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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Foundation Phase teachers' responses to curriculum change in
South Africa over the past two decades: A case study of two
schools**

Submitted by

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Abstract

South Africa has experienced three significant curriculum reforms since 1994. The first of these replaced the 'apartheid' curriculum with C2005 based largely on Outcomes Based Education. In the second stage C2005 gave way to the National Curriculum Statements, a simplified version of C2005. Finally, the NCS was replaced with CAPS.

This research study investigates the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of teachers implementing these curriculum changes. It focuses in particular on Foundation Phase in 2012, the year in which CAPS was implemented in that phase. It took the form of an interpretive case study, using qualitative data generating and analysis techniques. Principals and selected teachers of two primary schools in Grahamstown – an ex-Model C school and a performing 'township' school - were the respondents of the study. Data were generated chiefly through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, supplemented by document analysis and observation.

The findings revealed that the teachers in this study are frustrated and angry about the frequency of curriculum change in South Africa. Respondents are particularly critical of OBE and the NCS. While they welcome the need for a departure from 'apartheid' curricula, they feel the pedagogical underpinning of the NCS – with its emphasis on learner-centredness – disempowered them as teachers. Hence, they welcomed CAPS which seems to return to content – rather than skills and attitudes – and re-instates the teacher as the chief giver of knowledge and manager of learning.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ANA	Annual National Assessment
ANC	Africa National Congress
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
NECC	National Education Crisis (Later co-ordinating) Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
USA	United States of America
RSA	Republic of South Africa

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Chapter One

Introduction and background to the study

1.1 Introduction

South Africa has experienced frequent and radical curriculum reform initiatives over the past two decades. As can be expected during periods of change, the frequency and scope of these reforms have contributed to a climate of tension and uncertainty. The resulting frustration and even anxiety among teachers – myself included – prompted my interest in exploring teachers' responses to curriculum change more systematically in order to gain a deeper understanding of the rationale for such fundamental change as well as how those who need to implement the new agenda feel about it.

A curriculum is more than a list of what to teach: the rationale and thinking underpinning curriculum design reveal a mind-set, an approach to teaching and learning. It is therefore fair to claim that curriculum change can often seem disempowering to teachers accustomed to a particular style of delivery and assessment. To find these 'comfortable' pedagogic orientations challenged and devalued can be a demotivating experience.

The first post-apartheid curriculum reform (C2005) introduced in 1998 has doubtless been the most dramatic and radical. Underpinned by the now debunked Outcomes Based Education pedagogy, C2005 sent shock waves through the teaching world. Ultimately, responding to widespread unhappiness and criticism, the DoE revised and streamlined C2005, creating the National Curriculum Statements. Still largely driven by OBE principles and practice, the NCS did little to alleviate teachers' sense of confusion. Then, three years ago, came the announcement that OBE was finally to be abandoned and the NCS was to be replaced by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). All of this has happened within a period of just over two

decades, a relatively short period in the life of a conservative profession and system. This is what has prompted the current research. Judging by my own response and the response of my colleagues, it seemed to me that gaining a clearer sense of how teachers were experiencing these radical changes would be interesting and potentially useful.

1.2 Background of research

The release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 was one of the first steps in eradicating apartheid. The coming of a truly democratic country naturally triggered debates concerning curriculum transformation and reconstruction to meet the visions of the new democratic government (Jansen, 1999, as cited in Harley & Wedekind, 2004, p. 195) and also led to the development and implementation of the policy framework which aimed to redress past inequalities and provide equitable, high quality and relevant education (Diphofa, Vinjevold & Taylor as cited in Ishmail, 2004, p. 34).

In addition, since democracy in 1994, South Africa has had a number of curriculum reforms intended to redress the inequalities and injustices, which were caused by the apartheid regime policies. The first reason to change the curriculum was to clear the syllabus of racist language and outdated content. Also, South Africa embarked on restructuring and transforming the curriculum which would be informed by the vision for democracy in South Africa (DoE, RNCS, Grades R-9: (Schools): Policy: Overview English, 2002, p. 4; Jansen & Christie, 1999; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001; DoE, 2002). This led to the introduction of Curriculum 2005 to inform the vision of democracy introduced in January 1998.

When C2005 with its OBE philosophy was put in place in South African schools, it came with a lot of criticism (Makhwatha, 2007, p. 27; Hoadley, 2010; Jansen, 1999 in Le Grange, 2010, p. 191). These will be discussed later. In spite of the new curriculum

deliberately departing from the apartheid curriculum which encouraged rote-learning shaped by behaviourist methods (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 104), academic results had not shown signs of improvement in schools (Botha, 2003, p. 3). It seemed that the learner-centred pedagogy of the NCS, shaped by constructivist ideologies, was not clearly understood or well implemented. The notion of active and critical learning in which the individual is the active person in the process of thinking and learning where the emphasis is placed on the human factor (Cimi, 2009, p. 2) seemed to be too new and too radical a departure from what teachers were used to.

According to Harley and Wedekind, 2004, p. 201), teachers' engagement with the C2005 model has been superficial. The teachers did not receive enough training in this new curriculum which exacerbated problems with its implementation.

Taking the above criticism into consideration, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced another curriculum policy, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). CAPS was introduced in 2012 in the Foundation Phase, with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Literacy, Life Skills and Numeracy. CAPS signalled a radical departure from C2005 and the NCS, one that was welcomed by most teachers. Perhaps the most significant differences between CAPS and the OBE curricula are that the transformative agenda characterising C2005 as well as the NCS seems to have been played down, and pedagogy driven teaching and learning seems to have shifted back to a more traditional position. These are important distinctions, especially in the context of an ailing education system in South Africa. It seems crucial to determine what it is that is weakening education in South Africa, and it seems fair to assume that curriculum and its implementation lies at the heart of this understanding.

From the position of an 'ordinary' teacher, questions surrounding curriculum – what it contains, who has input into its design, how it is organised, what theories inform it and how it is to be delivered – seem crucially important if teachers are to commit themselves to teaching and achieving educational goals. This research is driven by these concerns.

1.3 Research goals and questions

The goal of my research was to investigate perceptions of selected Foundation Phase teachers about the recent curriculum changes. To achieve this goal, I needed to answer the following main questions:

- Is there a need at times to change the curriculum?
- What are teachers' attitudes to and opinions of the curriculum?
- What kind of curriculum would teachers want to be designed to meet the educational needs of South Africa at this time?
- Who should be involved in curriculum development, and at what levels should they be involved?
- Is CAPS likely to change teaching and learning in ways teachers and learners will benefit from?

1.4 Research methodology

This study is a qualitative case study framed in an interpretive tradition. The term qualitative research means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at through statistical procedures. This can refer to research about persons' lives, stories and behaviour but also about organisational functioning, social movement or interactional relationships (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17). The reason for using this

method is that data are collected in a natural setting where the subjects spend most of their working lives. The respondents in this study - teachers - are in their real world describing their daily experiences in relation to the curricular changes. Furthermore, in qualitative research the outcome is not merely to simplify what is investigated. Instead, the researcher recognises the many layers and dimensions that constitute and underpin the issue being discussed and the qualitative researcher seems to know that there is no 'truth' to be discovered (Leedy & Ormond, 2001 p. 147; Gillham, 2000, p. 10).

Qualitative research has been assigned many different labels such as field research, interpretive research, ethnography, naturalism and constructivism. These share a common focus - for example they interpret and construct the qualitative aspects of communication experiences. Furthermore, qualitative methods require collecting data verbally which could give the researcher in-depth understanding of the nature of respondents' experiences (Makhwathana, 2007 p. 5). For these reasons a qualitative case study was deemed appropriate.

1.5 Outline of the study

Chapter One looks at the background of the research study and provides a statement of the problem being researched, the goals and research questions and the research methodology.

Chapter Two is the theoretical framework underpinning my study. It reviews the literature related to curricula changes that have happened in South African since apartheid was abolished in 1994.

Chapter Three provides the methodological framework of my study. The presentation and discussion of the research paradigm, methods of collecting data and data gathering will be done. Issues such as data analysis, sampling, limitations and ethical protocols are addressed.

Chapter Four presents an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings.

Chapter Five concludes the study, makes recommendations for research and practice and discusses the study's shortcomings.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented basic foundation and structure of the research project that aims to investigate the perceptions of the Foundation Phase teachers about the curriculum change in South Africa over the past two decades: A case study of two schools in Grahamstown. These changes in curriculum have brought about confusion in teachers and their learners because of the frequency in changing curricula. As I have pointed out earlier in the chapter, stake holders such as Christie and Jansen have scathingly criticised C2005/OBE by saying that it was un accessible in its discourse and not targeted at conditions in the majority of the South Africa classrooms. Because of these changes and with a view to discovering whether the implementation of CAPS is likely to result in a significant change in teaching and learning. I will discuss more in chapter 4.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents a review of relevant literature and policy in an attempt to develop a theoretical framework for the study. Merriam describes the literature review as “a narrative essay that integrates, and analyses the important thinking and research on a particular topic” (1998, p. 55 as cited in Phorabatho, 2010, p. 12). This study focuses on curriculum development; hence, there is a need to give an account of the important changes that have taken place in South Africa as far as curriculum content and pedagogy are concerned.

The first section looks at definitions of curriculum in an attempt to develop an understanding of the phenomenon under study. Next, I discuss reasons for curriculum change globally with special reference to the South African context. The third section traces and critiques curriculum developments from the ‘apartheid’ curriculum to the present day. This includes a discussion of C2005 and OBE, as well as the teaching and learning theories underpinning these curricula, chiefly the move from behaviourism to constructivism. Finally, I focus on the problem statement of my research looking at the impact these changes have had on the teachers and learners since the 1994 democratic elections.

2.2 Definitions of curriculum

To ask ‘what is the curriculum’ is not simply to imitate the pedantic judge who displays his judicial ignorance to force counsel to define something everyone knows (Becher & Maclure, 1978, p. 11).

As this quote suggests, the notion of 'curriculum', much as it is a word in everyday use, is by no means either simple or obvious in meaning. The word 'curriculum' has several meanings and most people confuse it with the word 'syllabus' (Marsh & Willis, 1995, p. 6; Kelly, 2009, p. 7). One senses that a curriculum is a broader and richer concept than a syllabus. According to the Farlex Trivia Dictionary, "a syllabus is an outline of a single course offered within a curriculum, which is described as a complete course of study offered by a school" (2012, online). A curriculum captures "socially valued knowledge, skills and attitudes made available to students through a variety of arrangements during the time they are at school, college or university" (Bell, 1971).

"Socially valued" suggests a sense of agreement within broader society of what knowledge is valued and worth passing on. Phorabatho (2004, p. 16) argues that there should be "a close relationship between what is taught in schools and underlying values of the society that schools serve. In this way, the dynamic demands of the society would often influence the need for curriculum change". The reference to "variety of arrangements" suggests notions of learning beyond the classroom. Wilson (online?) argues that "Curriculum is everything that goes on within school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships". Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) similarly include the notion of "dealing with the experiences of the learner ... in school and even out of school" as part of the curriculum (p. 10).

In South Africa it seems that the broader implication of curriculum (what happens out of classrooms) has been neglected in favour of a narrower view that focuses on knowledge and assessment. This is arguably the result of the heavy emphasis on examination results as measures of quality in education. As Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) argue:

Curriculum is also considered in terms of subject matter (Maths, Science, English and History) or content (the way we organise and assimilate information). We can also talk about matter and content

in terms of different grade levels. Nonetheless, the emphasis from this view point would be on facts, concepts and generalisations of a particular subject or group of subjects (p. 11).

