievement of learning outcomes. The DoE, in supporting this view, defines the assessment standards as: criteria that collectively describe what the learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade; that they embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the learning outcomes and that these assessment standards, within each learning outcome, collectively show how conceptual progression occurs from grade to grade (Department of Education, 2003:7).

1.9.7. The Teacher

The Department of Education (2003: 2) refers to a teacher as “any person who teaches or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education, psychological services at any public school, further education and training institution, departmental office or adult basic education centre, who is appointed in a post on any education establishment under employment according to the Education Act 76 of 1998”. De Villiers, Wethmar and Van der Bank (2000:30) maintain that a teacher “possesses authority in the educative situation by virtue of his/her academic knowledge about education in general and his/her skills and competencies in imparting their knowledge to the learners”. This suggests that the teacher is an academically and educationally knowledgeable and caring person who transmits information, skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to the learner.

The National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2003:5) does not only regard a teacher as a qualified, competent, dedicated and caring person but also visualises him/her as a mediator of learning, an interpreter, designer, leader, administrator, manager, scholar, researchers, lifelong learner, community member, citizen and pastor, assessor and subject specialist.

1.9.8. The Learner

A learner, on the other hand, is a person who receives information, knowledge, skills, and values from a teacher. Joubert and Prinsloo (1999:15) define a learner as anyone who receives education or is obliged to receive education. They continue to describe a learner as any learner, pupil or person who is taught or trained by a teacher.

1.9.9. Home Language

A Home Language is a language that is acquired by learners at home and is their first language in the developmental stage of their associations with the immediate family members. Home Language Level therefore means the language proficiency level that reflects the mastery of interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum (DBE, 2011:viii). The said level gives learners a literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability that provides them the ability to create, imagine and empower their understandings of the world in which they live.

1.9.10. Setswana Home Language

Setswana is a vehicular cross-border language spoken in four Southern African countries, namely, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. In South Africa and Botswana, Setswana enjoys the status of being both an official language and a national language respectively. It is also one of the learning areas offered at both the General and Further Education Bands and it is a home language to thousands of learners

1.9.11. Aims

An aim is an overall or a general specification of the intention or purpose and management of learning of a programme of study of a course; a project; a policy, and so on. It is a broad statement of what the teacher will teach, which lets the learners know what they will be taught and what they might learn. In its essence, an aim provides learners with an indication of the scope of the content or subject matter that will be covered as well as its

relationship to the course in general. It attempts to summarise, in broad or general terms, the activity that will take place. In brief, aims are general statements concerning the overall goals, ends or intentions of teaching.

1.9.12. Objectives

An objective is a specific statement of the intention or purpose and management of learning. It specifies what the teacher intends to teach and what the learners are expected to learn or be able to do as a result of studying their subject or programme of study. Objectives by their nature are measurable or detailed breakdowns of the broad aims normally referred to as learning objectives. Therefore, it can be summarised that learning objectives are specific and concrete statements of what learners are expected to learn, and be able to do or understand as a result of having worked through the subject content material. In his definition of an objective, Mueller (2011) says that much like a goal or standard, an objective is a statement of what students should know and be able to do, and like a standard, an objective is amenable to assessment, that is, it is observable and measurable.

1.9.13. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

According to the DBE, a National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is a single, comprehensive, and concise policy document, which replaces the current Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and the Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-12. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) refers to the policy documents that stipulate the aim, scope, content and assessment for each of the listed subjects.

1.10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is significant in that it contributes towards the empowerment of teachers and learners and teachers as assessors in order to better understand assessment and the

role of assessment standards in guiding teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana Home Language in particular, and other learning areas in general (in the Further Education and Training band). It also contributes towards raising the awareness of education managers and assessors as well as teaching and learning officials to the concepts and ideas that are not plainly stated in the curriculum guideline documents and policy statements. The study places its emphasis on the role that assessment standards play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It consequently examines the implications of assessment standards for the achievement of learning outcomes which require authentic application of knowledge in solving real-life problems or in creating real-life tasks or activities. Assessment requires of learners a demonstration of skills rather than rote-memorised facts in problem solving. In brief, the study is significant in that it demonstrates the inextricable link that exists between teaching, learning and assessment and the role that assessment standards play in ensuring this linkage.

1.11. PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Chapter 1 deals with the introduction and background to the study. It explains that post-1994, the first democratically elected government of South Africa developed a programme of educational change to help it achieve the priorities it had set itself; and that in the process of transforming educational practices, the South African government decided to address social issues such as equity, access and redress. Chapter 1 explains the important role that teachers' ideas play in both teaching and assessment. Again, the chapter discusses the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process. In this context, it is explained that it is imperative that the assessment standards should be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning. Apart from all these topics, this chapter highlights the problem statement, the aim and the objectives of the study. It is explained that the study follows a qualitative approach and uses observation, individual interviews and document analysis to collect data.

Chapter 2 recognises that educational changes have been implemented in different countries, and that outcomes-based education was implemented in South Africa through Curriculum 2005 (C2005). It also refers to the three types of outcomes-based education, namely, traditional OBE, transitional OBE and transformational OBE and indicated that

transformational OBE was the preferred approach adopted by South African education authorities. The chapters also discuss theories such as behaviourism, critical theory, pragmatism and constructivism, and concludes with a discussion of Setswana Home language and the planning and teaching of Setswana as depicted in the National Curriculum Statement.

Chapter 3 sees assessment as an important component in the teaching and learning process because it provides teachers with information that is significant in decision making in the classroom. Assessment is seen as of vital importance to learners in that the learners look at assessment results as a way of informing them about their progress and also of identifying the learning areas that need to be improved. The chapter also discusses the purpose and benefits of assessment; the teachers' conceptions of assessment; and principles of high quality assessment practices, such as reliability, fairness, validity, discrimination and meaningfulness, were discussed. Furthermore, it provides an explanation of how outcomes-based assessment differs from traditional assessment.

Chapter 4 discusses the launch of the modern standards movement and traces its roots to the back-to-basics movement. It discusses the reasons behind the usage of standards in education, namely, the desire for greater academic achievement, accountability and the provision of guidelines for teachers. The most important principles that comprise the framework of a standards-based program are pointed out. The chapter recognises that different kinds of standards can be distinguished, and that these standards are identified as content, performance-based and world-class standards. This chapter also highlights the apparent benefits of standards. In the second half of the chapter, the concept alignment is discussed and linked to two well-known taxonomies of learning, namely that of Bloom (1956) and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The chapter concludes with an explanation of the future role that aims, goals and objectives will play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment when the new CAPS is implemented.

Chapter 5 discusses and explains the approach and design of the study, the sampling procedure, data gathering instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical guidelines, the aim being to try and produce a wealth of descriptive data that explain the complexity of teaching and assessment, and promote a broader insight into the field of assessment standards and the role they play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It is explained that the study uses a qualitative research methodology and

that the methods used to gather data are observations, individual interviews and document analysis.

Chapter 6 introduces the six teacher participants in the study, by the provision of their background information and other details. The chapter focuses specifically on the data collected at the four secondary schools with the six research participants through observations, interviews and document analysis. It explains that the researcher carefully observed the research participants in action in classroom situations teaching and assessing learners; that the research participants were asked five biographical questions and eighteen key questions are asked.

Chapter 7 presents a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the qualitative inquiry and integrates them through a literature study and an empirical inquiry obtained in Chapters two, three, four, five and six. It is concluded that, considering the findings and conclusions, that the authorities responsible for the proper teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana Home Language at the Further Education and Training phase should revisit their intervention strategies with a view to improving the situation

CHAPTER 2

POST-APARTHEID CURRICULUM CHANGES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher recognises that educational changes have been implemented in different countries, and that in South Africa, outcomes-based education was introduced in 1998 along with outcomes-based assessment. Although there seems to be a move away from outcomes-based education in South Africa, it should be kept in mind that outcomes-based education as portrayed in the National Curriculum Statement, is currently (2011) still being followed and will still be followed for the next two years (2012 and 2013) in grades 11 and 12. In addition, when this study was conceptualised, outcomes-based education was still the prescribed approach to education in South Africa. The study could therefore not disregard the role that learning outcomes and assessment standards play in ensuring the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment practices. It should also be kept in mind that although outcomes-based education has experienced its fair share of problems, the good that resulted from this approach should be acknowledged.

This chapter furnishes an overview of curriculum changes that have taken place in post-apartheid South Africa. It takes the reader through the implementation of Curriculum 2005, the (Revised) National Curriculum Statements (NCS) and the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). As initial post-apartheid curriculum changes prescribed that an outcomes-based approach be followed, to a great extent the focus falls on the manner in which this approach impacted on teaching, learning and assessment in South African schools. As the CAPS is a new curriculum and had not yet been implemented when this study was conducted, the discussion only briefly touches on this curriculum as there is currently insufficient information available to engage in an in-depth discussion. It is, however, indicated that whereas the NCS refers to critical outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards, the new CAPS is based on aims, goals and objectives. The similarities between the NCS and the CAPS are indicated as far as possible.

2.2. POST-APARTHEID EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM REFORM

Education is never static and no education system is ever perfect. New education needs rise as society changes; an education system must thus change on a continual basis if it is to meet the changing education needs of society.

2.2.1. The necessity for curriculum change in South Africa

Post-apartheid educational reform in South Africa was intended to serve as an instrument for a new political vision and the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equality and redress were central to all policy alternatives and curriculum development processes (Harley & Wedekind 2006:260).

One of the reasons for changing the curriculum in South Africa, was to redress the “legacy of a racially and ethnically fragmented, dysfunctional and unequal education system inherited from apartheid” (Cross, Mungadi & Rouhani 2002:171). The development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is a framework on which standards and qualifications are registered was the starting point for transforming education and training in South Africa. It came into being through the South Africa Qualifications Authority Act (No 58 of 1995, Government Gazette No 1521, 4 October 1995).

One of the most significant of the changes that resulted within the schooling system was the move away from the content-based education characteristic of apartheid education, to an outcomes-based approach to education.

Van den Berg (2004:18) mentions three important reasons for the change to outcomes-based education. In the first place, she mentions that the content-based approach emphasised knowledge that was often not relevant to the real world. The sources of information in this approach were mainly text books; the teacher and text books were hardly ever questioned. The approach was teacher centred and learners were often prepared for the matric examination and/or further studies at a university. This gave rise to a high failure rate in the matric examination. In addition, learners were not adequately prepared for the job market and were unable to use what they had learned to generate work for themselves. In the second place, learners were required to reproduce what they had learned in tests and examinations and no other form of assessment was used. This

implied that the different learning styles of learners were not taken into consideration. Because the content-based approach focussed on acquiring knowledge, learners did not acquire the necessary skills, values and attitudes that are necessary to function effectively in life. The knowledge they acquired was in many cases irrelevant. Van den Berg (2004:19) comes to the conclusion that transformation of education was necessary in order to adapt to the changing demands of a highly competitive society.

According to Lam (2009:2), there are three forms or types of outcomes-based education, namely, *traditional outcomes-based education* – which measures the learning outcomes according to how learners master the curriculum; *transitional outcomes-based education* – which measures the learning outcomes according to higher-order competencies such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills and teamwork; and, *transformational outcomes-based education* – which measures the learning outcomes of learners according to knowledge and skills, higher-order competencies, attitudes and values that are needed by society.

A transformational outcomes-based approach was chosen by the South African Department of Education because South Africa is a complex, dynamic and technologically sophisticated society. This necessitated an educational approach that would prepare learners to function effectively in a complex society (Department of Education 1997:19). Lam (2009:2) states that, under the transformational outcomes-based education, curriculum, teaching and assessment are developed jointly by all stakeholders who include learners, employers, teachers, parents and the community. Lam (2009) continues to explain that in transformational outcomes-based education, each learner's needs and learning outcomes are accommodated through different teaching strategies and assessment tools which include tasks, assignments, projects, oral presentations, tests and portfolio of the learner's work. It is clear from Lam's (2009) statement that transformational outcomes-based education moves away from the traditional content-based curriculum and in particular from traditional assessment methods.

The curriculum in transformational OBE is designed by starting with future-driven outcomes whose aim is to equip all learners with knowledge, competence and orientation needed for success after they leave school (Lam, 2009:3). This is stressed by Spady (1994:64) when he says that the main question in transformational OBE is: "What sort of qualities would be expected of all citizens?" He maintains that the critical, broad outcomes,

which include knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners would need to operate as critical citizens, are the starting point and focus in transformational OBE. The whole curriculum is developed around these critical outcomes: “schools are told that they can choose any content and use a variety of teaching methods as long as these develop citizens who display the agreed-upon critical outcomes” (Department of Education 1997:19). (Critical outcomes are discussed in further detail in section 2.3.2.2).

From the above discussion it can be seen that change in the South African education system was indeed necessary in a post-apartheid society and that outcomes-based education, which is a learner-centred system of education as opposed to the traditional system that was more teacher-centred, was the most logical choice. A more learner-centred approach is one of the most significant changes that were brought about by outcomes-based education. That outcomes-based education is learner-centred implies that learners actively participate in their teaching, learning and assessment process. During the teaching process, the teacher acts as a facilitator and guides the learners towards the achievement and consolidation of predetermined outcomes through specified assessment standards. A more detailed discussion of what outcomes-based education entails and the way in which an outcomes-based approach influenced education in South Africa can be found in section 2.3.

2.2.2. Curriculum 2005 and the National Curriculum Statement

The vehicle through which outcome-based education was first implemented in South Africa was known as Curriculum 2005 (Cross, *et al.* 2002:171; Department of Education 2000:38). Curriculum 2005 was introduced on 24 March 1997, by the then Minister of Education, in Cape Town, Mr Sibusiso Bengu.

Siebörger and Macintosh (2002:2) explain that although Curriculum 2005 and outcomes-based education might appear to be the same thing, it is important to realise that they are not. Curriculum 2005 is just an example of a curriculum based upon outcomes. There are many other types of curricula based on outcomes all over the world.

According to the Department of Education (1997:20) Curriculum 2005 is directed at developing creative, literate, and critical citizens, leading productive and self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. Curriculum developers thus

faced a dual challenge: The post-apartheid challenge (to overcome the legacy of apartheid education by ensuring a deeper knowledge, values and skills-base for South African citizens) and the global competitiveness challenge (to ensure the development of knowledge, skills and competences for innovation, social development and economic growth) (Van Rensburg 2000). In an attempt to address the above-mentioned challenges, the newly developed Curriculum 2005 prescribed an outcomes-based approach and did away with the strict boundaries between subjects that were characteristic of the pre-apartheid curriculum and identified eight learning areas. This was done to ensure integration across and within disciplines (Cross, *et al.* 2002:179). The traditional subjects were accommodated within the following eight learning areas: Arts and Culture, Language, Literacy and Communication, Economic and Management Sciences, Human and Social Sciences, Life Orientation, Mathematics and Mathematical sciences, Physical and Natural Sciences and Technology.

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was widely criticised because of its incoherence, incompatibility, and flaws in the design of the curriculum structure and poor implementation, planning and execution (Department of Education 2000). As a result of the criticism, Curriculum 2005 was reviewed and led to the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for the General Education and Training Band (grades R-9) in 2002 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for the Further Education and Training Band (grades 10-12) in 2003. The eight learning areas were kept in the General Education and Training Band, but the Further Education and Training Band, made provision for different subjects. The revised curricula renewed the commitment to an outcomes-based framework for the national curriculum. Outcomes based education, by definition, focuses on attitudes, disposition and competencies, and consequently fails to give adequate specification of essential learning content. This lack of knowledge stipulation in Curriculum 2005 needed to be addressed when the curriculum was revised. This was achieved by introducing assessment standards and various forms of content frameworks, which provided the content that teachers were required to teach in the RNCS and the NCS (Department of Education 2009:13-15).

The essence of the (Revised) National Curriculum Statement is such that the curriculum starts with future-driven outcomes whose aim is to equip all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientation needed in the world of work (Brady 1995:9). In this regard, it

prepares and expects of learners specific qualities that would be expected of all citizens, as demonstrated in broad national outcomes, also known as critical outcomes.

2.2.3. The development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)

Although many teachers regarded the development of the (Revised) National Curriculum Statement as a completely new curriculum, it was in fact a revision of Curriculum 2005. Even though the RNCS and NCS were an improvement of Curriculum 2005 many problems were nevertheless encountered with the implementation and in July 2009, the Minister of Basic Education, Minister Motshekga, appointed a task team consisting of a panel of experts to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the NCS and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve the implementation of the NCS (Department of Education 2009:5).

The Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (2009), inter alia, found that that teachers were battling with too high an administrative burden, inadequate understanding of the (R)NCS and too many curriculum policies and documents (Department of Education 2009:5). There was a need to lessen the administrative load of teachers and to ensure clear guidance and consistency for teachers when teaching and it was recommended that one comprehensive curriculum document be developed for every subject (by phase) (Department of Education 2009:7). This led to the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). The CAPS is a comprehensive and concise policy document that provides details regarding what teachers need to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis (Department of Education 2011).

The brief that was given for the development of the CAPS was that it should be “organised around the knowledge (content, concepts and skills) to be learnt, recommended texts, recommended approaches, and assessment requirements. The latter will specify the level at which content, concepts and skills are to be taught, and how and when they should be assessed” (Department of Education 2009:62). This design principle, specified for the development of the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, once again emphasises two important implications for education: it alludes firstly to the role that

assessment plays in the teaching and learning process, and secondly, to the importance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment with one another. In Chapter 4, the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment as an important principle in outcomes-based education is discussed.

Exactly how the new curriculum document will influence teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa is, however, at this stage (2011) not clear, because the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) will be implemented for the first time in 2012 in grade 10, in 2013 in grade 11 and in 2014 in grade 12. It could, however, be assumed that the influence of outcomes-based education (positive and negative) will linger on for some time in South African classrooms.

2.3. OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Outcomes-based education has influenced education in South Africa in many ways. Before these effects can be highlighted, it is first necessary to take a closer look at the concept of outcomes-based education (OBE).

2.3.1. Characteristics of outcomes-based education

According to Olivier (1998:20), OBE reflects the notion that the best way to get where you want to be is to first determine what you want to achieve.

There are four prominent features of OBE. According to the Department of Education (2000:46), these four features, which are globally characteristic of curriculum reform, are:

- The active learner and ideas of uniqueness and difference
- The active teacher who, rather than following a prescriptive syllabus, makes decisions about what to teach and how to teach it
- The relative importance of activity and skills as a basis for knowing and knowledge
- The relative importance of induction over deduction.

These features are responsible for a “paradigm shift” in teaching, learning and assessment and they emphasise the importance of an active learner in the learning process.

Olivier (1998:2) explains that in outcomes-based learning programmes, the curriculum design process starts with the intended learning achievement; in other words, the outcomes. Learners must demonstrate the achievement of an outcome as well as involvement in the learning process. The fact that learners are expected to *demonstrate the achievement of outcomes* alludes to the important role that assessment plays in the teaching-learning process.

Spady (1994:9), who is often referred to as the father of OBE, describes the purpose of outcomes-based education as:

- Ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities necessary for success after exiting the educational system;
- Structuring and operating schools in such a manner that the outcomes can be achieved and maximised for all learners. These purposes confirm the belief that all learners can learn if given the necessary support and differentiated treatment, structured curricula and learning opportunities. It thus necessitates that in order to change a classroom culture to support OBE, the teacher must take cognisance of the three basic OBE assumptions as indicated by Spady (1994:8-9):
- All learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day and in the same way.
- Successful learning promotes even more successful learning.
- Schools control the conditions that directly influence successful learning at school.

Killen (2002:5) suggests the following as philosophical assumptions of OBE:

- All learners are talented and it is the duty of schools to develop their talents.
- The role of schools is to find ways for learners to succeed, rather than finding ways for learners to fail.
- Mutual trust drives all good outcomes-based schools.
- Excellence is for every learner and not only for a limited number.
- By preparing learners every day for success the following day, the need for

corrective measures is reduced.

- Learners collaborate in learning, rather than competing with each other.
- As far as possible, no learner should be excluded from any activity in a school.
- A positive attitude is very important.

Although Killen claims that the above are the underlying philosophical assumptions of outcomes-based education, they can be regarded as the philosophical assumptions of all good education and are not necessarily applicable to outcomes-based education only. It is clear that within the confines of OBE, as in all other forms of education, that the most significant aspects are the learner and the results that the learner achieves; that all learners have potential, even though all cannot realise this at the same time. This means that there needs to be:

- A clear definition of what the learner is to learn;
 - A learner's progress must be able to be traced back to demonstrated achievement;
 - A learner's needs must be accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and
 - A learner must be given enough time and help to maximise his/her potential (Killen 2002:26).
- Flowing from this discussion, it can also be concluded that:
- That learners should be provided with a variety of opportunities to show their learning; and
 - That assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and should be authentic (i.e., uses real-life situations to test knowledge) (Department of Education 1996:7).

2.3.2. The four defining principles of outcomes-based education

According to Spady (1994), there are four principles that form the heart of outcomes-based education, namely, clarity of focus, designing down, high expectations and expanded opportunity for learning. Du Toit, Du Toit and Reddy (2010:25) state that these principles

are didactically sound and can guide learning in an OBE teaching and learning environment. Teachers should apply these principles consistently, systematically, creatively and simultaneously when constructing teaching and learning environments. As this study focuses on assessment and assessment standards in particular, the implications of each principle for assessment are also pointed out in the following discussion of the four principles.

The principle of clarity of focus demands that the teacher and learners should have a clear picture of the desired outcome. This principle forms the starting point for curriculum, teaching and assessment planning as well as implementation. It reminds educators that the learner's success is the top priority for teaching and assessment. This principle requires that all assessment tasks must be clearly and explicitly linked to well-defined outcomes and assessment standards. These links are essential if the assessment is to produce evidence from which valid inferences can be made about learners' achievements. It can also be argued that the basic tenets of fairness require that learners are not assessed on things that they do not know and have not been helped to learn (Spady 1994:11; Du Toit, *et al.* 2010:26).

The designing back or designing down principle of OBE is based on the concept that outcomes form the starting point of learning and assessment. All planning is performed backwards because it takes the intended outcomes as its point of departure (Spady & Schlebusch 1999:32). When this principle is applied to assessment, it expects of teachers to be able to describe the purpose of each assessment task in terms of:

- How it provides information about learners' current understanding,
- How it provides information on learners' readiness to proceed to the next step in learning
- How it provides information on each learner's progress towards long-term outcomes.

This relates well to the ideas of content validity and predictive validity (Messick 1989) and to the commonsense notion that each assessment task should inform the teacher about the readiness of learners to proceed to more complex learning.

The OBE principle of high expectations is based on the notion that, given appropriate opportunities, all learners can achieve high standards (Spady & Schlebusch 1999:35). It

reflects the idea that teachers' expectations, as well as their teaching practices, influence learners' achievements (Vandeyar & Killen 2003:122). Following this principle, assessment tasks must be challenging, not simply routine.

- The assessment must provide scope for learners to demonstrate deep levels of understanding and high levels of achievement.
- It must be possible to discriminate between low and high levels of achievement.
- There needs to be recognition and reward of excellence in learner achievement.

It is essentially because of this principle that OBE emphasises the use of criterion-referenced assessment rather than norm-referenced assessment. Again, there are links with the general principle of fairness in testing; if assessment is to be criterion-referenced then the criteria must be made explicit before the learners attempt the assessment task. This will also minimise errors and increase the reliability of the assessment.

The OBE principle of expanded opportunity embodies the idea that all learners can succeed if they are given adequate opportunity and time. What really matters is that learners are ultimately successful in their learning, not that they learn in a particular way or within a fixed period of time (Spady & Schlebusch 1999:34; Du Toit, *et al.* 2010:26). Learners who do not achieve appropriately high levels of understanding at their first attempt must be provided with further opportunities to learn and to demonstrate their learning. The teachers must work within practical constraints (e.g., learners attend school for a limited number of days each year), but they must also try to adapt to the needs of their learners. It is important that in implementing the principle of expanded opportunity, the teacher must investigate alternative methods of assessment and to question their traditional approaches to issues such as assignment due dates. This OBE principle links most closely with the basic assessment principle of fairness. It is not fair to expect that all learners will learn and be ready for assessment at the same time. It is also not fair to judge learners' achievements on the basis of a very limited number of opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:124).

2.3.3. The outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa

2.3.3.1. Defining outcomes

Learning outcomes describe what the learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of a grade or phase. The learning outcomes clarify the actions or performance expected. According to the Department of Education (1997:12), the verb in a learning outcome statement indicates the performance, competency or achievement expected. The words that follow the verb describe the object intended. Spady (1994:58) states that this verb also explains the processes that the learner is expected to carry out in the end. For example, “the learner is able to use language structures and conventions appropriately and effectively”. The verb ‘use’ explains the processes that the learner is expected to carry out, that is, ‘usage of language structures and conventions in meaningful sentences appropriately and effectively.

2.3.3.2. Different levels of outcomes

Three types of outcomes guided the implementation of the outcomes-based curricula (Curriculum 2005, the RNCS and the NCS) in South Africa, namely, Critical Outcomes; Developmental Outcomes and Learning Outcomes.

The critical outcomes were derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996). The Constitution describes the type of citizen that must be developed through education and training. According to the Department of Education (2002:11) the National Curriculum Statement grades R-12 aims to produce learners who are able to:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- Work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team;
- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation; and

- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.

The development outcomes envisage learners who are able to:

- Reflect and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- Explore educational and career opportunities;
- Develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

As was discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the differences and similarities between the curriculum based on outcomes and the new CAPS curriculum will be indicated as far as possible. In this regard it needs to be pointed out that the CAPS policy does not refer to the development outcomes at all. The critical and development outcomes that form part of the RNCS and the NCS are instead replaced by general aims in the CAPS. This implies that teaching, learning and assessment will in future be guided by aims, goals and objectives and not by learning outcomes and assessment standards as is currently the case. The role of aims, goals and objectives is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, section 4.13.

In the RNCS and NCS each learning area or subject also has a number of learning outcomes that are applicable to that particular learning area or subject. As this study deals with the teaching of Setswana Home Language in the FET phase, the four learning outcomes for languages in the FET phase are included here:

- **Listening and speaking.** The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts.
- **Reading and viewing.** The learner is able to read and view for understanding, to evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts.
- **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.

- **Language.** The learner is able to use language structures and conventions appropriately and effectively.

In the new CAPS document the learning outcomes (listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, presenting and language) are referred to as **skills** that the language learner should acquire. The learning outcomes are also absorbed in a number of aims that are formulated and which learners should achieve. According to the CAPS (2011:12), learning a language should enable learners to:

- Acquire the language skills required for academic learning across the curriculum;
- Listen, speak, read/view and write/present the language with confidence and enjoyment;
- Use language appropriately, taking into account audience, purpose and context;
- Express and justify, orally and in writing, their own ideas, views and emotions confidently in order to become independent and analytical thinkers;
- Use language and their imagination to find out more about themselves and the world around them. This will enable them to express their experiences and findings about the world orally and in writing;
- Use language to access and manage information for learning across the curriculum and in a wide range of other contexts;
- Use language as a means for critical and creative thinking, for expressing their opinions on ethical issues and values, for interacting critically with a wide range of texts, for challenging the perspectives, values and power relations embedded in texts, and for reading texts for various purposes, such as enjoyment, research and critique.

In the NCS, each learning outcome is broken up to include assessment standards. The learning outcomes remain the same from grades 10-12 while the assessment standards change from grade to grade because they exemplify the level of cognitive demand and the progression of the learner over time (Department of Education 2009:16). These assessment standards play an important role in the teaching, learning and assessment process as they are pivotal to the alignment of these three activities.

2.3.3.3. Assessment standards

As already stated, outcomes-based education is a way of teaching and learning which clarifies what the learners are expected to achieve. It works on the principle that the teacher states beforehand what the learners are expected to achieve. From there the teacher's task is to teach in order to satisfy the requirements and the learner's task is to learn or do (achieve) what is expected. The learner's achievement is measured against the set outcomes and assessment standards. This argument recognises the importance of the role of assessment standards in ensuring a close link between teaching, learning and assessment. Within the context of outcomes-based assessment, the learning outcomes to be achieved with their associated assessment standards must be clarified and mentioned at the beginning of the teaching and learning process.

It is thus clear that assessment standards play an important role in determining the learner's success. These assessment standards are standards and activities by which learners demonstrate the achievement of outcomes and specify the depth and breadth of demonstrating their achievement. They serve as benchmarks that are developed for the assessment tasks to establish the achievement of learning outcomes (Department of Education 1997:12). The Department of Education, in supporting this view, explains the assessment standards as criteria that collectively describe what the 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 and collectively show how conceptual progression occurs from grade to grade (Department of Education 2003:7).

These assessment standards are used to assess whether the learners have achieved the learning outcomes. Within the teaching, learning and assessment process, it is imperative that the assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning (refer to Chapter 4, sections 4.3 and 4.4). The learners must also be provided with constant or continuous feedback on the learning that has taken place. In essence, this demonstrates the important link between teaching, learning and assessment. When learners are assessed and provided with feedback, what has been learnt is measured, guided and directed.

Although assessment standards are grade specific and demonstrate conceptual development that should happen in a learning area, they do not specify methods that must be used. While learning outcomes are static, assessment standards are dynamic. Being

static means that learning outcomes remain the same from grade to grade (for example, for grades 10-12), while being dynamic implies that assessment standards change from one grade to another showing what it is that has to be learnt in order to achieve the outcomes. In this manner, assessment standards also contribute towards the achievement of a qualification like the Further Education and Training Certificate (Department of Education, 2003:70).

Although the focus of outcomes-based education falls on the learning, the important role of assessment standards in guiding teaching, learning and assessment cannot be over-emphasised. Proper teaching, learning and assessment cannot be achieved without the proper direction given by the assessment standards because they indicate to both the teacher and the learner the right path towards the achievement of the learning outcomes. In brief, assessment standards serve as linkages between teaching and learning and learning and assessment. As was indicated in Chapter 1, this notion of assessment standards as a link is confirmed by Cowdroy and Williams (2007:89) when they state that what we teach and how we teach it, what learners learn and how they learn it, as well as what teachers assess, and how they assess it, are guided by the assessment standards. This illustrates that learning, teaching, and assessment, are inextricably linked. It is only in the context of the other that each has meaning: without learning, assessment has relatively little value; without assessment, the effectiveness of learning and the accountability of teaching cannot be determined (Department of Education 1996:47).

2.4. THE INFLUENCE OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION ON TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

There is a difference between outcomes-based learning and traditional content or competency-based learning. The latter types of learning were mostly content/skills driven and teacher centred. Assessment consisted mainly of written tests or examinations. All learners were assessed according to set memoranda and criteria and were passed or failed based on how well they mastered the knowledge and could regurgitate what they have learned (Olivier 1998:3).

Nieman, Swanepoel and Venter (2004:4-5) explain that outcomes-based education differs from the traditional approach to teaching, learning and assessment in many ways. In the

traditional approach teachers conveyed information, the focus being on facts and textbook knowledge. The curriculum was a set document and teachers were not allowed to deviate from it. Syllabi and content were independent of the learners' experience and subjects were compartmentalised, each with an accumulation of knowledge. In an outcomes-based approach, teachers are learning facilitators and teaching is learner centred. A wide range of expected outcomes ensure acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and values to prepare learners for real-life situations. Teaching is therefore relevant to real-life situations and learners' experiences. The focus falls on the application of knowledge. There is cross-curricular integration between subjects.

A closer look at the way in which OBE has influenced the role of the teacher, learning and assessment, is necessary at this stage.

2.4.1. The role of the teacher and learners in the learning process

Before the role of the teacher in the learning process is discussed, a closer look at the constructivist classroom is important, as constructivism is one of the most important foundations for an OBE approach. In a constructivist classroom (refer also to Chapter 1, section 1.1) the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the learner. The classroom is not a place where the teacher becomes an expert and pours information into passive learners who, like empty vessels, are waiting to be filled. The learners are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Constructivism emphasises the interaction of learners with other learners in a learning process (Fraser 2006:6). According to Tam (2000:5), constructivism requires a teacher who acts as a facilitator with the sole objective of helping learners become active role players in their learning and make meaningful connections between prior knowledge, new knowledge and the processes involved in learning.

Two main approaches to constructivism are cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Cognitive constructivism is associated with the work of Piaget and social constructivism is associated with the work of Vygotsky. While cognitive constructivism deals with how the individual learner understands things, in terms of developmental stages and learning styles, social constructivism emphasises how meanings and understandings grow out of social encounters. In constructivism, the emphasis is on the learner as an active "maker of meanings". The role of the teacher is to enter into a dialogue with the

learner, trying to understand the meaning, to that learner, of the material to be learned, and to help her or him to refine their understanding until it corresponds with that of the teacher (Schcolnik, *et al.*, 2006:12).

The most significant bases of a social constructivist theory were laid down by Vygotsky (1962) in his theory of the “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD). According to Atherton (2005:2), Vygotsky observed that when learners were assessed on the tasks on their own, they rarely did as well as when they were working in collaboration with a teacher. It was by no means always the case that the teacher was teaching them how to perform the task, but that the process of engagement with the teacher enabled them to refine their thinking or their performance to make it more effective.

Cognitive constructivism and social constructivism are not mutually exclusive. Underpinning both is the belief that learners learn by constructing their own knowledge (Atherton, 2005:2). However, the main emphasis in the two approaches is different. While cognitive constructivists concentrate on the importance of the mind in learning, the social constructivists focus on the key role played by the environment and the interaction between learners. Thus, although Piaget did not reject the role of social interaction, his main purpose was to shed light on the development of cognitive structures in learners. Vygotsky, while focussing on the effect of social interaction on learning, similarly in no way denied the cognitive role (Fosnot 1996: 24).

In traditional education learners were passive and were expected to learn “parrot-fashion” without necessarily understanding the work. OBE on the other hand is mainly based on a constructivist view of teaching, learning and assessment, and it is thus fundamental to in OBE that critical thinking, reasoning, research, reflection and action are required. Learners are actively involved in the learning process and should take responsibility for their learning. Traditionally learners were taught not to question anything they learn. In an OBE approach, learners are encouraged to learn to ask questions, to respond personally to that which they learn and to relate what they learn to their personal lives and the real world (Nieman, *et al.* 2004:5).

Teachers used to teach in order to convey information. Learning expectations were not conveyed to learners. A “chalk and talk” approach was mostly followed. In an OBE approach, a variety of sources are used to teach and learners work in groups and pairs as

they debate and conduct role plays and experiments. Learners know what outcomes they are expected to achieve (Blignaut, 2008: 117).

As a facilitator in an OBE approach to education, the teacher coaches, mediates and helps learners to develop and assess their understanding and their learning. Teachers in this environment encourage the development of learners by giving them activities or tasks which they can do and complete with minimal help while the teacher asks constructive and meaningful questions (Educational Broadcasting Corporation 2004:1). In this manner, the teacher becomes a guide in the teaching and learning process and not a “know-it-all” or an expert, but someone who participates with learners in the process of solving problems. Tam (2000:5) states that teachers serve as models and guides, showing learners how to reflect on their developing knowledge and providing direction when learners meet with difficulty.

According to the dictates of the current South African context, a teacher is also seen as a key contributor to the transformation of education. The National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education 2003b:5) does not only see a teacher as a qualified, competent, dedicated and caring person, but also visualises him/her as a mediator of learning, interpreter, designer, leader, administrator, manager, scholar, researchers, lifelong learner, community member, citizen and pastor, assessor and subject specialist.

2.4.2. Outcomes-based assessment

Outcomes-based education did not only influence the way in which teaching and learning were viewed, it also had a profound influence on the way in which assessment has been conducted and — no matter what curriculum is followed — will be conducted in future. According to Olivier (1998:3), assessment used to consist of the assessment of knowledge of syllabus content by means of tests and year-end examinations. It focused on the retention (remembering) of knowledge. An OBE approach requires that continuous assessment be conducted throughout the year in order to provide an overall picture of an individual learner’s progress. This is in accordance with the view held by Nieman, *et al.* (2004:5) who state that assessment in traditional education concentrated on written tests or examinations which were passed or failed on the basis of how well learners crammed or

memorised facts or content. Assessment was mostly norm-referenced and no alternative assessment methods were used.

In outcomes-based assessment, the aim of assessment is to obtain information about which steps should be followed next in order to achieve the required outcomes — the aim is thus not only to determine if a learner passes or fails. Assessment which includes a variety of assessment methods is a comprehensive statement of what the learner has already achieved. Assessment of learning is therefore continuous and is based on the assessment of knowledge, skills and values within the assessment standards of the learning outcome. This derives from the fact that assessment forms part of the learning and teaching process and that its purpose is to establish the success of the learner (Nieman, *et al.* 2004:5).

Killen (2007:322) emphasises that assessment in outcomes-based education must help learners make judgements about their own performance, set goals for progress and provoke further learning. This therefore implies that assessment is important when it helps identify problem areas or areas of difficulty regarding the teaching and learning process with an aim of providing relevant interventions.

Assessment is an integral component of teaching and learning as it helps learners succeed by giving them feedback regarding their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is through assessment that learners are motivated about what they are capable of doing, as it demonstrates their potentialities and progress. Nieman, *et al.* (2004:233) support this view when they say that assessment consists of a task or a series of tasks that are set by the teacher to learn more about a learner's knowledge, skills and attitudes, in order to determine whether the learner has satisfactorily achieved all the set outcomes and assessment standards.

When the National Curriculum Statement introduced a number of changes to assessment practices, it placed the assessment standards at the heart of the assessment process. As already pointed out, these assessment standards give a description of the expected level of performance and the range of performance for each of the learning outcomes for every grade. Assessment standards specify the manner in which the learning outcomes should be achieved and they also provide a description of the minimum level, depth and breadth of what it is that has to be learnt. As indicated earlier, they are most importantly

benchmarks that are fashioned for assessment tasks to establish the realisation and achievement of a learning outcome (Department of Education 1997:12).

Lombard (2010:36) explains that the three activities of teaching, learning and assessment should be integrated during a learning experience “to form a powerful, concerted action to stimulate learning”. Lombard refers to SAQA’s (2005) stipulation that assessment should form an integral part of teaching and learning and that it should not merely be seen as an “add on”.

Based on this view that assessment should form an integral part of teaching and learning, Biggs (1999:27) states that alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment process is fundamental in the achievement of the learning outcomes; that instruction must be planned in such a manner that there is a clear link or alignment between that which is taught, learnt and assessed. The most prominent factor in this regard is the assessment standards. The alignment of teaching, learning and assessment and the role of assessment standards are discussed in detail in Chapter 4 section 4.12.

For the purposes of this study it is worth noting that, although the National Curriculum Statement sees the teacher as fulfilling, *inter alia*, the role of assessor, the teacher’s beliefs about assessment are important for implementing an assessment policy. Van Laren and James (2008:292) draw a distinction between the teacher’s personal understanding and their policy understanding of assessment. They state that the teacher’s beliefs may be referred to as the teacher’s personal understanding of policy and that this understanding is linked to the actual experiences of learning about and implementing this policy in the classroom. Van Laren and James (2008:293) argue that the teacher’s conception of assessment and the assessment policy is necessary for implementing this policy in accordance with the policy requirements.

