

Chapter One

Overview and rationale

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From 1996 onwards, the National Department of Education in South Africa released a number of draft policies on curriculum reform. This curriculum reform was called curriculum 2005 (C2005) because it represented a process of curriculum reform that was to be introduced in an incremental level from 1998 to 2005. This process of curriculum reform was to follow a new educational approach called Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), which focuses not only on the acquisition of general knowledge but also on skills, values, attitudes, critical thinking and understanding. It was hoped that by the year 2003, all the grades would have been exposed to curriculum 2005, and that the two years that followed would see a fundamental review of the new curriculum with a view to improving and refining the departments' curriculum goals (Curriculum 2005. Lifelong learning for the 21st century, 1997:8,18).

With the commencement of the year 2003, the introduction and implementation of curriculum 2005 following the OBE approach had only just reached grade nine in South African secondary schools. The year 2002 saw us at the point of conducting the first round of internal and external outcomes-based assessment in grade nine in all the secondary schools in the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Whilst assessment guideline documents were made available earlier in that year, educators were only trained in this regard a mere term before all school-based assessment had to be finalised. The training was provided with the relevant information by the GDE in a once-off two-day information session. Despite this late delivery of instruction from the GDE the level and quality of work produced by some schools were excellent. The educators from these schools declared that they had taken a pro-active stance, familiarizing themselves thoroughly with the assessment guideline documents and also using their knowledge of how portfolios were compiled by matric learners. Many schools, however, battled with the rushed time-frame and educators admitted, during informal interviews, to having taken a reactive stance waiting for the GDE to give clarity on what had to be done.

Rampersad (2001:287-292) attributes this waiting of instruction from the GDE to a “dependency culture” that exists in many educators due to their lack of participation in curriculum development in the past. She points out that although the new curriculum offers educators an empowering experience if they are innovative and creative enough, there are many dependent educators who are still waiting for instruction, training, curriculum interpretation and the means of curriculum implementation from a top-down structure. It appears that once the GDE provides guideline documents and the basic minimum training, educators should then take the initiative to follow through and develop the necessary skills needed to comply with the provisions of the new curriculum. In the cluster meetings I attended, I observed that although many educators were willing to implement the new curriculum, only a small number felt confident and capable of doing so. There appears to be stark differences in the way the implementation of the new curriculum is experienced by educators in the different schools.

Rogan (2000:118) points out that differences in schools are an indisputable fact of life, particularly in a country like South Africa, where some of the reasons for the differences are the discriminatory funding policies of the previous government and the continued socio-economic gulf between groups that persists to this day. He argues that due to this, the implementation strategies used in South Africa in terms of the new curriculum should be guided by the differing realities of each school. The schools in South Africa are very different from one another in terms of how the classrooms are organised, the learner-educator ratio and the kinds of educators the school has in terms of qualifications, experience and expertise. Despite these differences, current efforts to implement OBE and curriculum 2005 proceed from the assumption that schools are essentially the same and will benefit from the same kind of in-service education and training (INSET) and the same implementation strategy (Rogan 2000:119).

According to Jansen (1999:149) this “flawed assumption” of what happens in South African schools, is one of the reasons why OBE is destined to fail. This is so because the implementation of transformational OBE assumes that all educators are qualified enough to face the challenge of change to existing practice, to understand the theoretical underpinnings of OBE and to demonstrate a capacity to transfer such understanding in different contexts. Only such qualified educators will be able to make sense of the terminology and language of OBE, which Jansen (1999:147) describes as simply “too complex and inaccessible”. Furthermore he points out that

with the current policies of educator rationalisation and the directive to increase the average class sizes, OBE enters an environment that directly militates against the conditions for its success (Jansen 1999:152).

Mahomed (1999:164) responds to this criticism by pointing out that everybody agrees that the quality of teaching in South Africa needs to be enhanced. OBE intends to do just that, i.e. to find better ways of ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning improves. He poses questions that I feel are worth repeating:

“If teachers are not ready to implement OBET [outcomes-based education and training], then isn't this all the more reason for preparing them for it, and shouldn't a start be made somewhere?”

“If we do not introduce teachers to OBET, as the critics recommend, then what should teachers be introduced to?”

His point is that since there are no alternative education systems suggested by the detractors of OBE, staying with the old discredited approaches will leave the education system at a dead end. He accepts that the disparities that exist in schools will be there for a long time still, but asserts that the challenge of teaching in the context of these problems has to be met in innovative and creative ways of teaching and learning. In this respect he sees the OBE system as one that can lend itself to be a provider of solutions. One of the ways in which OBE is sophisticated is that it enables and encourages educators and learners to use whatever is available or accessible in their environment, albeit rural, poor or less developed (Mahomed 1999: 164-165).

Wherever one is in the debate on the implementation of OBE, the process continues with people on both sides of the OBE coin finding more evidence to support their specific views. My concern rests with the educators who find themselves having to make sense of it all. For some educators the implementation of OBE has presented a positive challenge which they find rewarding. For others OBE is still the nightmare they have not as yet woken up from.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The educators who were tasked with the implementation of OBE in grade nine have thus far proved to be very adaptable. Although they were faced with numerous problems, in some cases unique to their own schools, informal interviews indicated

that many of the educators managed to comply with the requirements of outcomes-based internal and external assessment in grade nine. It was a difficult road for grade nine educators. In general they complained about a lack of clarity regarding the assessment process, of there being no consistency in what the different schools were doing and of having too much administrative work to do over a short period of time. Many admitted to feeling tired and stressed and just could not reconcile what the large amount of paper work actually had to do with achieving the educational goals of the school.

Whatever the realities are of a particular school, it is the educators in the classrooms and the school management teams that carry the process of change forward. They respond to last minute instructions and what is described by some as haphazard training from the Department of Education. The educators and school management teams are challenged in their quest to meet the department's late delivery of instruction and training whilst they attempt to meet the goals of their schools with a quality and effective curriculum delivery.

This research focuses on these people who are crucial to educational reform efforts in South Africa – the educators - who translate theory into practice in their individual classrooms. The research also focuses on the school managers, who have to be agents of change using whatever human material and financial resources they have at their disposal to effect the change and still maintain high standards in their specific departments and in the school as a whole. Hence the research question is: *How do educators experience the implementation of outcomes-based education in grade nine?*

1.3 AIMS OF RESEARCH

I aim to describe educators' experiences of the process of implementing OBE in grade nine in respect of the following questions:

- (a) What was positive?
- (b) What was negative?
- (c) What can be done (by management) to improve an educator's experience of curriculum reform?

In finding out how educators experience the implementation of OBE in grade nine I hope to have a better understanding of the challenges that these educators face.

This understanding, in turn, will help to shape the role of manager and leader. I also felt that the information derived from the research could be used to inform the managerial practices of many other schools. School managers, it seems, need as much guidance in the implementation of a new curriculum as the level one educators who are mainly responsible for the implementation of OBE in the classroom. Perhaps their need is stronger given that their role is to manage the process and to lead other educators into unknown territory.

My experiences of managers when I was a novice educator in the old apartheid system were that they were the “know-it-all”. Although there were negative aspects to this type of managerial style, these school managers represented a source of knowledge, a guide to the improvement of teaching practice and a means for the growth and development of an educator. School managers now do not feel as empowered as before and are essentially running the same crazy race on an uncertain road. For school managers perhaps, the race is like a relay, with them receiving the baton from the GDE and then handing it over as fast as possible to the educators in their teams. With nothing more to offer their team members than this “baton”, some managers seem to be taking the backseat in curriculum reform, merely appending their signatures when all the hard work has been done.

Understanding how educators experience the implementation of OBE in grade nine can also do much in terms of addressing the issue of quality. The General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) to be issued at the end of grade nine will represent a particular standard of education. If it is issued *en masse* as a pass one, pass all scenario as is one of the criticisms of OBE (Venter 2000:1), then it will not be worth much to the recipient.

1.4 PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

I am a product of a content-based curriculum transmitted firmly in line with a calendar by a teacher seen as the ultimate authority in a racially fragmented education system. For many years I also taught in this education dispensation. As both learner and educator I was critical of this education system in terms of not only its segregated policies but also, more especially, in terms of what actually took place in the classroom.

I saw the previous education system for what it was, an instrument of the apartheid state, affording its people unequal access to what I feel should be a basic human right – a quality basic education for all. In 1994 I voted for the first time, looking forward to an open, democratic South Africa. I have always been pro-transformation which is described by Schoeman (1995:102) as being “anti establishment” and endeavouring to “...eliminate permanently all vestiges of biased privileging, domination, hegemony and the like from the South African Society”. I believe that just as the education system of the past was used to enforce and entrench apartheid ideologies, so too the education system of the present has to play a role in bringing about and maintaining the change to democracy.

Within the actual classroom situation the gaps in the previous education system was particularly evident when I found myself having to teach “weaker classes”, a certain quantity of content in a certain period of time. Capper and Jamison (1993:429) describe the selection of this content as an “amorphously conceived process” in which committees select packaged textbooks covering a variety of material, which become the curriculum in and of itself. This “shapeless heap of knowledge” and instructional practices in education are built around issues of time (calendar) and learner custody (promotion/retention) rather than guaranteeing learner success. Staff members are subjected to the pressure of staggering through this curricular morass in a quick and standardised fashion (Capper & Jamison 1993:429). In such a system which holds time and the opportunity to learn constantly, the level of learning mastery will appear to align itself along a traditional, bell-shaped curve (Spady 1988:5) with few learners doing very well, few not so well, and the majority somewhere in between.

An ill-defined curriculum and the pace at which the material was covered, was driven by the calendar, rather than the needs of the learners, and dictated whatever learning took place in the traditional education system described above. Such a system is *input-driven* rather than *outcomes-based* or *results oriented* (Capper & Jamison 1993:429). Spady (1993:10) refers to “transformational outcomes-based education” which is future-oriented and exists to equip all students with the knowledge, competence and orientations needed for them to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities they will face in their career and family lives after graduating. It also emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning (Spady 1993:2) and appears to be more optimistic in terms of the potential of each learner than the previous content driven education system, believing that all learners can succeed and can achieve an

outcome. Precisely when an outcome or performance level is achieved though, varies from one learner to another. What is important is that an educator has high expectations of *all* his/her learners, for Spady (1993:17) assures us that outcomes will occur for everyone provided every student is given enough time and enough support. The OBE system will thus ensure that schools are no longer a “self-defeating” experience for some learners where they never get to experience any kind of success.

I am passionate and excited about the changing education system believing that given our history of education in South Africa as well as my own experiences of the limitations that the previous education system presented, any possibility of change has to be explored. As Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:206) put it, “Any system which transforms an eager, questioning, experimenting, pre-school child into an uninterested, passive person who practices rote memorisation needs to be replaced”.

My passion and excitement for the new education system though fueled by what it promises to deliver in theory is watered down considerably since I have been involved in its implementation. For many other educators that I have worked with the experience of implementing the new education system has served to dampen their enthusiasm for change.

The strength and purpose of OBE in South Africa relies not on its theoretical principles and assumptions but on its successful implementation. Successful implementation of OBE in South African schools is, in my opinion, a function of the extent to which the experience of implementing the new curriculum is rewarding to educators on a personal and professional level. Where this is not the case the result is likely to be a haphazard and unsuccessful attempt at the implementation of OBE in South Africa.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is essential to this study. Focus groups, individual interviews and classroom observations of educators in two different schools ought to supply the data that will describe how educators experience the implementation of OBE in grade nine. In the process, those management strategies that facilitate and ease the burden of implementing a changing curriculum will be highlighted.

1.5.1 Ethical measures

All ethical measures will be considered throughout this study, which are the principles guiding the study from the beginning. These principles will include informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:398-399). These aspects will be explained in chapter three.

1.5.2 Method

A qualitative research method will be followed in the study. The following will be discussed under research method:

1.5.2.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling will be used. According to Patton (in McMillan & Schumacher 1993:378), in purposeful sampling the researcher identifies “information rich” participants for the reason that they are possibly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. Educators in two secondary schools will be selected for the purpose of this study.

1.5.2.2 Data collection

I shall conduct focus groups in two different schools. Tape recordings of the interviews and discussions will be done and the recordings will be transcribed verbatim. In addition, I shall conduct and transcribe individual interviews and observe lessons in classrooms in each of these schools. Thus a triangulation of methods will be used. More detail about these methods is given in chapter three.

1.5.2.3 Data processing

I shall read carefully through the transcribed interviews and notes made during the classroom observations. The data will then be analysed according to accepted qualitative methods. The method of data analysis will be explained in chapter three. The data will be interpreted and the findings presented and discussed in chapter four.

1.6. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Some of the key concepts used in this dissertation are clarified below so that the concepts may have the same meaning for the reader as it has for the writer. The concepts clarified are “curriculum”, “outcomes”, “outcomes-based education”, a “level one educator” a “school manager”.

1.6.1 Curriculum

According to Bhatt the term 'curriculum' can be described from three viewpoints, namely, “.....curriculum as object, curriculum as interaction, or curriculum as intent” (Bhatt in Vakalisa, 2000:15). The narrowest definition would be the one that represents curriculum as an object, for example, an outline of a course of study. The broadest definition would be one that subsumes all three viewpoints (Bhatt in Vakalisa, 2000:15).

The National Department of Education, in a booklet (Curriculum 2005. Lifelong learning for the 21st century, 1997:10) supplies the following definition for the term 'curriculum'.

A curriculum is everything planned by educators which will help develop the learner. This can be an extra-mural sporting activity, a debate or even a visit to the library. When the curriculum is being planned, the physical resources, work programmes, assessment criteria and extra-mural programmes should all be taken into account. A good curriculum produces thinking and caring individuals. All knowledge is integrated and teaching and learning are not sharply divided. This means that a person's intelligence, attitudes, knowledge and values are easily developed.

This definition is broadly stated and seems to include all the learner's experiences as a result of his/her schooling and it is the definition adopted for the purposes of this study. When the term curriculum 2005 (C2005) is used it refers to the new *outcomes-based* curriculum introduced in South Africa. The year 2005 represents the initial deadline, envisaged by the department, by which all grades would have been introduced to this new curriculum, including two years for reviewing the curriculum (Curriculum 2005. Lifelong learning for the 21st century, 1997:10).

1.6.2 Outcomes

In an outcomes-based education system, the focus is on outcomes, i.e. the end result of a learning process, which is not time-bound. Spady (1993:4), regarded by some to be the ‘father’ of OBE, gives a definition of an outcome as “a culminating demonstration of learning”. He explains that outcomes are what learners do and he emphasises that it is not the curriculum content that is the outcome but the demonstration of the content. Spady and Marshall (1991:67) call this culminating demonstration an “outcome of significance” which requires “substance of significance” to be applied through “processes of significance” in “settings of significance”.

Ankiewicz and de Swardt (2001:8-9) simplify these thoughts as follows:

- **Outcomes happen**

Outcomes are *visible* – they can be seen (observable) – they are tangible demonstrations of competencies, skills, knowledge and actions

- **Outcomes happen at the end**

Outcomes are *results*

- **Outcomes happen somewhere**

Outcomes happen in *real situations*

Performance implies *doing real things* in *real places*

- **Outcomes happen in many ways**

Outcomes may take micro forms (small skills) or macro forms (life-role performances)

Mahomed (2001:16) points out that outcomes are typically demonstrations or performances, which reflect three things:

- 1) What the learner knows.
- 2) What the learner can actually do with what he/she knows.
- 3) The learner’s confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration.

This study accepts that an outcome actually happens. Somebody (the learner) does something significant at the end of a learning process, which is not time-bound, and until a learner does, an outcome has not been realised. This study also accepts that this “doing something” is not just a recall and regurgitation of facts, but that it is an

actual demonstration of learning that must occur in an authentic context (Spady 1993:4).

1.6.3 Outcomes-based education

According to Spady (1993:5-6) for an education system to be “outcome-based” it means that the system has to design and organise everything around the final intended learning demonstration. The system has to start with a framework and a set of expectations about the desired learning results, which are the outcomes. These outcomes must be clearly defined first before the curriculum and organisational forms that are appropriate to achieving them are built. Mammery puts it succinctly in an interview with Brandt (1994:27): “Start with your outcomes and let your outcomes drive your actions.”

Griffin and Smith (1997:6) explain that OBE involves specifying what the learners are expected to learn and then collecting evidence that this has occurred. OBE is a very accountable process as the educator, the school and the system are expected to publicly state what is important for learners to learn and to be able to support these assertions with evidence that this has occurred. Such an approach differs from previous orientations in that it changes the focus to what is achieved rather than what is provided (Griffin & Smith 1997:6).

Zlatos (1993:13) gives a similar definition. For him the OBE approach is one that defines clearly what learners are to learn (the desired outcomes), measures their progress based on actual achievement, meets their needs through various teaching strategies, and gives them enough time and help to meet their potential.

For Malcolm (1999:77-78), OBE is a way of *managing* curriculum and assessment that has many forms depending on what outcomes are chosen and what management systems are used to achieve them. In this regard Spady and Marshall (1991) describe three models of OBE. In a nutshell, *traditional OBE* entails the descriptions of learning outcomes within an existing curriculum framework, *transitional OBE* lists the outcomes required by learners when they complete schooling and *transformational OBE* lists the outcomes that describe the nature of performances to be undertaken once the student enters the real world. Just having the outcomes, though, does not make the system outcome-based. Once these outcomes are chosen and defined, all processes, from curriculum formation to the

school organisation and the entire instructional system, should be aligned to these outcomes, which become the driving force in the education system (Pretorius 1998:101).

Consensus in the definitions of OBE provided above indicate that it comprises

- a list of outcomes;
- a means to achieve the outcomes by planning appropriate learning strategies;
- an evaluation of individual learners to determine whether the outcomes have been achieved;
- the provision of remediation and enrichment as required by individual learners;
- a whole-school approach involving the entire school organisation.

South Africa is committed to implementing authentic OBE, i.e. a transformational approach to OBE (Pretorius 1998:x). In South Africa the outcomes chosen are based on a vision of what all learners should be able to do when their learning experiences in school have been concluded.

1.6.4 A level one educator teaching grade nine

For the purpose of this study, a level one educator teaching grade nine is any educator who teaches a grade nine class in a school and has no managerial role except in regard to his/her own classroom. Such an educator is not part of the school management team.

1.6.5 A school manager

West-Burnham (1994:28) emphasises that 'management' is not a noun but a verb and that perpetuating the notion that management is a group of senior staff creates a significant barrier to the effective assimilation of management concepts. This in turn becomes associated with the notion of status and power and because of the nature of the promotion process, is often perceived as being male dominated.

For the purpose of this study a narrow definition of a school manager as a person who is a principal, deputy principal or a head of department (HOD) of a subject or learning area or a grade head will be used. These educators form part of the school

management team (SMT). They may also be known as the executive team of a school. For example, in Lanyon High School in Australia, the “executive team” comprises of the principal, deputy principal, three-home school executive teachers and a student management executive leader (Griffin & Smith 1997:34).

1.7 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

Chapter one contains the overview and rationale of the study as stated above.

CHAPTER 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Chapter two contains a literature review on outcomes-based education.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN

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

CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the research will be presented and will be discussed. The researcher will attempt to identify patterns and themes in the responses from educators.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The conclusions and limitations of this study will be presented. Recommendations for managers on how to facilitate and ease the burden of educators having to implement a new curriculum will be made. Recommendations for future research will also be made.

1.8 SUMMARY

The overview, problem statement, research question, aims of the research, research design and method and definition of concepts have been stated. In chapter two, a literature review of outcomes-based education is undertaken.

Chapter Two

Characteristics of Outcomes-Based Education

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The overview, problem statement, research question, aims of the research, research design and method and definition of concepts have been stated in chapter one. In chapter two, a literature review of outcomes-based education is undertaken.

Most advocates of restructuring treat reform as a product ignoring the people involved in the change (Evans 1993:19) or as an event or object ignoring the process of change, i.e. how schools put the reforms into practice (Hopkins, Ainscow & West in Rogan 2000:119). The product or object of change being experienced in South African education is the shift to an outcomes-based education (OBE) system and the people essential in the implementation of this change are the educators in their classrooms and their school managers. The literature review focuses on OBE but also looks at the reality of implementing the change with regards to the educators and managers at South African schools.

2.2 THE PRODUCT OF CHANGE: OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Although Spady (1993:ii) asserts: Outcome-based education is NOT “. . . a quick-fix, a panacea, a miracle or an event”, the OBE system was introduced in South Africa as a means to reform a previously fragmented and oppressive system of education into one that will bring about equality and social and cultural upliftment to all its citizens, moving South Africa out of its primitive apartheid past to its modern post-apartheid future (Soudien & Baxen 1997: 456).

The uncritical embracing of OBE as a panacea for public education in the United States of America (USA) is problematic to Capper and Jamison (1993:443) as they feel that OBE can serve to reproduce and exacerbate educational and societal

inequities rather than redress them, reinforcing the cliché that the more things change the more they remain the same. They warn, “Educators should consider the wisdom of gulping an initiative which pours from the same fountain of so many failed reforms” (Capper & Jamison 1993:443).

In deliberating means to reform an education system in tatters after the first democratic election in 1994, South African policymakers and education leaders opted to gulp from this fountain. The emphasis on OBE’s ability to transform society was probably irresistible to our politicians and planners, as it needs a crisis to put in place a system as radical as OBE (Morgan in Hiralaal 2000:21). In the USA it was the 1983 report called, “A Nation at risk: The imperative for education reform” that was created in response to protests about the quality of education and the continual decline of tests and scores and increasing illiteracy. There was a need for reform and this gave rise to the implementation of OBE in America (Hiralaal 2000:21). I will now proceed to look at why OBE is viewed as a vehicle of social reform in South Africa.

2.2.1 The need for a new education system in South Africa

The previous education system in South Africa was fragmented with there being huge disparities between black, white, coloured and Indian education. Each provincial education department developed its own subject curricula. South Africa thus needed a single, national education system that integrated theoretical and practical learning and that provided equal access to quality education for all its citizens. The development and maintenance of a national, outcomes-based qualifications framework in South Africa seemed like an obvious strategy for the elimination of many of these disparities (Malan 1997:3).

Educational change was required in South Africa to bring about a more balanced view of its people (Van der Horst & McDonald 1997:5-6). An OBE system seeks to develop learners’ critical thinking powers and problem-solving abilities, thus allowing South Africans to appreciate the different aspirations and perspectives of people from whom they were distanced. Furthermore, the OBE system, which endorses the concept of lifelong learning, would give learners who were deprived of educational and training opportunities the chance to develop their potential to the full regardless of what age they were (Van der Horst & McDonald 1997:5).

According to Pretorius (1998: vi-viii) other important reasons for educational reform are that South Africa is now a partner in the global market and has to keep pace with both the influence of technological inventions as well as the changes in the organisation of work. These changes require workers with a healthy work ethic to produce quality products for the export markets that are able to compete with the best in the world. These reasons for educational reform all seek to address the need to build South Africa as a thriving democracy with economically active and empowered citizens. This need to remain globally competitive also applies to many leading industrial countries with established democracies like the USA, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and Japan and explains why these countries have launched large scale reformations of their education systems within the last ten years (Pretorius 1998:vi). In the USA, for example, there existed the concern that the skills of high school graduates did not match the needs of employers and that the schooling system was not preparing students, at reasonable cost, for the challenges of a global economy (Ladd 1996:1). In Australia teachers and principals were tasked to work towards producing a thinking and intelligent workforce to keep Australia competitive in the global market (Moore 1997:29).

The means chosen to effect transformation in the education systems of these leading industrial countries was also a shift to an OBE system (Vakalisa 2000:21). South Africa, however, is the only developing country that has so far been courageous enough to plunge into what Vakalisa (2000:21) calls “untested waters”, given the controversy that surrounds OBE even in the country of its origin - the USA.

But what is the OBE system and what is it that makes it important in education reform not only in South Africa but also in many other countries?

2.2.2 The underlying philosophy and principles behind OBE

The main underlying philosophy of OBE is *success* (Spady in Mahomed 2001:17), and there exists three premises to it:

- all learners can succeed, but not on the same day and in the same way;
- successful learning promotes more successful learning;
- schools control the conditions that directly affect successful learning.

Spady and Marshall (1991:70) describe the four key principles of OBE as follows:

2.2.2.1 Ensure clarity of focus on outcomes of significance

Culminating demonstrations, i.e. outcomes, must be the starting point, the focal point, and the ultimate goal of curriculum design and instruction (Spady & Marshall 1991:70). Learners must know the outcomes and play an active role in achieving them. This clear picture of where learners stand and where they are headed is a genuine boon and stimulus to them (Spady 1988:7). Educators must ensure that the learning experiences and assessment practices in classrooms lead to the attainment of these outcomes.

2.2.2.2 Design down from ultimate outcomes

The curriculum and instructional design must proceed *backwards* from the outcomes on which everything ultimately focuses and rests, thereby ensuring that all components of a successful culminating demonstration are in place (Spady & Marshall 1991:70). Spady, in an interview with Garson (1998:7) describes it as “. . . start[ing] where you want to end up”. He explains that learners should be given a picture of the abilities they are expected to have and that the educator should start with this picture and then put all the building blocks in place.

2.2.2.3 Emphasise high expectations for all to succeed

Outcomes should represent a high level of challenge for learners, and everybody should be expected to accomplish them eventually at high performance levels and be given credit for their performance whenever it occurs (Spady & Marshall 1991:70). In view of this point, Mahomed (2001:17) mentions three other principles that are at play:

- only a high quality performance is regarded as finished or acceptable;
- quotas and bell curve assumptions about learners are eliminated;
- a learner's access to a high level challenging curriculum is expanded.

2.2.2.4 Provide expanded opportunity and support for learning success

Time should be used as a flexible resource rather than a predefined absolute in both instructional design and delivery, thus accommodating differences in learning rates and aptitudes. Educators should deliberately allow learners more than one

chance to receive the needed instruction and to demonstrate their learning successfully (Spady & Marshall 1991:70). In applying this fourth principle, Mahomed (2001:17) mentions five realities about learners that educators need to take cognisance of:

- Their rates of learning differ, as do their rates of learning different kinds of things. Time should be used flexibly.
- The ways through which people learn vary. A multiple method approach would yield far better results than a single method approach.
- Only a few learners learn well and permanently the first time. Multiple chances at learning and more than one opportunity to demonstrate learning will allow all to succeed.
- There are only 'good' and 'bad' learners when the standard for judging is comparative. Negative labels should be avoided, and one way of doing it is through criterion testing.
- Learners need a clear indication of what is expected of them, and what is important to learn.

The bottom line for Mahomed (2001:18) is that time and instructional methods should be used flexibly to meet learner needs.

Clearly, the needs of the learner now take centre stage and herein lies the appeal of OBE. The fact that OBE is success-based seems to be a strong selling point for OBE and explains why education leaders are attracted to its call (Dlugosh, Walter, Anderson & Simmons 1995:183). In the USA, OBE has gained impetus from a feeling that the U.S. educational system has not been especially efficient in turning resources into educated students (Ladd 1996:1). OBE is a results-orientated reform effort that seeks to encourage schools to use their limited resources more effectively in pursuit of a common goal namely high levels of learning for all students (Ladd 1996:vii). In this regard OBE is also seen as an accountable education system (Willis & Kissane 1997: 30) as it brings the focus squarely on outcomes or “outputs” and not on inputs such as the curriculum, hours of instruction, educator-learner ratios, school buildings, equipment or textbooks, or support services.

The need to hold South African schools accountable to produce educated learners is acknowledged. However, ignoring input factors is a very controversial point in the implementation of OBE, as many people question whether in South Africa, specifically, the gaps in resources in the different schools can be ignored.

I will now look at OBE, as it is currently being implemented in grade nine in South Africa. This is followed by an explanation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), so as to place the significance of grade nine in the broader context of South African education.

2.2.3 The status of OBE in South Africa

OBE is currently being implemented in South Africa in grades one to nine by means of Curriculum 2005 (C2005). In highlighting the achievements in education since 1994, the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, informed us that C2005 was developed through extensive processes of participation and was released as policy in 1997. He argued that it is one of the most progressive of such policies in the world. C2005, guided by principles of OBE and learner-centred education, as well as by critical outcomes of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), defines specific outcomes and standards of achievement in eight learning areas. Asmal (2001) sees the critical and specific outcomes as major shifts in what is to be learnt in schools, emphasizing competencies rather than particular knowledge.