In summary, curriculum is a programme of learning; it presents an outline of what is considered worth learning and knowing and in this sense it is also a social document. It seems also generally to be accepted as a guide to what is valued both in and out of the classroom, which is, a reference to the social and moral shaping inherent in educational systems. The fact that this broader understanding seems less important in South Africa is perhaps a significant indicator of how education (schooling in particular) is viewed in this country.

Next I turn to how and why curriculum change occurs.

2.3 Factors informing curriculum changes

2.3.1 Global context

Curriculum change does not happen without reason. In the following paragraphs, the many factors that influence curriculum change will be discussed. First, I look at factors that influence curriculum change globally and then discuss curriculum transformation in the South African context.

Educational reforms and curriculum change in particular is a global phenomenon. In most instances, a curriculum change in a particular educational system is brought about by social, political and economic developments. South Africa provides a clear example of how curriculum change was driven by political upheaval with the attainment of democracy in 1994. However, countries also change their curriculum because they want to raise standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy (Pepper, 2008, p. 4; Phorabatho, 2009, p. 17; Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998, Moreeng, 2009, p. 40; Carl, 2009, p. 17). The results of international assessments contributed to what

Pepper (2008, p. 5) calls “impetus” for curriculum changes to raise the standards in France, Germany and New Zealand.

According to Pepper:

In Germany, the ‘PISA shock’ of 2000 has been well documented. France has seen itself as underperforming in international assessment and New Zealand has been concerned with disparities in the attainment of some groups of pupils. However, the subsequent PISA 2007 results are too recent to reflect any possible effect of the curriculum changes. Standards were mentioned in the case of Spain but not international assessment. In other countries, the changes to the curriculum emphasised broader learning outcomes. This usage fits with the recent definition of ‘curriculum outcomes’ as ‘what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a process of learning’. In Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Slovenia and South Africa these outcomes related to preparation for lifelong learning and active participation in the economy or wider society (2008, p. 4).

There are also similarities between countries such as Scotland and Northern Ireland in emphasising learners as individuals, citizens and contributors. These similarities apply to what the South African Revised C2005 of the Department of Education Policy document stipulates. There are also countries such as USA, Japan and Great Britain that had their curriculum changed and updated in response to the far-reaching changes occurring in the world (Pepper, 2008, p. 4). As Phorabatho puts it:

Modern societies invest in education as the means to address socio-political and economic needs. The formal education system does not exist independently of its relation to the larger social order and to other sources of human action (2009, p. 17).

Moreover, the educational changes and renewal processes are highly motivated by global economics and technological inventions (Naicker, 1999, p. 90; Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998, p. viii; Spady & Schlebusch, 1999, p. 16 as cited in Moreeng). Hence the development of what is regarded as knowledge can be a powerful driver of curriculum change. According to Taylor and Erickson:

Knowledge has changed from being seen as focusing on lower cognitive level centered around topics and related to facts towards focusing on the teaching to deeper conceptual understanding. Knowledge is seen as something that is not fixed and firm and absolutely true for all time, but it is always filtered by the mental framework, values and language and understanding that all of us use in making sense of the world (1998, p. 7).

The USA's reaction to the success of the Russian sputnik is a good example of this kind of change. After the success of the sputnik programme in 1957 the USA embarked on far-reaching reforms and upgrading of educational systems, resulting in new curricula in several subject areas.

In South Africa curriculum reform since 1994 have emphasised skills (rather than knowledge only) and a conceptualisation of knowledge associated with the constructivist approach to learning as discussed later in this Chapter (Moreeng, 2009, pp. 96-7).

2.3.2 The South African context

As has been the case in many African countries, curriculum reform in South Africa has been driven by political as well as educational needs and demands. Since the demise of apartheid the dismantling of a discriminatory and inequitable education system has been accompanied by several curriculum reforms. Hence, one of the first reasons to change the curriculum was to clear the syllabus of racist language and outdated, biased content. The dispatch of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1997 set the scene for transforming the curriculum to address equity in the South African schools including the Further Education and Training band (FET) (Kumar, 2010, p. 1; Treu, Olivier, Bean & Walt, 2010, p. 343; Harber, 2001, p. 7).

2.3.2.1 Apartheid education in South Africa

Colonialism and racism have been the key factors in shaping curriculum discourses in South Africa since colonial times. As a colonial process, the curriculum involved the “denigration” and displacement of local knowledge and identities of the “natives” (Kumar, 2010, p. 2).

According to Kumar, the main curriculum questions in the colonial era were:

How is the curriculum to preserve the fiction that some people are superior to others? How was the nation to be conceived and who is sufficiently human to be included as citizen subjects? What national identity is to be cultivated for the people? These all questions were, and even now are, central to the politics of curriculum in South Africa (2010, p. 2).

The introduction of formal education is an important first step to understanding the emergence of the field of curriculum development in South Africa. According to Soudien (2010), the first school in South Africa was a slave school established in 1658 in the Cape:

The nature of the curriculum that was first deployed at the slave school, with its emphasis on religiosity, provided the pattern that was to be used for the next 200 years. Schools served chiefly as an instrument for the perpetuation of a religious order. Literacy enabled children to read the Bible. Curriculum questions such as what should be taught and who should teach were answered by the church (as cited in Kumar, 2010, p. 2).

Coupled with religiosity was the need for a labour force. Kumar notes that:

During these times the curriculum was used as a tool to enforce the political advantage of Europeans and the presumed innate superiority of European civilisation over indigenous people of South Africa (ibid.).

When the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 it became clear that the education of all children was the responsibility of the state and the church. The colonisers wanted useful labour for expanding the economy and at the same time needed to retain control of indigenous peoples (Kumar, 2010, p. 3). The central outcome of these developments was the emergence of the academic curriculum which ignored African culture. Hence, African culture was essentially denied by both colonisers and missionaries: missionaries believed African children needed to be civilised and colonisers wanted to prepare a work force (Kumar, 2010, p. 3). Colonisers believed that practical learning or industrial training was all that the 'African' needed (Kumar, 2010, p. 3).

The advent of apartheid perpetuated and strengthened these views and led to legislation which made it impossible for black children to enjoy a level of schooling that could lead to empowerment and political and economic freedom. As Soudien puts it:

Bantu Education was born, which effectively condemned African people to the "status of hewers of wood and drawers of water" (2010, p. 7).

Bantu Education was constructed largely on the recommendations of the Eiselen Commission which was set up to explore educational alternatives for South Africa under National Party rule. The investigation ran from 1949 to 1951. Samuel (1990, p. 17) explains that "the commission was requested to formulate the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities are taken into consideration" as well as "their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under the ever changing social conditions". Naturally, the notion of black Africans as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' had serious implications for the kinds of curricula devised, and the provision of education for different racial groups.

Many decades would pass before real signs of protest appeared. Essentially Africans lacked the political power to reject their education system, so it was not until the late 1970s that resistance emerged in the form of the People's Education for People's Power (PEPP) to challenge Christian National Education and "its attendant fundamental pedagogics" (Soudien, 2010, p. 4).

The role of PEPP was to represent those who struggled for social reconstruction through education in South Africa. This was an attempt coordinated by the then National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), advocating that parents, teachers, students and other community members should be involved in the governance of education. There were workshops conducted by this movement for teachers characterised by discussions of questions related to the political, social and economic realities of the apartheid state. Unfortunately, in the 1980s the PEPP plunged into crisis due to state repression as well as a lack of clarity over what precisely its purpose was (Soudien, 2010, p. 7).

According to Soudien, these groups tried to:

develop socialist ideas to a level of personal and social commitment against the racialising tide of South African history. Moreover, as teachers these people introduced into their classrooms a non-racial curriculum in order to disrupt the racist curriculum of apartheid (2010, as cited in Kumar, p. 8).

Soudien further argues that these initiatives did not necessarily bring about a complete break from racial ways of thinking. While the idea of non-racialism is ultimately adopted by the African National Congress (ANC), "the substance of this commitment seems confused. Even when the ANC commits to non-racialism, it is clear that this non-racialism was instead a multi-cultural one (Kumar, 2010, p. 8). Furthermore, Soudien argues that:

What changed in its ideology was a commitment to racial unity but not to the removal of race. The Freedom Charter of the ANC for example, continued to speak of South Africa's four racial groups: Africans, Whites, Coloureds and Indians without engaging with these concepts as social constructs. As a consequence, the political and intellectual discourse, even in subordinate circles remained enmeshed in hegemonic vocabulary and liberalism (2010, p. 8).

The unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela led to the development of a new democratic movement. There were many projects aimed at transforming all spheres of South African society. One example of such a project was the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) which formalised aspects of People's Education, (which I have mentioned earlier) between 1990 and August 1992. Twelve reports were produced including a report on curriculum. This report recommended building a unitary education system with a curriculum unbiased with respect to race and gender. The next section discusses the shift from apartheid regime to a democratic curriculum.

2.3.2.2 Curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa

Curriculum changes in post-apartheid South Africa started immediately after the election in 1994 (as pointed out earlier) when the National Education and Training Forum began a process of syllabus revision and subject rationalisation (DoE, RNCS Grades R-9: (Schools): Policy: Overview, 2002, p. 4. The purpose of this process was to remove the overtly racist content, insensitive language and ideologically distorted notions of apartheid from the existing syllabi.

This needs to be seen against a backdrop of unequal resources. Black learners often numbered 100+ in the same classroom and there were large numbers of unqualified black teachers (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Nakabugo & Siebörger, 2001; DoE, 2002; Dean, 1998, p. 1).

Figure 1 below shows the resource allocation and performance:

	Whites	Indians	Coloureds	Blacks
Pupil-teacher ratio	16	21	25	41
% of under qualified teachers	2	4	43	87
Student capitation (Rands, 1989)	3600	2600	2100	750
Fraction of entry cohort passing matriculation (year 12)	.85	.84	.30	.14

(Dean, 1998, p. 2).

Curricula were seen as irrelevant and there was an inadequate teacher education system, particularly in black colleges. Black education was experiencing an enrolment explosion but was saddled with high dropout and failure rates.

In the 'new' South Africa the constitution (South Africa. 1996, Act No 108 of 1996) laid the foundation for the transformation and development of the curriculum. A series of policy papers (1994; 1994b; The Department of Education's White Paper, 1995, 1996; The Schools Act, 1996; The Department of Education's Curriculum, 2005) and the constitution were designed specifically to redress the educational wrongs of the apartheid years within a democratic framework of equality and equal opportunity. The ANC's Election Education Manifesto, a Policy Framework for Education and Training:

promised to open the doors of learning and culture to all by addressing four priority areas; the first, and most urgent, was to close down the racially segregated education departments and replace them with a single non-racial administration. The second was to equalize *per capita* school spending (Fleisch, 2002, p. 41).

The manifesto also promised to open up adult basic education and training opportunities and develop early childhood education. It also envisaged the transformation of the bureaucratic and authoritarian culture of education that characterized the former system.

To understand the thinking behind curriculum change in educational rather than political and social terms, I now need to look briefly at theories of teaching and learning that drove – and continue to drive - both the ‘old’ and the ‘new’.

2.4 Learning in the apartheid curriculum

2.4.1 Behaviourism and the political project

Teaching and learning seems largely to have been viewed in behaviourist terms during the apartheid years. According to Ornstein and Hunkins:

Behaviourists believe that the curriculum or learning should be organised so that students experience success in mastering the subject matter. Behaviourists are highly prescriptive and diagnostic in their approach and they rely on step-by-step structured methods for learning (2004, p. 104).