This research study therefore attempts to investigate the role that teachers’ play with regards to understanding of assessment, in particular assessment standards, guiding the teaching, learning and assessment process in the FET phase (with the focus on grades 11 and 12) with specific reference to Setswana Home Language (refer to Chapter 1, section 1.3.) It is therefore important to determine the extent to which teachers understand the role of assessment and the use of assessment standards to guide or align their teaching, learning and assessment activities. In Chapter 4, a brief overview of the world-wide

standards movement is given and the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, section 4.12.

As the study focuses on the teaching of Setswana Home Language, the following section deals with a brief discussion of this language as one of the languages in South Africa and listed in the National Curriculum Statement.

2.5. SETSWANA HOME LANGUAGE IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT IN THE FET PHASE

2.5.1. The Languages of South Africa

In South Africa, the constitution guarantees equal status to eleven official languages to cater for the country's diverse peoples and their cultures. Therefore, South Africa can be referred to as a multilingual country. Besides the 11 officially recognised languages, scores of others —African, European, Asian and more— are spoken here, as the country lies at the crossroads of Southern Africa. The eleven officially recognised languages are:

Afrikaans	Sesotho
English	Setswana
IsiNdebele	IsiSwati
IsiXhosa	Tshivenda
IsiZulu	Xitsonga
Sepedi	

Other languages spoken in South Africa and mentioned in the constitution include the Khoi, Nama and San languages, Sign language, Arabic, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Portuguese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu as well as a few indigenous creoles and pidgins.

2.5.2. Language distribution

According to the 2001 census, isiZulu is the mother tongue of 23.8% of South Africa's population, followed by isiXhosa at 17.6%, Afrikaans at 13.3%, Sepedi at 9.4%, and English and Setswana each at 8.2%. It has been indicated in Chapter 1 that Setswana is a vehicular cross-border language spoken in four Southern African countries, namely, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana. It is also one of the learning areas offered in both the General and Further Education Bands and it is a home language to 10.3% of South African Batswana and 8.2% of the population of South Africa. In South Africa, Setswana is mainly spoken in seven of the provinces: Limpopo, Northwest, Northern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and Western Cape. The speech varieties related to Setswana include Sekgalagadi in Botswana and Shilozhi in Namibia and Zambia.

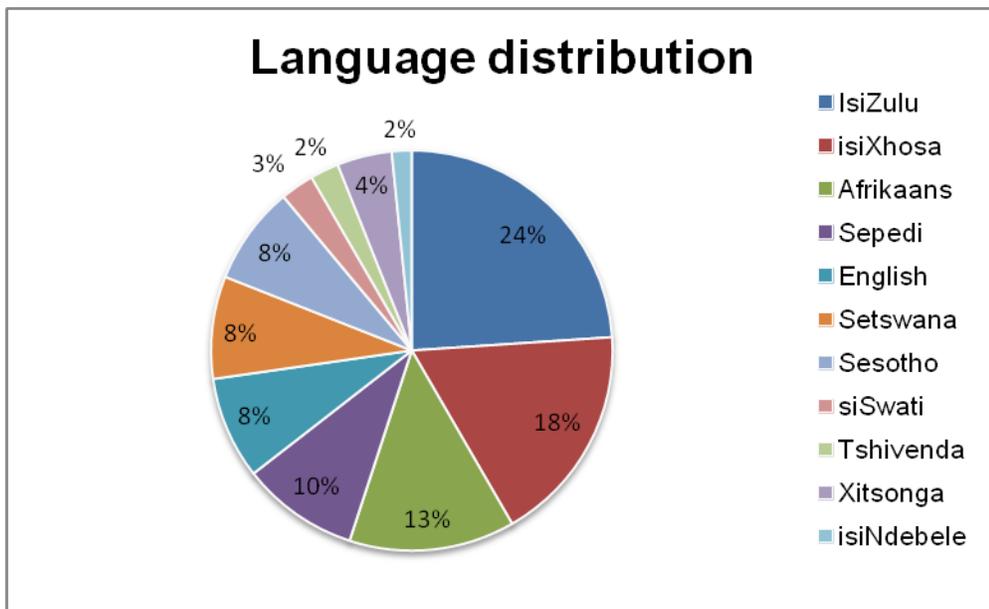


Figure 2.1: Mother tongue distribution in South Africa in 2001(Statistics South Africa, Census 2001 and Ethnologue)

2.5.3. Distribution of Setswana speakers

Setswana was the first Sotho language to have a written form. In 1806, Heinrich Lichtenstein wrote *Upon the Language of the Beetjuana* (as a British protectorate,

Botswana was originally known as Bechuanaland). In 1818, Dr Robert Moffat from the London Missionary Society arrived among the Batlhaping in Kudumane, and built Botswana's first school. In 1825 he realised that he must use and write Setswana in his teachings, and began a long translation of the Bible into Setswana, which was finally completed in 1857. One of most famous Setswana speakers was the intellectual, journalist, linguist, politician, translator, and writer, Sol T Plaatje. A founder member of the African National Congress, Plaatje was fluent in at least seven languages, and translated the works of Shakespeare into Setswana. A map indicating the distribution of Setswana speakers can be found below.

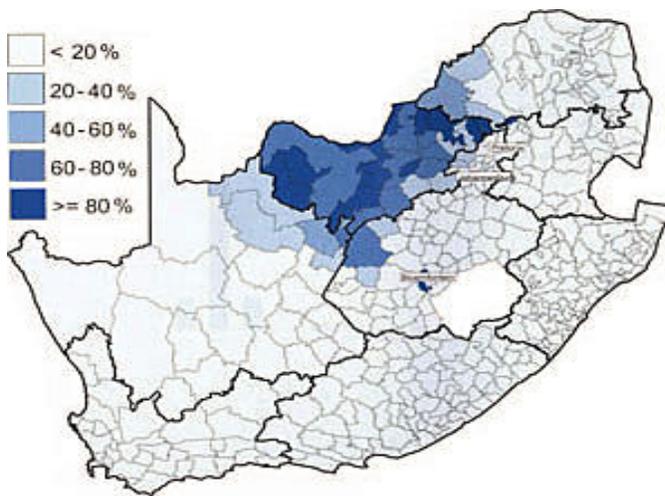


Figure 2.2: Distribution of Setswana speakers in South Africa – 2001 (Statistics South Africa, Census 2001 and Ethnologue)

2.5.4. Setswana in the National Curriculum Statement

The learning outcomes listed for Setswana Home language in the Further Education and Training Band have already been mentioned in section 2.3.2.2 and are therefore just briefly listed in this section as: Listening and speaking, Reading and viewing, Writing and presenting and Language use and structure (Department of Education 2003:14-41).

Each learning outcome has a range of assessment standards attached to it. In preparing a lesson, the teacher not only identifies the learning outcomes and assessment standards to be attained but also chooses tasks that will allow the learners to achieve the learning outcomes. The assessment standards inform the content of the tasks that the teacher

chooses, and each assessment standard serves as a statement of what learners should be able to do. For example one of the assessment standards of learning outcome four (LO4) is: “*Dirisa dipolelo tse di bopilweng sentle ka tsela e e nang le bokao, le go bontsha mokgwa wa go dirisa puo ka gale*” (Use structurally sound sentences in a meaningful and functional manner). (Department of Education 2003a: 49). The assessment standard is usually a noun that describes the knowledge required by the learner while the verb describes the skill. For example, in Setswana home language Grade 12, learning outcome 4, one assessment standard reads: “identify and explain the meanings of words and use them correctly in a wide range of texts” (Department of Education 2003:41). The assessment standard indicated requires of the teacher to teach the learners to “identify meanings of words, explain meanings of words, and how to use them correctly in texts”. Assessment will then involve activities in which the learner’s ability to identify meaning of words, to explain meanings of words and to use the words correctly in sentences or texts, is assessed. Thus assessment standards become the driving force behind the assessment of skills indicated because they inform the development of the tasks of the teacher. It can therefore be concluded that assessment standards guide or assist the teacher in planning, teaching and assessment.

2.5.5. Planning in the teaching of Setswana Home Language

According to the Learning Programme Guideline (Department of Education 2005), there are three stages of planning, namely, a subject framework, a work schedule and a lesson plan. In the Further Education and Training band, teachers work together in the development of **a subject framework** which is a systematic plan that concentrates on the conceptual progression of key skills, knowledge, values and attitudes of the learning outcomes and assessment standards across grades ten, eleven and twelve (Department of Education, 2005:24). **A work schedule** on the other hand, gives a description of the teaching and learning that will occur over a period of a year. It interprets the learning outcomes and assessment standards into planned teaching and learning activities. Lastly, **a lesson plan** provides a description of the teacher’s classroom planning which shows how items of the content will be included during the year to achieve the intended learning outcomes. According to the Department of Education (2005:26), a lesson plan shows what learners will learn, key questions that guide the learning experience, the resources, the

teaching strategies and the assessments, all of which assist in the provision of evidence of learning.

The lesson plan precedes the implementation of the teaching, learning and assessment plan. It is during this stage that the teacher chooses the learning outcomes and the assessment standards to be assessed. The assessment plan indicates the learning outcomes and assessment standards so that the learners know what they will be assessed on beforehand. In brief, during the teaching and learning process the teacher states what the learners are expected to achieve, and from there the teacher's task is to teach in order to help learners to satisfy the requirements of the assessment standards, and the learners' task is to learn or do what the assessment standards expect.

2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter recognises that educational changes have been implemented in different countries, and that in South Africa outcomes-based education was introduced in 1998 along with outcomes-based assessment. The vehicle, through which outcomes-based education was initially implemented in South Africa, is Curriculum 2005. C2005 was later revised and led to the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement for grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement for grades 10-12. Problems with these curricula led to the development of yet another curriculum, namely the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements. It was explained that although a new curriculum, generally referred to as CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) was developed, the current outcomes-based curriculum will still be followed until 2014. An attempt was therefore made to point out the differences and similarities between the two curricula. These differences are explained in more detail in the next chapter.

Outcomes-based education differs from traditional education in the sense that clearly defined outcomes form the starting point of all teaching, learning and assessment activities. Four principles, namely, *clarity of focus*, *design down*, *expanded opportunities* and *high expectations* form the key to the design and development of teaching, learning and assessment activities based on outcomes.

The chapter briefly referred to the three types of outcomes-based education, namely, traditional OBE, transitional OBE and transformational OBE and indicated that

transformational OBE was the preferred approach adopted by South African education authorities. Although the outcomes-based education is rooted in theories such as behaviourism, critical theory, pragmatism and constructivism, this chapter has established that it has more philosophical underpinnings of constructivism. Within the constructivist classroom, the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the learner, as constructivism requires a teacher who acts as a facilitator with the sole objective of helping learners become active role players in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of Setswana Home language and the planning and teaching of Setswana as depicted in the National Curriculum Statement.

From the discussion in this chapter it is clear that outcomes-based education had a very positive influence on teaching, learning and assessment in the South African context. The change to a learner-centred approach, the emphasis on critical thinking, understanding and application of knowledge as opposed to parrot-like learning, the important role of the teacher in ensuring that learners are active role-players in the learning process, continuous assessment and the importance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment will be important principles guiding education in future, irrespective of which curriculum is followed.

CHAPTER 3

A NEW APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an important component in the teaching and learning process because it provides teachers with information that is significant for decision making in the classroom. According to Rahim, Venville and Chapman (2009:1) teachers from time to time make decisions about learners' learning and development as well as the suitability and effectiveness of classroom teaching. The information gathered from assessment provides the teachers with an insight into the meanings constructed or assigned by learners of ideas or concepts that have been taught in the classroom. In this regard, the teacher is given a chance to gauge whether the idea or concept taught has been conveyed successfully to learners. As such, the link between teaching, learning and assessment can be clearly seen. Assessment is also of vital importance to learners in that the learners look at assessment results as a way of informing them about their progress and also to identify the learning areas that need to be improved. Rahim, et al (2009:1) assert that learners who receive regular feedback through assessment are better motivated to learn because they are actively involved in their own learning. Thus, feedback from assessment directs improvement of learner learning and contributes towards the motivation of learners.

This chapter takes a closer look at the concept of assessment. It starts by defining assessment before going on to explain the link between teaching, learning and assessment and the role that assessment standards play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. Thereafter, the purpose and benefits of assessment; the teachers' conceptions of assessment; and principles of high quality assessment practices, such as reliability, fairness, validity, discrimination, meaningfulness and contribution to learning as well as the principles of classroom assessment are discussed.

3.2. DEFINING ASSESSMENT

Based on the Latin origin of the word "assidere" which means to "sit with", Lombard (2010:34) reasons that metaphorically speaking, the teacher is supposed to "sit with" the

learner when assessing. According to him this implies that assessment is done *with* and *for* the learner and not *to* the learner (Lombard 2010:34).

The Department of Education's assessment policy (Department of Education, 1998:3) defines assessment as a process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes and assessment standards for a particular phase in learning. Seen in this context, assessment can be viewed as significant in the teaching-learning process, because the teacher has to measure whether the learner has achieved what is required.

According to Sieborger and Macintosh (2004:5) assessment involves tasks, exercises, tests and examinations, set and marked for learners by teachers. They maintain that when one assesses something, one actually measures it since what is measured is that which has been learnt; that which can be remembered; that which is understood and can be applied in different environments or contexts from what has been learned. Although they assert that assessment is similar to evaluation, they accept that assessment is not however the same as evaluation. In capturing this, Sieborger and Macintosh (2004:5) state that assessment measures the extent of learning in learners while evaluation is a process whereby the effects and effectiveness of teaching can be determined. In this regard, assessment not only involves the set and marked tasks, exercises, tests and examinations but it also encompasses different ways of obtaining information and providing feedback about an individual learner's progress (Sieborger & Macintosh, 2004:5). Therefore, assessment within an educational perspective not only measures the learner's achievement but it also helps a learner learn and achieve more.

This brings us to the notion that assessment has many facets and many definitions in educational literature. Most of the definitions of assessment refer to the collection of information about student performance and the monitoring of students' performance before, during or after teaching. Chase (1999:4) refers to the role of assessment as the "broad area" of monitoring students' performances. Green and Johnson (2010:388) define assessment very succinctly as: "The variety of methods used to determine what students know and are able to do before, during and after instruction." Verhoeven and Devos (2005:258) regard assessment as a collection and interpretation of data about the teaching-learning process in order to measure the progress of the learners or to form a basis for making decisions about the progress of the teaching-learning process. Here,

assessment is seen as a process that focuses on the knowledge of the learners, on their understanding of the curriculum, their skills and on their attitudes. Badders (2007:1), on the other hand, refers to assessment as a sample taken from a larger domain of content and process skills that allows one to infer the learners' understanding of a part of a larger domain being explored; and that this sample may entail behaviours, products, knowledge and performances. Badders (2007:1) holds the view that assessment is a continuous and an ongoing process that involves examining and observing learners' behaviours, listening to their ideas, and developing questions that promote conceptual understanding.

Dreyer (2008:5) includes "measuring or estimating the value of something" as part of his explanation of what assessment entails, but then goes on to quote from the Delaware website, because he regards their definition as a comprehensive and descriptive one:

Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning.

This implies that assessment is an ongoing process in which faculty (in the present study, teachers):

- Establish clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning
- Ensure that students have sufficient opportunities to achieve these outcomes;
- Systematically gather, analyse and interpret evidence to determine how well student learning matches (our) expectations;
- Reformulate educational outcomes based on the result of their assessment (Dreyer, 2008:6)

3.3. THE LINK BETWEEN TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

In traditional education teaching, learning and assessment were viewed as separate activities during a learning experience. One of the ways in which an outcomes-based approach impacted on education was to change this perception and to ensure that these three activities are integrated to form a powerful, concerted whole to stimulate learning (Lombard 2010:36).

Killen (2000: vii) states that there are four questions which guide decisions about planning, teaching and assessment:

- What do we want learners to learn?
- Why do we want learners to learn?
- How can we best help learners to learn things?
- How will we know when learners have learnt?

Killen's (2000) four questions not only give guidance in respect of planning, teaching and assessment, but also explain the close link between teaching, learning and assessment. The first two questions refer to the learner, what s/he is supposed to learn and confirmation on the part of the teacher regarding the value of what the learner learns. The third question refers to delivery, instruction and how the teacher will facilitate the learners' learning. The fourth and last question relates to assessment and how teachers will determine whether the learners have learnt what they have been taught (Blumberg 2009:93). This close link between teaching, learning and assessment is also alluded to by Siebörger and Macintosh (2002:7) when they state that the teacher helps learners to learn (by teaching them) and that assessment is one of the ways to help learners to learn.

According to Harris, Irving and Peterson (2008:2) assessment is a key process in the teaching and learning cycle because it allows stakeholders to evaluate learning and use the gathered information to improve teaching and learning. The New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2007:1), on the other hand, sees assessment as a process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about learners' learning. This is also supported by Brown (2004:304) when he states that assessment is an act of interpreting information about learner performance, collected through any means or practices. This demonstrates that the central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress in order to set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.

The close link between teaching, learning and assessment is clearly explained by the Carnegie Mellon University (2010): "What we want students to learn and be able to do, should guide the choice and design of the assessment."

From the above discussion it can be concluded that assessment is an integral part of the teaching-learning process, that it is not an add-on and that it should be taken into consideration right from the planning stage of the process of a teaching-learning intervention.

3.4. WHAT ARE THE PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF ASSESSMENT?

It is vitally important for teachers to use assessment, not only to determine whether the learners have learnt what they were supposed to learn, but also to inform and direct teaching. If a teacher utilises different assessment tools, he or she will be able to determine the teaching strategies that are effective and those that need to be refined or modified. In this context, assessment can be utilised for improvement of classroom practice, for curriculum planning and for reflecting on one's own teaching practice (Badders, 2007:2). One of the key functions of assessment is that it is used to provide more information to learners, parents and other stakeholders. It is highly likely that teachers can defend their teaching and the amount of their learners' learning (Brown, 2004:304), but this can only occur or happen through some demonstrable evidence gathered from observing their learners' behaviour and performances on the assessment exercises that follow their lesson presentations. This information is a vehicle through which learners are empowered to be self-reflective and to monitor and evaluate their own progress as they develop the capacity of being self-directed learners. Badders (2007:2) states that apart from informing teaching and developing in learners the ability to direct their own learning, assessment data can also be utilised to measure learner achievement, examine the opportunity for learners to learn, and to provide the basis for evaluation of a programme. According to Brown (2004:304) the major purposes of assessment include, but are not limited to: improvement of teaching and learning; making learners responsible or accountable for their own learning; and accountability of schools and teachers. Kellough and Kellough (1999:418-419) write that there are seven most important purposes of assessment, namely to:

- Assist learners' learning;
- Identify learners' strengths and weaknesses;
- Assess the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy;
- Assess and improve the effectiveness of curriculum programmes;

- Assess and improve teaching effectiveness;
- Provide data that assist in decision making;
- Communicate with and involve parents.

According to Loubser (1993:190) the purpose of assessment serves four functions, i.e. to monitor learners' progress with the purpose of adapting teaching practices for the benefit of the learners; to identify shortcomings and gaps in learners' mastering of skills or content; to determine how well students can perform certain tasks and functions and how successful teaching and learning have been. Lombard (2010:46) refers to the following six purposes of assessment as identified by Gipps and Stobart (1993):

- **Screening:** to identify learners who are in need of special help
- **Diagnosis:** to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses
- **Record-keeping:** recording and safekeeping of learner achievement to assist with learner transfers
- **Feedback:** to provide information about learner progress and teacher success
- **Certification:** to provide a learner with a certificate, signifying that a level of competence has been achieved
- **Selection:** to assist learners in their decision-making about further studies.

Airasian and Russel's (2008:5-7) explanation of the purposes of assessment is in line with the above. They also mention placing students, providing feedback, diagnosing student problems and disabilities and summarising and grading academic learning progress as important purposes of assessment. However, they add that assessment is also carried out with the purpose of establishing and maintaining a classroom environment that supports learners' learning.

The following table further outlines what one can achieve with assessment (Department of Education, 2010a: 7):



Figure 3.1: Uses and benefits of assessment (Department of Education, 2010a:7)

Green and Johnson (2010:15) explain that it is important to keep the purpose of any assessment in mind, as the purpose dictates the kind (or type) of assessments that must be undertaken. Lombard (2010:49) refers to the “assessment mode” that will be determined by the assessment purpose.

3.5. TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Lombard (2010:49) explains that if the purpose of assessment is for example to determine the entry level of learners to a new learning experience, the assessment mode or kind of assessment to be used is **baseline assessment**. **Diagnostic assessment** will be used

when the purpose is to determine the possible barriers experienced by learners while **authentic assessment** will be used when the purpose is to determine learners' ability to transfer and apply knowledge, skills and values in situations resembling real-life contexts. Teaching success and learner development will be determined by means of **formative assessment**, whereas the learning success at the end of a learning experience will be determined by means of **summative assessment**. Lombard (2010:49) lastly explains that if the purpose is to establish learners' ability to produce or do (demonstrate) something, **performance assessment** will be employed.

The National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2003b:48) distinguishes between different kinds of assessment and methods of assessment.

3.5.1. Baseline assessment

Baseline assessment of prior learning is assessment that occurs at the beginning of a grade or a phase to determine what learners already know. Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan and Brown (2010:323) assert that there are at least three reasons why many effective teachers use a pre-test to assess their learners' current knowledge: First, such a test will identify learners who do not have enough prior knowledge to begin the new material. The teacher can then provide these learners with prerequisite work. Second, assessing the general level of learners' prior knowledge helps determine where to begin instruction and what to present. Finally, scores on a valid and reliable pre-test can serve as a baseline from which to measure progress (Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, and Brown 2010:323). It can therefore be said that baseline assessment helps teachers in their planning of learning programmes and learning activities.

3.5.2. Diagnostic assessment

This method of assessment is used to establish whether learners face barriers to learning and to determine the nature and causes of such barriers. In brief, it determines specific areas of learning difficulty. The purpose is to identify learners' strengths, weaknesses, knowledge and skills – particularly what learners need to learn in designated subjects (Lombard, 2010:50). When the teacher has established these, the teacher will be able to

remediate learners and adjust his or her teaching to meet each individual learner's needs. Diagnostic assessment in its nature is used in conjunction with specialists – teachers of reading or foreign languages, special educators or counsellors and psychologists – to identify problems or to screen for problems (Orlich, et al 2010:323). That is why in most cases, diagnostic assessment is usually followed by guidance, appropriate support and intervention strategies.

3.5.3. Formative assessment

At the heart of the teacher's job is his or her learners' growing competence and success in learning. Therefore, the most common and important kind of classroom assessment teachers engage in is that of formative assessment – ongoing assessment to monitor learners' progress. Formative assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching and is used to inform learners and teachers about the learners' progress in order to improve learning. Orlich, et al (2010:323) state that in this regard, the purposes are twofold: firstly, to verify that learning is occurring and that the curriculum is appropriate, and secondly to provide feedback to learners. In the first instance, the primary user of the information is the teacher. Constructive feedback is given in order to help learners develop and grow. It is possible for formative assessment to discover learning barriers and their causes. As explained, formative assessment is used to provide feedback to learners, to answer their need to know “How am I doing?” and “Am I meeting expectations?” (Orlich, et al, 2010:323). The form of the assessment will be whatever can most reasonably answer this question for the learner and provide the quickest possible feedback. Under normal circumstances, formative assessments would comprise daily quizzes, homework, and short assessment exercises. As evidenced in current research, timely and relevant feedback is one of the most important factors for improving learner achievement, according to Orlich, et al (2010:323).

3.5.4. Summative assessment

By contrast with formative assessment, summative assessment is an “overview of previous learning” (Black & William, 1998:28). In order to accomplish this task, the teacher collects information about learners over a teaching or instructional period or through an

end-of-period assessment task or project. The central purpose of summative assessment is to certify completion of projects, classes, and programs. The users of summative assessment include not only learners but also their parents and perhaps future schools and employers. Formative and summative assessments are under normal circumstances carried out by teachers, though they may be included in the supplementary materials that accompany textbooks or large-scale assessment tasks or tests administered by school districts, state or country. As Orlich, et al (2010:323) argue, summative assessments also have an important instructional dimension. They provide an overall picture of learners' progress at a given time, such as at the end of the term or year or on transfer to another school.

3.5.5. Authentic assessment

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

The following are characteristic features of authentic assessment:

- The focus is on content that is essential.
- The assessment is done in depth and leads to other problems and questions.
- The assessments are feasible and easily done.
- The focus is on the ability to produce a quality product or performance, rather than a single right answer.
- It promotes the development and exhibition of learners' strengths and expertise.
- The criteria are known, understood, and negotiated between the teacher and the learner before the assessment begins.
- Assessment provides multiple ways in which students can demonstrate they have met the criteria, allowing multiple points of view and multiple interpretations.
- The assessments require marking that focuses 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, with a task to be performed, a rubric by which the performance of the task will be assessed. Teachers teach to the assessment and the learners know which rubric will be used for assessment. This relates with the clarity of focus goal of outcomes-based education.

3.5.6. Performance assessment

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 learners 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. 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. 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).

3.5.7. Portfolio assessment

Portfolio assessment is performed by assessing a meaningful collection of a learner's work. According to Orlich, et al (2010) a portfolio is more than a folder stuffed with a learner's papers, progress reports and related materials. It is usually a purposeful collection of the learner's work that tells the story of the tasks completed, efforts and achievement in a given area over a period of time. A well designed portfolio can motivate learners, show teachers and parents what learners know and can do, and can encourage learners to engage in self-reflection (Dreyer, 2000:272). The greatest benefit of portfolio assessment is that learners are taught to become independent thinkers. The other benefit

is that portfolio assessment also contributes towards the summative assessment in that a portfolio is an end-of-year mark bearing product.

3.6. METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment methods chosen for the assessment activities must be appropriate to the assessment standards against which assessment must take place, and the purpose of assessment must be clearly understood by all learners and teachers involved. After all, competence can be demonstrated in different ways. Therefore, various methods are needed to provide learners with opportunities to demonstrate their abilities fully. According to the Department of Education (1998), there are four assessment methods that can be used with the five types of assessment as explained above: *self-assessment*, *peer assessment*, *group assessment* and *teacher assessment*. A brief discussion of the four methods follows:

3.6.1. Self-assessment

Self-assessment takes place when the learners assess their own work. Before learners can start a learning experience, they know what the required standards are, which means that they know what is expected of them. In this regard, their learning is directed by the known standards and learning consistent with the expected standards put before them (Department of Education, 2010a:7). As such, self-assessment provides learners with opportunities to look back at their own progress and to develop plans for growth and self-understanding or their future learning. In this regard, learners get to think about what they are learning and how they are learning it (Orlich et al, 2010:322). When learners reflect or stand back from the learning process to think about learning strategies and their progress as learners, they own and become responsible for their own learning (Orlich et al, 2010:323). In cases where learners cannot assess their own work, they are accorded the opportunity to review their work and to produce an improved version of the original product.

3.6.2. Peer assessment

According to the Department of Education (2010a:9), one way in which learners internalize the characteristics of good quality work is by assessing the work of their peers. In brief, peer assessment takes place when learners assess each other's or one another's work and talk about the assessment with their peers. In order to do this effectively and efficiently and be able to give helpful feedback, the learners must know and understand what they look for in their peers' work. Here the learners can rate the oral and written work of their peers and identify areas that need improvement as well as those areas that are well presented. When learners reflect on the work of their peers, they learn about their own learning.

3.6.3. Group assessment

Group assessment takes place when learners in groups assess themselves in a classroom context. Van den Berg (2004:283) states that group assessment assists learners to be focussed and to drive their work through the assessment standards towards the achievement of the set outcomes. She further says that assessment in groups can be carried out by completing checklists or open-ended questions.

3.6.4. Teacher assessment

The fourth and last method is teacher assessment. This is the traditional manner of assessing learners and the best known method of assessment. Even within the outcomes-based assessment practice, teacher assessment remains the most effective method. The reason for this is that written pieces of work or tests can best be assessed by a teacher. Van den Berg (2004) says this is important so that the teacher can determine what learners know, what they can do and what their problem areas are. It is, therefore necessary that the teacher provides learners with feedback on their assessment tasks. Since assessment forms an integral part of the teaching and learning process, all tasks of assessment must be well planned and managed by the teacher. In the planning and managing of assessment, the teacher must think of how the learning activities were organised, and whether these activities addressed the assessment standards that drive

the achievement of the set learning outcomes. When assessment forms part of teaching and learning, the teacher is able to establish whether the tasks of assessment address the said standards and whether these standards link well with the set learning outcomes.

3.7 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 (1993:117), 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:

- Gather a wide range of evidence of learning that can be used for assessment;
- Provide different and varied opportunities to gather evidence;
- 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 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 from the learners at various times to demonstrate learning (Van Rooyen (1993:118)).

The discussion also refers to the notion of 'expanded opportunities', a concept that addresses the idea that learners should be given a chance to achieve the set outcomes through the set assessment standards. As indicated earlier, the role of assessment standards is significant in ensuring that assessment is integrated with teaching and learning because they are the driving forces behind the achievement of the set outcomes. Assessment in this regard shifts from the notion of passing or failing to the concept of ongoing development or growth. This consequently calls for the use of different assessment methods, such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, group assessment and teacher assessment, within the different assessment types.

3.8 PRINCIPLES OF HIGH QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

According to Kellough and Kellough (1999:419) assessment is important in that the welfare and the future of many people depend on its outcomes. They assert that for any attempt at learning to be successful, the learner must answer to questions such as: Where am I going? Where am I now? How do I get where I am going? How will I get there? Am I on the right track? It is within this context that Kellough and Kellough (1999) state the importance of establishing principles that guide the implementation of assessment. In view of this requirement the following nine principles have been established (Kellough & Kellough (1999:419):

- The assessment of learner learning starts with educational values;
- Assessment becomes effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time;
- Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes;
- Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the (assessment standards) that lead to those outcomes;
- Assessment works best when it is not episodic but ongoing;
- Assessment fosters wider improvement when the representatives from across the educational community are involved;
- Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people care about;
- Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it forms part of a larger set of conditions that promote change;
- Through assessment teachers meet responsibilities to learners (Pausch & Popp, 2010:2).

According to Vandeyar and Killen (2003:122) there is a strong argument that high-quality assessment practices in OBE are fundamentally no different from high-quality assessment practices in any other approach to education. This implies that although a new curriculum will be implemented over the next couple of years, the principles for high-quality assessment will still be valid when the new curriculum (CAPS) is put into practice. The relationship between the principles of high quality assessment outlined and the

foundational principles of OBE can be summarised as follows (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:122):

- The assessment procedures should focus clearly on the outcomes and assessment standards to be tested so that valid inferences can be drawn about learning.
- The assessment procedures should be reliable. There should be a conscious effort to minimise measurement errors and allow learners to demonstrate their understanding at appropriate times and in ways that will produce consistent results.
- Assessment procedures should be fair. The criteria for high-quality performance should be made explicit and the learners' opportunity to demonstrate their understanding should not be influenced by any irrelevant factors such as the learner's cultural background.
- Assessment should reflect the knowledge and skills that are most important for learners to learn (that is, the building blocks for the achievement of long-term outcomes).
- Assessment should challenge learners to the limits of their understanding and their ability to apply their knowledge. It will, therefore, discriminate between those who have achieved high standards and those who have not.
- Assessment tasks should be authentic and meaningful so that they support every learner's opportunity to learn and, because learners are individuals, assessment should allow this individuality to be demonstrated.

Regardless of the educational setting, high-quality assessment practices should satisfy certain common principles that are typically referred to as reliability, validity, fairness, discrimination and meaningfulness (Airasian, 2001; Gronlund, 1998; Herman, Aschbacher & Winters, 1992). When these principles are understood they provide a clear framework for all the major decisions that teachers need to make an assessment. When they are misunderstood or ignored, the resulting assessment practices are likely to result in the generation of worthless data.

3.8.1. Reliability

Reliable assessment items or tasks are those that are substantially free of errors of measurement. Because measurement errors produce inconsistencies, it is common to think of reliable tests as being those that produce consistent results despite the fact that the test is being administered at different times or that the learner's performance is judged by different markers. Through reliability, teachers can minimise the extent to which learners' performances in each assessment task are influenced by unwanted variability arising from the learners (perhaps because they were hungry, tired or under stress) or the assessment task (perhaps because it was worded in a confusing way). Teachers also need to minimise the extent to which their judgements on learners' understanding are influenced by undesirable factors such as interruptions to marking or preconceived ideas about the learners' capabilities. For most practical purposes in schools, an assessment task can be considered reliable when the task, the conditions under which it is administered, and the marking are designed to minimise errors of judgement concerning learners' performance. If two teachers can compare their judgements, this is a bonus that will further minimise these errors. The basic question for teachers to consider is: "Have I tried to minimise the possibility that I will make errors of judgement about learners' performance?"

3.8.2. Fairness

For a test to be reliable it must first of all be fair; it should not require learners to do unreasonable things or to do them under unreasonable circumstances. For example, it would be unfair to ask learners questions in a language they do not understand or to expect learners to answer an extremely large number of questions in a short time. The first step in achieving fairness in testing is for teachers to ensure that all learners have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the outcomes that are being tested. The assessment strategies must be designed to ensure equal opportunity for success regardless of the individual learner's age, gender, physical or other disability, culture, language, socio-economic status or geographic location. The basic question for teachers to consider is: "Does the assessment task give every learner a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate his/her understanding or skill?"

3.8.3. Validity

Quite commonly, validity is taken to mean, “a test measures what it is meant to measure” (Hill, 1981, 22). However, Messick (1989) points out that such a narrow definition is really just an indication of the content relevance and content representativeness of the test – that is, a measure of whether each item in the test is relevant and a measure of whether or not the test as a whole samples an appropriate range of the content that learners have been expected to understand. Messick argues that validity should really be considered as an evaluative judgement on the degree to which there is evidence to support the appropriateness of the inferences that are drawn as a result of assessment. From this perspective teachers should not only be trying to maximise the validity of the tests they use; they should also be trying to maximise the validity of the inferences they make as a result of using those tests.

Teachers should consider whether their tests are assessing appropriate content (or outcomes), but they should also consider the special characteristics of the learners, the circumstances under which the test was administered and, most importantly, the theoretical and empirical evidence they have for reaching any conclusions on student learning. The basic question for teachers to consider is: “Based on the evidence provided by the assessment task, can I justify the conclusions I have reached about the achievements of each learner?”

3.8.4. Discrimination

Historically it has been considered important for tests and individual items to be able to distinguish or discriminate between learners who have learned whatever is being tested and those who have not. Typically, objective test items that did not distinguish adequately between respondents who scored high and low in the overall test were said to have a low discrimination index, which was regarded as inappropriate. Unless teachers are using objective test items and unless they possess the mathematical skills to perform the calculations, they will not be able to discriminate between learners. In a less structured way however, it is still worthwhile for teachers to focus on the question: “Why does this test item elicit different responses from different learners, and are those responses indicative of the level of understanding of each learner?”

3.8.5. Meaningfulness and contribution to learning

Learners cannot be expected to make a serious attempt at an assessment task unless it is meaningful to them. If it is meaningful, the task will also have the potential to contribute to their learning. One of the rationales for more contextualised assessments is that they ensure that learners engage in meaningful problems which result in worthwhile educational experiences and higher levels of motivation (Vandeyar & Killen, 2003:121). To ensure that assessment tasks are meaningful, teachers must explain the purpose of assessment to learners, learners must see the tasks as realistic and worthwhile, and the teacher must deliberately link the assessment to important learning outcomes and assessment standards. After all, assessment tasks will not be meaningful to learners who do not have sufficient background and knowledge or appropriate language skills. The key question for teachers in relation to this principle is: “Is the purpose of the assessment task clear to learners and will they understand how it will contribute to their learning?”

3.9. PRINCIPLES OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

The following principles are a set of beliefs and assumptions on which a teacher must base his or her assessment practice. These principles are in turn based on the South African philosophy of social justice and respect of human rights as covered in the country’s Constitution (1996) and the Bill of Human Rights. These values permeate every facet of our society, including education. Assessment, and practice thereof, as an integral part of curriculum planning and implementation, observes these principles.

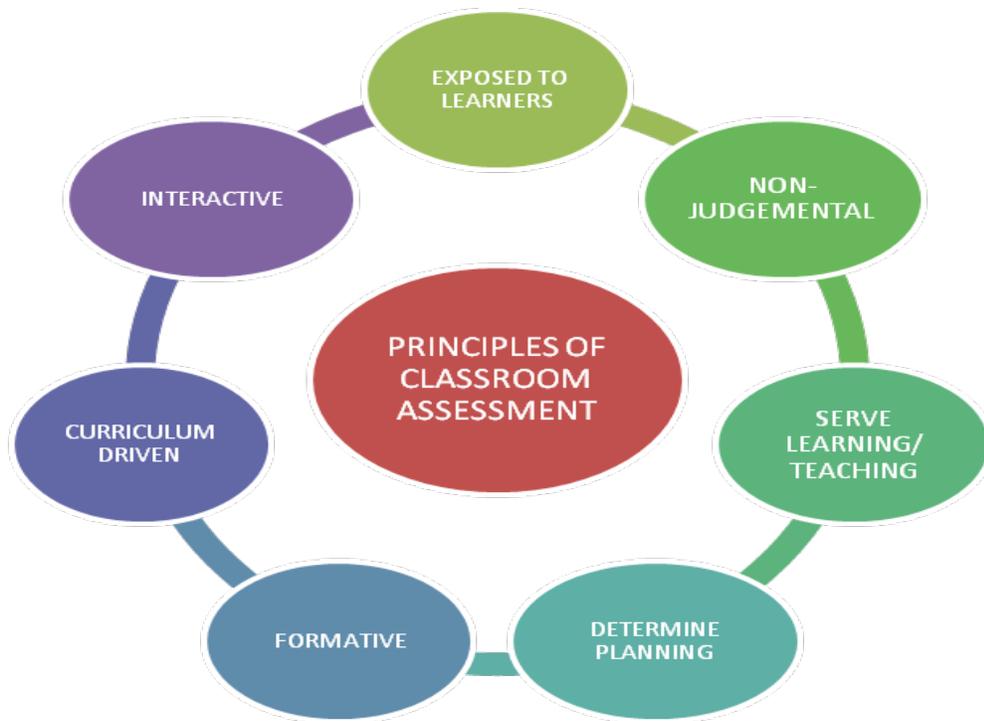


Figure 3.2: Principles of classroom assessment (Department of Education, 2010a:8)

3.9.1. Assessment should be formative

Classroom assessment should be carried out formatively in order to inform on-going teaching and learning. It should be formative because it refers to the formation of a concept or process. To be formative, assessment is concerned with the way the learners develop. It is also designed to stimulate growth, change and improvement in teaching through a reflective practice. In other words, it has a crucial role in “informing the teacher about how much the learners, as a group, and how much individuals within that group, have understood what has been learned or still needs learning as well as the suitability of their classroom activities, thus providing feedback on their teaching and informing planning” (Department of Education, 2010a:8).

