PROBLEMS FACING EDUCATORS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT:
THE CASE OF TSHIFHENA SECONDARY SCHOOL, VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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Statement of originality

Student number: 308-585-69

I declare that, PROBLEMS FACING EDUCATORS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT: THE CASE OF TSHIFHENA SECONDARY SCHOOL, VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA, 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   **DATE**
(TM Badugela)

DEDICATION

To my husband Patrick, and my kids Tshilidzi, Vhithu, Mulisa and Vhuhwavho.
To my late sister Ndanganeni Madavha who passed on late September 2011.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

SUMMARY

The implementation of the National Curriculum Statement was problematic to the culture of teaching and learning in various South African schools. If challenges experienced by educators, such as inadequate resources, financial constraints and lack of training, are not addressed, this will have far-reaching consequences not only for our education system but also for the type of skilled learners that will be produced and for the economic growth of the country. This qualitative investigation was conducted in a single school in Limpopo Province with the aim of finding out which challenges the implementation of the NCS presents to FET educators. The sample consisted of educators and learners from grades ten to twelve as well as members of the SGB, SMT and district education officers. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. It was found that the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement was problematic and far from satisfactory. The study highlights the need for the Department of Education to prioritise educational resources for schools and educator training in curriculum implementation.

Key concepts: continuous professional development of teachers, teaching and learning resources, stakeholder involvement, teacher preparedness, curriculum development, curriculum implementation.

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CHAPTER ONE

1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study looks at the challenges facing educators in implementing the National Curriculum Statement for Further Education and Training (i.e. Grades 10 to 12) at one of the high schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The National Curriculum Statement booklet (DoE 2004:6) contains policy statements for learning and teaching. These statements explain how teaching should be done in terms of objectives, outcomes and assessments standards. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) comprises Subject Statements, each containing a definition, purpose, scope, educational and career links, learning outcomes, assessment standards, subject competence descriptions per grade, content and contexts for attaining the assessment standards, and a generic section on assessment.

The NCS is used by teachers in schools for guidance on what they must teach targeted grades of learners. In this instance, Grades 10 to 12 learners are the target group. The primary purpose of the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 is, therefore, to benefit society and learners by equipping the latter with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable their meaningful participation in society. The curriculum also aims to provide a basis for further study in Higher Education, to lay a foundation for future careers, and to develop learners who are productive and responsible citizens and lifelong learners (DoE 2004:7).

In order for educators to fulfil their roles effectively, they must have the required knowledge and skills. The seven roles for the teacher, as set out in the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE 1996), are the following: (1) learning mediator, (2) interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, (3) administrator and manager, (4) scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner, (5) community, citizenship and pastoral role, (6) assessor, (7) learning phase specialist. If teachers are not well equipped, it is most likely that they are going to face several challenges in their classes. Killen (2007:366-367) describes the seven roles as follows:

a. Learning mediator

The educator should mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning; construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualized and inspirational; communicate effectively, showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others. The

educator will also demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in a South African context (366).

b. Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials

The educator will understand and interpret provided learning programmes, design original learning programmes, identify the requirements for a specific context of learning and select and prepare suitable textual and visual resources for learning. The educator will also select, sequence and pace the learning in a manner sensitive to the differing needs of the learning area and learners (366).

c. Leader, administrator and manager

The educator will make decisions appropriate to the level, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision-making structures. Such competences will be performed in ways which are democratic, which support learners and colleagues, and which demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (367).

d. Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner

The educator will achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth through pursuing reflective study and research in his/her learning area, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other related fields (367).

e. Community, citizenship and pastoral role

The educator will practice and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others, one that upholds the constitution and promotes democratic values and practices in schools and society. In classroom situations, the educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learners and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. The educator will develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organizations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental developmental issues like HIV/Aids education (367).

f. Assessor

Assessment forms the basis and is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and educators should know how to integrate it into this process. The educator

will have an understanding of the purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. Such an educator will design both formative and summative assessment in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of learning. The educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment. To improve learning the educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into the process for the improvement of learning programmes (367).

g. Learning area phase specialists

The educator should be well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures relevant to the discipline, subject, learning area, phase of study, or professional or occupational practice. The educator should know about different approaches to teaching and learning and how these may be used in ways which are appropriate to the learner and context. The educator should have a well-developed understanding of the content knowledge appropriate to the specialism (367).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS)

Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the learner to acquire knowledge or experience. It is vital to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (University of Zimbabwe 1995:8).

Curriculum is the way content is designed and developed. The process includes the structure, organization, and balance of the materials. Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabuses, schemes of work and lessons to be delivered to learners (University of Zimbabwe 1995:9). Curriculum 2005, which was South Africa's version of outcomes-based education (OBE), was introduced in 1997. It was appropriately accused of being jargon-ridden and inaccessible in its discourse. Its procedures for designing learning programmes were complex and sophisticated. This was partly due to poorly and over-hasty introduction of the new curriculum into schools, without teachers being sufficiently prepared for outcomes-based pedagogy, including continuous assessment. Teachers went through in-service training to equip them but even this was inadequate. Because of the lack of capacity in the provinces in most schools to implement major changes as proposed, the government scaled down its plans to implement the new curriculum to Grade 1 from the outset. Because of these flaws and inadequacies, a review committee was established to look at possibilities of refining Curriculum 2005 and this led to

the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which was a refined version of outcomes-based education (Christie 1999:279).

The implementation of the new curriculum did not merely involve the direct and straight-forward application of plans. It was a dynamic organizational process that was shaped over time by interactions between projects, goals and methods and the institutional setting (Gultig et al 2002:183). However, my observation as an educator is that teachers are still using the traditional method of teaching, where a teacher is regarded as the only source of information and the learners as the vessels that need to be filled with knowledge or learning material. Teachers must be willing to apply the new approach and must be able to articulate their ideas so as to make a meaningful contribution to the new curriculum implementation.

Morris (2002:15) indicates that for educators to be self-motivated and committed to their objectives, the mutual relationship between teachers should be promoted, all stakeholders should be involved in planning the curriculum, and there should be opportunities for growth and more innovative and effective teaching methods. What becomes clear is the need for teacher education and for educators to grasp the challenges and opportunities to assert their power over shaping the curriculum process that will produce competent, confident teachers (Kruss 2009:22).

The NCS for Grades 10-12 (General) represented a policy statement for learning and teaching in schools located in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The document stipulated policy on curriculum and qualifications in Grades 10-12. The NCS for Grades 10-12 (General) was comprised of several documents which were to be read together: an Overview document, the Qualifications and Assessment Policy Framework Grades 10-12, and the Subject Statement.

The Overview described the philosophical underpinning of the curriculum and explained why it was necessary to replace Curriculum 2005.

The Qualification and Assessment Policy Framework (DoE, 2003) aimed at providing a mechanism through which learner achievement of the Further Education and Training exit-level Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards were recognized at schools, provincial and national levels and found acceptance globally in Higher Education and the world of work. This document outlined the requirements and rules for the award of the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC).

a. The principles of the NCS

The NCS Grades 10-12 (General) stipulated Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards and also spelt out the values that underpin the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996).

The NCS Grades 10-12 was developed with the aim of giving expression to the values of democracy, human rights, social justice, equity, non-racism, non-sexism and ubuntu. According to the Department of Education Policy Framework (DoE 2003:2), the NCS was based on the following principles:

- Social transformation
- Outcomes-based education
- Integration and applied competence
- Progression
- Articulation and portability
- Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice
- Valuing indigenous knowledge systems
- Credibility, equality and efficiency.