Van Harmelen (1997) concurs, arguing that pre-1994 curricula were underpinned by behaviourist principles according to which teachers were trained to ‘deliver’ education.

In terms of behaviourism we learn best through memorising facts which in turn leads to efficiency (Kudlas cited in Booi, 2000). This is because we, as humans, can be ‘trained’ to behave differently. Learning is an altered form of behaviour and is the result of repeated exposure to particular stimuli, what behaviourists refer to as conditioning. Behaviourists discount or play down the importance of cognitive processes and imaginative and creative channels of learning such as problem-solving. Behaviourism is usually associated with the work of Pavlov who trained animals to respond to stimuli in set and predictable ways. In education, behaviourist approaches draw more heavily on Skinner who developed early behaviourist thinking to sophisticated levels (Kaufhold & Kaufhold, 2002). He developed the

notion of operant behaviourism (ibid.) according to which we learn best through reward and punishment.

In the classroom behaviourist approaches to teaching and learning are usually evident in behaviours such as drill, repetition, rote-learning and consequences for actions – punishment for poor work and some form of reward for good work. Operant behaviourism is thought to reinforce good behaviour and discourage poor behaviour. Learning is passive and strongly led by the teacher.

Behaviourism had and still has its critics. Despite still being influential in terms of underlying many (if not all) teachers' classroom practice to varying degrees, behaviourism is today generally seen as detrimental to learning in which learners make sense of knowledge rather than simply take it in. One of behaviourism's most vocal critics was Paolo Freire. Freire used the banking metaphor of education to criticise teaching and learning driven by behaviourist psychology (1973, p. 73). In terms of this analogy, students are "receptacles" that are to be "filled" with the "content of the teachers' narration" (ibid.). These "receptacles" are expected to regurgitate information given in class, on tests, quizzes, and anything that requires an answer that is "word for word" what the teacher says (ibid.). In a banking classroom, the teacher is the authority and the students are therefore (pedagogically) oppressed. Freire writes, "The more students work at storing deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (1973, p. 73).

Even more powerful than pedagogy though, was the political orientation of the curriculum and schooling system as a whole, manifest in the selection of content (such as whose history would be taught) and of course the unequal availability and distribution of resources as has been discussed. These factors combined to produce a curriculum and education system that served the apartheid government's

purposes very effectively. The table below summarises the essence of the apartheid education system:

	Apartheid education
Political project:	Key instrument in the imposition of separate policies. It resulted in racially differentiated access to education.
Curriculum framework:	A conservative curriculum based on rigidly defined school subjects whose purpose was the unquestioned transmission of apartheid-determined syllabus content through rote learning.
Role of learner:	The learner was acted upon, and had little control of learning process; learners were selected, assessed, graded, and (often) excluded from future learning processes.
Role of teacher:	The teacher was subservient to the dictates of the state; tasks were prescribed by an imposed syllabus. Content-centred learning.
Role of community:	The community had little power in the determination of school policy.

(Adapted from Gultig, Hoadley & Jansen, 2002, pp. 146 -149).

Gultig, Hoadley and Jansen (2002) in highlighting the weaknesses of the apartheid curriculum, claim that there was a need for major changes in education and training in order to shift away from this ideologically distorted curriculum and provide equity in terms of educational provisions and promote a more balanced education for all South Africans (cited in Botha, 2002, p. 3). The response of the new democratically elected government under the ANC party was C2005 and outcomes-based education (OBE) to which I now turn.

2.5 Curriculum 2005 and OBE

To achieve the above mentioned ideologies, South Africa embarked on restructuring and transforming the curriculum which would be informed by the vision of a democratic South Africa. This led to the introduction of Curriculum 2005 in March 1997.

The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development paper reported that:

The announcement of the C2005 in 1997 was greeted with excitement and welcomed by the overwhelming majority of people. The National and Provincial Evaluation of implementation of C2005 confirmed this 'symbolic' break with the past (Chisholm, 2004, p. 199).

Through its Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach to teaching, learning and assessment, there was a sense that South Africa had finally found a teaching methodology that would transform teaching and learning in South Africa after the era of apartheid. This curriculum was learner-centred, unlike the content-based and teacher-centred curriculum of the apartheid era, and it emphasised learning by doing, problem-solving skills and continuous assessment (Christie, 1999, p. 282; Botha, 2002, p. 5). The National Policy for Grades R-9 set in place OBE assessments which aimed to ensure that learners had access to and could develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values as described in the Learning Outcomes so as to reach their potential. Furthermore, according to C2005 and the principles of outcomes based learning that informed it, "Learner-centred education" and "curriculum integration" were explicitly promoted but precisely what content should be sequenced was not specified (*ibid.*). In these and many other ways C2005 signaled a break with traditional curricula and for many years there was a sense of excitement and beginning afresh.

While this curriculum seemed sensible, in the face of the immense diversity of South African teachers and learners, it has proved a disaster. According to Soudien, the review of C2005 in 2000, after it was launched in 1997 was extremely controversial:

Most of the people involved in the reviewing of this curriculum were ANC-linked and this represented divisions over directions and who would give direction. The key players were the Minister of Education, South African Democratic Teachers Union, Departments of Education and Cabinet. The issue here was about OBE, its nature, manifestation in C2005 and whether it ought to be revised or not. But when Kader Asmal, the ANC Minister organised this reviewing exercise, the Review Committee consisted of sympathisers and active members only. The teacher unions were not included and this brought about a crisis within the ANC and the teachers' union. On the other hand, the Minister meant well to bring about this revision of the C2005 because it was necessary in the light of the existing inequalities and the realities of under-resourced schools which had large numbers and teachers largely untrained in learner-centered education and making their own curriculum (Soudien 2010, p. 10).

When the C2005 policy was put in place in South African schools, there were early warning signs, such as a critique of OBE in a paper by Jonathan Jansen entitled "Why OBE will fail?" Below are the criticisms that Soudien raised against OBE:

C2005 represents an 'imported' curriculum; It has been brought from New Zealand and the United Kingdom with a view to induce the "best-practice" in South Africa's school education without giving any attention to the latter's historical and present circumstances. A relatively little known curriculum specialist from the United States of America, William Spady was employed to develop OBE in South Africa. Spady's OBE encountered severe criticisms, both in USA and South Africa, for emphasising "competencies" rather than academic knowledge (2010, p. 10).

Jansen also predicted that it was going to fail because he felt it was jargon ridden and inaccessible in its discourse. That meant it was not targeted for the conditions in the majority of South African classrooms. Only those schools with prepared teachers and enough resources were found to be possible beneficiaries of C2005/NCS (Jansen, 1999b p. 330).

Hence teachers found themselves with a new curriculum which they did not know how to deal with. There are various research studies that have shown that teachers have had problems in understanding the OBE/C2005 curriculum. Instead of teachers becoming the dominant force in the classroom that liberates the learners' minds from the evils of apartheid, they moved from being the controllers of teaching and learning to where they became invisible in their classrooms. They also were withdrawn from their comfort zones offered by subject matter competence (Jansen, 2001, p. 243).

The above criticisms as well as the fact that academic results had not shown signs of improvement led to a revision of C2005 in 2002, producing the National Curriculum Statements.

2.6 The National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

In the wake of the above criticisms, C2005 was to be revised in 2002. This revision produced the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The review committee strongly recommended reduced integration, clearer specification of content and more simplicity of curriculum design (Kumar 2010, p. 13). The NCS was not a new curriculum *per se* but it was meant to streamline and strengthen C2005, which was introduced in 1998. It was hoped to produce citizens who were knowledgeable, sensitive to the environmental issues, and able to respond to the many challenges that confront South Africa (Makhwathana, 2007, p. 32).

Kumar confirms that:

The review also argued in favour of retaining outcomes and the review asserted that though OBE emphasises the dominance of outputs, it also contains the progressive features of curriculum

reform from the world over, namely “active learning,” “ideas of uniqueness and difference,” and “activities and skills” as the basis for knowing and knowledge (2010, p. 13).

Also, the Department of Education notes that the NCS aspired to redress the past divisions and advance the social transformation agenda of the democratic government of South Africa.

According to Mosuwe and Vinjevold:

The NCS aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of the democratic South Africa. It also seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate and numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen (in Phorabatho, 2009, p. 23).

These debates were highly politicised in the sense that they animated much discussion around the review of C2005. Kumar (2010, p. 13) concludes:

Ultimately, a moderate constructivist view was taken with respect to curriculum, which emphasised conceptual coherence and vertical progression as well as an attempt to restore the authority of the curriculum and the teacher.

As noted above, the NCS was driven by more progressive learning and teaching theories and I now briefly focus on these.

2.6.1 Learning theories of the NCS

In contrast to the apartheid education system, the NCS was shaped by constructivist ideologies. According to Botha:

The formulated outcomes of the model (NCS) underscored the above aspects and emphasised the development of critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative and future-oriented citizens. Outcomes-based education without the shadow of a doubt, constituted a radical break with the previous education approaches of apartheid (2002, p. 4).

In addition, the NCS is learner-centred and emphasises group work. The curriculum encourages active and critical learning. The learner is the key player; he/she participates in generating meaning in his/her learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 116-118) and cannot passively accept information by mimicking the wording or conclusions of others. Instead the learner must engage him/herself in internalising and reshaping or transforming information into active consideration. In short, constructivism places the individual as the active person in the process of thinking and learning and the emphasis is placed on the human factor.

According to Botha:

The C2005 model brought on a variety of current ideas and trends in the international arena and replaced them to fit the local conditions. Outcome-based education was one of those trends included in the international arena. The philosophy behind the C2005 and OBE was meant to clearly focus and organise everything in an educational system around what is essential for all learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences (2002, p. 6).

This meant bringing about a new educational system which was important for learners of the new South Africa. The following table summarises the essence of NCS education under the constructivist learning theory:

	Outcomes-based model of learning
The learner	Active learners
Assessment	. Continuous assessment. . Learners are assessed on a longer on-going basis.
Role of teacher	Learner-centred; teacher as facilitator; teacher constantly using group work and team work.
Curriculum framework	Learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes.
Time frames and learning pacing	Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace.

Adopted from Gultig, Hoadley and Jansen (2002, p. 158).

2.7 The coming of CAPS

CAPS is the most recent curriculum development in South Africa. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) appointed a panel of experts to investigate the nature of the current challenges and to streamline the National Curriculum Statement. This resulted in the criticisms directed at the implementation of the OBE system introduced in 1998. However, OBE would not be completely scrapped but would be modified to improve the performance of school learners (Learning Curve Gazette: Volume 13, Issue 1, 2011).

Taking the above criticism of the NCS curriculum and its OBE policy into consideration, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) appointed a panel of experts to investigate the nature of the current changes and to streamline the National Curriculum Statement. Based on the recommendations from the experts, DBE proposed the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the aim being to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The focus would then be the developing of the content to be taught and the required assessment tasks for each school term. The DBE emphasised that CAPS was not a new curriculum. Angie Motshekga, the South African Minister of Basic Education said that the new

curriculum (CAPS) would, by 2025, replace the highly criticised outcomes based education (OBE) system introduced in 1998. However, OBE would not be completely scrapped but would be modified to improve the performance of the pupils. The new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) would replace the existing method, where assessment requirements are mapped onto the achievement of outcomes and assessment standards (Van Wyk, 2010). To enlighten my readers more about CAPS and NCS, I would like to clarify some of the differences between them.

In NCS, assessment is integral to teaching and learning. An OBE approach to teaching and learning requires Outcomes Based Assessment (OBA). This assessment has implications for what the teacher does in the classroom.