3.9.2. Assessment should determine planning

It is imperative that assessment help teachers plan for future work. First, teachers must identify the purposes for assessment – that is, specify the kinds of decisions they want to make as a result of assessment. Second, they should gather information related to the decisions they have made. Next, they interpret the collected information – that is, it must be contextualized before it is meaningful. Lastly, they should make the final, or the professional decisions. The plans present a means for realizing teaching objectives which are put into practice as assessment to achieve the actual outcomes (Department of Education, 2010a:9).

3.9.3. Assessment should serve teaching

Assessment serves teaching through the provision of feedback on learners' learning that would make the next teaching event more effective in a positive, upwards direction. The teachers as assessors fulfil the learners' expectations through offering helpful feedback and correction on their performance. It can be said that assessment drives teaching by forcing teachers to teach what is going to be assessed. As a result, teaching involves assessment; that is, whenever a learner responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the learner's performance (Brown, 2004). So when teachers are teaching, they are also assessing.

3.9.4. Assessment should serve learning

Assessment is an integral part of the learning process as well. The ways in which learners are assessed and evaluated strongly affect the ways in which the learners learn. It is the process of finding out who the learners are, what their abilities are, what they need to know, and how they perceive that the learning will affect them (Sommer, 1989). In assessment, the learner is simply informed how well or badly he/she has performed (Department of Education, 2010a:8). Assessment and learning are inextricably linked and not separate processes because of their mutually-influenced features (Department of Education, 2010a:10). Learning by itself has no meaning without assessment while the

latter has no meaning outside learning. Thus, assessment places the needs of the learners at the centre of the teacher's planning. The teacher designs the situation based on his or her assessment of the learner's learning preference, interest, and needs. If learning is the central concern, then, assessment should contribute to the learning process.

3.9.5. Assessment should be curriculum-driven

According to Lambert and Lines (Department of Education, 2010a:9) assessment should be the servant, not the master, of the curriculum. Assessment specialists see assessment as an integral part of the entire curriculum cycle and it is thus important that decisions about how to assess learners must be considered from the very beginning of curriculum design or course planning.

3.9.6. Assessment should be interactive

Assessment should be viewed as an interactive process that engages both the teacher and learner in monitoring the learner's performance.

3.9.7. Assessment should be transparent to learners

Accurate information about assessment must be transparent to learners. They must know when the assessments occur, what they cover in terms of skills and materials, how much the assessments are worth, when they can receive their results and for which purpose the results are going to be used. They must also be aware of why they are assessed as they are part of the assessment process. Since assessment is part of the learning process, it is significant that assessment should be done with learners, not to them (Department of Education, 2010a:10). It is also important to inform or provide learners with assessment activities lined up for the learning session.

3.9.8. Assessment should be non-judgemental

During assessment, everything focuses on learning which results from a number of factors such as learner needs, learner motivation, teaching style, time on task, study intensity, background knowledge, course outcomes, etc. Hence there is no praise or blame for a particular outcome of learning. The teachers should take no stance on determining who has done better and who has failed to perform well.

3.10. DAILY ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

The National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10, 11 and 12 on assessment stipulates that two different sets of assessment should be practised in schools. These are daily and programme assessments.

The daily assessment is the continuous and informal assessment while the programme assessment is the formal and graded assessment activities and tasks (Department of Education, 2010a:5). The expectations placed on these two sets of assessment are that they must be used to develop learners' knowledge, skills and values; assess learners' strengths and weaknesses; provide additional support to learners; revise specific sections of the curriculum and motivate and encourage learners (Department of Education, 2010a:5-6). The daily assessment tasks are normally the planned teaching and learning activities that occur in the subject. It is during the presentation of these activities that the learners' progress should be monitored through question and answer sessions or through short assessment tasks that are usually completed during the lessons by individual learners, paired learners or grouped learners and consolidated through homework. In this context the teachers use individual and groups of learners to mark the assessment tasks or activities. When learners are actively involved in the assessment of their work through self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment, they are given opportunities to learn from and reflect on their own performance (Department of Education, 2010a: 6).

Although the results of the informal daily assessment tasks are not recorded formally, teachers can use the learners' performance in the assessment tasks to give feedback to both the learners and parents verbally or in written form. In so far as programme assessment is concerned, teachers develop a year-long formal Programme of Assessment for each subject and grade. The Programme of Assessment, for Grades 10, 11 and 12, is made up of tasks that are carried out during the school year and in the end-of-year

examinations. Therefore, assessment is essentially a continuous method of finding out what learners know, understand and can do to demonstrate their competence. It is more concerned with the improvement of a teacher's teaching and increasing the learner's learning opportunities. The assessment activities are a means through which the teacher targets the assessment standards set by the Department. These assessment standards help the teacher prepare the learner and equip them with the appropriate level of knowledge, skills and values for formal school assessments. As indicated above, the central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress in order to set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning. This statement brings into play two types of assessment, namely, assessment of learning and assessment for learning.

3.11. ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING VERSUS ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

3.11.1. Assessment of learning

Assessment of learning looks at the learner's level of performance on a particular task or at the end of a unit of teaching and learning. In this regard, the information gathered from this type of assessment can be utilised for reporting. The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Training (2007:1) holds the view that when teachers decide on a level of achievement they must make on-balance judgements that best fit. The department explains that an on-balance judgement does not solely concentrate on a specific piece of work or a task, but that although there might be both weaknesses and strengths, it is important that it should fit a particular judgement. It is also important to make a decision pertaining to the context of standards, particularly the content standards and the performance standards.

3.11.2. Assessment for learning

The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007:1) considers it to be imperative that assessment for learning should happen regularly in the teaching and learning process, as the information that is obtained from assessment tasks or activities normally shapes or guides future teaching and learning processes. Assessment for learning is an important

and integrated component of the teaching and learning process in that it reflects the notion that all learners can improve their performance

3.12. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENTS

In Chapter 1 (section 1.2) it has been explained that teachers play an important role in assessment. The way in which they understand assessment and assessment standards will determine how assessment will be done in the classroom and it is therefore important to take a brief look at the teachers' conception of assessment.

According to Brown (2004:303), conceptions act as a framework through which a teacher views, interprets and interacts with the teaching environment. He further clarifies that the term 'conceptions' is used to describe an organising framework by which an individual understands, responds to and interacts with a phenomenon. What is interesting in Brown's (2004:303) discussion of conceptions is that the teachers' conceptions vary and are complicated. It is thus clear that, as has already been stated, teachers' conceptions of teaching, learning and assessment have an impact on the way they teach and assess or what learners learn or achieve.

In this study of Setswana Home Language at secondary school, the researcher would like to determine whether teachers understand the gist of assessment and make use of assessment standards to guide their teaching and assessment process, or whether their teaching and assessment is merely content-based and not linked to the assessment standards for the achievement of the learning outcomes. The researcher would also like to determine how they understand different aspects of assessment and what their ideas and views regarding the policy and guideline documents that are related to assessment are.

This study therefore attempts to investigate the role that assessment standards play guiding the teaching, learning and assessment process in the FET phase, that is, Grade 12 with specific reference to Setswana. It is essential that a clear understanding of the implications of assessment standards for the teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana in the Further Education and Training Band be developed, as well as of what it means to teach, learn and assess within the confines of specified assessment standards. It is therefore important to determine the extent to which teachers understand and use the assessment standards to guide or align their teaching, learning and assessment activities.

When teachers design lesson plans they need to consider the role of assessment standards as these standards inform the teaching and learning activities. The teaching activities are what the teacher does with the learners while the learning activities are what the learners do in a subject such as Setswana home language. While the teaching activities occur in class, the learning activities take place both in class and out of class and can either be teacher-directed or learner-directed (Blumberg, 2009:95). The assessment activities consequently determine if the learners have satisfied the assessment standards and have achieved the learning outcomes. When the learning outcomes and assessment standards are clearly stated, they assist the teacher's lesson plan in terms of the content and context to be covered, the teaching and learning activities within the theme and the assessment methods. It is important that the learners' assessment flow directly from the teacher's statement of the learning outcomes and the assessment standards. When these standards are clearly stated, they improve the presentation of the teacher and communication between the teacher and the learners. The statement of such standards facilitates efficient learning, and reduces the learners' anxiety because learners know what the teacher expects of them and what their learning priorities should be (Blumberg, 2009:96). Therefore, the said standards play a critical and integrating role in the teaching, learning and assessment process of concerning this home language. Alignment of teaching, learning and assessment requires consistency among all of the major parts of the lesson, that is, the learning outcomes, the assessment standards, the teaching and learning activities and the assessment exercises (Blumberg, 2009:96). Blumberg (2009:96) further emphasises that when these core parts are aligned, they support one another.

3.13. CONCLUSION

The chapter provided a discussion of outcomes-based assessment. It saw assessment is an important component in the teaching and learning process because it provides teachers with information that is significant for decision making in the classroom. The teachers from time to time make decisions about learners' learning and development as well as the suitability and effectiveness of classroom teaching. The information gathered from assessment provides the teachers with an insight into the meanings constructed or assigned by learners of ideas or concepts that have been taught in the classroom. In this

regard, the teacher is given a chance to gauge whether the idea or concept taught has been conveyed successfully to learners. As such, the link between teaching, learning and assessment can be clearly seen. It can therefore be mentioned that assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning. It was also indicated that the learners who receive regular feedback through assessment are better motivated to learn because they are actively involved in their own learning. Thus, feedback from assessment directs improvement of learner learning and contributes towards the motivation of learners. . The chapter also highlighted the purpose and benefits of assessment; the teachers' conceptions of assessment; and principles of high quality assessment practices, such as reliability, fairness, validity, discrimination, meaningfulness and contribution to learning as well as the principles of classroom assessment are discussed. The next chapter considers the educational standards and the concept of alignment with the associated taxonomies of learning, teaching and assessment.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS AND THE CONCEPT OF ALIGNMENT

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief discussion of the modern standards movement as it is important to understand the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process. The standards movement, which originated in the United States of America (USA), can be traced back to the “back to basics” movement. The chapter starts by providing background information on this movement. It goes on to explain that it was not strictly in the USA that education experienced tremendous transformations but that major changes in education also affected other countries. The standards movement was mainly initiated because of dissatisfaction with the schooling system.

A brief discussion of what is understood by standards is given and it is concluded that standards specify what learners should know and be able to do. In this discussion the reasons behind the usage of standards in education, namely, the desire for greater academic achievement, accountability and guidelines for teachers, are explained. An overview of the most important principles that comprise the framework of a standards-based programme is given and the controversy surrounding the use of standards is referred to. The discussion also refers to the argument that although considerable criticism has been directed against the use of standards the apparent benefits, due to their being based upon common principles, facilitate better teaching. For example: learners are exposed to equal learning opportunities. It is pointed out that it is not surprising that clarifying assessment requirements and standards is considered good teaching practice and that it improves learner performance.

As has been explained in previous chapters, a new curriculum will be implemented in South Africa over the next couple of years. This newly formulated curriculum, referred to as the CAPS, is not outcomes and standards-based, but is based on aims and content. The concept of aims is therefore discussed and the role that aims play in the teaching and learning process is compared to the role of outcomes and assessment standards. It is important to refer to this aspect of the new curriculum, as the findings of this study have implications for the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment when the new CAPS

policy is implemented in future. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the concept “alignment” and the significance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment.

4.2. THE LAUNCH OF THE MODERN STANDARDS MOVEMENT

It is well documented that education in the latter part of the 20th century, particularly American education, experienced a revolutionary shift (Lefkowitz & Miller 2005:1). In America, the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, is widely accepted as the literary catalyst that initiated or launched the modern standards movement in that it led to the definition of what learners should know and be able to do. With the advent of federal legislation enacted in 2001/2002, the No Child Left Behind Act and its anticipated renewal, all states in the USA had to establish “challenging academic standards” Orlich, D.C., Harder, R.J., Callahan, R.C., Trevisan, M.S. & Brown, A. (2010:85). One component of the standards movement has been the *high-stakes test* phenomenon. Such tests are called “high stakes” because teachers, learners, and schools are rewarded or penalised on the basis of the students’ scores (Orlich, et al 2010:85).

4.3. WHAT ARE STANDARDS?

The term **standards** have multiple meanings and applications. Standards can be criteria by which to judge the quality of what learners know and are able to do, the quality of programs available to them, the quality of teaching they receive, the quality of the system that supports their teachers and programs, and the quality of their school’s assessment practices and policies (Orlich, et al 2010:85).

According to Perna and Davis (2007:2) standards specify what learners should know and be able to do. They can therefore be used to assess the success or failure of a lesson when monitoring learners’ progress. The abovementioned authors are of the opinion that standards must be explicit goals that ensure that rigorous attention is given to content learned in schools. Sleeter (2001:156) confirm this when she asserts that standards can also make explicit what the learners will be assessed on, a detail that may help parents and other stakeholders to know what the ‘game’ is and what the learners will be assessed on. Standards do not only concern themselves with learners’ ability to do what is expected of them, but they also take cognisance of their cognitive growth (Lewis 1995:746).

Perna and Davis (2007:2) assert that a standard can involve one specific statement that defines what the learner must do to achieve it or that it can involve a number of descriptive statements that clarifies what the learner must do to achieve the level of competence expected in the standard statement. Sleeter (2005:3) confirms this when she says standards specify what learners must know and be able to do, that they describe how well learners are expected to master a given body of knowledge and skills, and that they specify what learners should know and be assessed over and how performance should be measured or assessed. From the foregoing, it is clear that standards define the content and the ability of the learners to demonstrate their understanding of the acquired knowledge and skills.

4.4. THE STANDARDS MOVEMENT AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

While today's standards-based reform movement is new, its fundamental ideas are not. Looking back into history, the "back to basics" movements in the 1950s and 1970s, or the competency-based education movement of the 1970s comes to mind (Sleeter (2005:15). These movements were akin to the current standards movement, and were similarly concerned with raising student achievement levels by specifying exactly what all learners should know and ensuring that teachers taught to those specifications. As such, it had a significant influence on curriculum development.

According to Sleeter (2005:15-16) the standards-based movement neatly framed the four important curriculum questions:

- What purpose the curriculum should serve,
- How knowledge should be selected,
- How teaching should be done,
- How it should be established whether teaching aims or outcomes have been achieved.

As far as the purpose of the curriculum is concerned, the standards movement has defined what schools should do and what the curriculum is for. It also succeeded in reducing dissent and promoting cultural and linguistic assimilation by inculcating the same skills, facts, and traditional discipline-based concepts. With regard to the selection of content (knowledge), the standards movement reaches consensus about what all students should

know and be able to do, and its agreement can be determined at the state level objectively by disciplinary “experts” (Sleeter 2005:15). Generally standards are presented as consensus documents, even if their adoption is often controversial. School or classroom level selections of knowledge are to be made within the boundaries of the standards, and aligned to them.

4.5. THE RATIONALE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

4.5.1. Dissatisfaction with education

It is not only in the USA that education has gone through major changes or transformations over the past years. Many the changes have also occurred in other parts of the world because of the dissatisfaction with the different schooling systems, which called for modifications in teaching practices. Due to the chaos and lack of direction that education found itself in, many teachers established their own individual “go as I teach” curriculum or the “follow the textbook” curriculum (Perna & Davis, 2007:1). When the curriculum is guided by the preferences of individual teachers rather than by a set of goals, one group of learners may be prepared for their next level of study while another group may not be prepared for that level (Perna & Davis 2007:1). This concern is taken further by Schmoker and Marzano (1999:2) who state that there are great differences in what teachers teach in the same subject at the same grade level in the same school.

As it is clear that education is the major vehicle that can prepare young people for the increasing challenges of modern life in the 21st century, radical adjustments in education needed to be made (Lewis 1995:746). A major advancement in the quest for more effective instruction was, as indicated above, the creation of educational standards. This brought about the use of standards as a framework for systematic development of the curriculum in order to avoid a situation where learning is dictated by individual teacher preferences or textbooks.

4.5.2. Ensuring equal learning opportunities for all

Perna and Davis (2007:1) state that when standards are used as targets of learning, the school can ensure that learners are moving towards the same goals, that teachers can

also be accountable for achieving the same goals, and that learners are provided with enough support to enhance their learning. Resnick and Nolan (1995:8) believe that when standards are identified, constructed and adapted across the board, educators will be able to provide equal learning opportunities for all learners. They believe this to be the main reason why diverse countries such as Japan, France, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Australia and lately also South Africa have national curriculums based on standards (Resnick & Nolan 1995:6; Grabin 2007:68). According to Grabin (2007:68) as well as and Schmoker and Marzan (1999:1) standards is a major force in education and have probably had the most significant influence on educational reform.

4.5.3. Desire for greater academic achievement

Schmoker and Marzano (1999:3) maintain that the most important aspect of a successful school is a shared sense among its teachers and stakeholders about what they are trying to accomplish. They emphasise that it is only through agreed-upon standards that the school's capability and capacity for rational planning and action will be enhanced. Lefkowitz and Miller (2005:2) explain that we need to redefine what learners should know, assess whether they have learned what they should know, record and report the assessment results. Their view is that when this is done, learners who are not learning will not fall through the cracks but that schools will be encouraged to improve their results for all learners.

4.5.4. Accountability

Standards have been introduced to meet the demands for accountability (Smith 2004:83). In other words, when learners fail to perform successfully, the search begins for those responsible for the failure. In most cases the term "accountability" is a term used by politicians and heads of institutions (Smith & Fey 2000:334). It signifies the requirement of one group to provide justification to another group in return for trust and dispensation (Sachs 2003:177). Accountability in education means that schools are expected to meet specific educational goals and when they fail to do that, they are berated for not achieving

the necessary expectations, which then indicates that reforms need to be devised to remedy an ailing situation.

4.5.5. Providing guidelines for teachers

Kluth and Straut (2001:17), Lefkowitz and Miller (2005:1), Sleeter (2005:15) as well as Perna and Davis (2007:2) all point out that standards are an invaluable tool in helping to direct teachers towards effective instruction. Standards operate as guidelines for teachers and learners in executing their assignments (Smith 2004:83). They help teachers plan, teach and assess by means of specifying the educational targets that must be met. Learners benefit from knowing what is important to learn and what they are expected to accomplish. Once standards are clearly set, assessment becomes more viable as a measurement of targeted knowledge and skills.

It can thus be concluded that standards facilitate better teaching in different ways. Standards-based teaching ensures that teachers consider their learning outcomes and plan their lessons very clearly. Teachers cannot do this meticulously if they do not have an accurate understanding of the principles they wish to transmit as well as a clear vision of the performance that is necessary to exhibit achievement of that standard. It is therefore imperative that assessment exercises should form part of lesson planning right from the start.

4.6. PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING STANDARDS

As the National Curriculum Statement is based on outcomes and assessment standards, it is important to discuss principles underlying standards.

4.6.1. Standards must be specific

In order for the standards to be measurable and understandable, they must be specific enough and not vague, otherwise learners will not know what it is that is expected of them. They must not only be clear in their task description, but must also be clear in the task the learners are required to fulfil (Marzano in Scherer 2001:17). Marzano (2001) in giving a history example says a benchmark such as “shows an understanding on World War 1” doesn’t direct students to a specific, clear activity that demonstrates their mastery of this

subject. A measurable task would be “explains the main reason why the United States entered World War 1”.

4.6.2. Standards must measure multiple levels

The standards must reflect different levels of accomplishment, with many diverse levels in each area of competence (Gandal 1995:20). The learners must have clear descriptions of the criteria they must meet on all levels and be able to understand how they can improve their level. It is an irrefutable fact that standards have a direct impact on assessment, and that they must include multiple performance levels to allow for student diversity (Gandal 1995:20). In order to ensure that this happens, multiple levels of achievement for each content standard must be developed, which include but are not limited to “proficient”, “advanced” or “expert” levels which would allow for learners to reach their individual potential and for the monitoring of their progress.

4.6.3. Standards must be teachable

The educational standards must be teachable in order to have a real impact on the learners’ learning. This means that they must be clear, precise and to the point. The learners must be told and must know exactly what is expected of them in as simple, clear and understandable language as possible which is both grade and age appropriate. Gandal and Vranek (2001:7) point out that a standard that states that students should “read literally, inferentially, and critically”, fails to provide adequate direction to either teaching or learning. This implies that a vague standard would not have a positive influence on teaching, learning and assessment. Assessment should be able to measure the criteria set by the standards so that learners are presented with performance opportunities that will enable them to use the knowledge and competence that they have acquired.

4.6.4. Standards must be flexible

Although the standards must be specific and not vague, and must reflect different levels of accomplishment and be teachable, it is very important that the standards must be flexible. Since the abilities of learners are different, it is possible that some standards may not be attainable for some learners. Therefore, enough room for flexibility must be an essential ingredient of the standards. Since it is natural that learners learn at varying paces, it makes sense that there should be no rigid timetable for the attainment of all standards (Gandal, 1995:16-21).

4.7. DIFFERENT KINDS OF STANDARDS

One of the controversial issues surrounding standards is the question of what kind of standards should be applied. There are different kinds of standards, each having a different purpose and connection to instruction and assessment (Sandrock 1997:8). The central question is whether standards should be *content* or *performance-based*. *Content-based standards* describe standards in terms of knowledge and skills that should be acquired in order to exhibit competency (Lewis 1995:746). In brief, *content standards* reflect what learners should know and be able to do. Therefore it is important that assessment activities must be tailored with the content standards in mind. The learners must be given challenging tasks that expect of them to use the skills and knowledge that they have acquired.

Performance standards, on the other hand, define the level of learning that is considered to be satisfactory (Lewis 1995:746). This means that *performance standards* describe how the learners demonstrate their ability to accomplish the *content standards*. The learners are assessed through performance tasks in which they must apply and demonstrate what they know. They utilise their knowledge and skills in real life situations. It is believed by some scholars, that the *performance standards* which in essence play a major role in learning are closely linked to *content standards*. Marzano and Kendal (1996:14) point out that “performance standards identify the environments in which knowledge and skill should be demonstrated.” They assert that schools should begin by developing *content standards* and then define a “complementary set of *performance standards*” or performance tasks.

4.8. PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH STANDARDS

Although there has been great and general enthusiasm heralded by the adoption of educational standards, many educationists and educational experts remain sceptical about the impact of standards. People such as Sandrock (1997:7) warn that standards “hold tremendous promise, but also tremendous peril”. They maintain that there are a number of reasons why the effectiveness of standards can be questioned. In the first place, Eisner (1993:22) cautions that standards do not signify the most important ends we seek in education. He believes that we want work “that displays ingenuity, complexity, and the learner’s personal signature”. Cohen (1995:756) insists that “standards should be understood ... not as the kingpin of change or as the occasion to decide for our time what the content of education should be and what level of achievement will be acceptable” but that they “should be understood as one tool for helping the entire education system to learn and improve...” This demonstrates that though the standards movement holds potential, it has been met with a myriad of objections.

4.8.1. Unclear standards

One of the most vehement criticisms directed at standards is the fact that they are often unclear and un-teachable (Schmoker & Marzano 1999:21). It is within this vein that Ravitch (1995:25-26) proposes a clear definition of the skills that are to be taught and the specific performances standards that are targeted.

She points to the ambiguity of several content standards, such as “love of literature”, which offer little or no direction or indication of student ability. Tucker and Coddling (1998) support her when they also protest against unclear standards and suggest that performance standards are more suitable to measuring a learner’s abilities in any given area. They view performance standards as a three-part system that encompasses a concise description of what students must know and be able to do, samples of learners’ work to clearly demonstrate the standards that are required, and commentaries on those samples that explain the characteristics that raise them to the standards.

The implications of unclear standards for assessment are numerous. Without clear standards learners will be unable to know what is expected of them. They may feel frustrated and discouraged if they fail to meet the projected standards. Unclear standards

may also result in poor assessment for learners who have proficiency, but do not perform well as a result of poor direction.

4.8.2. Too many standards

One of the most powerful criticisms levelled against standards is the excitement with which educators and policymakers have produced an unrealistic abundance of standards. Ravitch (1995:26) complains that such an ambitious abundance of standards impact negatively on the performance and competence of teachers' ability to teach and the learners' ability to learn. Marzano and Kendall (1998:1-5) assert that the fault with the standards lie not only in that some of them are not specific, but also in the fact that they are too numerous, repetitive and non-specific enough. They state this as a major reason that militates against the efficient and effective implementation of standards. They maintain that when there are overwhelming and excessive standards there is bound to be serious consequences on assessment, since they tend to confuse learning goals and cloud the areas of proficiency that learners should be expected to meet.

4.9. LEARNER UNDERSTANDING OF ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

It has been emphasised repeatedly in this study that assessment drives student learning (Brown & Knight 1994; Ramsden 2003). It is important that learners should understand assessment standards in terms of what they have to do and the level expected (O'Donovan et al 2001:4). When the assessment standards are clearly stated, they improve the presentation of the teacher and communication between the teacher and the learners. The statement of assessment standards facilitates efficient learning and reduces the learners' anxiety because learners know what the teacher expects of them and what their learning priorities should be (Blumberg 2009:96).

Unfortunately, evidence suggests that many learners are confused about what is being asked of them and resort to guessing as a way of interpreting assessment standards (Hinnett 1995, O'Donovan et al 2001: 6). Therefore, it is not surprising that clarifying assessment requirements and standards is considered good teaching practice and has been evidenced to improve learner performance (Rust et al 2003).

4.10. ASSESSMENT STANDARDS IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT

In South Africa, the idea of a national curriculum coincided with the birth of a new political dispensation or a new democracy. A new curriculum was introduced to address equal educational opportunities for all and to establish and promote a sense of national identity particularly for the chaotic education sector (Department of Basic Education, 2009:11). As such the RNCS and the NCS brought with them many changes in education by following the world-wide standards movement and introducing a national curriculum based on outcomes and accompanying assessment standards for compulsory schooling (Department of Basic Education 2009:12).

In the NCS the learning outcomes normally remain the same from Grades 10-12 while the assessment standards change from grade to grade showing what it is that has to be learnt in order to realise the outcomes.

As has been explained in Chapter 2, outcomes-based education is a way of teaching and learning which makes it clear what the learners are expected to achieve. Within the context of outcomes-based assessment, the learning outcomes to be achieved with their associated assessment standards must be clarified and mentioned at the beginning of the teaching and learning process and the achievement thereof (in other words “learning”) must be assessed during and after the teaching intervention by making use of different types and methods of assessment (as explained in Chapter 3, section 3.4.

This brings us to one of the most important aspects of the assessment principles in the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment process, namely, alignment. Biggs (1999:27) states that alignment of the teaching, learning and assessment process is key in the achievement of the learning outcomes; that instruction must be planned in such a manner that there is a clear link or alignment between what is taught, learnt and assessed, and the most prominent factor in this regard is the assessment standards.

4.11. THE CONCEPT OF ALIGNMENT

4.11.1. What is meant by alignment?

Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary (1992:26) explains that if you “align” something, you place it in a certain position in relation to something else, usually parallel to

it. If this is made applicable to the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment it can be concluded that there should be a close relationship between teaching, learning and assessment. According to La Marca (2011:1) alignment refers to the degree of match between the content of the assessment task and the content of the subject area that has been identified by the educational standards. The manner in which teachers plan and teach their subjects has a great influence or impact in what the learners learn. It is therefore of great significance that in lesson planning the teacher must develop or use appropriate learning outcomes which are consistent with the assessment standards, learning and teaching activities and the assessment exercises. The lesson outcomes, the learning and teaching activities and the assessment exercises should mirror the prescribed assessment standards.

According to Biggs (2003:1) alignment refers to what the teacher does. That is, to set up a learning environment that supports the learning activities that are appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The most important thing in this regard is to ensure that the teaching and learning activities, the assessment standards and the assessment exercises are aligned. Biggs (2003:1) says, when all these are integrated and aligned, the learner is “trapped” and cannot escape without learning what must be learned. He further states that, when teachers align their content, they specify the assessment standards that have to help them achieve the particular learning outcomes of the specific content. They then develop the teaching and learning activities guided by the specified assessment standards in the level of understanding that they want the learners to achieve. Hereafter they set up an environment in which the learners will be able to be actively involved in the activities designed to achieve the learning outcomes. Lastly, the teachers develop assessment exercises around the assessment standards that lead towards the attainment of the intended learning outcomes. This means that the delivery of content and whatever the educator assesses must be guided by the assessment standards. Biggs (2009:93) says teachers call this best practice because it increases learners’ learning. What Biggs (2009:93) is saying is that alignment requires consistency among all the core components of the lesson, namely, the learning outcomes, the assessment standards, teaching and learning activities and the assessment exercises. Assessment standards as one of the core parts of the lesson help in the achievement of learning outcomes, and inform both the teaching and learning activities as well as assessment exercises. When these core parts consistently revolve around assessment standards, there is alignment of teaching, learning

and assessment. When the teaching, learning and assessment process is aligned, learners' learning is maximised, and the goals or learning outcomes are achieved.

Biggs (2009:96) states that when the lesson is aligned, it will require a higher level of cognitive processing and the assessment exercises will similarly require higher order thinking skills and not the mere recall of information. (The different levels of thinking are discussed in section 4.12.3.1.

4.11.2. The significance of assessment standards in the alignment process

It is important that when teachers plan and prepare their lessons, they should bear in mind the four key aspects of lesson planning, namely, outcomes, assessment standards, the teaching and learning activities and the assessment exercises. While the teaching activities refer to what the teacher does with learners, the learning activities refer to what the learners do with the content, and the assessment exercises determine whether the learners have met the assessment standards and achieved the learning outcomes. Since the assessment standards are an expression of what the learners should have learned in the course content, they guide the planning, preparation and delivery of the lesson activities and course content. The assessment standards are the pointers regarding how teachers should teach and learners should learn. As such, the assessment standards are the driving force behind teaching, learning and assessment. When assessment standards are carefully selected and clearly stated, they help the teacher plan his or her lesson regarding the content or subject matter to be covered which includes the teaching and learning activities as well as the assessment exercises. When the lessons are well structured they guide and give learners enough opportunities to attain the requisite learning outcomes through the learning activities and to be able to demonstrate that they have met the relevant assessment standards through the different assessment exercises.

It is imperative that when teachers interpret Setswana proficiency based on Setswana assessment task scores, and follow guidelines to and establish whether the Setswana assessment score is based on a performance that is in line with the skills that represent the expected standards.

4.11.3. The role of taxonomies of learning in the alignment process

According to Van Rooy (1993:114) a taxonomy is a scientifically based classification scheme. 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. Taxonomies also ensure that different cognitive levels of thinking are assessed. Two well-known taxonomies of learning are that of Bloom and Krathwohl-Anderson (which is basically a revision of Bloom's taxonomy). These taxonomies are briefly discussed.

4.11.3.1. Looking at Bloom's taxonomy with its accompanying verbs

Bloxham and Boyd (2007:24) state that, a confusing number of taxonomies or frameworks of thinking have been developed to assist instructional design. They refer to Brown, et al (1997) who argues that such a classification of the kind of skills and capabilities that one wants students to develop is a necessary first step in developing an assessment system. Bloom's taxonomy is regarded as one of the most influential taxonomies of the twentieth century. Blooms' model integrates cognitive levels, instructional objectives (or outcomes) and assessments (Banks 1991:47).

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, originally only referred to the cognitive domain, but the affective domain was later added. However, the cognitive framework is usually what is referred to when speaking of *Bloom's Taxonomy* (Banks 199:47). This taxonomy includes six separate cognitive domains or levels. The classification of the levels is hierarchical in the sense that each category involves learning behaviour which is more complex and abstract than that of the preceding category (Van Rooy 1993:114; Blumberg 2009:94; Bloom 1956:18). These levels are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (Bloom 1956:18). These cognitive domains are summarised below (Banks 2005:47; Van Rooy 1993:115). The verbs that can be used to tasks on a particular level (Gauteng Department of Education, 1984) are indicated in brackets.

Knowledge. The learner is able to remember and recall specific information in more or less the same form in which it was initially presented, e.g. the ability to remember words,

definitions, dates, numbers and formula. (List, define, tell, subscribe, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, write, find, state, etc.)

Comprehension. The learner is able to understand and interpret information through translating knowledge-level information into his or her own words. (Summarise, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extent, explain, outline, reformulate, translate, compare, etc.)

Application. The learner is able to use a concept in an appropriate situation, for example, to solve a problem. (Apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover, use, construct, etc.)

Analysis. The learner is able to divide information into its components so that the relationship between the parts is apparent. (Analyse, separate, order, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer, distinguish, examine, compare, contrast, investigate, categorise, identify, advertise, etc).

Synthesis. The ability to combine disparate ideas to create a new understanding (Combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, what if? compose, formulate, prepare, generalise, rewrite, predict, construct, imagine, propose, devise, etc.)

Evaluation. The ability to make value judgements about certain aspects (Assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarise, choose, justify, debate, verify, argue, discuss, rate, prioritise, determine, etc.)

According to the Department of Education's (2009:23) Examination Guidelines for Grade 12, Setswana Home Language should be assessed in such a way that all the cognitive levels, that is, the lower-order, the middle-order and the higher-order thinking skills, are catered for in the following proportions consistent with Bloom's taxonomy: levels 1 and 2 which assess *knowledge* and *comprehension* are allocated 40%; levels 3 and 4 which assess *application* and *analysis* are allocated 40% while levels 5 and 6 which assess *synthesis* and *evaluation* are allocated 20% of the total mark of the assessment instrument. In this respect, the higher-order thinking skills are given only twenty percent while both the lower-order and the middle-order thinking skills are provided eighty percent.

4.11.3.2. Looking at the Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy

- The Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy of learning, teaching and assessing is a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy. Although Bloom's taxonomy is widely used in academic circles, the Anderson-Krathwohl taxonomy is relevant for this study in that it focuses on four questions that are fundamental to teaching (Killen 2004:71):
- What important things should learners 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?

Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) transformed the knowledge level of Blooms' Taxonomy into one separate dimension of the matrix (Blumberg 2009:94). The knowledge level has four categories, namely *factual knowledge*, *conceptual knowledge*, *procedural knowledge* and *metacognitive knowledge*. *Factual knowledge* refers to knowledge of terminology which includes technical vocabulary, facts and basic elements such as knowledge of people, events, locations or dates. This means that factual knowledge is the surface level knowledge (Biggs 1999) which forms the foundation for all types of knowledge, and as such it helps learners in constructing their conceptual and procedural knowledge. *Conceptual knowledge* refers to knowledge of classifications and categories, principles, generalisations, theories, models and structures. It is difficult, more complex and organised than factual knowledge and demonstrates a deep understanding of content (Biggs 1999). Blumberg (2009:94) calls it "the what of knowledge". If teachers encourage learners to remember or recall facts in isolation, they essentially promote factual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge on the other hand leads to better comprehension and retention of knowledge and provide learners with opportunities to use the knowledge. *Procedural knowledge* is discipline-specific knowledge of skills, techniques, methods and includes knowledge of the criteria. Blumberg (2009) calls it the "how of knowledge" because it involves a series of logical steps in the achievement of a specific competency or skill. *Meta-cognitive knowledge* is the knowledge of general strategies for learning and thinking and is also referred to as strategic knowledge, knowledge about tasks which

include contextual and conditional knowledge. Contextual knowledge in turn refers to when and how to use cognitive strategies or tasks while conditional knowledge refers to when and why to use strategies appropriately (Blumberg 2009:95). Meta-cognitive knowledge is consistent with learner-centred teaching in that it encourages learners to develop self-knowledge, that is, to know one's own strengths and weaknesses. The cognitive process dimension contains six categories: *remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate* and *create* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001:5). Although the levels of cognitive processing are similar to Bloom's original taxonomy, the types of knowledge are a new creation. The six levels of cognitive processes are, remember or recall, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create.

The immeasurable verb at level 2, "understand", includes measurable verbs like interpret (data), exemplify, classify, summarise, compare and explain while "analyse" is further defined by verbs such as differentiate, organise and attribute (Blumberg 2009:94). The educators ensure or maximise learners' learning by providing them with opportunities to use and apply the content with different types of knowledge. According to Blumberg (2009: 96) Anderson and Krathwohl's taxonomy uses levels of cognitive processes to define verbs that are used in assessment standards to achieve the prescribed learning outcomes.

4.12. Conscious alignment

Teachers should consciously ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment standards are aligned. Blumberg (2009:96) states that it is imperative that every assessment standard should have a teaching and learning activity and an assessment task that correspond to the assessment standard should be implemented. This means that it is crucial that when assessment tasks are developed, alignment should always be considered. La Marca (2011) in support of Blumberg (2009) mentions a two-step process in the analysis of alignment, namely, a systematic review of standards and a systematic review of assessment tasks. He feels that this process is very important when the judgement of depth alignment is considered. According to La Marca (2011:2), the review of assessment standards should occur before a review of the assessment task. In this regard, the analysis of the degree of cognitive complexity prescribed by the standards is very important in the review process, because the review of assessment tasks normally involves two decision points, namely, a determination of what assessment standard an

assessment task assesses, and the assessment task's degree of cognitive complexity. Teachers should in particular consider the cognitive levels of thinking expected from learners in the teaching; learning and assessment process (see section 4.12.3). It is therefore important that teachers should have a common understanding of the definition of cognitive complexity. Taxonomies of learning play an important role in this regard.

Blumberg (2009:97) states that although it is possible to have teaching and learning activities at a lower level than the level of the assessment standard to prepare learners to do a higher order cognitive level work, these activities also needs to include work that is at the same cognitive level as the assessment standard or objective. The same holds for the assessment exercises. While teachers would include some assessment exercises that are at a lower cognitive levels, the majority of the assessment tasks must be at the same cognitive level as the assessment standard.

The role of assessment standards in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment has been discussed in detail so far. At this stage it is, however, also necessary to look at the role of aims, goals and objectives, as these concepts were used in the past and will probably be used again when the new CAPS is implemented. In the same way that assessment standards are the key factor in ensuring alignment, learning objectives will play a key role in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment in the CAPS.

4.13. ALIGNING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENTS: THE FUTURE ROLE OF AIMS, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

4.13.1. Defining, aims, goals and objectives

Teaching is an intentional activity because it is directed at the achievement of particular educational and learning results. The results envisioned must be stated explicitly so that the achievement thereof (by means of assessment) can be monitored (Van Rooy 1993:111). Whereas the results envisioned are indicated by means of learning outcomes and assessment standards in the National Curriculum Statement, the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), refer to aims.

An analysis of the literature reveals that different terms are often used to refer to aims in the teaching-learning situation. Green and Johnson (2011:33) refer to "goals" and explain

that “(Learning) goals are referred to with many terms, such as learning outcomes, objectives, aims and targets.” Airasian and Russel (2008:64) and Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russel (2006:79) prefer the use of “objectives”, whereas Van Rooy (1993:111) choose to use “aims”. Airasian and Russell (2008:64) state that no matter whether the intended results are called, aims, goals or objectives, they play an important role in any teaching situation, because if teachers do not identify the objectives they want the learners to achieve, instruction and assessment will be purposeless. In the same way that objectives in our everyday lives help us to focus on what is important and remind us of what we want to accomplish, objectives in the teaching situation express the content, skills and behaviours teachers hope their learners will master or acquire through teaching (Airasian & Russell 2008:64).