The NCS built its Learning Outcomes for Grades 10-12 on the Critical and Developmental Outcomes that were inspired by the constitution and developed through a democratic process (DoE 2003:3).

The **Critical Outcomes** required learners to be able to

- identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community;
- organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information;
- communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and or language skills in various modes;
- use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

The **Developmental Outcomes** required learners to be able to

- reflect on 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 education and career opportunities; and
- develop entrepreneurial opportunities.

According to the NCS document (DoE, 2003:6), learners who emerged from the Further Education and Training band were expected to demonstrate achievement of the Critical and

Developmental Outcomes listed earlier in this document. Subjects in the Fundamental Learning component collectively promoted the achievement of the critical and developmental outcomes, while specific subjects in the Core and Elective Components individually promoted the achievement of particular Critical and Developmental Outcomes.

In addition to the above, learners emerging from the Further Education and Training band must have access to, and succeed in, lifelong education and training of good quality; demonstrate an ability to think logically and analytically as well as holistically and laterally; and be able to transfer skills from familiar to unfamiliar situations.

Furthermore, the Department of Education (2003:6) indicated that all teachers and other educators were key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. The NCS Grades 10-12 (General) visualized teachers who were qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. They fulfilled the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for the Educators (DoE 1996). As stated above, these included mediators of learning; interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials; leaders, administrators and managers; scholars, researchers and lifelong learners; community members, citizens and pastors; and subject specialists.

b. Structure and features of the NCS Grades 10-12 (Schools)

The NCS Grades 10-12 (Schools) consisted of an overview document as well as subject statements. These subject statements provided a guide to requirements and expectations for each grade, as well as the key features of the subject and the learning outcomes and assessment standards. According to the NCS (DoE 2003:6), the curriculum provided the following subject groupings demarcated into Learning fields to help with learner subject combinations: Languages (fundamentals); Arts and Culture; Business, Commerce, Management and Services Studies; Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology; Human and Social Sciences and Languages; and Physical, Mathematical, Computer, Life and Agricultural Sciences.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Due to challenges experienced by educators such as inadequate resources, financial constraints and lack of training, curriculum implementation has proved problematic to the culture of teaching and learning in various South African schools. If left unaddressed, these matters will have far-reaching consequences not only for our education system but also for the type of skilled learners that will be produced and for the economic growth of the country. Currently, some of the educators in our schools are foreigners who were not trained or oriented in terms of the NCS. In addition, some of the local educators who are currently employed as temporary teachers were not oriented on the implementation of the NCS.

1.4 AIM

The aim of this study was to find out which challenges the implementation of the NCS presents to FET educators at a particular school, namely Tshifhena Secondary School in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.

1.5 OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of this study were to:

- identify how the implementation is hampered by poor resources at the school.
- discover how much these teachers are capacitated and trained in order to make implementation of the NCS successful.
- learn how much the School Management Team (SMT) is involved in the implementation of the NCS.
- establish how much support is rendered to teachers by the Department of Education in the implementation of the NCS.
- find out how far the school is supported socially, economically and politically in the implementation of the NCS.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

I hope that the Limpopo Department of Education will use the findings of this study in reviewing curriculum implementation. *The Educator* (2010:29) has already indicated the need for curriculum change while implementing the curriculum in various grades, i.e. from Grades R–9 and from Grades 10–12. The recommendations made in this study would add knowledge and provide a basis for other researchers, conferences and debates on National Curriculum implementation.

Theoretically

- The study provides an understanding of the NCS.

Practically

- The study explores teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation and the problems that face them in the process.

Academically

- The study increases knowledge with regard to National Curriculum implementation.

According to Bruner's theory (1966), what is taught should be in keeping with the learners' cognitive structures and understanding. As far as possible, new materials should have a bearing on what learners already know.

The teacher should present learners with a problem; thereafter, s/he should play the role of facilitator in an inductive inquiry process, starting with specific information and continuing with step-by-step discovery. This study is aimed at bringing about a paradigm shift in educator teaching methods: in order to make our education system relevant, content which should be taught should relate to the immediate environment of the learners.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS

The research focused on the implementation of the NCS in the Further Education and Training Phase within Vhembe District at the Nzhelele East Circuit School in Limpopo Province. For this reason the research was confined to only those educators who offered Grades 10, 11 and 12 in this particular school.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

The main purpose of the research was to determine problems facing educators in implementing the NCS. However, the study had certain limitations. The research was limited to Nzhelele East Circuit School because the researcher was familiar with the locality as she resided and worked in the area. Limited resources, time and financial constraints restricted the researcher to the study of one secondary school in a district. Because the sample size was too small for a quantitative study, the choice fell on a qualitative research approach based in one school with interviews conducted with the participants. The study was designed to be exploratory and descriptive in nature.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This study looks at the challenges facing educators in implementing the NCS in Further Education and Training, that is, the teaching of Grades 10 to 12, at one of the high schools in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The curriculum aims at providing a basis for continuing learning in Higher Education, to lay a foundation for future careers, and to develop learners who are productive and responsible citizens and lifelong learners. If challenges experienced by educators in schools, such as inadequate resources, financial constraints and lack of training, are not addressed, this will have far-reaching consequences not only for our education system but also for the type of skilled learners that will be produced and for the economic growth of the country.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. CASS - Continuous assessment.
2. CAPS - Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
3. DATA - The result obtained from which interpretations and conclusions are drawn.
4. FET - Further Education and Training, training for vocational services offered to learners from Grade 10 to grade 12.
5. IQMS - Integrated Quality Management System: An instrument used to measure or monitor teacher's progress (a whole-school evaluation process).
6. LTSM - Learner Teacher Support Materials: Teaching and Learning resources to facilitate and enhance teaching.
7. NCS - National Curriculum Statement, which is learner-centred and outcomes-based.
8. Purposeful sampling - Selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth.
9. RNCS-Revised National Curriculum Statement.
10. Semi-structured interview - Interview that allows for individual open-ended responses to fairly specific questions.
11. SMT - School Management Team.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature pertinent to the theoretical basis of this study of the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The main focus of the study was on the challenges faced by educators in implementing the NCS. The literature review provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for the study.

2.2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW

This chapter indicates the urgent need for change amongst educational leaders because principals as leaders, guides, supporters and mentors were responsible for driving the process of change from the old to the new curriculum. The principals were expected to undergo a paradigm shift so that they could influence educators' attitude in implementing the NCS.

The chapter addresses the objectives of the research. It investigates the need for successful implementation of the NCS to find out what was already known and whether different teachers were able to meet the requirements or not. The chapter also determines the training that was necessary to equip teachers so that they could implement the curriculum without difficulty.

With the new curriculum we moved from an emphasis on learning content to specific outcomes and from the memorization (rote learning) of facts to the demonstration of outcomes (Spady and Marshall 1991:68). A number of problems presented themselves: teachers were not well trained; there was a shortage of resources as well as lack of support from government. Implementation of the curriculum was hampered by the fact that the authorities seemed to be always chopping and changing the curriculum. An increase in administrative work on the part of teachers was also a challenge. In addition, managers were not well trained to manage the transition to the new curriculum.