The developmental needs of learners are continuously assessed (CASS), comprising both formal and informal assessment. Thus, learners are evaluated regularly, but not all the assessment findings need to be recorded. Only formal planned assessment tasks should be recorded.

This applies to CAPS as well but there are few differences. The proposed plan was not to abolish RNCS completely but to take away all the OBE policy terminology such as Critical and Developmental Outcomes, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards, with Learning Areas now being called Subjects.

Lastly, I discuss the Annual National Tests (ANA). I feel it is worth mentioning in my literature review as well as in Chapter Four, because I posed a question about these tests in the questionnaire administration. The introduction of ANA has also caused concern amongst teachers and parents at large. That is the reason why I have included it in this study so as to find out what teachers have to say about these tests.

2.8 The Annual National Assessments (ANA)

The poor quality of learning outcomes in South African Schools has triggered a concern amongst the teachers, parents and the general public of late. The government has tried to make improvement in bringing in the ANA as well as CAPS to improve learning in this country (Curriculum News: Policy document, 2011, p. 20).

According to Hayward, the planned first Annual National Assessment Tests (ANA) for learners across South Africa in Grades 2 to 7 and 10 are over and in a letter to parents the Department of Basic Education gave the following reasons for instituting ANA:

The tests will set a benchmark on how to improve the children's literacy in the years ahead; teachers will be able to find out whether children need academic support and the results will assist the Department in finding out where it should "intervene if a particular class or school does not perform to the national level." In principle, practice to whether standards have been achieved. So for example: The teacher in grade three class room needs to know whether his/her learners are an age-appropriate reading level. If need be, corrective action can be taken. The teacher can also be motivated to raise the achievement bar. Quality teaching is always in a state of never-ending improvement (Hayward, 2011).

If wisely implemented ANA has a huge potential to help turn the "Quality of Education for All" slogan into reality. According to the report document by Hayward, it was found out that inspectors for these standardised tests were prejudging schools on the basis of their results in England and it was found out that some inspectors were biased against them on the basis of the standardised test achievements. There was lack of recognition for disadvantaged schools and as a result parents only chose those schools with good results. What about the economically poorer schools where teachers are working hard to achieve the same results? They should not blame these schools for poor results because they are not

well resourced and for this reason, teachers should not be penalised on the basis of raw scores in such tests (ANA).

Just like in Zambia these tests are done in years seven, nine and twelve only. The results seem to be better because no child could be allowed to progress to grade ten without passing his/her grade nine and the same applies to grade seven he/she could not go to grade eight without passing grade seven. The Australian teachers boycotted these tests because of naming and shaming. The results are published in the national media and websites and this made some of the disadvantaged schools ashamed of their results. Children and teachers of these schools are humiliated by the negative publicity.

If this system of testing could work in other countries, it should work in South Africa as well. No matter how stressful it is, teachers must focus on preparing learners for the ANA tests and the government must make sure that the disadvantaged schools are motivated to do well by providing enough resources for them because teachers in these under-resourced schools also strive to work hard with their learners.

2.9 Conclusion

Looking at these changes that have happened in the South African education system, one notices that there is still more to be done. The first apartheid curriculum disadvantaged the black race as they had no say in whatever was happening in the education system in the country at that time. Although the Department of Basic Education says that CAPS is not a new curriculum, there have been a lot of problems in curricula implementation since 1994. People and educators have experienced difficulties in teaching and learning in schools and classrooms.

Now that the Department of Basic Education has brought in ANA tests to improve the quality of learner attainment of results, the majority of educators would like to

see how these ANA tests will impact South African education. The question is will these tests work? The answer to this question will be discussed in Chapter Four when I present the data.

The following Chapter looks at the research design and methodology, the geographical location of the study area, sampling procedures and then a summary of the Chapter will be presented.

Chapter Three

Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

Bassey points out that:

Research is a systemic, critical and self-critical phenomenon which aims to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge and wisdom (1999, p. 38).

The above quote is useful for a researcher because it makes him/her begin to understand what research is all about. 'Systemic' implies a sense of order and structure. Research is perceived to rely on planning and integration of design, process and outcomes. There is 'critical' and 'self-critical' enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge about:

the experience of and nurture of personal and social development towards worthwhile living; and the acquisition, development, transmission, conservation, discovery and renewal of worthwhile culture (Bassey, 1999, p. 39).

In all respects researchers themselves should continually assess, re-assess and reflect on the issues of research which they report in their research products (Morrison, 2002, p. 5; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 49).

I have learnt that methodology entails a range of approaches, procedures and techniques to be used in educational research to gather data. This research is interpretive in nature where there is non-directive interviewing, questionnaire administration and non-participant observation. This enabled me to understand others' reality by interacting with them and listening to what participants were telling me (Terreblanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 123). The aim of methodology is "to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific

inquiry but the process itself” (Keplan as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 47). Methodological issues and considerations therefore contribute to a notion of methodology as a science and a scientific process in which claims need to be strongly substantiated by data.

This research is empirical in nature which means it has focused primarily on data collection. It is research where people were asked about their feelings and opinions on the problem being researched. My attempt to present a fair and reliable picture of how my respondents experience and interpret the issue at hand – the curriculum changes – will hopefully result in a convincing picture through using rigorous, systematic processes (Bassey, 1999, p. 40).

Qualitative methodology entails generating data, usually in the form of language, through methods such as interviewing, questionnaires, observation and document analysis. Data thus generated is subjected to analysis, which involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, “making sense of the data in terms of participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 461). Because qualitative approaches focus on phenomena that happen in natural settings there is usually a degree of complexity which is best captured by multiple data generation methods. As Leedy and Ormond (2001, p. 147) put it, there are “many dimensions and layers” which can be portrayed “in a multi-faceted form”. The researcher’s role is to portray ‘reality’ as it manifests in the research context.

I now discuss the way my research was conducted. I first look at the research goals, then at research methodology, data strategies, data analysis, validity, sampling, ethical issues and limitations.

3.2 Research goals

The goal of my research was to investigate perceptions of selected Foundation Phase teachers of the recent changes in the curricula. To achieve this goal, I needed to answer the following main questions:

- Is there a need at times to change curriculum?
- What are teachers' attitudes to and opinions of these curricula?
- What kind of curriculum would teachers want to be designed to meet the educational needs of South Africa at this time?
- Who should be involved in curriculum development, and at what levels should they be involved?
- Is CAPS likely to change teaching and learning in ways that teachers and learners will benefit from?

The purpose of this study was to:

- Find out if the teachers felt there was a need for the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of the curricula changes.
- Find out what kind of curriculum teachers would want to be designed and who would be involved in curriculum development, and at what levels they should be involved.
- To find out how teachers see the differences in assessments between CAPS and NCS.
- Find out whether the teachers felt that CAPS would change teaching and learning in ways that they and learners will benefit from.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Research paradigm

This research was carried out within the interpretive paradigm. An interpretive research paradigm is where reality varies from one person to another; reality is seen as a construct of the human mind. People perceive the world in ways which are often similar but not necessarily the same, so there can be different understandings of what is real. These differences in perceptions, interpretation and language are not surprising seeing that people have different views on what is real (Bassey, 2000, p. 13; Bassey, 1999, p. 43). The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm therefore, is to understand “the subjective world of human experiences” (feelings and opinions) (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 36). As people understand things differently, it was expected that feedback was to be varied and this was, to some extent, the case. I believe that a range of responses was likely to enhance my understanding of the new curriculum and how teachers are experiencing it.

This study was qualitative in nature and framed in an interpretive tradition. The meaning of the term qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at through statistical procedures. This can refer to research about persons’ lives, stories and behaviour but also about organisational functioning, social movement or interactional relationships (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17). The reason for using this method was that data were collected in a natural setting where the subjects spend their working lives. The teachers were in their ‘real world’, describing their daily experiences in relation to the curricular changes. Furthermore, in qualitative research the outcome is not merely to simplify what is investigated. The researcher recognises the many layers and dimensions that constitute and underpin the issue being discussed and the qualitative researcher seems to know

that there is no 'truth' to be discovered (du Plooy, 2002, p. 29; Leedy & Ormond, 2001 p. 147; Gillham, 2000, p. 10).

Qualitative research has been assigned many different labels such as field research, interpretive research, ethnography, naturalism and constructivism. These share a common focus which is that they interpret and construct the qualitative aspects of communicated experiences. Furthermore, qualitative methods require collecting data verbally which could give the researcher in-depth understanding of the nature of respondents' experiences (Louw & Edwards as cited in Makhwathana, 2007, p. 5).

3.3.2 Research method: Case study

Yin (2003, p. 13) describes case study research as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident: In other words, the case study method was used because I wanted to understand real life phenomena in-depth (Yin & Davis, 2007, as cited in Yin 2009, p. 18). Case study research copes with distinctive situations in which there are several variables of interest and as a result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge through triangulation (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

My research therefore, was social empirical research in an educational setting. Empirical research is a type of research where data collection is centre stage: it is where questions are asked of people, observations made of events and measurements taken of artefacts (opinions) (Bassey, 1995, p. 5; Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 38).

3.3.3 Research sites

Two Primary Schools were selected as research sites, an ex-Model C school and a 'township'¹ school. As they will not be identified due to research ethics, I have coded the Model C School as School A and the township school as School B.

Most of the teachers in the township school are known to me. I also know the Principal and a few of the teachers at the Model C School. I interviewed and administered questionnaires to four Foundation Phase teachers (R-3) at school A and five at School B as well as the two principals from both schools.

School A, a public school, was opened in 1949 and is managed by the Governing Body comprising parents, teachers and the principal. It provides tuition for learners from pre-school to Grade 3. It is renowned for providing high quality education and is a feeder school for ex-Model C primary schools in Grahamstown and beyond, with learners that are fully equipped academically, socially, emotionally, and physically so as to make the rest of their school careers meaningful and productive.

The school is situated in a fairly up-market part of town and has attractive surroundings. It is also well-equipped and well maintained. Since it caters for middle- and upper class families the school is able to charge school fees that make it possible to maintain and improve on its facilities as well as hire additional teachers. School policy actively encourages parents (SGBs) to become involved in the life of the school. The teachers at this school are well qualified and highly professional, ensuring a high standard of learning. Discipline is applied with a firm, but caring attitude. The classes range in size from 30 to 35 learners.

¹ The 'township' is commonly used in the literature to denote historically black, disadvantaged schools, located in black townships.

The language of instruction is English. However, both IsiXhosa and Afrikaans are also taught as additional languages. Sports activities form an integral part of the school programme and teachers are assisted by very competent sportsmen and women from Rhodes University. There are also cultural activities where learners are taught music appreciation, singing and movement to music. Public speaking skills are also an integral part of the school curriculum.

In addition, there is a diversity of cultural background and religious expression which are strongly promoted by the school.

School B runs from pre-school to Grade 7. It is a public Catholic school managed by the Catholic Authority and a Governing Body. The school respects other different religious views but would rather follow Catholic ethics. Not all teachers are Catholic. The school was started by Roman Catholic sisters and over time the Department of Education started employing non-Catholic teachers to work there. Religious persuasion is not a significant factor though, and causes no conflict or tension.

Unlike School A, School B is located in an area where people live in poor and overcrowded conditions. Most of the parents of the children who come to this school are unemployed; they depend on old age pensions, disability and children's grants. Social issues such as the selling of dagga, exposure to violence and drinking have affected the learners at this school. Most of the children are looked after by grandparents who fail to discipline them properly. As a result classroom and school discipline is a real challenge, one which the school tackles with enthusiasm and considerable success.