What follows is firstly a discussion of the outcomes that were chosen for the South African form of OBE. Thereafter, a list of the learning areas in which the outcomes must be achieved, and then a discussion of outcomes-based assessment (OBA) will follow.

2.2.3.1 The outcomes

The curriculum currently being implemented in South Africa follows the OBE approach, and thus has as its focal point, end results called 'outcomes'. These outcomes have to be clearly stated so that the educator and the learner know at the outset what the intention of the learning experience is. The outcomes guide the teaching and learning process, as well as the assessment of a learner's achievement, during and after the learning experience. These outcomes also provide a means of assuring the quality of education at the end of the phases, and form the basis for criterion-referenced assessment (Janse van Rensburg 1998: 27).

Two types of outcomes are discussed below.

(a) The critical cross-field outcomes

These outcomes are broad, generic and cross-curricular outcomes. They refer to the adult life roles to be acquired by learners and are meant to direct the process of teaching and learning in all grades and in all learning areas (Malan 1997:18). The critical outcomes were developed through a process of consultation with stakeholders in the education and training sectors, and finalised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) which is responsible for developing and maintaining the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Janse van Rensburg 1998: 29). The Department of Education (1997:24-25) states the critical outcomes to be achieved by learners as: identify and solve problems, work effectively with others, organise and manage oneself, process information, communicate effectively, understand relatedness and use science and technology responsibly. In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, learners must also be made aware of the importance of exploring a variety of strategies to learn effectively, participating as responsible citizens, being culturally and aesthetically sensitive, exploring education and career opportunities and developing entrepreneurial abilities. In developing these critical outcomes, the department hopes that they will ensure that the values of human rights, civic responsibility and respect for the environment are infused throughout the curriculum (Decisions of the CEM on the recommendations of the review committee on C2005 2001:61).

(b) The specific outcomes

Specific outcomes [SO's] were written for each of the learning areas. These outcomes represent the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be achieved within a particular field of learning. Currently there are 66 outcomes that have to be achieved across the eight learning areas in the General Education and Training (GET) band. The revised curriculum, however, which is to be implemented in the year 2008, will no longer contain 66 specific outcomes, but will have a few learning outcomes for each learning area. These learning area outcomes will specify the sequence of core concepts, contents and skills to be taught and learnt in each learning programme at each level (Decisions of the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) on the recommendations of the review committee on C2005 2001: 61).

Whilst the specific outcomes are too many to list here, their significance to the OBE system must not be underestimated. Together with the critical outcomes, these specific outcomes are what the new education system is all about. Following the underlying principles of OBE (see section 2.2.2.), there must be a clear focus on these outcomes. Educators are required to design downwards from these outcomes and deliver upwards to achieve these outcomes. The specific outcomes describe the competence which learners have to demonstrate in specific contexts and particular areas of learning at certain levels. It is therefore these outcomes, and not the critical outcomes, which should serve as the basis for assessing the progress of learners, and thus, indirectly the effectiveness of learning processes and learning programmes (Lubisi, Wedekind, Parker & Gultig 1997:14).

Workman (1997:15) questions whether this emphasis on predetermined outcomes is not restrictive as it draws attention away from unintended outcomes, which could be an exceedingly powerful force in what learners learn in schools. He emphasises that schools should not underestimate the unintended outcomes that occur through the culture of schooling or what is called the hidden curriculum (Workman 1997:15).

Manno (1995:720) speaks of a war that rages in America and cites the primary reason for the OBE backlash, as the *very outcomes* that define what students should master. Some of the criticisms about the outcomes in OBE are that they are often heavy on behaviours and beliefs that are vaguely worded and associated largely with the affective domain (Manno 1995:721; McQuaide & Pliska in Kanpol 1995:362). Many of the outcomes show little concern for core academic content. Instead they focus on such behavioural and social outcomes as attitudes, dispositions and sentiments (Manno 1995:721; Zlatos 1993:14; Jansen 1998:327), and therefore could be exposed to a wide range of interpretation by educators (Jansen 1998:327). Other criticisms about the outcomes are that they are prescribed by the state (Manno 1995:722; McClelland, Marsh & Podemski 1994:236), that there are too many of them (Manno 1995:721; Griffin & Smith 1997:6), that the outcomes deal with values and attitudes that parents may not want their children to learn (Manno 1995: 722; McClelland *et al* 1994:236), and that specifying outcomes in advance offers an instrumentalist view of knowledge (Jansen 1998:326) and is therefore a contradiction to the requirement that knowledge be used creatively. Kanpol (1995:362) feels that democracy is actually lost in these outcomes, which leave little room to explore alternate meanings.

Although many of these criticisms about the outcomes are relevant to the implementation of OBE in South Africa, the outcomes do reflect a country's vision to produce future competent citizens. In the GET band in South African education, eight fields of learning were identified to be areas of learning within which learners would achieve the outcomes.

2.2.3.2 *The learning areas*

GET in South Africa is made up of grades one to nine, as well as adult basic education and training (ABET). The curriculum for the GET band is centred on eight learning areas. The eight learning areas are compulsory for every grade nine learner and he/she is expected to develop certain knowledge, skills and attitudes in each of these learning areas which would then provide the basis for a general, formative education (Faasen & Metcalfe 1997: 8). The learning areas with their abbreviations in brackets are: language, literacy and communication (LLC), mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences (MLMMS), natural sciences (NS), human and social sciences (HSS), economic and management sciences (EMS), technology (TECH), arts and culture (A&C) and life orientation (LO) (Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century, 1997:14-15).

These learning areas do not have a defined syllabus as we were used to in the traditional education system, the content being of less importance than the outcomes. Spady (in Brandt 1992: 69) asserts that the curricular programme should not be subject-based, explaining that to learn mathematics in an OBE framework is an enabling outcome and not an outcome in its own right. Faasen and Metcalfe (1997:8) explain that the point of departure of these learning areas is integrated human experience and thus the learning areas are not to be seen as distinct subjects or disciplines. The move to an integrated curriculum was recognised as a trend in the nineties in education in the USA (McClelland *et al* 1994:238), and though research in general supports the effectiveness of curriculum integration (Glatthorn 1993:359), Brophy and Alleman (1991:66) warn that educators should consider integration a potential tool that is feasible and desirable in some situations, but not in all. They cite an example of "ill conceived" integration of art and history that lacks educational value as "carving pumpkins to look like U.S. presidents".

In some Australian classrooms where the learner centred inquiry learning approach is followed an integrated curriculum is essential (Woolley & Pigdon 1997:30). In this

case there exists a distinction between content outcomes and process outcomes, and educators are advised to give adequate attention to both types if they are to achieve a balanced curriculum. Educators are further advised to begin their planning by focusing initially on content (Woolly & Pigdon 1997:30). This “transitional approach to OBE” (Spady & Marshall 1991:69) is also followed by some schools in the USA such as the Aurora public schools, where outcomes are identified for traditional content areas such as mathematics and science, and also for aspects such as community involvement and the ability to work co-operatively with one another (Marzano 1994: 44). We have embarked on a more radical change, adopting a transformational OBE approach, our lessons being guided not by content outcomes but by the specific and critical outcomes. This is in keeping with Spady’s recommendation that to truly “transform” education, learning outcomes within specific subject content domains must be discarded *in lieu* of outcomes that reflect more realistic life roles (Spady 1988:6; Spady & Marshall 1991:70).

Having come to terms with the new learning areas and the various outcomes associated with each learning area, educators have to begin to assess whether the outcomes are being achieved at an acceptable level.

2.2.3.3 *Outcomes-based assessment*

Lubisi *et al* (1997:14) point to the role of assessment as a development and monitoring tool through which the efficacy of the teaching and learning process can be evaluated. At the heart of an *outcomes-based* teaching and learning process is the question “Have they achieved the outcomes?” (Willis & Kissane 1997:30). How well we are able to answer the crucial question – whether at the level of the individual, class, school or system – depends on the quality of the information we have of learners’ achievement of the outcomes. So the quality of assessment practices is integral to determining the success of OBE (Willis & Kissane 1997:30).

In outcomes-based assessment (OBA) in South Africa, there is an emphasis on continuous assessment (CASS) where learners are assessed on an ongoing basis using a variety of different forms of assessment (Gauteng Department of Education: Circular 5 / 2000:3). Assessment is criterion-referenced which means that each task, activity, performance, presentation, *etcetera*, is assessed against criteria which indicate the attainment of the outcomes, rather than against other learners’ performances (Lubisi *et al* 1997:14). These assessment criteria (AC), which are

transparent to the learners, are often listed in a rubric, with various levels (usually four) at which the outcomes can be achieved. Rubrics are commonly used as assessment recording tools for OBA.

There are two components of assessment in each learning area in grade nine: CASS which counts 75% of the learner's final mark and the Common Task of Assessment (CTA) which counts 25% of the learner's final mark.

(a) *CASS in grade nine*

CASS refers to the continuous assessment that the learner undergoes throughout the year in each learning area. This is the internal component of grade nine assessment and is school-based, designed by the educators of the various learning areas. The evidence of learner achievement in CASS should be stored in a portfolio (Department of Education: Curriculum 2005 Assessment guidelines: undated:15). A portfolio is defined as a collection of a learner's work over a period of time (Gauteng Department of Education 2000:6). A learner in grade nine has a portfolio for each learning area. The work in the portfolio is selected by the learner and represents the best attempt that a learner has made in a particular task. These portfolios are moderated internally by the head of the learning area, and then again at district level.

The tasks in the portfolio would have covered all the outcomes for a particular learning area. Educators are advised not to expect all the learners to attain the same specific outcomes at the same time or at the same place or in the same manner, as not all learners learn at the same rate and in the same way (Lubisi *et al* 1997:14). This means that educators are obliged to give learners *ample opportunity* to achieve the stated criteria at the *highest level*. The showcase portfolio to be submitted to the department at the end of the year must contain a learner's best work on any assessment task (Gauteng Department of Education 2003:13). This implies that more than one of such tasks has to be done in a year, each being assessed with a view to improving the learner's performance. A learning area such as Natural Science has to submit 18 assessment tasks. If each learner required three attempts to do his/her best, a total number of 36 assessment tasks must be done for one learner in one learning area alone. Some of the assessment tasks, such as the investigations are done over a period of three to four weeks and are assessed progressively, as certain steps are completed.

It is this aspect of assessment in OBE that educators complain about the most. This is because of their workload that has drastically increased. In addition, they feel pressurized to ensure that every learner is assessed in every way prescribed, even if that learner is frequently absent or does poorly initially, as he/she knows a second chance exists for doing better.

Venter (2000:3) speaks boldly about assessment in OBE criticising its “success for all” philosophy. He points out that in the real world some people succeed and some fail. He laments that success has come to mean nothing, and recounts the time he visited the UK where they had recently switched over to an automatic promotion concept. The learners he interviewed admitted they would work harder if they had to pass the year. Furthermore he points out that since success for all doesn’t always succeed, marks may be inflated to cover up the system. In this regard he cites Biggs (in Venter 2003:3) who tells of a South African working part-time as an educator in California where “marks start at 70%”. He also mentions Sykes (in Venter 2003:3) who quotes the case of an educator in Georgetown USA, who was berated because of the number of poor grades he handed out. But CASS is just one component of OBA in South Africa; the CTA’s are another.

(b) CTA’s in grade nine

The CTA is the external component of assessment and is set nationally for each learning area. The Department of Education (undated:14) emphasises that the CTA is a process and not an event and should therefore be administered over a period of time. The administration of the CTA section A would thus be infused into the routine schedule of the school. The CTA is designed to include a number of tasks and there are various criteria used to evaluate each task. Once section A of the CTA is completed during classroom instruction time, section B is administered in controlled, examination-like conditions.

One important question about outcomes-based assessment is, how well do learners perform? In searching for answers to this question, Marzano (1994:47) found that there appears to be a significant difference in learner performance in the USA between tasks embedded in classroom instruction and those that are presented in a controlled fashion. Learners performed better on tasks embedded within classroom instruction where there was the advantage of an educator’s guidance, peer support and an unhurried pace, as compared to tasks or tests administered in a controlled

environment (Marzano 1994:47). This can be confirmed from my personal experience with the administering of the CTA's. Learners almost always perform better in section A than they do in section B. Furthermore, the CASS mark, obtained throughout the year and made up of the learner's best attempt at each task, is almost always higher than the combined CTA marks. The conclusion drawn from this is that results on OBA (also called performance-based assessment) must be interpreted in the context of instruction and guidance (or lack thereof), provided before or during their administration (Marzano 1994:47). This raises two concerns regarding assessment in grade nine in South Africa, where all successful learners receive the same General Education and Training Certificate (GETC): (a) To what extent does the guidance offered to learners in some schools result in more learners passing without using their own skills? (b) The bulk of grade nine assessments are school-based. With schools being as different as they are in South Africa, how can we be assured that each learner with a GETC has achieved each of the outcomes at the same level?

Marzano (1994:47) raises this concern about outcomes-based performance assessment in the USA by a very succinct question "How reliable are they?" In this case reliability refers to the extent to which independent raters agree on the scores assigned to learners on the various proficiencies measured within performance assessments. This is called inter-rater reliability (Marzano 1994:47). Shavelson, Gao and Baxter (in Marzano 1994:47-48) conducted research on the reliability of assessing *content specific* performance-based tasks and found that performance assessments in mathematics and science can be scored in a highly reliable manner. Such content specific tasks, however count for only a small percentage of a grade nine learner's final assessment. With regard to other types of performance-based assessment tasks, such as assessing whether a learner is a tolerant person, a self-regulated learner or a responsible citizen, Marzano (1994:48) analysed 22 tasks designed by K-5 educators in the USA to find which tasks produced high reliabilities. His finding was that although very little differences were found in the tasks themselves, there were great differences in the rubrics used for these tasks. The tasks with the most specific rubrics had the highest reliability whereas tasks that had the least specific rubrics had a very low reliability. The use of rubrics in outcomes-based assessment in South African high schools is extensive. Some of these rubrics, even those provided by the Department are sometimes very poorly designed, and educators themselves have received no formal training on the designing of rubrics. This once again calls into question the quality of assessment in grade nine.

Despite these concerns, most grade nine learners will pass and receive a report at the end of the year after having achieved success with CASS and the CTA's. This report will have a number next to each learning area that will reflect the learner's *performance rating* in that learning area. The number ranges from one to four with four representing an outstanding result (70%-100%), three representing an achieved result (50%-69%), two representing a partially achieved result and a one representing a result not achieved or a fail. Educators have to fill out special forms called 450 forms on a learner's progress in terms of the achievement of the outcomes. The forms may be 450 A, B, C, D or E. Forms called 450 A, D and E are generally filled out for all learners whilst forms called 450 B and C are filled out for specific learners who have failed a learning area, or are in need of support in a learning area and/or need to be retained in a grade (Gauteng Department of Education 2000: Circular 5 / 2000:15).

A learner who has passed grade nine has completed the GET band of his/her schooling. This is one of three bands on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to which we turn our focus now.

2.2.4 The National Qualifications Framework and the importance of grade nine in South African Education

The new education system in South Africa does not confine itself to and recognise learning that occurs in schools and colleges only. Outcomes-based learning moves away from the idea that learning involves spending a certain length of time in a classroom in order to receive credits or a qualification. A structure called the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is in place to give effect to offering opportunities of lifelong learning for all (Education Information Centre 1996:12).

2.2.4.1 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The NQF centralizes all education in South Africa by registering all qualifications, such as school qualifications, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and non-formal qualifications and work experience. In doing so, the NQF recognizes that learning is lifelong and can take place under many circumstances. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) defines the requirements for all qualifications to be registered (Van Wyk & Mothata 1998:10). Muller (1998:178) cites the purpose of the

NQF as a means of enhancing flexibility and the educational opportunities of learners across all sites of formal and non-formal learning. Furthermore, it allows previously disadvantaged learners to redeem their unqualified competencies (recognition of prior learning) and permit recurrent and multiple re-entry for purposes of reskilling (Muller 1998:179).

The NQF is made up of eight qualification levels that are accommodated within three bands (Figure 2.1). The GET band, which includes the reception year from grade one to grade nine, represents the free and compulsory education that the government is constitutionally obligated to provide to all citizens of South Africa (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996:14). This band is made up of three phases, namely the Foundation phase, the Intermediate phase and the Senior phase. It also includes Adult Basic Education and Training levels 1-4.

In adopting the NQF, South Africa emulates New Zealand, where an outcomes-based approach is also teamed up with a national qualifications framework (Muller 1998:178). The New Zealand Qualifications authority (NZQA) has met with a great deal of opposition from the higher education community who object strongly to the writing of standards for tertiary education qualifications. Their argument is that higher education is curriculum-centred comprising of knowledge-based subjects, for which it is difficult, if not impossible, to spell out standards, as the level of mastery is not so easy to calibrate (Muller 1998:182). That higher education is curriculum-centred rather than learner centred contradicts a central premise of the NZQA and the NQF for that matter too (Muller 1998:182).

A grade nine learner has a long way to go before higher education. Grade nine is in the senior phase of the GET band. Once the GETC is obtained, the learner will move on to the FET band for a minimum of three years before reaching higher education.

FIGURE 2.1: The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (EIC, 1996)

NQF Level	Band	Types of Qualifications and Certificates		Locations of Learning for units and qualifications		
8	Higher Education and Training	Doctorate Further Research Degrees		Tertiary / Research / Professional Institutions		
7		Higher Degrees Professional Qualifications		Tertiary / research / Professional Institutions		
6		First degrees Higher Diplomas		Universities / Technikons / Colleges / Private / Professional Institutions / Workplace etc		
5		Diplomas Occupational Certificates		Universities / Technikons / Colleges / Private / Professional Institutions / Workplace etc		
Further Education and Training Certificates						
4	Further Education and Training	School/College/Trade Certificates Mix of units from all		Formal high schools/ Private/ State schools	Tech- nical/ Commu- nity Police / Nursing / Private colleges	RDP and Labour Market schemes / Industry Training Boards / Unions / Workplace etc
3		School/College/Trade Certificates Mix of units from all				
2		School/College/Trade Certificates Mix of units from all				
General Education and Training Certificate						
1	General Education and Training	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4	Formal Schools (Urban/ Rural/ Farm/ Special)	Occupation/ Work-based training/ RDP / Labour Market Schemes/ Upliftment /Community programmes	NGOS/ Churches/ Night schools/ ABET programmes/ Private providers/ Industry Training Boards/ Unions/ Workplace, etc
		Intermediate phase	ABET Level 3			
		Foundation phase	ABET Level 2			
		Preschool	ABET Level 1			

Mothata (1998:21) describes the importance of grade nine in South African schooling as follows:

2.2.4.2 *The importance of grade nine in South African education*

Grade nine is a crucial year in the life of a South African OBE learner. At the end of grade nine learners would have completed the senior phase of education. This phase begins in the primary school in grade seven and ends in the high school in grade nine. Mothata (1998:21) gives two reasons for the importance of this grade. Firstly, grade nine, once passed, represents an exit point from formal education. This means that learners are to receive a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) at the end of this grade. Secondly, grade nine is also the end of compulsory schooling and, armed with a GETC, learners may choose not to continue any form of formal schooling. It is for this reason that all eight learning areas are covered. Mothata (1998:21) indicates that because grade nine can serve as an exit point, it is very important that learners be prepared for life after school, whatever form this may take, whether it be in the field of work, at institutions of further learning and basically, for life in general.

The extent to which learners will feel empowered to make the correct decision as to what to do with their GETC will depend to a large extent on the educators that accompanied them to the point of achieving it. We turn our focus on them now.

2.3 CHANGE AGENTS OF OBE

Evans (1993:20) points out a very relevant double standard that prevails in times of change. He says: “When we advocate change, we usually mean by *other* people”. It is in cluster meetings and in the classroom where educators grapple with the practical issues involved in the implementation of the new curriculum. It is here, where what Evans calls “the human face of reform”, is visible. This face may take the form of enthusiasm and commitment to change but may also take the form of insecurity, frustration, anger and resistance. I look at some of the educators’ experiences in implementing OBE in the USA.

2.3.1 The human face of reform: Educators’ experiences in implementing OBE in the USA

The implementation of OBE in the USA has met with mixed reactions. An educator of English found the experience very negative, citing an increase in workload, coupled with apathy on the part of learners and anger and frustration on the part of parents as

added burdens (Schwarz & Cavener 1994:332). Advocates of OBE are likely to give many reasons for OBE not working in some situations. These include that change is always difficult and that implementation takes time and should not be judged too early or quite simply, that the educators are not doing OBE correctly. However, for many educators the OBE paradigm just invites frustration and failure (Schwarz & Cavener 1994:332). Many people in the USA echo these thoughts.

A circuit judge in the USA, Patrick Madden (in Hiralal 2000:23) wrote that the problem with the state controlling OBE is that it becomes an engineered result of someone's pre-determined agenda. Although OBE advocates claim to liberate educators, the emphasis on standardization and accountability, on a paradigm not necessarily selected by them, keeps educators voiceless yet responsible for the results (Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 335). Such top-down reform movements have previously contributed significantly to educator stress and burnout (Farber in Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 335). Furthermore, group efforts that are part of OBE could be characterised as "contrived collegiality", namely educators working together in one room to fulfill other's agendas (Hargreaves in Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 335).

The impact of OBE on some parents and learners in the USA has not been positive as well. Kosser (in Hiralal 2000:23) cites many instances of parents who opposed the implementation of OBE in USA schools. The Arizona Legislature turned down OBE whilst statewide OBE goals were dropped in Iowa because parents attacked the plan, saying it glossed over the basic academic skill and instead attempted to infuse politically correct values into the curriculum. Angry parents in Nebraska appealed to the education leadership to reconsider implementing this new mode. Parents in Michigan filed a lawsuit against the State Board of Education when educationists scoffed at their concerns about OBE. Parents were outraged that 40% of the new curriculum dealt with emotional and mental health.

Despite the declaration that all learners can learn, motivation remains problematic in today's schools (Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 336; Ristau 1995:44; Spady & Douglas 1977:12), with learners distracted by a host of personal, family and societal problems (Schwarz & Cavener 1994:336). More chances to retake tests do not automatically engage learners (Schwarz & Cavener 1994:336) and questions the value of effort over ability (Ristau 1995:44). Furthermore, in a study by Robert Slavin (in Hiralal 2000:23), it was concluded that the method of mastery learning (OBE) is a "Robin Hood" approach, taking from the fast learner to help out the poor learner. The

questions of what to do with learners who do not achieve after a period of time, or those who are able to demonstrate all the expected outcomes for secondary school at age thirteen remain unanswered (Ristau 1995: 44; Spady & Douglas 1977:14).

Spady (in Hiralaal 2000:24) asserts that in an attempt to discredit all aspects of OBE, claims have been made that it has a track record of costly failures. The literature on OBE implementation in the USA does report some success stories. Spady and Douglas (in Hiralaal 2000: 22), cite districts in the United States where OBE has been successfully implemented and has contributed to substantial increases in pass rates. Each has exceptional district leadership and community support and has helped pioneer the evolution of OBE thinking and implementation. But many argue that valid research proving OBE works is lacking (Manno 1995:723; McClelland *et al* 1994:235; Schwarz & Cavener 1994:327; Glatthorn 1993:355).

My focus in this dissertation, on the people involved in educational change, is in keeping with the ideas of Schwarz and Cavener (1994:333) and Smit (2001:72) that a school is not a *tabula rasa* – a blank slate on which to introduce change. Schools are cultures - systems of human relationships, traditions, ideas, attitudes and ways of doing things. School cultures include not only educators who know their own classes, but administrators, staff, learners who have their own understandings of their school roles, parents with their expectations, and others. Different school cultures also have different resources (Schwarz & Cavener 1994:333).

The main focus here is on the role of educators and school managers in a climate of educational change in South Africa. The new role that educators should play in implementing the OBE system in South Africa will now be looked at.

2.3.2 Educator roles and competencies in a climate of change in South Africa

Individual educators are as diverse as individual learners (Green 2001:134). There exists such a spread of abilities in the education profession, but except for the purposes of promotion or appointment, the structure of most school systems show little recognition of the wide differences among educators. This is especially true of educators in South African schools. Despite these differences all educators in the new South Africa are expected to adopt the roles of being a mediator of learning, a designer of learning programmes, a lifelong scholar, an assessor, a good citizen, a good leader and a specialist in his/her learning area or phase (Killen 2000:189-191).

Educators who were trained to teach in a content-based education system focussed primarily on two things: mastery of content and means of delivery. Learners were assessed on how well they could recall the content presented. There existed a great deal of structure and certainty for educators in this system. That educators now not only have a choice in the content that is delivered but a responsibility to choose that content that will ultimately lead to the achievement of a specific outcome, may be very difficult for some educators. In addition, the educator has to find reliable means of assessing whether the outcomes have been achieved, giving ample opportunity for remediation, reassessing and, where necessary, enrichment. As Malan (1997:22) puts it "... while giving teachers and curriculum developers more freedom to exercise their creativity, outcomes-based education also demands a higher degree of responsibility, accountability and professionalism - a challenge which South Africa will just have to overcome".

The General Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), Thulas Nexsi, interviewed by Warren-Brown (2000:29), points out that only those educators who are motivated and well trained will be able to perform the tasks defined by the Norms and Standards. He stresses that educators need training, especially for the implementation of OBE, a need which has not received the urgent and meaningful attention it requires.

The Department of Education has been criticised for the training provided to educators to prepare them for the implementation of OBE (Pithouse 2000:154; Smit 2001:73-74). Informal interviews have indicated that some educators walk away from a training session having gaps in their knowledge and feeling insecure about the skills needed for OBE implementation. These gaps and feelings of insecurity that plague educators cannot be ignored. Furthermore, this issue cannot be ignored at the school managerial level. Managers are obliged to monitor and evaluate the quality of work of all their educators. There are many reasons for this, including achieving the goals of the school and for market related purposes, such as setting the school apart as providing an excellent service to the community in educating its future citizens. When it comes to the chalk-face of implementing OBE in South African schools, the task falls squarely on the shoulders of the educators themselves and those closest to them – the school managers - who are now tasked with *managing the change* in schools.

2.3.3 Managing educational change in South Africa

Moloi (2001:126-127) distinguishes between change management and managing change. She cites a definition of change management as managing (either well or poorly) the impact of some particular environmental and/or organisational change on the core activities of workplace performance. Managing change, on the other hand, is described as *managing people*, which draws on our knowledge of human motivation, groups and leadership. She points out that, in order to understand change more clearly, we need to shift the focus from the change itself to the people facing the change.

At the school site the people facing the change are the educators in the classroom and the school managers on the school management team (SMT). It is important to point out that the roles for educators mentioned above apply equally to the principal and all members of the SMT as it does to a first year educator or even an educator in practice. In most schools in South Africa, the principal teaches (educates) as well as manages and leads the school. So members of the SMT are on the one hand grappling with the implementation of the new curriculum themselves, and are on the other hand facing the challenge of motivating, inspiring and empowering the members of their teams.

Fullan (1991:118) suggests that for educational change to take place, all educators and school managers, such as principals, need to understand themselves and be understood by others, and advises that we should first start out understanding where the educators are. This implies starting with the routine, the overloads and the limits to reform.

We now turn our focus to some of these limitations to reform.

2.3.3.1 Aspects of management that impede change

Griffin and Smith (1997:42) interviewed many educators, administrators and researchers in Australia that have engaged in the implementation of OBE. An important objective of their project was to draw on the experiences of some of these practitioners with a view to identifying the nature and extent of their work. They found the major impediment to change was top-down management. On their own, directives or mandates from education system personnel and principals were

regarded as unlikely to result in the implementation of outcome-based approaches. There was a general view that effective consultation, followed by collaboration and co-operation, were more likely to achieve the intended results as this gave educators a sense of ownership of changes to be implemented. This point is echoed by Spady (in Brandt 1992:69), who cautions that authentic OBE is an “evolutionary process” and should not simply be dropped on people. Spady (in Brandt 1992:70) is of the opinion that you cannot just mandate OBE and hope to have it successfully implemented. For Rogan (2000:119) the “heavy top-down fashion” in which OBE is implemented in South Africa is contradictory to the intention of OBE to empower educators to become curriculum developers. Fritz (1994:81) also slams the top-down setting of outcomes in schools, stating that OBE will fail just as top-down management in business has failed. According to Fritz (1994:81) top-down management can never unleash the creativity and motivation that can come from a leadership style that is patient and kind, never boastful, conceited, rude or selfish; delights in the truth and is ready to trust.