The educators were afraid of change, they feared the unknown, they lacked knowledge and understanding and as such they faced enormous challenges in implementing the new curriculum (NCS). The instructional leadership challenge to the principals in the implementation of the curriculum to help educators in their day-to-day teaching practice was daunting. The chapter covers motivation as a challenge, because educators were to be motivated to teach effectively. It also deals with monitoring and support in curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the experiences of other countries in the implementation of the NCS are looked at with the aim of searching for the means of addressing local needs.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is a set of terms and relationships within which the problem is formulated and solved. It is a concise description of the major variables operating within the arena of the problem to be pursued together with the researcher's overarching view of how the variables interact to produce a more powerful or comprehensive model of relevant phenomena that has not heretofore been available for shedding light on the problem.

This research is based on the following theoretical assumptions:

1. Educators perform well where there is certainty and stability in the curriculum and education system.

Here Piaget's ideas of assimilation and accommodation (1977) can be cited. Educators who were trained at college and universities for a particular curriculum have to assimilate and accommodate the new education dispensation regarding curriculum transformation and change. The new curriculum (NCS) brings with it new principles, approaches and methods. Educators have to assimilate and accommodate these changes in order to implement them.

2. Educators do well in curriculum implementation where they are motivated. According to Maslow's theory (1943), people have the need for esteem. This includes factors such as recognition, attention, social status and accomplishment. The atmosphere of our education system has not motivated educators to work hard for successful implementation of the NCS curriculum; educators feel that they are not supported by department and community; their efforts are not recognized; and incentives and rewards for outstanding achievements are limited.

3. The NCS curriculum is implemented well where learners at particular grades have the foundation of the previous grade and are afforded an opportunity to analyze data for themselves and arrive at their own conclusions and concepts. Annual examination results have proven deficiencies in the current South African education system regarding learners' performance at various grades. This makes the task of educators very difficult because learner's literacy and language skills are very low.

a. Change as a challenge for curriculum implementers

Change is a phenomenon that affects all aspects of a person's life and brings about alterations in both personal and employment spheres. According to Bertels (2003:478), change can be described as the process of analyzing the past to elicit present actions required for the future. It involves moving from a present state, through a transitional state, to a future desired state. The focus of change is to introduce an innovation that produces something better, hence the implementation of the new curriculum.

b. Management of curriculum change for effective curriculum implementation

Change as a process needs to be managed. The school principal, as the key figure around which much of the school's activities revolve, to a great extent determines the school's success or failure when change is implemented. An educational leader should lead the change; not merely be subject to it (Van der Horst and McDonald 2001:192).

According to Briggs and Sommefeldt (2002:29), the principal should know how to manage and lead the process of change. The principal should ensure that s/he has the necessary policy documents, circulars and guidelines on hand. S/he should study those documents and internalize all the fundamentals of the curriculum changes.

Change means that the principal should work through the following phases with his staff: diagnosing the problem, planning for change, implementing change and reviewing developments. Working as a team with the staff should ensure that those who are affected by the implementation of change are involved in the planning from the beginning. Irrespective of who makes the final decision, the staff should feel that they were consulted as a group as well as individuals, and that their opinions had some influence on the final decision.

Graetz et al (2006:340) identify the change process as including the following: unlearning, which involves establishing a felt need for change and managing resistance; changing, which requires establishing new learned and instinctive ways of thinking and behaving; relearning, which entails a process of reinforcing, evaluating and modifying desired ideas and behaviour; and institutionalizing change, which involves using human resource processes such as performance to reinforce continual personal improvement that is consistent with the desired change outcome. According to Bertels (2003:361), the process of organizational change is as follows: unfreezing (recognizing the need for change), changing (attempting to create a new state of affairs) and refreezing (incorporating the changes, creating and maintaining a new organizational system). Most people resist change because it is threatening and uncomfortable, especially when the outcomes of change are unknown or unfavourable.

My analysis has revealed that the NCS focused too much on the outcomes and neglected issues of content; these were left to individual teachers to construct. However, given the poor training of teachers and the lack of resources, as well as the toll that apartheid had inflicted on the education system, the majority of teachers found it difficult to know what to teach and tended to act as mere technicians without the necessary conceptual and content tools.

Learners should be responsible citizens of the country, unlike the outcomes that were fostered by the old curriculum where the emphasis was on rote learning and not producing skilled labourers. Furthermore, the new curriculum content is learner-centred; the learning activities revolve around the learner instead of the teacher as it used to be; it is source-based and skills-

oriented. Although educators experience problems with its implementation, the curriculum allows the learners to develop their own interpretations of resources that are available in their communities.

In the past, outcomes centred on knowledge in the classroom, where it was reduced to the constructs that teachers and learners individually brought into the classroom, or became simply a product of classroom interaction through some form of progressive education. For instruction to be effective, the teacher must know more than the learner, must have adequate content knowledge, and must know the conceptual destination of the learning. The cognitive aspect of schooling has been lost through too much emphasis on outcomes in the new curriculum. Today 80% of our schools are referred to as dysfunctional. This calls for the overhauling of the education system. Every child deserves the right to education of quality.

Resistance to change was caused by different factors at different levels. Kobola (2007:204-208) indicates that the following factors cause resistance to change: at the individual level, some individuals exhibit resistance to change if they perceive a lack of personal control over unfolding events; other individuals have attitudes towards change based upon their previous experiences of organizational change. Their attitudes are based on a lack of trust and misunderstanding of the intentions of change. At a group level, resistance is caused by group cohesiveness, social norms, participation in decision-making and autonomy for self-determination of actions. In this case, the distribution of organizational power and authority mediates the levels of resistance under different circumstances. Any change that emanates from outside the group is likely to be perceived as a threat to the status quo because the group values highly its social interactions but possesses little power to influence the change process. At organizational level, factors such as organizational structure, climate, culture and strategy contribute to change.

Curriculum implementation cannot be done without the inclusion of the principals. According to Briggs and Sommefeldt (2002:106), principals should address the following pertaining to change:

- The soundness of the proposed change, because change proposals are not all authentic.
- Understanding the failure of well-intentioned change. New policies could be hoped for and adopted naively without the adapters realizing the implications or understanding the specific changes needed for implementation.
- The depth of the change. Change strikes at the core of the learned skills and beliefs of educators and creates doubts about their sense of competence and purpose.
- The question of valuing. The principal should check whether particular change is valuable.

My analysis has revealed that for the curriculum to be implemented, participation is a crucial source of legitimacy for policy decisions, especially in educational policy. No educators were involved in the decision to adopt the new NCS as the preferred policy approach for a post–apartheid curriculum. Even as educators were called on to become involved in the elaboration and the implementation of the curriculum, the decision to proceed had already been made. Unfortunately, participation is sometimes confused with consultation.

Therefore, it implied that for schools to be transformed and improved, the principal would ensure that educators understood what they were doing. The principal would focus on changing the mindset of all stakeholders, while improving the internal functioning and the key functions of the school, namely teaching and learning. The principal and educators were expected to take the opportunity of an era of change as a chance to achieve positive development in their curriculum.