Aims can range from general to very specific and the time it takes to achieve an aim can be either long, medium or short term (Airasian & Russell 2008:65; Banks 2005:6-7; Van Rooy 1993:112-114). Based on the time it takes to accomplish an aim and the level of specificity, a distinction is usually made between different aims. Airasian and Russel (2008:65-66) and Banks (2005:6-7) refer to global objectives, educational objectives and instructional objectives. According to them (Airasian & Russel 2008:65; Banks 2005:6), **global objectives** are often called goals and are broad, complex student learning outcomes that require substantial time and instruction to accomplish. These types of objectives are usually made at state level and are rarely used in classroom assessment unless they are broken down into more narrow objectives. Van Rooy (1993:112) refer to global objectives as macro-level aims and explain that these type of aims are directed at teaching and learning in general and are abstract and long-term in nature. These long-term, general aims can be equated to the critical outcomes in the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education 2003:2) and the aims that are stated in the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (Department of Education 2011:6).

Educational objectives represent an intermediate level of abstraction and are more specific than global objectives (Banks 2005:6). Educational objectives are “... sufficiently broad to indicate the richness of the objective and to suggest a range of possible student outcomes associated with the objective” (Airasian & Russel 2008:65). Van Rooy (1993:113) refers to this type of objectives as “goals” formulated at the meso level and explain that meso-level goals are derived from macro-level aims.

Instructional objectives are the most specific type of objective and can be achieved in a relatively short time, (e.g. in a particular lesson) (Van Rooy 1993:113; Airasian & Russell 2008:65; Banks 2005:7). Instructional objectives are important because they define the knowledge and skills the learners should have at the end of the lesson. As such instructional objectives guide the learners' learning and the teacher's selection and development of learning content and activities and the selection of assessment instruments and activities (Newby et al 2006:79).

In this study the terms aims, goals and objectives are preferred to distinguish between the different types of aims. As the driving force behind lesson preparation, teaching, learning and assessment, a closer look at short-term learning objectives is necessary.

4.13.2. Formulating objectives

Learning objectives spell out what learners should learn. Therefore objectives must be formulated with care and caution (Van Rooy 1993:120; Newby et al 2006:80-81). According to Newby et al (2006:80) objectives should include the following three components:

- **Performance:** What learners will do to indicate that they have learned? This should preferably specify an observable performance (e.g. the learner should demonstrate/explain/compose/solve/draw, etc.). This will allow both the learner and the teacher to tell whether learning has occurred.
- **Conditions:** The circumstances under which learners are expected to perform. This includes aspects such as setting (where will they be expected to perform), people (will they be working alone or in groups?) and equipment (will they be allowed to use any equipment, such as a calculator or dictionary?).
- **Criteria:** The standard that defines acceptable performance. The question to be asked in this regard is: How well must students perform? Van Rooy (1993:121) define criteria as "... the quality and quantity which will serve as the standard for acceptable realisation ...". This implies that the level at which the activity must be dealt with should be specified when objectives are formulated.

Van Rooy (1993:120) adds that objectives should describe particular learning content. The learning content to which the objective relates must be clearly demarcated and specified.

The formulation of learning objectives for the teaching of Setswana Home Language would, for example, be as follows:

- Learners would be able to independently (condition) research (performance) complex topics (content) from a wide variety of sources and record (performance) findings accurately (condition).
- Learners would be able to clarify (performance) the meaning, origin and pronunciation of words (content) correctly (criteria) by using dictionaries and thesaurus (conditions).

Airasian and Russell (2008:67) states that objectives are logically and closely tied to teaching and assessment. This knot between learning objectives (what learners should learn), teaching and assessment is depicted by the Carnegie Mellon University (2010) in the form of a triangle:

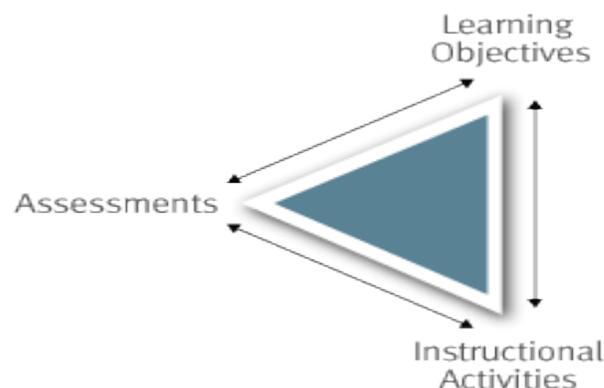


Figure 4.1: The alignment of learning objectives (what learners should learn), instructional activities and assessments. (Carnegie Melon University, 2011)

Two major reasons for aligning assessments with learning objectives and instructional activities are provided. The first reason cited is that alignment increases the probability that students will be provided with the opportunities to learn and practice the required

knowledge and skills. The second reason is when assessments and objectives are aligned, 'good grades' are more likely to be equated to 'good learning' (Carnegie Mellon University 2011).

At this stage the resemblance between aims, goals and objectives and critical outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards should be clear. Orlich, et al (2010:85) doesn't make any distinction between standards and educational objectives. They see standards as criteria by which the quality of what learners know and are able to do can be judged. According to Newby et al (2005:80), criteria for the required performance should form part of *learning objectives*. Perna and Davis (2007:2) state that assessment standards are *goals* that a teacher can use to assess the success or failure of a lesson when monitoring learners' learning and that they specify what learners should know and be able to do. They are of the opinion that standards must be *explicit goals* that ensure that rigorous content is learned in school. Sleeter (2001:156) confirm this when she assert that standards can also make explicit what the learners will be assessed on, a detail that may help parents and other stakeholders to know what the 'game' is and what the learners will be assessed on.

Perna and Davis (2007:2) assert that a standard can involve one specific statement that defines what the learner must do to achieve it or that it can involve a number of descriptive statements that clarifies what the learner must do to achieve the level of competence expected in the assessment standard. Sleeter (2005:3) confirms this when she says assessment standards specify what learners must know and be able to do, that they describe how well learners are expected to master a given body of knowledge and skills, and that they specify what learners should know and be assessed on and how performance should be measured or assessed. Learning objectives fulfil the same role and when CAPS is implemented in future, the learning objectives will thus be the driving force behind the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment activities. This is clearly stated by Green and Johnson (2010:35):

Using learning goals as a starting point is the key to **alignment** in the instructional process. Alignment occurs when elements that are interrelated (i.e., learning goals, instruction and assessment) are positioned so that the elements perform properly. Aligning your instruction and your assessment with your learning goals ensures that instruction

addresses the content and strategies that you want students to learn. It also ensures that students are properly assessed on that specific content.

4.14. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the launch of the modern standards movement and its roots in the back-to-basics movement was discussed. It became clear that the rise of the modern standards movement could be attributed to dissatisfaction with different schooling systems in different countries. The chapter briefly examined how the standards-based reform movement framed the four central curriculum questions, determined what is understood by standards and concluded that standards specify what learners should know and be able to do. It then went further and described the reasons behind usage of standards in education, namely, desire for greater academic achievement, accountability and guidelines for teachers as well as the most important principles that comprise the framework of a standards-based program. These principles include, that standards must be specific; that standards must measure multiple levels; that standards must be teachable; and that standards must be flexible. Different types of standards can be distinguished, each one having a different purpose and connection to instruction and assessment. These standards were identified as content, performance-based and world-class standards.

Although the standards movement is a world-wide movement, certain controversies surround the use of standards. These include the question of whether standards should be implemented, and the challenges that standards pose to the teachers, learners and other stakeholders. Although there has been considerable criticism levelled against standards, the apparent benefits of standards, namely, that learners are exposed to equal learning opportunities, that standards that are based upon common principles are advantageous and, that standards facilitates better teaching, cannot be ignored. It is not surprising that clarifying assessment requirements and standards is considered good teaching practice and that it improves learner performance.

In the second half of the chapter, the concept of alignment is discussed and linked to two well-known taxonomies of learning, namely that of Bloom (1956) and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The significance of alignment and the methods of how to determine

whether alignment does exist in subjects or courses were also discussed. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the future role that aims, goals and objectives will play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment when the new CAPS is implemented.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a description and justification of the research plan that was adopted in this study. It presents the procedures that were followed in collecting and processing data in order to answer to the main and secondary questions of the study. In this chapter the purpose of the research as well as the sub-questions that helped in the achievement of the purpose are highlighted. Thereafter the research approach or methodology that was employed is discussed and an explanation of the reasons why this approach was adopted is given. The research design is presented a description of the sampling procedure that was adopted is given. This chapter also explains why the researcher resolved to employ it. In section 5.6 a discussion of data collection instruments is furnished; these include semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. In sections 5.7 and 5.8 the issue of data analysis is outlined, as well as those of validity and reliability respectively. In these sections, a description of how data was analysed, checked for trustworthiness, coded and categorised is provided. Sections 5.9 and 5.10 provide a description of the ethical considerations of the research study as well as procedures that were followed in accessing the Gauteng Department of Education and entry into the Tshwane West District and its schools. The last section, 5.11, contains the conclusion of the chapter.

5.2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate Setswana Home Language teachers' understanding (concept) of assessment practices and to determine to what extent they ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned.

The following sub-questions derived from the main research question were formulated in order to guide the study towards addressing the research problem:

- How did curriculum changes influence teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa?

- What does assessment entail and what are the principles of high quality assessment practices?
- What is meant by the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment?
- To what extent do Setswana teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and what challenges do they face in this regard?
- What can be done to help teachers to ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices in the teaching of Setswana Home Language are aligned?

5.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to respond to the main research question and its sub-questions, it was important to use relevant and appropriate research methodology. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:9), methodology refers to the way one collects and analyses data. By its nature the research methodology that has been adopted in this study is qualitative. Creswell (2007:128) argues that qualitative research is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field or participatory observer research and that it emphasises looking at variables in the natural setting in which they are found. Qualitative research is an umbrella term for different approaches with a variety of theoretical backgrounds, methodological principles, research issues and aims (Schurink, 2009:3). When he defines qualitative research, Schurink (2009) describes it as an approach that is based on different methods whose aim is to describe people's lived experiences as closely to their own indigenous constructions of social reality as possible. This means that qualitative research provides a researcher with an opportunity to enter into the people's lived experiences or stories about their lives; by so doing the researcher can obtain a definite in-depth response regarding particular aspects of concern in a study. Hence the comment of Mpya (2007:50), that qualitative research allows a researcher to view respondents as human beings with lives, ideas, feelings and motives rather than as mere sources of information, which stories and so forth

may yield useful descriptive data. Schurink (2009:10-15) captures this more precisely when he states that;

- Human behaviour can be explained from the outside by means of observation through the use of general scientific laws;
- Humans are different from things and human behaviour can only be understood from an insider's point of view by gaining insight into the meaning that the subject gives to his or her life world – and the meaning that the subject gives to his or her innermost feelings and experiences is represented by an objective researcher;
- Qualitative research aims to understand actors' subjective meanings and interpretations to explain their behaviour;
- In qualitative research, there is an external reality or truth and the researcher must maintain a detached and objective position;
- Reality must be interpreted through the meaning that research participants give to their life world;
- There is no fixed reality or truth, reality can only be socially and personally constructed and the subject must be actively involved.

Creswell *et al* (2010:50) support this view when they describe qualitative research as an approach that tries to collect rich descriptive data linked to a specific phenomenon with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. It essentially concentrates on how people as individuals or groups view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their life experiences (Creswell *et al*, 2010:50). In this way, qualitative research allows the researcher to determine Setswana Home Language teachers' understanding (concept) of assessment practices and to what extent they ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned. In line with what Anderson (2009:180) writes, the qualitative method was used to gather data in the form of words and language from interviews, observations and documents.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:16) assert that qualitative research methods help understand human behaviour and experiences, particularly in more complex systems of integrated life experiences. The research methodology allowed the researcher to understand the processes involved in the teaching and social contexts of the teachers

within which specific beliefs, attitudes and practices may have been developed. As an UMALUSI Grade 12 Setswana External Examiner, the researcher often conduct face-to-face individual interviews with examiners and chief examiners who agree with Chrisholm et al (2010:195) that the National Senior Certificate offered under the National Curriculum Statement of South Africa, “emphasises learner-centred goals of the outcomes-based education” but that its practice centres on the “pass rate as a primary indicator of performance and quality” (Taylor, 2009:2). As indicated previously (Creswell et al, 2010; Schurink, 2009; McMillan and Schumacher, 2001), qualitative research is concerned with exploring the “why” questions of research and studies people or systems by interacting and observing them in their natural setting. Being involved in the examining and moderation of the Grade 12 question papers, the current research study provides opportunities for me to carry out some introspection and reflection on the whole experience of teaching and assessment by asking the “why” questions. The researcher needed to understand why teachers do not seem to understand the role of assessment standards in the teaching-learning-assessment cycle and why they do not seem to use them in their teaching and assessment as central controlling ideas in their lesson planning, teaching and assessment. In this context, a qualitative approach was relevant and helpful for this study in understanding and exploring the opinions, practices and experiences of teachers in their field. The researcher therefore intended to explore, in-depth, the teachers’ understanding of assessment and their usage of the assessment standards in guiding their teaching and assessment in classrooms and what they actually require in order to be successful in this regard. The researcher collected information on their lived experiences and understanding of assessment and the role of assessment standards and to what extent they use them in their teaching and assessment. Through this approach the researcher was able to determine what works and what does not work for them in respect of their teaching and assessment practices.

It should be pointed out that, in its search to understand a phenomenon, qualitative research uses the natural setting as a source of data, which are very often words with meaning, and that the researcher is the key instrument. The researcher becomes a key instrument because he or she is personally involved and as an insider is at risk of being partial. The researcher therefore attempted to develop a healthy relationship with the participants in order to be able to collect accurate or unbiased information from them. The researcher intended to observe, describe and interpret settings as they were and spent

time in the natural setting to be able to understand the context in which the phenomena take place. In this context nothing was taken for granted, no assumptions were made and data was not suddenly taken as relevant without proper interpretation. In the current research study, data was collected by interacting with the research subjects in their natural school contexts and by obtaining their viewpoints on their understanding of assessment and assessment standards in guiding the teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana in the FET band. The researcher did not work towards a predetermined hypothesis or conclusion but investigated patterns as they emerged with each natural setting, to arrive at an informed conclusion.

5.3.1. Why qualitative research?

Although the qualitative research approach is often criticised in that it does not have credibility due to it lacking the objectivity of traditionally accepted methods which use numerical measurements, a qualitative research approach is adopted in this study because it allows the researcher to interpret the importance and viewpoints of the participants (Horsburgh, 2002:308; Walker & Evers, 1999:43; Grabin, 2007:180-181). The researcher took cognisance of the fact that the results of qualitative research may be problematic because of the researcher's personal role and their involvement, experience, history and viewpoint, which sometimes influences the analysis (Grabin, 2007:180). This study thus recognised that participants, or teachers in this context, are people who are best qualified to describe, interpret and discuss their specific environment that the natural setting serves as a comfortable locale which encourages the participants to respond truthfully and honestly, and in this manner can add meaning, validity and reliability to a study. In order to avoid personal bias, the researcher did not project his own views during interviews and during data analysis.

5.3.2. Qualitative research and constructivism

One of the paradigms used in qualitative research is called constructivism which looks at knowledge as being socially constructed and which may change depending on circumstances. Constructivism is a theory of learning which holds the view that learners learn by actively constructing their own knowledge (Scholnick, Kol & Abarbanel,

2006:12). This means that learning is a process which involves the active participation of learners in their own learning. Therefore the learners have to actively construct knowledge and not just sit passively in the classroom and wait to be filled like empty vessels. In this regard, Scholnick, et al (2006) assert that concepts cannot simply be transferred from teachers to learners but that they must be conceived. In constructivism, the mind becomes an agent actively seeking to satisfy its curiosity and resolve troubling issues (von Glasersfeld, 1995).

Knowledge in the light of constructivism is seen as a construct to be pieced together through an active process of involvement and interaction with the environment, but not as a commodity that should be transferred from an expert to a learner (Scholnick, et al, 2006:12). According to Golafshani (2005:605), constructivism is a view that all knowledge and all meaning is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essential social context. Golafshani (2005) further emphasises that constructivism helps qualitative research achieve its aim of undertaking in-depth research that probes for deeper understanding instead of investigating surface features. In other words, constructivism values the multiple realities that people have in their minds. Therefore, when multiple methods of research, including interviews, observations and recordings are used, more valid, reliable and diverse realities are constructed.

5.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be seen as a summary of different procedures employed by the researcher in collecting, analysing, interpreting and presenting research data. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:50), the research design describes procedures on how to conduct research and involves when, from whom and under what conditions data is collected or obtained. It also encompasses how research is organised and explains the methods that are used in collecting data and the general procedure for conducting research. Therefore, Creswell and Clark (2007:58) are correct when they point out that a research design guides the researcher's decisions about the methods she or he uses during their study and sets the logic by which they make interpretations at its end.

This research was designed as a study of teachers who teach Setswana Home Language in the Further Education and Training band in South Africa. Generally the research refers to Setswana Home Language teachers in the FET band within a South African context. Therefore the teachers who were invited to participate in this study were needed to provide the necessary subject specific material. The researcher wanted to understand and gain insight into the dynamics of the teachers' specific situation (Creswell et al 2010: 76).

As indicated earlier, in the researcher's role as an UMALUSI Grade 12 Setswana External Examiner, the researcher often has face-to-face interactions with examiners, chief examiners and internal moderators of Setswana Home Language in the FET band during external moderation of their question papers. Since these examiners and internal moderators are all teachers of Setswana Home Language in their field, the researcher knows the various lived stories and involvement in their teaching and assessment process. The researcher has evaluated their question papers, listened to their stories about the processes of setting, read internal moderators' reports and participated in a number of memorandum discussion meetings and verification of marking meetings. Though this has been the case, all these exercises have clarified very little about how teachers in the natural setting experience their teaching and assessment as well as the learners learning in their own specific or individual voices. The study therefore was intended to fill in the gaps about these teachers' opinions and experiences. In so doing, the researcher collected and presented detailed information about specific individual teachers.

5.5. SAMPLING PROCEDURE

In conducting this study the researcher used sampling, that is, a selection of units of analysis such as people, groups of people, artefacts and setting, in a manner that maximized his ability to answer the research questions set down (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003:715). In other words, the sample was hand-picked for the research. This is consistent with Creswell et al (2010:79) who define purposive sampling as a sampling approach in which participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of data needed for the study. The sampling decisions are made specifically for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to respond to the research questions.

In this study, the researcher selected participants with comprehensive knowledge and experience of teaching of Setswana Home Language in the FET band. They had taught this subject for more than fifteen years. This was in order to encourage reflection on the various aspects and components of the whole intervention. The choice of purposive sampling was guided by the writings and research of McMillan and Schumacher (2010:158), namely, that in this type of sampling, the researcher selects specific elements from the population that are representative or informative about the topic of interest. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that it is on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population that a judgement is made about which participants or subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. The researcher selected subjects with a specific purpose; targeting information-rich teachers who teach the said subject. In choosing the sample for this research study, the researcher focussed on specific characteristics of the sample and made the selection on the basis of at least four key characteristics:

- Gauteng Province: Gauteng is geographically suitable and accessible for the researcher, thus enabling ready access to the secondary schools needed for the research;
- All the secondary schools were within the Tshwane West District of the Gauteng province. This is a district which, apart from its closeness to the researcher, houses a good number of secondary schools that offer Setswana Home Language. Another reason for selecting this district is that it typically admits learners from diverse familial and ethnic backgrounds as well as socio-economic circumstances;
- The researcher targeted only those schools that were currently teaching and assessing according to the outcomes-based approach and were situated under the Department of Basic Education as an assessment body;
- The researcher selected six Setswana HL teachers who were teaching in the secondary schools of the Further Education and Training phase;
- The researcher chose participants of mixed gender and age.

The sample of secondary schools thus selected consisted of: School W, School X, School Y and School Z. All these schools are routinely evaluated, measured and monitored by the

same group of people using the same criteria. The researcher concentrated on the four schools in the district as these experiences the same or similar access to information and training in the outcomes-based curriculum.

In selecting the sample, the researcher considered the purpose of the study, the main data collection strategy and the availability or accessibility of the participants. With reference to **the purpose of the study**, the researcher chose four secondary schools in the same district. While the researcher searched for literature written on assessment standards and in particular on how the teachers understand assessment, the role of assessment standards and how they use them in their teaching and assessment, the researcher could not find many researchers who had already explored this topic. Due to the fact that this research study was exploratory, the researcher did not need many participants for too many would have overwhelmed the study. As Schulze (2003:12) writes, a qualitative research study involves only a few participants because its aim is strictly to understand and describe a phenomenon as it unfolds itself in a natural setting.

Secondly, the researcher considered the *main data collection strategy* that would control the research study, namely, qualitative researchers are directed in their research by prevalent circumstances. Although a research study may have a small sample size, the researcher may frequently or continually go back to the same context or the same informants in order to seek clarification and confirmation of particular issues. In this research study, the researcher intended interviewing participants a number of times over a period of three months, from April to July for data collection. The researcher's interaction with the participants was prolonged because the researcher also had to visit and conduct telephonic interviews to check on specific issues that had emerged during the analysis of the data.

Finally, the researcher took into consideration the **accessibility or availability of the informants** as some were difficult to locate, make appointments with or sometimes some were ill or seemingly unwilling to participate openly in a face-to-face situation with a stranger, but others were relatively easy to locate and interview. In this research study, factors that made the task difficult to complete were issues such as unavailability due to attendance of workshops, lack of preparedness for lesson presentation and observation, unwillingness to participate in a face-to-face situation for fear of the unknown. This meant that the researcher was obliged to go through the administration of the Gauteng province,

through the Tshwane West District, the principals of individual schools and down to the specific informant. Therefore, full up-front disclosure on the part of the researcher was critical. The researcher consequently went to individual schools and teachers to make requests for their participation so that they could voluntarily participate.

The following figure is a table that describes the sample characteristics for this research study:

Table 5.1: Sample characteristics

Teacher	A	B	C	D	E	F
Teaching Subjects	Setswana Home Language	Setswana Home Language	Setswana Home Language	Setswana Home Language	Setswana Home Language	Setswana Home Language
Current Position	Educator	Head of Department	Head of Department	Head of Department	Head of Department	Educator
Teaching Experience	22 years	26 years	28 years	24 years	34 years	19 years
Grades	10,11,12	10,11,12	10,11,12	10,11,12	10,11,12	10,11,12
Qualifications	Matric & Senior Education Diploma	B Tech & Senior Teachers' Diploma	B.A. & Senior Teachers' Diploma	B.A., Hons B.A. & Diploma in Education	B.A., Hons B.A., M.A., PTD, & HED (Mathematics)	B.A., Hons B.A., M.A., FD EM & HED

The table refers to a sample of teachers, ranging for example from Teacher F who has nineteen years of teaching experience up to Teacher E who has thirty four years of teaching experience. The spread of teachers in terms of experience in this study

represents a significant range of characteristics within the population of Setswana Home Language teachers at the FET phase in the Gauteng province and elsewhere.

Below is a map of the Gauteng province of South Africa: (Sainfo Reporter, 2009)

Table 5.2: A map of the Gauteng province



A brief profile of the Gauteng province

Gauteng is one of the nine provinces of South Africa. It was formed from part of the old Transvaal Province after South Africa's first all-race elections on 27 April 1994. It was initially named Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (or the PWV region) but was renamed 'Gauteng' in December 1994. Although Gauteng was carved out of the old Transvaal province in 1994, the terminology "PWV" described the region that existed long before that.

Situated in the heart of the Highveld, Gauteng is the smallest province in South Africa, with only 1.4% of the land area, but is highly urbanised, encompassing the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria. As of 2007, it housed a population of nearly 10.5 million,

making it the most populous province in South Africa. Gauteng comprises five major education regions and fifteen education districts. The five major education regions are Tshwane, Gauteng, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and Sedibeng. These five education regions are further divided into fifteen education districts, namely, Tshwane West, Tshwane North and Tshwane South; Gauteng East, Gauteng West and Gauteng North; Johannesburg South, Johannesburg West, Johannesburg East and Johannesburg Central; Ekurhuleni North and Ekurhuleni South; and lastly, Sedibeng West and Sedibeng East. These education districts are also clustered into three, namely, the Tshwaga cluster, the Ekudibeng cluster, and the Johannesburg cluster.

5.6. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

5.6.1. Introduction

In this research study, data was collected to address the main research question and the sub-questions indicated earlier in this chapter. According to Maree (2011:79-80), qualitative research involves a holistic inquiry carried out in a natural setting. Therefore data collection involved three instruments to obtain data from the research participants, namely interviews, observations and documents such as assignments, portfolios and tests. Interviews, be they structured or unstructured, are at the heart of qualitative research because they are used to obtain information from informants. Interviews with individuals were used in order to obtain data on how the informants conceived and experienced their world and how they made sense of the important events in their lives (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Teachers were interviewed as individuals on a confidential face-to-face meeting in order that the individual could be free to express opinions, ideas, concerns and challenges. It was through this conversation that adequate information was collected in the form of words and an in-depth verbal description of phenomena was provided (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:41). The main purpose of the verbal description was to obtain and capture the wealth of behaviour that occurs in a natural teaching, learning and assessment setting from the participant's perspective. The interviews in this study were of crucial importance in that the researcher wished to explore and record the views of teachers and observe them in action in their classrooms, teaching learners, learners' learning and responding to teacher facilitation processes to determine whether there were linkages, misinterpretations and misrepresentations. In order to collect the data the

researcher visited each of the four secondary schools in the Tshwane West District of Gauteng Province and conducted a prolonged interview with each participant. This field work was done during a three month period between April and July 2011. In order to gather data, the researcher listened attentively, questioned participants closely, observed and recorded all the details obtained.

While the researcher agrees that it is necessary that interviews be unstructured, it must be kept in mind that the unstructured interview is an established qualitative research method that is based on the phenomenological paradigm (Van Niekerk, 2005:95), and allows for various degrees of structure. This means that although all respondents were asked the same questions, the interviewer sometimes adapted the formulation of questions, including terminology, to suit the background and educational level of the teachers. According to Van Niekerk (2005:94), the order in which the topics are broached may vary from one respondent to the next, depending on the way in which the interview develops, and the level of understanding of each respondent. Generally, the interviews were conducted at a time and place agreed by both participants, namely, the researcher and the interviewee, to avoid undue pressure on the interviewee, and also in a language of their individual choice or preference.

Secondly, the researcher used observation as another instrument of data collection. As Naidoo (2005:19) asserts, observation is a data gathering technique that occurs through direct contact with an object, usually another human being. Here the emphasis is on understanding how people in a situation make sense out of what happens to them.

Thirdly, the researcher made use of document analysis as another instrument of data collection. The researcher collected documents that helped in obtaining rich information and insight into the teachers' understanding of assessment, the role of assessment standards and the extent to which they use them in their teaching and assessment. These documents included lesson plans, learners' portfolios, tests, assignments and examination scripts.

5.6.2. Instruments: Semi-structured interviews

Creswell et al (2010) define an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas,

beliefs, views, opinions and behaviors of the participant in order to see the world through the eyes of the latter. The current study used semi-structured interviews. While an unstructured interview is an open-ended, in-depth conversation that is designed to obtain rich and detailed data from a participant using follow up questions (Bryman, 2004:519-521), a semi-structured interview is a conversation in which a researcher attempts to understand the complex behavior of people without imposing any a priori categorisation which might limit the field of enquiry (Punch, 1998). These interviews often take the form of a conversation in which the researcher, with the participant, explores her or his views, ideas, beliefs and attitude about certain events or phenomena. The purpose of the researcher as interviewer was to obtain information from informants as respected individuals in such a manner that they would be free to share their ideas, concerns and challenges verbally with the interviewer. In this study participants were teachers, and they were asked to provide rich detailed information with regard to their views on the given questions. The interviews were thus made appropriate to delve deeply into the feelings, attitudes, intentions and motivations for the classroom behavior of the Setswana Home Language teachers.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the help of a protocol of pre-determined questions, (which are included in Appendix F), with all six of the Setswana Home Language teachers in the FET phase. The researcher did this in order to establish their views on their understanding of the assessment and assessment standards and the role which assessment standards play in guiding the teaching, learning and assessment process. The interviews provided information about each teacher's educational background, and the other matters investigated. Within the context of this research, interviews clarified the 'What', the 'How' and the 'Why' of the teacher as an assessor. The semi-structured interviews also allowed the researcher to probe more deeply and explore responses that had significance to the research topic but were not necessarily in the original questions.

5.6.3. Instruments: Observations

Naidoo (2005:19) argues that observation is a data gathering technique that occurs through direct contact with an object, usually another human being. Its purpose is to come to understand how people in a situation make sense out of what happens to them.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:459) when a researcher observes, there are some non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, body movement and other un-verbalised social interactions that suggest the subtle meaning of language that the researcher registers.

According to Merriam (2005:17), observations are a major means of collecting data in qualitative research because they offer a first-hand account of the situation under investigation. It is relevant to use the observational method of data gathering in order to obtain valid and reliable answers since the observational method requires the researcher to be part of the people at the research site; observing their behaviour in the environment. This is emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:275) who indicate that the observational method relies on a researcher's seeing and hearing things and recording these observations, rather than relying on a subject's self-report responses to questions or statements. For example, a primary challenge in classroom practice is the teaching strategies that teachers have to employ to accommodate all the learners in the classroom and ensure that there is alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. The researcher through observation had access to:

- First-hand information on whether teachers understand assessment and assessment standards and the role they play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment, and how they use assessment standards in their teaching and assessment;
- Insight into how they differentiate their activities to give every learner an opportunity to participate;
- An opportunity to see if there are barriers to their efforts to use assessment standards in guiding their teaching and assessment.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:145), observations in a qualitative study are intentionally unstructured and free flowing, allowing for the researcher to be flexible and to shift his or her focus from one thing to another as some new event or important object presents itself in the situation. Some of the secondary schools at which the researcher conducted observations made use of 6 periods for different learning areas in a day which ran for 55 minutes each. Teachers were observed for a full day from the first to the last

period. Due to the fact that teachers use subject teaching, the researcher had an opportunity to observe each teacher for several days.

5.6.4. Instruments: Document analysis

Merriam (2005:17) uses the term documents as an umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual and physical material relevant to the research study. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:42) explain documents as records of past events that are written or printed; they may be anecdotal notes, letters, diaries, tax records and receipts, maps, journals, newspapers and official minutes. According to Krippendorp (2004) content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences. Krippendorp (2004) asserts that the content analyst sees data as representations not of physical events but as texts, images, and expressions that are created to be viewed, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings. It is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts or other meaningful matters to the context of their use, and can be undertaken with any written material, from document to interview transcripts, from media products to personal interviews (Krippendorp, 2004:18). In this study, as well as semi-structured interviews the researcher also used policy and guideline documents, learner portfolios, tests, assignments and examination scripts.

Given the main objective of this study, the researcher needed to understand how the teachers taught and assessed in the past. The researcher therefore interpreted the facts from the documents in order to provide the explanations of the past, and in order to clarify the collective teaching, learning and assessment meaning on current issues and practices. The documents also helped frame a perspective on the teachers' understanding of assessment standards and the role of assessment standards in guiding the teaching, learning and assessment process against which the teacher's perspective were mapped. The policy and guideline documents, learner portfolios, tests, assignments and examination scripts, as essential documents, provided a rich source of information in these respects. The documents also assisted the researcher in the development of the interview schedule that was used to probe teachers' responses. In order to be able to construct the teachers' stories, the researcher needed to understand the classroom practices clearly, that only relevant and appropriate questions to the teachers were asked.

5.7. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data, which involves interpreting, consolidating and reducing what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read in order to derive or make meaning out of the process. It is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation (Mpya, 2007:15). Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing and interactive process, implying that data collection, processing, analysis and reporting are intertwined (Creswell et al 2010). In the current study the analysis was done continuously during the data collection process, according to four key steps of data analysis process as suggested by Anderson (2009:213), namely, that: the researcher should understand and assess the information collected; reduce it to manageable proportions; explore the key themes and patterns; and reach meaningful conclusions that can be justified on the basis of the analysis. It is within this context, that during the data collection phase, the researcher actually recorded all the conversation with the participant teachers. While observations were restricted to a note-taking exercise, interviews were simultaneously tape-recorded. In order to strike a consistent note and to ensure accuracy, the researcher read from the transcripts and listened to the audiotapes repeatedly in order to increase his understanding of the participants' viewpoints.

The tapes were transcribed verbatim, meaning that they were rewritten word for word. The researcher used a colleague of his to transcribe the tapes in order to make sure that all the words of the participants were captured, some of which might not have seemed important to other people who would not be involved in the research. According to Creswell et al (2010) all data collected by electronic or digital means, such as tape or video recordings, and must be transcribed.

After reading the data several times, in order to understand and make sense of it, the researcher then began coding it. Coding is defined as the marking of the segments of the data with symbols, descriptive words or unique identifying names (Creswell et al, 2010: 105) for easy identification. The codes were used to identify aspects relevant to the questions and these were clustered into themes. Creswell et al (2010) assert that the coding process enables the researcher to quickly retrieve and collect together all the text and other data that is associated with some thematic idea so that the sorted bits can be

examined together and different cases compared in that respect. After having coded the transcribed data the researcher began to cluster and categorise the identified themes for the study.

The researcher then organized and arranged related codes into categories in order to identify specific patterns. Categories and subcategories started to emerge as a result of this. Literature and observation assisted the researcher in identifying the final categories. The categorization of the data was undertaken to ensure clarity and simplification of data so that it could be applied in the field. This was consistent with Le Compte (2000) who views qualitative analysis as an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns among these categories.

In this study, the researcher started with certain categories into which the researcher sorted the data. The categories emerged from the conceptual framework that was developed early in the study. The theoretical categories included the following: duration, collective participation, focus on content, active learning and coherence. Some scholars have suggested the importance of identifying certain codes from other empirical studies dealing with one's topic even during the literature review (Creswell et al, 2010).

The researcher also did document analysis to examine the meaning of the written words. Payne and Payne (2004) describe this as a type of method that seeks to demonstrate the meaning of written or visual sources by systematically allocating their content to pre-determined, detailed categories, and quantifying and interpreting the outcomes. The researcher collected relevant sources to check whether there was alignment in assignments, tests, portfolios and examination question papers. The documents yielded evidence on the issues mentioned.

5.8. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

5.8.1. Introduction

The qualitative researcher as a person who collects data is accountable for the results of the research findings. It is imperative that these findings must be credible and trustworthy so that they may be applicable in the field and be worthwhile and useful to the people who read them. In order to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the data in qualitative

research, it is important that the researcher should use different procedures. The two concepts that are established for the notion of trustworthiness are validity and reliability. The use of validity and reliability measures has long been common in quantitative research, but only recently has it received considerable attention in the qualitative research paradigm as well (Golafshani, 2003). It is important to note that this research recognised that the concepts of validity and reliability are contentious terms within qualitative research traditions. These are mostly associated with the quantitative paradigms and as Golafshani asserts (2003:597) “they should be redefined for their use in a naturalistic approach”. Merriam (1998) questions the use of these terms in qualitative research studies and, rather, prefers to talk about trustworthiness and credibility of the data in qualitative studies. Golafshani (2003:601), in this regard, points out that trustworthiness and credibility are crucial in qualitative research and that the trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability.

Joppe (2000:1) explains that validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Another concept that is established in the notion of trustworthiness is reliability. Makhado (2002:118) defines reliability as the degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research, while Sethosa (2001:149) sees reliability as the degree of consistency with which the instrument or procedure measures whatever it is supposed to measure. What Sethosa (2001) implies here is that the consistency with which a specific measuring instrument is administered to a different group of respondents under different circumstances in time and venue, should also lead to the same observations and conclusions. In order to keep this consistency, it was essential for this research study to employ instruments such as a tape recorder and transcripts, which are materials that have important implications for reliability and accuracy.

Joppe (2000) in defining reliability remarks: (it is) the extent to which results are consistent over time and whether the results of a study can be repeatedly reproduced under similar conditions. According to Smit (2003:24), the validity of qualitative research lies in its internal validity rather than its external validity. By internal validity, Smit (2003) refers to internal logical relationships that have to do with goals, reasons, and meaning. This also refers to how the study’s findings match reality. According to Makhado (2002:116) internal validity checks whether researchers actually observe what they think they observe and

whether researchers actually hear the meanings that they think they hear. In the context of this research study, it was important that the researcher understood the actions of the participants because the strength of this research lied in its internal validity.

Therefore, as far as the definitions of validity and reliability are concerned, especially in this research, the researcher took the following stance: In as far as reliability was concerned, whether the results were replicable, while with regards to validity, whether the means of measurement were accurate and were actually measuring what they were intended to do. In order to test or maximise the trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative data in this study, the researcher used triangulation, member checks and prolonged stay in the research sites. The researcher contacted the participants after the scheduled period through visits and telephonic conversations.

5.8.2. Triangulation

When different sources of data collection are included or involved in a study, they increase the trustworthiness and credibility of the results. It was therefore important that the current study includes triangulation. This meant using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Triangulation can also be used through engaging multiple methods, such as observation, interviews and recordings that will lead to one valid, reliable and diverse construction of reality. The current study particularly used more than one data collection strategy including in-depth interviews and document analysis. Again, it is imperative to mention that triangulation is also a contested idea within qualitative research approaches. Richardson (1990: 954) prefers the term “crystallisation” as opposed to triangulation. She argues that triangulation is based on the assumption of a fixed point or objects that can be triangulated; she dismisses this fixed position as the outcome of a qualitative study and proposes that we should not triangulate but crystallise. Richardson (1990:954) proposes that crystallisation is a concept that can enable us to shift from seeing something as a fixed, rigid, two-dimensional object towards the idea of a crystal, which allows for infinite variety of shapes, substance, transmutations, dimensions and angles of approach. In order to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of data, the researcher therefore used several strategies which included doing member checks and staying for a longer time in the field for data collection in addition to the time spent interviewing, observing and doing document analysis.

5.8.3. Member checks

The phrase member checks describes a procedure where one goes back to the research participants, after the completion of the interviews, to ask them if the captured record is accurate or needs correction or elaboration. In this context, the researcher and the informants or participants worked together in the planning, conducting, and analysing of results. In order to perform member checking satisfactorily, the researcher returned the transcripts to the teachers that he had interviewed, for them to verify and authenticate the data as an accurate reflection of the contents of the conversations. In some instances, the researcher read parts of the transcripts telephonically for the informants or participants to verify and confirm if the researcher had correctly captured sections that were not audible on the recorded conversations.

5.8.4. Prolonged engagement in the field

From the discussion above, it is clear that it is of significance for the researcher to be in the field for a period long enough to collect credible data. Therefore, it was appropriate for the researcher to spend not only three months but also some additional days in the specific district. These extra days were strictly used for verifying, confirming and/or authenticating information from transcripts and other documents through follow-up interviews with some of the teachers.