Griffin and Smith (1997:42) found that another crucial aspect for educators is a practical commitment to the new curriculum in the form of hands-on workshops so that they become empowered to practice and improve the new skills in the actual classroom situation. In the absence of the above, schools are seen to be paying mere lip service to the need for change by adopting the rhetoric of OBE without changing their everyday practice. The implications of this for school management is that staff development initiatives should be geared towards providing more practical, hands-on skills which the educators can apply in their classrooms.

2.3.3.2 Aspects of management that enhance change

Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:xv-xvi) speak about creating an “enabling environment” that is flexible enough to change and adapt to environmental demands and is able to manage change. An enabling environment is one which acknowledges and supports the contributions of each educator in the school, and which recognises that every educator is potentially a change agent. Such an environment provides scope for educators to make their unique contributions in the life of the school. They point out that in South Africa there is a need to rekindle the love of learning and the love of educating. There is a need to reignite the process of educators becoming learners and our learners bringing their own knowledge and experiences actively into the classroom and the school (Davidoff & Lazarus 1997:xv-xvi).

This idea of schools becoming learning organisations is embraced by Newell (1997:26) who advises that for school communities to achieve lasting change, there needs to be a collaborative culture *deliberately* developed and nurtured, which encourages a critically, reflective learning community. Schools, she says, need to become learning organisations with a capacity to share and reflect on the experiences of all members and to change the way schools are structured and managed. Principals, educators and anyone facilitating change in schools need to understand and believe in the philosophy behind developing critically reflective communities of learners, and be willing to model a collaborative and democratic style of leadership.

Mammary (in Brandt 1994:25) speaking about the Johnson City district in the USA case where the learners have flourished under an OBE program that encourages self-directed learning and active staff participation, attributes the remarkable success of the learners to the “environment you create.” He explains that they started by creating an environment where everybody was considered in partnership with the operation. The Johnson City Schools lived by three principles:

- (1) All staff members would be involved in every major decision.
- (2) They would always strive for 100% agreement, even if they had to go back many times.
- (3) Agreements should be changed now and then.

According to Mammary (in Brandt 1994:25), you have to first create the environment that says people are important, that no blame will be apportioned and that there will be no humiliation and coercion. Another factor is how intentional educators are about everything they do – intentional about what they want students to learn, about alignment of instruction, about creating standards and holding learners accountable. He stresses that even the techniques of OBE do not make a difference if schools do not have the right environment. The dedication of the staff has got to be secured; consensus on the mission of the school has to be reached.

Thus an essential issue when it comes to implementing the new OBE system in South Africa, is that there has to be a focus on the people at the chalk-face of change – the educators in the classroom. There should also be a focus on the environment within which these educators implement the changing curriculum. This environment concerns many aspects of the school. However, the role of the school leaders under

whose direct guidance an educator works is crucial. Volmink (1997:6) speaks of leaders as those who “walk ahead” and who have genuine commitment to real change within themselves and their organisations. They lead through developing new skills, capabilities and understandings. He points out that it is the leadership and management within institutions that play a crucial role in the creation of effective schools. It could further be argued that the type of leadership and management at a school affects the way in which educators in that school will experience the implementation of OBE.

2.3.4 South African reactions to the implementation of OBE

Since OBE was debated and introduced in South Africa there have been many articles written and much research conducted on the impact of the change on educators. According to Jansen (1999:147-154) there are ten reasons why OBE will fail. In a nutshell, he cites the following criticisms of OBE: The language of OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory; there is no evidence of curriculum change ever leading to economic growth; the participation of educators in this policy have been limited; it is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside South African schools; it offers an instrumentalist view of knowledge; it will multiply the administrative burden placed on educators; it side-steps the important issue of values; it trivialises content; it lacks the political will needed for a total re-engineering of the system and finally, it lacks appropriate assessment systems.

There have been point-by-point responses to these criticisms by two proponents of OBE, Mahomed (1999:163-168) and Rasool (1999:173-179). Mahomed focusses on why OBE *has* to succeed rather than why it will fail. He points to the widespread and general support for the need to make a break with apartheid education and the need to achieve the goal of a high quality education for all (Mahommed 1999:161). His responses to some of the criticisms centred on the fact that any kind of change is difficult and that change in South Africa, in particular, is complex. This complexity he says, must be confronted rather than shied away from. He accepts that there are problems in the implementation plan in terms of the rushed time frames and limited human and financial resources. He argues, though, that we have to confront the factors that have shaped the inevitability and necessity of the change and that problems should be seen as challenges for which solutions should be found.

Putter (1998:11), in a letter to *The Teacher*, is extremely positive about the rewards and benefits of OBE. He argues that teaching in an OBE system, though slow and messy because classes are no longer quiet and orderly, is also a very exhilarating experience as he feels he is part of the making of a real democracy. He works with the principle that he, as well as his learners, are responsible for the generation of content, as the learners come to the class with their own knowledge and skills and are, in a sense, a source of content to each other. He points out that it is more important for learners to know how to enjoy and exploit each other's differences than it is for them to know about Van Riebeeck. It is also much more challenging for an educator to teach a child tolerance than to teach him facts.

An investigation into foundation phase educators' attitudes and classroom practice in relation to Curriculum 2005 undertaken by Mkhabela (1999:45), revealed that educators had, in principle, accepted OBE although they still have many reservations about aspects such as the training and support given. This acceptance of OBE is confirmed by Raboroko (1998:45-50) who sought to determine what the perceptions of grade one educators in Gauteng are on OBE and NS (natural science) teaching. He found that educators are ready for change in line with the OBE approach, to make their lessons more learner-centred, to act as facilitators, to use group work and to use a variety of other sources of learning. He also found that educators are ready to relinquish the authority and monopoly of chalk and talk over learners, and saw that educators are convinced of the need to change to OBE.

On the other hand, Giessen-Hood (1999) investigated the attitudes, perceptions, and feelings of competence of 124 educators from six different types of primary schools, namely a private school and a historically 'black' school, 'coloured' school, Indian school, 'white' English speaking school and 'white' Afrikaans speaking school. The study showed that 64% of respondents expressed negative attitudes towards OBE. Feelings expressed, amongst others, were that of scepticism (17%), insecurity (16%), confusion (14%) and apprehension (7%). Only 36% of respondents expressed positive attitudes towards OBE.

Other researchers who have focused on the implementation of OBE in the foundation phase have looked at aspects such as educator support and educator training. Stoffels (2000:10) evaluated educator support during the implementation of Curriculum 2005 in grade one by means of a descriptive survey method. Data was collected using questionnaires. The results indicated that the majority of educators

were unhappy about the in-service training and the support provided by the Department as well as by the principal of the school. The Department's efforts to equip principals to support educators were rated as poor by 65% of the participants (Stoffels 2000:15).

The aspect of educator training was explored by Singh (1999) in a case study in two schools in Richards Bay and Mokgaphame (2001) in the Northern Province. Both researchers found that educators were dissatisfied with the training given, feeling that the training was inadequate, insufficient and rushed. Mokgaphame (2001:60-61) interviewed principals in the Phalaborwa district and found that principals received no training at all, relying in most cases on educators to access information on OBE and Curriculum 2005. Principals reported feeling isolated, insecure and frustrated by the changes that were taking place in schools. They reported that they felt that they were not able to manage the changes effectively because of a lack of knowledge.

From the afore-mentioned it seems that whilst there is a general agreement of a need for a new education system, there is still much anxiety over the implementation plan, particularly with regard to the kind of support and training being offered to educators as well as the increase in workload that the new system brings with it. A very important issue highlighted in some investigations, which is very relevant to this research, is the role of the principal, and in fact, the school management team, in the implementation of a new curriculum.

2.4 SUMMARY

The literature review focused on OBE as a reform mechanism where I looked at the need for education reform in South Africa and the reasons why an OBE system in particular, was chosen to reform South African education. I briefly touched on aspects of the new curriculum and the importance of grade nine in the life of a South African learner was highlighted.

In chapter three that follows I explain the research design and methodology that will be used in my study.

Chapter Three

Research methods and design

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two a literature review on OBE was undertaken. In chapter three I will describe the research design and methodology I intended to use in conducting the research. In this research effort, I aim to describe educators' experiences of implementing OBE in grade nine. Although much has been written about OBE, and there have been many research projects undertaken on the implementation of OBE, the concern here is about the implementation of OBE in grade nine, from the participants' perspective, i.e. the perspective of the educators who were involved with the education innovation firsthand. I aim to describe their positive and negative experiences and also to highlight those managerial strategies that can improve an educator's experience of implementing a new curriculum.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

My research strategy was housed within an interpretative paradigm and conducted using a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is described as "naturalistic enquiry" (Johnson & Christensen 2000:313) where non-interfering data collection strategies are used to discover the natural flow of events and processes and how participants interpret them. In most qualitative research projects the researcher describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. In this qualitative research I described and analysed how educators in two different schools experienced the implementation of OBE in grade nine. As a qualitative researcher I view reality as multi-layered, interactive and a shared social experience interpreted by individuals. I described educators' experiences of implementing OBE in grade nine from their (the participants') perspective. I view subjective data, such as an individual's account of his/her own experiences, as data not to be rejected, but as *quality data*, comprising detailed descriptions based on authentic experiences in the social world of the participants (Neuman 1997:368). These were obtained by means of focus groups and interviews.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

A case study design focusing on one phenomenon was used, which was selected to understand in-depth regardless of the number of sites, participants or documents that were available for the study. The phenomenon alluded to was the implementation of OBE in grade nine. My focus was on the experiences of different groups of educators, those educators who were regarded as school managers and those who were not school managers and were referred to as level one educators.

3.3.1 Ethical measures

I considered all ethical measures throughout this study, which were the principles guiding the study from the beginning. These principles included voluntary participation and informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

3.3.1.1 Voluntary participation and informed consent

It is an ethical norm in social research that no one be forced to participate in any research attempt. I sought consent from the school principal (see appendix A) and asked all educators in the two schools who were knowledgeable on the topic to participate. Only volunteers were interviewed and had their lessons observed, and there was no coercion of any sort. Each participant in the study was informed of the purpose of the study, the time required for participation, and was assured of anonymity and confidentiality. This manner of informing participants was done to encourage free choice of participation.

3.3.1.2 Anonymity

A respondent may be considered anonymous when the reader of a research report cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. I assured all the participants that their views and opinions as given freely in interviews and their classroom practices as observed would not be identified by anyone else (see appendix A and B). Neither would the educators' names be mentioned in the research nor would the names of the schools be mentioned. This was in keeping with a strong feeling among field workers that settings and participants should not be

identifiable in print (McMillan & Schumacher 1993: 399). I thus used code names for all the participants (the educators) and the settings (the schools).

3.3.1.3 Confidentiality

I gave the participants the assurance that their views, responses, opinions, *etcetera* would be treated in the strictest confidence, which would not be violated (see appendix B). Although these views would be coded in terms of general themes and patterns, and certain opinions and views would be stated *verbatim*, the name of the participant who gave the view or opinion would not be mentioned.

3.3.2 Measures to ensure trustworthiness (reliability and validity)

3.3.2.1 Reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:385) define reliability in qualitative research as the "...extent to which independent researchers could discover the same phenomena and to which there is agreement on the description of the phenomena between the researcher and participants". They further explain that reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, data recording, data analysis, and interpretation of participant meaning from the data (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:386). To ensure and pursue reliability in the research work I was aware of and considered all the factors that could affect the reliability in the design of my research (factors *a* to *e* below), as well as the factors that could affect the reliability of collecting data in my research (factors *f* to *i* below).

(a) Researcher role

The preferred researcher role is that of a person who is unknown at the site or to the participants. In this case, I was known to some of the participants as a colleague who taught in the same school. Whilst this aspect would appear to limit the reliability of my study, my personal and professional experiences in the two schools in which the research work was conducted enabled me to empathise with the participants enabling me to relate to, recognise and understand participant meanings.

(b) Informant selection

Future research requires a researcher to contact individuals similar to those who were informants in the prior study. To achieve reliability in this regard I carefully described the informants and the decision process used in their selection. This information is given under sampling.

(c) Social context

I described the people involved in the focus groups, as well as the time of the focus groups or classroom observations, and the place of the focus groups and/or classroom observations so as to facilitate replicability of the study. I also considered how the interpersonal relationships among group members and the social relationships between groups may explain any individual's actions and meanings.

(d) Data analysis strategies

I provided a detailed account of how the data was synthesised and I explained step-by-step how the data would be analysed and interpreted.

(e) Analytical premises

The primary safeguard against unreliability is making explicit the conceptual framework, which informs the study and from which findings from prior research can be integrated or contrasted. The conceptual framework for this study is evident in my paradigmatic perspective given in chapter one, and also aspects of my literature review in chapter two. These will inform other researchers seeking to replicate this study.

(f) Interobserver reliability

The agreement sought in qualitative research is interobserver reliability, i.e. the agreement on the description or composition of events, especially the meanings of these events, between the researcher and the participants. In this regard I used the following strategies to further reduce threats to reliability:

(g) Verbatim accounts

Verbatim accounts of conversations, transcripts, and direct quotes from documents are highly valued as data. I presented extensive direct quotations from the data to illustrate participant meanings. The original raw data are also available should any person request to see it.

(h) Low inference descriptors

Low-inference means that the descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations are almost literal and that any important terms stated are those used and understood by the participants. This is the hallmark of qualitative research and the principle method for establishing reliability of patterns found in the data and thus I used concrete, precise descriptions and verbatim accounts of conversations.

(i) Mechanically recorded data

A tape recorder was used to record the focus groups and the personal interviews.

(j) Member checking

This was especially used after classroom observations. Depending on the participant, either a casual conversation or a formal corroboration interview with the educator followed each class visit to confirm observations and participant's meanings. Other educators were also asked if the findings gave an accurate description of the phenomenon.

(k) Participant review

Participants, who were interviewed in-depth, were asked to review a synthesis of the data obtained from him or her. The participant was asked to modify any misrepresentation of meanings derived from the interview data.

(l) Negative cases or discrepant data

A negative case is a situation, a social scene or participant's views that contradicts the emerging pattern of meanings. Discrepant data presents a variant to the emerging

pattern. I actively searched for, recorded, analysed, and reported negative cases or discrepant data.

3.3.2.2 *Validity*

Whilst reliability is a serious threat to most qualitative research, validity may be its major strength. I undertook appropriate measures to ensure both internal and external validity.

Internal validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have *mutual meanings* between the participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:391). Factors *a* to *d* below describe measures to ensure internal validity. External validity in qualitative research is concerned not with the generalisation of results, but with the extension of understandings (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:394). It is concerned with the detailed descriptions that enable others to understand similar situations and to extend these understandings in subsequent research. The idea is that knowledge is produced, not by replication, but by the preponderance of evidence found in separate case studies over time (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:394). Hence detailed descriptions of data setting and collection are given to ensure external validity.

(a) *Lengthy data collection period*

The period of time over which the research was conducted was three years. During this time I was continuously involved in data collection. This lengthy data collection period provided opportunity for continual data analysis, comparison and corroboration to refine ideas and to ensure the match between research-based categories and participant reality.

(b) *Participants' language*

The language used in the interviews was phrased very closely to the participants' language so that we could literally be on the 'same page' as we communicated with one another.

(c) *Field research*

Focus groups, personal interviews and classroom observations occurred in natural settings, namely the school in which the educator taught. This reflected the reality of the educator's work experience more accurately.

(d) *Disciplined subjectivity*

This is a kind of researcher self-monitoring in which I as researcher submitted all phases of the research process to continuous and rigorous questioning and re-evaluation. My awareness of potential bias was heightened when I set out to gather data and to analyse data.

3.3.3 Data collection

During data collection, I collected various kinds of information or data through various methods and techniques following a number of methodological criteria, including suspension of personal prejudices and biases, systematic and accurate recording and establishment of trust and rapport with the interviewees (Mouton 1996:110-111). Thus data collection involves applying the chosen measuring instrument/s to the sample or cases selected for the investigation (Mouton 1996:67). But first the researcher has to make important decisions about the issue of sampling.

3.3.3.1 Sampling

I used purposive sampling where I selected "information-rich" cases for an in-depth study. In using purposeful sampling, I wanted to understand something about a case without needing or desiring to generalise to all such cases. Participants were chosen because they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon being investigated. The logic of purposeful sampling is that a few cases studied in-depth yield many insights on the topic and this type of sampling serves to increase the utility of information obtained from small samples (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:378). The types of purposeful sampling that will be discussed are sampling by case type and site selection.

(a) *Sampling by case type*

A “case” refers to an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon and not the number of people sampled (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:382). The phenomenon that I wished to study was the experiences of educators implementing OBE in grade nine. There are many examples of sampling by case type but by selecting information-rich persons known to experience the implementation of OBE in grade nine, this can also be referred to as concept/theory-based sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:380).

(b) *Site selection*

The research was conducted in two high schools in Gauteng. Both schools were involved in the implementation of OBE in grade nine from the year 2002 onwards and thus the grade nine educators in these schools, by virtue of them having first-hand experience of the implementation of OBE in grade nine, were definitely information-rich persons. It was a legal requirement that all schools in Gauteng start to implement OBE in grade nine in 2002 but these two particular schools were chosen on the basis of convenience. The schools were chosen because in the year 2002 when OBE was implemented for the first time in grade nine I taught for six months in each of these schools. In the one school (school A), I was a senior manager trying to prepare the educators in my team for the implementation of OBE. In the other school (school B), my managerial role also saw me overseeing the implementation of OBE in grade nine as a whole but in this school I also taught Natural Science (NS) in four grade nine classes and was involved first hand with the internal and external assessment requirements for grade nine in the learning area Natural Science. Being involved in the implementation of OBE in two different schools and at two different levels in the same year afforded me the opportunity to see for myself that the implementation of OBE posed different levels of difficulty to different schools. Within these sites, information-rich persons were approached for interviews and for permission to visit their classrooms. According to the level of involvement an educator volunteered, he/she was part of a focus group and/or personal interview and/or allowed me to observe his/her lessons.

(i) Biographical data of school A

The school is in existence since the First World War and has seen the racial population of its learners change drastically from being mostly white to now being mostly black. The racial composition of the educators has also gradually changed from being mostly white to being mostly black. All the white members left at the school are part of the school management team. In total there are 34 educators on the staff, of which 29 are paid by the GDE and five are paid by the School Governing Body (SGB) from the school fund. Most of the learners come from Soweto and out of a population of 1026, only 50% pay the school fees of R2 400,00 a year. It is regarded as a “previously model C” school and is partly a technical school in that it offers subjects such as Motor Mechanics, Fitting and Turning, and Technical Drawing. Its extra-curricular offerings are confined to the basic sports such as soccer, netball and athletics. The school has a library and a computer science room as well as science laboratories. Most of these facilities are not adequately stocked and are under utilised. The school has two netball courts, a soccer field and a fairly large ground which is marked for internal athletics activities.

(ii) Biographical data of school B

The school is just over 80 years old and although it has always been a school for girls, the racial composition of the learners at this school has changed from being all white to being multiracial, with 50% of its learners being white, and 50% non-white comprising of Indian, coloured and black learners. The school has a large staff of 60 members comprising of mainly white educators, of which 31 are paid by the GDE and 30 are paid by the SGB. The school is also regarded as a previous “model C” school. Its curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular offerings are wide and diverse. The academic programme includes subjects such as art, and speech and drama, whereas there are over 57 extracurricular activities on offer. Of the 1000 learners currently at the school about 80% pay their school fees of R12 000,00. The school has a fully equipped library and two computer science rooms available for the learners, as well as a special art centre and fairly well equipped biology and science laboratories. The school also has five netball fields, four tennis courts and a swimming pool.

(c) *The participants*

I conducted two focus groups in school A. The one focus group comprised of nine members. Each had fewer than six years teaching experience. The combined years of experience in this group were 35 years. There were six males in this group and three females. All the educators were black. Each educator in this group taught one or more learning areas in grade nine and they were all level one educators. The focus group was conducted at about 12h00 during a June examination period, when the learners had already written their examinations and were dismissed. This focus group was the longest and lasted almost two hours. As a follow-up to this focus group, I visited seven of these educators' classrooms the year after the year in which their focus group was conducted. Some of the lessons visited were during the administering of CTA section A. The second focus group in school A comprised of eight members – it was the school's entire school management team (SMT). With the exception of one educator, they all had more than ten years teaching experience. The combined teaching experience of this group was 144 years. The SMT of this school comprised of four males and four females. Six members of this team were white, one was Indian and one was black. The majority of the members of the SMT taught OBE in grade nine. At the time of the focus group, no member of the SMT had a masters or an honours degree. This focus group was conducted the day after the first focus group at about the same time and lasted about one and a half hours. My follow-up on this group involved member checking that was done by means of an informal discussion with one participant.

In school B I conducted three focus groups, each of which took place after school and lasted for just over an hour. With the exception of one black person in one focus group, the rest of the educators were white. With the exception of three males, the rest of the educators were female. The first group comprised of six members each with less than five years teaching experience. Each of these educators taught grade nine classes and they were all level one educators. I followed up on one educator in this group by doing a class visit with an informal discussion thereafter.

The second focus group in this school comprised of educators who are on the SMT. Although the school has a large SMT comprising of 15 educators, all female, only six SMT members participated in this interview. With the exception of one educator who had ten years teaching experience, the other members had more than 20 years of teaching experience, with the combined teaching experience of this group being 128

years. Three of these educators had honours degrees and three had masters' degrees. Only one SMT member in this group taught grade nine classes. I followed up on this educator because she was in charge of MLMMS in grade nine. My follow-up involved doing class visits with normal lessons as well as CTA section A lessons, each class visit being followed by an informal discussion.

The third focus group from this school comprised of five educators who were different from the other two groups in that they were not part of the SMT. Each member also had much more than five years teaching experience. On average, the educators in this term had 16 years teaching experience, with the combined years of experience in this group being 80 years. Most of the educators in this group taught arts and culture, a learning area that, the dedication of these teachers aside, was generally not taken seriously. I followed up on two educators in this group by doing class visits followed by an informal discussion thereafter.

I conducted seven personal interviews in the third year of my research and they involved all young educators new to the profession and who were chosen to teach grade nine as soon as they entered the profession. None of these educators were part of the previous groups whose classes were visited and who were interviewed the years before. Four of these educators have been teaching for two years, one for three years and two for four years. Each interview lasted for the duration of one school period, which was 40 minutes. Unlike most of the other educators interviewed, these educators were trained with regard to the OBE philosophy and methodology. I followed-up on two educators in this group asking them to review a synthesis of my interview with them to determine whether I had accurately represented their views and opinions.

3.3.3.2 *The researcher as instrument*

As a qualitative researcher I became "immersed" in the phenomenon studied but I was explicit and as self-aware as possible about personal assumptions, values, biases, affective states and how they came to play during the study.

3.3.3.3 *Method*

Focus groups were conducted in two different schools, classes visited and observed in these two schools and in both the schools individual interviews were conducted.

This use of different data collection techniques to explore one aspect is known as triangulation of methods and the basic idea behind it is that in social research measurement improves when diverse indicators are used (Neuman 1997:151). Rosnow and Rosenthal (1996:416) define triangulation as “The process of using multiple methods to zero in on the effect of interest.” It was my intention to 'zero in' on the way educators experienced the implementation of OBE in grade nine and to look more closely at the role school managers could play in the process of implementing a new curriculum. Each method will be discussed briefly below with regard to the rationale for the method as well as the methodology involved.

(a) *The focus groups*

A focus group is a type of group interview in which a researcher leads a discussion with a small group of individuals to examine, in detail, how the group members think and feel about a topic (Johnson & Christensen 2000:145). I conducted five focus groups in which I tried to determine and understand the shared feelings of a homogeneous group of educators on how they experienced the implementation of OBE in grade nine, and what role they feel the school management team could play in the implementation of a new curriculum.

I arranged for a convenient date and time in which to conduct a lengthy interview with each focus group. Educators were informed that the minimum duration of the interview would be one hour and they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. I also secured permission from the participants to have the interview tape recorded. (See appendix A.) During the interview, I asked three broad questions about the educators' experiences with regard to the implementation of OBE in grade nine. The three questions were:

- What is positive about the implementation of OBE in grade nine?
- What is negative about the implementation of OBE in grade nine?
- What can be done by management to improve the experiences of educators having to implement curriculum reform?

I introduced each question and then tried to maintain a flow of conversation keeping people focused on the topic and also encouraging all participants to contribute to the discussion. I listened attentively as the educators responded to my questions and followed the natural flow of conversation with each broad question posed. I used the listening skills that I gained as a lifeline counselor for eight years to the best of my

ability. I used, in particular, the skills of active listening, paraphrasing, reflecting and summarising, to maintain the flow of conversation. I listened to the tape recordings afterwards and transcribed the conversation *verbatim*. I then proceeded to analyse the interview by trying to identify patterns and themes in the responses from the educators. This will be presented in chapter four.

(b) *The personal interviews*

Semi-structured, non directive personal interviews were conducted with individual educators and managers to verify information gathered in the focus groups and also to probe and explore certain aspects in greater detail.

I conducted seven personal interviews. Each interview was essentially a conversation in which I established the general direction for the conversation and then pursued specific topics raised by the respondent. I conducted these personal interviews for the following reasons:

- to verify the information gathered in the focus groups;
- to probe certain issues deeper, to get more clarity and understanding on aspects that came up in the focus group discussions;
- to actively seek discrepant data.

After the interviews I listened to the tape recordings and transcribed the conversations *verbatim*. I then proceeded to analyse the interviews by trying to identify patterns and themes in the responses from the educators. This will be presented in chapter four.

(c) *The classroom observations*

The classroom observations were done the years that followed the first implementation in grade nine. It was assumed at that stage that the educators would have acquired a reasonable degree of proficiency with regard to OBE. Classroom visits were undertaken to observe OBE in practice and to try to match educators' account of their experiences with what was actually happening in practice. My reason for classroom visits was an attempt to investigate, on a very limited scale, how educators actually implemented the new curriculum in grade nine, particularly with regard to the stated outcomes and the procedures employed to assess the achievement of the outcomes. In doing so, I wished to establish a relationship (if any)

between theoretical knowledge and theoretical training with practical implementation. This information, in turn, fed into the possible role that school managers could play in empowering educators with skills required in OBE classrooms.

The educators were asked to conduct their lessons as they would under normal circumstances and to try to ignore my presence. I tape recorded the classroom visits and made notes according to an observation schedule (see appendix C).

3.3.4 Data analysis

A bottom-up strategy was adopted as follows (Johnson & Christensen 2000:426-431):

- Segmenting: This involves dividing the data into meaningful analytical units.
- Coding: The identified units were coded by means of category names and symbols. Facesheet codes that apply to single transcripts were given to enable comparison of groups.
- Compiling a master list: All the category names and codes were put on a master list.
- Showing relationships between categories: The categories were investigated for possible relationships between them.

3.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the research methodology and design were discussed. Specific methods to ensure research ethics and trustworthiness of the results were highlighted.

In chapter four the results of the research will be presented and discussed.

Chapter Four

Findings and discussions

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three I described the research design and methodology I used in conducting the research. In this chapter I present the findings of my research. It investigated how grade nine educators at two schools experienced the implementation of OBE.

4.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the data analysis five broad themes emerged namely: OBE curriculum and principles, educators, learners, school management, Department of Education. They are presented below.

4.2.1 OBE: curriculum and principles

4.2.1.1 *Focusing on outcomes versus content*

The majority of educators did not follow the design principles of OBE (see 2.2.2). My findings, in terms of the first principle, (to focus on the outcomes – see 2.2.2.1.), were that many educators either ignored the outcomes altogether, used their own outcomes instead of the prescribed specific outcomes, used the specific outcomes only to the extent that it was a portfolio requirement, or when the school was evaluated by the GDE. Here are some comments about focusing on the outcomes:

To be honest I don't use them at all.

I can tell you one thing I have decided... until we get another inspection...I'll be hypocritical...I've chucked out the SO's, because they do not work in English.

Many educators did not follow the design down OBE principle either (see 2.2.2.2). One educator was very confused about it and asked: "Begin at the end? How can

you begin at the end?" Most educators, however, considered the outcome after having done the content of the lesson. As one educator put it:

"We do some task that is wonderful and brilliant and inspiring for the learners and then afterwards you think oh what - you know - what outcomes did this [actually achieve]? ... In practice it happens – the other way".