The principal was expected to have instructional leadership skills for the effective management and implementation of the NCS. If this transformation was not properly managed, educators would face challenges in implementing the new curriculum. If leaders failed to embrace the change and handle it properly, it would come to affect educators negatively. The necessary support was only given to piloted schools and most educators would lag behind in terms of understanding the essence of change and the knowledge required.

c. Insufficient instructional leadership in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement

The principal as an instructional leader should lead the implementation of the new curriculum in a school. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008:40), instructional leadership encompasses those actions the principal takes and delegates to others to promote growth in student learning. The instructional leadership of the principal has a positive and direct effect on student achievement. It is clear that the purpose of the principals' instructional leadership role is to facilitate effective teaching and learning. The principal should organize effective instructional programmes, create a positive school climate, exercise effective management behaviour, and overcome constraints from the community or handle inputs from the community effectively.

An instructional leader provides curriculum direction for the team, inspires and energizes the team, motivates and mediates educational policy to the team, mentors and supports the team and monitors their progress (Mason 2004: 21). In addition, Mason indicates that in providing instructional leadership, the principal and members of the SMT also oversee the curriculum planning in the school; help develop OBE learning activities; develop and manage assessment strategies; ensure that the teaching and learning time is used effectively; develop and use team planning techniques; and develop and manage learning resources.

Furthermore, Mason (2004:21) recognizes the existence of members of the SMT and their cooperation in managing the school. He encourages participative leadership which involves colleagues in the decision-making process and in shared power. Although he does not give a definition of instructional leadership, he describes the duties of an instructional leader. For the purpose of this study instructional leadership refers to the actions of the principal, together with other members of the school management team, to promote effective teaching and learning.

The principal should acknowledge educators for exemplary teaching and encourage them to share their expertise with others. S/he should identify good teaching and provide feedback that promotes professional growth. The principal should communicate to the staff the essential beliefs that (1) all learners can learn and experience success; (2) success builds upon success; (3) schools can enhance learner success; and (4) learner outcomes should be clearly defined to guide instructional programmes and decisions (Spady and Marshall 1991:26).

Furthermore, s/he should create a visible presence in day-to-day activities and model behaviour consistent with the school's vision. Effective leadership is essential in proper implementation of the NCS, but unfortunately most of our school principals lack this quality. Educators would not operate effectively in an environment where the leader did not provide direction in matters related to the new curriculum. Educators would lack information as the leader who was supposed to provide it was not there for them.

d. Lack of monitoring and support in the implementation of curriculum amongst educators by principals.

The principal, together with the School Management Team (SMT), should manage the process of teaching and learning within the school in accordance with curriculum policy documents and other policies. Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the curriculum are among the roles of the principal as an instructional leader. Mason (2004:47-48) indicates that the SMT should monitor and support the following:

- content teaching: ensure that the content for teaching and learning is in line with the assessment standards;
- integration in planning and presentation: ensure that assessment standards and various teaching methods are properly integrated;
- learning outcomes and assessment standards: ensure that learning outcomes and assessment standards are correctly sequenced to allow progression;
- learner-centred and learner-paced teaching: ensure that the teaching pace is determined by the learners' learning progress;

- application of NCS principles such as progression and inclusivity: ensure that learners with various learning barriers are considered during planning and presentation;
- continuous assessment: ensure that once-off assessment, for instance in the form of examination, is avoided in favour of continuous assessment;
- drafting of time-tables: ensure that allocation of periods to Learning Areas is in line with the NCS policy; and
- remedial work: ensure that learners with learning barriers receive the necessary assistance that enables them to learn.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:188) see monitoring and support in the context of class visits. The class visits create the opportunity for the SMT to observe teachers' work, provide motivation and exercise influence. During supervisory discussion educators also have the opportunity to talk to the instructional leader about the problems they encounter in teaching practice.

The principal should conduct class visits and give support to educators. S/he should draw up a monitoring instrument which could direct the class visits. An Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) programme should also be put in place. Structures such as school development teams and development support groups should be in place (Brunton 2003:8). The appraisal of educators should take place for educators to share their experiences and offer each other moral support.

The proper implementation of the NCS by educators required effective monitoring by principals and other SMT members. Monitoring would determine successes and also determine deficiencies and challenges which educators encountered. After monitoring had been done and challenges diagnosed, corrective measures, support and other intervention strategies could then be taken to assist educators and that on its own would be a way of empowering educators.

e. In-service teacher training

Regarding the in-service training of teachers, a vast amount of work still needs to be done to ensure the successful implementation of the NCS in South Africa. Obviously the education authorities cannot provide all the in-service training that is needed and are at this stage involving higher education institutions in the process. The challenge that lies before providers of in-service teacher training regarding implementation of the NCS is not only to be able to train so many teachers; aspects such as the relevant curriculum and teaching practice are also involved. The in-service training should obviously also be presented in a way that takes into account that the teachers are novices regarding curriculum implementation.

The successful implementation of the NCS in South Africa will also to a large extent depend on the provision of the necessary resources and facilities to ensure that the enthusiasm of teachers and learners is sustained. Exposure of teachers, learners, parents, school principals and governing bodies to information on the purpose of the curriculum implementation and the extent of its impact should receive the necessary attention to ensure that everybody is aware of and fully understands the challenges that are involved. These in-service interventions, as such, only partly address the challenges mentioned above. To meet the challenges mentioned above, a large scale cooperative effort between the educational authorities, the providers of in-service teacher training and sponsors from the private sector will be necessary (Bush and Bell 2002:208).

2.4 CHALLENGES FACING OTHER COUNTRIES

Curriculum as a set of education plans should be prepared and adapted based on the learning situation and future demand. In Indonesia, the government took a careful step by implementing the concept of a school-based curriculum in order to deal with the main educational problems, such as the demand for teachers and schools to be skilled and trained. (Mulyasa 2006:52). Amongst others, the step gave authority for schools to arrange, improve or develop and evaluate their curriculum by considering social, cultural, financial, and local potentials; as well as society's needs, results and other aspects that affect the education process in the school or in the area where the curriculum was applied.

Tadesse et al (2007:63) indicate the following challenges of the school-based curriculum: inadequate supervision, time mismatch with school calendar, lack of financial and material support, and negative attitudes of teachers towards the new curriculum. The problems Tadesse highlights are similar to those experienced in Limpopo Province (Vhembe District), where the procedures for developing a learning programme were complex; hence the need for better prepared educators, many of whom, especially in the previously disadvantaged groups, were inadequately prepared for basic teaching, let alone comprehending the new curriculum process. NCS implementation favours well-resourced schools with well-qualified teachers. In South Africa, the NCS was implemented without considering the contextual changes needed to make the strategy effective.

2. 5 CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The NCS came into being as a way of improving the quality of the Curriculum (C2005). The Ministerial Review Committee chaired by Linda Chisholm confirmed that C2005 had weaknesses that made it difficult for educators to implement it. According to Chisholm (2000:18-21), the weaknesses ranged from a skewed curriculum structure, lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment, low quality of learning and teaching support materials,

time frames that were unmanageable and unrealistic, inadequate teacher orientation and training to limited transfer of learning into classroom practice.

It seems that the ANC government was too hasty in its implementation of the curriculum policy to eradicate racism and sexism from the syllabus (*Sunday Times*, 4 June 2000: 22). It was hoped that those weaknesses were being identified and removed through the production of the NCS documents for Grades 10-12. De Clercq (1997:140-144) argues that educators with a poor teaching and professional background, limited resources and working in difficult environments find it virtually impossible to improve their professional performance through this form of outcomes-based curriculum. The argument is appropriate, given the fact that the RNCS (Revised National Curriculum Statement) was more complicated than the previous content-based curriculum. However, the problem of limited resources and poor professional background remained a challenge to be explored.