5.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.9.1. Introduction

Educational research in most cases involves the participation of persons or people in experiments, surveys, interviews and observations including the use of school records (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:456). Due to the fact that human beings as participants become involved, it becomes necessary to be aware of ethical considerations pertinent to research. As a result, when a researcher wants to conduct an investigative inquiry into sensitive issues he or she needs to be ethical. In order to truly be ethical, he or she has to apply a system of moral principles to prevent harming the participants or subjects he or she is working with. A researcher whose action or conduct in research harms, offends or who

does not care about the consequences emanating from his or her interaction would likely be a questionable scientist or researcher, though qualitative researchers often face ethical dilemmas and have to make hasty decisions to address these dilemmas in order to continue with the study. Merriam (2005:18) confirms this when he emphasises that in qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge at two points, namely, during the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420) qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. Makhado, 2002:120) on the other hand asserts that "... most qualitative researchers devise roles that elicit co-operation, trust, openness and acceptance and should take into account the effects of the research on participants in order to act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings". Ethics are generally concerned with beliefs about what is right and what is wrong from a moral perspective. Research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when one engages with participants or access to archival data is requested (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:160).

5.9.2. Informed consent

It is a requirement that when human beings become participants in research studies, they be informed about their role in the research and that they should give their written consent for participation (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009:456). Again, it is imperative that the informed consent must speak to the purpose and procedure of research as well as provide an explanation or description of any risks or negative consequences that may result. Since the current study required the participation of human respondents, the teachers, the researcher needed to address some ethical issues with them. The researcher ensured that the participants were well-informed about the purpose of the research they were asked to participate in as well as the procedures that would be followed. The researcher explained and made sure the participants understood the risks they had to contend with as results of being part of the current research by expressing certain views in a clear and understandable manner, and that their own voices were seen as a subversive activity. The researcher also ensured that the participants felt free to make independent decisions without fear of negative consequences; whether they wanted to participate or not and

whether they wished to discontinue their participation at any stage of the process. This is what researchers refer to as informed consent. It is defined by Lazar et al (2010:581) as a process in which participants consent to participate in a research project after being informed of its procedures, risks and benefits. Therefore, a letter of consent was sent to participants to complete in order to confirm and ensure mutual consent.

5.9.3. Voluntary participation

It is within this context that the researcher also ensured voluntary participation in the study, free of coercion and enforcement. The researcher opened up and was honest with each participant. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to the importance of this, writing that researchers should generally be open and honest with participants about all aspects of the study. This usually involves a full disclosure of the purpose of the research. In the consent form, the researcher made sure that the participants were aware that their participation in this research was voluntary and that they could withdraw from participation at any time.

5.9.4. Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality in human research is understood as an acknowledgement by the researcher that even though s/he knows each individual participant, what they say and have said, s/he will not reveal or disclose their identity or what they have said in the interview until or beyond their death (Tolich, 2008:101). While Tolich (2008) and Wiersma and Jurs (2009) are agreed that confidentiality involves non-disclosure of identity, Wiersma and Jurs (2009:438) go further and state that anonymity means that the names of the participants from whom the data is obtained are not known. Therefore, according to Wiersma and Jurs (2009:458) confidentiality refers to the secrecy or the act of not disclosing the identity of participants in research, while anonymity means that the participants from whom the data is drawn remain unknown. In the context of this research study, it was consequently essential that the privacy of the participants was honoured and that necessary precautionary measures were taken not to disclose the identity of the participants.

The participants were assured of anonymity, that is, that their names would not be used in the transcriptions in order to protect a pledge of confidentiality. In this way, confidentiality was assured to the six teachers, which implies that only the researcher and possibly a few others like the principal and the heads of department were aware of the identity of participants but were bound by a commitment to confidentiality. It was not only the question of confidentiality that was important: anonymity was also one of the most important elements of research. That is, the participants were promised that their real names would not be used when analysing and reporting the data and that false names or pseudonyms would be used or numbers or letters assigned to participants where necessary. This is not complete anonymity as someone who was familiar with the participants' views, characteristics, and settings could conceivably fathom whose words or ideas the researcher would be representing. The researcher's stance was informed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), who view confidentiality as meaning that no one has access to individual data or the names of the participants except the researchers. However, complete anonymity occurs when even the researcher does not know who the respondents are, as in an anonymous questionnaire. When a participant is anonymous, it obviously means that no one can identify him or her. In the context of this research, it also included the one who conducted research, that he or she must also not be able to identify any participant or subject afterwards. Makhado (2002:122) confirms the necessity of this stance when he points out that a participant or subject is considered anonymous when the researcher or any other person cannot identify the participant or a subject from the information provided. This implies that it would be a completely unethical practice to link an individual participant to specific information in the research study. The researcher therefore provided a consent form to the participating teachers (Appendix E). After explaining all these details, the participants understood the importance of their role in this study and willingly agreed to participate in the interviews.

5.9.5. Additional guidelines

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2005), as cited by Wiersma and Jurs, (2009:458), there are nine considerations for ensuring that ethical requirements for conducting research are met:

- To avoid fields where the participants may feel forced to be involved in the research;
- To ensure and honour the privacy of participants;
- To protect the identities of participants so that the collected data does not harm them in any way;
- To treat the participants with respect and to ask for their co-operation in the research study;
- To clarify the terms of agreement with all stakeholders and to
- Live in accordance with the agreement;
- To tell the truth in the writing of reports and findings;
- To respect the participants' time and ensure that interview
- Time schedule is respected and used appropriately.

5.10. ENTRY IN THE FIELD

5.10.1 Access into the Gauteng Department of Education

One of the most important ethical responsibilities of the researcher is to obtain permission from the appropriate authorities. Before the researcher could continue with the interviews and observations of the study, the researcher started off by requesting permission to conduct research from the Gauteng Department of Education, in which the researcher specified the research site as the Tshwane West District. The researcher wrote an e-mail to the Gauteng Department Education asking for permission to undertake research in the province, which was accompanied by a research request form in which the researcher indicated the title of the research study and the purpose of study. The researcher then received a positive e-mail response with the promise of an ensuing official letter granting permission to do research. Later on, the researcher received an approval letter from the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix B). Based on the e-mail received from the

Gauteng Department of Education, the researcher phoned the director of the Tshwane West District for an appointment. The researcher then took along a formal letter requesting permission to do research in this district accompanied by the one from Head Office. After having explained the purpose of the research study, and the type of assistance the researcher required, the researcher was given a letter of access to the secondary schools in the district that offer Setswana Home Language in the Further Education and Training phase and was also provided with a list of secondary schools that offer Setswana in the district.

5.10.2. Entry into the Tshwane West schools

Though the researcher anticipated a positive response from the District Director, the researcher also wrote individual letters to the respective principals asking for permission to enter their schools. Entry into the identified schools was not as difficult as the researcher had thought because of the permission received at higher levels of governance. However, it took three weeks for the researcher to obtain permission to access the district. The teachers were not fearful of research nor did they view it as a kind of inspection, thinking that the school practices would be observed and analysed by an outsider in ways that might be intimidating. To prepare for the visits, the researcher telephoned all the identified teachers in the different schools from the list provided by the office of the regional director. The researcher described his study to the teachers as well as his intentions to have conversations with them. All the identified teachers agreed readily to participate in the research study. Having secured their verbal consent, the researcher then wrote a formal letter to their school principals clearly indicating the names of the teachers the researcher had to have the interviews with. The principals, gave the researcher positive verbal responses. After having agreed on times with teachers and principals from different schools, the researcher then set off to visit the schools and spent a few weeks interviewing teachers, as indicated earlier. For every teacher with whom the researcher held a conversation, he began by explaining the nature of the study before explaining in detail the contents of the consent form. All the teachers willingly signed the consent forms. After every conversation with all the teachers the researcher thanked them for their willingness and openness towards the study and requested their permission to call them should there

be a need for clarifications and/or further questions the researcher wished to pose regarding the conversations.

5.11. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the researcher discussed and explained the approach and design of the current study, sampling procedure, data gathering instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical guidelines. The aim was to try and produce a wealth of descriptive data which would elucidate the complexity of teaching and assessment, and promote a broader insight into the field of assessment, assessment standards and the role they play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. The purpose of this research study was reiterated. It was explained that the study used qualitative research methodology to explore the degree to which teachers understood assessment and the role of and use the assessment standards to direct their teaching and assessment. In Chapter Six the researcher presents a detailed description of the interview data obtained from the conversations with the teachers, the researcher's observation of the teachers' practices and the analysis of the respective documents using the methods described above.

CHAPTER 6

EXPLORATION OF ENGAGEMENTS WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In chapter five the research design and methodology were described. This chapter, that is, Chapter 6, introduces the teacher participants in the study and explores their constructed research ideas, views and perceptions. This process was adopted in order to bring order, structure and interpretation to the study, but it also moves beyond this to where the ideas, views and perceptions of the teacher participants interact with each other to create an analysis, interpretation or composition where the product of analysis and interpretation will yield findings and recommendations.

The chapter focuses specifically on the data collected by means of interviews, observation and document analysis during the research conducted at the four secondary schools with the six research participants discussed in chapter five.

During the observation sessions, the researcher carefully observed the research participants in action in a classroom situation teaching and assessing learners. The purpose of the observation was: to determine whether teacher participants demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the role of assessment standards by using them in the lesson preparation and actual presentations of the lessons; and to confirm whether the teacher participants do not contradict the ideas or views expressed during interviews. The lessons were also discussed with the teachers afterwards and, in some cases, during analysis and interpretation, the researcher kept on going back to refer to these discussions. As lessons were discussed with teachers after they had presented them, these discussions often revealed interesting information. With each lesson observation, the teachers had to submit their respective lesson plans and these were analysed in conjunction with the lesson presentations. However, lesson plans as such are discussed in more detail under section 6.8 of document analysis. During the individual interviews with the research participants, five biographical questions and nine key questions (see Appendix F) were posed. The questions were asked as contained in the interview schedule and were not simplified any further for consistency and avoidance of bias against any research participant. The research participants were also given the opportunity of expanding on their answers as might be required by each individual participant. The study of documents presented to the researcher provided greater insight into the level of importance given to the teaching, learning and assessment process in the broader picture of each individual school system.

6.2. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE SCHOOLS WHERE THEY TEACH

The data collected from the teachers is used to determine: *What are Setswana Home Language teachers' conceptions of assessment and to what extent do they use the assessment standards to ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language?*

The six teachers who took part in the research are referred to as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and so on, and the four schools are referred to as School W, X, Y and Z. The data obtained from the biographical questions included in the interview schedule revealed the following:

Teacher A is a Setswana teacher in his early fifties and matriculated with Setswana as one of his major subjects. He is a qualified teacher who holds a Senior Education Diploma from Strydom Training College and has 22 years teaching experience in secondary school Setswana Home Language. Teacher A's extensive experience is demonstrated by his involvement in the moderation of the Tshwane West District's School-Based Assessment portfolios for both Grade 12 teachers and learners. When asked about his qualification and eligibility to teach Setswana at his current school, Teacher A expressed his pride and passion for Setswana as a language. He opened that though he is not naturally a Setswana-speaker his love for the language was inspired by his college lecturer. Although he had initially enrolled for English, he then changed focus to Setswana:

"I think I qualify to teach Setswana because of the intensive training that I received at a college called Strydom College of Education in Thaba Nchu, where I received a good lecturer who inspired me to teach, to enrol for Setswana, because in the first instance my major subject was English".

Teacher B is a Setswana teacher in his late forties and a graduate with a degree in Setswana. He is a trained teacher and holds a Senior Teachers' Diploma with a major in Setswana. Teacher B has 26 years teaching experience in Setswana Home Language. His teaching experience is demonstrated by his involvement in the setting of the National Senior Certificate examination question papers at national level and in developing other Setswana teachers in the district of Tshwane West. When asked about his qualifications and eligibility to teach Setswana at his current school, Teacher B said that he was eligible in that he qualified with a major in Setswana, that he had been involved with Setswana for twenty six years, and that he was still furthering his studies.

Teacher C is a Setswana teacher in his late early fifties and a graduate with a degree in Setswana. He is a trained teacher and holds a Senior Teachers' Diploma with a major in Setswana and an Honours B.A. degree in Setswana from the former University of Bophuthatswana. Teacher B has 28 years teaching experience in Setswana Home Language. Teacher C's considerable teaching experience is demonstrated by the facts that he was once Acting Subject Advisor and helped develop

other Setswana teachers in the Tshwane West district. When Teacher C was asked about his qualification and eligibility to teach Setswana at his current school, he said that he thought it was because he studied and majored in Setswana, that he had been involved with Setswana for 28 years.

Teacher D is a Setswana teacher in her late forties and a graduate with a degree in Setswana. She is a trained teacher and holds Diploma in Education with a major in Setswana from the former University of Bophuthatswana. Teacher B has 24 years teaching experience in Setswana Home Language. Teacher D's teaching experience is demonstrated by her involvement in the oral moderation of Setswana learners' performances in her district of Tshwane West. Teacher D's response to a question about her qualification and eligibility to teach Setswana at his current school was that she was eligible to teach it because she had been trained as a Setswana teacher for four years, that teaching and assessing Setswana was her passion and wanted to learn more about the subject. She stated that she had been involved with Setswana for 28 years.

Teacher E is a Setswana teacher in her late forties and holds a Bachelor of Arts (UNISA), Honours Bachelor of Arts (UP) and Master of Arts (UP) degrees in Setswana. She is a trained teacher and holds a Primary Teachers' Diploma, with a major in Setswana. Teacher E also holds a Higher Education Diploma in Mathematics and has 34 years teaching experience in Setswana Home Language teaching. Teacher E's teaching experience is demonstrated by her involvement in the oral moderation of Setswana learners' performances in her district of Tshwane West. In terms of her qualification and eligibility to teach Setswana, Teacher E's response was an emphatically positive response. She said:

"For 34 years I have been teaching Setswana at high school level, even got promotion to head the subject. My aim is to uplift the Setswana educators, guide them and instil in them the love of the subject. Again I strive to unpack, uphold and expose the norms and values as embodied in Setswana culture. I also participate in Radio and TV shows to reach out to the nation."

Teacher F is a Setswana teacher in her late forties and holds a Bachelor of Arts (UNISA) with a major in Setswana, Honours Bachelor of Arts-Setswana (UP), as well as a Master of Arts (completed written Course Work - UP). She is a trained teacher and holds a Further Diploma in Educational Management and a University Diploma in Education – Secondary. Teacher E also holds a Higher Education Diploma in Mathematics and has 19 years teaching experience in the teaching of Setswana Home Language. Teacher F's teaching experience is demonstrated by her involvement in the School-Based Assessment oral moderation of Setswana learners' performances at Provincial level. When she was asked about her qualification and eligibility to teach Setswana at her current school, she replied that she was a qualified and trained Setswana teacher with a passion for the subject.

6.3. LESSON OBSERVATIONS

The data reported here come from the teaching and assessment practices of the Further Education and Training (FET) Band teachers of Setswana Home Language in predominantly Setswana speaking secondary schools in South Africa. Two were selected from School W and School X while four were selected from School Y and School Z respectively.

Each teacher participant and class was observed for two weeks and the observations occurred over a ten-week period. The observations were strictly restricted to Setswana Home Language in Grade 12. Over the entire research period ten lessons from each teacher were observed which represents a total of sixty lessons for the six participants. Most of the classes observed contained between 34 and 50 learners. The four schools in this study were predominantly Setswana speaking in character even though there were learners from other cultural groupings like the Zulus, Ndebeles, Tsongas, Pedi as well as Shonas and Ndawos from Zimbabwe. All four secondary schools from which the teacher participants were selected were Black English-medium schools.

The following descriptions summarise the activities observed during lessons in which the six teacher participants were teaching and assessing their learners, consistent with their work schedules and lesson plans. An observation checklist was used to record what was observed. The observations were restricted to the teaching and assessing of poetry, that is, learning outcome 2, essay and transactional writings, that is, learning outcome 3 and language structure and use, that is, learning outcome 4. While the researcher was observing teachers in the different lessons, the activities reached a saturation point in that the teachers' practices were almost repetitive. Therefore, the researcher confines his analysis to only one lesson of each participant teacher in order to adhere to constraints of length and repetition. Almost all the teachers' practices in the different lessons were repetitive, and would thus, if all are analysed, compromise the quality and standard of the study. It also needs to be mentioned that, the researcher did not interfere with the programs of the teacher participants in accordance with the stipulations of the letter of approval to do research in the Gauteng district of Tshwane West.

6.3.1. Teacher A

During the observation of Teacher A, it was apparent that he had previously taught the poem titled *Mosadi wa letagwa* (A woman drunkard) by SA Moroke. The teacher simply presented learners with a handout of questions based on this poem without any reference to the learning outcomes and assessment standards on which his assessment exercise was based. Again, he did not include these in the lesson plan given to the researcher. The questions were mostly focussed on the heading of the poem, meaning of words, figures of speech and poetic devices used by the poet instead of the specific assessment standards that would lead to the achievement of the

requisite learning outcome or outcomes. Because there was no correlation between the work schedule and the lesson plan the assessment standards were easily evaded in the lesson plan. The eleven questions that build up the written assessment task were as follows:

- *Letagwa ke eng?* (What is a drunkard?)
- *Goreng mmoki a taya leboko la gagwe “Mosadi wa letagwa?”* (Why does the poet give his poem the title “Mosadi wa letagwa” (a woman drunkard)
- *A ke basadi fela ba tagiwang?* (Is it only women who get drunk?)
- *Goreng mmoki a tlhophile mosadi go tlhama leboko ka ena?* (Why has the poet chosen a woman in his creation of the poem?)
- *Lefatshe le solofela eng mo mosading?* (What does the world expect from a woman?)
- *Mmoki o kaya eng ka “mahutsana?”* (What does the poet mean by “mahutsana” (tribulations)
- *Mola wa 2 o kaya eng?* (What does line 2 mean?)
- *Mmoki o bua ka bojalwa bofe?* (Which beer does the poet refer to?)
- *Mola wa 1 o bontsha sekapuo sefe?* (Which figure of speech does line 1 refer to?)
- *Setsokotsane ke eng?* (What is a hurricane?)
- *Bodikwadikwane ke eng?* (What is dancing?)

The observation of Teacher A’s execution of the assessment task demonstrated that he did not understand the imperatives of the current assessment practice. He did not indicate or reveal the learning outcomes learners had to achieve and the necessary assessment standards that were being assessed, to the learners. As such learners did not know how and why they were being assessed. Teacher A expected all learners to finish responding to the assessment task within the stipulated period time of 45 minutes without due regard for slower learners and for the time spent handing out the assessment instrument. The whole activity was formal and teacher-directed without any involvement of the learners in the assessment activity. In a follow up discussion with Teacher A, it became clear that he favoured the traditional method of teaching and assessing which makes no allowance for the development of marking guides or rubrics. He expressed sentiments of complacency that he has been teaching Setswana home language for many years that it was not important for him to prepare and develop marking rubrics as he was ready and quick to provide responses or answers to the learners regarding all the questions that were asked. He asserted that his learners knew very well what would be asked in the final examination papers, and that what he was doing was to inculcate the necessary aspects into the learners’ heads. Teacher A

admitted that these assessment tasks were geared towards preparation for the final examination sitting rather than to the effective and efficient learning by his learners. When asked what he wanted to achieve in the assessment task, Teacher A was confident in saying that the main purpose of his assessment task was to determine whether his learners understood the poem and whether they were ready for the coming examinations. He also opined that he obviously had to record and report on the learners' performance for the June reports and for parents' meetings.

6.3.2. Teacher B

When Teacher B started his lesson, he gave his learners a handout containing the same poem. The lesson plan presented to the researcher did not stipulate the learning outcomes and assessment standards around which the lesson presentation would revolve. It was clear that in Teacher B's planning and preparation of the lesson, he did not think of the key aspects of lesson planning, namely, learning outcomes, assessment standards, teacher activities and learner activities, nor assessment exercises. The fact that the teacher did not indicate the assessment standards in his lesson plan and lesson presentation made it clear that the assessment standards were not used as pointers regarding how Teacher B would teach and how his learners would learn. In brief, though the assessment standards are an expression of what the learners should have learned in the content of the poem, they were not used to guide the planning, preparation and delivery of the lesson activities. The lesson activities mentioned in the lesson preparation were as follows: the teacher activities were 'buisa leboko' (read the poem), 'botsa dipotso' (ask questions), 'tlhalosa diteng tsa leboko' (explain the contents of the poem) while the learner activities mentioned were 'araba dipotso' (answer questions) and 'utlwelela ka tlhoafalo' (listen attentively), respectively.

It was very clear from the lesson plan that the assessment standards were not used as pointers regarding how Teacher B would teach and how his learners would learn. As such, the assessment standards were not used as the driving force behind teaching, learning and assessment. Due to the fact that the assessment standards were not stated, there was no controlling idea that helped the teacher's delivery of his lesson regarding the content or subject matter to be covered including the assessment exercises. Since Teacher B's lesson was not well structured, it could not guide and give learners enough opportunities to attain the requisite learning outcomes through the prescribed assessment standards. The following questions were posed to the learners towards the end of the lesson verbally:

- *Naya setlhogo sa leboko le.* (Give the heading of the poem.)
- *Ke goreng mmoki a file leboko setlhogo se?* (Why has the poet given his poem this heading?)

- *Ke mefuta efe e mebedi ya maboko e o e itseng?* (Which two types of poetry do you know?)
- *Mosola wa leboko le ke eng?* (What is the value of this poem?)

Although Teacher B asked his learners these questions, he did not have any assessment guidelines through which his learners' performance would be assessed. Instead he relied heavily on his recall potential. The learners were simply asked verbally and also had to give their individual responses verbally. Again, not all learners were actively involved. It was during the execution of this assessment exercise that Teacher B said that he was monitoring the learners' learning through question and answer sessions and that he intended them to be done during the lesson presentation. Unfortunately, Teacher B only concentrated his activities on the individual learners, who raised their hands to give the correct answers, and did not use paired learners or grouped learners in his assessment activities, nor did he use consolidation through homework. The teacher did not involve his learners in the assessment exercises as groups of learners to mark the assessment tasks or activities. In this regard, learners were not actively involved in the assessment of their work through self-assessment, peer assessment or group assessment, and thus did not get opportunities to learn from and reflect on their own performance (Department of Education, 2010: 6).

It was very clear in Teacher B's classroom that learners were not provided any opportunity to construct their own knowledge as they were not given any time to think and apply the knowledge acquired in their real-life situations. The teacher did not use the learners' knowledge of the real life situations to get ideas such as whether there are women who drink a lot and whether it is a fact or an opinion that there are women who take too much drinking and ignore their families. The teacher was apparently under pressure of time; he employed a straightforward and quick formative assessment. He had ready specific and correct answers to compare against his learners' responses. The learning outcomes and assessment standards were not stated, and since the teacher's lesson presentation was fast and time-bound, this made the learners' learning less efficient and it visibly heightened the learners' anxiety as they did not know what the teacher expected of them and what their learning priorities had to entail. The approach was essentially teacher-directed and instruction-oriented without due regard to the learners' learning.

When Teacher B's teaching and assessment practices are analysed, it can be noted that it was apparent that Teacher B knew of the existence of assessment standards but did not understand their role in lesson planning, preparation, delivery and assessment of the subject matter. Although Teacher B asked the three questions, his questions did not address the appropriate assessment standards pertaining to poetry because they only dealt with knowledge of the heading of the poem, types of poems, and the function of the poem. The questions did not address the prescribed learning outcomes and their requisite assessment standards, namely, 'read and view for understanding and evaluate critically and respond to a wide range of texts' and 'explain how word choices,

imagery and sound devices affect mood, meaning and theme; explain how lines, stanza forms, rhyme, rhythm and punctuation affect meaning' (Department of Education, 2003:29) as was stated in his lesson plan.

6.3.3. Teacher C

During the observation of Teacher C, no reference was ever made to learning outcomes and assessment standards in his teaching and assessment, or on his lesson plan, which implied that her teaching and assessment continued to rely on static and de-contextualised tests that did not correlate with assessment and teaching. Learning was represented as a mastery of discrete skills which could be measured through formal and teacher-directed assessment. During his lesson on the interpretation of pictorial information, Teacher C gave a written revision test to determine the learners' understanding or comprehension of the pictures, as well as their critical awareness and problem-solving competencies. Some of the questions that constituted this test were obtained from a previous final Grade 12 examination question paper. All the questions were relevant in terms of content coverage in that learners were expected to draw distinctions between messages revealed by the different pictures, the interconnectedness of the different pictures provided and employed critical and problem-solving elements.

Although the assessment items were pitched at the appropriate level of difficulty, the assessment practice or condition was not fair in that there were obvious shortcomings or problems in the pictures provided. The first picture had the words (transcribed as were), "Ke karolo efe ya nnyaa e sa e tthalogany"; the second picture contained the word "tshotlakako"; the third picture had the words "Basadi ba re ontse aanong"; while the last picture used "tidimalo e a bolaya". When the first three sentences are analysed, it becomes very clear that the messages in these pictures were wrong; and this severely affected the reliability, fairness, meaningfulness and validity of the assessment exercises and the conclusions reached through the questions. The messages contained in the first three pictures were devoid of meaning. All the three sentences contained subtleties in language and grammar that twisted the intended meaning. For example, the first sentence said; "which part of no did not understand", the second picture contained the word "tshotlakako" which meant "repetitive abuse" while the intended meaning was just "tshotlo" (abuse); while the last sentence; "Basadi ba re ontse aanong" could roughly be translated as "Women say he is ow seated". It is these types of language and grammar errors that estranged the learners from their own home language and that alienated learners from relating to the messages revealed through this type of wording. Therefore, most of the learners could not fathom the messages revealed through the different pictures as these did not relate to their real-life worlds and as such obtained less than five questions out of a total of ten.

Although this scenario called for an immediate rethinking of the teaching and assessment strategies, Teacher C did not take heed of the poor performance of the

learners but continued to teach the class as if no remedial intervention was needed. Instead Teacher C provided answers or responses without clarifying their relevance as well as how to analyse pictures to derive appropriate information. What compounded the problem of Teacher C's assessment practice was that she did not reveal her assessment criteria, nor did she correct the obvious unfairness of the language used in the pictures. Although the pictures were riddled with language and grammar errors, Teacher C did not exercise leniency in the learners' interpretations of the messages of the pictures as well as in the language mistakes committed by the learners. Learners were penalised for spelling and word division mistakes as well as for incorrect interpretations.

When the researcher asked about the usage of a previous year's final examination question paper, Teacher C responded that her primary aim was to ensure that learners were grounded on the imperatives of the structure of the final examination question paper. This response had obvious bias in respect of Teacher C's assessment practices that she concentrated on teaching and assessing for the structure of the examination paper rather than for their learning.

6.3.4. Teacher D

The following discussion refers to the activities observed during the lesson in which Teacher D was assessing the learners' competency in creating and producing an essay within the stipulated period of 45 minutes. Teacher D gave her learners a question paper comprising a choice of eight essay topics, two of which were visual and six of which were descriptive, narrative and argumentative in nature respectively. Although Teacher D provided the researcher with a lesson plan, it did not include the assessment task given to the learners. The teacher only indicated that she was going to hand out a question paper on essays and transactional writings. The assessment task was conducted after Teacher D had taught her learners about narrative essays. The researcher could not determine whether Teacher D conducted the assessment task after all the different types of essays were taught to the learners. The assessment task was completed under controlled conditions with Teacher D invigilating learners to avoid peer assistance and to ensure that learners were not disruptive.

Teacher D did not provide her learners with any assessment guidelines against which their performance would be assessed. It was apparent that Teacher D was not aware that the learners should be informed in advance about all matters pertaining to their teaching and assessment for learning to occur. In other words, the learners should be made aware of when the assessments need to occur; what they cover in terms of skills and materials, how much the assessments are worth; when they will receive their results and for which purpose the results are going to be used. They must also be aware of why they are assessed because as learners they are part of the assessment process. Again, Teacher D's mini-question paper did not contain the necessary learning outcomes and assessment standards on which the assessment task was

based except for the instruction which read: *Kwala tlhamo ya bolele jwa mafoko a a ka nnang 400-45 ka nngwe fela ya dithlogo tsa ditshwantsho tse di neilweng. Fa o dirisa setshwantsho go kwala tlhamo, se neele tlhogo se se maleba. Ose ka wa lebala go thala letlhameso* (Write an essay of an algae [sic] of about 400-450 words on only one of the given pictorial headings. If you use a picture to write an essay, give it a suitable heading. Do not forget to draw a plan).

Although the assessment items were pitched at the appropriate level of difficulty, the manner in which the instruction was phrased indicated a type of bias in the assessment task which compromised the reliability, fairness, validity and meaningfulness of the assessment task and conclusions drawn from the results. The instruction contained contextually inappropriate words such as “bolele” (algae) instead of “boleele” (length), “dithlogo” which is affiliated with Sepedi culture, “Ose” which read more like the Afrikaans “osse” instead of “O se” (Do not), and lastly a misspelling of “letlhameso” (plan) in “letlhameso” (date morning). Again, the image of the visual essay on which the learners had to write was devoid of enough differing inferences for learners to write an essay of 400-450 words on. The instruction would have been more relevant, specific, appropriate and meaningful for learners if it had been captured in a more accurate manner with correct terminology pertinent to Setswana home language. Since the learning outcomes, the assessment standards, the marking memorandum or rubric were not stated on the mini-question papers nor revealed to the learners, the performance of learners was compromised. Although the instruction to the mini-question paper in itself had language and grammar errors, the learners were heavily penalised for language and grammar mistakes.

It can therefore be concluded that Teacher D’s assessment did not clarify the learning outcomes, assessment standards or the assessment criteria to cause learners to engage in appropriate learning activities. Although the questions were pitched at the right level of difficulty, it was very clear that Teacher D did not know or understand the fundamental principles of high-quality assessment. She seemed to rely heavily on the traditional approach to assessment which is teacher-directed and holds the view that it is only the teacher who must know the prescribed learning outcomes with their requisite assessment standards, and that the assessment criteria are the sole prerogative of a teacher. Her practice was inconsistent with the principle of transparency which presupposes that the teacher should state beforehand what learners are expected to learn and achieve.

6.3.5. Teacher E

During the observation of Teacher E, the researcher was not provided with a lesson plan to show how the delivery of the content would be structured. The manner in which the lesson was delivered indicated that the teacher participant did not understand the significance of the learning outcomes nor the role that assessment standards play in the teaching and assessment practice. Teacher E’s delivery was teacher-centred and

gave the impression that she regarded learners' minds as containers waiting to be filled as the learners were not given opportunity to construct their own knowledge. The teacher adopted a lecturing or chalk and talk approach in her teaching of the different moods, that is, language structure and use, such as "**modirisotaelo**", "**modiriso-popego**", "**modirisokgethi**" and the different tenses within a period of 45 minutes. In her presentation she did not seem to understand the role of assessment standards in guiding her planning, preparation and delivery of the lesson. Her presentation did not evince the key aspects of the lesson, namely, learning outcomes, assessment standards, and the assessment exercises. Her concentration was mostly geared towards distributing information within the stipulated time period. The teacher did not, beforehand, explain the learning outcomes to be achieved, or the assessment standards that expressed what the learners would have learned at the end of the lesson presentation. The learners' prior knowledge was not taken into account implying that the teacher did not give due cognisance to how she would teach and assess and facilitate learning for the achievement of the desired learning outcome.

The learners' experiences, observations, their ability to distinguish and construct meaning were not accommodated within the scheme of the presentation. The assessment standards were not stated, there were no linkages between the teacher's learning outcomes, assessment standards, teacher and learner activities and the assessment exercises. Because Teacher E's lesson was not well structured, it could not guide and give them enough opportunities to attain the requisite learning outcomes through the prescribed assessment standards. The formative assessment items asked also could not demonstrate that the learners had met the relevant assessment standards. The four questions that Teacher E asked in-between the lesson presentation were as follows:

- *Tiro ya modiriso ke eng?* (What is the function of mood?)
- *Naya sekao sa modiriso-taelo mo bongweng le mo bontsing.* (Give an example of mood in both the singular and plural form.)
- *Ke dipaka dife tse dingwe tse modiriso-kgethi o tlhagelelang ka tsona?* (In which other types of tenses does mood appear?)
- *Fetolela polelo "Rre o tlaa tsamaya a opela" mo kganetsong.* (Change the sentence, "My father will walk singing" into the negative.)

As in the case of Teacher B, Teacher E asked her learners these formative questions, without giving due cognisance to the assessment criteria through which her learners' performance would be assessed. Although she did not reveal her marking memorandum, she was able to provide correct answers from the luxury of providing correct answers from her own head knowledge. The teacher asked questions from a scrap paper, and the learners provided individual responses verbally. It was clear during observation that Teacher E was still glued to the traditional method of asking questions. She adopted a more teacher-centred approach in which she was both the

instructor and provider of correct answers while the learners' responses were either rejected outright or accepted without improvement. In question (iv) above, one learner provided a correct answer "Rre ga a kitla a tsamaya a opela" (My father will not walk singing) but Teacher E rejected the response as incorrect.

Teacher E's teaching and assessment practices demonstrated that she knew about learning outcomes and assessment standards from policy documents but that she did not understand their role in lesson planning, preparation and delivery of the subject matter. She did not use assessment standards to assess whether the learners have achieved the desired learning outcomes, and since it seemed that she did not understand the worth of assessment standards she also did not provide her learners with these assessment standards to help them take charge of their learning. Because Teacher E could not point to the important connection between teaching, learning and assessment, but simply provided immediate and quick answers to the questions asked, the learners' learning was not appropriately guided and directed. What they learned were just isolated facts or content which were not linked to specific assessment standards and learning outcomes or objectives.

Although Teacher E conducted her assessment task under a relaxed atmosphere, and her questions targeted the appropriate content presented, the subject knowledge or content knowledge of the teacher was compromised when she could not accept a correct response from a learner, and it also impacted on the reliability of the assessment. Because the memorandum, the learning outcomes and the assessment standards were not revealed in advance to the learners, learners were penalised even for correct answers.

6.3.6. Teacher F

During the classroom observation of Teacher F, it became apparent the teacher had taught her learners the different poems prescribed for Grade 12, namely, *Kgosi Kgama (Chief Kgama)*, *Kgwanyape (A hurricane)*, *Selelo sa moopa (The cry of a barren woman)*, *Bathai ba nkwe (Tiger trappers)*, and *A ke bona bongwetsi? (Is that your being a daughter-in-law)* before. The teacher presented learners with a handout of questions based on these different poems, and provided the researcher with a lesson plan that did not include the questions on the hand out. However, there were no indications of the learning outcomes and assessment standards mentioned earlier (*Department of Education, 2003:29*) on which her assessment exercise was based. The techniques used were predominantly teacher-directed pen and paper tests.

The manner in which the assessment task was designed demonstrated clearly that the main aim of the task was to record the marks and report to parents; it was more examination-directed than assessment intended to serve teaching and learning. It could therefore be concluded that the assessment task did not take heed of the principles of classroom assessment and that; assessment should inform ongoing

teaching and learning. While the structure of the questions indicated that the teacher was coaching her learners regarding the structure of the final examination paper for Grade 12, the validity of her questions was compromised by the fact that she assessed lower-order level cognitive skills at the expense of higher-order and middle-order cognitive skills. This was apparent in the usage of question-openers such as “Neela” (Give), “efe” (Which), “eng” (What) and “Nopola” (Quote). Most questions focussed on the heading of the poem, meaning of words, figures of speech and poetic devices used by the poet instead of the specific assessment standards that would lead to the achievement of the requisite learning outcome or outcomes.

Because Teacher F did not state in advance the learning outcomes and the assessment standards through which these outcomes could be achieved, she compromised the principles that guide good assessment: (i) that assessment works best when the teaching or learning content it seeks to improve has clear and explicitly stated purposes, and (ii) that assessment requires attention to outcomes and the assessment standards that lead to those outcomes. What compounded this lack in Teacher F’s assessment practice was the fact that she did not have the assessment criteria through which she would draw her conclusions regarding the performance of her learners.

In my discussion with Teacher F, she made it clear that all the learners’ scripts would be assessed by her in that she could determine what her learners knew, what they could do and what their problems were. The memorandum was not available and that the teacher essentially had to depend on her knowledge of the subject; there was a real doubt as to whether she would truly and objectively allocate accurate marks due unto individual learners. A sample of the type of questions that build up the assessment task was as follows:

- *Leboko leo ke la mofuta ofe?* (What type of poem is that?)
- *Neela mabaka a mabedi go netefatsa karabo ya gago.* (Give two reasons for your answer.)
- *Neela morumo wa temana ya ntlha.* (Give a rhyme of the first stanza)
- *Ke ponagalo efe ya poko e e fitlhelwang mo moleng wa 8 le 9?* (Which poetic device is found in lines 8 and 9?)
- *Neela mosola wa ponagalo e o e neetseng mo go (iv).* (Give the function of the poetic device mentioned in (iv))
- *Ke ponagalo efe ya poko e e fitlhelwang mo moleng wa 13?* (Which poetic device is found in line 13)
- *Neela mosola wa ponagalo e o e neetseng mo go (vi).* (Give the function of the poetic device mentioned in (vi)).

- *Neela ponagalo ya poko e e tlhagelelang mo moleng wa 16 le 17.* (Give the poetic device that appears in lines 16 and 17.)

The observation of Teacher F's execution of the assessment task demonstrated that she did not understand the imperatives of the current assessment practice. Apart from the fact that she did not indicate or reveal the learning outcomes the learners had to achieve, or the necessary assessment standards that were being assessed to the learners, the quality, reliability and validity of the assessment task was compromised by the element of predictability that ran through all the questions. In almost all the questions on specific poems, questions such as the following; "Ke ponagalo efe ya poko e e fitlhelwang mo moleng wa" (Which poetic device is found in line ...) and "Neela mosola wa ponagalo e o e neetseng mo go" (Give the function of the poetic device mentioned in) were repeated more than twice.

Teacher F expected of all learners to finish writing the assessment within the stipulated period time of 45 minutes without due regard for slower learners or for the time spend handing out the assessment task. The whole activity was formal and teacher-directed without any involvement of the learners in the assessment activity. It was clear that her assessment tasks were geared towards preparation for the final examination rather than to the effective and efficient learning of his learners. The marks obtained in the assessment task would be recorded in the learners' reports as part of school-based assessment activity.

6.4. DISCUSSION ON THE OBSERVATIONS

6.4.1. Teachers' epistemologies

It is necessary that the researcher mention that, each of the teacher participants had taught for more than eighteen years at a secondary school when they agreed to participate in this research study. Almost all of them underwent their pre-service teacher training before the new dispensation and had gone through different education eras, namely, the apartheid, the homeland one and the new dispensation. It can therefore be argued that they had not experienced and internalised outcomes-based education, and its approach to teaching and assessment strategies. Thus with the introduction of outcomes-based education these teachers were obliged to make "a paradigm shift from a teacher and content-driven curriculum to an outcomes-based and learner-centred curriculum" (Geysler, 2000:22).