An interesting finding of this study is how educators often "pay lip-service" to the outcomes doing what they have always done in the past and then just "bending them to fit the SO's" and "bending them to fit the...assessment requirements". The following comments illustrate this:

I don't care what this GDE says – in term three we do accounting. We'll put it under er er OBE term – management of data or whatever.

There's big resistance to those...SO's...even though some of them... are worthwhile. Teachers still don't like that, they still want to teach knowledge... In maths in particular you've got to take what you got and somehow just twist it to fit one of those [outcomes].

Comments like these indicate that in practice educators were more focussed on content rather than on outcomes. If OBE was done at all it was traditional or transitional OBE rather than transformational OBE, as was the Department's intention (see 1.6.3. and 2.2.3.2). The main reasons why educators chose to focus on subject content rather than the outcomes is that on a personal level they felt they needed more structure in their work, they needed consistency across schools in terms of content, and they still needed the security of being able to prepare their learners for a final examination or to teach to a test. This is how educators expressed their insecurity about a lack of content:

They give you this wonderful SO and you still don't know what work to cover to reach that SO.

From the CTA aspect...we need to get - like in January - we need to know exactly what is going to be tested.

What kind of data handling are we going to get? How many map work things? Are we going to work from a proper map or are we going to work from a drawn map? How are we going to get...the kids equipped to complete the CTA's fully?

Educators also chose to focus on content for the benefit of the learner. They were particularly concerned that learners did not know the basics and were getting weaker and were not adequately prepared for grade ten. Here are some of the comments:

I find it very hard... that learners come from... primary schools...lacking basic skills.

It's across the... feeder schools...you find they can't for example, read. Why is that?

[Learners] can't even string a sentence together in grade nine.

Their timetables, 4x3... it's too hard for them and this is a high school.

Many educators referred to the gap between grade nine and ten describing it as “big” and “very difficult to fill.” Some educators felt that many learners would need a bridging course before they go to grade ten. One educator explained why this gap was so big: “In grade nine there’s very little content. In grade ten there’s an amazing amount of content...its unbelievable”. The consequence of this for both the educator and learner, respectively, was given in the following comments:

We are stuck with covering all that we need to do from grade eight to grade ten in one year.

The moment they get to grade ten their academic, scholastic curriculum hits them full in the face and they land flat on their backs and they... they stagger... they really do.

Although educators came up with many reasons for staying with content, this focussing on content under the disguise of OBE mirrors what Griffin and Smith (1997:42) describe as educators adopting the rhetoric of OBE without changing their everyday practice. According to them, this happens when educators do not have a “sense of ownership” or a “practical commitment to OBE” which in turn could be due to the top-down fashion in which OBE was implemented in South Africa (see 2.3.3.1).

4.2.1.2 OBE language

As in other countries where OBE is implemented, a big problem is the “vague” way in which the outcomes are phrased (see 2.2.3.1). Educators echoed the criticisms of the entire language of OBE (see 1.1) as is evident in the following statements:

Every time you go for OBE there is something new. CTAs, CSS, CASS. Everyday there are the tongue twisters. To understand all the terms needs a full...four year degree.

The jargon is...terrible! All those abbreviations! ...You try to get away from that, you try to make stuff practical for the kid's everyday life and it's just got worse!

I think the reports that we send home coated in the jargon ... are completely meaningless to parents.

They're [the outcomes are]...phrased like one should 'make and negotiate meaning'. They [the learners] laugh because...every time they're doing that. So it's a bit ridiculous.

4.2.1.3 Implementation of OBE within time-frames

Educators may not have selected the OBE paradigm themselves, but they were still responsible for the results (see 2.3.1). A principal put it this way: "The policy was made but it had no flesh...the schools had to make the policy work." In meeting the GDE's OBE requirements as well as the content that educators felt personally obligated to cover, they found themselves rushing through work and violating another essential OBE principle namely to provide expanded opportunity and support for learning success (see 2.2.2.4). This is how this frantic pace was described:

They say that you should give them more time and give them another opportunity to do a test but by the time that happens we're on to the next one already... it's really exhausting.

You were so concerned with getting things done that you sometimes couldn't slow down and pick up... ok now they're struggling, say with the comma, and focus on that because you had this work to get through.

4.2.1.4 The learning areas and integration across learning areas

The introduction of some previously "marginalized" learning areas like life orientation, arts and culture and technology in grade nine was applauded. A life orientation educator enthused: "Changing to proper life orientation and be[ing] able to do assessment in it has made it much more meaningful both for the educator and for the learners". A very positive aspect of the integration of learning areas is that educators and learners were constantly utilising different skills, mainly their reading skills, because they did a lot of research and produced written work or verbalised knowledge. Here is a comment from a mathematics educator: "I like the fact that... we're not just doing maths ...we're doing lots of general knowledge and history and... art and it gives those kids who aren't good at maths an opportunity maybe to score somewhere else".

The concerns about the integration of learning areas were that one aspect of the curriculum ended up being "the slave" or "the hand maiden" of the other, that the portfolio tasks hampered integration and that some educators did not cope. The following comments concern human and social sciences in particular:

We were all distinctly either history or geography teachers; very few of us are both. I mean geography teachers flounder with any knowledge of what happened prior to yesterday. And the history teachers can't teach map work because it's too like maths and the history teachers are never... mathematicians.

Even this year we're giving extra lessons... to the history teachers – so that they can teach map work – teachers don't have time to learn the geography skills and they feel stupid in front of their classes.

The role that educators should be specialists in their learning area or phase (see 2.3.2.) is being challenged by the requirement that to truly transform education the syllabus must not be subject-based (see 2.2.3.2). In this respect it is not uncommon to find educators being treated like a “Jack of all trades”. One school manager was outraged: “Suddenly every teacher can teach everything. So all you've done is study the Middle Ages and Napoleon but you're an expert on map work and if you're not oh they'll send you on a two-day course. A two-day, two-hours - if you're lucky –course.” Where schools do employ specialists to teach, for example Arts and Culture, the specialism is not rewarded in the CTA's at the end of the year. One Arts and Culture educator was very disappointed: “Last year we looked at things like Hindu art, Muslim art, township art, and they're all very nice exciting things and then [when they did the CTA] they're supposed to stare at a tree ...it's kind of a waste of what we've done for the whole year because there was no knowledge”. Another educator felt that this gave OBE a “very anti-intellectual thrust”.

4.2.1.5 Assessment

(a) *Continuous assessment*

Guided by the question “Have they achieved the outcomes?” (Willis & Kissane 1997:340) a typical grade nine educator teaching for example, Natural Science to four grade nine classes, with 35 learners in each class, would have assessed a minimum of 2520 tasks excluding the CTA. The quality of assessment practices was questionable, though (see 2.2.3.3), as one educator confessed to “inventing things to make marks” and complained that she got to the point where she just wanted to “get it over.” All the educators found the process of assessing, handing back work, filing work in portfolios and taking pains to store the work safely, tedious and tiresome. The biggest educational disadvantage of this endless process, according to one educator was that “no-one can learn from their mistakes.” Another educator explained why this

was so: "Instead of saying right now take your test and go and learn from it. It's like do not – put it in your portfolio – it's not leaving this class!"

The majority of educators did see the advantage of continuous assessment as a means of assessing learners in totality. An educator made this comment: "You don't only focus on one side of the potential of a learner ...it gives everybody a chance to excel." The problem many educators faced was that grade nine assessments were often at the expense of learning, as one educator put it: "Measuring the pig, or weighing the pig, doesn't fatten it." The other problems educators faced were achieving criterion-referenced assessment and having a reliable assessment process.

(b) Criterion-referenced assessment

There was definitely an attempt on the part of most educators to achieve criterion-referenced assessment (see 2.2.3.3) in that they tried to make the criteria available to learners (usually in the form of a rubric), before each task was assessed. Most educators agreed that when learners were aware of the criteria beforehand it was "very beneficial" because it aided in self-learning. As one educator put it: "They edit their work before they actually hand in their final job." However, many educators pointed out the following barriers to criterion-referenced assessment: Learners not taking note of the criteria; educators not explaining the criteria, criteria that were restrictive, poor rubric design of criteria and difficult language of criteria.

(c) Reliability of the assessments

Most educators were concerned about the fact that when a task was assessed using a particular rubric the likelihood that two persons would rate the same task in the same way was much lower than with a conventional memorandum for a test. The blame for the problem with inter-rater reliability (see 2.2.3.3) was attributed not only to the way rubrics were designed, but also to an educator's ability to confine himself or herself to the criteria of a specific rubric and to learners' ability to rate themselves and/or their peers honestly.

Educators generally used rubrics given by the department, or rubrics found in resource books, but they complained that they found these rubrics "difficult to use", "complicated" and "confusing". But even when a rubric was excellently designed and

was user friendly to the educator and learners, there were other factors that affected inter-rater reliability.

Firstly, some educators ignored the rubric. When two educators were given the same rubrics to assess the same skill, one educator felt “constrained” by the rubric and found it “rather limiting”, while another educator wanted to “override the rubric”.

Secondly, peer and self-assessment also affected inter-rater reliability. As one educator said: “The kids ...they mark their own work ...they mark it it's fine, they get 15 or 30 but when you check it they got 3 or 6”. Some educators counteracted this concern by ignoring the mark: “I let them assess one another but I don't ... let it count for a ... mark”

Thirdly, the reliability of the assessments was also affected by the fact that many marks were obtained from group work and the fact that some parents did the assessment tasks. Group work was thus seen as “impractical constantly.” One educator complained that learners “ride on other ones” and another complaint was that learners were “getting pushed through to the next grade ...with these high marks that they didn't have much to do with.” An added frustration for educators was that they often had to deal with parents' complaints that the marks were “not fair in group work.”

Despite these problems affecting the reliability of the assessments or perhaps because of them, the majority of learners passed grade nine. One aspect of the OBE philosophy that has caught on is that all learners can succeed. Many educators, however, voiced this assumption in a negative way, like OBE “curbs failure rate” and grade nine was seen as a “free ride.” One educator felt that learners were being passed “just to shift the bell curve.” It did appear that the old bell-shaped curve assumption about learners (see 1.4 and 2.2.2.3.) was a thing of the past. The reality, however, was that when success did not succeed (see 2.2.3.3), i.e when learners did not meet the prescribed specific outcomes in grade nine, the marks were either inflated or the standard to pass was lowered. This was clearly illustrated in the following comments:

I've got someone sitting with 46% and I don't want him to fail and I push him up to 50 with four marks.

Last year ...the pass was 50% and in the end everybody was shouting out loud and saying "Oh no, oh no. All our learners are failing!" And what did they do? They lowered it and said: right, now you need 40 to pass Afrikaans.

(d) *Standardisation, moderation and quality control*

Internal assessment in grade nine differed radically from school to school (see 4.2.5.3.), which could be attributed to many factors unique to the school. However the standardisation and quality control of the CTA, which was set by the department of education and which therefore represented the external component of grade nine assessment, was called into question as well. As grade nine represented an exit point from one band of learning on the NQF, the standardisation and quality control of a grade nine pass, which would secure entry into the FET band, was of concern to many educators. The general feeling among educators was that there was no standardisation of what represented an excellent achievement of any outcome.

One educator's comment encapsulated most of the other educator's comments about the standard of the CTA in a particular learning area: "The pitch was completely wrong." For one educator the standard was too low: "They had to solve things that ...could be done by learners in primary school". And for another educator: "The standard of [the] NS CTA last year was too high for the grade nine learners." An educator queried: "I want to know – what was the criteria they used for setting the CTA's?" and she asserted, "I hope they will be consistent this year."

Some educators wrote comments to the Department on the level and quality of the CTA, but most educators complained that there was simply no feedback from the department on the level and quality of their work in individual schools. Here is a comment from an HOD: "We got the portfolios back from the GDE after being moderated, there was no report, there was not a single tick in the files, nothing, so...whatever we did we did for mahala ...nobody looked at it."

For most educators peer moderation did not represent an adequate and reliable form of feedback. They felt that the gaps in educator expertise, the different levels of work done by different schools and the rushed time frames were factors that resulted in moderation being seen as "a bit of chaos" and "a farce."

Many educators also voiced complaints about the performance ratings. Most of them felt that the numbers one to four as a final result was just not an adequate means to

describe the full range of assessments that the learner was subjected to in grade nine, and that the performance ratings did not adequately distinguish between the learners. Some educators also complained that there was no standardisation of a particular performance rating in a particular learning area. Here are some educator's comments:

At the end we've got er a 4, a 3 or 2 or 1, after all this computation...you got one mark... and it was such a general mark. Uhm, for instance, somebody who really excelled would have got 4, somebody who had just just made 80 would have got a 4. There's no motivation in that. There's no explanation to the parent...

[To pass a learning area] they must have a 3 or a 4. And they come here and you say but it's impossible for you to be a 3...three is achieved... And then once you start assessment, once you start teaching and interacting with these learners...I realise that – [they're] clueless - how do you get a 3 if you are clueless?

If you get three, i.e. achieve, there is no actual standardisation of what that 3 actually means. That 3 means whatever the school makes it mean.

4.2.2 Educators

4.2.2.1 Diverse experiences of educators

Many educators seemed to be ambivalent about the OBE design itself, finding it hard to be totally for or totally against it. This is evident in the following statements:

I think the principle behind OBE ... you know working together and getting a broad understanding...I think its good – but the practicalities of it ...

You get to think for yourself...you can interpret things on your own... but the negative part of that is that the kids don't learn the work as well as they should.

They can express how they feel... they can be very creative in OBE...but then...it goes too far, too vague ...then they don't know anymore how to do the basics.

A few educators spoke of the experience of implementing OBE as a “career rejuvenation” and also that OBE forced a teacher “to explore her own or his own range of possibilities”. However, all the educators complained of the overwhelming workload that OBE caused. This is expressed in other countries as well (see 2.3.1.). The general feeling is captured in the following comments:

OBE frustrates teachers.

You never quite knew when you were doing the right thing.

You get so bogged down with paper work...you lose your love for what you're doing.

OBE is driving out the dedicated, creative, qualified teacher.

There was an acknowledgement among educators, however, that the successful implementation of OBE required qualified educators who were also hardworking, committed, dedicated, knowledgeable, creative and resourceful. Educators also felt that if a school was well resourced it eased the burden on an educator, as these comments illustrate:

You see I don't think OBE can make a good teacher. I think OBE requires – and this is what they're not recognising – highly educated and motivated teachers. A mediocre teacher can deal with the text book 'Page 3, everybody tomorrow its page 6 ...' it's dull, it's boring, it's not life-related but maybe they've learnt a few facts. OBE depends on this good teacher whose got knowledge in the teacher's head and who can organise classes... the kids must have resources.

If you don't have the resources at school – whose job is it? The teacher! The teacher must sit from what time to what time to gather all this information – go to libraries, get the books, internet.

One educator acknowledged: “You can actually do a lot of OBE things with very...little materials” but she insisted, “The teacher has to be prepared to actually do those things with a small amount of materials.” It was clear that input factors (see 2.2.2) in South Africa were a concern. Educators as a human resource were a crucial input factor and there was a flawed assumption (see 1.1 and 2.3.4) that despite differences in the qualifications, experience and competence of educators and despite the differences in other resources available to educators, every school would be able to facilitate the meeting of outcomes at the highest possible level.

There are educator roles (see 2.3.2) that are being enhanced due to the implementation of OBE. OBE inspired educators to be lifelong scholars and to undertake more leadership roles in the school. Every educator who has had the experience of implementing OBE spoke about having learned something new and having broadened their facilitation and assessment skills. Two educators described their experience of implementing OBE as follows:

Teachers ...have kind of broken out of the mould of what they've been doing year after year after year. It was something refreshing, and, er, challenging and you could actually explore your own resources.

Like, er, when I'm just chosen as the member of an assessment team, that in a way empowers me because I go and gather the information, I come back and report.

4.2.2.2 Programme developers

One requirement of OBE is that educators have to design learning programmes (see 2.3.2.). This is how an educator described this role:

I've got no resource material for it, so I've had to invent all the stuff, all, everything, everything, specifically for...our needs. [It was] a huge time commitment. I spent both the Easter holidays and the July holidays ... searching for, planning, preparing. You know, so I arrived on the first day and we were ready to roll... But it's awesome the amount of effort creative effort, [needed]- the only time I've got the energy to be that creative is during school [holidays]

Some schools, however, still perpetuate a dependency culture (see 1.1) by the practice of choosing one educator per learning area in grade nine to design all the work and then to distribute it to the other educators. Two such educators commented as follows:

In our department I do the grade nines, everything, I go to the cluster meetings, everything, I read the memos, I pass them on, I prepare all the work...I do it all

I find that the work is very often one person's, and everybody just takes it and there's no looking at developing new things.

Another educator who had to use someone else's notes defended: "There isn't time to sit back and develop new stuff all over". The negative aspects of one person designing the learning programmes and distributing them are captured in the comments below:

It does get a bit of, er er, kind of production line, kind of...everyone gets a copy of the notes...and then you can't remember who made it.

If there is someone that does everything, it can take the opportunity away from those who still have to learn.

You couldn't discuss them, you couldn't change them but often there were big problems with them.

Those things came in very late, it's not stuff that was set up at the beginning of the year, its stuff that was set up two days before we came back.

It was clear though that "there's certainly a need for a higher level of teamwork" among educators. Educators who worked in teams derived the benefits that it reduced the workload, served as a kind of pace setting, creating a sense of security and it also served as a means to share problems. Here are some educator's comments:

We all took turns in setting the worksheets so that the preparation didn't kill us as well as the marking.

It was a comfort for me to know that I was always on track. I mean...the meetings are a pain, but at least you always know that you are at the same stage as everybody else and you've done the right thing and you're not just going along doing your own thing.

You can moan and groan with one another, you know, without taking that bitterness home sometimes.

4.2.2.3 Assessors

Another role that the implementation of OBE brought into sharp focus is that of assessor (see 2.3.2.). Many educators were unhappy that they did not have any opportunity to do any other work but assessment tasks. They complained that assessment in OBE was “very time consuming” because of “all the marking and the admin”, “all the forms you have to fill in”, the “recording of marks”, and “going over tests”. The bottom line for most educators was that their role as an assessor took prominence over their role of being a mediator of learning. One educator put it this way: “What can't be quantified ends up suffering”. The following comments showed how crucial learning practices were affected:

There's actually no time to prepare lessons ...you're actually more focussed on trying to get the marking done ...you're not actually saving your energy for the classroom.

You'll think, ok, now I can give them this work to do and while they're busy working I can quickly mark, and then right, ok, what else can I give them to do.

There was a teacher here ... who stayed at home to finish marking the CTA's. Other principals are saying that [in] the township schools...where they had classes of 80 to 100...in a class – those teachers... stay away for 3-4 days...and claim sick leave just to finish that marking.

For other educators, learning new assessment practices was empowering. The following example illustrated this:

I think the different methods of assessment ... from... an old teacher's point of view, were exciting. Hey, instead of just a test, we can do this, we can do that – it was creative and we got the brain cells sort of working again – rejuvenated.

4.2.3 Learners

4.2.3.1 Influence on strong and weak learners

All the educators interviewed raised many concerns about OBE in terms of the impact they felt it had on learners. Their main concerns were: (1) In practice, OBE were more assessment-focussed than learner-centered as the average learner did a minimum of 200 assessment tasks a year, excluding opportunities for enrichment and extension. (2) A bright learner was more likely to benefit from OBE than a weak learner. (3) Most learners were actually disadvantaged by OBE as they found loopholes and became less accountable for their own learning. I elaborate on the second and third aspect below.

Many educators felt that OBE only benefited the learners “who really want to do well”. These learners were described as “dedicated” and “very hard working.” The main reason why these learners seemed to benefit from OBE was that they worked independently. As one educator pointed out: “They think for themselves as opposed to being spoon-fed, being told what to learn.” Educators were still unsure, though, about what to do with these learners who achieved the outcomes faster than others (see 2.3.1) so these learners were used in the class “to help the rest of the kids grasp the concept”. It seems as if these bright learners understood their Robin Hood role (see 2.3.1). An educator explained: “I think it’s a given. I think they quite enjoy that because it...gives them a bit of like authority in the classroom.” The following comments explain a possible negative impact of this on these learners:

OBE doesn't cater for individual performance... he has to wait if he's gifted and do the work according to the pace of other learners.

Those brighter kids...they would rather go for their sport ...because they get more recognised for their sport... they can work harder on their sports with still passing... they lack the motivation to produce ...a high standard of work all the time.

The benefit that OBE had for the weaker learner was that OBE “curbs failure rate”. However, most educators felt that OBE disadvantaged weaker learners further by “making it easy for them to do less.” As with the bright learner there was a lack of self-motivation in the weaker learner for almost the same reason. An educator stated: “They know if they don’t work they will still get through the year so they’re actually ...not applying any pressure on themselves to try and do well.”

The problem for the weaker learner, though, was that this successful learning did not promote more successful learning (see 2.2.2). The weaker learner was elevated in grade nine only to be dropped in grade ten. The following comment illustrated this:

Some of them that now sit in grade ten – that confidence that they got from OBE is destroyed totally. They are so negative. You can try your utmost best, you don't get that child to think positively because he is struggling so much.

4.2.3.2 *Playing the system*

Whether the learner was regarded as bright or weak, educators were concerned that most learners were getting smart at using OBE to their best advantage. This was also experienced by educators in other countries and was regarded as an added burden to the problems of implementing OBE (see 2.3.1). Learners have caught on “how to play the system.” One educator explained that when learners were given a task they kept asking if the marks were going to count. Here are more examples of how learners played the system:

The girls know I am a feminist so they will say in front of me a whole lot of garbage about feminism ... on paper they will be brilliant because they're not stupid and they know that's what I want, but it's not what they feel in their hearts. In their hearts they want to look like Barbie dolls.

They... have another opportunity to redo the work ... a lot of the kids take advantage of that.

They've caught on that they must just give you one of their best pieces... so as long as [they] produce that one that's at its best...they tend to slack in other similar tasks.

4.2.4 School management

4.2.4.1 *Reaction to top-down authority*

The managerial role in terms of the implementation of OBE in schools was portrayed as a helpless one. “Their hands are tied” was a comment made by one educator. The managerial role in implementing OBE had generally been taken over by the Department of Education who gave instructions and provided training. Thereafter, the grade nine educators needed to implement the information. One educator commented:

This is down on paper. It has been discussed on higher levels and I don't think there's anything else that they can do ...it's a top-down thing.

Many educators and school managers described the interaction between the GDE, the SMT and the level one educator as a kind of relay sprint. The principal received the information [the baton] from the Department about a learning area. The baton is then handed over to the Head of Department (HOD), and thereafter to the OBE educator. Because of the time constraints, this is done hurriedly. Hence, one educator commented: "I ...feel that the management is failing us - whatever the Department says, it's ok, then they can shove it down our throats ... you must hand it in whether you like it or not – even if it means you must go to sleep at four a.m. you must do it." School managers were thus asked to be "the voice of the educators" and convey to the Department that educators preferred to "spend time teaching, rather than spending time on paper work". The school management was also asked to insist on feedback from the Department. On the other hand, there was the concern that school managers had to comply with the GDE, as this was labour policy.

4.2.4.2 Work allocation of educators

In terms of work allocation, grade nine educators agreed that they should not teach more than one grade nine learning area at a time; an educator should not teach grade nine and grade twelve in the same year; educators should be kept in learning areas in which they were qualified and experienced; and more time should be made available for educators from different learning areas to meet. Here are some educators' comments:

We have to prepare the portfolios for the grade nines. It's demanding. We have to prepare the grade twelve portfolios. It's still demanding and all these are needed at the same time.

You change me from LO, you place me in HSS, now which means, all of the information that I gathered has gone down the drain ... it's futile...give me enough chance to develop...and be an expert in that learning area rather than keep on changing.

We even had Wednesday afternoon lessons for the Geography teachers who would teach the History teachers and vice versa. You know, but that's, that's time outside normal hours ...which is a load, an extra load.

In addition to the above, educators complained about the unrealistic demands made on them. These included not considering realistic time-frames for tasks given and not

understanding the extent of tasks. An educator's response to the latest theories on ways to refresh his teaching from his HOD was: "Another article, one day I will read it." This educator complained: "There's like a lack of sensitivity or acknowledgement of how much pressure you are under." This was confirmed by another educator who speaks of her HOD: "I really don't think she understands, I don't think she's got 40 % idea of what we do in grade nine."

This lack of sensitivity and understanding was attributed to the fact that most school managers did not teach grade nine. One educator commented: "It would be nice if my manager could teach grade nines for a year and do all the portfolio marks and the CTA marks and add all the marking, and I am sure then she will change her opinion."

Regarding all of the above, school managers pointed out that the biggest lack of resources in most schools was the lack of people, resulting in there being too few educators who taught too many different learning areas across too many grades. A principal stated: "From, er, managing the school's point of view, OBE can work. But it can work only if they give 20 more teachers to every school." The high educator-learner ratio in most schools presented the added burden that managers were often used to fill other gaps.

4.2.4.3 Support of educators

There has been a strong call for school managers to find ways to meet the needs for support of educators. One school manager commented: "In the general climate people are already discouraged ...some of them feel so low ... and so your role as a manager is very uplifting, encouraging." However, the same school manager also pointed out that this was not as easy as it sounded: "It is sometimes difficult because when you are uplifting people they are draining you of your energy, your ideas, your emotional energy." Many school managers pointed out that the biggest problem was that they had to instruct educators to do things that they themselves may not believe in. This view is illustrated by the following comment: "It's actually quite hard ... to keep people positive when they have to spend a whole afternoon filling out 450 As, Bs Cs, Ds, Es, Fs and Gs, and nobody knows what the purpose is. I think they're a waste of time... so...as a person who is supposed to be motivating...it's hard to actually do that." Educators also wanted managers to acknowledge their work. One educator declared: "I think I am quite a competent teacher and I'd like to hear that sometimes. I think it would be nice for her to say 'well done'...I never hear that!" This

need for praise and encouragement is met in schools where OBE is successfully implemented (see 2.3.3.2).

4.2.5 The Department of Education

A significant concern educators had about the members in the Department of Education was how little practical knowledge they actually had of the classroom and school situation. A principal asked: “How few of the people in the Department have ever held a piece of chalk in their hand?”

The Department of Education, has been criticised for the way OBE has been delivered to educators in schools (see 2.3.2 and 2.3.4). The findings of this study confirmed this. In many ways, the criticisms were similar to those found in studies in 1999 (Singh 1999, Mkhabela 1999:45), in 2000 (Pithouse 2000:154; Smit 2001:73-74, Stoffels 2000:15), and in 2001 Mokgaphame (2001: 60-61). As in these studies, the criticisms against the Department of Education centred mainly on the poor training provided and the lack of support and feedback from the Department.

4.2.5.1 Educator training

The aspect of educator training was criticised heavily because of the rushed time frames, the ever-changing information that was disseminated and the unreliable way information was communicated to schools. Here are some educators' comments:

We only found out half way through the year what the portfolio requirements were.

Every meeting you go to they tell you something new so you never quite knew when you were doing the right thing... there was always something extra or something else.

Their communication skills are almost nil, they're very erratic. Some schools would get things, other schools won't get them. Some schools would get them six weeks after the other schools.

Most of the educators interviewed were particularly unhappy with the lack of knowledge and skills of the Department officials who trained them. Examples included the following:

We met people from the Department...believe me...they were not trained properly and we didn't gain anything from them at all.

It was the blind leading the blind.

I must tell you they become an embarrassment in the eyes of the teachers - because they are unable to answer simple questions.

Department officials projected a very poor image mainly because they had “so many excuses” about their poor attendance, punctuality, lack of knowledge and lack of availability of resources at training sessions. Educators recounted some of these excuses:

Our one arrived two hours late - she got lost in Rosebank.

They tell you ‘sorry I’m not EMS, I’m just here in the place of so and so and so’.

Saying they are understaffed that’s why...they just give a square peg in a round hole - giving an HSS person when I’m an LO person.

There was forever the impression that we got ‘don’t shoot the messenger, we’re just carrying the message across from the top. I’m sorry.’