Jansen (1998:323) maintained that the language of innovation associated with outcomes-based education was too complex, confusing and at times contradictory. On the contrary, the language in the NCS had been simplified and its design features reduced so that educators could understand it better and give it meaning through their classroom practice. Although the RNCS had been simplified, its paper-work was likely to multiply the administrative burdens placed on educators. Jansen (1998:328) was of the opinion that outcomes-based education trivialized curriculum content. Learners did not learn outcomes in a vacuum. Thus, curriculum content was regarded as a critical vehicle for giving meaning to a particular set of outcomes.

The implementation of the NCS took place on an unequal basis between the previously advantaged schools and previously disadvantaged schools: the previously disadvantaged schools have poorly qualified educators, a lack of parental support and little, if any, access to the private sector, which made it difficult to implement OBE. In addition, Kraak (1998:49) criticizes OBE for its disregard for the centrality of the curriculum and the need for professionally trained and motivated teachers. The previously disadvantaged schools need more financial support and well-trained educators to implement the NCS successfully.

Nurturing the new patriotism or affirming a common citizenship was one of the strategies expressed in the NCS to familiarize young South Africans with the values of the Constitution (DoE 2004:3). The question arises: to what extent does the NCS address the issue of common citizenship at the primary school level? The concept does not appear as a learning area or in one of the learning outcomes in the policy document. However, it was understood that a curriculum embodying citizenship principles could also be compatible with principles of non-racism, non-sexism and democracy which were among the entitlements of common citizenship. Common citizenship, democracy and civic responsibility should be taught as part of an attempt

to build a citizenship ideal which incorporates different communities as equal citizens with equal rights.

Another challenging factor of the NCS is that educators were expected to select appropriate learning content and develop a curriculum. The reality was ignored that some teachers did not have the skills, the resources or the time to develop learning content. Curriculum development is a specialized activity and there is a need to inform educators about what they should be teaching in each learning programme in each grade (*Educare*, 2008:86). The question was: to what extent did the learning outcomes in the NCS specify the sequence of core concepts, content and skills to be taught and learnt in each learning programme at each grade level? Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, presenting the national budget speech in Parliament in 2009, identified these challenges and also outlined strategies to reduce teacher frustration and eliminate constraints of curriculum implementation by teachers and emphasised the benefits of curriculum implementation. The Minister appointed a task team to review the implementation of the NCS — the NCS Implementation Task Team (ITT). There were five areas under investigation: curriculum policy and guideline documents; transition between grades and phases; assessment, particularly continuous assessment; LTSM, particularly textbooks; and teacher support and training (for curriculum implementation).

Research has consistently shown that South African learners lack substantial problem-solving and creative abilities (Kruss 2009:22). The new curriculum was chosen to improve the quality of South African Education. It was hoped that doors might be opened for learners whose academic or career paths had previously been blocked by providing a curriculum more relevant to learners needs.

The process of change which was introduced by policy makers created an enormous burden for teacher implementers, who discovered that their skills and knowledge no longer matched the new demands of the changed curriculum. The NCS represented a paradigm shift from content-based teaching and learning to an outcomes-based one for which they were not adequately prepared.

The reality was that there were some major problems with the implementation process of the new curriculum in South Africa, of which the inadequate training of teachers to teach in an outcomes-based manner and the lack of financial resources to train these teachers efficiently and effectively were the most important (Chisholm 2000:4-12).

2.6 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Schools needed financial support either from the government, private business or parents in order to implement the new curriculum effectively. The government led in giving financial assistance to public schools because it was concerned with all learners having equal access to

basic education. Financial assistance from private businesses to all schools could not be guaranteed.

Similarly, some parents did not have money to pay for the education of their children. Funds were required for purchasing learning and teaching support materials, organizing experts to facilitate workshops at school level, transport to meetings and workshops, building halls for drama and dance exercises, libraries to encourage reading and research work, laboratories for experiments and artwork, and sports facilities for various sporting codes (Bush and Bell 2002:191).

Numerous funding systems for schools exist in other parts of the world and most of them seem to have been designed to address inequalities in education. Davies et al (2005:168) explain the government funding to schools in England. They indicate that the central government allocates some funds directly to schools and other funds to schools via the local Education Authorities.

This arrangement was made to improve the funding to schools and to ensure that basic entitlement conformed to the requirements of the fair funding lobby. However, they explain that while the intention to fund fairly across England was clear, the opportunity to address the historic inequality of funding across Key Stages had been missed.

Bush and Bell (2002:191-202) indicate that the traditional welfare state model of school provision (in the USA, in particular in Milwaukee,WI; Chile; Colombia; and Sweden) consists of state funding together with state provisioning. They explain that funding comes from either the state or the private sector (parents, charities churches and business sponsorship), depending on whether or not the school's assets (building and grounds) are owned and its management employed by the state. The state funding is not sufficient for the most deprived children.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:346-347) present models of school funding as practised in California. With a flat-grant model, state aid to local school districts is based on a fixed amount. The amount is then multiplied by the number of learners in a district. They suggest that the model is more expensive to educate some children than others. For example, a child requiring special-education services or bilingual education would cost a school district more to educate than a child not needing these services.

With the power-equalizing model, the state pays a percentage of local school expenditures in an inverse ratio to the school district's wealth. The wealthier the district, the less matching state monies it receives. The goal is equalization between wealthier schools districts and those of less wealth. The model seems to be doing well in helping schools with the most deprived children to run effectively.

In a weighted-student model of financing public education, learners are weighted in proportion to their special needs. For example, learners requiring bilingual education or special needs classes would be allotted additional money according to the costs of those services. One of the problems with this model is the complexity involved in assigning weights since some children receive more than one special education service (Cunningham and Cordeiro 2000:346).

In South Africa, schools receive funds from the Provincial Government and they are allowed to supplement the funds by school fees from parents. In terms of the South African Schools Act [SASA] (RSA 1996) the state funds public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in education. Section 21 schools, those institutions that have been given the status to manage their own financial affairs, receive a lump sum per learner for the payments for which they have responsibility. According to regulations for financial management and the Public Finance Management Act, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) have to account to the parents and the Department of Education regarding the usage of these public funds.

Schools that were not yet on section 21 lists were not informed of their budget, even if it was a paper budget, to prepare them to understand the actual costs of running their schools. The allocation per learner was the same as that of schools on the section 21 list. What was still to be determined was whether the funds from the government were sufficient for the implementation of the RNCS or not. The school fees from the neediest schools would not play a crucial role in supplementing funds from the government because many parents did not have the means of earning a salary or they earned low salaries. Thus, in terms of SASA (RSA 1996), those parents qualified for either partial or full exemption.

In conclusion, lack of funds did not prevent schools from drawing up their prioritized lists of curriculum needs. The school established a marketing unit which looked for sponsors. Schools needed facilities in order to implement the curriculum successfully.

2.7 ADEQUATE FACILITIES

Adequate facilities such as classrooms, halls, libraries, laboratories and playing fields are the prerequisites for successful implementation of the NCS. Schools need adequate classrooms to alleviate overcrowding of learners. Proper implementation of the curriculum cannot take place if classrooms are overcrowded. Languages, especially the practice of individual reading (DoE 2004:59), cannot be treated fairly in overcrowded classrooms. A proper classroom with adequate air ventilation is conducive for learning and teaching (Lemlech 1998:79).