From the research evidence presented thus far, and specifically under section 6.3.5, it is clear that the teacher's epistemologies exert a controlling effect on how they make sense of curriculum policy. Teachers' existing views regarding teaching and learning as well as their beliefs, namely, their existing understanding often interferes with their ability to interpret and implement the new curriculum policy in ways consistent with the policymakers' intent. All the six teachers' views, experiences, and knowledge structures

played a critical role in that they had constructed a certain meaning of assessment and assessment standards. The messages contained in this Statement were often interpreted in the light of what they already understood or the knowledge base they already possessed. The teachers' definite views about what constituted good teaching, learning and assessment influenced them to a great extent and these were clearly discernible in their classroom practices as well as confirmed during the follow-up discussions of their lesson presentations. Almost all the teacher participants demonstrated that lecturing or a "chalk and talk" approach to teaching and learning and a test-based approach to assessment formed the core component of what their teaching was all about and they maintained that no learning and achievement could be successful without memorisation of the core images of the content presented for learning to occur. This stance was adopted in their classroom teaching and assessment practices regardless of the imperatives of the National Curriculum Statement and policy requirements.

It was clear that the teachers' views and understanding were shaped and engraved by a markedly different education system as opposed to the current curriculum policy, and that these teachers were products of a system very different to the one in which teacher roles are now prescribed. Almost all the six cases provided evidence that teachers have strongly held views about key aspects of teaching, learning and assessment as well as the content and structure of knowledge that exert an authoritative influence on their classroom practices and how they make sense of curriculum policy (Blignaut, 2008:117). The findings of this enquiry are also in line with Blignaut (2008:117), who states that teachers' beliefs, dispositions, and knowledge about learners, subject matter teaching, learning and assessment, as well as their prior practice, influence the willingness to change their practice in response to reform and their ability to practice in ways suggested by reformers. What Blignaut (2008) describes, namely that during curriculum change teachers often hold on to the epistemological regularities of the old, was confirmed by Teacher A when he emphasised that he did not take planning and preparation seriously and he ignored them. It is within this context that, while curriculum policy may reflect a more experiential, meaning-oriented direction, the classroom practice of teachers continues to reflect a more reductionist orientation (Blignaut, 2008).

6.4.2. Lesson planning and the inclusion of assessment standards

Although the lesson planning and lesson implementation of the teachers recognised outcomes-based education as a way of teaching and learning by stating, by number, the learning outcomes and the assessment standards, the latter could not inform the activities and the assessment exercises. When asked why they stated the learning outcomes and the assessment standards in a numerical form, almost all mentioned that it is easier to do it that way. When asked why, they referred to assessment standards numerically; almost all mentioned that this was. When the researcher asked

whether they could relate specific assessment standards to the numbers, none could do so. They had to look up the assessment standards in the National Curriculum Statement – Languages and some of them had a great difficulty in finding the relevant assessment standards in the curriculum document. This means that though the teachers knew that outcomes-based education, operates on the principle that the teacher states beforehand what the learners are expected to achieve; and that from there his/her task would be to teach in order to satisfy the requirements so that subsequently the learner's task would be to learn or do (achieve) what was expected, teachers did not understand what had to be done in order to ensure that this happened in a real sense. They could not demonstrate that the learner's achievement was being measured against the set outcomes and assessment standards. As a result, the importance of the role of assessment standards in ensuring a close link between teaching, learning and assessment was not recognised.

The teachers' lesson plans gave no indication that they realised that assessment standards played an important role in determining the learner's success. Therefore, the learners could not use assessment standards as standards and activities by which they would demonstrate their achievement of outcomes. From the teachers' lesson plans the researcher concluded that, though assessment standards serve as benchmarks that are developed for the assessment tasks to establish the achievement of learning outcomes (Department of Education 1997:12), and that these standards embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the outcomes, did not enable the majority of the participating teachers to understand and use these standards to teach and assess whether the learners had achieved the outcomes nor provided learners opportunities to learn on their own. This study has thus established that, the principle which dictates that it is imperative for the assessment standards to be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners to take charge of their learning is ignored in the teachers' lesson planning. It is consequently unfortunately necessary to conclude that, the teaching, learning and assessment process is not given proper direction by the assessment standards because the right path towards the achievement of the learning outcomes is not provided. In brief, the teachers do not use assessment standards to direct their teaching and assessment.

There are virtually no linkages between teaching and learning and learning and assessment, and content is just presented in raw form to the learners. As Cowdroy and Williams (2007:89) mention, the assessment standards should guide what teachers teach and how teachers teach it, what learners learn and how learners learn it, as well as what teachers assess and how teachers assess it. The conclusion arrived at is therefore that teachers teach that which they cannot assess and what teachers assess will not be that which could be derived from the assessment standards. Once again, reaffirms that learning, teaching and assessment in the actual classroom practice are not inextricably linked.

When the researcher studied the teachers' lesson planning and preparation, he realised that teachers were not thinking of the key aspects of lesson planning, namely,

learning outcomes, assessment standards, teacher activities and learner activities, and the assessment exercises. Regardless of the fact that the assessment standards are an expression of what the learners should have learned in the subject content of the different aspects of language learning, they were not used to guide the planning, preparation and delivery of the lesson activities. The lesson activities mentioned in the lesson preparation were not didactically sound: For example, in their respective lesson planning, they simply planned to read or lecture, ask questions, explain the content of the subject without connecting it to real-life situations, while the learners would answer questions and listen attentively. It can therefore be concluded that Spady's (1994) four principles which form the heart of outcomes-based education, namely *clarity of focus*, *designing down*, *high expectations* and *expanded opportunity for learning*, that guide learning in an OBE teaching, learning and assessment environment, were not consistently, systematically, creatively or simultaneously applied when constructing lesson planning for relevant and appropriate teaching, learning and assessment environments.

6.4.3. Teachers' understanding of assessment and assessment standards

It was abundantly evident that most of the teacher participants knew about the National Curriculum Statement but the actual classroom practices contradicted what obtained in the lesson plans. As Tiley (1997:2) argues, theory that is not applied in practice is sterile while practice without theory is blind. By this he means that if theory cannot help change a person's thinking and actions, then it is useless. My observations uncovered that teachers do not understand the role of assessment standards and as such do not use them as the driving force behind their teaching and assessment exercises. The most fundamental classroom principle of clarity of focus is not adhered to because learners are involved in teaching and learning without knowing the outcomes and assessment standards they should achieve to be competent.

If the learning outcomes and the assessment standards are not clarified to learners before they begin the learning activities, learners will not know what would be expected of them at the end of the learning activity. It was observed that very few teachers apply expanded opportunities in their classroom practices. While two teacher participants did, four teacher participants did not. The two teacher participants who did so applied them after school hours and not during school hours. These participants helped the learners who did not achieve the desired outcomes after the normal school hours and gave other learners homework. It was clear that the classroom context played a major role in this decision as their classes were big, with more than 45 learners in one class. During an informal discussion after the lesson presentation, one of the teacher participants complained, overcrowding has a negative impact on the proper implementation of the real tenets of the National Curriculum Statement. Although these teachers are aware that learners should be provided with expanded opportunities and be supported

through their learning, they contend that if learners in classrooms they cannot attend to their specific problems individually.

6.4.4. Assessment for learning versus assessment of learning

It was clear from the responses that most teachers could not distinguish between assessment of learning and assessment for learning. They mentioned that assessment for learning determines teaching and learning gaps and that it assesses existing knowledge while they spoke of assessment of learning as assessment that determines the learners' understanding and the learners' performances, that checks whether the learners have attained the assessment standards. What was not mentioned by the teachers was that assessment of learning looks at the learner's level of performance concerning a particular task, for instance, at the end of a unit of teaching and learning as well as that the information gathered from this type of assessment can be used for reporting. Although teachers spoke of assessment for learning as assessment that determines gaps and that assesses existing knowledge, they could not equate it with formative assessment. They further could not confirm that assessment should occur on an ongoing and regular in the teaching and learning process, as the information that is obtained from assessment tasks or activities normally shapes or guides future teaching and learning processes. The element of feedback was also not referred to in the context of reflection for learners to see their mistakes, with the teachers providing feedback in order that all the learners could improve their performance. As a result, the teachers could not point to formative assessment and feedback as playing vital roles in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment since formative assessment permits the teachers to follow up the progress in the learning process. The ignorance of teachers regarding formative assessment is assessment for learning in which learners are able to interpret their own learning and in which teachers can readjust their teaching, learning and assessment, was perceived to have serious implications for teaching, learning and assessment. When this is the case, the significance of feedback which is normally associated with formative assessment, which in essence, is at the centre of the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, becomes compromised.

6.4.5. Examination preparation

Almost all the participants seemed to gear their teaching and assessment towards examination preparation. Apart from the fact that teachers' presentation of lessons was time bound with quick to answer questions, the teaching and assessment was structured in such a manner that the learners were grounded in what they had to expect from the final examination question papers. This was not only expressed verbally but it was also discernible in the classroom exercises given to the learners. Photocopying devoid of intuitiveness, genius and originality was the order of the day. It was also demonstrated in the usage of the previous National Senior Certificate

question papers and the provincial question papers (often full of mistakes) with little or no adjustments or individual creativity. In this way, teachers' teaching and assessment was directed at the achievement of learners, particularly in the final matriculation examinations. In section 6.3.1 one teacher even expressed that his learners already knew what they expected in the examination. He emphasised that he had taught them to the structure of the examination because for him that was the most significant or important aspect of teaching, learning and assessment. Gao and Watkins (2002:56) mention that, this simply means that teachers view learning and teaching from an exterior perspective in relation to learners and teachers, that learning then becomes a way to pass examinations and to acquire the required qualifications. When this occurs, learners become figures that have to be fashioned and shaped consistent with the target examinations without any regard for knowledge acquisition and high-quality learning which involves critical thinking and problem solving. According to Gao and Watkins (2002:65) when teaching is examination-directed, what is taught and assessed including the method of teaching and assessing are based on the content of and the methods used in the examinations. In brief, the content of teaching and assessing becomes greatly determined by external and not internal factors in which the teachers adopt a strategy of drilling with examination-type questions. It was evident during observations because most of the teachers' assessment exercises were photocopies of the previous years' examination question papers.

6.4.6. Learner-directed teaching and assessment

De Jesus and Moreira (2009:195) explain that assessment is at the centre of student learning experiences and that the demands of assessment tasks and activities often determine student's engagement in learning. The implication is that it is imperative that the assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning. In this context, the learners must be actively involved in their learning through individual, pair and group learning and assessment. What was clear in the participants' classroom practices was that almost all the teachers did not actively involve their learners in the teaching, learning and assessment process. The teachers' activities were more formal and teacher-directed than learner-centred, and the teachers' intentions were mostly directed at the completion of syllabus than teaching for learning and assessing for learning.

The feedback provided to learners was mostly minimal and not constant or continuous regarding the learning that had taken place. The issue of time constraints in connection with content coverage, application of group work to actively involve the learners as well as broad based assessment practices arose quite often when the researcher checked why group work was not used. Blignaut's (2008:114) finding, that teachers often see group work as 'time consuming', and there was always an element of anxiety to cover the syllabus or content of the subject matter before the final examination sittings, was confirmed by the researcher's observations. Therefore, the issue of time constraints,

the large classes and the associated scripts of learners that had to be marked were seen as stumbling blocks on the road to good teaching and assessment practices. Although policy documents stipulate that time should be used in a flexible manner in order to allow for learner differences; that learners should be provided a variety of opportunities to show their learning and that learners should be actively involved in their learning, it became clear during the lesson observations that teachers were more concerned about preparing learners for the examination than teaching and assessing them for the achievement of the learning outcomes and the real-life situations.

6.5. INTERVIEWS

6.5.1. Introduction

In view of the fact that much of the validity of the interview data relied on teacher participants speaking their thoughts candidly, the researcher tried to create a healthy relationship and to create a motivating environment for them. He prepared an introduction which was read at each interview, guided by respect and clarity about what the researcher expected from them. The introductory rendition's sole purpose was to ensure right at the outset, that participants confided in him and had no concerns about their involvement in the research study. The researcher explained the obligations and the time commitment at the beginning, and appreciated the fact that they had taken a leave out of their busy schedule to make time for the research interview. As indicated in the research interview schedule, the interview session for this research study was scheduled to last for two hours to make room for a relaxed atmosphere where participants would take their time to, think, reason and be confident to respond in the manner. Each interview was conducted at the participants' respective secondary schools. Upon completion of each interview session, the researcher then gave the research teacher participant transcripts of the interviews to read before the researcher could start to analyse and interpret the data. The researcher used a colleague of his at the university to do the transcription so that she could help determine the confidence and genuineness with which each teacher participant responded to individual questions.

After transcription of the interview, the colleague e-mailed me the data and the researcher read the transcripts repeatedly in order to fathom the essences of each teacher participant's responses. The researcher then made notes, codes and categories according to themes. The coding process was described earlier. The categorization of the data was undertaken to ensure clarity and simplification of data so that it could be applied in the field. The researcher then identified the themes which provided some direction on what I should look for in the data. The researcher began searching the transcripts for the data that matched the theme. The main objectives of the interviews were to determine:

- Whether teachers understood the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning, teaching, learning and assessment?
- The extent to which Setswana teachers used assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and what challenges they faced in this regard.
- What could be done to help teachers to ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices in the teaching of Setswana Home Language are aligned?

In order to understand the viewpoints of the teachers on; what the Setswana Home Language teachers' conceptions of assessment and assessment standards are and to what extent they ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language, the researcher analysed the interviews conducted with teachers who participated in the research study. As the researcher has already presented the analysis of the observations, it becomes imperative that the results of the interview analysis be provided. The researcher strictly provided the views, ideas and understandings of the teacher participants as individual genuine responses to their experiences of their natural practices.

6.5.2. Planning and preparation

Most of the teachers spoke about their knowledge of learning outcomes and assessment standards but showed that they did not understand how to use assessment standards in the planning and preparation of their lessons, which included assessment exercises. Although they were confident and could talk at length on their classroom practices, it was clear that they followed a prescribed lesson plan developed at district level. The format of the lesson plan was similar across all schools and across all teachers that participated in the research study. Most of them participants did not understand that the assessment standards played a crucial role in the planning and preparation of the lessons. They did not realise that while the National Curriculum Statement and the work schedule are important, the central controlling idea in lesson planning and preparation remained the assessment standards. It was patent from the participants' responses that they knew about the policy and curriculum documents and were aware that in lesson planning and preparation assessment standards and learning outcomes that go with the theme that had to be included, but they essentially did not understand how these assessment standards should be applied.

6.5.3. The use of curriculum documents and work schedule

Almost all the teacher participants spoke about the importance of having the curriculum statement and work schedule in the planning and preparation of the teaching and learning activities. They mentioned that it was from the curriculum statement that teachers could develop their work schedule, and this work schedule would then help in the development of the lesson plan. However, one of the participants was adamant that though policy and guideline documents were important in ensuring that teachers' classroom practice is consistent, he felt forced to implement the new approach to lesson planning and preparation, and that he strongly believed in hard teaching and only prepared his lessons to satisfy his seniors. This is illustrated by the responses such as that *"I start from the known to the unknown; but I cannot put them to use"*.

6.5.4. Understanding the difference between assessment of learning and assessment for learning

None of the participants could distinguish between assessment of learning and assessment for learning as indicated earlier. They equated assessment for learning with determination of teaching and learning gaps and an assessment of existing knowledge while they spoke of assessment of learning as assessment that determines the learners' understanding and the learners' performances and checks whether the learners have attained the assessment standards. Not mentioned by the teachers was that assessment of learning evaluates the learner's level of performance on a particular task, for example, at the end of a unit of teaching and learning and that the information gathered from this type of assessment can be used for reporting. As a result they could not equate it with formative assessment. They could not confirm that this is assessment that should happen on an ongoing and regular basis in the teaching and learning process, due to the information obtained from assessment tasks or activities normally shaping and guiding future teaching and learning processes. The element of feedback was also not addressed. This misunderstanding is clear from the following response received from one of the participants:

"I can't differentiate this; assessment for learning: It helps to adjust the learning content according to the level of development of learners; assessment of learning: it helps to evaluate both the educator and the learners".

6.5.5. The teachers' understanding of the concept 'assessment standard'

Only one of the participants could sufficiently explain what the concept 'assessment standard' meant:

"Assessment standards within each learning outcome are criteria that collectively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade."

These assessment standards 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.”

The participants relayed their understanding of assessment standards as ‘learning outcomes’, and ‘a measurement of learning outcomes, and one of the participants even explained the meaning thereof as “measurement things”.

Although the participants knew about learning outcomes and assessment standards, they confirmed that the biggest challenge they faced was to understand the role of such standards as a link around which the teacher activities and the learner activities including assessment exercises revolve.

“Since there was no training the challenge was to understand the link of assessment standards to teaching, learning and assessment and to lay the assessment standards to use”.

“It is unfortunate that now even ours seniors don’t understand the role of assessment standards, I mean to apply them in the content of the subject”.

The participants were of the view that outcomes-based education is a good system if everything it promised could be delivered except for the challenging administrative responsibilities as well as the inadequate and inappropriate training that go with it.

Although one respondent seemed lost in his responses, he admitted that the existence of assessment standards in the National Curriculum Statement had greatly influenced his teaching and assessment. It was interesting to realise that he aware that assessment standards guide and organise the setting of questions or assessment tasks:

“I think it has done a very good job, and why because, now even with this new method of setting question papers whereby all assessment standards ... helped a lot. Because the way we set questions, they make questions for learners.”

The influence of outcomes-based education on the teachers’ classroom practice and on the learners’ active involvement was evident in the teachers’ responses regarding the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process. Although some teachers might not understand the role that assessment standards play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment, the impact of learner-centeredness and the significance of feedback in assessment practices were obvious during the interviews:

“Assessment standards help in organising teaching and assessment. To know what to teach for a week the pacesetter for me and other teachers in the same grade are necessary.”

6.5.6. Recognition that assessment standards organise, guide and improve teaching, learning and assessment

Although all the teacher participants knew about assessment standards they did not understand these or their role. They shared different views on the role of such standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. One of the participants mentioned that this role of was to measure whether teachers are doing the correct things in the classroom and that they are following the correct learning outcomes in class. Although he shared that the standards helped teachers to assess their learners and determine whether they have completed and understood the lesson, and that these are guidelines for the educator that ensure that whatever he is doing is correct, he emphasised that he could not put them to good use. Almost all the participants mentioned that the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process was to ensure that the teacher received feedback from the learners, and that the questions must be in line with assessment making sure that the type of questions that a teacher ask clearly cover the syllabus. It was obvious that teachers had a vague idea of assessment standards and did not understand to what extent these could be used in organising, guiding and improving teaching, learning and assessment. One participant commented as follows:

“To a large extent, assessment standards direct the teacher and a teacher cannot achieve the intended learning outcome without the assessment standards. The only problem that I have is to lay them in my lesson plan and use them in the teaching and learning activities.”

Although outcomes-based education might be discontinued and CAPS be introduced with its own objectives, skills and content, it is clear that the need for organising, directing and aligning teaching, learning and assessment is imperative; and, that teamwork and collaboration with teachers in the same grade will forever be considered important elements of effective and efficient teaching and assessment practices. Another teacher made the following comment:

“Yes obviously when you are teaching the learners, what you want to get, and which is very critical is to just know that you can teach without assessing the learners, meaning what I do. Yes, because this is that tool that guides you, guide you whether learners are with you or not. If I have done my best, you need to get feedback from the learners. “Assessment standards have guided me in varying my methods of asking questions. Each learning outcome has different assessment standards. A lesson cannot succeed if I don’t have or I don’t know what to assess at the end of the lesson.”

It was however evident that the teachers were aware of these standards and the role they played, but they could not use or apply them in their teaching and learning activities as well as assessment exercises. Although teachers mentioned that when they plan, they plan around assessment standards and that whenever they assess learners they assess them around assessment standards, their lesson planning and their actual classroom practices could not confirm this. One of the respondents

mentioned this regarding the role of assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment:

“When teachers plan, they should learn around the assessment standards even if you assess learners the assessment revolves around the assessment standards and every time or activity that you involve normally you must always put assessment standards in place.”

The response demonstrated that teachers are aware of the significance of assessment standards as the centre pillars of teaching, learning and assessment. According to the responses they knew that learning and assessment revolve around assessment standards and, that in every teaching activity that was pondered, assessment standards always had to be at the forefront. However, classroom practices and the lesson plans submitted to the researcher did not demonstrate that teachers’ planning is done around assessment standards:

“I plan my lesson around the assessment standard so that when I assess the learners, I make sure that everything is according to assessment standards.”

The evidence as obtained from classroom observations negated the teachers’ views and ideas. According to the evidence gathered, the teachers’ knowledge of the role of assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment lacked an understanding that could be translated into practice. One of the participants emphasised that:

“I do not understand the role of assessment standards because I cannot lay them to use in the planning and preparation”

As Blignaut (2008:115) speaks, teachers’ knowledge structure, understanding structure and experiences play a critical role in their construction of meaning.

6.5.7. The influence of outcome-based education on the teaching, learning and assessment process

Although a lack of understanding of the role of assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment appeared to be an enduring and an obvious difficulty in the implementation of the new approach to teaching and assessment, almost all the participants agreed that outcomes-based education exerted a tremendous influence on their classroom practices. As one participant said:

“They have improved my teaching and assessment skills because the National Curriculum Statement came with different methods and approaches to teaching and assessing learners. Assessment can be used in different ways to assess learners, by giving them work to share in class. You can have self-assessment, the child can assess himself or herself, you can have peer-assessment where learners come

together and assess each other and the duty of the educator is to direct or help the learners.”

All the participants recognised the significance of outcomes-based assessment when they referred to the importance of peer-assessment, self-assessment and group-assessment while the teacher acts as a facilitator.

6.5.8. Initial training to implement the new approach to assessment

All the six teachers' experiences and foundations as teachers and their training to implement the new approach to assessment during their outcomes-based education years seemed to have had a very significant impact on their views and classroom practices. Almost all the participants expressed that they had insufficient training. They do not understand the new approach to assessment because they had only attended a course for one or two hours at a time or about two to three weeks conducted in the afternoon. Most of these participants commented that the timing and duration of the training were not conducive to an effective and efficient training that would empower and develop them to be able to implement the new approach to assessment. All the six participants agreed that their training was not sufficient to implement the new approach to assessment. The reasons given for the inadequacy of the training were the following:

- Length of training: The duration of the training was not long enough. One participant added that they needed thousand hours of training:
“Yes, we underwent training although it was a very short period. We attended for two weeks, it was a two week training. I don’t think that was enough, we needed thousand hours of training”.
- The training was not acknowledged in the form of certificates. Participants felt that if they had received certificates of certificates of competence, they would have gained more from the training intervention. Two participants said:
“As I said now, it was not sufficient. To me it was supposed to be a new course, whereby you can even get a certificate to show I have got this knowledge”.
“I cannot say, it was just a trial and error crush course without a certificate”.
- The training did not involve examples of practical application. The teachers opined that they needed training on various methods of teaching that could be used to ensure learner involvement as teaching and assessment was learner-centred and not teacher-centred:
“Our training did not have practicals of policy in terms of content. We need training involved in the various methods of teaching, the emphasis must be on

learner involvement much on learner centred, and unlike in the past when emphasis was on, it was teacher centred”.

- They did not benefit from the training. All six participants mentioned that their training involved sharing ideas on things they did not understand.

“Not really training per se. The training involved the sharing of ideas on things we do not understand”.

6.5.9. The need for intensive and ongoing training

The issue of the need for intensive and ongoing training arose during each interview that was concluded. All the participants indicated that in spite of having attended some training in the new approach to teaching and assessment, their classroom practices still remained traditional and teacher-centred. They expressed the notion that when the teachers’ epistemologies are not fused with their context (Blignaut, 2008:118) and when the teachers’ views, understandings and perceptions are not considered or listened to in order to understand their lived stories, teachers will continue to do what they are used to doing. This simply means that new approaches would not stand much chance of surviving if there is no fit with the teachers’ epistemologies and real-life contexts (Blignaut, 2008:118). It was clear from the teachers’ views and ideas that they consider what passes as in-service training to be uninspiring and ineffective. The teachers need training and support that is participatory and linked to context. All the teachers who participated in the study indicated that there was inadequate and inconsistent intervention provided for teachers regarding the understanding of the role of assessment standards and their use in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It became apparent that in order for the situation to be remedied rigorous and ongoing in-service training for teachers would have to be provided. One of the participants said in this regard:

“I think teachers need very intensive training, intensive training not in the way it was done in the past.”

Most of the participants mentioned that many teachers would continue to struggle with current or new curriculum because they are expected to implement policies that they had never engaged or experienced in their respective training. They felt that there was a need for more time to be spent with teachers on relevant and appropriate classroom activities which involved the understanding and application of policy in relation to subject content, that theory outside application could not help teachers. One teacher emphasised that teachers must be exposed to real-life classroom situations and experiences in order to internalise the processes and procedures of good classroom practices. He said:

“Teachers need to be work-shopped fully and guided in lesson planning and preparation using the National Curriculum Statement.”

Although this teacher put more emphasis on the National Curriculum statement, his ideas, views and understanding of good training could be applicable in all contexts of curriculum innovations. It is clear from these comments that he wished *“teachers should be work-shopped fully”* which statement calls for sufficient amount of time and ongoing interventions. It has to be understood within the context of these interviews that all the interviewee felt strongly that training in the form of workshops offered effective, useful and helpful interventions in teachers’ practices. For their part, training is equated with workshops though workshops might be perceived as isolated, fragmented and incoherent meetings which do not take heed of the actual classroom practices of teachers.

6.5.10. The need for guidance by subject and policy experts

All the participants expressed the view that when teachers are faced with new policy ideas, the assimilation of these ideas into existing knowledge frame is required (Blignaut, 2008:119). They mentioned that additional support for teachers was necessary in order to inculcate in them the ability to align teaching, learning and assessment through the assessment standards or the lesson objectives. The teacher participants emphasised that there was a lack of expert knowledge in the body of senior people appointed in their district:

“It is unfortunate that even our seniors do not understand ... we need an expert. Yes, when I talk about an expert, for example in our subject ...”

Most participants were clearly disturbed at the lack of expert knowledge in their field. It was not only expert knowledge in terms of good teaching and assessment practice they were concerned about, but also by the lack of expert knowledge in terms of the content of the subject. They interviewees mentioned that there was an urgent need for competent teachers, that subject teachers must be specialists in their own field. They expressed that what was needed was teachers who could teach Setswana as a subject, love it and make learners love it also, not teachers who take it out of lack of choice:

“You see, now I want to be honest. I think we need to have teachers who are competent, in most schools the principle is whoever can be in charge is alright. We take a Maths teacher and say go and teach Setswana. Which is wrong because you cannot, when you get an Afrikaans teacher, it is an Afrikaans teacher. We need teachers who will make learners love the subject, and also make learners aware that Setswana is very important, and make them love it.”

Collaboration and cooperation among teachers in respect of good teaching and assessment practice also appeared to be one of their priorities in ensuring that they are

trained to be able to align teaching, learning and assessment. The value of the usage of subject experts and regular and ongoing in-service training in the form of workshops was emphasised:

“The problem with our system is that we are trained by people who also struggle to interpret the curriculum policy and guideline documents. We end up being trained by fellow teachers who are also struggling. We definitely need experts not only in policy interpretation but also in content knowledge so that they can train us on good practice, that is, on how to translate policy into good practice. Further training, more workshops in conjunction with other educators, other schools, other provinces, that would help us to reach one goal, following the correct assessment practice.”

The teachers' views and preferences in respect of experts in training was a very important aspect as it spoke to teachers' interest, perception of subject advisors, development and acquisition of relevant and expert information regarding their training. Conversations with these teachers were crucial in that they demonstrated the frustration with which they attend their subject specific training or workshops. As one respondent mentioned, intensive training conducted by policy and subject experts was of paramount importance in ensuring good classroom practice in terms of teaching and assessment:

“We need experts in policy and subject knowledge. There should be more study guides with more questions for the languages like it is done in content subjects and facilitators should conduct regular and meaningful workshops that deal with teaching and assessment.”

This response was a clear illustration of the views and perceptions of many teachers who valued in-service training in the form of workshops to the point that the respondent felt that out of these meaningful workshops study guides should be developed with more questions in language subjects to guide the assessment practice.

As can be seen from the following response by one of the participants, some of the teachers were of the opinion that evaluation and monitoring was a definite priority:

“Because this national curriculum statement is still new, it is important that the Department of Education should make sure that time and again they call workshops and revisit what the teachers are doing in class. Especially in our area, most of the present educators are educators of the old system. Therefore it is important to check, to measure, to make sure that everybody is taken on board, which I don't see the Department of Education do at present. I feel the curriculum statement should be rigorous at the lower level so that when the learners grow they exactly know what is happening. We have only got it correct in the exit classes.”

The following table – Table 2 - summarises the ideas or responses of the interviewees in the study.

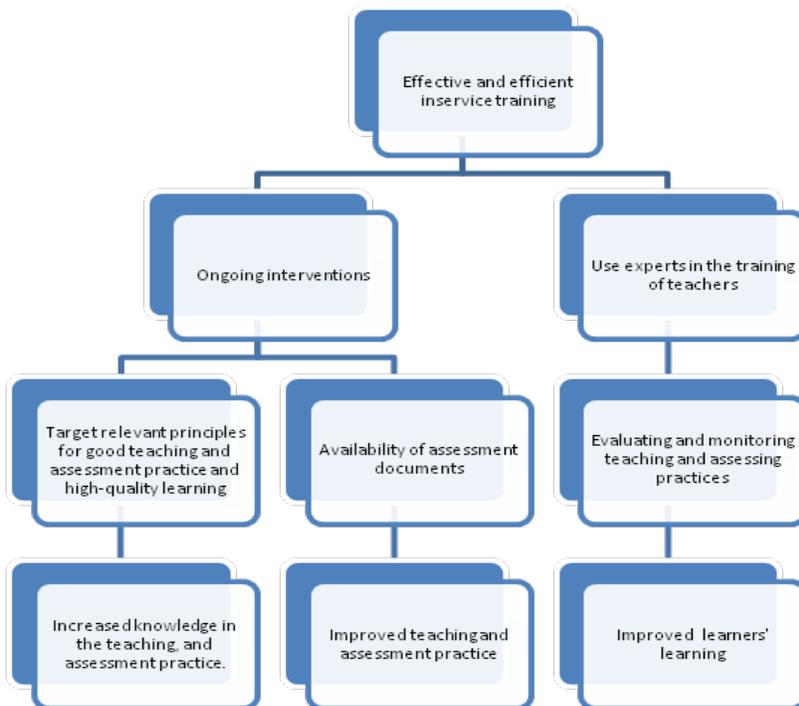
Table 6.2: A summary of the themes and interviewee responses

Participant	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
	<i>Planning and preparation</i>	<i>Assessment of/for learning and teaching</i>	<i>Description and measurement of learners</i>	<i>Assessment standards organise, guide and improve teaching and learning</i>	<i>intensive and ongoing training</i>	<i>Subject and policy experts in in-service training</i>
TA	-did not take lesson planning and preparation seriously; -felt forced to implement the imperatives of the curriculum.	-was not sure what assessment of learning and assessment for learning meant.	-did not understand what an assessment standard was.	-did not understand what assessment standards entailed -had no idea that assessment standards could be used in organising, guiding and improving teaching, learning and assessment.	- expressed a need for rigorous and ongoing in-service training for teachers.	- expressed the need for experts in both content and policy knowledge; -need for subject teachers to be relevantly qualified and passionate about their subjects.
TB	-did not understand the role of assessment standards in planning and preparation; -regards only National Curriculum Statement and the work schedule are important	-did not know what assessment of/for learning meant	-assessment standards measure learning; - had a vague idea of what the assessment standard was.	- assessment standards are guidelines and ensure that whatever is done is correct; - Assessment standards measure teachers' practices.	- regular and intensive in-service teacher training or workshops; - need for teachers to have all the necessary policy and guideline documents in order to ascertain adherence.	- value of usage of subject experts; -need for collaboration and cooperation of teacher across levels
TC	-National Curriculum Statement and the work schedule are important; -assessment standards guide and help in teaching.	-could not differentiate between assessment for learning and assessment of learning.	- assessment standards as measurement things; -assessment standards measure teachers' teaching and learners' learning.	- Assessment standards help in organising teaching and assessment; - need for organising, directing and aligning teaching, learning and assessment; -problem is to lay them in my lesson plan and	-need for ongoing training that is complementary and developmental	- need for experts in policy and subject knowledge.

				use them in the teaching and learning activities.		
TD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - starts from the known to the unknown; - says she uses assessment standards he was taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessing for learning determines gaps; - assessment of learning determines learners' understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment standards are techniques used in planning around assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teachers should plan around assessment standards; - learning and assessment revolve around assessment standards; -outcomes-based education influenced practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -need for ongoing training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -favours training conducted by policy and content experts.
TE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planned and prepared his teaching and learning activities by using learning outcomes and assessment standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment for learning helps adjust learning content according to developmental level; - assessment of learning helps evaluate both the educator and the learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -assessment standards refer to description and measurement of learners; - assessment standards describe the minimum level, depth and breadth of what it is to be learnt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process help us determine learning outcomes; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sees workshops as effective, useful and helpful intervention in teachers' practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organisers to consider competency level of people who conduct in-service training.
TF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work schedule, the national curriculum statement and the subject framework help plan and prepare; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -assessment for learning assesses existing knowledge; - Assessment of learning checks whether the learners have attained the assessment standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment standards are criteria that collectively describe what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade; - assessment standards embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the learning outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment standards help teachers assess achievement of objectives; - assessment standards serve as guidelines for educators; -assessment standards help to check and verify if the lesson has been understood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -workshops on how to plan and prepare; - a need for more time to be spent with teachers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a need to have experts conduct in-service training in the form of workshops.

In concluding this content analysis of interviews, it is imperative that the researcher propose a framework of what the researcher considers a worthwhile model for effective and efficient in-service training informed by the responses of the teacher participants.

Table 3: A model for ongoing in-service teacher training as suggested by interviewees responses



6.6. TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF ASSESSMENT AS IDENTIFIED FROM THE INTERVIEWS

As explained in the chapter on outcomes-based assessment, assessment is an important component in the teaching and learning process because it provides teachers with information that is significant in decision making in the classroom. It provides him/her with an insight into the meanings constructed or assigned by learners to ideas or concepts that have been taught in the classroom. In this regard, the teacher is able to determine whether his/her teaching has been successfully conveyed to the learners. Informed by the Greek word "assidere" which means to "sit with", Lombard (2010:34) reasons that the teacher is supposed to "sit with" the learner when assessing. According to him this implies that assessment is done *with* and *for* the learner and not *to* the learner (Lombard 2010:34). The teachers interviewed in this study have identified the following conceptions of assessment:

6.6.1. Information gathering, analysis, interpretation and reporting

The **information gathering, analysis, interpretation and reporting** conception is based on the fact that teachers gather or collect information on the learners' learning or acquisition of knowledge and skills through assessment. This information is assessed and analysed through a process of marking using memoranda, after which marks are recorded in order to interpret the learners' performance and also to compile reports on the learners' achievement. These are used as a means of reporting to the different stakeholders involved in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

6.6.2. Evaluation and provision of feedback on the learner progress

Through this practice, teachers use assessment to gauge the learners' learning and knowledge acquired in order to provide feedback to the latter for improvement and variation of methods of teaching. The interviewed teachers mentioned that this concept also helps determine the learners' strengths and weaknesses in order to make provision for expanded opportunities. Here the former maintain that they have the responsibility to ensure that the learners realise and understand their potential in order to perform to the maximum. This therefore could involve the teachers' understanding and judging of the learners' achievement.

6.6.3. Yardstick for parental involvement

The notion of the **yardstick for parent involvement in the learners' schooling** is based on the view that learners' learning, performance and achievement relate closely to parent involvement in the academic life of the learners. The interviewees felt that assessment should involve not only teachers and learners but also parents. When parents assess learners learning in responding to assessment exercises or tasks in

the form of homework, the learners become motivated and develop positive attitudes to their learning. Teacher C mentioned that:

“Assessment should involve teachers, learners and parents in inculcating good attitudes to learning. Parents must take part when learners are give homework to do and correct the learners’ mistakes.”

6.7. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

6.7.1. Introduction

In addition to observation and interviews, document analysis was also conducted. Almost all the participants, except for one, kept the following documents:

A **master file** which contains; time table; National Curriculum Statement documents such as the subject statement-languages, subject assessment guideline as well as the national protocol on recording and reporting; learning programme documents such as the subject frameworks, work schedule, subject formal assessment plan, lesson plans as well as lesson preparations; the school-based assessment guidelines; the program for subject specific meetings; circulars and memoranda; reports from the subject specific head of department; evidence of professional development; and Learning and Teaching Support Material control list;

A **teacher file** which contains all the fourteen tasks scheduled for the respective year arranged according to three month terms. The fourteen tasks are organised consistent with the subject assessment guideline;

A **learner file** which mirrors the learners’ responses to the tasks as contained in the teacher file. According to Learning Programme Guideline (Department of Education, 2005), there are three stages of planning, namely, a subject framework, work schedule and a lesson plan.

In the Further Education and Training band, teachers work together in the development of a **subject framework** which is a systematic plan that concentrates on the conceptual progression of key skills, knowledge, values and attitudes of the learning outcomes and assessment standards across grades ten, eleven and twelve (Department of Education, 2005:24).

A **work schedule** which gives a description of the teaching and learning that will occur over the period of a year. It interprets the learning outcomes and assessment standards into planned teaching and learning activities.

A **lesson plan** provides a description of the teacher’s classroom planning which shows how items of the content will be included during the year to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

According to the Department of Education (2005:26) a lesson plan shows what learners will learn, key questions that guide the learning experience, the resources needed, the teaching strategies and assessments all of which assist in the provision of evidence of learning. Although most teachers keep all these texts, the arrangement of the master file is inconsistent and non-uniform in the district. In general, the lesson plans are not consistently updated and used during lesson presentations. It has been observed that only two teachers' master files contain all the requisite texts arranged in a more intelligible manner consistent with good practice. It can be argued that texts kept by teachers are usually utilised to assist in the organisation of teaching, learning and assessment as well as in the evaluation and monitoring of the progress made by teachers in terms of teaching and the progress made by learners in respect of learning.

Although this is designed to inform decisions on strategies that can be adopted to improve or enhance the learners' development in the teaching, learning and assessment context, it remains doubtful whether the teachers are aware of this. Clear and self-explanatory records may also inform the teacher about the learners' performances, the effectiveness of his or her instructional and assessment strategies in the classroom and formative assessment where learners are given feedback as well as for summative assessment where the learners' level of performance is assessed or judged. Almost all the teachers who participated in this research study recorded the learners' marks on a monthly basis and, at the time of writing this report, all teachers had entered marks for Grade 12 up to the thirteenth task. At face value, this demonstrated that there was a continuous assessment of learners and were rated according to their performance. Although Teacher B's marking was done consistent with the marking memoranda and rubrics, it was unfortunate that old, inappropriate and unapproved rubrics were used to assess the learners' work. Again, the teacher and learners' files were incorrectly arranged and the changes recommended to be done on the marking sheets were not affected. One of the most obvious tasks not carried out was to reflect the learning outcomes and the assessment standards in the different tasks as required by the Subject Assessment Guideline.