4.2.5.2 Educator support

Cluster groups are made up of educators in a particular region and an educator or district facilitator is appointed as the cluster leader. This group provided support for some educators. One educator said: “Ja, they’ve been fine, they’ve been good... and I must say especially last year we got a lot of support from each other.” Another educator felt that the groups enabled educators to share ideas, experiences and frustrations. For the majority of educators, though, the cluster groups are a contrived collegiality (see 2.3.1). They described it as a “complaint session” and a “waste of time.” In some cluster meetings the educators merely discussed the departmental circulars.

There was an attempt to share work in some cluster meetings but many educators felt that they were constantly asked to copy examples of their portfolio work for other educators. “We felt that every time we were going there we were just giving out all this work ... rather than receiving the stuff or getting any input on it or changing it,” one educator remarked. All educators agreed that the focus in cluster meetings was generally on what the GDE wanted, i.e. what “the legal requirements” were in terms of learner assessment. But this old-school approach of focussing on assessment confused some educators.

Given all these problems with the dissemination of information to the educators, a relevant question for the Department of Education is: Are they succeeding in their goal to transform education in South Africa?

4.2.5.3 *The transformation of education in South Africa*

The educators felt that there had not been any significant progress made in bridging the gap between schools. To them OBE was not the panacea for public education in South Africa (see 2.2), as it appeared to be exacerbating educational and societal inequities rather than redressing them. The general feeling was that there was no consistency across schools in terms of the quantity or quality of work done. One educator described what she saw at a moderation process: “There were some schools with two portfolio pieces and other schools with 22 portfolio pieces.” Many educators expressed concern over the weak schools. One reason for the continued disparities in the work produced in schools, according to some educators, was that the money used for OBE could have been better spent. Here are some educators' comments:

They have tried to be too radical...they needed to get down to grass roots and fix the... basics, which is furniture in the classroom, and getting kids into the classroom, and making that environment better for them..

There are still schools out there where the kids come to school hungry, where they are in danger of being raped, where there's no stuff in the classroom. Why don't they take that money and make those schools secure? Give the kids a meal? Cut down the numbers in the classroom? Have a policeman on the grounds? Jack up their soccer field?

Most educators felt that OBE enlarged gaps between wealthy and poor schools mainly because it is so “resource heavy.”

4.3 SUMMARY

In summary, the positive aspects of implementing OBE centred more on the fact that for some educators the change signified a kind of career rejuvenation, which challenged them to broaden their repertoire of skills, and increased the creativity within which they could contemplate and facilitate the learning experiences in their classrooms. The negative aspects of implementing OBE for the majority of educators were the increased workload, the fact that they were not getting the best work out of

their learners, feeling unsupported by the SMT and being at the mercy of unrealistic instructions and deadlines from the GDE.

In this chapter the findings of my study were presented and discussed. OBE design principles and OBA practices were analysed in terms of theory and practice. The effect and impact of OBE on learners, educators and school managers were highlighted and were related to the role played by the Department of Education in bringing OBE down to the schools.

In chapter five I present my conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on the people who are crucial to educational reform efforts in South Africa. On the one hand the focus is on the educators, who translate theory into practice in their individual classrooms. On the other hand the focus is on the school managers, who have to be agents of change using whatever human, material and financial resources they have at their disposal to effect change and still maintain high standards in their specific departments and in the school as a whole. My research question is: *How do educators experience the implementation of outcomes-based education in grade nine?* In finding out how educators experience the implementation of OBE in grade nine I am hoping to have a better understanding of the challenges that these educators face. This understanding, in turn, will help me shape my role as a manager and a leader. The information derived from my research could be used to inform the managerial practices of many other schools.

5.2 CONCLUSION

5.2.1 Conclusions from the literature study

5.2.1.1 *The change to OBE*

OBE has been introduced in various countries as a success-based, results-oriented education system to replace education systems where the focus was mainly on input factors without corresponding results (see section 2.2.2.). The reasons given for a change to OBE, include the need to address high illiteracy rates, the need to enhance a country's competitiveness in a global economy and the need to transform society (see section 2.2.1).

5.2.1.2 OBE is simple in theory

In theory OBE is presented simply as a list of outcomes to be achieved according to a few design principles. Subject matter is important only to the extent that it enables the outcomes to be achieved. Criterion-referenced assessment is undertaken continuously to determine whether the outcomes have been achieved and at what level. Every learner must be given ample time, opportunity and support to achieve the outcomes at a very high level (see section 2.2.2).

5.2.1.3 OBE is very difficult in practice

In practice, however, OBE has presented problems to educators, parents, learners and the wider community in all the countries where it is implemented. Criticisms leveled at OBE begin at its core packaging, the language in which it comes and its core premise, its outcomes (see sections 1.1 and 2.2.3.1). The language of OBE has been described as complex, confusing and inaccessible, needing highly qualified educators to make sense of it (see sections 1.1 and 2.3.4). The many outcomes in OBE have been criticised for being prescribed by the state, vaguely worded and associated more with the affective domain (see section 2.2.3.1 *b*). The criticisms of OBE extend to its success-based philosophy, which tends to foster a lack of accountability for personal learning (see section 2.2.3.3 *a*), and OBE's assessment practices where the reliability of assessment and quality assurance of passes have been called into question (see section 2.2.3.3 *b*). OBE has also been criticized for increasing the workload and frustration of educators (see section 2.3.1) who have not been adequately consulted on OBE, have not been properly trained on OBE (see section 2.3.4) but who are responsible for its success. The criticisms extend right to the end result where the question whether OBE works has yet to be answered with compelling evidence to back it up (see section 2.3.1). Despite there being some success stories on the implementation of OBE (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3.2) there are strongly held views that OBE will neither improve the economy nor transform the society of any country in which it is implemented (see sections 2.2 and 2.3.4).

An interesting outcome of my literature study of South African educators specifically is how, despite the many practical problems, individual educators and schools in South Africa are making concerted efforts to embrace OBE and to make the implementation of OBE a success (see 2.3.4). There is still a loud call for the improvement of the implementation plan as well as the improvement of the training

and support given to educators and, in particular school managers. Many educators are convinced of a need for change and a need to make a break with the old education system (see 2.3.4).

5.2.2 Conclusions from empirical study

The empirical study provided information specifically about grade nine educators in two South African schools and their experience of implementing OBE under the guidance of their school managers and the Department of Education.

5.2.2.1 OBE: curriculum and principles

OBE is not perceived as being totally negative or totally positive. Generally, some educators applauded the broad principles of OBE but most educators criticised the practicalities of it. Transitional rather than transformational OBE was being implemented in grade nine classes in South African schools. There was still a very strong focus on content rather than on outcomes, and the design principles of OBE in general were not adhered to (see 4.2.1.1). The strong focus on content was largely attributed to the need for the kind of security that a prescribed syllabus provided in the past and the fact that learners seemed to be getting weaker and were not adequately prepared for grade ten the following year. The lack of focus on some design aspects of OBE was largely attributed to the jargon of OBE (see section 4.2.1.2) and the rushed pace at which educators were forced to do their work because of the assessment requirements of OBE (see section 4.2.1.3). The inclusion of learning areas like LO, A&C and TECH has been applauded but they were not always taken seriously (see section 4.2.1.4). The integration of learning areas had benefits in that it enabled learners to utilise a wide range of skills, especially reading skills, but the problems with integration were that some aspects of the content may be lost and that educators were not always skilled to cover different areas of content (see section 4.2.1.4).

Assessment work in OBE took prominence over other work and it was not only educators and learners that had to work so hard on assessment tasks but parents as well (see section 4.2.1.5). There was a general agreement that continuous assessment was advantageous, however not to the extent that it happened in grade nine where it often took away from actual learning in the classroom (see sections 4.2.2.3 and 4.2.1.5). There was a concerted effort to achieve criterion-referenced

assessment (see section 4.2.1.5b), which was largely seen as beneficial to the learners. The barriers to criterion-referenced assessment were the language and design of the rubrics, learners who ignored or did not understand the criteria and educators who did not explain the rubrics to the learners (see section 4.2.1.5). Inter-rater reliability (see 2.2.3.3) of assessments had many barriers. These barriers were cited as the poor design of the rubrics, an educator's ability to confine himself or herself to the criteria of a specific rubric and to learners' ability to rate themselves and/or their peers honestly. The reliability of assessments were also negatively affected by group work and by parents who do their children's work (see section 4.2.1.5c).

The high pass rate in grade nine could not always be attributed to hard work on the part of the learner and educator. Apart from other aspects like redoing work or choosing their best work (see section 4.2.3.2) marks were also inflated and at times the pass requirement was lowered (see section 4.2.1.5). The success-based philosophy has translated, in practice, into a guaranteed pass or automatic promotion.

A pass in grade nine means that the learner had achieved either a three or four in most of his/her learning areas. The standardisation of what this 3 or 4 actually meant, was school-specific and sometimes much higher than the GDE's standard (see section 4.2.1.5 d). The lack of standards and quality control were attributed to the fact that different schools did different quantities and quality of work, there was no adequate moderation process and in the absence of constructive feedback, all schools would continue to do more of the same (see section 4.2.1.5 d).

5.2.2.2 Educators

OBE increased an educator's workload drastically (see sections 4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.3 and 4.2.1.5). Educators voiced the concern that although OBE required qualified educators who were hardworking, committed and dedicated, it could in fact be driving out this very kind of educator. Aspects such as the educator-learner ratio and the provision of other resources at a school affected an educator's ability to implement OBE (see sections 4.2.2.1, 4.2.4.2, and 4.2.5.3). Of all the roles and competencies that educators had to embrace in this new education dispensation some grade nine educators were traversing a learning path and were becoming proficient in facilitating outcomes-based learning, in designing learning programmes and in assessing the

achievement of outcomes resulting in them being seen as the leaders and specialists in that learning area and/or phase (see section 4.2.2). A dependency culture was being perpetuated in other educators who relied on the educators who were “in charge” of grade nine in their own schools or on educators that they met in cluster groups (see section 4.2.5.2). Educators who were already specialists in one area of content sometimes struggled to teach in an integrated learning area and resented the ‘Jack of all trades’ requirement of OBE (see section 4.2.1.4).

5.2.2.3 Learners

OBE placed huge demands on learners as well, but for them the success rate was at an all time high (see sections 4.2.1.5 and 4.2.3.1). The learners who benefited from OBE were those who could get on with independent, self-directed learning. Educators called them “bright” learners (see section 4.2.3.1) and sometimes used them to help the weak learners in the class. Most learners passed grade nine, whether bright or weak, and without much distinction between the best and the worst in class. This resulted in a lack of self-motivation and a lack of accountability for their own learning in all types of learners (see section 4.2.3). However, those learners perceived as being weak, were also seen as more likely to struggle with the content requirements of grade ten and the fact that a pass was no longer guaranteed (see section 4.2.3.1).

5.2.2.4 School management

The top-down manner in which OBE was delivered by the department to schools was generally copied by the SMT as they passed down information on OBE to the, usually level one, grade nine educators. This middleman approach to managing the change to OBE in secondary schools was criticised by many level one educators and a more assertive approach was called for (see section 4.2.4.1). On the other hand, the lack of human and material resources in some schools placed a burden on school managers and they generally found themselves having to focus on other aspects of their work rather than on what was happening in grade nine (see section 4.2.4.2). There were many suggestions put forward on the role that school managers could play in ensuring the effective implementation of OBE. These included work allocation considerations when planning for the new year (see section 4.2.4.2), not making unrealistic demands on educators, SMT members teaching grade nine and learning the new system with the other educators (see section 4.2.4.2) and basic

people-related issues such as using praise and encouragement to acknowledge the effort on the part of grade nine educators in fulfilling the department's mandate of a new education system (see section 4.2.4.3).

5.2.2.5 The Department of Education

The Department of Education was severely criticised for its delivery of OBE to educators. The training provided by the Department was rushed and inadequate with little or no follow-up support given. The trainers were described as ill-equipped and projecting a very poor image (see section 4.2.5.1). The various meetings and interaction with the department officials on various levels, especially cluster groups, were seen as a waste of time except for the fact that it sometimes clarified the GDE's assessment requirements for grade nine. This in itself was criticised as an old-school approach where the focus was more on an exam and assessment than on classroom practices (see section 4.2.5.2). The Department of Education was challenged to acknowledge that OBE was resource heavy and that this hampered the redress of the inequalities (see section 4.2.5.3).

5.2.3 Integrated conclusions from both studies

OBE sounded good on paper but it was very difficult in practice. In many ways, the practice of OBE defeated all of its theoretical goals.

5.2.3.1 OBE: curriculum and principles

Transitional and not transformational OBE was done in most grade nine classes in South African schools. In general the design principles in OBE were not adhered to. The findings from my study led me to agree with Jansen's (1999:147) comments on the difficult language of OBE as well as the many authors who levelled criticisms about the outcomes (Manno 1995:721; Zlatos 1993:14; Jansen 1998:327; McClelland *et al* 1994:236; Kanpol 1995:362) These two aspects of OBE, its packaging (language) and its core premise (outcomes) were the main reasons why OBE was difficult in practice, as first and foremost, the theory was not understood and did not make sound educational sense, and secondly, educators felt focusing on outcomes would not lay or continue to build on a foundation for the learning of basic skills and would also not adequately prepare learners for grade ten.

Continuous assessment in OBE was taken too far and it increased an educator's workload, placed huge demands on learners and parents, and hampered other crucial aspects of learning in a classroom. The use of rubrics in OBA was extensive. There were many problems, though, with the design of the rubrics themselves as well as with both the educators' and learners' ability to understand and use the rubric. These problems have led to the conclusion that OBA in grade nine was unreliable mainly in terms of inter-rater reliability. In this regard my findings led me to concur with Marzano's (1994:47-48) point that rubrics used to assess outcomes that are vague and not focussed on content, as the 66 outcomes we currently have, must be clear and specific. The poor design of the rubrics also retarded the achievement of an essential aspect of OBA, namely that assessment must be transparent and criterion-referenced.

These problems with OBA were experienced amidst the backdrop of a success-based philosophy translated into a guaranteed pass. There was no quality assurance of the success that was achieved. The quality of the success in grade nine classes was educator-specific and/or school-specific.

5.2.3.2 Educators

My findings are in keeping with those of Schwarz and Cavener (1994: 335) who also found OBE to drastically increase an educator's workload, as well as to increase their frustration in dealing with apathetic learners who play the system, and parents who are confused by and oppose the system.

OBE insisted on a tall order of characteristics of its educators, including a good education qualification, as Jansen (1999:149) pointed out, but also a high degree of proficiency in all the expected roles (see section 2.3.2), as well as other aspects such as having a broad general knowledge to teach an integrated curriculum, being hardworking, willing to learn and to embrace change and most of all, being committed to education in South Africa to remain in the profession. All this had to be achieved, irrespective of the resources available to the educator and within a climate of limited and/or inadequate training and support from the SMT and the GDE.

5.2.3.3 *Learners*

I concur with the authors who hold that, despite OBE's declaration that all learners can learn, the lack of motivation that remains problematic in today's schools (Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 336; Ristau 1995:44; Spady & Douglas 1977:12), was exacerbated by learners getting more chances to redo their work, and really questioned the value of effort over ability (Ristau 1995:44). My findings were that grade nine learners were generally spoken of as being "bright" or "weak." The perception of the current inherent ability of learners was more spoken about than the possible improvement in ability through effort.

Furthermore, I agree with Robert Slavin's (In Hiralaal 2000:23) 'Robin Hood' concept of OBE as my findings were that in some ways OBE did take from the fast learner to help out the poor learner. My findings also confirmed Venter's (2000:23) concerns about automatic promotion in that to ensure that all learners passed grade nine, there were instances where marks were inflated, and standards being lowered. A grade nine learner was almost guaranteed a pass in South African schools.

5.2.3.4 *School management*

OBE continued to be delivered in a top-down manner from the GDE to schools and from the SMT (in most cases) to the level one educator in the grade nine classrooms. School managers were challenged to become lifelong learners including learning to become proficient in facilitating the achievement of outcomes in grade nine classes. There was a call from many participants in this research, with which I agree, that members of the SMT, as the leaders in the school, should encapsulate Volmink's (1997:6) idea of leadership. The SMT should be the kind of leaders who walked ahead in times of change, developing new skills, capabilities and understandings, and who thus role-modelled genuine commitment to real change within themselves and in their organisations. There was also a call from managers to create the right environment for the implementation of OBE, be it administratively or in terms of the people they work with. This was in keeping with the thoughts of authors such as Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:xv-xvi), Newell (1997:26) and Mammary (in Brandt 1994:25), who all advocated a learning, enabling, consultative, collaborative and people-centred environment within which to effect real changes in a school.

5.2.3.5 *The Department of Education*

There was still much criticism levelled at the Department of Education regarding its efforts to prepare educators, school managers and schools in general for the implementation of OBE. In many ways, the criticisms were similar to those found in studies in 1999 (Singh 1999, Mkhabela 1999:45), in 2000 (Pithouse 2000:154; Smit 2001:73-74, Stoffels 2000:15), and in 2001 (Mokgaphame 2001:60-61). As in these studies, the criticisms against the Department of Education centred mainly on the poor training provided and the lack of support and feedback from the Department. The training provided by the Department was described as rushed, inadequate and ineffective and the trainers themselves were regarded as incompetent and as projecting a very poor image.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Recommendations based on conclusions from both studies

5.3.1.1 *OBE: curriculum and principles*

From the conclusions, the following can be recommended:

- There has to be a focus on both content outcomes and those outcomes associated with the development of life roles in learners.
- These outcomes must be assessed over a phase and not one year, thus allowing sufficient time for expanded opportunities and ensuring the achievement of the outcomes at a high level.
- The problem with the complicated OBE language must be addressed through adequate, relevant and hands-on training both from the GDE and the SMT.
- Schools should have effective mechanisms where work done by a learner in one school travels around with the learner through their profiles.
- Schooling should be restructured so that the entire phase, i.e. grade seven, eight and nine, occur in the same school making the assessment of all the outcomes over a phase and not one year more easily achievable. In the interim the final grade nine assessment must be based on grade eight and nine work. This means that the current assessment requirements must be

spread over two years, thus also giving a little more time for extension and remediation as required.

- We need a reliable assessment process and a quality assured progression from one grade to another. This is currently school specific. This must be addressed through adequate moderation at school and district level. There must be, firstly, SMT then district intervention when a defined standard is not understood or reached.
- There must be a clear definition of what a high standard in the achievement of every outcome is. All grade nine educators, all members of the SMT and all the district officials must understand this definition. All grade nine educators must have some tools on how to facilitate the achievement of the outcomes and how to assess the degree at which the outcome is achieved. Members of the SMT and district officials are required to be more proficient in this regard.
- Training in OBE assessment must thus be addressed as a matter of urgency.

5.3.1.2 Educators

OBE will fail if the issue of educator qualifications, expertise, motivation empowerment and morale are not addressed. The educator is the key, regardless of the availability or lack thereof of other resources. I recommend that:

- Educators' workload needs to be reduced by having the senior phase outcomes assessed over 3 years rather than merely in their grade nine year.
- The rushed, same-for-all training that educators have been subjected to up to now be reviewed and replaced with training that targets the developmental level of the school and more specifically, the educator.
- The training provided, irrespective of the service provider, be focussed on the development of specific skills over a specific time. For example, training should deal with one role at a time, for example, on being an assessor. This should be further narrowed down to one aspect of assessment, such as the designing of rubrics for a specific assessment task, for example an oral presentation.

5.3.1.3 *Learners*

The lack of self-motivation and accountability for personal learning are possible negative consequence of OBE on all types of learners. In this regard I recommend that educators and parents insist on accountability from learners through the following:

- Good organisational classroom practices where learners know in advance what is required of them, at what level it is required and when it is due, coupled with support and guidance on the completion of the work, given by the educator.
- Built-in sanctions in the rubric and/or otherwise, when work is not produced after adequate time and assistance for preparation is provided.
- Parents should be aware and keep track of deadlines. Parents should refrain from doing their children's homework or providing excuse notes when the work is not done at its highest level the first time around.
- Effort, on the part of the learner, must be shown to be the real determinator of success.

5.3.1.4 *School management*

The SMT must reclaim their role in the delivery of learning in all grades in their area of responsibility. In terms of grade nine this would still be done in terms of GDE requirements, but members of the SMT:

- should challenge unrealistic expectations;
- are more likely to be aware of the developmental level of a particular educator than an official from the GDE. He or she must fill in the gaps in GDE training and/or take the training further to effective implementation in the classroom;
- are at the school site and are therefore in a prime position, given their experience with content and other aspects, to assist an educator with keeping extension tasks on hand for brighter learners and remedial exercises on hand for weaker learners;
- would be more likely to assist if he/she has taught grade nine at least once;
- need to acquire a sensitivity to people's needs – to create the right environment to empower the educators to produce their best work. They need to secure a consensus on the mission of their Department (or area of

responsibility) and place this continuously in the context of the school's mission and vision as a whole.

5.3.1.5 The Department of Education

We have to challenge the Department's provision of incompetent trainers who are late and unprepared. This must be communicated as unacceptable. I therefore recommend:

- The Department must adequately train those who are to train educators, and until this is done well, the implementation of OBE at school level be halted. The Department officials should review their service delivery and their image in this regard, or they will continue to be criticised and not be taken seriously.
- The Department must undertake a need analysis in terms of the training and support required at the different schools. This information, together with a school developmental audit that notes the different qualifications, experience and expertise at the different schools, must inform training sessions that are targeted at specific groups of educators and specific schools.
- The district officials must moderate the assessment work in OBE. This must not be delegated to the educators who had done all the hard work themselves. Feedback from such a moderation process must be fed into a plan to improve the skills of those educators found to be needing it. The execution of this plan may or may not be with the assistance of educators who are found to be better at the implementation of OBE.

5.3.2 Recommendations for further research

The following are recommendations for future research:

The portfolio work of different schools should be investigated to look at the differences in standard, quantity and quality of work as a means of identifying areas in assessment in a particular learning area, where educators can be helped to improve.

A comprehensive study of the developmental level of a selection of schools in terms of their educator staff can be undertaken. The research could focus specifically on the qualifications and experience of the educators in terms of the subjects they teach and the impact this has, if any, on the implementation of OBE. This information could

be gathered from the educators themselves, their school managers, the learners they teach and, if possible, parents as well. The purpose of this research would also be to identify the developmental needs of the specific educators and perhaps the school as a whole.

5.4 LIMITATIONS

This research was conducted in my own backyard, and the fact that I am known to the participants may be a limiting factor. The research was conducted in previous model C schools which are generally better equipped than many other schools in South Africa. Although the two schools had many differences in the resources available to the educators and learners, there are other schools that have much less.

5.5 SUMMARY

This research focuses on educators' experience of implementing outcomes-based education in grade nine in secondary schools in South Africa. Two secondary schools were chosen as settings within which qualitative research was conducted. In total, there were five focus groups and seven personal interviews conducted and twelve classrooms were observed where grade nine learners were being taught and/or where aspects of the Common Task of Assessment (CTA) section A were being administered.

Twenty level one educators participated in three of the focus groups, comprising of nine, six and five members respectively. Two of these groups, from two different schools, were homogeneous in that each participant had less than six years teaching experience. The third focus group of level one educators was homogeneous in that the educators had, on average, more than sixteen years teaching experience and they mainly facilitated learning in areas such as technology and arts and culture, learning areas that were generally not taken seriously.

Fourteen school managers participated in two of the focus groups comprising of eight and six members respectively. In one of the focus groups, the school management team was comprised of a fair mix of young and old managers. Most of these school managers were currently teaching grade nine learners. The other focus group contained school managers that had mostly more than twenty years teaching

experience. The majority of these school managers did not teach any grade nine classes.

The seven personal interviews conducted were all with educators who were new to the profession and who were given grade nine classes to teach. Unlike most of the other educators interviewed, these educators came to the profession with knowledge of the OBE philosophy and methodology.

Findings indicated that some educators found the experience of implementing OBE positive in that it improved their repertoire of facilitating and assessing skills. The reasons for citing OBE as a negative experience were given as the following: an increased workload, poor training and lack of follow-up by the department, and the school management team's degree of involvement in grade nine matters.

Recommendations were made on how to ease the burden on educators implementing OBE in their classrooms and to empower school managers to manage it within their respective areas of responsibility.

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LETTER TO SECURE PERMISSION FOR INTERVIEWS

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

I am currently busy with a dissertation on the implementation of Outcomes-based education (OBE) in grade nine. In this dissertation I aim to describe how educators have experienced the implementation of OBE in grade nine in 2002. My focus in particular is on what was positive and what was negative about the experience. I also aim to look at what role the management staff at a school can play in improving an educator's experience of implementing a changing curriculum.

I hereby seek permission to conduct two focus groups at your school. The one focus group should comprise of about eight educators who each have fewer years of teaching experience (less than five) and who have taught grade nine last year. The other focus group should comprise of as many school managers as possible, who may or may not have taught grade nine last year.

The focus group interviews will be conducted at a time that is agreed on by all the participants and will last for one to one and a half hours. Refreshments will be served.

The interviews will be tape-recorded (with the permission of the participants) and will be later analysed and used in my dissertation.

All comments made in the interviews will be treated in the strictest confidence and no educators' name will be mentioned and neither will the name of the school be mentioned.

Razia Ghanchi Badasie

NOTE OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

To the participant

This note confirms that each participant in this focus group will be respected with regard to anonymity and confidentiality. I intend to use the substance of the interview (comments, opinions, views, etc.) in my dissertation but I hereby assure each participant of the following:

- Your name will NOT be mentioned in my dissertation
- Your comment may be reported but anonymously. A pseudonym may be used.
- The name of the school at which you are an educator will also not be mentioned.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

Razia Ghanchi Badasie

PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURES

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

EDUCATOR: _____ CLASS: _____

LEARNING AREA: _____ No. of learners in class: _____

PHYSICAL CLASSROOM

Arrangement of desks

Charts

OHP's, TV, video, etc.

Chalkboard: available, whiteboard, blackboard, etc.

Information displayed pertaining to OBE and the learning area

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE

Educator's disposition, educator-learner relationship

Learner's participation, responses, learner's interaction with each other

LESSON DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes:

Were they stated by the educator and known by the learner?

Were they one of the 66 outcomes or the educator's own outcomes?

Did the learner's appear to understand the outcome?

Assessment:

Were learners informed of the assessment criteria?

Was there any evidence of assessment in class?

Type of assessment: self, peer, etc.

Tools for assessment:

ROLE OF LEARNER

Active participant or passive recipient?

ROLE OF EDUCATOR

Imparts knowledge or facilitates self-directed learning?

RESOURCES USED IN THE CLASS

Name the resources

Who supplied the resources, educator or learners?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW A1: VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION

SCHOOL A: FOCUS GROUP ONE

CONDUCTED: 17TH JULY 2003 TIME: 12h00 DURATION: approx. 2 hours

NO. OF EDUCATORS: 9

A: ...and then . . .ok, now each one of you has signed this note - this note says to the participant – this note confirms that each participant within this focus group will be respected with regard to confidentiality and anonymity. I intend to use the substance of this interview that means I will use your comments and your opinions and your views in my dissertation but I assure you that your name will not be mentioned ‘em and that the school’s name will not be mentioned. Right. You will be known as er focus group one and the school will be known as school A. With this in mind, I want to thank each one of you for being here and participating and I want to ask that please if we could speak a bit louder so that we can record everything that is being said. The purpose of me recording it is so that afterwards I will analyse what is it that the teachers of this school has said and compare it with the teachers of the other schools has said and then look at patterns and see if there is common feelings and common positives and common negatives of the topic under discussion.

My ... basically my aim here is to look at how did you experience OBE last year. In the year 2002, in grade nine, we implemented outcomes-based education for the first time – where we did continuous assessment where we did portfolios for the school assessment and the CTAs section A and section B for the district assessment. Do you all remember having experienced that? Now at the time I know some educators from this school also phoned me and said I don’t know what is happening here and I don’t know what is happening here. There was a lot of discussion. I want you to think about that time because we are going to focus on last year and what was your experience all about. There are three main questions that I want to ask – and I will start off by throwing this question out to each one of you: I want you to think about your experience last year and think about what do you think was positive about your experiences of implementing outcomes-based education last year?

C: we start with the positive – the importance

A: Yes, the positive

B: I think what I noticed to be positive was that, was that, er, the administration was accurate, the papers, the CTAs, they came on time, there was no management problem – that was positive and we should give credit where it is due.

A: ok - thank you

[There were many people shaking their heads in disagreement]

If you have a disagreement, can you note it as a negative for..... all right?