Other Learning Areas, such as Arts and Culture and Life Orientation, need a hall for learning and teaching to take place effectively. Drama and dance exercises should be done in an open space like in a hall (DoE 2004:173). The normal classroom with chairs and tables is not conducive for

drama and dance exercises. In addition, the availability of laboratories in schools is important because experiments in Learning Areas such as Natural Science cannot be done in a classroom situation. Similarly, for the curriculum to be successfully implemented there should be a library in a school to offer learners and educators a wide range of reading material (Lemlech 1998:44).

Furthermore, Life Orientation as a Learning Area incorporates a Learning Outcome that has to be implemented on a playing field. As such, the availability of proper playing fields was a prerequisite for achieving this learning outcome. The Learning Outcome 4 deals with track events and invasion games (DoE 2004:206). Thus, schools had to have playing fields which enabled learners to practice track events and various invasion games. Therefore, adequate facilities were a prerequisite for the implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, the availability of resources, funds, training, educators and a positive school climate were equally important for the success of the curriculum implementation.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a literature survey which describes the challenges the educators experienced in the implementation of the NCS. It has demonstrated that educators encountered various obstacles while implementing the National Curriculum Statement, which included limited resources, inadequate instructional leadership, poor monitoring and support, financial constraints and poor change management skills.

The Department of Education was expected to ensure that there would be curriculum alignment and assessment; there would be enough classrooms, monitoring and support; curriculum activities would be learner-paced; and there would be enough money so that the curriculum could be implemented without any difficulty. What was not yet known was whether the educators were fully aware of these challenges while implementing the National Curriculum Statement. The next chapter (Chapter 3) describes the methodology this researcher employed to answer some of these questions.

CHAPTER THREE

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD

For this study a qualitative research method was selected. This method seeks to understand a given research problem from the perspective of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. It is more concerned with social phenomena from the perspective of participants (De Vos et al 2005:295).

A practical research project was conducted in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province in order to find out which problems faced educators in implementing the NCS, to explore ways of assisting educators, to shed light on educators' teaching programmes, to get in-depth information on how to address challenges in implementing the curriculum, and to offer possible recommendations in this regard. The project entailed several steps: the identification of the research population, selection of the sample, designing of the instruments, data collection and data analysis. This chapter explains how these steps were followed in order to achieve the objectives of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

For this research the case study design was used. The research specifically focused on Tshifhena Secondary School in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. The case study design examines a bounded system or a case over time in detail, employing multiple sources of data such as distribution of questionnaires and conducting interviews with the concerned parties. The researcher defines the case and its boundary, which is, focusing on FET educators in all subjects that are offered by the school. A case can be selected because of its uniqueness or used to illustrate an issue. The focus may be one entity (within-site study) or several entities (multisite study) (McMillan and Schumacher 2006:22)

In order to plan how the designed instrument such as the questionnaire would be used to obtain reliable data, a pilot test and follow-up interviews were utilized. The questionnaire was distributed in the circuit area office of Nzhelele East circuit in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. The principal of the nominated school was requested to distribute questionnaires to all teachers who were offering English in Grades 10, 11, and 12 and to all sampled learners, SMT members, and departmental representatives at district level. The completed

questionnaires were collected and returned to the circuit office where they were collected by the researcher.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Permission was requested from the circuit manager in the Limpopo Province Department of Education, Vhembe District, to collect data from teachers who were implementing the NCS in Secondary Schools for Grade 10 to 12 learners (see Appendix A). In order to maintain confidentiality, the names of the respondents were not mentioned. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to respondents. This gave the researcher an opportunity to explain the purpose of the study. The secondary-school principal of the participating school was requested to collect questionnaires from the sampled teachers. The researcher personally collected questionnaires from the principal.

a. The Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from secondary-school learners and educators, SMT members and a departmental representative pertaining to the challenges they are faced with concerning curriculum implementation in the FET phase. Only secondary-school teachers in FET in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province were used. The questionnaire was made up of eleven questions and it focused on the following participants: learners, educators and SMT members and members of the School Governing Board (SGB). The questionnaire was comprised of open and closed questions (see Questionnaire, Appendix A).

b. Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the educators, selected learners, the SMT and SGB. The interview was designed to start off with simple and non-sensitive questions. The interviewer made appointments with the interviewees. In addition, the interviewees were asked to explain their answers where necessary and probing questions were also used (see Interview Guide, Appendix B).

c. Secondary Sources

Data was gathered from the District Education Offices attendance registers concerning the number of educators who were trained on implementation of the NCS. We gathered the information on dates and at the venues of NCS training workshops.

3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Different methods were used to test the effectiveness of the instruments used to collect data.

a. Pilot Study

Before the questionnaire was put into final form a pilot study was carried out. The subjects for the pilot study were: teachers in one Secondary School in Vhembe District teaching Grades 10 to 12. Educators were the subjects. It was given to educators who were implementing the NCS. That pilot was aimed at determining the following: the time that the pilot group spent in answering the questionnaire; whether the layout of the questionnaire was clear; and to solicit any useful comments from the pilot group. The aim was to test whether the study could be researched and was feasible. As a result of that pilot study useful changes were made to the questionnaire. Adjustments were made on some of the questions. Ambiguous questions were amended to obtain the required information.

b. Interview

Interviews were conducted with a small number of participants at the school concerned. Interview questions were adjusted and some were added.

3.5 POPULATION

The target population of this study included 300 learners from Grades 10 to 12 in all subjects, 7 SMT members, 40 members from the district Department of Education and 16 secondary-school teachers teaching Grades 10 to12 (FET) in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. All teachers who are currently teaching FET were included, regardless of age, gender or whether they are permanent or temporary, local or foreign.

3.6 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SIZE

3.6.1 Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling. It is a strategy to choose small groups or individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest. In purposive sampling, participants are chosen for a particular purpose and the researcher has a reason why s/he has chosen the participants. In this study, the researcher sampled participants who were involved in curriculum implementation: learners, educators and SMT and SGB members. The sample of the study was selected from the population identified above and included learners as well as educators who were affected by and involved in challenges experienced in curriculum implementation at the school.

a. Learners

Initially the learners were put in groups according to their classes, i.e. the Grade 10s, Grade 11s and Grade 12s. Then we further grouped them according to classes, and each learner in each class was given an equal chance to randomly pick a number in a bucket. Those who picked numbers 12, 20 and 37 were then taken as part of the sample. There are five classes for Grade

10 and only three learners were included. From Grade 11, there are two classes and again three were selected from each class. Those who were included were those who picked numbers 7, 15 and 22. Finally for Grade 12, there are two classes and only three were included, namely those who picked numbers 15, 25, and 35.

b. Educators

Educators who were not in the SMT were grouped according to subjects, namely English Language, Mathematics, Tshivenda, Life Orientation, Life Science, History, Economics and Business Studies. Educators from each subject were requested to randomly pick a paper and those who picked number 3 were included. Each educator was given an equal chance to select the number.

c. School Management Team

All the SMT members, namely the principal, deputy principal, and heads of department were included in the sample.

d. School Governing Board and Department of Education Officers

The members who were considered are those who are not educators at the school or the principal. In other words, members who were considered are not employees at the school but represent the parent component. Thus only two parents were part of the sample. The Department of Education officers were selected according to availability.

3.6.2 Sample Size

Table 3.1: Grade 10 Learners

Grade 10	Number of learners
A	3
B	3
C	3
D	3
E	3

Table 3.1 above shows the number of Grade 10 learners chosen from classes A to E.