The researcher provided a synopsis of texts used by the teacher participants, namely the master file and the teacher file in their teaching and assessment practices. He wishes the reader to take note of the fact that during document collection and analysis Teacher F was taken to hospital ill, after which it became difficult to make an appointment with her. The researcher in going through the different files compiled a table to indicate availability and non-availability of the different texts as contained in the files of the various teacher participants. In this regard, the researcher has used a cross to indicate whether the teacher's file contained the required text or not. The tables are marked Table 4 for representation of a master file and Table 5 for a representation of a teacher file:

Table 6.3: Texts Utilised by Research Participants in 2011 – Master File

TOPICS	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D		Teacher E	
	Yes	No								
MASTER FILE										
1. TIME TABLE										
(i) Is there a time table?	X			X	X		X		X	
2. NCS DOCUMENTS										
(i) Subject statements	X		X		X		X		X	
(ii) Learning programme guideline	X		X		X		X		X	
(iii) Subject assessment guideline	X			X	X		X		X	
(iv) National protocol on recording and reporting		X		X	X		X		X	
3. LEARNING PROGRAMME DOCUMENTS										
(i) Subject framework	X			X	X		X		X	
(ii) Work schedule	X			X	X		X		X	
(iii) Subject Formal Assessment Plan	X			X	X		X		X	
(iv) Lesson plans		X		X	X		X		X	
4. SUBJECT MEETINGS										
(i) Are there subject meetings?		X		X	X		X		X	
5. CIRCULARS & MEMOS										
(i) Are there circulars and memos?		X	X		X		X		X	
6. REPORTS (HOD, ETC)										
(i) Are there HoD reports?		X		X	X			X	X	
7. EVIDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT										
(i) Is there evidence of professional development?		X		X		X		X		X
8. LTSM CONTROL LIST										
(i) Is there an LTSM Control List?		X		X		X		X	X	

Table 6.4: Texts Utilised by Research Participants in 2011 – Teacher File

TOPICS	Teacher A		Teacher B		Teacher C		Teacher D		Teacher E	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
TEACHER FILE										
1. Are there complete details on the cover of the educator's file?	X			X	X		X		X	
2. Is the formal programme of assessment available?	X			X	X		X		X	
3. Have the three phases of moderation (pre-, process and post-moderation) been done?	X			X	X		X		X	
4. Comment on quality of school moderation (HOD)	G		G		G		G		G	
5. Instructions of tasks with relevant assessment tools	X		X		X		X		X	
6. Is the educator's file well arranged and neatly organised?	X		X		X		X		X	
QUALITY OF TASKS/TESTS										
7. Are the instructions on the tasks clear or unambiguous?		X	X		X		X		X	
8. Is there a variety of questions to cater for the different levels of learner's needs?	X		X		X		X		X	
RECORD SHEETS										
9. Are marks transferred correctly on the mark sheet from learner's evidence of performance?	X		X		X		X		X	
10. Have marks been correctly calculated?	X		X		X		X		X	
11. Is there enough evidence for awarding a 0 (zero) to learners for a task?	X		X		X		X		X	
Is there an explanation/evidence of expanded opportunities provided for this?	X		X		X		X		X	
LEARNERS' TASKS										
12. Explain/comment whether the tasks have been assessed according to the set criteria or rubric.	X		X		X		X		X	
13. Have learners understood and interpreted the task correctly?		X	X		X		X		X	
14. Have learners' tasks been fairly, consistently and accurately assessed?	X		X		X		X		X	
15. Have the tasks been dated?	X		X		X		X		X	
16. Have the marks been totalled correctly?	X		X		X		X		X	
17. Have educators given developmental feedback?		X		X	X		X		X	
18. Standard of marking: Is the quality of marking acceptable?	Lenient		Fair		Strict					

6.7.2. Lesson planning

Almost all the participants' lesson planning simply stipulated the learning outcomes and assessment standards, mostly indicated by numerals or numbers, but did not use these to align their teaching and assessment. It was quite clear that all their planning and preparation did not consider the significance of the four key aspects of lesson planning, namely, learning outcomes, assessment standards, teacher activities and learner activities, and the assessment exercises. Although the assessment standards are the central controlling ideas around which lesson are planned, these were not used to guide the planning, preparation and presentation of the lesson activities. Almost all teachers used the lesson format developed at district level, and all that they did was to slot in the necessary information. Although the participants' lessons contained teacher activities and the learner activities, these activities did not mirror the assessment standards for the respective learning outcomes and themes presented. For example, under teacher activities appeared sub-topics such as, "read", "ask questions", "and explain the content" while under the learner activities were "answer questions" and "listen attentively" respectively. It was very clear from the lesson plan that the assessment standards were not used as pointers regarding how the teachers would teach and how the learners would learn.

From the structure of the lesson, it was obvious that all that the learners were expected to do was to listen attentively and answer questions, nothing more and nothing less, while the task of the teacher was to read texts, ask questions and explain the content without the learners being actively involved through group work. Therefore, it was clear that the assessment standards were not used as the driving force behind teaching, learning and assessment. Instead the teachers only demonstrated that they knew something about outcomes-based education as a way of teaching and learning by stating the learning outcomes and the assessment standards numerically. Unfortunately the assessment standards could not inform the activities and the assessment exercises. Even when the researcher asked what assessment standards the numbers stood for, the teachers could not answer the question and had to refer to the National Curriculum Statement – Languages.

Though the teachers knew the principles of outcomes-based education they did not understand what had to be done in order to ensure that this happened. What they could not demonstrate was the fact that the learner's achievement is measured against the set outcomes and assessment standards. As a result, the importance of the role of these standards was not recognised.

It was not clarified in the teachers' lesson planning that assessment standards played an important role in determining the learner's success. This study has drawn attention to the fact that it is of the utmost necessity that the assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning when it is ignored.

This study concluded that Spady's (1994) four principles of outcomes-based education, namely clarity of focus, designing down, high expectations and expanded opportunity for learning, were not consistently, systematically, creatively and simultaneously applied when constructing lesson planning for relevant and appropriate teaching and learning environments.

6.7.3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter the study introduced the teacher participants and explored their constructed research ideas, views and perceptions. As indicated, this process was adopted in order to bring order, structure and interpretation to the study, but it also moved beyond this to where the ideas, views and perceptions of the teacher participants were contrasted with each other to create a discussion, analysis, interpretation or composition where the product of analysis and interpretation gave us findings and recommendations. The chapter focused specifically on the data collected by means of interviews, observation and document analysis conducted at the four secondary schools with the six research participants. During the observation sessions, the researcher observed the research participants in action in classroom situations, teaching and assessing learners. Through these observations the study recognised the participants' knowledge and understanding of the role of assessment standards, and that the teachers did not use assessment standards to guide their lesson preparation and actual presentations.

The study identified different themes that emanated from the participants' responses, which included, but were not limited to: teachers' epistemologies, lesson planning and the inclusion of assessment standards, teachers' understanding of assessment and assessment standards, assessment for learning versus assessment of learning, peer and group work. During the individual interviews with the research participants, five biographical questions and eighteen key questions were asked. The questions as contained in the interview schedule revealed that outcomes-based education has greatly influenced the teaching, learning and assessment process though there is still a need for intensive and ongoing training and a need for guidance by subject and policy experts. The teachers interviewed in this study have identified the conceptions of assessment such as information gathering, analysis, interpretation and reporting; evaluation and provision of feedback on the learners' performance; and so on. The next chapter offers a summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In concluding this study, Chapter 7 provides a general overview in order to demonstrate that the aims originally expressed in Chapter 1 have been addressed and achieved. Through this chapter, the researcher summarises the study, highlights conclusions arrived at consistent with the literature study discussed in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 as well as through an empirical inquiry by means of observations, interviews and document analysis in Chapter 6. This final chapter also suggests recommendations including possibilities of future research. It also presents a model for ongoing training to complement the recommendations. As indicated under sections 1.4 and 1.5 this study emanated from the premise that the fact that teachers do not seem to have a clear understanding of the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in guiding and aligning the teaching, learning and assessment process, is problematic in the achievement of quality education. The problem of the study was narrowed to: *What is Setswana Home Language teachers' conception of assessment and assessment standards and to what extent do they ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language?* Therefore the aim of the study was to investigate Setswana Home Language teachers' understanding (conception) of quality assessment and to determine the extent to which they use assessment standards to ensure that their teaching, learning and assessment practices are aligned. The achievement of the overall aim was facilitated by the achievement of a number of objectives, namely:

- to determine how curriculum changes influenced teaching, learning and assessment practices in South Africa (Chapter 2);
- to determine what is meant by assessment and to investigate sound assessment principles and practices (Chapter 3);
- to establish what is meant by assessment standards and the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment (Chapter 4);
- to determine teachers' understanding (conception) of the new approach to assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning, teaching, learning and assessment (Chapter 6);
- to find out to what extent Setswana teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and to determine what challenges they face in this regard (Chapter 6); and,

- to provide guidelines for ensuring alignment between teaching, learning and assessment practices of Setswana Home Language (Chapter 7).

The study utilised qualitative research methodology. Three data collection strategies, namely interviews, observations and document analysis, were employed to obtain data from the research participants. The research was conducted in the real world of teachers and learners in a school setting. Through the qualitative research inquiry, the researcher determined Setswana teachers' understanding of assessment and the extent to which they use the assessment standards to ensure the alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana in the Further Education and Training phase. The findings of the study provide readers with insights into the teachers' views, beliefs and practices in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

7.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 dealt with the introduction and background to the study. It explained that post-1994, the first democratically elected government of South Africa developed a programme of educational change to help it achieve the priorities it had set itself; and that in the process of transforming educational practices, the South African government decided to address social issues such as equity, access and redress. The initiative then culminated in the introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum in South Africa which led to many changes in the education system. Chapter 1 also discussed the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment, and it pointed out that constructive alignment helps ensure that teaching is effective in actively engaging students in learning and in ensuring that outcomes are achieved. The chapter further explained the important role that teachers' ideas play in both teaching and assessment. Teachers' understanding of assessment was seen as being of the utmost importance as their conception of assessment determines the way in which teachers implement assessment practices. Again, the chapter discussed the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process. In this context, it was explained that it is imperative that the assessment standards should be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they could take charge of their learning. The chapter also accentuated that learners should also be provided with constant or continuous feedback on the learning that had taken place and in the process also on the achievement of the assessment standards and learning outcomes. Apart from all these topics, this chapter highlighted the problem statement, the aim and the objectives of the study. These basically revolved around Setswana teachers' understanding of assessment and the role that assessment standards play in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment. It was explained that the study had followed a qualitative approach and that observation; individual interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. In order to understand the key concepts of this study, it was necessary to clarify them to avoid misinterpretations and misrepresentations. The concepts that were used quite frequently included the following: outcomes-based education,

teaching, teacher, learning, learner, assessment, learning outcomes, assessment standards, home language, aim, objective, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, were explained. The chapter concluded with an indication of the chapter division.

Chapter 2 recognised that educational changes had been implemented in different countries, and that in South Africa outcomes-based education was introduced in 1998 along with outcomes-based assessment. Outcomes-based education was implemented in South Africa through Curriculum 2005 (C2005). C2005 was later revised and led to the development of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R-9 and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 10-12. Problems with these curricula led to the development of yet another curriculum, namely the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements. It was explained that although a new curriculum, generally referred to as CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) was developed, the current outcomes-based curriculum will still be followed until 2013. An attempt was made to point out the differences and similarities between the two curricula.

It was explained that outcomes-based education differs from traditional education in the sense that clearly defined outcomes form the starting point of all teaching, learning and assessment activities. Four principles, namely, *clarity of focus*, *design down*, *expanded opportunities* and *high expectations* form the key to the design and development of teaching, learning and assessment activities based on outcomes. The chapter briefly referred to the three types of outcomes-based education, namely, traditional OBE, transitional OBE and transformational OBE and indicated that transformational OBE was the preferred approach adopted by South African education authorities. Although outcomes-based education is rooted in theories such as behaviourism, critical theory, pragmatism and constructivism, this chapter has established that it has more philosophical underpinnings of constructivism. Within the constructivist classroom, the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the learner, as constructivism requires a teacher who acts as a facilitator with the sole objective of helping learners become active role players in the teaching, learning and assessment process. The chapter concluded with a discussion of Setswana Home language and the planning and teaching of Setswana as depicted in the National Curriculum Statement.

Chapter 3 saw assessment as an important component in the teaching and learning process because it provides teachers with information that is significant in decision making in the classroom. The chapter explained that teachers make decisions about learners' learning and development as well as the suitability and effectiveness of classroom teaching based on assessment results. The information gathered from assessment provides the teachers with an insight into the meanings constructed or assigned by learners to ideas or concepts that have been taught in the classroom. In this regard, the teacher is given a chance to gauge whether the idea or concept taught has been conveyed successfully to learners. As such, the link between teaching, learning and assessment was clearly pointed out. Assessment was also described as

of vital importance to learners in that the learners look at assessment results as a way of informing them about their progress and also of identifying the learning areas that need to be improved. Chapter 3 also discussed the assertion that learners who receive regular feedback through assessment are better motivated to learn because they are actively involved in their own learning. Thus, feedback from assessment directs improvement of learner learning and contributes towards the motivation of learners.

The chapter provided an in-depth discussion of assessment. Assessment was defined and thereafter the link between teaching, learning and assessment and the role that assessment standards play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment was explained. The purpose and benefits of assessment; the teachers' conceptions of assessment; and principles of high quality assessment practices, such as reliability, fairness, validity, discrimination and meaningfulness, were discussed. It also provided an explanation of how outcomes-based assessment differs from traditional assessment. It was lastly indicated that the purpose of assessment determines the form of assessment that will be employed in the classroom to align teaching, learning and assessment.

Chapter 4 discussed the launch of the modern standards movement and traced its roots to the back-to-basics movement. It became clear that the rise of the modern standards movement could be attributed to dissatisfaction with different schooling systems in different countries. The chapter briefly examined how the standards-based reform movement framed the four central curriculum questions, namely, (i) what purpose the curriculum should serve, (ii) how knowledge should be selected, (iii) how teaching should be done, and (iv) how it should be established whether teaching aims or outcomes have been achieved. It also determined what is understood by standards and concluded that standards specify what learners should know and be able to do. It did not only end there but it also took a step further to discuss the reasons behind the usage of standards in education, namely, the desire for greater academic achievement, accountability and the provision of guidelines for teachers. The most important principles that comprise the framework of a standards-based program, namely, that standards must be specific, that standards must measure multiple levels, that standards must be teachable, and that standards must be flexible, were pointed out. The chapter recognised that different kinds of standards can be distinguished and that each one has a different purpose and connection to instruction and assessment. These standards were identified as content, performance-based and world-class standards. Although there has been considerable criticism levelled against standards, the apparent benefits of standards, namely, that learners are exposed to equal learning opportunities, that standards that are based upon common principles are advantageous and, that standards facilitates better teaching cannot be ignored. Therefore, it was noted that clarifying assessment requirements and standards is considered good teaching practice and that it improves learner performance.

In the second half of the chapter, the concept alignment was discussed and linked to two well-known taxonomies of learning, namely that of Bloom (1956) and Anderson

and Krathwohl (2001). The chapter concluded with an explanation of the future role that aims, goals and objectives will play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment when the new CAPS is implemented.

Chapter 5 discussed and explained the approach and design of the study, the sampling procedure, data gathering instruments, data analysis, validity and reliability and ethical guidelines. The aim was to try and produce a wealth of descriptive data that would explain the complexity of teaching and assessment, and promote a broader insight into the field of assessment standards and the role they play in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It was pointed out that the purpose of this research study was to determine what Setswana Home Language teachers' conception of assessment was, and to what extent teachers understand the role that assessment standards play in ensuring proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language. It was explained that the study used a qualitative research methodology and that the methods used to gather data were observations, individual interviews and document analysis.

Chapter 6 introduced the six teacher participants in the study, by the provision of their background information and other details. The chapter focused specifically on the data collected at the four secondary schools with the six research participants through observations in sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4, interviews in sections 6.5 and 6.6 and document analysis in section 6.8. During the observation sessions, the researcher carefully observed the research participants in action in classroom situations teaching and assessing learners. The purpose was to determine whether they demonstrated knowledge, understanding and usage of the assessment standards and whether they taught to their lesson plans. During the individual interviews with the research participants, five biographical questions and nine key questions were asked. The questions were asked as contained in the interview schedule and were not simplified any further for consistency and avoidance of bias against any research participant. The research participants were also given the opportunity of expanding on their answers as might be required by each individual participant. During the individual interviews, the researcher carefully observed the research participants in order to determine the underlying issues as would be determined from their reactions including their conceptions of assessment. The data obtained by means of observations, individual interviews and document analysis were not only discussed, but also interpreted.

7.3. SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

As indicated in section 7.1, the findings of this qualitative inquiry are presented and integrated through a literature study and an empirical inquiry as obtained in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6. These are discussed hereunder:

7.3.1. Teachers have limited understanding of assessment and assessment standards

The teachers knew about learning outcomes and were aware of assessment standards; however, most teachers did not know, were unsure or had a vague idea of what assessment standards were. In this study, only one teacher was able to define assessment standards according to the Department of Education's policy document under section 6.5.5, namely that assessment standards are criteria that collectively describe what the learners should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade; that they embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the learning outcomes.

7.3.2. Teachers do not understand that learning, teaching and assessment revolve around assessment standards

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:166) curriculum changes in South Africa brought with them the notion that assessment should be seen as an integral part of all planning and preparation and that it should help shape or form the learner through the learning process. While most of the teachers embraced this notion, some expressed different ideas regarding the role of assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. They either had no idea that assessment standards could be used in organising and guiding teaching, learning and assessment or thought of them as guidelines that ensure that whatever is done in the classroom is correct. They didn't think of assessment standards as helping, directing, aligning and organising teaching and assessment; didn't understand that learning, teaching and assessment revolved around assessment standards; or that assessment standards helped teachers assess learners' achievement and helped teachers check and verify if the lessons had been understood. Teachers knew of the existence of assessment standards but because they did not understand their role in aligning teaching, learning and assessment, they found it impossible to use assessment standards to direct teaching, learning and assessment. Therefore, assessment standards were not used as the driving force behind teaching, learning and assessment, and thus there was no controlling idea around which teachers' lessons revolved regarding the content or subject matter to be covered including the assessment exercises.

7.3.3. The teachers ignore some of the principles of outcomes-based assessment in their classroom practices

According to the Department of Education (2003b:7) it is important, within the teaching, learning and assessment process, that assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their own learning. What this study found, was that the most fundamental classroom principle of

clarity of focus was not adhered to because learners were involved in teaching and learning without knowing the outcomes and assessment standards they should achieve to be competent. The assessment standards that had to be used when learners were assessed, that also helped in the achievement of the learning outcomes, were not revealed to learners.

As the learning outcomes and the assessment standards were not clarified to learners before they could get involved in the learning activities, learners could not know what was expected of them at the end of the learning activity. It had been observed that very few teachers used expanded opportunities to take on board slower learners because they mentioned that the practice was time-consuming and difficult to implement in overcrowded classes. While two teacher participants applied expanded opportunities in their teaching and assessment practices, four teacher participants did not.

7.3.4. The district lesson plans compromise the teachers' creative construction of lesson plans

The research has demonstrated that teachers do not understand the significance of learning outcomes and assessment standards in their planning and preparation. While they used the National Curriculum Statement (Languages) and the Work Schedule for their planning and preparation, they did not show that they understood how to construct their own lesson plans and to use assessment standards in the planning and preparation of lessons, and assessment exercises, the teachers followed a prescribed lesson plan format developed at district level. The format of the lesson plan was similar across all schools and across all grades. It consisted of the listing of learning outcomes, the assessment standards, integration, activities done before, activities that will be done, content or tasks, assessment exercises which were framed as learning objectives, method of teaching, the intended assessment task, sources, expanded opportunities and teacher outcomes. Though the teachers' lesson plans looked overloaded, they did not address both the teacher and learner activities in a consistent and relevant manner, and the assessment standards played no role in aligning teaching, learning and assessment exercises. Almost all the participants captured the assessment standards in numerals instead of in the form of prose texts. When the researcher asked for which assessment standards the specific numerals stood for, the teachers could not explain, but had to refer to the National Curriculum Statement. It was very clear that the teachers could not relate the numerals to specific assessment standards as contained in the curriculum statement.

While some of the participants felt that the National Curriculum statement and the Work Schedule are important resources in lesson planning, other teachers were reluctant and felt that they were being forced to implement the imperatives of the curriculum. The teachers who participated in this study did not use formative assessment and feedback as strategies essential in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. Although they

started some of their lesson planning and preparation by identifying the learning outcomes and the assessment standards, their actual delivery did not encompass these, and as a result, their lesson plans lacked *clarity of focus* as explained under sections 6.6.1 and 6.8.2. The assessment standards listed in the lesson plan were often not addressed in the actual lesson presentation. This compromised lesson presentation or delivery because the desired outcomes and accompanying assessment standards were not the focus of teaching and assessment and learners' learning. The teachers' assessment items were more content-driven than driven by the achievement of learning outcomes through their requisite assessment standards.

7.3.5. Outcomes-based education influenced the teachers' classroom practices to a limited extent

In Chapter 6, it became clear that outcomes-based education has had a tremendous impact on South African teachers because they have since become aware of the learner-centred approach. However, it was found in this study that outcomes-based education had a limited influence on teachers' day-to-day teaching practices. Teachers indicated that they know about the learning outcomes and assessment standards but they could not apply or use assessment standards in their lesson plans. Apart from the question of learner-centeredness as opposed to teacher-centeredness, the teachers were familiar with the importance of the usage of rubrics in the essay, transactional and literary writing. While some teachers used old rubrics inconsistent with the current setting guidelines, and they could not provide their learners with the rubrics prior to the writing of their assessment tasks, it was clear outcomes-based education has had an influence on the teachers' teaching practices in some ways, but not in all. The teachers, tend to teach according to the traditional teacher-centred approach to teaching and assessment, in other words they transmit information like filling cups with water (refer to 7.3.11 and 7.3.12).

Although teachers have been influenced by outcomes-based education, it was only to a limited extent, because there were some who still confused assessment with testing and examination preparation, and were not aware that teaching, learning and assessment are inextricably linked. This was evidenced by their lack of understanding and ability to distinguish assessment of learning from assessment for learning, and to indicate that learning and assessment as well as assessment and learning go together. They also did not acknowledge the value of constructive feedback.

7.3.6. In-service training and constant support is of the utmost importance to ensure understanding of the new curriculum

It is a challenge for teachers to apply a new approach to teaching and they therefore need rigorous and ongoing in-service training that is complimentary and developmental

for all teachers in the form of workshops. The need for workshops that would develop teachers on how to plan and prepare their lessons, and a need for enough time to be spent with teachers became apparent. It was clear from the conducted interviews that in spite of there being some interventions through training in the form of workshops for teachers, the teachers' classroom practices still remained to a certain degree traditional and teacher-centred. Part of the reasons for this situation lied in the fact that the teachers' views, understandings and perceptions are not always considered or listened to in order to understand their lived stories. The participants in this study considered what normally goes for in-service training as uninspiring and ineffective. This study noted that teachers as contributors in the classroom practice or teaching-learning-assessment process needed training and support that is participatory and linked to context and that they should not be seen as empty reservoirs ready to be filled. This means that teachers should be thoroughly developed and trained to be proficient and competent in the execution of their duties. As indicated earlier in this study, learners cannot acquire high-level content knowledge and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills if the teacher's knowledge is not deep and sophisticated enough to understand his/her subject and the subject's accompanying assessment requirements, and if teacher training is not done with the most appropriate rigour it deserves. It is only when teachers are considered essential role players, and viewed as participants who construct knowledge, but not as ordinary receivers of knowledge or empty vessels waiting to be filled, that they would own up to their training in whichever curriculum. When teachers as individuals are taken seriously, change becomes imminent because they understand what is expected of them, but, if teachers do not understand what is expected of them, they will not own up to the process of change and will not commit themselves to ensure the change process.

7.3.7. In-service training should be done by qualified experts

In-service training is of no or little value if it is not conducted by qualified experts. The teachers felt that in spite of there being in-service training workshops conducted, the training was inadequate, and conducted by people with little or no expert knowledge in policy and subject content. The consequence was that teachers' classroom teaching and assessment practices still remained locked in the old traditional approach. There is a definite need for teachers to be provided with rigorous, relevant, regular and ongoing in-service training in the form of workshops conducted by experts in both policy and subject content. A major issue yet to be resolved was that of people who conducted both policy and subject specific training workshops. Unless the issue is tackled head on, the problems that teachers have in respect of lack of understanding of teaching and assessment practices, including content knowledge, will remain for years to come regardless of innovations in terms of curriculum development.

7.3.8. The timing and duration of training are not considerate of the times that suit the teachers

Teachers have a busy schedule and training should be provided at times which would be convenient for teachers. The challenge that teachers faced referred to the timing and duration of the training or workshops. The training workshops were conducted in the afternoons after a hard day's work and, in most cases the workshop duration was one to two hours. These times were not arranged according to suitable times for teachers. What frustrated the teachers was that workshops used their resting time and not the teaching time for training. The problem of timing and duration was also compounded by the fact that the training workshops were conducted by ordinary teachers or subject advisors with little or no in-depth knowledge of policy and subject content. Added to these frustrations was the fact that in some instances teachers were only taken to one or two days' workshops in a year and expected to deliver without any form of monitoring and evaluation.

7.3.9. The principles of high-quality assessment practices are often compromised in teaching and assessment

The teachers' assessment practices showed that they were not familiar with the principles of high-quality assessment practices. What compounded the problem further was that teachers did not reveal the assessment criteria for the learners to know in advance how they would be assessed. Therefore, most of the learners could not fathom the messages revealed through the assessment tasks or question items as these did not relate to their real-life worlds.

This impacted negatively on the principles of high-quality assessment practices, and compromised the teachers' individual creativity or intuitiveness. As Vandeyar and Killen (2003:119) declare, if teachers do not understand the fundamental principles of high-quality assessment, they will not be able to adapt their assessment practices not only to outcomes-based education, but to any future curriculum framework. Although this study focused on teachers' understanding of assessment and the role of assessment standards in ensuring alignment between their teaching, learning and assessment activities, it is assumed that the findings will equally be applicable to the role of aims and objectives in ensuring alignment when the new CAPS are introduced.

7.3.10. Examination preparation is done to the detriment of quality assessment principles

Most teachers did not consider one of the most important principles of classroom assessment, that assessment should inform ongoing teaching and learning. They simply coached their learners regarding the structure of the final examination paper for Grade 12, and sometimes ended up assessing lower-order level cognitive skills at the

expense of higher-order and middle-order cognitive skills. Most teachers in the study used question-openers such as “give”, “which”, “what” and “quote” which expected a lower-order cognitive skill of recall. Apart from the fact that teachers concentrated on lower-order cognitive levels, the assessment tasks were normally compromised by the element of predictability that ran through their questions. Most assessment questions were repeated more than twice and could easily be spotted.

Although two of the seven roles of the teachers define educators as assessors and educators as programme designers, this study has shown that teachers mostly used photocopies of old test and assessment exercises without any regard for aligning the assessment exercises with the relevant assessment standards.

7.3.11. The teachers’ lecturing or chalk and talk approach compromises the principle of learner-centeredness

Almost all the teachers could not actively involve the learners in their teaching and assessment but preferred a lecturing approach that left learners passive. According to constructivism, the classroom is not a place where the teacher becomes an expert and pours information into passive learners who, like empty vessels, are waiting to be filled. The learners should be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Constructivism emphasises the interaction of learners with other learners in a learning process. It requires a teacher to act as a facilitator with the sole objective of helping learners become active role players in their learning and make meaningful connections between prior knowledge, new knowledge and the processes involved in learning.

It was clear that the teachers’ views and understanding were shaped and engraved by a markedly different education system as opposed to the current curriculum policy, and that these teachers were products of a system very different to the one in which teacher roles are now prescribed. The findings of this enquiry are also in line with Blignaut (2008:117) who found that teachers’ beliefs, dispositions, and knowledge about learners, subject matter teaching, learning and assessment, as well as their prior practice, influenced the willingness to change their practice in response to reform and their ability to practice in ways suggested by reformers.

The teachers still favoured the lecturing or a “talk and chalk” approach to teaching and assessment practices based on memorisation and lower-order thinking skills as the core components of their teaching and assessment. Teachers thought that no learning and achievement could be successful without memorisation of the core images of the content if learning had to occur. They therefore tended to assess knowledge, instead of understanding and application of knowledge. Teachers practised the lecturing method or chalk and talk approach because they asserted that it helped them cover the syllabus within the prescribed time period in preparation for final examinations. In most instances, these quick assessment exercises were directed at a few learners with utter disregard of the whole body of learners.

The teachers' talk and chalk approach was done at the expense of group work. They did not once use pair or group activities to ensure the active involvement of learners. They also did not involve learners in assessment as individuals and as groups of learners to mark the assessment tasks or activities. The learners were also not actively involved in the assessment of their work through self-assessment, peer assessment and group assessment, to get opportunities to learn from and reflect on their own. The teachers' activities were more formal and teacher-directed than learner-centred, and the teachers' intentions were mostly driven towards completion of the curriculum and examination preparation than teaching for learning and assessing for learning. Although all teachers agreed that they had undergone one or two in-service training in the form of workshops, they all confirmed that these could not empower and develop them to be able to actively involve the learners through group work. Therefore, it was difficult for them to implement these in aligning their teaching and assessment practices.

7.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides recommendations based on the research questions that triggered the study including the conclusions arrived at from the literature and the empirical inquiry.

7.4.1. Teachers' understanding of assessment and assessment standards

Within the teaching, learning and assessment process, it is important that the assessment standards must be known not only by the teacher but also by the learners so that they can take charge of their learning. The learners must also be provided with constant or continuous feedback on the learning that has taken place. When learners are assessed and provided with feedback, what learners have learnt as a result of teaching is measured, guided and directed. Continuous assessment cannot be effective if there is no feedback on both the learner and the teacher activities. This study therefore recommends that feedback must be made an important component of assessment and must be expressed in terms of assessment standards in order that the teachers can associate their teaching and assessment with the assessment standards or goals and objectives and the learners can associate their assessment and learning with the assessment standards or goals and objectives. This means that mechanisms of receiving and responding to feedback must be done in such a constructive manner that learners feel as parts and parcels of the teaching, learning and assessment process.

7.4.2. The construction of lesson plans

Teachers should construct their own lesson plans, and use the district format only as a guide that informs their own practice.

- Lesson plans should consider the four key aspects of the lesson as essential components of planning, namely, assessment standards (or goals and objectives), teacher activities and learner activities, and assessment exercises and ensure that all the aspects of lesson planning revolve around the assessment standards (or goals and objectives).
- Assessment standards must not be captured in numerals but in complete sentences in order that the lesson plan should be readable, understandable and re-usable to the teachers and all readers.

It has been argued in Chapter 6 that almost all the teachers observed and interviewed followed a prescribed lesson plan format developed at district level. It is of vital importance that the lesson plans should consider the four key aspects of the lesson as essential components of planning, namely, assessment standards (or goals and objectives), teacher activities and learner activities, and assessment exercises and ensure that all the aspects of lesson planning revolve around the assessment standards or goals and objectives. (Goals and objectives will be used when the new CAPS is implemented.) Again, it is recommended that the assessment standards must not be captured in numerals but in complete sentences in order that the lesson plan should be readable, understandable and re-usable to the teachers and all readers. When the learning and teaching activities, as well as assessment exercises are guided by assessment standards or objectives, it will contribute to effective learning. The assessment standards or objectives become the core parts of the lesson and they help in the achievement of learning outcomes or the aims of the curriculum, and inform both the teaching and learning activities as well as assessment exercises.

7.4.3. In-service training is of the utmost importance in ensuring an understanding of the current as well as the new curriculum

Almost all the teachers expressed a dire need for rigorous and ongoing in-service training that is complimentary and developmental for all teachers in the form of workshops. It was clear from the conducted interviews that in spite of there being some interventions through training in the form of workshops for teachers, the teachers' classroom practices still remained to a certain degree traditional and teacher-centred. It is therefore recommended that in-service training is very important in ensuring an understanding of the current and the new curriculum. In view of the fact that South African schools are on the brink of implementing yet another curriculum, it is important

to take note of the need for proper training and constant and developmental support. If this is not done, the new curriculum is doomed to failure.

7.4.4. The in-service training should be done by qualified people

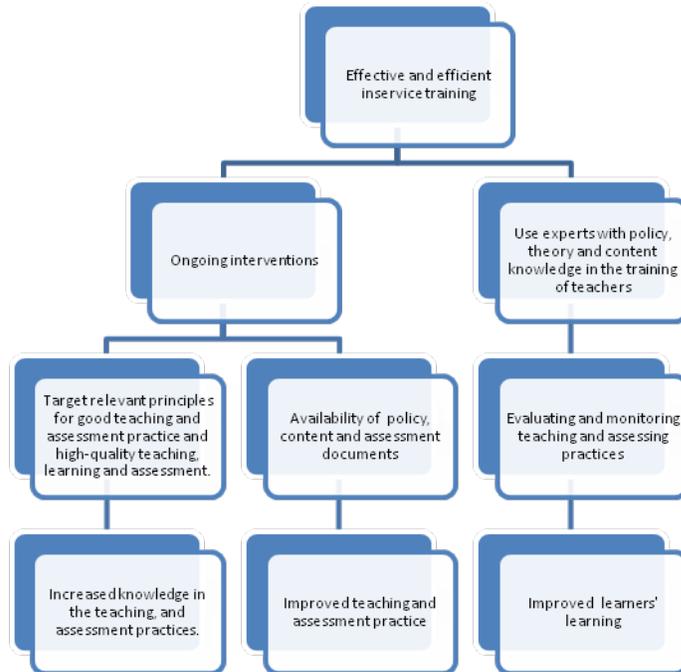
All the teachers mentioned that in spite of there being in-service training workshops conducted, the training was inadequate, and were also conducted by people with little or no expert knowledge in policy and subject content to the extent that teachers' classroom teaching and assessment practices still remained locked in the old traditional approach. They expressed that unless the issue of training is tackled head on, the problems that teachers have will remain for years to come regardless of innovations in terms of curriculum development. The study therefore, recommends that rigorous and relevant in-service training for teachers should be done by qualified people in policy, theory and content knowledge.

7.4.5. The timing and duration of training must be considerate of the suitable times of the teachers

Almost all the teacher participants raised a problem regarding the timing and duration of the training or workshops. The teachers were concerned that the workshops were frequently conducted late in the afternoons when teachers were already exhausted from the hard days' work and that in most cases the workshop duration were one to two hours. The teachers were frustrated by the fact that workshops used their resting time and not the teaching time for training. The study therefore recommends that, the timing and duration of the teachers' training must be arranged in such a manner that they are considerate of or suit the teachers' time.

The following model for ongoing in-service teacher training as informed by the interviewees was developed and it is recommended that this model guide in-service training in order to ensure effective implementation of all future curriculum initiatives.

Figure 7.1: A model for ongoing in-service teacher training



About the model in brief: This model provides an idea of what can be done to unleash relevant and possible interventions that can impact on teachers’ classroom practice. Change in teachers’ approach to teaching and assessment are possible because there is a willingness on their part to change for the better. When teachers own up to their training and they are listened to and the training is not demand-driven, it becomes easy for them to change. From the model, it is recommended that effective and efficient training of teachers requires experts in policy, theory and content knowledge. These experts must be able to translate policy and theory into classroom context to influence the teachers’ classroom practice and epistemologies. Their training must be directed at the relevant principles for good teaching and assessment practices including the principles for high-quality teaching, learning and assessment. The

accessibility and availability of policy, content and assessment documents must form an essential part of the teachers' inventory.

Success will not just come overnight but needs training that is monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis for teachers' increased knowledge and understanding of the teaching and assessment practices. Therefore, continuity of monitoring and evaluation, assistance and guidance with good strategies for improvement is very important. It is not only teachers who should be committed to good teaching and assessment it is the responsibility also of the subject specific advisors to ensure that teachers are developed on an ongoing basis. Improvement in teachers' teaching and assessment practices may then improve learning.

7.4.6. The teachers' understanding of the principles of high-quality assessment practices should be developed

This study recommends that the teachers' proficiency and competence in principles of good assessment practices and principles of high-quality assessment must be developed and supported, to ensure that their assessment practices ensure that learners acquire the necessary content knowledge and higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. It is also recommended that the Department of Basic Education should intervene, invest and ensure that teachers are empowered in terms of principles of high-quality assessment practices. The empowerment must address problems that teachers have in respect of lack of understanding of the significance of assessment standards or goals and objectives in aligning teaching, learning and assessment, and the lack of knowledge of the essential principles of good assessment practice, lest they remain for years to come regardless of innovations in terms of curriculum development. The study further recommends that the Department of Basic Education through the respective districts should ensure that teachers are developed in terms of the new assessment approach, principles of good assessment and principles of high-quality assessment practices. Therefore, it is important that the South African teachers' knowledge of sound assessment practices must be put to standard.

7.4.7. Teaching and assessment must not solely be directed at examination preparation

What compounded this problem was the fact that most teachers seemed to gear their teaching and assessment towards examination preparation. Apart from the fact that teachers' delivery of lessons was time bound with quick to answer questions, most of the teaching and assessment was structured in such a manner that the learners were well grounded in what they had to expect from the final examination question papers. This was not only expressed verbally but it was also discernible in the classroom

exercises given to the learners. Photocopying devoid of intuitiveness, genius and originality was the order of the day. This was also demonstrated in the usage of the previous National Senior Certificate question papers and the provincial question papers (often full of mistakes) with little or no adjustments or individual creativity. The researcher concurs with Gao and Watkins (2002:56) when they mention that this simply means that teachers view learning and teaching from an exterior perspective in relation to learners and teachers, that learning then becomes a way to pass examinations and to acquire the required qualifications. When this occurs, learners become figures that have to be fashioned and shaped consistent with the target examinations without any regard for knowledge acquisition and high-quality learning which involves critical thinking and problem solving. When teaching is examination-directed, what is taught and assessed including the method of teaching and assessing, are based on the content of and the methods used in the examinations. In brief, the content of teaching and assessing becomes greatly determined by external and not internal factors in which the teachers adopt a strategy of drilling with examination-type questions. As indicated in Chapter 1 under section 1.2, when pass rate tends to be over-emphasised over and above learner performance and quality education, the end result becomes the read-regurgitate-recite learning cycle which gears learners more towards preparation of examination writing than preparation for the real-life challenges of the world of work.