Er I think what I’ll do is I will at this point some paper

[Lots of shuffling as people took out pen and paper to write]

But your ...your point sir is that you are happy with the administration that the CTAs have arrived on time

B: ...have arrived on time, yes, everything was packed; the portfolios were there, that was marvellous.....

C:and then I can also.....[unclear].....the main advantage

A: speak louder sir please

C: The main advantage of OBE

A: yes

C:is that learner's are able to get the outcomes themselves which means they are actively participating in what ever they are doing. **They reach the outcomes** immediately thereafter they are able practically to do what is supposed to be done - especially as far as the objectives are concerned - so in that situation I believe it would be very much positive - and then it makes them very much active in that situation - it is not a matter of the teacher being the only sole er owner of information - the learners are able to gather themselves

A: Thank you

D: yeah I would like to add on to what T..... Teacher has said. I think OBE is positive in the sense that em we do err more assessments. If the child fails, for example, is weak on a certain part, he has time to catch up say on practical, on maybe, research 'cos they love doing research - they are very creative unlike say maybe calculations - if it was only calculations then they would'nt make it so I think OBE gives them a chance

E: Well, [clearing throat], as far as I'm concerned its just to add to what she has been said, she has just said, really looking at it from an assessment point of view, we were given various forms of assessment and then which therefore which therefore makes a learner to be able let me say to be assessed in various ways. Like you know looking at - at a learner as consis..... some - let me say more than one aspect so like when you give a learner lets say design a ????????? which is just one of the these various forms of assessment which we give - it means the learner looking at design and making - it's - it's focus is on creativity. So it means er the creativity of a learner was as well assessed. And again looking as I say at all these various forms of assessment it's unlike Perhaps in the past whereby we would just give a child a summative kind of assessment whereby perhaps we would just give a child a written kind of an examination like a test and then we think of perhaps - think of perhaps a child that would have had a problem by or let me say on that day when an exam was to be written or might have perhaps had some let me say problems at home or life in general. So you see now as the child is er examined on a regular daily basis it means this child is given er enough chance in a way - not just to be given something after a certain period which is like an exam but now he is tested just on a regular day

A: more opportunities

E: more opportunities

D: And I also found they work well if they are not under pressure for example, the exams. Some of them they get nervous, they get scared, unlike when they are doing practicals they doing – that way they are more relaxed. And that's why they work better unlike exams.

F: And also I felt like when we usually talk continuous assessment – when we usually talk this language of continuous assessment – I realise that even as a teacher that means I rated myself – I continually assessed myself. Because some of the information are not given - are too much subjective. You get the ideas from the learners – that's where you can rate... wh...how far are these learners up to – that's where I can assess myself. I realise so many things out of it.

A: So you – you're seeing a benefit for yourself as an educator

F: More than that

A: OK

B: The other thing I noticed is when we went outdoors to do measurements, usually they the kids who are in class somehow behind their friends but when it comes to practicals they are so far better than their friends. So for the first time in their lives they have a chance to show what they are really made of and that balances the equation.

A: Mr. G...

G: Ya like in subjects which needs practicals I think it stimulates the interest of learners to go and do further/thorough researches unlike in the olden days wherein a teacher was supposed to stand up and preach thisgospel. In this OBE learners are challenged to go and do thorough researches and then let me say they spend most of their time researching for the sake of finding better answers. Unlike in the olden days wherein we use to spoon feed them – to spoon-feed them – because in spoon-feeding there is nothing that they learn. But if they research for themselves it can't get out of their mind.

C: Ya it's more like speaking of what the total package package of the learner which means OBE is more about assessing learners in totality. You don't only focus on one side of the potential of a learner. It gives learners a chance to show themselves and not also to be embarrassed if one extreme or one faculty of their potential is not good enough compared to others. So in that case it gives everybody a chance to excel 'cos its more like you are putting all the challenges and then you are giving all the learners a chance to show which section or their strength or the power of that learner. So that that learner can contribute positively. And most of it is done in the group form whereby one can come and draw, the other one contribute er verbally, the other one will just be part represent or present the matter given. So its more like giving learners a chance also to be in a communal base of education Again assist them to get together well, to communicate, to know – familiarise – and take away this fearfulness amongst themselves in the classroom situation.

B: And the other point I noticed is that when they are doing group work it gives them chance to see their leadership skills – to test their leadership skills. From there you can tell who will be leading society one day. ‘cos there you can clearly see who is participating more and that’s a test of maturity and that’s a test of leadership. So they are not just learning that - indirectly they are also learning to lead one day.

D: And on the point of view of a teacher you don’t have that much work as was before because in this case learners are not as passive as they used to be. You as an educator – you just a facilitator – you just facilitating – that makes it less work for us.

C: I think even again there is something I can add. Er OBE is more on the future level - is more like an education which is very much optimistic, like you are grooming the learners to be somebody else or to be people who are responsible in their because in whatever they are doing the decision they are reaching that comes back to them to present or feedback to all the other learners about we reached this conclusion because of this particular evidence. So learners learn from an early stage to take decisions - to be responsible and accountable and then at the end of the day we are more like having a society that will be responsible I think that gives them more platform to see what is happening now so that they can be future leaders.

D: And to add on that I think em with OBE they can also relate – they now have an understanding of what the subject means. They can relate – for example-technology – er at first they didn’t know why we design a chair – how – what factors do you look for – what is it that you look for. Or clothing, materials, why choose a certain material instead of another. Now they know. It’s not a question of that they are given – they go and research for themselves and they know – they can relate.

A: It’s more relevant

D: It’s relevant, yes.

B: And when it comes to research, the other point I noticed that er was positive in that – is that they were involving their family members – like for example ...you have research work er to the grade nines and go and do at home - so everybody got it right except one girl – she got everything – nothing - zero. So I asked why everybody got it right? So it was not me who solved these things it was my mother. So that shows there is some participation – you know everybody

A: family participation

B: Yeah. Not only at home but the mother was sure she was working it right

A: But the mother was doing everything

B: Ya she did everything for the child and it was a catastrophe

A: and that’s positive?

B: ya that’s positive because the whole community is now getting involved.

A: OK

C: Even looking forward to tomorrow. Er OBE encouraged because when it comes to attendance – er the grade nines most of them were here at school last year – we didn't have most of them absenting themselves so they were looking forward to the classroom situation – what is it today that will come up – what is it today that we will be doing. So it encouraged learners to come to school regularly. We didn't more of them staying at home.

A: and that's definitely a positive

C: it's very much positive

F: and again although one may call last year as the year of OBE trial and error

A: for grade nine

F: For grade nines, yes. Er but we didn't experience much more problems because we were informed about the latest information. In most cases, in advance – and through workshops and cluster meetings.

A: So can we talk about – you mentioned cluster meetings em what's positive about being part of cluster meetings and going to cluster meetings?

H: Er I think its - its very much useful 'cos you get to know what – what you have to teach learners in class. For example, in NS last year, we have to we didn't know that we have to do smoking as part of the whole 'em curriculum last year. So when you go to cluster meetings they inform you we should do this one, we should do electrical – electricity part, we should do smoking part, we should do a certain part in biology – that's how it helped us and how

A: So you get informed

H: Ja the whole information about the portfolio work as well.

F: And more important on the same note is that teachers do share ideas, their experiences and their frustrations of cause

A: So it is a chance to communicate with others that are in the same boat as you are.

H: Can I add something and from different schools as well – it's not school A only

I: Ok er just on a positive notealthough I am more on the negative I don't totally agree with OBE. So I I can just say em I support the government for trying to change the education system and because OBE is research but now on comparing the OBE with other researches then I find some loopholes, but on the positive note, I support the government for trying to change the - the education system although there are so many loopholes in OBE. To me it is just a cut and paste method.

A: So what you're saying is that you - you recognise that we need to change the education system to something although you've got problems with OBE as such.

I: Yes.

A: OK

D: I can also say the certificate part they know they are – they are always looking for it at the end of the year. They know they are going to get a certificate

A: So passing is assured

D: ..plus it- its like not only a report it is a certificate. It's like you ending matric or you ending another phase before you go on to FET.

A: mmm OK

C: Ja it also encourages, it encouraged and now is still encouraging the learners. You remember first half I spoke about the attendance levels and also the curbing in trying to do away with this failure rate. You know the previous system of education was too much based on more learners failing. Actually learners were even scared to come to school. And learners were not that much willing to prepare er for lessons and they were not doing much of the tasks But with the OBE I think the most important focus is that we are supposed to groom these learners so that they can know what they are here for not only to be academics or to be more on the bookish side but to give them different streams of life so that they can choose themselves which stream is well suitable for them 'cos they are able as Mr. B – as the teacher here indicated that – er you are able to tell that you can be more of a good leader and you are able to tell which stream is going to be – OBE just gave learners a chance to recognise or to identify their potentials. And very much[coughing].....then a learner will obviously follow that particular stream. And again, failure rate, I don't think if we do our own work well as teachers because with OBE you are able to tell that this class – this learner needs this kind of assistance. So, obviously you do help learners according to that individual's potential. It curbs failure rate – learners are able to pass.

[Give it 2 seconds]

E: I was just gonna focus my mind just on the content itself in the learning areas. You know I just got to er life orientation it was the learning area, which I was like offering. Er looking at the constant supply by the government again I would actually appreciate that you know we- we actually have a constant supply which er let me say which was more relevant than in the past years than perhaps to - to have what guidance. Guidance would be in this way would be some thing that er has just gone a long distance before learners begin even to realise. But looking at Life Orientation – it's something of- it's immediate – it's something just immediate – something that is being experienced on a regular daily basis. Then like er guidance would talk of after grade twelve and all is then that you begin to experience life of which life is like something that er

A: So you're comparing Life Orientation that they are doing now in OBE to the subject Guidance that they used to do in the past.

E: That's it

A: and you're saying that Guidance was mainly related to life after school like career guidance whereas Life Orientation is what the child is experiencing now its life and this is for you a big thing

Positive about OBE

J: OK, what I can say is most of the things they used to do theoretically only, I can give an example of Arts and Culture – most of the things I remember when I was still doing my er secondary and lower levels I did not do Arts and Culture – it was only when you go to tertiary institution that you start doing Arts and Culture but nowadays learners are given the chance to do practical things in Arts and Culture.

D: I can also say for me as a teacher, OBE has exposed me to other learning areas 'cos it integrates all the learning areas so that has been fun for me. Not only to concentrate on electrical – I've done EMS, which was in- integrated with Technology, I've done sewing, I've done mechanical – cooking – you integrate all the learning areas

A: and that word you used was fun

D: it is ja.

A: OK

F: On the same note again regarding integration, of cause to me it was the best because that's where it gave the room – like er in our commercial department - former commercial department – it used to be like a - a certain teacher will specialise in accounting will not be familiar to Business Economics or Economics. So in OBE EMS that's where now a teacher who has specialised now in particularly accounting will come into the other different like er field Business Economics or – or Economics. That means that teacher needs to now communicate with the other teacher to get much more information. That's where now all of – all of us we come together to sit down and discuss.

A: So its not only an integration of learning areas its an integration of

F: Communication amongst educators

A: communication among educators

F:and of which we learn much more from each other.

G:grade nine there is a...a good link between age and the syllabus.....find out thatteenage stage and they learn about themselves. So they become curious to know – and as you know that learning can be fun – they become curious to know – they become interested to do research, like asking their friends what is this? What is this? All those things.

A: So that sentence that you said there is a good link between age and the syllabus?

G: Ja what they are learning about like in teenage stage more especially in L.O. they learn about themselves that maybe 2 years to come the girls must expect this, 2 years to come the boys must expect this, all those things. And then by that is like in the olden days there was no this sex education but now it is coming full force.

[Laughter from some of the educators]

B: The other thing I that was positive from my viewpoint is that er during group work, you – you get to know the children better, they are relating to what – what is happening to them, ‘cos when.but then you discover they are undergoing adolescence which is stressful, they are getting the stress out, and from there you learn that er er there is poverty in the home, this is stressful and they are getting their stress out. Because at the end of the day you end up with a bunch of kids who are impossible to handle and you think what is this but dur-during the discussions you learn a lot about them. You learn that there is poverty in the home this is stressful. There is violence in the neighbourhood, which is stressful. There is fear for personal safety, which is stressful. At the end of the day you understand the child better.

A: So you’re saying this comes out in the lessons in the OBE lessons

B: ...in the OBE lessons – the way the questions are phrased, because they are all home-based questions – no there are no $x + y$, strictly $x + y$ ’s, always home-based and you really learn that oh this is why X, W Z behaves X, Y, Z.

A: So in the MLMMS LA, which you teach, it gave you an opportunity still to learn about the learner

B: To learn about the learner – what really drives them that way. One cannot from my viewpointwas that....this was stress because under – undergoing whenever they see the word sex they always so you know that they are going that stage. Ja and they are getting their stress out.

A: Thank you

E: Just to come again here, right. In looking at the assessment my feeling is OBE is er you know is something to to actually vote for. Because we I find that all the stakeholders are involved. ONE: we talk of the school support based assessment team and then we talk of DAT? which is district assessment team. We also look at the school support team. You see it means the district is involved in the assessment and then looking at er let me say this school-based assessment team – that one involves the management, educators, the community as well. However it hasn’t been done er you know optimally so. But, if it was like already so and then it would therefore mean all the stakeholders are involved because even the parents themselves are involved because they should be part and parcel of this er school support based assessment team. So in that way I feel that everybody is involved because the parents, teachers, er the management out of the three assessment teams I made mention of.

A: So it’s more community involvement. All the stakeholders are involved.

J: OK to add on Mr. B has said, I think educators are helped.

A: continue

J: They they get help by the information they get from learners like when we discuss learners about their er informal knowledge you you tend to know them better. And before previously....

A: you called it informal knowledge

J: yes, the knowledge that you gain at home and wherever you accumulate the knowledge from? Then you – you tend to know them er better so it helps you when teaching them you know how to treat them unlike before even if a learner had a problem or --- nobody cares what happens. So now we know that if if maybe a learner has got a problem you know how to treat them and maybe you can also help them.

C: And then in addition to what meneer said here. Regular consultation with the district and also all the stakeholders involved in education. I think it made it possible for those people to always have some visits taking last year.....for example. We had closer relationship or ties with the district officials and of which previously it wasn't the case. So OBE made it possible for them to come closer and understand things from our educator's point of view – myself also included. And then management also understood better what is happening in the classroom situation – how - what kind of learners we have, education itself, and so on. And I think it benefited most of us as teachers.

B: Yes and the other thing that was positive in my view was that er er what I've noticed is we are implementing- we are moving away from top-down management to bottom-up management. So now what we have is the learners are the bosses and it shows when they are really learningand the other thing that was positive.....

A: You're saying the learners are the bosses

B: are the bosses because everything is now bottom-up

A: right

B: It was er previously it was top down management where it comes from and goes and

A: You're talking about specifically classroom management

B: yes, yes. And now they are the bosses – they do a good job. So that was – and the other thing what I noticed is that er er as meneer said we had very good intercourse with the district officials which was unlike in the previous case where they could come once in a blue moon.

A: You speak about er bottom-up management in the classroom

B: yes, and even nationally and the whole administration of the school is – we are moved from top-down to bottom-up where you have the power to take - to task anybody.

A: and that's positive for you.

B: that's positive because.....it goes down to er freedom and those things. So bottom-up management must start from the classroom where it moves to society where it can lead into positive or chaos but let us experiment

A: and that includes the staff room

B: yes

C: Ja, speaking of the grassroots which means those are the people that suffer most. So if you do get their cries it's easier to relate that message to those that who are able financially to.....

A: As a group you are pretty much grassroots because you are just starting out in the education er field, em and you got about five years or less of teaching experience. So are you experiencing this bottom-up management?

???????

A: it's a positive thing it's it's it's open to you to do

C: I think we pioneered this OBE thing last year. So most of the things started last year. So we are still in the process of that. So taking last year and now we are just in the mid of the second year of OBE but things have drastically changed.....indicated that yes we are feeling the change is a happening even though not to our satisfaction or to a level whereby we can say now its happening. But its drastically and gradually going there.

A: OK

E: Ja really I would agree with you. We we feel that. Like ee when I'm just chosen as the member of an assessment team. That in a way empowers me because I go and gather the information I come back and report and its up to me if I don't give them it's up to me again. Er whether I hide or whatsoever because that's my information. But ee normally as we do we come back and report er sharing whatever er we we actually collected as er as the information so in that way really I feel its unlike saying all the time its the principal going, the deputy going, no but now er the the work has been sort of like delegated. You go and do this and then you come back and all that so er in a way I feel that we are working as a unit.

A: How do others feel? Who else has experienced what Mr. E has experienced in terms of gathering information and bringing it back?

C: I think I attended a Life Orientation course last year for two weeks with er ma'am just behind you. It was very fruitful. We were able to come there gather

information and then its more of a delegation like system of education whereby we don't expect one person to be the sole owner of information

A: So its sounds like a few of you had been to workshops. Can we talk a few minutes on that – on your positive experiences about workshops?

F: To me it has been another situation 'cos you know I am a cluster leader EMS cluster leader

A: cluster leader

F: So yes, I earned a lot the last time when we had a cluster meeting but er to those teachers you know they earned much more than that

A: earned?

F: they earned much more from me because I had to go out to look for information. Even the guy from the department wasn't familiar to some of this information.

A: So what was positive about that for you?

F: The little that is why I am saying it's it's a different situation because I earned a little from the experience.

C: Er I don't think so. He earned more. Because once you are given a responsibility you have to be accountable. The fact that he was able to go out and research, gather information so that he can feed all those people who will be there he gained also.

F: I feelthe information that some of the teachers because of their reluctance, their ignorance, that is why they don't know.

A: mmm OK

F: ...they need to be well equipped with the information

A: So, if I'm if I'm listening to what you're saying. You're saying that sometimes cluster leaders are important because other people are ignorant and they they're lazy to learn. Is that it?

F: They are lazy to learn. Some of the teachers they are lazy to learn they are reluctant, they ignore this er papers, all this minor papers that we get, all the circulars, so when you go through the circulars you get the information. I got the information from the same papers that they got. So I don't know whether it is because of misinterpretation or what. But I when I interpret the information to them, so many were surprised So the er the only thing that I learn from them is that some of the teachers because of lack er of information and reluctance, that means they are unable to carry out OBE.....????

A: OK. Can we on the last few minutes of positive but if you do come up on a positive thought please write it down so that at the end of the interview you can still – because every single thought and view and comment is important.

You wanted to say something?

G: Ja I wanted to say like this OBE is like teaching is like two-way traffic now unlike in the olden days wherein a teacher is supposed to feed the learners. Nowadays is a two-way traffic because learners can learn from a teacher and the teacher can learn from learners. Like for example I grew up in a poor situation. One day while I was teaching the class another learner mentioned the issue of jacuzzi.

A: Sorry she mentioned the issue of ?

G: Jacuzzi

A: Jacuzzi?

G: Ja and I didn't know jacuzzi by then.

A: yes.

G: So as a teacher I swallowed my pride and I asked the learner what is this jacuzzi? So she said a jacuzzi sir you don't know this? I said no I don't know what is jacuzzi because I grew up in the poor situation. So she explained to me so which means since that day I learn more from the learner unlike in the olden days.

A: So what is a jacuzzi sir?

G: Jacuzzi she say it is – or you don't know it yourself?

[Lots of laughter]

she say its something like a basin where you go in and sit there then you press then the water boils there

[More laughter]

always since that day I learned from the learner. I swallowed my pride and say oh its this.

A: But but but you felt good about that?

G: more than good.

A: It was a positive thing for you to actually learn from a child.

G: Ja it's a two-way traffic now. I learn from them they learn from me.

B:

F: Quite right. I also have the same experience like Mr. G. You know I learnt a lot er in terms of er especially when it comes to presentation. Er in the former commercial subjects, especially in Accounting, Business or Economics, we didn't

have the discussion thing. We know that when we discuss or do the presentation it must be in English. So now we er they brought in this assessment presentation where the learners will stand there and do. Like I give them a this topic statement: Is there a necessity for paying tax? Do you see any need for paying tax? So those learners were very much interested they went out to look for much more information. They even gave me some of the information that I know some of the teachers who don't know. If I must ask one of the teachers that "What is tax..... , tax"?"

B:we can defend ourselves.....

A: MR.

F: I learnt from those learners and I of cause, I believe even some of the teachers. When I explain here I will be able to .. sometimes you tell these teachers. So I do believe it is a two-way thing.

J: To add on that. We learn a lot from learners. Like myself I teach Arts and Culture. Most of the things they did in the primary schools, they bring along. We also share ideas - how to make things, how how can we do this. When I come up with er suppose a project, I also let them come up with the same thing – how can we do this? They come with alternatives – alternative ways of doing it. So I also learn from them they also learn from me. And like in the class you find the class is big and learners are from different schools. So they learnt different things. But you you find that maybe the theme is the same. So we have a theme and learners come up with the ideas of doing things and I also bring mine. Then we find a way.... We get more knowledge.

A: So you're not only getting knowledge from books, you're getting knowledge from each other.

Ok, last comment on this positive aspect.

F: Er, regarding the presentation, because it wasn't there in the commercial field all along, it has brought an idea thatexpress not only writing, you knowmuch more information and can bring much more questions and much more much more ideas. But even the teachers, that means, they even send they can even send the teacher to go and look for much more information.....

A: So it challenges teachers.

F:teachers, really. And it brings self-motivation to the learners. Because now they know that if they bring this kind of information, the the teacher may either know it or not. Yes. Because I was asked, once asked what is biochemical industry? You know I knew it from that simple level but...you know one of this learners he explained it to the last last you know, I and I clearly understood.

A: Something that he went out and learnt himself

F: Ja.

C: So which means er sharing information with the learners er OBE style ee is not embarrassing especially to the teachers who were well known with not making mistakes. But in the case like OBE, we learn we share ideas even if a learner feels like he tabulated or he put something in a very more drastic way. As a teacher you are able to swallow that humbly so knowing well that this is more of a group of people or a family whereby you are just sharing different things. Personally I feel OBE is the best at this point because I don't have another alternative, but compared to the older system or traditional; system, er OBE is the best. The only thing is people are supposed to structure it er revise the structuring, and also the facilitation. People who must facilitate OBE as

A: I thank you all for contributing to the question on what was positive on OBE. Uhm we are now going to reorientate our mind to think about what was unpleasant or negative about the experience last year. However, if a positive thought, or a thought of something positive crops up in your mind make a note of it and then we can still revisit the topic. OK I now throw open the question to everybody and say that last you did OBE in grade nine, you conducted the assessments and uhm you did the CTA section A and B. What for you was a negative aspect of outcomes-based education last year?

F: It was pre-implemented, it was over emphasised, before time whereas the government didn't put in enough resources in time. They didn't equip the teachers, the facilitators to run OBE smoothly. That's where we come across this

A: I'm just going to repeat some of the words you're saying, you're saying the government did not prepare the teachers

F: yes

A: and did not have enough resources

F: ...didn't equip the teachers

A: didn't equip the teachers

F: then again didn't pre-implemented OBE. That means....

A: didn't?

F: they did pre-implement it that means they should have prepared some some of the factors

A: OK

F: ...they didn't just you know put in OBE without considering some of the negative elements that will come in so that we can avoid criticisms

A: OK, OK

F: But now I will say is so many people will view OBE negatively because of what it was pre-implemented. We see negativity toward OBE.

A: mm I'm trying to understand the word "pre-implemented"

F: before they could put in enough resources

A: Oh, OK

F: before they could er equip teachers to facilitate OBE.

A: Oh, OK. Uhm OK you sir, then you and you

I: OK uhm to me OBE has failed to distinguish between how learners construct knowledge in school and how how learners construct er knowledge from their environment. That means in other words what I am saying is, er we teachers we're having a problem with the informal knowledge that the learners construct from home, that impedes thatin school. We spend too much time trying to separate what they learn from home and what they should learn er at school. So.....

A: I'm gonna repeat what you said sir, you're saying that OBE has uhm not distinguished between how learners construct knowledge at home and how they construct knowledge at school because you're seeing the one impeding the other.

I: yes. And er the knowledge which is called everyday life conception that learners bring from home unfortunately poses a problem here at school. Because this this informal knowledge it is not given within any any framework. Is just the knowledge that they learn at home.

A: and you're finding that with your situation it's impeding what they're supposed to be learning at school.

I: and as I was.....because curriculum 2005, that is research work, but unfortunately, that hasn't been researched properly.. There are so many loopholes there. Because if I compare this research work to the research that was done by er ethnographers, the psychologist like er er ZZZ, and er Freudian and Piaget andThe This psychologists, they tend to agree because they talk about the same thing. They are trying to break the everyday knowledge with the knowledge that supposed to be constructed at school by learners. So that is there only problem.

A: mm OK.

B: Ja. My observation about OBE to me its most unfortunate that a learner is made to pass on the basis of OBE. To me OBE should have been there as a 30% only. All these CTAs and everything only accounts for 30%. and 70% is hard work – you sweat for it. Now.....make a learner me I'm for mathematics, MLMMS x2 will remain x2.....to 2 million years ago.....but I call a spade its better to call a spade rather than a big spoon. Whom are you fooling?

A: OK

B: so we're now trying to going around x2 calling it a knowledge, really ... so I'm going tothe learner to pass. At the end of the day they end up passing yes, but what knowledge are they taking with them?

A: So, so you're saying that the knowledge gained

B: the knowledge gained should be on concrete – no compromise on knowledge. It will be on concrete basis of the..... a learner passing. But if you want to marry it with er er er OBE, OBE should only account for 30% or less and 70% should be sweat and toil.

A: So you're actually saying there's a differences between content and OBE.

B: yes

A: OBE is not content.

B: OBE is ...a mathematical concept. X2 has been x2 for the past 2 million years. Now nowadays we want to call it two oranges

A: Ok, ja.

B:its better you call a spade a spade rather than a big spoon. 'cos you are not fooling anybody. So at the end of the day is, we are now moving in circles trying to get.....

A: We're side stepping the issue.

B: We're side stepping the issue. For what? To please who? At the end of the day it will be that child whocall himself a grade ten with this little knowledge. So what I'm saying is OBE is good, yes, in the experimental, stage, we should have never..... been in a hurry, the world won't end tomorrow, we should have taken a good two` years, or taken OBE only as a 30% and then 70% should be the old good mathematics.

A: OK point taken sir.

H: Er I will, I will, I will say it in terms Of NS, what I experienced last year in the CTAs. Firstly they were incomplete, there was incomplete information they and uhm the memorandum was also incomplete. In what I personally think, what I feel, is that the standard of NS CTA last year was too high for the grade nine learners. And uhm one other thing, assessment criteria was so er difficult to use it was so complicated and er it was confusing as well. And the other thing, was uhm, I said something about assessment criteria, and we didn't know about some information's 'cos they we had those cluster meeting very late.

[end of tape]

A: OK you were saying ma'am

H: I think we should have uhm cluster meeting in time. Like few months before we can get CTAs, 'cos last year we we taught learners about different things of which they were not even there in CTAs we wasted our time. For example we did sexual reproduction for the whole term in biology and they didn't even give us anything about biology concerning sexual reproduction. Li...they were telling us about smoking, we should er teach learners about smoking and all that and we didn't do that so we had short time to cover the whole uhm syllabus that they wanted us to do in grade nines.

E: Yes, I personally found it lacking structure. As a result confusion was then a problem among the schools. You would find that while attending these workshops you would find that all these schools were confused not knowing what to do and how. Er I personally feel that if perhaps we had something in place so specific. You know in the past, I'm trying to compare. In the past, we used to have something like a syllabus, though today I understand very well we're not working towards covering the syllabus but towards the outcomes. But, if perhaps we had something as a simple, straightforward guideline, that would say all the schools should cover this and that and that and that. (banging fingers n the table). Something so specific and not something, er because what they give is written..... because it's what you realise. They give something broad, which still then gives you as an individual school the task to break it down. Now as I break it down as er er school A. You'll find that I'll just start now taking my own route and then school C will start then taking er its own route. Do you understand? Eventually or the eventuality of it would be therefore confusion. So really there's no structure. If they could just work on the struc, improving the structure, coming up with something very specific, something saying that this is what you should give. Let me just quote one er subject, say HSS as I'm in HSS. Say this term cover this, giving straight specific topics

A: Topics, you're talking about content sir.

E: content

A: because you you have your outcomes

E: yes

A: so now you're looking at content.