Table 3.2: Grade 11 Learners

Grade 11	Numbers
A	3
B	3

Table 3.2 above shows the number of selected Grade 11 learners from classes A and B.

Table 3.3: Grade 12 Learners

Grade 12	Number
A	3
B	3

Table 3.3 above shows the total number of Grade 12 learners which were chosen from A and B classes.

Table 3.4: Educators, SMT, SGB, DoE Officers

Participants	Numbers
Educators	8
SMT	7
SGB	2
DoE Officers	2

Table 3.3 above shows the number of educators and SMT members who were chosen. The educator component is comprised of educators from all subjects. The Department of Education Officers were chosen according to their availability.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents an analysis of data obtained from the secondary teachers' and learners' responses. The presented data is descriptive and presented in tables, followed by interpretation and discussion.

4.1 LEARNERS' BIOGRAPHY

The table 4.1 below shows the biography of learners who were sampled. The majority of the learners are females.

Table 4.1: Biographical Information of Learners

Grade	Gender	Average Age	Number of Learners
10	Female	16	9
	Male	17	6
11	Male	18	3
	Female	17	3
12	Female	18	4
	Male	18	2

In the following section teachers were requested to respond to eleven major items. Some items solicited information on educators' personal background such as gender, age, teaching experience and their professional qualifications, as shown in table 4.2 below. Other items required educators to give their opinions on the problems they experienced in implementing the NCS. Teachers indicated the constraints in implementing the curriculum and made recommendations on how to address the problems.

4.2 EDUCATOR PROFILE

Table 4.2: Profile of Educators

Educators	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Age	45	48	40	46	39	38	44	50
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male
Teaching Experience	18	20	16	20	14	15	17	22
Post Level	CS1	CS1	CS1	CS1	CS1	CS1	CS1	CS1
Professional Qualification	STD	Two-year certificate	STD	STD	Degree	Degree	STD	Two-year certificate
Grade & Subject Taught	10 English	10 Mathematics	10 Life Orienta-tion	11 Business Studies	11 Tshiven-da	11 Life Science	12 History	12 Economics

Table 4.3: Support given to Educators

Departmental support	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate
Resources Given	Enough	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Enough	Enough
SMT Support	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate

Table 4.3: Learner Resource Materials

Responses	%
Insufficient	75%
Enough	25%
Total	100%

Table 4.3 above shows the response on learner resource availability. The majority of learners pointed out that the resources were not sufficient.

Table 4.4: Teacher Preparedness

Responses	%
Sometimes	67%
Always	33%
Total	100%

Table 4.4 reveals that a number of educators indicated they were not always prepared when they attended their lessons.

Table 4.5: Parental Involvement

Responses	%
Never	75%
Sometimes	25%
Total	100%

From table 4.5 above, there is enough evidence that parents and guardians are not involved in their children's work. From table 4.6 below, there is evidence that the syllabus content is not always relevant.

Table 4.6: Content Relevance

Responses	%
Not always	67%
To some	33%
Total	100%

Table 4.7: Holding of Staff Development Meetings

Responses	%
None	67%
Sometimes	33%
Total	100%

From table 4.7 above, there is evidence that staff development meetings were not held at the school.

Table 4.8: Budget for Learning and Teaching Resources

Responses	%
Enough	33%
Not enough	67%
Total	100%

From table 4.8 above, it is clear that the money allocated to purchase teaching and learning resources is not enough. Educators indicated that their schools were under-resourced. This shows that there is a shortage of learning and teaching material. Educators also commented that the textbooks provided had insufficient information and were therefore not suitable.

Table 4.9: Availability of Educators

Responses	%
Enough	0%
Not enough	100%
Total	100%

Table 4.9 indicates that not enough educators are available; rather, there is a need for the department to address the number of teachers at the school.

Table 4.10: Support from the Department

Responses	%
Enough support	33%
Not enough	67%
Total	100%

Table 4.10 shows that the department is not providing enough resources.

Table 4.11: External Support

Responses	%
Enough support	80%
Not enough	20
Total	100%

Table 4.11 demonstrates that there is considerable external support from the stakeholders.

Table 4.12: Availability of Workshops for Educators

Responses	%
Not enough	67%
Enough	33%
Total	100%

The following information emerged:

- Those who were conducting workshops seemed not to be adequately knowledgeable.
- Teachers attended workshops for half a day, which was not enough to grasp all the information to be given to learners. This suggested that both males and females were not satisfied by the way information was given within a short space of time.

Table 4.13: Educators' Administrative Work-Load

Response	%
Heavy	67%
Reasonable	33%
Total	100%

Two respondents indicated that it was difficult to keep learners' portfolios because of a shortage of storage facilities. This shows that both were not dissatisfied with the way the learners' portfolios were handled. They indicated that submission might seem real, but objectivity and quality assurance were not real.

One of the major shifts in the new curriculum was on how learners were assessed.

Most educators in secondary schools indicated that the elimination of failure, abolition of grades, marks, percentages and symbols had not been not well explained to them. Very few educators indicated that they were not aware of whether the elimination of failure, abolition of grades, marks, percentage and symbols could have an impact on the curriculum implementation. The results indicated that the curriculum implementers had not considered those factors.

4.3 BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTATION TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

More than half of the respondents (70%) strongly agreed that their classroom practice improved as a result of the new curriculum implementation. Also, thirty (30%) percent agreed that they benefited from implementing the new curriculum, even though it has shortcomings. The results were encouraging because all educators who participated in the curriculum implementation would testify that they had gained new knowledge. When interviewed to mention areas such as assessment of learners in class, teaching learners, lesson preparation, most teachers showed improvements in knowledge of learning areas. The results indicated the there was improvement in learning outcomes and assessment standard application (70%), and that classroom management skills had also improved by thirty percent (30%).

4.4 CONSTRAINTS HAMPERING IMPLEMENTATION

Educators were requested to mention constraints which they encountered while implementing the NCS. Some of the responses were presented as follows:

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents experienced high transport costs when attending workshops, a shortage of teaching and learning materials, lack of accommodation and shortage of training time. Twelve percent (12%) indicated that trainers seemed not to have adequate knowledge because they were unable to answer some of the questions posed by educators. They indicated that they were still on a learning curve and they were not well versed in the intricacies of the NCS.

4.5 SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT

All educators recommended that the principals, circuit managers, and the Department of Education should support teachers in implementing the NCS by motivating them. The Department should outsource trainers to train educators. The DOE should provide schools with relevant policies as more time was spent drafting policies for schools by the SMT (School Management Team). The Department should specify and reduce the number of projects required from learners. The Department should reduce the number of educators' portfolios for administrative purposes.

Respondents pointed out that the government had stopped releasing educators to attend workshops after twelve. They argued that three days per quarter was not enough for training an educator and to expect him or her to teach learners effectively through knowledge gained within such a short space of time.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter I discuss the results of my exploration into teachers' experiences during their implementation of the NCS in a school in Limpopo Province.

The findings of the research revealed that educators experienced many challenges which hindered the successful implementation of the NCS. The respondents painted a gloomy picture about conditions that prevail in our schools; for example, 67% of respondents indicated lack of support from the department, 75% of respondents indicated a shortage of learning and teaching resources. The environment that exists in our schools largely contributes to the inability of educators to successfully implement the NCS.