Parents are expected to be involved in the life of the school but their involvement is less than in ex-Model C schools. As I have pointed out above, most "parents" are grandparents who are not educated. While the medium of instruction is English,

most learners want to speak IsiXhosa and their command of English language is not very good. Extra-mural activities are done with difficulty because of the limited space at school. Most of the sport activities such as hockey are done at the Prospect Fields at Rhodes University as the school has no playing fields of its own.

In spite of these challenges, School B has a reputation of producing excellent results. The school is frequently used as a teaching practice school by Rhodes University because it is a functioning, high-performing organisation, where student teachers can expect to gain valuable teaching experience.

3.3.3 Data generation strategies

The following were my data generation methods:

- Individual interviews
- Questionnaires
- Document analysis
- Observation

I also did informal observation and recorded interesting and relevant issues in a research journal.

3.3.3.1 Individual interviews

An interview is designed to encourage respondents to answer questions which will help the researcher to answer the research questions. Rossouw (2003, p. 143) adds that a research interview is a conversation between the researcher and a respondent with the specific objective of gathering information about a topic that the researcher is investigating. Interviewing is a form of social interaction (Welland & Pugsley, 2002, p. 33).

In addition, Laing (1967, p. 66) claims that an interview is:

A flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 349).

I used interviews because I wanted to follow up on unexpected responses to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they did (Kerlinger, 1970, as cited in Chen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 351).

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of the recent changes in South African curricula. The participants were encouraged to express their feelings and attitudes openly to the issues being discussed. This aspect of the research was to yield significant results as some of these teachers were colleagues and had strong feelings which they were willing to share.

I used individual semi-structured interviews in my research because it was suitable for my topic (Appendix 2). I felt one could not observe feelings, thoughts and intentions (Merriam, 2001, p. 72) and wanted respondents to express these so that I could enter into the participants' perspectives. Participants selected had common characteristics that related to the topic as will be elaborated on later. Patton (1990, p. 335) says the aim of interviews is "to get high first quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views". For this reason, open-ended questions were used, allowing opportunities for in-depth probing and ensuring that participants understood the questions which were being asked. With interviewees' approval the interviews were recorded.

3.3.3.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are written questions covering a number of issues related to the topic of interest. They are completed either in a direct person to person encounter, can be emailed or handed to the respondents for completion without any supervision (Mwamenda, 2004, p. 14; Roussouw, 2003, p. 127 as cited in Makhwathana, 2007, p. 44).

According to Gillham, questionnaires are towards the:

‘structured’ end of the verbal information-getting continuum and usually have a minor place in case studies (if they are used at all) but useful in any project and easy to construct. They are, however, central to the survey main method (Gillham, 2000, p. 78).

Questionnaires are useful in the sense that they could reach many respondents as possible at one time. The questions I used were open-ended in nature because of the nature of my research. Such questions enabled the participants to write freely in their own terms, to explain and qualify responses and avoid limitations of answers. The questions I used were those where I had to leave spaces for the participants to provide free responses (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 330). Such questions as ‘What kind of curriculum would you want to be designed/implemented to meet the educational needs of South African schools at this time? Please explain’ were provided to the participants. The questionnaire is included as Appendix 1.

3.3.3.3 Document Analysis

Documents provided me with useful background and context for my research. Documents also supported other forms of evidence collected (Koshy, 2005, p. 96). I collected data by studying documentary evidence such as the NCS and CAPS policy

documents and looked for differences in the presentation and arrangement of content, pedagogical positions and assessments strategies.

In the Foundation Phase CAPS and NCS documents, I looked at how the assessment guidelines have been implemented and checked whether the workload was lessened as the teachers had been complaining about the amount of paper work. The analysis of documents was done before, during and after the interviews and as such was used to inform and complement the interviews. My main concern here was not to study CAPS but to investigate the feelings, attitudes and opinions of the changes that have happened in South African schools since 1994 when the country became an independent state.

3.3.3.4 Observations

I also made use of observations and noted issues that seemed interesting and relevant in a research journal. My observations took the form of getting a feel for the climate of the school, looking at learner behaviour, teachers' conduct and general levels of professionalism.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis means sifting through the data looking for themes (Hinchey, p. 86). Stake (1995) says data analysis is "giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations". Therefore, data analysis yields the researcher's findings (Hinchey, 2008, p. 86). Data collected through individual interviews and questionnaires were coded to create categories. Coding is "the system to identify individual pieces of data as belonging to a particular category" (Hinchey, 2008, p. 92). Maxwell also states that:

Coding is the fracturing of data and then re-arranging them into categories that facilitate comparisons between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts (2005, p. 94).

After coding I then identified particular themes as belonging to particular categories. I used colour coding marking data with an appropriate colour. This helped me to pick out individual bits of information that seemed to fit together (Hinchey, 2008, p. 92). These categories were then described, with frequent quotation from raw data to strengthen validity, and occasionally compared to documents and observation findings. Finally, the findings were discussed in terms of key literature in the field.

3.6 Validity

In order to interpret and report on the data, the three sources of data (individual interviews, questionnaires and document analysis) were synthesised by using triangulation which served to overcome validity issues as well as enrich the findings.

Cohen and Manion (2000, p. 233) describe triangulation as:

the attempt to map out and explain more fully the richness of human behaviour by studying it from more than one stand point. All transcripts or reports of interviews and observations will be made available for viewing/comment and member checking (2000, p. 233).

Bassey (2002, p. 110) maintains that after the transcription, the recorded data should be shown to participants so that they can have the opportunity to verify the data for validity purposes.

3.7 Ethical protocols

In general, research must be planned in a manner that respondents do not suffer physical harm, discomfort, embarrassment or loss of privacy and vulnerable people such as individuals with AIDS, mentally disturbed people and even the aged should be respected. In short, a non-disclosure and confidentiality agreement should be

prioritised. Permission was sought from the Department of Education (Appendix 3) and from the schools (Appendix 4) to undertake the research in the chosen schools. A letter requesting consent was written to school principals and the teachers. Also, the participants were made aware that although their participation was valued, their role was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw should they feel uneasy during the process of the study. In addition, the researcher undertook to ensure that the names of participants and the institutions under study were concealed. Instead code names, letters and numbers were be used. Lastly, this research will be made available to the participants on request and the analysis of data was made available for viewing/comment and member checking. Gillham (2000, p. 53) recommends that research findings should be shared with the participants so that a researcher can build trust to enhance helpfulness and disclosure of information from the respondents.

3.8 Limitations

I was aware of several potential limitations of this study. As a teacher who does not hold any formal leadership positions in a school in the education sector, I had to rely on other teachers' goodwill and willingness. I needed to remain objective since I was familiar with many of the respondents. There was always the danger that responses would be biased, or that I would misinterpret what was meant. I tried to keep the process as professional as possible, making clear arrangements prior to the date of interviews. I also hoped that the use of more than one data generating technique would minimise the risk of bias.

This study does not claim generalisability. According to Struwig and Stead (2004, p. 145), "Generalisability refers to the degree to which the data can be generalised within a group or to other groups". The findings from the two schools may or may not apply to other schools in Grahamstown or to any individual in the same group.

This is for the reader to determine. The threat of subjectivity was to be minimised by showing that findings emerged from the data rather than being my personal opinion.

Chapter Four will deal with the data interpretation and discussion. The Chapter looks at the responses to the questionnaire administration, interviews and the document analysis. These are organised into categories and discussed in terms of the answers they provide to my research questions.

Chapter Four

Analysis and discussion of data

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents analyses and discusses the data generated by the methods employed. Bellavita describes data generation in this way:

Meaning has always implied wholeness. The whole may be and usually is made up of interconnected parts. And meaning for me cannot be separated from context. Chopping reality from anyone's reality into little bits and pieces will damage the meaning (as quoted by Ely et al., 1997, p. 17).

In this Chapter, I present and compose meaning from the data that lead me to understand my respondents' real points of view about the curricular changes that have happened in the last two decades. In addition, this Chapter brings the theoretical understanding as described in previous Chapters into a 'human' reality. For this reason, my aim will be to let the data speak in order to provide a human perspective and thereafter to discuss findings in light of theoretical perspectives.

The research was conducted at two primary schools as explained in the previous Chapter. School A is an ex-model C school. On my visit I noticed that the school is well built and neat and teachers seemed to be very busy doing their school work. I was warmly welcomed (Field notes: 10th May, 2012). School B is a government school under Catholic authority. It is known to be one of the best primary schools in this educational region. Teachers here are always striving to get the best from the learners. They also find it hard to accommodate the many changes that occur but they still want to do their best. The school is known as one of the best at managing school and cluster continuous assessments moderation tasks (Field Notes, May, 2012).

There were eleven respondents: nine teachers, one HOD (the HOD stood in on behalf of the Principal of School A) , a Phase Coordinator and the Principal of School B, all employed at the two primary schools in Grahamstown. They all answered all the questions set out in a questionnaire, and some additional interview questions were posed to them in one-on-one interviews.

Teachers are coded as follows: T1, T2, T3 etc. for the questionnaire participants. For the interviews the teachers were coded as: TA, TB, TC etc. The HOD is coded as HOD, the phase coordinator as PH, and the principals as P1 and P2 respectively.

The data have been analysed into seven themes according to the questions I used in the questionnaire and individual interview questions. Out of eighteen questionnaire questions and seven interview questions, only seven main questions emerged and are used here to analyse my data. The data presented here thus come from both data sources, and are complemented by document data where appropriate.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison hold that:

Research questions are a very useful way of organising data, as it draws together all the relevant data for the exact issue of concern to the researcher, and preserves the coherence of material. It returns the reader to the driving concerns of the research, thereby 'closing the loop' on the research questions that typically were raised in the early part of the inquiry (2007, p. 468).

The authors believe that this approach, where all relevant data from individual interviews and questionnaires are collated, is able to provide a collective answer to questions such as the one posited in this thesis which explores the perceptions of teachers of the curricular changes in South African schools

In addition, Cohen, Manion and Morrison maintain that:

This type of data collection enables patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly (2007, p. 468).

I had initially planned to do focus group interviews, but during the pilot study it became apparent that individual interviews were preferable. In the pilot study during group interviews, I noticed that some of the teachers felt embarrassed to answer the questions in English. It was difficult for them to express themselves in their second language and I unfortunately could not do the interviews in isiXhosa, being a Zambian. Thus, the answers I got were very short, such as “Yes”, or “No” whenever I asked a question. The Principal was the only one who was able to answer most of the questions fully and the other teachers often gave the same answers as the Principal. My personal observation was that the other teachers were intimidated by the Principal. I thus decided to do individual interviews at the two selected schools. Seven categories were created to capture interview and questionnaire data; document analysis is also referred to where appropriate. I referred to the following documents:

- *Oxford Headstart: Life Skills Teacher’s Guide Grade 3*
- *Learning Curve Gazette* Volume 13, Issue 1
- CAPS Life Skills-Foundation Phase: Department of Basic Education
- An article from the Minister of Basic Education - Mrs Angie Motshekga
- An Internet article by Richard Hayward

The themes are:

1. The need for change.
2. Apartheid curriculum with its implications.
3. How pre-1994 curricula differed from OBE/NCS in terms of the approaches.
4. Detrimental effects of OBE/NCS.
5. Why CAPS?

6. Will ANA tests strengthen teaching and learning in Literacy and Maths?
7. The desire for a curriculum which is designed by education experts not by politicians.

4.2 The need for curriculum change

Most of the teachers in both the individual interviews and the questionnaires maintained that there was a need for curriculum change but that the changes should not be done so rapidly that it leads to confusion. They also argued that teachers needed to be part of the change process. They agreed that change was needed but differed on the reasons for change. In the following section, I present the reasons for change that the teachers gave me during my data collection. The first section starts with the data collected from questionnaires and interviews.