7.5. POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to examine the *Setswana Home Language teachers' conception of assessment and assessment standards and the extent to which they use the assessment standards to ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language*. The study was conducted through observations (sections 6.2, 6.4 and 6.4), interviews (sections 6.5 and 6.6) and document analysis (section 6.8), with six Setswana Home Language teachers, at four secondary schools of one the Gauteng province, in action in their natural setting of their respective secondary schools. Because this study knows of no other studies conducted, of a similar nature, the researcher is confident that the study clarifies the subject under investigation and has triggered possibilities for future research. The study cannot be taken to be complete in itself despite the intensity of argumentation, in-depth and comprehensive inquiry on the subject. As the study was qualitative in nature it is also not possible to make generalisations and to extrapolate the findings. Therefore, with the advent of the new curriculum, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, the study proposes inquiries that would include more provinces, more districts and more secondary schools with quite a number of secondary school teachers as individuals and in focussed groups. The current study concentrated on the role of assessment and assessment standards and the importance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment. In view of the fact that most teachers demonstrated that they did not fully understand the role of assessment and assessment standards and did not

recognise the importance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment, the new study may investigate the teachers' understanding and application of goals and objectives in the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment once the new curriculum has been implemented for a number of years.

Other inquiries may involve an examination of the teachers' (of all subjects) understanding of the new approach to assessment and the extent to which they ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment. Studies to explore the challenges and prospects for improving teachers' assessment practices should also be undertaken. Again, as most teachers had strong views and perceptions against the effectiveness of the training they received in the current curriculum, it is significant that more research be done in respect of a qualitative investigation of teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards in-service training. Because this research study indicated that almost all the problems that were identified could mostly be attributed to a lack of proper training, and because all teachers expressed a need for more training, more research can be done on how training can be made more effective and efficient. In view of the fact that South Africa is on the brink of implementing a new curriculum, it is important to learn from the mistakes made in the past. This means that, if proper training, done by experts on times that best suit the teachers is not done, the implementation of the new curriculum will be just as problematic as the previous ones.

7.6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study suggest that the Department of Education and currently the Department of Basic Education through its provincial departments has not successfully ensured that teachers understand the principles of quality assessment and the role of assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment. Although the department introduced the current curriculum with its learning outcomes and assessment standards, the understanding of the role of assessment standards in informing teacher and learner activities and assessment exercises has lacked behind. Therefore, the teachers have not fathomed the fact that assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning. Although teachers are relatively influenced by the tenets of outcomes-based education, and are aware of learning outcomes and assessment standards they confirmed that they cannot put the assessment standards to good use. It is therefore imperative, considering the findings and conclusions, that the authorities responsible for the proper teaching, learning and assessment of Setswana Home Language at the Further Education and Training phase should revisit their intervention strategies with a view to improving the situation. These would include the Members of the Executive Councils of Education in the seven provinces that offer Setswana; the district subject advisors and the provincial co-ordinators of school-based assessment. Therefore, it becomes imperative that the authorities, particularly the Setswana subject advisors, must ensure that they do not only study the curriculum policies but also study theories of good

practice and the content of their subjects thoroughly in order to develop and empower the teachers. As subject advisors are aware of their state of knowledge of the subject content, they may involve university lecturers with relevant subject content, theory and policy knowledge to help develop teachers of their subject.

Lastly, the results of this study have illuminated the researcher on the subject of his dissertation, and have proven empowering and developing in matters of the importance of aligning teaching, learning and assessment. It also enriched the researcher's understanding of assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning. Whichever route may be taken in terms of curriculum innovation, outcomes-based education has influenced teacher practices in some ways, and further research into challenges and prospects for improving teachers' assessment practices would be essential. Again, the study has highlighted that the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards high-quality assessment practices is of the utmost importance.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1. Appendix A: Application to do research in Gauteng province

GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



RESEARCH REQUEST FORM

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN INSTITUTIONS AND/OR OFFICES OF THE GAUTENG DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. PARTICULARS OF THE RESEARCHER

1.1	Details of the Researcher	
<i>Surname and Initials:</i>	SEBATE, PM	
<i>First Name/s:</i>	PHALADI MOSES	
<i>Title (Prof / Dr / Mr / Mrs / Ms):</i>	Prof	
<i>Student Number (if relevant):</i>	435-030-8	
<i>ID Number:</i>	561212 6097 08 5	

1.2	Private Contact Details	
<i>Postal Address</i>	15 ROSETTE AVENUE, KAREN PARK, AKASIA, 0118	
<i>Physical Address</i>	15 ROSETTE AVENUE, KAREN PARK, AKASIA, 0118	
<i>Postal Code</i>	0118	
Tel	012-549 2873 (H)/ 012-429 8220 (W)	
Cell:	082 665 9433	
Fax:	(012) 429 4919	
E-mail:	sebatpm@unisa.ac.za	

2. PURPOSE & DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

2.1	Purpose of the Research (Place cross where appropriate)	
	<i>Undergraduate Study – Self</i>	
	<i>Postgraduate Study – Self</i>	X
	<i>Private Company/Agency – Commissioned by Provincial Government or Department</i>	
	<i>Private Research by Independent Researcher</i>	
	<i>Non-Governmental Organisation</i>	
	<i>National Department of Education</i>	
	<i>Commissions and Committees</i>	
	<i>Independent Research Agencies</i>	
	<i>Statutory Research Agencies</i>	
	<i>Higher Education Institutions</i>	

2.2	Full title of Thesis / Dissertation / Research Project	
	<p>The role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home Language</p>	

2.3	Value of the Research to Education (Attach Research Proposal)	
	<p>The aim of this research study is to find out: <i>What is Setswana Home Language teachers’ conception of assessment and assessment standards and to what extent do they ensure proper alignment between teaching, learning and assessment in</i></p>	

Setswana Home Language? It is hoped that through this research, the teachers and learners will be empowered in understanding the role of assessment standards, and in their use to guide them in the teaching-learning-assessment cycle, and teachers as assessors will know that assessment standards serve as the central controlling ideas in the lesson planning process.

It is also hoped that this research study will raise awareness (of education managers, assessors and teaching and learning officials) to problematic terminology in the versioned guideline and policy documents

2.5	Student and Postgraduate Enrolment Particulars (if applicable)
<i>Name of institution where enrolled:</i>	University of South Africa
<i>Degree / Qualification:</i>	MEd
<i>Faculty and Discipline / Area of Study:</i>	Human Sciences/ Didactics & Curriculum Studies
<i>Name of Supervisor / Promoter:</i>	Prof MM Nieman
2.6	Employer (where applicable)
<i>Name of Organisation:</i>	University of South Africa
<i>Position in Organisation:</i>	Professor (Tertiary Lecturer)
<i>Head of Organisation:</i>	Prof M Makhanya c/o Dr P Mafora
<i>Street Address:</i>	P.O Box 392
	Preller Street Muckleuneck
<i>Postal Code:</i>	0003
<i>Telephone Number (Code + Ext):</i>	(012) 429 6962

Fax:	(012) 429 4919
E-mail:	@unisa.ac.za

2.7	PERSAL Number (where applicable)
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3. PROPOSED RESEARCH METHOD/S

(Please indicate by placing a cross in the appropriate block whether the following modes would be adopted)

3.1 Questionnaire/s (If Yes, supply copies of each to be used)

		NO	X
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3.2 Interview/s (If Yes, provide copies of each schedule)

YES	X	NO	
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3.3 Use of official documents

YES		NO	X
<i>If Yes, please specify the document/s: School policies, codes of conduct, and Class registers.</i>			

Tests, assignments, portfolios and policy and guideline documents for the National Curriculum Statement.

3.4 Workshop/s / Group Discussions (If Yes, Supply details)

YES		NO	X

3.5 Standardised Tests (e.g. Psychometric Tests)

YES		NO	X
<i>If Yes, please specify the test/s to be used and provide a copy/ies</i>			
N/A			

4. INSTITUTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH

4.1 Type of Institutions (Please indicate by placing a cross alongside all types of institutions to be researched)

<i>INSTITUTIONS</i>	Mark with X here
---------------------	------------------

Primary Schools	
Secondary Schools	X
ABET Centres	
ECD Sites	
LSEN Schools	
Further Education & Training Institutions	
Other	

4.2 **Number of institution/s involved in the study (Kindly place a sum and the total in the spaces provided)**

<i>Type of Institution</i>	Total
Primary Schools	
Secondary Schools	4
ABET Centres	
ECD Sites	
LSEN Schools	
Further Education & Training Institutions	
Other	
GRAND TOTAL	4

<i>Tshwane West</i>	X
<i>Tshwane North</i>	
<i>Ekurhuleni South</i>	
<i>Ekurhuleni North</i>	
<i>Sedibeng East</i>	
<i>Sedibeng West</i>	
<i>Johannesburg East</i>	
<i>Johannesburg North</i>	
<i>Johannesburg Central</i>	
<i>Johannesburg South</i>	
<i>Johannesburg West</i>	

<p>If Head Office/s (Please indicate Directorate/s) N/A</p>

NOTE:

If you have not as yet identified your sample/s, a list of the names and addresses of all the institutions and districts under the jurisdiction of the GDE is available from the department at a small fee.

4.5 *Number of learners to be involved per school (Please indicate the number by gender)*

<i>Grade</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>6</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>										
<i>Number</i>												

<i>Grade</i>	<i>7</i>		<i>8</i>		<i>9</i>		<i>10</i>		<i>11</i>		<i>12</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>G</i>
<i>Number</i>									<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>

4.6 *Number of educators/officials involved in the study (Please indicate the number in the relevant column)*

<i>Type of staff</i>	<i>Educators</i>	<i>HODs</i>	<i>Deputy Principals</i>	<i>Principal</i>	<i>Lecturers</i>	<i>Office Based</i>

						<i>Officials</i>
Number	6					

4.7 Are the participants to be involved in groups or individually?

The participants will be involved as both individuals and in small groups.

Participation	
Groups	
Individually	X

4.8 Average period of time each participant will be involved in the test or other research activities (Please indicate time in minutes)

Participant/s	Activity	Time
	Interview & Observation	120 Min

4.9 Time of day that you propose to conduct your research.

<i>School Hours</i>	<i>During Break</i>	<i>After School Hours</i>
<i>X</i>	<i>(Learners)</i>	<i>X</i>

4.10 School term/s during which the research would be undertaken

<i>First Term</i>	<i>Second Term</i>	<i>Third Term</i>
	<i>X</i>	

<i>DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER</i>	
1. I declare that all statements made by myself in this application are true and accurate.	
2. I have taken note of all the conditions associated with the granting of approval to conduct research and undertake to abide by them.	
<i>Signature:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	<i>14.02.2011</i>

<i>DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR / PROMOTER / LECTURER</i>
I declare that: -

<i>Surname:</i>	<i>Nieman</i>
<i>First Name/s:</i>	<i>Marietha</i>
<i>Institution / Organisation:</i>	<i>University of South Africa</i>
<i>Faculty / Department (where relevant):</i>	<i>Human Sciences</i>
<i>Telephone:</i>	<i>(012) 429 4587 (W)</i>
<i>Fax:</i>	<i>(012) 429 4919</i>
<i>E-mail:</i>	<i>niemanm@unisa.ac.za</i>
<i>Signature:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	<i>14.02.2011</i>

N.B. This form (and all other relevant documentation where available) may be completed and forwarded electronically to Nomvula Ubisi (nomvulau@gpg.gov.za). The last 2 pages of this document must however contain the original signatures of both the researcher and his/her supervisor or promoter. These pages may therefore be faxed or hand delivered. Please mark fax - For Attention: Nomvula 011 355 0516 (fax) or hand deliver (in closed envelope) to Nomvula Ubisi (Room 525), 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg.

9.2. Appendix B: Approval letter



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Enquiries: Nomvula Ubisi (011)3550488

Date:	14 February 2011
Name of Researcher:	Sebate Phaladi Moses
Address of Researcher:	15 Rosette Avenue
	Karenpark
	Akasia 9433
Telephone Number:	0125492873/0826659433
Fax Number:	0124294919
Research Topic:	Alignment of Teaching, Learning and Assessment of Setswana in FET phase: The Role of Assessment Standards
Number and type of schools:	4 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

- 1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.**
- 2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.**
- 3. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.**
- 4. letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.**
- 5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.**
- 6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.**
- 7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.**
- 8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.**
- 9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.**
- 10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.**
- 11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.**

12. ***On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.***
13. ***The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.***
14. ***Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.***

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Nomvula Ubisi

DEPUTY CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST: RESEARCH

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.

<i>Signature of Researcher:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	

Appendix C: Request for permission-District

Department of Educational Studies
University of South Africa
P.O. Box 392
UNISA
0003
20 April 2011

The District Director
Gauteng Department of Education
Tshwane West district
Fax: 012-725 1346

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN TSHWANE WEST

I am conducting research for my Masters in Education studies with the title: ***The role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home Language.***

The focus of my study is specifically on secondary school teachers, specifically in the Tshwane West District, as these teachers are some of implementers of the National Curriculum Statement and agents of change within the classroom. The proposed times of my meetings with the Setswana teachers will be mid-week after and during school hours; times for after hours engagements will concentrate on individual interviews that I will have with the teachers concerned while times during school hours will be dedicated to observations and documentary analysis. The plan for my study is to have individual interviews, observations and document analysis in four different schools with one teacher per school, which will be identified once this application has been approved.

It is my presumption that the research findings will make a laudable contribution towards the understanding of the role of assessment standards and will lead to quality teaching and assessment in secondary schools. A feedback to Tshwane West district and the schools involved will be provided in the form of a copy of a completed dissertation.

Hoping this application meets with your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely

Prof Phaladi M Sebate

.....

Tel: 012 429 8220 (w)//0826659433 (cell)

Fax: 012 429 4919

Appendix D: Request for permission-Schools

Department of Educational Studies

University of South Africa

P.O. Box 392

UNISA

0003

22 April 2011

The Principal

WXYZ Secondary School

Private Bag X369

Gamawinterveldt

0947

Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN WXYZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I am conducting research for my Masters in Education studies with the title: *The role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home Language*. Since my research has to do with people particularly teachers, I have to undertake research in schools in certain areas. Therefore, I hereby request permission to conduct my research at your school.

The focus of my study is specifically on Setswana secondary school teachers, specifically in the Tshwane West District, as these teachers are some of implementers of the National Curriculum Statement and agents of change within the classroom. The proposed times of my meetings with your Setswana teacher at your school will be mid-week after and during school hours; times for after hours engagements will concentrate on individual interviews that I will have with the teacher concerned while times during school hours will be dedicated to observations and documentary analysis. The plan for my study is to have individual interviews, observations and document analysis in your school with your Setswana subject teacher, from whom I would also like to obtain consent should this request be approved.

It is my presumption that the research findings will make a laudable contribution towards the understanding of the role of assessment standards and will lead to quality teaching and assessment in secondary schools. A feedback to Tshwane West district and your school will be provided in the form of a copy of a completed dissertation.

Hoping this application meets with your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely

Phaladi M Sebate

.....

Tel: 012 429 8220 (w)//0826659433 (cell)

Fax: 012 429 4919

Appendix E: Informed consent letter

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project on , "***The role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home Language***", that is being conducted by Prof Moses Phaladi Sebate from the University of south Africa.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to hold an individual interview to find out about the ***The role of teacher understanding in aligning assessment with teaching and learning in Setswana Home Language***: we will discuss our general ideas about: whether teachers understand the role of assessment standards in instruction, whether they intensively trained to implement the imperatives of the General National Curriculum Statement – Languages; to what extent do the teachers use assessment standards to align teaching, learning and assessment in Setswana Home Language and the challenges do they face in this regard; what they think can be done to ensure that teachers recognise (the role of assessment standards) and use assessment standards in aligning teaching, learning and assessment.

I understand that the person leading the discussion will attempt to keep the discussion focused on this research topic and that I myself will act individually, not wanting to discuss issues outside these topics. I understand my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that if I wish to withdraw from this study or to leave, I may do so at anytime, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so. If I do withdraw from this study, I understand that this will have no effect on my relationship with the University of South Africa. I understand that because of this study, there could be violations of my privacy. To prevent violations of my own privacy or others privacy, I have been asked not to talk about any of my own private experiences that I would consider too personal or revealing.

I understand that all information I give will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and that my name in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher and the University. I understand that the study involves an individual interview that lasts 2 hours or less, which will be audio taped. I also understand that if the researcher decides to reuse the audiotapes for training purposes in the future the researcher will contact me prior to their use.

If there are any concerns or questions about this study, please contact Prof Phaladi M Sebate or Prof MM Nieman at the Department of Educational Studies, University of South Africa, AJH van der Walt Building, UNISA, 012 429 8220 // 082 665 9433 or 083 450 0079 // 012 429 4587.

I have read and understand this information and I agree to take part in the study.

Today's Date

Participants' Signature

Appendix F: Interview schedule with responses

Question	Responses
<p>1. What do you think qualifies or makes you eligible to teach Setswana? Are you a qualified Setswana subject teacher?</p>	<p>TA: I think I qualify to teach because of the intensive training that I have received at a college called Extreme College of Education in Thaba Nchu. Whereby I received a very good lecturer by the name of Mr. Letchi, who inspired me to teaching, to enrol for Setswana, because in the first instance my major subjects was English but after three months Mr. Lebo has asked me to come and teach at his department, it is where I develop love for Setswana, I think he was one of the best lecturers that I have, who motivated me to have this interest in Setswana because of, by that I develop a pattern in grade, from grade 1 to grade 3 and then I doing CP but now from 4 to 5 to where I started to teach Setswana and then again through reading and reading novels of Setswana, everything that I came across which talks about Setswana, I read, I can be a very person in Setswana, also when I am teaching Setswana, it was about 15 years ago, where a teacher called me, then I was Teaching Life Science which is, and the people asked me can you assist me with teaching Setswana and then through the teacher that we, through teachers that we were working, with some teachers, I remember one teacher, at Modiri, who is sort of now the knowledge, also a teacher in Soshanguve, the knowledge, also there was a this lady, she was by then, when I was marker she was my senior marker, she also assist me a lot. Also through integration with other teachers exactly where I develop a lot of knowledge in Setswana, I have marked paper 1, 2, 3 in the senior marker in the Setswana. There was a man called Prof Legotlo, he was a lecturer at the University of North West, Bophuthatswana by then. I used to mark under him. He is the one who recognized the potential in me and he appointed me as a senior marker in Setswana. I have marked paper 2 and 3 and then I have also supervised those people and also in the Gauteng Department of Education when we do the Gauteng Department of Education I was appointed senior marker and also in Gauteng Department of Education I am also part of the examiners of Setswana paper 1.</p> <p>TB: I am illegible qualified Setswana because I am a qualified in educator in Setswana, I trained for 30 years period Setswana as a colleague and I furthered my studies.</p> <p>TC: I think because I have studied and majored in Setswana.</p> <p>TD: I am illegible Setswana because I have been trained as a Setswana Teacher for four years and then it is my passion to learn more about Setswana.</p>

	<p>TE: Yes. For 34 yrs I have been teaching the subject at high school level, even got promotion to head the subject. Aim is to uplift the Setswana educators, guide them, and instil the love of the subject. Again strive to unpack, uphold or expose the norms and values as embodied in Setswana culture. Also participate in Radio and TV shows to reach the mileage of the nation.</p>
	<p>TF: Yes I am a qualified Setswana subject teacher. I have been trained (I went to training college to be trained to teach Setswana and I've got passion for the subject).</p>
<p>2. How many years have you been teaching Setswana?</p>	<p>TA: Grade 12.</p>
	<p>TB: 25 years in the field of teaching Setswana.</p>
	<p>TC: I have been teaching Setswana for 28 years.</p>
	<p>TD: I have been teaching Setswana for the past 26 years.</p>
	<p>TE: For 34 yrs.</p>
	<p>TF: 19 Yrs</p>
<p>3. Have you been trained to implement the imperatives of the current National Curriculum Statement?</p>	<p>TA: Not necessarily been trained because we went for a course for about two to three weeks in the afternoon whereby we trained only for one to two hours. So to be honest it was not really an effective method. I have gone for training, yes.</p>
	<p>TB: I have been trained to implement the imperative of the current national curriculum.</p>
	<p>TC: Yes, we underwent training although it was a very short period. We attended for two weeks; it was two week training. The training was not enough for someone who have not been trained, we needed thousand hours of training. I don't think that was enough, for someone who has been trained under the old system, because I initially trained as a primary teacher at Technikon College and now I really can't say the training was enough.</p>
	<p>TD: Yes, I have been trained to be national curriculum statement.</p>
	<p>TE: Not really trained per se but merely underwent crash courses of three to four hours. The training involved sharing ideas on things we do not know and understand.</p>
	<p>TF: Yes</p>

<p>4. What did the training involve?</p>	<p>TA: It, as I say to you, we were trained to introduce new curriculum which in my case and with other colleagues we found that now this curriculum it, I mean this new curriculum cannot be so effective in our constitution where we are imagining 40 learners in your class, I am teaching grade 12. I need to be complete my syllabus, complete my syllabus you have to work very hard and with the current institution of our learners who are not prepared to read on their own, you have to implement the new curriculum as such, because I think the new curriculum can be implemented may be in the senior phases whereby we've got, where you cannot be teacher centred but learner centred. But in terms of curriculum with the limited time, when we write examinations you are expected, your learners are expected to write all the papers of good quality.</p>
	<p>TB: Skills, knowledge, attitude and other many important issues that would differentiate between national curriculum statement and the education.</p>
	<p>TC: Our training did not have practices of policy in terms of content. We need training involved the various methods of teaching, the emphasis must be on learner centred, much on learner involvement, unlike in the past when emphasis was on, it was teacher centred.</p>
	<p>TD: The training involved how to teach and then how to implement some of the assessment standards and then how to handle the learners during the lesson.</p>
	<p>TE: Orientation into the curriculum.</p>
	<p>TF: Assessment Standards and Learning Outcomes.</p>
<p>5. Was the training sufficient to help you to implement the new curriculum?</p>	<p>TA: As I said now, it was not sufficient. To me I think it was supposed to be a new course, whereby you can even get a certificate to show I've got this knowledge.</p>
	<p>TB: wasn't, it has to take one to make own research or make further studies so that we can be in the position to go with the current of curriculum.</p>
	<p>TC: Not much. I cannot say, it was just a trial and error crash course without a certificate of competence but on the same, it has helped.</p>
	<p>TD: I don't think the training was sufficient because some time the people who were, let me repeat again. It was not sufficient because the people who were meant to give us the lessons, they were not ready to use the training and then some of the issues, they were not properly trained. We were not properly trained and it was not sufficient. I think they should have given us more time and keep on training us as time goes on.</p>
	<p>TE: No, not sufficient.</p>
	<p>TF: I can say yes, but partly no, because it is not effective enough like the education system that we had before.</p>

<p>6. Share with me how you plan and prepare teaching and learning activities.</p>	<p>TA: I want to open and honest with you, I prepare for the sake of my seniors, but what I prepare is not normally what I am going to implement, I am going to be honest.</p>
	<p>TB: Firstly you must have curriculum statement. From the curriculum statement that is where you can develop your work schedule and your work schedule will help you to develop a lesson plan. Without a three mentioned it is impossible to can have a quality lesson.</p>
	<p>TC: What I usually do, I make sure that I make sure that I have my work schedule with me because the work schedule will always help me with the content of the lesson and I always make sure that I have the NSC guide that will help me in using the LO assessment standards for the grade I am preparing for. For instance if I am preparing a lesson that is LO2, I would be, I will also look into the question, ja, the assessment standards and the assessment standards will always, let's say I treat characterization, and that assessment no 2 for the, the guide is always helping me in teaching up the relevant assessment standards. The assessment standards that will suit the lesson that I am preparing, for they always help the teachers, the assessment standards not to deviate from the content and also to know what to teach. The content of the lesson, like I have said is derived from the work schedule and the plan will always include the copies, the methods, the resources, the LO's and assessment standards. All these have to be included in my lesson plan and the duration.</p>
	<p>TD: Firstly I start from the known to the unknown when I handled a certain topic with the learners. Because if came from the known and I go to the unknown and most of the time I used the assessment standards that they taught us to handle when you do anything concerning learners.</p>
	<p>TE: I plan and prepare teaching and learning by using LO's and AS's.</p>
	<p>TF: Firstly the work schedule is consulted which is informed by the subject framework, then you plan your lesson according to the subject framework and the National Statement is used to check the AS that go with the LO's to be taught.</p>
<p>7. What do you understand by assessment for learning and assessment OF learning? (Follow up question: How do these help in teaching and learning?)</p>	<p>TA: Assessment for learning? For I think, I am not sure, assessment for learning and of learning, of learning it is on the learners, and of learning, and for learning it is when I assess my situation, in terms of the situation, it is how I assess. Forms of assessment encourages learners for learning. Continuous assessment helps or encourages learners to learn.</p>
	<p>TB: Assessment for learning is an assessment that will take one to assess how do you educate or how do you get learners in teaching, and assessment of learning is to assess what the learners have done in the subject. It must be clearly focused, flexible, integrated with teaching and learning. It should use a variety of methods. Different methods used for learning or acquire knowledge .e.g. self, peer and group assessment.</p>
	<p>TC: I can't differentiate this. Assessment helps teachers to judge learners performance. Assessment helps the teacher to see barriers of learning among learners. Assessment should involve both teacher, learners and parents. Parents must take part in the involvement of assessment.</p>

	<p>TD: Assessment for learning you assess learners to see where there are gaps and teaching and assessment after the lesson you find out whether a learner have understand the lesson. Assessment for learning is a way of assessing what learners are supposed to learn or know after a lesson. Assessing what learners have learnt after a particular lesson.</p>
	<p>TE: Assessment for Learning: It helps to adjust the learning content according to the level of development of learners. Assessment of Learning: It helps to evaluate both the educator and learners. We assess learning to check if learners were able to understand the lesson and to check if the lesson was well understood by the learners, checking LO's and A's of the module that they are achievable or not. We assess learning in order to check if learning is possible or not.</p>
	<p>TF: <u>Assessment for Learning</u>: Is when learners are assessed at the beginning of the lesson to check what they already know. <u>Assessment of learning</u>: Is to check whether the learners have obtained the AS you set out to attain at the beginning of the lesson. I think it refers to assessing that which has to be studied i.e. to assess whether it caters for the required results the learning will yield. I think it means to assess that which students have learned in a particular lesson.</p>
<p>8. What do you think is an assessment standard?</p>	<p>TA: Involving, making sure that now we are assessing them in, so that I can find out whether the subject that you are teaching of the subject in which learners really understand, but you can assess learners in different forms. By giving them work to do in the class, sitting by them by asking questions, making sure that we are using different types of questions. What do they say, in terms of? I think you are talking in terms of LO's. LO1, 2, 3, 4, 5. He speaks Setswana.</p>
	<p>TB: Assessment standard is a measurement of learning outcomes. You will be in a position to know how do you assess from a learning outcome, which criterions, which important factors you need to focus in order to go according to the curriculum?</p>
	<p>TC: My for a We carry like a measuring thing, you will measure your teaching and also you measure the learning. Ja. For assessment standards, you will be able to know whether you have achieved your goal and you will always be able to see a wonderful child.</p>
	<p>TD: By assessment standard you mean the way you use, the planning that you use around assessment and you normally use during the teaching and give them feedback after each and every lesson.</p>
	<p>TE: Assessment standards describe the minimum level, depth and breadth of what it is to be learnt.</p>
	<p>TF: Assessment Standards are criteria that collectively 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.</p>

<p>9. What is the role of assessment standards in the teaching, learning and assessment process?</p>	<p>TA: The role of assessment standards is to ensure that now after teaching learners we can get feedback from the learners in the form of assessing them, assessing them in a different category. For e.g. even you set questions, they must be in line with the assessment, making sure that you, the type of questions that you ask clearly cover the syllabus and I mean they also cover all the assessment. All the assessment, for e.g. shorter questions, longer questions, different types of questions. What role, you mean their function. I only know that what I said is their role, I cannot put them to good use in content and tests.</p>
	<p>TB: You are able to measure as to whether you are doing the correct things in the classroom and you are following the correct learning outcomes in the class. Without the assessment standard you can exactly be in a position to assess the learners on how they have completed or understood the lesson. Since there was no training the challenge was to understand the link of assessment standards to the teaching, learning and assessment and to lay the assessment standards to use.</p>
	<p>TC: Assessment standards help in organizing teaching. To know what to teach for a week, in a way further the pacesetter for me and the other teachers in the same grade. Ja, I say this because I crammed but I cannot use assessment standards to control my planning.</p>
	<p>TD: When teachers plan, they should learn around the assessment standard, even if he or she assess learners the assessment standards revolve around the assessment standard and every time or any activity that you involve, normally you must always put assessment standard in place. I must say I was not sure that assessment standards connect the content of the subject matter and assessment, it is unfortunate that now even our seniors don't understand the role of assessment standards.</p>
	<p>TE: Assessment standards in the teaching, learning process help us to determine whether the learning outcomes have been attained.</p>
	<p>TF: Assessment Standards are used by educators to assess if their lessons have obtained the objective they set out to reach at the beginning of the lesson.</p>
<p>10. To what extent do you use assessment standards to guide the teaching and assessment of your subject?</p>	<p>TA: At what? Yes obviously when you are teaching learners, what you want to get, and which is very critical is to just know that you can teach without assessing the learners, meaning what I do, when I make sure that I assess the learners. Yes, because this is that the tool that guide you, guide you whether learners are with you or not. There is no point that you can get to the class, if I've done my best, how do you assess that your learners, you need to get feedback from the learners.</p>
	<p>TB: Every time when you teach, you need to refer to assessment standards, you cannot teach without referring to the assessment standards. Those are the guidelines of the educator to make sure that he is correct to reach the theme.</p>

	<p>TC: To a large extent, assessment standards direct the teacher, a teacher cannot achieve the intended learning outcome without the assessment standards, and the implementation of the assessment standard is not a problem as such, the only problem that I have is to lay them in my lesson plan. In the NCS guide they are put in numerical order. It is not easy for one to draft without content, it take you through the guide.</p>
	<p>TD: I plan my lesson around the assessment standard so that when I assess the learners, I make sure that everything is according to assessment standards.</p>
	<p>TE: By asking questions i.e. learner involvement, in a form of a group discussion, homework, assignments etc. As HOD I have to check the performance and to assist both the teachers and learners.</p>
	<p>TF: Assessment Standards serve as a guideline to educators to help them prepare their lessons with the objective in mind of what they really want the outcome of the lesson.</p>
<p>11. How has the existence of assessment standards in the National Curriculum Statement influenced your teaching and assessment?</p>	<p>TA: I think it has done a very good job, and why because, now even with this new method of setting question papers, the new method of question papers, whereby all the assessment standards are dealing with. It has helped me a lot. Because the way we set the questions, they make questions for learners so that they can be even open minded. For example to be able to, for a question of interpretation, interpretation of the pictures, interpretations for example of maybe a paragraph to be summarized. Interpretation of a comprehension test, also how do we interpret, in terms of pray how do interpret a pray.</p>
	<p>TB: It has improved my teaching skills because the national curriculum came with different ways and approaches to what teaching and assessing learners. Yes, for instance we can look deeper into the issue of assessment. Assessment in different ways, you can assess learners by giving them work to share in class. You can have self assessment, the child can assess himself or herself, you can have the peer assessment where the learners come to together, assess each other and it is the duty of the educator to direct or help the learners in all those processes of assessment that I have mentioned.</p>
	<p>TC: Assessment standards have guided me in varying my methods of asking questions. Each learning outcome has different assessment standards, therefore assessment standards help me in planning my lessons in view of the assessment that is the questions intended to achieve the objective of the lesson. A lesson cannot succeed if I don't have, if I don't know what to assess at the end of the lesson.</p>

	<p>TD: t helped me to have a syllabus or the school to progress to the next syllabus.</p> <p>TE: Since there was not enough training, the existence of Assessment Standards in the NCS did not influence my teaching and assessment.</p>
	<p>TF: It influenced it in the sense that all the teaching activities one involves herself in, they are always guided by the outcome and the AS helps to check and verify if the lesson has been understood.</p>
<p>12. What do you think can be done to ensure that teachers recognize the role of assessment standards) and use them in aligning teaching, learning and assessment?</p>	<p>TA: I think maybe teachers need very intensive training, intensive training not in that the way it was done in the past, because I don't think that the old days, maybe the new teachers who will say I really understand and master as old as assessment is, I can only implement them without saying, and also the switching.</p>
	<p>TB: Every educator must have a curriculum statement. In the curriculum statement it is clearly indicated how you use learning outcomes together with assessment standards without these tools that are curriculum statement one cannot reach his or her full potential. It is very imperative that when you want to align teaching with government standards, always refer to your curriculum.</p>
	<p>TC: I should think that there have to be a regular way of conducted and in these workshops teachers should be made aware of the importance of assessing learners in such a way that they are could be in a position to explore the subject in an exciting an different way.</p>
	<p>TD: When teachers plan their work, they should plan their assessment standards, even if he or she assess learners, the assessment revolve around assessment planning.</p>
	<p>TE: Intensive workshops are needed.</p>
	<p>TF: Teachers still need to be work shopped fully in realizing how to plan lessons using the National Curriculum Statement which guides with lesson planning.</p>
<p>13. What additional support would you, as a teacher, like to receive to be able to align assessment standards, teaching and assessment?</p>	<p>TA: It is unfortunate that now even our seniors don't understand, we need an expert. Yes, when I talk about an expert, with our for example with our subject, even as most of, really differentiate 1, 2 and 3.</p>
	<p>TB: Further training, more workshops in conjunction with other educators, other schools, other provinces, that will help us to reach one goal of following the correct assessment standards.</p>
	<p>TC: There should be more study guides with more questions for the languages like it is done in content subjects and also facilitators should conduct regular and meaningful workshops, workshops that deal with teaching and assessment.</p>
	<p>TD: IF the department can introduce educators for assisting learners who are unable to read or write.</p>

	TE: Thorough training, taking into consideration the cognisance level of individual learners.
	TF: I think in-service training and workshops will help in this regard.
14. What do you understand by assessment?	TA: The process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers in making decisions about the progress of their learners.
	TB: The way in which you evaluate your progress and be able to give feedback. The process of gathering information on learner competence in many different ways continuously.
	TC: A process whereby you collect information on learners continuously in different ways.
	TD: Assessment is way of checking the ability and understanding of the learners after a lesson or a particular module has been presented. Is a measuring stick of the achievement of learning outcomes of a presented lesson.
15. What do you regard as the purpose of assessment?	TA: To inform the teacher about the strengths and weaknesses of the learners.
	TB: To see as whether you have understood the lesson. To provide feedback, guidance, supporting learning, remediating barriers to learning.
	TC: Assessment helps learners to identify the importance of learning. Assessment also helps learners to take decisions about their learning. Assessment also helps learners to identify their problems.
	TD: We assess in order to check the understanding of a lesson and to give feedback
	TE: Assessment assist in checking the progress of learning by learners and teaching by the educator.
	TF: It is to measure the level of understanding of a particular lesson. To get feedback that what one has been taught is understandable.
16. What do you regard as good assessment practice?	TA: Assessment that is valid, fair and unbiased. Reporting after assessment
	TB: It helps learners to gauge the value of their learning. It must provide information about curriculum. Both the assessor and the learner should know what they are assessing for.
	TC: Assessment must be fair. The learner must understand why he/she is assessed. Feedback should be given to learners.
	TD: When the assessor know what he want to assess.
	TE: When the assessment is able to detect the pace, problems and achievements of the educators and learners during learning progress.
	TF: It is when one assesses individuals after a lesson has been presented and to give feedback so that the one being assessed really know what was expected of him/her.

17. Are you familiar with assessment policies?	TA: Yes
	TB: Yes. These policies should be visited time and again, to check as whether you are on the right track.
	TC: Yes
	TD: Yes. Because I always assess learners and know what important aspects are supported to be included in the question paper, such as LO's, A's and cognitive levels.
	TE: Yes. I always refer to the policy when I design a question paper for learners to check if all the LO's and A's are being assessed and when am I supposed to assess.
	TF: Yes, as they are also based on different cognitive levels and once assessing a person based on his cognitive level, one knows what type of preparation one has to do in order to get certain results.
18. Are there any other suggestions, comments, views or perceptions that you have that you feel you should have mentioned? Are there any ideas or points that you would like to add?	TA: Comments? Not much, you see that now I want to be honest, I am not here to Setswana teaching. We have teachers who are competent. I think we need to have teachers who are competent and firstly because now in most schools the principle or whoever is on charge, will takes a maths teacher and say go and teach Setswana. Which is wrong because you cannot, when you get, an Afrikaans teacher is an Afrikaner, sort of now recognize the language. But now if a teacher is in a situation, I am just teaching because they are short of teachers. We need teachers who will make learners to love the subject. The question now, if you take a subject like this, obviously you are not... and also to make learners aware that it is Setswana, it is very important. And make them love it. I taught Setswana for the past 16 years, the old place. But now one teacher will be ashamed to say, are you teaching Setswana, I will ask him a question, how can you teach Setswana, because they don't associate Setswana with being a very good subject and then also teachers are not educated, it is wrong. No I think I said a lot.
	TB: Yes, because this national curriculum statement is still new, so the department of education have to make sure that time and again they call workshops and revisit what the teachers are doing in class. Especially in our eras, that is the present era, most of the present educators are educators of the old system, therefore it is important to check, to measure, to make sure that everybody is taken on board, which I don't see the department of education do at present. As I have already mentioned I feel the curriculum statement should at the lower level, so that when these learners grow they exactly know what is happening, instead of breaking this curriculum statement by doing in classes, grade 9 and grade 12. Themust be in between, we've only got it correct through in the exit class.
	TC: Nothing. I think I have said enough. I feel assessment, I should think teaching and learning and assessment are inseparable. What I think, how I think is dependent on assessment. Assessment is an outcome of teaching and learning, that is assessment determines how good or bad the teaching and learning are. For I make, in my teaching that what I teach is always followed by assessment and the result of the assessment clearly show the extent of learning that has taken place.
	TD: I think you must have enough training, and learners at primary they should do a lot of reading and calculating because when they are at secondary there is no time to teach them or to calculate, so if they are having a problem of reading, you find it difficult to read or to answer, anything, especially if there is a passage to read and then they are supposed to answer it, but normally you find that the learners they find it

	<p>difficult to answer such questions. You also have a high failure rate into grade 10 because most of our learners are foreigners. And in such instances you find it difficult to teach them Setswana. And then the other thing is I think the department must try to revisit the skill ratio of one educator to 25 learners because when you look at the assessment standard, so difficult to handle such big classes because you cannot do some of the things in a very short period of time and sometimes you find that there are lots of tasks to complete and then when you doing such tasks some of the learners they are a little bit slower. So now you have to take some time to try to catch up with the learners who are a little bit behind. I think may be in future the department should involve educators in planning for a new syllabus like the new one that is coming for 2012, the CAP, I think teachers should be involved so that they must know what are they supposed to do and what to do.</p>
	<p>TE: Maybe NCS was successful in other countries; however South African contextual factors were never taken into consideration as to the relevance of this curriculum. There is lack of continuation/continuity in the approach of different education ministers.</p>
	<p>TF: for reading that is LO 2 must be drilled thoroughly because learners can't read and it makes everything difficult.</p>