E: the content, and then by giving me by giving schools, you know something specific, which in a way reduce grossly so er confusion. Because now you end up ha in my school I'm doing it this way and then in our school we're doing it that way and in our school – you see now – you you you ask yourself where are we going to? Where are we standing? Where are we going to? Because it's like we go we come You go there you come still confu – you have gone to there confused, you still come back confused. Now you are just gonna confuse the poor learners - because of the lack of structure.

A: Thank you sir.

F: I need to add on that to emphasise what er sir,,..... OBE er lack consistency – has no direction at all. I wrote it some here. Even the concepts used in OBE, not all

the facilitators are familiar with. So there might be some problems there. Again like I said with the pre-implementation, ok, resources are not enough to facilitate OBE. Like now we have to put in all what they did er in the file. Some of this learners its either they choose whether to submit or not. If the school can't er won't be able to to buy than that's another problem. Er there is ever changing information in OBE. Today you get this information; the other day it's another information. Especially in terms of circulars. Today they will tell you circular number 73, while you are still sticking on circular no. 63 or 73, there comes another 100. Ever changing information.

OK. And again, er like in our field, EMS, er EMS cover, must cover Accounting, Economics, Business, all commercial subjects. And of cause because it has been integrated into one now EMS learning area. So and I've got only 40 minutes. There is no way that I will cover all those four in one 40 minutes – in one period – no. So there that means it doesn't give a room for all the former sub – all those subjects to be covered in OBE. And they do much more emphasises in what the author thinks – not what must be. Like now we just started with Accounting in grade ten. That means we need to cover up what? Grade eight, grade nine, and grade ten work in one year. How are we going to do that? And of cause, according to

A: So you mentioned two points sir. The first one you said is because in the commercial subjects for grade nine you have to cover EMS and I mean you have to cover Accounting and Business Economics and Economics, so the 40 minutes is not enough time.

F: Is not enough

A: And the second point that you mentioned is that the going from grade nine to grade ten where they specialise in Accounting.....

F: with the individual subjects, now we are stuck with covering all what we need to do from grade eight to grade ten in one year.

A: OK

F: And of which the the latest er circular that we got its all the grade nines now up to so far it was said they were going to write the same senior matric exam in their grade twelve. Therefore how are they going to cope with the grade twelve standard? Whereas now they are struggling with grade nine. Now I'm busy with the grade nine work not grade ten. Its now June, when we open now we start with grade ten. And of which how far are we going to do that. Then again, er with the OBE we do have this things called rubrics and in anyway when you go from school to school it would, it depends on individual teachers which rubric to choose to assess that individual form of assessment. That means you may find that I'm assessing presentation I'm using rubric number whatever from the book of which it does not exactly sorting out or taking out the objectives that is needed for that presentation.

A: So it doesn't assess what you want it must assess.

F: No it may assess according to that individual teacher, but there is no consistency amongst the teachers. How will we - How will I know that I'm the best when it comes to presentation? I may look at the skill – presentation skill. I may look

at the content, only to find that the content – the learner did at home. His brother did it for the learner. The other teacher that means we differ in assessment.

A: There's no consistency. No consistency.

F: And again, integration. The other one, i.e. integration of the ordinary sub – i.e. the normal subjects that we know into OBE. Sometimes they don't fit because they they they they put the simple things unlike the real content. It's like what the other teacher just said.

A: mmm So they just integrate for the sake of integration

F: for the sake of just putting the name

A: OK

B: The other thing I've noticed that is er every time you go for OBE there is something new. CTAs, CSS, CASS [laughter] Everyday there is the tongue twisters. To understand all the terms it needs a full full four year degree. ...to understand the CTA and what what. So OBE has its...got its advantages but in my humble view it takes us one step forward and two steps backwards – be sure to be going no where. So what I emphasise and the the thing of group work – it makes the classroom into paradise now. Everybody is free to talk and it breeds chaos. But one thing we should know is that to school we don't just come to learn $x + y$. We also come to learn how to live in society. So if we are promoting chaos in the classroom, believe you me there will be chaos on the streets. Because that is what OBE is teaching us that there should be chaotic in order for freedom to prevail. But when you talk of human rights we should also have in mind human wrongs, Where do you draw the line which is a human right and which is a human wrong? Who is er its hair splitting. So this thing can be progressive or disastrous depends on which side of the fence you fall and why.

A: OK

H: Uhm, still on CTA issue the other thing that I've realised was is that like uhm what they had given learners in section A they repeated the same things – or by the way is in terms of NS – they repeated the same thing in section B. Which for me I think is they are spoon feeding learners and that one is is old method of you know

A: education?

H: education.

F: and again

D: OK with us er technology I was so disappointed with the CTAs. Number one: Er we always teach them all the technological processes that when solving any problem they must follow those steps. Now with the CTAs there was more comprehensions. They had to answer questions from there. There was no input from the learners. It was just simple English.

A: Like a comprehension passage?

D: Comprehension, yes and then you answer the questions. That was it! So it didn't.....

A: So you were disappointed at the...?

D: yes I was. "Cos we we did processing – you can do anything on processing – system and control and and structures. On structures there was about two questions, How do you make this structure rigid? That was the only question that I saw, the rest was comprehension. Again, on the certificate, I was also disappointed. Because we I though the government was going to hand out proper certificates only to find that it was we had to do those sort of reports.

H: Ellerines....

D: It it wasn't a certificate I mean – they they gave us the job back we had to fill in so and so. I mean we filled the forms that uhm the forms that uhm

A: the marks

F: say section A, section B you get that. They brought them back so that we must fill again.

A: mmm so they they they brought the admin work back to you

D: Back to us

A: whereas your understanding was they were going to produce certificates

D. Certificates, yes. And another thing sometimes at cluster meetings, I think they are a waste of time. The last, the only thing that I benefit from its the workshops, not the cluster meetings. "Cos some are reluctant to talk, they think maybe if they are giving more information, some are not it's it's like they feel like maybe Mr. What Mr. C said – that he didn't benefit, they benefited. Some of the teachers think that if I'll say give more information some are just sucking they are not contributing anything. So our previous cluster meetings they just we just discussed whatever is on paper – I mean we can read. The could have just faxed the paper to us. We could have just gone through the paper and we know what we must do. And another thing uhm or I was I wanted to talk about what Mr. C said, about the corruption or whatever in the class. I think we are facilitators in the classrooms, we we must not let uhm the learners to get out of hand. If say I know say group discussions sometimes get out of hand but we are there as facilitators just to guide to tell them this is the right way to go. If they are going out of hand then you can say uhm.....

A: So you must contain that?

D: yes. That is why we are in the classroom.

G: Ja, I want to talk more about NS and HSS. Like we find that there is one subject which falls under HSS and NS is the subject called geography is called geography. What we find that in NS there is a part of geography, and then in HSS there is geography. And then you find that we on the part of HSS is more of geography than History. And then in History part is still more of theory than practical. Why because they are still talking about Jan van Riebeeck and whatever and whatever – all those things. I think the government should have provided us with cassettes like a cassette of June 16, a cassette of Hector Peterson, Steve Biko and all those things. But now we're just preaching the same gospel that there was another guy, er students were angry and were marching against Afrikaans, then the police shoot, is still theory than those things. Unlike maybe the government provide us with cassettes then we show them on a big screen. Maybe learners can learn with passion. P a s s I o n .

A: So they they you're saying some visual lessons

G: some visual lessons

A: on cassettes

G: ja

A: on on videocassettes.

G: on a videocassette, yes.

A: OK I'll take ms. Ma'am

H: Uhm one other thing about er CTAs is that before we can have them last year we went to uhm I don't know what they call it. I wasn't actually cluster meeting but we met people. I think it's a workshop ja we met people from department those who were trained. Believe me they couldn't answer some of the questions. They were not trained properly and we didn't gain anything from them at all - and one other thing is that like uhm last year I saw maths paper MLMMS – Believe me some of the questions they were supposed to go to like primary schools the the level wasn't for grade nine learners because that's what some teachers were start to to to to find difficulties in grade tens. 'Cos they used to simple things. For especially in maths they they had to solve things that they could be er done by learners in primary school.

A: So for some learning areas, like you mentioned NS, you found the standard a bit high. Other learning areas you found the standard a too low.

H: exactly and I think they should train people, they should like for NS, they should take people who know science who have that basic for maths they they must take people who know maths, for Accounting people who know that subject. I I still think they took people who doesn't know anything about the subject at all, the content.

A: So your trainer didn't help you.

H: didn't.

C: Ja firstly I would like us to clearly distinguish between the flaws of OBE as part of education and also the flaws and mis education of what the teachers have at this point in time. Uhm.....

A: Just say that clearly again, the flaws of the education system called OBE and the flaws of

C: and er also teachers who are not much well equipped as far as presentation or dishing out

A: Ok so the implementation is separate from the actual OBE system

C: OBE – yes because most of the problems er articulated at this point in time are more not OBE-based as a curriculum or a form of education – but on the people who are supposed to facilitate that. And then what I can indicate firstly is that their facilitators from the GDE – those people who are supposed to empower teachers as far as OBE is concerned didn't know OBE themselves. They were not clear about what OBE is all about. So from that point in time the teachers also took what they got from the facilitators, they get more confused and then at the end of the day learners also didn't gain. As I've previously indicated personally I feel OBE is the best. If you take from that light, uhm the only administrative task I believe was a flaw last year or with last year firstly, the school didn't cater for teachers to make OBE a success. Firstly the 40 the 40 minute periods whereby we didn't get double periods in succession, that hampered or impeded OBE. And then secondly, the facilitators indicated, and also time constraints we had. We didn't get much help from the GDE as far as time is concerned. So those people didn't give us more information or resources on time so that by the end you would be in a position to dish out this er portfolios to them well well equipped. So another thing I can indicate is that the concentration of OBE now is more of OBE. OBE is too based on the paper work and again is not spontaneous. I think I have very few flaws or negatives as far as OBE is concerned. Firstly they concentrate more on terminology than the actual delivery. It is not a spontaneous education learners are supposed to get in class. When we speak of the specific outcomes, SOs 1 to 7, you speak of assessment criteria's, at the end of the day a teacher ended up not concentrating on the delivery or ensuring that learners understand the lesson but on which specific outcome now am I covering. So at the end of the day even the officials there, when they come, they ask about which specific outcome is this question. So you end up not giving the learners what they are supposed to get. You concentrate now on the SOs. So at the end of the day, that doesn't help. And then on the same score again, OBE, not the teachers or facilitators, or the officials, individuality. OBE doesn't cater for individual performance and it doesn't cater for the learners who are genius in the classroom situation. To an extent that they end up as drawbacks not actually pulling because people we are not the same intellectually – our IQ's – there are learners in the classroom situation who have 85% IQ who are gifted. So when they are in the OBE scenario, they end upobviously they are supposed to be called that. You can't say and a gifted learner is supposed to be aside or gifted learners are supposed to do their own projects or assignments aside while there are all those others. So they have, he has to wait if he's gifted and do the work according to the pace of other learners. So you end up not developing that

learner according to his potential as somebody who is gifted. That's another pitfall of uhm of OBE. No I think everything is ...

A: you're covered.

F: OK. Like I said, I once had an er cluster meeting. So I encountered that there is a communication breakdown

A: Communication breakdown

F: Communication breakdown from the higher level to the er bottom level because the facilitator – they guy from the department didn't have much information to tell the teachers and didn't have enough information that that he accumulated from the top.

A: ok, so

F: That means he didn't know anything much about OBE – and he didn't have enough information to reason on the questions from the teachers. And of cause because of communication breakdown, it becomes shift of responsibility. There comes those facilitators I must tell you they become an embarrassment in the eyes of the teachers. Because they are unable to answer simple questions. I remember last time we attended one in another school down there. So the guy told us that we are waiting for another guy from Van der Bjl Park he's on the way. When the guys asked I remember one of our teachers asked, “ what about those minor reports that we got, those inferior reports? The guy said it was just a trial and error. Why didn't you tell us that guys we work like this but don't tell the learners because the learners they expected much more they had an ambition.

B: OK er the other day I attended a cluster meeting er regarding MLMMS, and the what I noticed is this tongue twisters there was no substance really. The facilitator told us that no syllabus should be used only SOs.

[Laughter]

The SO or whatever you call it, you are still following a syllabus. And then he said, “begin at the end” How can you begin at the end?

[Laughter]

B: You see the the guy is smart but if you analyse what he's saying its rubbish. Anyway sorry to to use that terminology. So those those things were quite disturbing

A: So you didn't like that they keep

B: ...saying no syllabus, only SOs. SO itself is a some sort of syllabus.

A: in your opinion

B: in my opinion. It is still a syllabus. You can't run away and you can twist it its still the same thing. Begin at the end - what does it mean? So we asked him for clarification he said no begin with what you want the outcome to be. How can you begin to say hello, how are you then you go?

[Laughter]

So and er the other thing that was discussed was er which was highly disturbing to me which is “do not make the learners write an exam”. They us only the CTAs and continuous assessment – “no exam please”. And then they went on to say “no learners should fail at all costs” Er even in heaven not all of us are going to heaven. There is no such. God will like you to go to heaven but not everyone make it That’s how life goes.

A: So you’re saying not all of us will go to heaven but everyone will get a pass in grade nine.

B: That’s what it is. Which is, which is. And now er if a learner fails, it will only be acceptable to the department when you show a letter sent home that the child was doing nothing in class and signed countersigned by the parent that oh yes my son didn’t do any work which is next to impossible in my view.

A: Why is that sir?

B: and er

A: Why is that sir? Why do you feel that’s impossible?

B: I don’t think I can write for my son and say “yes he didn’t work”

A: OK so you’re what you’re saying that’s impossible because the parent is not going to sign

B: will will not co-operate.

A: yes

B: and then at the end of the day we will be made – now the thing is Ok they all pass, fine, but what have we achieved? In grade ten we now start serious work, the child is just grade two material but you have told he should pass. So whom are we fooling really?

Maybe, I don’t know, I don’t know we are fooling some people who don’t know anything. So at the end of the day we will laugh at ourselves because what we are producing is a mirror image of ourselves. It’s not something to get a salary. I I come to work not to steal a salary. Uhm er I want

A: to earn it

B: to be proud, yes, that I produced that one – that person will forever live in in er my you know – I will remember that person, when I see that person on TV, yes, I did it.

A: you, you.....?

B: you work and got OBE money and chow and you.....?

A: Ok Can I take a comment from each of you now – we’ll start with

F: OK another negative, I think, with the government and our management, there is no communication during the year. But at the end of the year they expect us to do everything. They'll tell us er you should have completed this and this and this. Meanwhile during the year there was no uhm check-up like er what – er how far are you know? How are you doing? What are the problems? No.....

A: You're talking about the school management as well as the district.

D: as, yes, the district.

A: OK

D: They'll just tell you er cluster cluster – we don't do anything we just discuss what's on paper

A: mmm

D: but then at the end of the year, they expect us, they tell us, er you should have covered this and this and this.

A: mmm

D: But they don't check that how far are you? What do what are problems maybe you you are encountering problems during the year. Even if you tell, the management...

A: like at the end of the first term or the second term

D: the end of the year

A: ja but, I mean during the course of the year

D: during, yes. No. There's no communication. But at the end of the year we are expected to

A: everything must be done

D: exactly

A: mmm

H: uhm the negative side of uhm OBE ah I've experienced something last year in in connection with portfolio work. Like I had about four classes of grade nines which is $40 * 4$ – it takes me to 160 learners. I did all those portfolios – but only two were marked. And I'll just say were marked because they they came back from department but er there was no comment.

A: mmm

H: That was my problem. Is for me it was just a waste. “Cos there was no comment and I even asked my H.O.D. then what’s going on ‘cos I need to improve from what I didn’t do right.

A: so you got no feedback

H: nothing

H: and one other thing I I knew I’m very much aware that OBE needs uhm research – from libraries, from er media centre, if you got media centre here at schools – but now I’m I’m I’m I’m talking on behalf of people who in rural areas. Like now in NS we got this project where learners have to do research er in in in different centres? To find their their history, their life and all that. But I’m just saying it on on behalf of people who doesn’t have libraries at home. No where to go –computers, nothing. Internet- they got nothing.

A: mmm. So you’re wondering how are they getting their.....

H: exactly, how are they coping?

A: mmm

H: “cos at least it’s it’s much better here in town, they can go to different libraries.

G: ja er I’ve got a few issues here. The first one is I want to blame the cluster leaders

A: you want to blame?

G: ja, they are not well versed in as far as OBE is concerned. because ja we can go there and ask how to do this? Say I I don’t know I will ask someone the district so it demoralises the teachers. Another thing again is in this OBE it was once said no one can fail and then this discourages we as teachers. Like I attended a cluster meeting last last Wednesday, this one I want you to believe it or not, but is what is true. They say this English and Afrikaans is called LLC, right. Now they say learners are not good in Afrikaans, so what we must do is if a learner get 80% in English, and get zero in Afrikaans, divide that 80 of English by 2 it comes to 40. Which means he got 40 in Afrikaans and 40 in English. So if a learner maybe gets [laugh?] zero in Afrikaans, and maybe er 70 in English, you divide this 70 by 2 it comes to 35 and that is a pass mark. 70 – er 35 for Afrikaans and 35 for English. So I mean this discourages learners. A learner can only focus on English and leave Afrikaans. “ cos knowing that no I got zero in Afrikaans, if I get 72 in English,

A: So it doesn’t really encourage him to learn both languages

G: ja

A: because he knows if he just learns one he can still pass.

G: you see now.

A: OK.

I: The problem that I see is is the structure of OBE

A: the structure?

I: the structure. Er er until we restructure OBE and the people who came up with this er this concept, are in the position to explain exactly what is OBE, where is knowledge needs to be constructed, when we talk about acquisition of knowledge we put learners in the classroom, and er we give them the task to do then what happens is 98% of that is going to be done by er the learners. What happens is learners sit in the classroom and they start to exchange their knowledge that they they they already have. Knowledge that's got nothing to do with er with the curricular that has to be taught at school level. So until OBE is in a position where it can define when and how knowledge should be constructed, then to me it's bound to fail because er the other thing is I think this people who er er er er study how the the cognitive of the child works, see that that is the problem. Because now according to OBE its er its goal centred. OK how learners get to that objective they don't care. Learners should come to this objective. And that is the problem there. You cannot teach a child how to drive a car er you would rather teach a child how the car functions.

A: So that content, that structure, needs to be there. Is that what you're saying?

I: the structure the structure is the problem.

A: ok – first, Ms – oh sorry, OK.

E: Er again, back to the government, lack of organisation by government, itself. One. Immediate Substitution whilst on course, on workshops – you find that er at once stage it happened – I was still teaching Life Orientation. Then er er the lady that used to sort of er facilitate er was not there and it happened in succession and when you find that now there is immediate substitution. Now you take an HSS person, you make that person my facilitator, Life Orientation, how do you expect that person to have the relevant and the correct information? Now as a result, you find that more often as it was mentioned..... they take you find that they fail to answer the questions posed by whoever is there or participating. Now in a way that brings about opposition. We now find ourselves opposing them more often and we find ourselves as really discouraged.

A: them being the district?

E: that's it. They are being discouraged. So that's why if you look at the workshops if you attend them regularly so, they – more often they have a poor attendance – because we are discouraged by what they give us, er themselves having so many excuses, one: ha I I I forgot something and is not with me we actually had to bring this and all that and they don't have yet they have to use it. Again being late in succession, you know this er er this time they are late that time and all that – needless to mention that we run the workshops when after school. So now when they

are like disorganised this way, we find ourselves you know being you find it being a waste of time going there. They are really struggling with their attendance. That's because of the - that's the image they project. And then more often you find them saying they are understaffed that's why that's er that's why they just give a square peg in a round hole. Giving an HSS person when I'm an LO person. Right and then and er well like I said, that's the lack er lacking of what of er the material that has to go out to be given to whoever has attended. And again that er discouraged us in a way you understand?.

A: So you're saying the the facilitators are not the right – they're not projecting the proper image – they're coming late, they're not for the right learning areas, they don't have enough organisation and learning materials, so

E: how do – why do I therefore have to go there?

A: why must you go...Ok thank you.

J: OK. I think this OBE most of the books I use in OBE lacks not er content. Because in most cases you find yourself maybe given a task maybe they suggested a task that you should do with learners – yet you cannot find somewhere where where you the the so-called model answer. You have to find out yourself, maybe we in most cases I find myself using those old books for er maybe I refer to old books in order for me to get model answers for the learners. Er where there are no if if may – suppose you you are teaching EMS and there's a question about er Business Economics, then you you suppose I have to go back and look for a Business Economics er book, you find that you only have maybe Accoun – suppose you have Accounting and Economics, so it means you cannot find the other information about er that part of er Business Economics because they they books we are using they lack content.

A: So its its means you still have to use the older books to get the answers.

J: Yes. And another thing we can find that like in our school we we teach the same learning areas – maybe three teachers teach the same learning area and you find maybe you find yourself making this one model answer and the other one making another one. So maybe I I think we – this OBE books were supposed to have model answers themselves so that we can be able to refer back to the same books that we are using.

A: mmm thank you.

D: I raise ... oh... there is no support from the management. Maybe I said this but uhm for example, with the portfolios, or the the meetings, I always come to tell Mr. X, or er

A: to the principal or the H.O.D.

D: ja. I always tell them what how much disappointment I encountered like uhm for my portfolios, they were not they were not moderated and I put so much effort. I took them back to my principal to take them back so that they can be moderated so that I can have feedback. He did that I assume, still nothing happened and they were

lost along the way. So what is that? And another thing at the end of the day you tell them uhm the meeting was not a success, you tell them all about the negative things you encountered in the cluster or in the workshop or wherever – nothing is done – but..

A: So you'd like something to be done about it

D: yes, and especially by the management. Say, for example, if they say there is a cluster right you must give feedback right this is what happened me ...? Then him or he must say phone back and say my teachers thinks this is what he didn't like or he feels this should be done or I mean there must be improvement we cannot go to clusters where you are not going to gain anything. Why go there anyway?

A: and by the time you bring it up to management you'd like management to do something about it.

D: exactly, to do something about it, not to say they'll say ay no that's the government what else can we do D? You know that's the way they are.

A: So you don't want them to have this helpless ...

D: exactly

A: attitude.

D: yes, they must be they must

A: manage?

D: ja they must go back to district or whatever and say my teachers feel these clusters are a waste of time.

A: You want representation from the management

D: exactly. They must be able to say er even even if they government comes back and say you want this to be done. They must be able to say good my I phoned you about this and this. This was rectified then they can do it. Unlike accepting everything the district want this, the due date is tomorrow, or please people do this. They should be able to say no. Er my my my staff are complaint to me about this and this and this. This was not done so therefore you should wait. Or whatever.

A: Your comment brings us to the third point. Uhm er about we spoke about what was positive and we spoke about what was negative and the third point of this whole interview is What role can management play in in in making the circumstance of implementing a new curriculum like you implemented OBE last year for the first time in grade nine. What role can your management of your school play to make your role better? And you've just er given us an introduction into that.

D: They should be our forefront they should be able to tell the government where to get of – not to say they must take everything. “Er You know Ms D, er I'm sorry but

this is what should be done they want this by tomorrow.” They should stand up to the government and tell them no we’re not giving you that information or we’re not given enough time or whatever. My my staff was complaining - for the whole year now you want this that is practically impossible.

A: point taken ma’am.

B: I think what management should do is let us ignore the department for a while and do real stuff in the class. And then just er sugar-coat it with the CTAs but at the end of the day is when the results are horrible, they won’t mention the CTAs, they’ll look at you and come down heavy on you. Let uscirculars and just push it under the door but we do real work in class and serious assessment as a management policy is the government is here blah blah blah ja we’ll do that but let us do the work – real hard work and then we’ll sugar coat it with the CTAs.

A: you want the management to focus on the real job of teaching

B: real job and forget about CTAs forget about simple stuff let us just do the break the nut and give them real work but when there is space we do the CTAs just to please the – at the end of the day we’ve produced learners who qualify and go anywhere in the world and fit in rather than producing er people who will end being tomato sellers.

A: tomato sellers, OK.

C: Still on the management point, and also for improvement, cos you indicated that what make er er this OBE or whatever er first let me put it this way. We can take OBE as more in the centre, er central note whereby this side do we have teachers and learners and the other side we have GDE and also facilitators I will use that word. So it it is just in between the two people who are more on the confused level or the two things which are on the confused level whereby you find it hard now to pass it and make it usable by all the stakeholders. So the.....

A: So your point about management sir

C: Management is supposed to take into cognisance the streams or the expertise as far as the subjects are concerned. They are supposed to ensure that the teachers are placed or cluster location is in such a way that teachers will be able to do their work properly. Like in the context whereby you are teaching all grade nines, you are expected to do 230 portfolios. In that case the management is supposed to locate or to foresee problems as far as attendance of those workshops are concerned and also affordability of making the portfolios er they supposed to foresee such things. And the another thing the resources to different teachers or to the departments they supposed to be timeously, teachers are supposed to get those things on time so that they can start working towards that even the goals or objectives they are expected to deliver at the end of the year. Whether they matter of immediately when we reopen after the ten days in September, we are expected to do miraculous things whereby the GDE is here and also the management is standing upon us. So that thing is very much difficult for us to do. The timetable is also supposed to be in such a way that it gives teachers more ample time to locate in other words to give these learners the task to do and also the

feedback. Whereby if it is 40 minute periods – the grade nines – those that are strictly on the OBE side are supposed to be given double periods ‘cos they know that they can’t[coughing]

F: OK. I’ll begin to differ with the idea that er we need to put much more emphasis on the management responsibility before we talk the responsibility of the department. I believe it is the labour policy that a manager at a school will be given an authority to carry out to the subordinate so that the school can run smoothly. That means, the manager, those managers that we see here in school A, is not because they want to do that. Is because of the authority that they are given. That means if they don’t comply with the authority given from the department, that means they are against the labour policy.

D: Can’t they question it?

F: OK. Then therefore, is better for us to talk, what is the responsibility of the government towards our managers? That means now it’s up to our managers now to lodge a complaintthat

A. OK continue.....

F: to lodge a complaint to the er man er to the department that you people you put us with frustration because you let us, you give us an authority, you give us a work to do that we need to instruct another person, now you bring circular number 44 that CTAs must be done within this period while other teachers they do have more than six classes, so how do you expect those people to do that.....

A: so you’re agreeing that managers must talk about the difficulties that educators are facing, you are saying that managers must talk.

F: the managers must talk. But in anyway, that is not because of them, we need not to blame them. Is because of the responsibility and the au given from the top level. Because of what, communication breakdown and other er irresponsibility’s of the department because they know that this must be done within this time. That means, the should have given the management a timetable a a a a timetable, a calendar that within this we gonna do one, two three.

A: So you’re say – your point sir is that it’s not the managers that are at fault as much as it is the department.....

F: is the department

A: Ok your point is taken sir – I’ll have to take the other people’s points as well. OK, yours sir.

I: yes I think er the management of the school must be the voice of the educators,

D: exactly

I: they must speak to these people at the department that er time is being wasted,

D: yes

I: we are not teaching in the classroom I'm telling you, we spend far too much time on? the OBE frustrates teachers. Uhm If I take for example, TD teacher of the school, is more frustrating than other teachers because now they come up with er with things what they say is incorporate OBE in technical drawing. Now they frustrate the teacher first, now the learners. We find that the learners cannot solve a simple thing, because now er due to this OBE thing we start talking of er instead of asking a learner just to find the true shape of of er of of something, we start talking of, we talk about steel frames – now that is frustrating learners because in the textbooks which we use they don't talk about these things now when they set the exam, the final exam, we cannot obtain er good matric result because we frustrate the learners. If they want to incorporate OBE they must do it from the start, they must change the textbook. They must say OK let us now talk about pipes, let us talk about pipes,

[end of tape – question raised about teacher's names being mentioned]

A: and you you you don't have to worry about if you've mentioned a teacher's name by mistake, uhm, its not problem. I'm not going to blackmail you or something. OK we were talking about management and I belief sir you were going to make a point of what do you think the managers must do in the situation that you described.

I: Ja what I'm saying is the management should encourage the department not to frustrate us in the classroom situation. What I'm saying is we should spend time teaching, rather than er spending times on paper work, I mean that doesn't worth it - at the end of the day, we're looking at the at the results – good results from learners.. for instance, in our school this year, we have to produce about ninety . . .