When asked if there was a need for curriculum changes at times, T6 of school A said: “Yes there is a need for change for social, economic and political reasons”. T7 agreed but added:

Curriculum changes are necessary because they keep disciplines [knowledge] current. The curriculum would become stale and outdated if it is never changed and teachers themselves would become stale as well. However, drastic changes or those which are not implemented correctly or to suit those using the curriculum can be equally damaging. Well thought out changes to put teachers on board would be a way forward (Questionnaire, 2012).

This argument – that change was necessary for educational competitive reasons – was quite widely shared. TA said “There is obviously a need for the curriculum to be revised and changed, and this happens all over the world” (Interview, 2012). TE of School A said that:

It is good for a curriculum to be changed because it is important to keep up with modern developments and for education to utilise modern technology (Interviews, 2012).

T5 generally agreed, saying that “There is a need to adjust to what the students need. Every year we get new things in the USA” (Interviews, 2012), but warned that the “curriculum must set high standards but must also acknowledge the realities of where our schools are currently functioning” (Questionnaire, 2012). I learned that Teacher 5 is an American who came to study at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. In the process of the interview, he told me that he was aware of the schools in the townships and said that the large classes made it very difficult for the teachers to teach effectively (Field notes: 10th May, 2012). Thus while holding up the USA as a model for “new things”, he seemed also to be aware of the realities that face South African teachers.

Furthermore, I had heard that Teacher 8 was new to the teaching profession and that she did not know how to answer some of the questions well but I wanted her input (Field notes: 10th May, 2012). When asked if there was a need for curriculum changes at times, she said “Yes and no. Change is good but don’t throw out the old which is tried and tested and works well” (Questionnaire, 2012).

Only one respondent – T4 – was opposed to curriculum change. She said:

No there should be no changes because when you get to feel confident with the existing curriculum you become confused when the government changes to another one (Questionnaire, 2012).

PH (Phase Coordinator of School B) said that change was necessary but said that it needs:

To be done appropriately and proper training or workshops need to be done for teachers. Furthermore, teachers as well need to play a role in changing the curriculum.

In addition, PH said that:

Change is vital as long as proper direction and guidance is given to teachers. Teachers must be trained well and ensure that they play a significant role in the changes. The new curriculum must benefit every child and offer every school, whether rural or urban, equal opportunities (Questionnaire, 2012).

TB agreed and said that changes should happen but that the government should not “change curricula often; they should wait at least for ten years before trying another curriculum” (Interview, 2012). TC of the same school felt that change was essential: “Generations change and so must the curricula”. (Interview, 2012), but added:

Changes pose a dilemma to teachers; the government should first consult experienced teachers and run proper workshops because the people involved in the implementation do not always appreciate what is required of teachers in the classroom (Interview, 2012).

The same teacher indicated that:

Education is managed well in other countries. Our government should bear in mind that each country has its own educational culture. For example, in South Africa and Africa in general, many children are second language speakers of English (the LOLT) and their living conditions are different from those countries with a sound economy (Questionnaire and Interview, 2012).

This awareness of the need for teacher consultation and the utilization of teacher expertise characterized several of School B’s responses. TC’s awareness of South Africa’s unique educational culture also displayed an unusually acute sense of critical engagement.

TD of School B said she had been complaining about the failures of the government for not sticking to one curriculum and that for the past 15 years she has endured enough of these changes. She was retiring in 2012 and she seemed relieved and happy about it. When asked if there was a need for curricula changes, TD said “Yes-

you have to keep up with advancement of technology and the world our children will have to face” (Interview, 2012).

On the other hand TB said:

There is a need, but the government must first wait for at least ten years for it to change to another curriculum; changing it so often, will confuse teachers and learners who would still be getting used to the existing one (Questionnaire, 2012).

When asked the reason why there should be changes, she referred to “the situation that we find ourselves in and the changing state of the world that we live in. I believe the whole world have had their curricula changes” (Interview, 2012).

In summary, there is overwhelming support for curriculum change in both schools. Reasons for support differ, ranging from the need to keep up with the rest of the world, technologically and educationally, to the need for redress and transformation. None of the respondents gave unconditional support though: some felt the changes were too frequent and that teachers had been sidelined in the process. There was also a sense of criticism of the DoE training programmes which are sometimes run by ‘experts’ who knew less than teachers.

These reservations regarding rapid change are not unusual or strange. Hoadley and Jansen comment on the phenomenon of resistance to change among teachers:

Many teachers’ response to the idea of change is ‘Oh, no, not again!’ or ‘But why?’ This is particularly true of South African teachers who have been through a number of curriculum reforms in the recent past (2009, p. 205).

However, curriculum change is not limited to South Africa as reported earlier in Chapter Two. Globalisation has resulted in many African nations striving to organise

their curricula in the same way as countries in the first world do. As a result, curricula are designed along competence or outcomes based lines, enabling recognition and appropriate certification.

Furthermore, changes in education could be seen as natural and inevitable, as is the case in other fields such as technology and politics (Lombard, as cited in Wolhuter, Charl, Warnich & Meyer):

It is human to perceive the world as imperfect, and people are always aspiring to change things for the better. Therefore, change is not primarily intended to slow things down; it is rather intended to challenge existing things as being tentative, hypothetical and temporary in the search for improvement, innovation. Sometimes change is imposed on us; at the other times it is self-driven and voluntary (2012, p. 1-2).

Almost all participants interviewed in my study agreed that curriculum change may be necessary from time to time, but felt that it was crucial that teachers should be notified first or even involved in the process. Unfortunately this was not done with the introduction of OBE which meant that many teachers were ill-prepared for the paradigm shift and found it difficult to navigate the new jargon that accompanied OBE and the new curriculum C2005 (Jansen, 1999; Department of Education, 2000 as cited in Killen Vandeyar, 2003, p. 119). The paradigm shift from the traditional 'apartheid' curriculum, which was prescriptive, content-heavy, detailed and authoritarian, with little opportunity for teacher initiative, to C2005/OBE with its emphasis on learners rather than teachers, resulted in confusion and a feeling of loss of control (Weber, 2006; Jansen as cited in Weber 2008, p. 26 by Stoffels; T8, T7, T9 Questionnaires and Interviews). In the minority were teachers from the other Grahamstown school who indicated that they were not affected by these changes because they had been using an OBE approach even before OBE was introduced (Interviews, 2012; Questionnaire for P1). One teacher highlighted the importance of teachers being given ongoing inspiration and stimulus, which she felt should be the

responsibility of education specialists in South Africa (Questionnaire participants, 2012).

4.3 The need/reasons to change from an 'Apartheid' curriculum

This section focuses in particular on the government's motivation for phasing out the pre-1994 curriculum. In the following paragraphs, I report on the responses the teachers gave as examples of why the government decided to implement OBE.

Four of the six respondents I interviewed said that the change from the apartheid curriculum was due to political motives as the apartheid curriculum was biased and discriminatory. Participants believed that the pre-1994 curriculum was beneficial to learners who had not experienced any disadvantage (mostly white children) encouraging teaching methods where learners were asked to use their skills to work on their own to find the answers to the given problems. The respondents argued that government brought in OBE as a tool for bringing about equity or equality, and to eradicate inequality in South African schools. Another view encountered was expressed by T5 who said that:

OBE tried to set high expectations of educators, learners and schools by adopting a curriculum based on American/British teaching standards with the concepts very foreign to South African teachers with ambitions to keep with "Western" teaching standards and methods of instruction (Questionnaire, 2012).

This criticism has featured prominently in commentaries on OBE. As reported in Chapter Two, for example, Hugo and Soudien write:

C2005 represents an 'imported' curriculum; It has been brought from New Zealand and the United Kingdom with a view to induce the "best-price" in South Africa's school education without giving any attention to the latter's historical and present circumstances (as cited in Kumar, 2010, p. 10).

But the dominant argument was the political one, expressed in a variety of ways. T6 said:

The disparities between the different population groups were vast. The education and training for future needs in developing the economy and society as a whole was inadequate (Questionnaire & Interview, 2012).

This argument was supported by T3 and T4 (Questionnaire, 2012).

According to T7, the apartheid curriculum was:

Very Christian and white Afrikaners dominated which obviously was completely prescriptive and did not represent the needs and wants of the majority of people in South Africa (Questionnaire, 2012).

In addition, T8 said that they changed the apartheid curriculum to OBE because they “wanted to exalt their political power to dismantle apartheid and try to close the gap between the fully functioning schools and those less privileged” (Questionnaire, 2012). T1 said that “Introducing OBE was the only way of getting rid of the old apartheid curriculum, which the teachers felt was not good enough for the other races” (Questionnaire, 2012). TA provided specific details of the disparities:

Money spent on a black child was less than that on a white one; it was important to show politically, socially and economically that the new system was aimed at a new generation of children. In addition, the curriculum change was meant to place children from the different population groups on the same level and to make sure each population group is represented in the materials that were available to schools (Interview, 2012).

This view was echoed by TD who said “It was essential for the new government to change to OBE because the Bantu Education system was unable to provide the education that the whites had” (Interview, 2012). PH commented on how the previous curriculum encouraged rote learning (Questionnaire, 2012). In addition, PH of School B said that only a small number of schools had benefitted from the

Apartheid curriculum, such as the Model C and private schools. Also, the Afrikaans language was a barrier to most of these disadvantaged schools.

The notion of the pre-1994 curriculum being inferior and discriminatory has been extensively commented on in the literature (for example Hoadley and Jansen, 2009, p. 152; Samoff in Weber, 2008, p. lx).

According to Carl:

South Africa acquired a transitional constitution on the 27th April 1994, which remained in force until the new Constitution, finalised by the Constitutional Assembly, was signed by the State President in December 1996. One of the cornerstones of the constitution is the guarantee of equal education for all; and this provision has been one of the major drivers of the transformation of the education system (2009, p. 19; RNCS Grades R-9 Schools Policy: Overview English, 2002, p. 6-7).

At the same time, scholars such as Soudien and others, argued that when C2005 was introduced in 1997 and the Revised National Curricular Statements (RNCS) in 2002, these policies set out to promote and bring about an equal and just society, based on equitable schooling. This is one the reasons why the curriculum drew so heavily on international examples, as notes above. Soudien writes:

In terms of how it came into being, and the idea underpinning it, C2005 is *par excellence* an example of internationalisation. Borrowed from curricular developments in New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the policy came to South Africa as an example of what was thought to be “best-practice” elsewhere in the world (2010, p. 41-42).

4.4 How pre-1994 curricula differed from OBE/NCS

In this section I report on how respondents felt the OBE curriculum differed from the pre-1994 curriculum. As pointed out in 4.3.2, the apartheid curriculum was based on traditional teaching approaches and was discriminatory in nature. Hoadley and Jansen (2009, p. 152) argue that the ideologically distorted curriculum of apartheid

was content-based and organised according to separate subject disciplines. The content was often abstract, theoretical and unrelated to most learners' experience of the real world. Assessment focused on the ability of learners to recall content.

OBE, on the other hand, was the opposite: the teacher is seen to be a facilitator of learners' learning and learners are seen to be active in their own learning (discovering things on their own).

Almost all the teachers I interviewed and those who filled in the questionnaire said that there was a difference between the two curricula. The teaching in traditional/apartheid curriculum was that of teacher-centredness. The teacher was seen to have control of all learning and teaching in class whereas in OBE the teacher was a facilitator. For example, T4 said that:

In OBE the teacher seemed to be the facilitator while the learners did all the research and discovered their own information. The OBE approach is learner-centred, while the Apartheid curriculum was teacher-centred. Learners were seen as clean slates on which knowledge was written by the teacher (Questionnaire, 2012).