Of course there are factors that need the attention of the Department of Education and those that could be dealt with by the school itself. For example, curriculum support, recruitment of educators, supply of teaching and learning resources and content offered, and administrative load of educators — all these are factors that cannot be entirely managed by principals and SGBs alone, but require the active involvement and intervention of the various levels of the department, from provincial to circuit level, in order to turn the situation around.

Factors such as staff development, educator preparedness, parent involvement and budgeting for teaching resources could be managed and dealt with by school managers, SGBs and educators in order to create an environment that is conducive to the successful implementation of the NCS.

The researcher's opinion is that the implementation of the NCS requires all role-players — the Department of Education, SMTs, SGBs and staff members — to collectively work together to create an atmosphere that permits successful delivery of the new curriculum. Pointing fingers at the department cannot be a solution. Yes, the department is an important partner in education and it has to fulfil its mandate, which includes the provision of financial, material and human resources, workshopping educators, curriculum support to schools, as well as limiting the administrative burden of educators. These are the competencies of the department and it has to fulfil its responsibilities. If the department does its part, it would provide SMTs, SGBs and educators with the necessary tools and resources needed in schools. But the process works both way: SMTs, SGBs and staff have to fulfil their mandates as well. The research results indicate that at present this is simply not the case.

The support and active involvement of the department alone is not enough. The role of principals, educators and SGBs is indispensable for the successful delivery of curriculum in schools. Educators should improve their professional qualifications; they should go to class fully prepared to teach — these are the competencies of educators. Principals and SGBs should provide proper leadership such as proper budgeting, staff development and training and encouraging parental involvement and the creation of discipline and motivation of learners. If all role players come to the party and carry out their mandates, the system will function well and the NCS will be successfully implemented in South African schools.

CHAPTER SIX

6 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

In the previous chapter, I discussed some of the findings of this research project. These seemed to indicate that all stakeholders needed to improve their contribution to the process of implementation of the NCS. This final chapter presents my conclusions with regard to the literature review, recommendations concerning strategies to implement the NCS, and recommendations for further studies.

6.2. CONCLUSIONS

a. Concerning the literature review

The literature review revealed that there were various problems experienced by educators in implementing the National Curriculum Statement. These included inadequate teaching and learning resources, and overcrowding of classes where implementation could not be done successfully, especially in rural areas.

Teachers, therefore, with the assistance of curriculum advisors and outside NGOs, are expected to join hands and play a leading role in encouraging their colleagues in implementing the system. The new curriculum endorses the concepts of life-long learning, which means that all people who need to learn should be provided with an opportunity to learn.

b. Concerning Empirical Work

According to data gathered, all respondents agreed that programmes were problematic. To address these problems related to Curriculum 2005 and the NCS, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was introduced and it would start in 2012.

Constraints of implementing the National Curriculum Statement

Teachers experienced some of the following constraints as they implemented the curriculum:

- Financial constraints, which were caused by extra travelling expenses to attend training workshops after school or during weekends.
- Time constraints, as they had to teach learners in addition to attending workshops.
- Lack of resourced classrooms, especially in rural areas.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Recommendations with regard to implementation constraints

- Curriculum contents should be fairly emphasized and appropriately sequenced.
- There should be adequate human, material and financial resources to put the designed curriculum into practice.
- Decision-making in the process of curriculum implementation should be participatory to avoid resistance and to develop a sense of belonging among the staff members.
- The outlined learning areas should be adequately covered.
- The management and administration system should be effective enough to implement the curriculum successfully and respond to the needs and interests of trainees..
- Training workshops should be scheduled to take place during school holidays to prevent interference with learners' school programme.
- The Department of Education should base the reimbursement of costs on the distance the educator has to travel.

b. Recommendations with regard to training teachers

- Training of teachers to support curriculum implementation should be subject specific and targeted only where needed; and all support staff, including school management, subject advisors and district officers should also undergo training on the curriculum and assessment policy.
- A comprehensive NCS training programme for teachers and other education curriculum officers as part of their professional preparation and in-service training should be compulsory.
- Core modules for curriculum change programmes should be created so that educators can receive credits towards further qualifications.
- Curriculum and Assessment Policy documents should be developed and implemented.
- All support staff, including school management, subject advisors and district officers, should also undergo training.

c. Recommendation with regard to use of teaching support material in curriculum implementation.

- An improvement of access to and use of NCS Policy materials.
- Training sessions, for instance on the correct use of resources meant for implementation, should be instituted.
- Increase of the buy-in by educators, a positive attitude and perceptions on the use of resources towards implementation.

- The Department of Education should centralize the quality assurance and catalogue development for textbooks and other LTSM; and each learner from Grades 4 to 12 should have a textbook for each subject.

d. Recommendation with regard to assistance to teachers

- Training of teachers and an awareness of problems facing educators, such as that implementation was not well thought through, should receive priority.
- Schools should also link up with the community to participate in school governance.
- There should be enough teaching and learning resource support materials. The number of projects required from learners must be reduced.
- Good positive support from the Department of Education is essential. There should be adequate infrastructure for accommodating learners.
- A single file for administrative purposes should be required from teachers.

e. Recommendations regarding other partners in the community

- Schools should encourage support services, and the curriculum committee should be headed by a curriculum co-coordinator.
- Non-governmental organizations should sponsor districts in order to embark on their training workshops for curriculum implementation.
- The Department of Education should be encouraged to supply all recent materials regarding curriculum implementation in schools.
- Schools need to be substantially reorganized.
- The role of parents in education should be adjusted.

6.4. Recommendation for Further Study

After twelve (12) years of a failing school system, curriculum implementation is still problematic. When presenting her departmental budget to Parliament in 2009, Minister of Education Angie Motshekga admitted that the curriculum had major problems (Motshekga 2009). The Minister subsequently announced that the new curriculum had been modified to improve pupils' performance.

I strongly recommend that further research be conducted to find out how teachers can be motivated to implement the NCS without any difficulty. This is also an opportunity for further investigation for those who feel that education can only be improved if recurring challenges in curriculum implementation are faced head-on and eliminated.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Do you have enough learner resources?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. Do educators go to class prepared?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

Justify your answer

_____

3. Are parents actively involved in learners education?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Is the content offered to learners relevant ?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

Motivate your answer

_____

5. Are there staff development and training programmes ?

_____

6. Is there budget allocation for learning and teaching resources? Explain

7. Do you have enough teaching staff?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. The level of support rendered by the department to teachers.

_____

12. Does the school receive support from external stakeholders?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, in what form?

_____

13. Are educators professionally and academically qualified?

_____

14. Administrative workload for educators

_____

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Probing questions were asked to elicit more information from the interviewees.

1. What are the successes of NCS?

2. Are educators always prepared for their lessons?

3. Do you have enough teaching staff?

4. What is the level of support rendered by the department to teachers?

5. Does the school receive support from external stakeholders?

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION

0993

2010-09-15

The circuit manager

Vhembe District

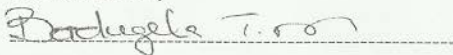Nzhelele East Circuit

Nzhelele

0993

Dear Sir

Request for permission to conduct Educational Research in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.

I hereby request for your permission to conduct research for MED Degree in Sampled Secondary Schools in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Department of Education.

The purpose of this research is to investigate challenges facing educators in implementing National Curriculum in FET phase. Constrains experienced by teachers in FET phase and recommendations thereof to overcome some challenges.

Yours faithfully

Thivhavhudzi Muriel Badugela