D: 85

I: 85 %. Now how are you going to do this?

A: 85 % pass rate? Are you talking about pass rate?

I: pass rate – otherwise our school is going to be under the spotlight. Now how are we going to produce this result if we spend time[unclear – coughing]

A: OK

I: ... we don't know what these papers are. Its just they are keeping us busy instead of allowing us to function in the classroom and to teach this learners.

Thank you. OK thank you.

E: I personally recommend that er the management should er stop changing teachers. Looking er at it from this er say subject allocation – OBE is something new, strange, I agree. And they send me just to attend a number of courses I come back

well equipped, I must come and report. Now comes the next year, you change me from LO you place me in HSS now which means, all of the information that I gathered has gone like down the drain, it becomes the whole of it – it's futile now So I must be kept as fixed as a a plant because I now know or have much information on that.

A: of a particular learning area?

E: that's it. Needless as I say, to mention that er it's new you understand? I now have learnt the information, next year I'm giving technology, the other year I'm giving er Life Orientation you know changing in a way it er impacts grossly

A: So management should try and keep you in a particular learning area

E: exactly

A: and not swop you around

E: exactly and give me enough chance to develop there and be an expert in that learning area rather than keep on changing. And again, if there are courses, there are some courses that come on the way, er I just quote you some, er like AIDS all kind of – you know one would sort of say the fall in this learning area. I would personally feel, that or I would personally suggest that it should be a teacher that er teaches that learning area do you understand 'cos its this teacher that you are trying to shape and ... to develop. Not just to its now that teacher, that teacher, that teacher – let the teaching who is specialising there be the teacher going for it. So I would recommend er you know I would actually motivate that teacher to take whatever relates to that learning area any way..

A: OK so don't just send anyone on a workshop

E: that's it.

H: Er I believe for for every learning area, there is there is budget, er which has to go to different H.O.D.'s for different learning areas. Uhm I'm saying this 'cos we we got lack of of OBE material for example, books which are very important 'cos normally, most of them has has different activities, that we can actually give learners to do. Er I believer er H.O.D.'s which are one of the

A: management

H: management should actually use that budget to get er materials that we need in OBE because without those materials somehow we cannot give learners different activities that needs er that's gonna help them to acquire different skills, in a particular topic.

A: Ok so management must make resources available

H: yes

D: Ok another thing, uhm, it's like when you want more resources, it's like you want to waste money. They'll say no you know we don't have enough budget, and just try using some of this or you know it's like they don't want you to they don't want to unleash you're your

A: potential

D: your full potential. If you want something they'll tell you no er just use that or find something you know you not working to your full capacity

A: you feel restricted

D: ja and I also feel that the management is failing us whatever the department say, it's ok, then they can shove it down our throats.

[Laughter]

A: so you feel like this because earlier you spoke on bottom-up – you feel it's quite top-down

D: yes it is because you don't have a say [the deputy] will come to you “D this is needed” [laughter] what else can you say? There is nothing that you can say. You must hand it in whether you like it or not – even if it means you must sleep at 4 am you must do it

A: so your point that management should say stop

D: yes, they should say er wait a minute,

A: my staff can't do that

D: exactly

A: you said this or there was no enough communication, now you want this - give us time or whatever! I mean they mustn't just take everything that comes from the department because they are the department.

A: OK

B: The other thing I've noticed, er which is er contributes to the results in general, there is I've noticed a very high teacher turnover –tomorrow is this one – it's like beingbefore you finish the job ? So that should be looked into.

A: that teacher's are leaving the system?

B teachers are coming and going – its its not good because the learners get used to you. And they they know – then tomorrow it's this one then tomorrow it's that one. At the end of the day they will get confused. And the other thing is as our managers they should stand up to the ...education? not just swallow everything that comes our way So then we were this school was evaluated, and given a rate of good they should

also propose to management that we as educators go and evaluate the department. So that we er

A: on par

B: ja on par. And we'll give them a grade out of 5.

D: On this on the same point, we were evaluated but we didn't get any feedback. You don't know whether you going or you coming.

A: From whom did you not get feedback?

D: From the management, I mean OK from the department – but now I assumed the management would say ok what have you found out then they'll give feedback to the management and the management could come back to us. No such thing was done it was just a trick? And I don't know I know my file was taken but I don't know why, or was it good was it bad or I don't I don't have anything

A: Did you get it back?

D: yes I got it back

A: ok but for you what does that make you feel when you don't get

D: feedback? What's the point of them visiting my classroom if they don't if they are not going to give me any feedback?

A: mmm

D: 'co next time I'll have a right to say no you not welcome ot my class.

A: So what should management do?

D: They should ask feedback. What is it that you're looking for so that they can come back to us to say "ok D er you had a visit, this is what they saw, maybe your voice was too – was not too loud alright. You must pace a little bit" – you know give us feedback all right. You must pace the maybe the class maybe your class management is not that good you must improve on that or something negative and positive we can . . .

A: So management should insist that you get the feedback and take the feedback to you so that you can improve

D: Another thing, why are they here to start with? Why did they come and visit us in our classes? What is it that they wanted to see? We don't know that.

A: So you're in the dark

F: yes

A: and you need management to give you information

F: I just know they came and visited my class whether it was a good lesson, or it was a bad lesson, or I on track or not I don't know.

A: Ok I'm gonna take your point sir and then yours and yours and yours.

G: ja I just wanna blame this evaluators. This people it seems as if they have not been in a school at all.

A: ok

G: they expect the unexpected. Like they came here they =expected our school to be like a mortuary

A: mortuary? You mean quiet.

G: ja to be dead quiet – something impossible –

A: ok now sir

G: ... I told them that this are learners

A: yes

G: they are growing up You can't expect them to be like people in a mortuary,

A: So you felt that their expectations was unrealistic?

G: ja ja they they say you are teachers learners must be quiet Maybe they are not referring to learners they are referring to dead corpse

A: [lauging] to dead corpse. Uhm sir what should the role of the management be in a situation like that?

G: our management?

A; yes.

G: No I think only to tell them that hey these are teachers and they are doing their best.

A: and what should management do to in in in terms of the curriculum – the OBE curriculum – to help you implement OBE better?

G: hey hey that one – I think the management like in some of the cases, where you find that some of the departments are allocated more budget than this one that the department of languages. You find that R35 000 – 00 whereas we buy nothing. If we buy a dictionary now it can last for the coming ten years.

[Laughter]

What we buy in the language is dictionaries.

A: ok so the management must take care that the budget gives everybody equal resources – all the learning areas.

G: ja.

A: ok, sir your comment.

C: ja ok, firstly I will say there should be healthy relationship between the teachers and also the management. In a way that there management of the people who are H.O.D.'s are supposed to praise if there is a positive input I have made they must come clear not only to wait for that day whereby mess up things then is only that I will know that I'm not that much good in that situation. So you feel encouraged as a teacher and then you feel free also to go to highlight some of the things which are very much necessary in the classroom situation. The second point – consultation – we don't have much of it we are just told. Let's say LLC as an example, or literature or literary set works, no poems, novels and so on, which are supposed to be learned in the classroom situation from grade eight to twelve. Truly speaking, no consultation. We don't have meetings which are fruitful and which would be help in ensuring that a learner from grade eight is gaining up to the level of maturity that is grade twelve. That's why we have so many gaps and so many differences from the grade eight learner the grade eleven and twelve because what is happening in grade eight doesn't lead the learner to the maturity stage of grade twelve.

A: So your point is that there should be a better relationship and there should be more consultation

C: consultation, yes. And then the departmental meetings also

A: And there should be more meetings – and - so you can communicate

C: yes to discuss the syllabus itself, does it lead a learner to learn poems in grade eight and of which is a must in grade twelve? You find that in grade twelve is only then that you teaching learners about figures of speech. The teacher who is teaching grade eight is independent of what is doing the the teacher in grade twelve doesn't even know what is happening in the grade. We find that we have all these mess-ups people with the wrong spelling and so on – then we will have to be far back and. ? In grade twelve and time constraint not very much good.

A: ok thank you sir.

F: Er..

A: the role of management

F: the role of management. OK. Like I I just heard some of er my people here talking, er management must do one, two, three, and the facilitators the don't have to

blame. In anyway, I believe the fundamental problem behind all this is because the management of each and every school including school A, must have a plan of action from the beginning of they year until the end. In relation to either OBE or normal subjects. Now if you ask me, what I'm gonna do two months to come, I wont tell you. Some of the teachers in anyway, they wont tell you. Even the management, they don't know, because they expect the unexpected. Because they are used to this thing of expecting the circulars. Now as we are busy talking, we may find there is another circular coming and of cause, because they are used to that, they expect the teachers to expect the unexpected.

A: So in other words what you're saying is there should be a plan and you must stick –

F: a plan

A: are you saying they must stick

F: and they must stick to a plan and it must that plan must leave a room that will allow the unexpected that we are used to to be fitted in.

A: but the plan

F: the plan

A: must be there

F: must be there. And again, on the same note of the plan, er because we need to assess that plan whether we are following the right direction or not. Of cause, the management again must do. According to the learning area EMS, in anyway, as a team, of the level of management they must sit together and do what and come up now with a method of assessment –value – just to value the level of the implementation of OBE. Now you may find that in terms of LO they are much more of a high standard, and in terms of EMS, they are low. The management must come up with a level that will standardise the whole thing.

A: mmm ok

F: So that means a general plan of action for OBE. Where will it come from? Will come from individual heads of learning area – of cause we do have. And on the same note that method of assessment must accommodate teachers that means must be able to motivate and encourage teachers to uplift themselves. Like now with Mr. Er er His complaining individually about those people and what they expect from his class. You may find that another teacher didn't have such a problem but if the management had tried to level that thing there would be no imbalances as such.

A: ok. So the management must bring about a particular standard of work

F: standard of – a plan first

A: a plan, yes.

F: a plan and the method that will value that plan – whether it's on the right track or not.

A: what you're saying sir is and I'm hearing you is that there is no plan at the moment.

F: there is no plan at all. Whatever we are following I may be - when we open I may be told that within two weeks we gonna do one, two, three; therefore give your learners assign – er assignment. And that assignment may be required to be submitted and be marked within a week.

A: but that's two weeks before you do it, it's not a year plan.

F: is not a year plan.

A: ok ma'am.

D: Again on the role of management I feel they should motivate us right. I feel bad if somebody from outside will come and say Ms D you're doing a good job whereas I have people whom I'm working with who I think are my managers and are not telling me you are doing a good job. That is for me it's ...

A: So you're not getting any kind of praise that was mentioned the word praise.

D: No. No.

A: And and you would need that?

D: Yes. And again if you go maybe to your manager and say er I need a letter say I mean can you recommend me you find something like ?

C: Let er let me let me this one ? In the managers – who are in charge of the departments, they must also be very much well equipped.

A: well equipped

C In a particular department therein because if as a person, academically or informally, by just coming across other people you don't have much of a clue about the department you are leading, that department is doomed. That department won't be able to give or won't be able to lead the learners in a more er optimistic way. Because the head doesn't have a light. Actually you don't know where you are taking this department to. You don't have more light as Mr. C make mention of a plan. And then in that case truly speaking er

A: you're saying the head has no light.

C: yes, yes.

A: that is so it's er

C: you are supposed to be knowledgeable; they are supposed to have more academically inclined, on the people they are going to lead.

A: and what are your feelings or experiences – are you experiencing that that is the case or that that is not the case?

C: I think some somehow that also hamper our development as far as the departments are concerned.

A: So you're saying in your opinion, your experience of management is that they are not more knowledgeable than you and this is hampering

C: Well that's it. Because when I come you will think that I as a subordinate I'm trying to show you I'm trying to make myself better and you won't allow that to happen because it will be more like now you are competing at that particular level and of which it won't be healthy for that department.

A: ok ma'am.

D: Er I want to go back again to my point of saying or managers feel helpless. If they might have for example, a plan, as soon as the government comes here, oh, it all, they throw it out of the table and they do whatever the government say. Even if there is a plan they can't say ok this is what we have or whatever, they'll change it to what the government wants.

A: So you find managers very accepting of everything that is given in your opinion.

D: exactly

A: yes sir.

F: OK. Er I will start with the latter speaker. Ok again I will begin to differ. Er because of what the idea that the manager, the managers, are especially in our school, maybe, are not effective enough to run our school.

A: Are you saying they are or they're not?

F: or the idea that

A: the idea that they may not be

F: the idea that they are not effective, it will differ with that. The managers, their problem, that I personally identified is that they do but they lack co-operation to each other. That means they lack co-ordination to each other

A: among the managers themselves

F: among the managers themselves. That means they've got different objectives amongst themselves – they don't have one goal that they serve for the school. That

will build up the spirit for the school. That is why they beganwhat we call inferiority among themselves because it's like who are you to tell me amongst all other H.O.D.'s. Not because they lack information no is because they lack the spirit of working together.

A: So the managers don't work together

F: The managers what I realise that they've got different objectives towards the school. And again this pose another question the idea that where comes this mentality – the mentality is because of the governments policy. That now the teacher won't be able – like now we have acting principal and whatever, those people they are still fighting for some you know posts. You know [laughing]

They do have objectives, but they are for their subconscious mind they do have their individual ones that they are objected to. Whoever comes up with the idea, the idea may be crushed or may be taken half way because er you know its like you are over ... ? and I want to achieve one, two, three. Now why why you coming . .? on to that

A: ok so so what are you saying – you're saying management must start to rather have one goal

F: build up the spirit of co-ordination, co-operation and look at the objective of the school, not only to benefit themselves.

A: ok thank you sir.

F: so that there won't be er

A: can you make your point sir quickly.

I: yes er er I'll just go to the crux of the matter. The problem here is OBE – but the crux of the matter is is OBE does not work. What needed to be doing – what we need to do with OBE is ...

D: the duty of management

I: ja we need to – management of the school or shall I say the people who came of management, ok they need to restructure OBE, they need to study or compare the research with other studies, otherwise they need to replace it with some other thing that's effective because in as far as I'm concerned

A: the school management

I: er I'm talking about government management, school, everyone who is taking part in that. Because in as far as I'm concerned to me OBE is just a waste of time. It is not working. It is stealing our time ? with the papers in the classroom – it's not working for us. So it needs to be replaced with something that is effective – something that will take care of the interest of the learners. What are we here for?

A: ok, thank you sir.

C: ? I won't take time, I won't be long. What I would like to highlight is er the specification was more about - unequivocally so - that managers or people who lead are supposed to have a vision.

A: speak louder please sir, a vision.

C: yes. They are supposed to have a mission

A: yes.

C: In a sense that the only way you can be able to lead is if you are well equipped with the particular subject you are heading. That one we can't compromise and sacrifice. As a head, you are supposed to have a vision, you are heading people there and also a mission on how to accomplish that vision. So then you can sit down and er try this co-operation form of a system. It's not a matter of trying to be together as H.O.D.'s or as managers and then try to formulate something that is going to inculcate all the different departments. But what is important is to ensure that we put somebody here we trust even though co-operation is really a must is necessary, but also that one.

A: trust is also important. Sir you're quiet now with this, with this question.

B: yes er what what what I would say er management as somebody looking from er afar, is er there is an attitude of my way or no way which we should er crush for professional purposes only. Er let us not be subjective toward anything, let us not be objective. It's objectivity which will get us out of any mess. So er my contribution would be that if er management think that we can't see even though they are behind close doors, that there are lot of cracks within the cake, that that is we need to ... ?

A: So what you're saying is management is not aware that you're actually looking at them and you're observing them.

B: The think that once they lock themselves in we can't see the cracks in the cake.

A: But you're seeing that. So what are some of those cracks?

B: er some of the cracks is is er personal observation. My observation is very different from his and each one has got their own personal interpretations.

A: sure

B: ja. So at the end of the day is this is er a collection of highly intelligent people who can see er before they are seen - who can read between the lines - so everything might look like its all swept under the carpet but to an intelligent mind that's useless.

A: ok so what should management do then to improve what you are doing in your classroom?

B: To improve the class er how we are doing in the classroom, is first they should should sort out their mess first then we start with a clean ...

A: what is their mess?

B: Their mess is the crack in the cake. [Laughter]

A: Ok so you're saying they've got lots of problems,

B: yes

A: they must clean up their act.

B: yes, because

A: and as soon as they do that

B: er in our language we got a saying that fish starts rotting from the head then it goes down. It never rots from the

A: tail

B: tail, no. So as long as there is something er which they do wrongly or rightly there's soon to be cracks in the in the head that must be sorted out then we can sort out everything. An another thing is ...

A: ok

B: er when it comes to er discipline or indiscipline of the ... we should have a policy – or collective – let us act as one. There there is this this no its not mine – it should be our problem. When she has a problem, its not her problem it is our problem. How do we solve our problems collectively?

A: ok

B: so we should

A: there should be more working together.

B: more working together, more humility and say oh, me I'm excellent, your problems are not my problems. That's wrong – your problems are our problems. There there because at the end of the day, what would be affected is the results. We are all happy when the results are good because they are our results – it's not your results.

A: ok ma'am do you have a comment to make about the role management can play – you said you had a lot of problems with the implementation of the the learning area last year uhm and the the one role you said as management can provide more budget, more money, so that's it.

D: can I also say...

H: And the other thing will be the what's this evaluations 'cos er I've realised they only do this er this term that they use appraisals – they they they only evaluate er teachers the the that's one thing that I find so unfair and what about er management 'cos some of them are in classes like us? Don't you think they also need to be evaluated like like other teachers?

A: ok

H: that's that's what I . . .

A: so you feel managers should be evaluated and educated.

H: exactly

A: I'm gonna you're your point and then yours and then yours.

D: ok I feel management and staff – us – level one teachers – should work together especially when there is a problem you will find that they will single you out to say er you know its not me they wash their hands but then if you do a good job, they take credit it's like they are in charge – they gave you all the information whereas you are working on your own. My point is we should work together. If there is a problem you are singled out – you are on your own – and then if you're doing something good they take credit for that whereas they are not.

A: and this is not fair

D: it's not fair

A: and your point is there should be working together so that problems and er successes are enjoyed

D: together

A: and worked on as a team.

D: yes.

G: ja I just wanted to add on the issue of this DAS and evaluation. Er er up with I'm up with arms against that. I hate that DAS. Why because DAS is done to PL1 teacher. When I go to the PL2 teacher, that brings

A: DAS is supposed to be done for everybody

G: for everybody

A: but you're saying that that's how its done.

D: no

G: usually is as only PL1 teachers

D: ja.

G: are under the the the spotlight. But it's like to be er H.O.D is an advantage of singing a song then someone must dance. So that one then usually I've been to school and I've been to the college. Usually people who come to - we used to call it to criticise – to crit – there are more negatives than positives. Didn't start the lesson nicely, learners didn't understand, someone was asleep there,

A: so what should the managers do that's my question – what should they do?

G: Concerning the issue of this DAS

A: of DAS ja.

G: No I think it must be a two-way traffic.

A: So they must also be

G: All the PL1 teachers must be given chance to assess them the the the PL3 teachers. Because they can sit in the .. ? and say ha hey / My shoe whereas they do not my shoe because we must learn from them they can learn from us because encourages us to learn to be an H.O.D one of the days but no . . .

A: ok your point is take sir

G: if they want to assess me in my class I must also go and assess in their class.

A: your point is taken sir.

D: maybe you learn something

C: I think what is happening or over er rules what er the two teachers have just indicated about the managers. As a manager obviously you are put in that position because you are able so if you are able there's no need for me as a PL1 teacher to go into your class and assess you. No. I have that belief and trust that the fact that you are here you are heading me, is enough in itself, except if I feel you don't deserve to be there then I can come and say I must also assess you.

D: but then who are you

A: ok

C: so in that situation I think it does cover that one. So the things I have make mention of is that consultation is supposed to happen in classroom situation, H.O.D's are supposed to come to us so that we can talk among about these things and try to solve the the whole especially syllabus story.

A: thank you sir.

F: er er I would like to er advise something to put a ??? on what my colleague friend has just said. Uhm I always tell my learners that you know it it will depend on you whether you interpret the matter you approach the matter positively or negatively. If you approach it negatively even though its simple, along the way you gonna get some difficulties. But if you approach it positively, you gonna look at it in a simple way.

A: OK so is there any advice to managers in there?

F: ok. On the same way, he said something like he hate er this thing called DAS. DAS I don't see, I personally feel that DAS is not it doesn't have any problem. It is just something that will uplift. The main thing of it is to develop but the approach of it by the people who imp implement it – they approach it in such a way that it becomes uncomfortability to other teachers.

A: So management should

F: approach it in such a way that it becomes comfortable to all the stakeholders.

A: Management should make it a comfortable process

F: comfortable process – in any way I want to highlight again how to do that. How to do that? I belief development appraisal system must be in such a way that it does not be like a photo it must be a continuous thing.

A: Not like a photo

F: Not like a photo

A: taken once

F: taken once and that instant. It must be before you are appraised, you must er be updated with how far are we doing that? I whether you ion the right track? From the beginning when they come to your class they must know that we left him up to this level then we expect him to follow because we advise him to do one, two, three. Therefore we expect him to be up to here. Therefore it must be a continuous thing – that is my belief towards DAS. And again,

A: and towards mangers in terms of DAS

F: towards DAS, towards the teachers. In any way I want to e entertain this one of who must er be evaluated?

A: yes

F: between the teachers or both of them or who? I belief as long as you are er involved in classroom situation, you must be you must be evaluated.

B: by whom?

F: By whom is the question of who in came up with the policy of DAS? How how its gonna benefit the school?

A: OK thank you sir. Ok

C: we have already placed it like a level one teacher . . .

F: In school A,

A: ok

F: In school A it was approached via the H.O.D.'s towards the teachers and the teachers put their own subjective opinions and ??? towards that. That is why it came as a negativity toward other teachers.

A: But er but your point is this: that management must make it a comfortable process

F: comfortable

A: for educators

F: for educators and if it is necessary, if it's necessary, they must be evaluated too

A: ok

F: to make it effective. How? Is the question of management bringing er the opinions together so that they can set up a committee if possible, to carry out such.

A. Mm. Ok thank you sir. Sir?

E: Er could you please throw around your eyes please?

A: shame, ok. Yes sir.

E: Ja er, just to refer to the point, looking at it from this er question of late attending workshops, more often I would find it er er happening this way: You find its PL1 teachers going to to to to the workshops [laughter] yet I personally feel that I should be getting something from above from the one who is like they this er do you understand?

So but now it goes the opposite way or the abnormal way, so to speak [laughter] I'm the one going out to to collect the information, and come back and give Mr. X.

D: yes

A: who is your senior?

E: who is my senior?

A: ok

E: now er er how how does that anyway happen on that because he should be the one above me going to collect the information? You know at one stage you find it you know that person, coming back to ask from you. So I would therefore recommend. You know needless to mention that at one stage we attended an assessment kind of er of er of er we had that session. And then the department itself said who are you? We were like all PL1 teachers? But we are supposed to be talking to the members of the management. But now surprisingly its you. But anyway, we shall continue, so my recommendation is let it be er the members of the management more often attending the courses, if not the workshops.

D: ok I feel Mr. X. talked about bottom-up

A: management style?

D: management – it doesn't work that way. It only works that way if it suits them. Alright. Again come coming back on how must the management maybe – how can they help us say for this DAS thing? Right. I think there should be feedback right. All the H.O.D.'s do this DAS right, and then maybe they should come to the staff room and say Ok, this is what happens, this this is what happened, right. But now how do you feel or how do you feel about this? How do you think we should go about it? Or like Mr. X thinks, maybe it he was he was being unfair, alright, he feels maybe there were more negatives, how about finding somebody else to go observe another lesson, so that we can see maybe where the problem is? There must be feedback – we must – we mustn't have management always discussing things – I want my my higher grades only – alright. [Laughter] They must there must always – we must always contribute. I mean we cannot always take whatever the management say. We we we can as PL1 teachers give positive feedback as well.

A: to them

D: ja I think we should also be consulted to say ok what do you think? Maybe we should come we could come up with better

A: ideas

F: suggestions on on to say maybe how about we try it this way? Alright. Maybe somebody should go not maybe only one person, one another person can go and see if the same thing happens then there must be a problem.

A: ok. So your point is that that consultation you feel is not happening there should be consultation on all aspects so that top-down management changes to bottom-up management on a continuous basis not only

D: when it suits them

A: once in a while

D: ja like when there is a cluster meeting [laughter]

A: then then PL1 has to go.

D: has to go

A: OK sir?

G: I think this is for your assignment huh? I just want to bear with my learned friend here when he says to be on the senior management ?????????? No it's not always the case. Like, for example, er I would come straight to the point, like last year we were requested to vote for an H.O.D. Right. But there wasn't criteria's.

A: You had to vote

G: ja that also [phone ringing] That H.O.D. must be having experience, it must have long being here, it must be able to control learners. I mean I think that was the whole criteria. Why because we find that someone has never done mathematics so to say or is an H.O.D. of mathematics ??? [Laughter]mathematics in grade eight but because I've been here for donkey years, [more laughter] I've been here for donkey years and then the kids listen to me they say you can be the H.O.D. Mr. So and so? No last year it can't. Maybe so and so? Ha he has got a diploma – he can't? So and so? Yes he has been here since 1969, yes he can. [Laughter] So I mean that is wrong. Another issue again, if maybe it said we put you in a senior position because we trust you I think that is not true. Like last year there was a chaos here, and ??? because the person who was causing the chaos is my friend. There was a chaos I'm sorry to say ...guy known as an H.O.D. Ja I mean some of us that's not members we didn't get the point why and how? I normally went to he principal and say Mr. Principal, the fight between person 1, 2 and 3 is because of the politician. He came last year and is still on probation. Someone came here I still remembered my colleague was in the office – I quoted I said Mr. So and so was here before this guy, but now you took the position to get this guy that's why she's worried???????/ then she said you know it doesn't matter you can be here for donkey years but if ???////// So I

A: Ok so what is what is it that managers should do in in situations like this?
What is your expectation of management when they have to appoint another manger?

G: Ja, I think internally we can't do it on our own. Like now we are going for H.O.D. post, ja there was a little questions how because so and so ?????? you can't. maybe people from outside they can. Because how can I be on the short-listing panel whereas I applied for the same post.

A: mmm ok

D: Can I just say there must be consistency on the criteria that is being used. It mustn't change to suit somebody else – there must be consistency. If this is the criteria that they are using to select a manger then that must be the criteria that they use throughout. Not to say you must teach grade eight – what kind of criteria is that?

A: mmm So so the managers must be consistent when they appoint other people because er am I understanding that eventually you might also want to be a manager

D: yes

A: and you'd wanna know what criteria is in place.

D: but then it changes to suite some people

A: so you prefer it to be consistent.

D: exactly because you will find that they'll say you must teach grade eights
[Laughter]

A: Let's here let's here this teachers point. We are wrap – we are wrapping this up because it seems the the last two aspects – the negatives of OBE and the role of management has sparked a lot of – let's call it excitement.

C: I I think It's not consistency

A: mmm what is it then?

C: because if consistency is wrong we can't keep on being consistent. If something was wrongly – let me say –

A: Er ok you cannot maintain a wrong thing

C: no.

A: ok

C: I don't care about consistency

A: I here what you're saying

C: If something was wrong it is supposed to be stipulated that it is wrong but it has been done. We mustn't appoint somebody because he is teaching grade eights so next year we'll still going to appoint because grade eights – no. If the person doesn't have the academic qualification, the person doesn't have much exposure – the person's relationship and also in ensuring that the department is well equipped – the vision and the mission. We don't care about other things that person doesn't qualify to be and H.O.D.

D: exactly

A1A: ok so what you're saying is that the criteria must be right. If its right keep it consistent, if its wrong – change it so that it fits the goals of the school. sensible

A1B: But according to my knowledge, I thought we had a criteria, we set the criteria some time ago, and I remember I even said if you don't have good communication skills, why must you be a manger if you don't have those. I I remember well we we we had a good

A1A: list of criteria

D: criteria, yes, but then it changed. Now I hear you had to teach grade eight
More laughter]

A: ok people I want to say thank you very much. Uhm let's let's not – can I ask that if you er you . I want to respect that you are anonymous and I want to respect that whatever you're saying is confidential. So you need to respect that also in your discussions that proceed when you leave here. Er very important thing in keeping everything anonymous and confidential it's important for us not to go out and say did you hear what Mr. said on that cassette? Alright uhm it was a very lively discussion and you all contributed a great deal