However, the responses to the new curriculum and to OBE were overwhelmingly critical and negative. Some of the respondents felt that the OBE approach was difficult to use because the learners and teachers in disadvantaged schools lacked resources. Some argued that Grade One learners could not manage group work. Teachers were also too accustomed to traditional methods, such as the audio-lingual type of teaching where they drilled learners during language lessons until the learners said the words correctly. Here are some of the detailed responses.

As pointed out earlier T5 comes from America and is new to South Africa. His response was critical, arguing that the curriculum made mastering difficult content seem easy: "I do not know much about the Apartheid curriculum. However, I know in some ways it sought to limit skills that people could learn and direct others to skilled trades to benefit working labourers. OBE came with the assumption that

learners would be “rocket scientists” just because they made the goals” (Questionnaire, 2012).

T6 felt the OBE/NCS curriculum had positive pedagogic implications, as in:

Learners participated more; debates and discussions are encouraged and lessons are learner-friendly. More research and self-discovery is encouraged. There is learning through discovery activities. There is more skills-based learning and there is learning through practical activities and through movement, art, drama, music. Content and knowledge represented all population groups and culture (Questionnaire, 2012).

But she also expressed a reservation:

OBE/NCS worked well in the well-resourced schools such as those in the Model C category with resources like computers, teaching materials and enough textbooks to cater for all the learners in the school (Interview, 2012).

Another positive consequence was mentioned by T7 who thought that “OBE/NCS lends itself to much more flexibility and freedom in terms of teaching and learning” (Questionnaire, 2012).

Mostly, though, the responses were negative. T8 simply said that OBE/NCS has “confusing terminology, unrealistic goals and there are many grey areas in assessments” (Questionnaire, 2012). PH said:

In OBE/NCS, the learner was an active participant in the learning process but content was lacking which is why I believe the traditional approach needed to be partly considered as teachers were not provided with a set of topics to teach. The whole emphasis was on discovery and research with minimal guidance for teachers.

PH also felt that there was a lack of appropriate curriculum planning (Questionnaire, 2012). She added:

In the apartheid curriculum only a few schools were well looked after and benefited a lot especially ex-Model C schools and private schools. Disadvantaged schools especially black schools had some huge problems for example with language problems and other factors (Questionnaire, 2012).

The HOD focused on classroom methodology:

OBE/NCS curriculum centred mainly on group work and this was not helpful for learning basic concepts. Children had to learn from text books and from discovering information on their own. Although OBE/NCS was aimed at equipping learners with skills to identify and solve problems so as to bring about social transformation, one of the drawbacks was the lack of skilled and experienced teachers in crucial subjects like Mathematics and Physics (Questionnaire, 2012).

This lack of clarity also came into focus in T3's response:

Children were encouraged to discover things for themselves but there was no definite curriculum, only outcomes which you could reach as you liked. In the apartheid curriculum, there was a definite, stipulated curriculum and it was the teacher's job to see that the children completed and knew what was in the curriculum (Questionnaire, 2012).

T2 focused on the role of assessment:

OBE/NCS resulted in slow learners lagging behind because teachers were always rushing to complete their assessment tasks and had no time for assisting individuals and classes were large (Questionnaire, 2012).

The above comments suggest that most teachers failed to cope with OBE and almost all the teachers I interviewed told me that OBE/NCS was a curriculum with which they were not comfortable. The apartheid/traditional curriculum made them feel like teachers, whereas OBE robbed them of their roles as teachers, and they viewed the differences between the two curricula as significant in terms of teaching and learning. Other factors that emerged were the lack of resources required by OBE, the

lack of clarity in the curriculum, the complex language and the dominant role of assessment and its accompanying paperwork.

As pointed out in Chapter Two, OBE (and hence C2005 and the NCS) was heavily influenced by the work of Vygotsky who promoted the notion that social interaction and social context - a world full of other people who interact with the child from birth onwards - are essential for cognitive development. This theory seems to underpin the outcomes based approach as used in South African schools. This school of thought is also recommended by other theorists like Piaget and Dewey (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 110).

The South African government at that time believed that this learner-centred approach to teaching and learning was appropriate for South African learners. Furthermore, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) expected teachers to have the following qualities:

Qualified, competent, dedicated and caring, and who were able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000 and these teachers were to be seen as mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and learning area/phase specialists (Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9. (Schools): Policy: Overview English, 2002, p. 9).

In spite of this excellent definition of a teacher, almost all my participants felt that teaching according to the OBE/NCS curriculum was not easy as much time was taken up with paper work, assessment tasks and moderating rather than teaching of learners (Interviews and Questionnaires, 2012).

In addition, the teachers did not like the constructivist way of teaching because it requires learners to learn through social participation which they believe does not work with beginners like Grades 1-3. Learners in these Grades were very noisy during group work and did not know how to do research projects. Parents were unable to help them because they were equally ignorant of the requirements of this curriculum (TD & TB, Interview, 2012).

4.5 The effects of OBE/NCS

The main theme of this section concerns effects of the introduction of OBE and C2005 in 1997. OBE was meant to change the ways in which learners learned. As mentioned in the previous section, learners would become discoverers of information and teachers would become facilitators in their classes. However, as reported in the previous section, these ideas resulted in confusion amongst teachers who were used to controlling their classes, the learning and their learners. Teachers complained that they were “robbed” of their role as teachers and that there was a lot of paper work in OBE/NCS, because every term they had to do continuous assessment tasks and recording of marks, while in the old curriculum most of the assessment took place in the form of examinations at the end of the year.

The metaphor of being “robbed” of their roles is a significant one with profound implications for education in South Africa. As noted in the previous section, the work of Vygotsky underpinned the thinking in OBE and the NCS. Central to this way of thinking is the changed role of the teacher, from transmitter to facilitator. This is the change teachers in this study were unable to accept. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2013, p. 110), the learner is the key player in this paradigm, who participates in generating meaning or understanding. The learner “cannot passively accept information by mimicking, but rather must internalise, reshape or transform the information” connecting “new learning with prior knowledge” (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 110). The learner is thus seen to be responsible for his or her

learning (RNCS, Grades R-9: (Schools): Policy: Overview English, 2002, p. 8). Furthermore, the fact that teachers focused so heavily on the burden of increased paper work points to an inability or unwillingness to identify with a new shift in teaching and learning. Paper work is more than the administrative, bureaucratic element of classroom teaching. An important component of 'paper work' is assessment which is the key to effective learning.

In response to questions regarding the problems with NCS and OBE, almost all participants complained bitterly about not having had sufficient training to cope with curriculum changes. Complaints started during the implementation of OBE/NCS and these complaints continued with the introduction in 2013 of CAPS in the Foundation Phase. The following paragraphs describe the difficulties encountered during the implementation of OBE. T5 (the teacher from America) wrote that "There was not enough interest in teacher support and development. There was little scaffolding for teachers to transit to the new curriculum" (Questionnaire, 2012). He added that:

OBE jumped the gun and did not take into account the current situation in education in South Africa. There needed to be greater infrastructure and support for teachers to make OBE work. In the USA, there have been many conceptions of OBE that have had drastic consequences of overwhelmed teachers who felt their methods were not valid (Questionnaire, 2012).

T7 similarly questioned OBE's suitability:

I don't think it was implemented correctly and I don't think the teachers themselves knew how to implement the OBE/NCS curriculum effectively. The curriculum was not meant for South African culture (Questionnaire, 2012).

She added that "The government had not done its homework properly and should first have implemented a pilot form of the curriculum to see if it was going to work or not" (Questionnaire, 2012).

T6 commented that:

The under resourced schools did not benefit from NCS/OBE. Teachers were overwhelmed by the new vocabulary, assessments and lots of administration, SO's, LO'S and AS's. Out with the old curriculum and in with a new one without support materials (Questionnaire, 2012).

P1 similarly felt the process had been rushed:

The government had not done its homework properly and should first have implemented a pilot form of the curriculum to see if it was going to work or not. You can't change to something when the other curriculum is not working for people. The government should first have educated the teachers on the new curriculum. However, at our school we use our own initiative to teach the children, and we are not bound by the requirements of OBE or any other curriculum (Interview, 2012).

Afterwards she said that they had been using the OBE approach at their school ever since the school started even before the government introduced it and said she was very proud of that. The new teacher in the system also said that the effects of OBE/NCS were that "There was bad planning, insufficient training for the teachers, confusing terminology and loads of paper work" (Questionnaire, 2012), a sentiment shared by TF (Questionnaire, 2012). Lack of resources also emerged as a reason for failure (TE, Interview, 2012).

The loss of confidence referred to earlier emerged again as a significant issue. TD explained:

I was confident with the old apartheid curriculum and when OBE was put in place, I lost confidence and I have battled ever since. The high expectations I had of the new curriculum have vanished. I feel that the South African government had wasted time and money on such a flawed curriculum (Interview, 2012).

Hence, she has in a sense resisted change and, as she explains:

I was still using the drilling method and memorising facts in teaching languages and Mathematics. I used to drill rhymes into the children

over and over again until they had mastered the words and this system worked well for me (Interview, 2012).

In spite of the problems highlighted above by participants such as TE, T5, T8, T7, T6 and P1, they indicated that they personally had experienced no problems in implementing OBE/NCS because their classes were not large and most of the teachers at their school were English first language speakers. They also had no problem allowing their children to work on their own because they had enough resources, such as computers, for them to use for their research projects, unlike their counterparts in the township schools who have no such facilities. P2 also said that problems were encountered only by those who were reluctant to change, especially those trained before OBE because a new curriculum always requires dedication and willingness (Interview, 2012).

4.6 'Why CAPS...?'

The main theme of responses to this question was that CAPS would bring about change and make some amendments to the NCS so that teachers would have less work in their assessments tasks. The fact that the teaching content would be provided so that teachers would know what they were expected to teach rather than deciding for themselves also emerged as a benefit. This is in line with the view expressed by the Minister of Basic Education:

The NCS is repackaged so that it is more accessible to teachers. Every subject in each grade will have a single, comprehensive and concise Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement which will provide details on what teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis (Article issued by the Minister of Basic Education, 2010).

She went on to say:

The new curriculum - Schooling 2025 - would replace the highly criticised outcomes based education (OBE) system introduced in 1998. However, OBE would not be completely scrapped but would be modified to improve the performance of school pupils (Motshekga, online).

CAPS was presented, not as a completely new curriculum but a supplement to the NCS in order to bring about a fundamental change in schooling outcomes. The Western Cape Minister of Education, Donald Grant, welcomed its coming:

If properly implemented, these changes could improve the education outcomes and also the changes will bring back a far greater focus on the use of text books and on content knowledge - two aspects we are already focusing on strongly in the Western Cape. Also the changes will go a long way to restoring a reasonable balance in the delivery of the curriculum (Grant, online). (SAPA, 2010, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/New-curriculum-new-language-options-20100706>).

Grant's comment – that CAPS would bring back “a greater focus on the use of textbooks and on content knowledge” – was also highlighted by participants interviewed in this research project who believed that the introduction of CAPS would take them back to the traditional way of teaching.

At this stage, it would be helpful to establish the main differences between CAPS and NCS, and to determine why the introduction of CAPS would alleviate the problems teachers have experienced with NCS. The table below captures some key differences:

National Curriculum Statement (NCS)	National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)
<p>Critical and Developmental Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Programmes • Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards <p>Learning Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • Life Skills <p>Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge • Skills • Attitudes • Values 	<p>Critical Outcomes with Developmental Outcomes infused into the content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase overview • Content areas with general and specific aims <p>Subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Language • First Additional Language • Mathematics • Life Skills <p>Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content knowledge and content • Skills • Attitudes and values • Transition between Grades

Adapted from Headstart: Life Skills; Teacher’s Guide. Grade 3. Review Copy by Johnson, Maxwell, Rossouw, Saadien-Raad, Savides, Siegruhn-Mars. CAPS : Curriculum made easy.

There are some significant differences here. The first of these is the notion of a “phase overview” rather than “learning programmes”. A phase overview suggests a clear identification of what is to be taught and learned in each phase, whereas learning programmes and the accompanying outcomes and assessment criteria usually give little or no indication of actual content to be covered. Immediately one sees a renewed emphasis on content, as commented on by Grant above. The second bullet under CAPS – “Content areas with general and specific aims” – is strongly reminiscent of pre-1994 curriculum statements and reveals an even stronger emphasis on content knowledge.

Second, the use of “subjects” rather than “learning programmes” would make sense to teachers, as would the return to recognisable “subjects” (such as Home Language) instead of vague concepts like “literacy”. Finally, the use of “content knowledge” as a focus of the curriculum is a clear signal of a return to knowledge and pedagogically suggests a teacher-centred approach, since the teacher is now again seen as being in control of the learning.

These changes were welcomed by my participants. Almost all who participated in questionnaires and individual interviews believed that CAPS would change the way they teach and learn, and said that there would be less work and fewer assessment tasks. One participant said that with CAPS there would be more teaching than discovering facts, as opposed to the situation with OBE/NCS. CAPS was seen as displaying elements of traditional (behaviourist) teaching and learning and almost all of the teachers and P1 said that they were happy that the ‘old way’ of teaching was back and that they were used to teaching in that manner. Being in control of the class was the best way of seeing themselves as teachers. This aligns with the view explored in the previous two sections where teachers showed their unwillingness to adopt a different role as teacher, and allow learners to learn through discussion and exploration.

Here are some of the responses in detail. P1 said “This curriculum (CAPS) entailed less paperwork. The more they change the curricula the more it goes back to the old system” (Questionnaire, 2012). This was an opinion expressed by almost all of the teachers. There was a general sense of relief that there would be less administrative work.

When asked why CAPS had been introduced, T5 said:

CAPS provides far more tangible goals to work on and more should be done to support teacher development. Having these measurable goals makes it easier to assess students’ abilities. I can do this with

my class of 18, but in schools of 40 and with no support, this task is far more difficult (Questionnaire, 2012).

In the interview she added:

There are never enough tangible materials for teachers in low economic areas to implement and it is difficult to “individualize” instructions with 40 learners (Interview, 2012).

She felt that problems would still be encountered in large classes with no resources (T5, Questionnaire, 2012).

T6’s response was:

I feel good about the introduction of CAPS because the document and guidelines are clear, practical and to the point. There are fewer assessments which allow for more teaching and learning time. Physical Education is included in the school day again and so our school hours have been lightened by an extra hour (Questionnaire, 2012).

There was also concern about how CAPS may be interpreted differently by different schools. T6 said:

The changes from NCS to CAPS are positive, exciting and in line with international trends but the understanding and implementation of this curriculum would vary from school to school and teacher to teacher (Interview, 2012).

I feel these teachers, T5 and T6, mean that no matter how good CAPS may seem to be, some schools will still find it difficult to implement it because of some of the problems the teachers have mentioned above. There might be a lack of textbooks and other teaching materials.

The CAPS and NCS documents reveal a reduction of assessment tasks per term in the Foundation Phase and fewer subjects because Life Skills is now combined with

Life Orientation. This means the only important subjects to concentrate on are Numeracy, First Additional Language (FAL) and Life Skills. This is perceived as a lightened work load.

Everyone felt CAPS would change the way they used to teach in NCS. T7 said “I have really enjoyed working with CAPS so far. It is detailed and it seems like a lot of thought has gone into it from a teaching point of view, which is great!” (Questionnaire, 2012). T8 echoed this sentiment:

We need the basics. CAPS is less confusing and more descriptive. The document of CAPS is much easier to work with and it is set out logically. I am sure of what I need to teach and there is a description of how to teach a specific area (Questionnaire, 2012).

There was only one negative voice. When asked the reason why CAPS has been introduced, T1 of School A said:

I am very unhappy about the introduction of yet another curriculum change I feel that this makes it very hard for teachers and children to cope. The curriculum designers should provide guidance for teachers to cope with the new curriculum (Questionnaire, 2012).

T4 said that the introduction of CAPS was fine because “It has made things easier because there is not much paper work to do unlike in NCS. The time allocated for Home Language is extended” (Questionnaire, 2012). TD similarly felt that CAPS enabled teachers to:

go back to basics ... there is provision for more teaching rather than merely discovery methods which tended to allow some learners to just play, while those who were academically sound did all the research (Interview, 2012).

This response is complemented by the document I read by the Department of Basic Education which argued that “the focus of the CAPS implementation will be on back to basics” (The Learning Curve Gazette, 2011).

T2 said “I am happy with the way that CAPS was structured; they have included teaching plans in each teaching and learning document” (Interview, 2012). She also referred to the fact that there would be fewer subjects and more integration across subjects:

Shared reading will be taught by the teacher first and then the learners who will in turn be given time to narrate the story read. Phonics is also being given more time because we are given a specific time to do each and every component of the language (Questionnaire, 2012).

This is supported by documentation:

The number of subjects in Intermediate Grades 4 to 6 will be reduced from eight to six. For example, Technology will be combined with Natural Sciences, Arts and Culture will be combined with Life Orientation, Economic and Management Sciences will only be taught from Grade 7 (Learning Curve: Heinemann Publishing Gazette, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2011).

When asked about how the National Rating Codes are in the Foundation Phase now that CAPS has been put in place, almost all the participants said that they were happy with the National Assessment Rating Scale Code. In NCS, the four-point scale was confusing meaning that the 7-point scale in CAPS is a huge improvement. It has particularly made it easier to rate children’s performances in the Foundation Phase (TA, TB, TD, TE, TF, and P1 of school A, Interviews, 2012). This seems to be one of the major differences in the way assessments are done in the Foundation Phase between NCS and CAPS.

When asked if their teachers had gone for CAPS training, P1 said “We all went on training for 5 days at the end of 2011 but only received our documents towards the end of the first term of 2012” (Questionnaire, 2012). P2 concurred: “Workshops were organized by the department in order for teachers to know how to implement CAPS effectively” (Questionnaire, 2012).

The above responses indicate that CAPS has been well received by teachers chiefly because work has been planned for them and a schedule of what should be taught when, is also included. Assessment tasks have been reduced and there is less paper work and workload. The difficult OBE terminology has been removed and the teaching approach seems to have gone back to traditional teacher talk. The DoE has also provided training for teachers and principals. The number of subjects has also been reduced.

The next section looks at what kind of curriculum the teachers would want to be designed and who should design curriculum.

4.6 A curriculum designed by education experts, not by politicians

Responses to the question - what kind of curriculum teachers wanted - stressed the need for the curriculum to be specific and to take into account the different circumstances of schools. The need for training was also highlighted. Respondents generally agreed that the curriculum should be designed by education experts.

When asked who should design curricula and what kind of curriculum they wanted to be designed, T5 said he wants a curriculum with:

more specific lesson plans for teachers. Before the curriculum is introduced intensive training and materials must be provided ... there must be follow-up training based on classroom observation and teacher feedback (Questionnaire, 2012).

In the interview he added:

When developing a curriculum, the current situation of teachers must be taken into account, providing those in disadvantaged schools with the support that they need. This was not done with the implementation of OBE, which is why it failed (Interview, 2012).

The same teacher felt that the OBE/NCS was not developed in a way that truly supports the “dire” situations the teachers face. He thought that there needed to be some recognition of those schools that accommodated large classes and limited materials (T5, Questionnaire, 2012).

T6 said:

There are enough experts in the country. They should be employed by the Education Department and less money should be spent on consultants so that more money should be allocated for actual classroom support and materials. Experts are thinking up grand schemes to be implemented by the teachers who work in the classrooms that still look the same as 20 years ago. More money should be spent on the “tools” of the trade than the “words” of the trade (Questionnaire, 2012).

T1 felt that retired teachers should also be involved in curriculum design as they have a lot of experience (Questionnaire, 2012). T7 said:

I would like the curriculum to be designed by researchers who have an in-depth understanding of the education system, as well as how teachers and learners respond to different kind of curricula; individuals with extensive knowledge of South Africa, its people, problems, history and current education situation; and teachers as they are the ones who will actually be teaching and working with the curriculum every day in the classroom (Questionnaire, 2012).

For PH, relevance and international compatibility were important:

I would like a curriculum that would prepare learners for their future jobs and give them the knowledge that is needed anywhere in the world and I feel that our South African learners if given a chance should mingle and work with learners from other countries.

She gave an example by saying:

Learners in South Africa are not on the same level with learners from other countries. Why? If we look at Mathematics and Science subjects, we have a problem. Why? It is because of a lack of teachers who are knowledgeable enough for these subjects. Teachers that are qualified for such subjects find better jobs and better pay elsewhere, because the South African government is not supporting the teachers. Otherwise, a curriculum should be

designed in a manner in which all learners benefit equally - that is black or white or from different backgrounds (Questionnaire, 2012).

PH also believes that teachers should be consulted about and involved in the curriculum development process and teachers should be asked to provide their views on what is working and what is not in their classes (Questionnaire, 2012).

When asked who should be involved in the curriculum development, T3 said:

Teachers of course; but there should be one or two pilot schools used and they should work with them until a good workable system/curriculum is established and then it will be time to introduce it to the rest of the educational bodies. Teachers are demotivated to their wits end. We just don't know what is going to come up next. We have done and re-done and re-done our files. This is a huge job, and frankly, I'm not prepared to do them again (Questionnaire, 2012).

According to the feedback received, there is a perception that teachers are not consulted sufficiently in curriculum design, but that in South Africa this important work is left to people who are not teachers themselves. Other than this concern, the importance of being on a par internationally emerged as an issue for some.

Literature reinforces teachers' beliefs that their input into curriculum development is neither valued nor wanted. Internationally renowned curriculum expert, Pinar, argues that teachers have been reduced to the level of domestic workers, simply carrying out the instructions contained in the curriculum. While it is true that this study suggests that teachers want to be told what to do, the ideal is of course that they occupy the central position in curriculum decision-making and may be seen as both committee members and as a crucial focus group (Juneau, 2011, p. 1). They should decide which curriculum will work in their classrooms. When doing this there should be distinct guidelines provided to them for developing their curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 154; Marsh, 2009, p. 212).

Almost all the teachers I interviewed complained that they were usually not consulted when a new curriculum was introduced or implemented. PH said that

teachers should be part of the curriculum development process because teachers know what goes on in their classes. T5 maintained that, before the curriculum is introduced, teachers should receive intensive training and should be provided with resource materials to assist them with implementation. This last point is the key. If teachers in this study appear only too happy to be told what to do, it is probably because they are disempowered; hence training and development opportunities need to accompany teacher involvement in curriculum processes.

Teacher involvement could go even further. According to Fullan (as cited in Ornstein and Hunkins):

Teachers function not as co-designers of expert curricula and instructional systems, but also co-researchers into the effectiveness of implemented curricula (2013, p. 208).

Fullan points out that many schools allow teachers to work together to develop their own programmes. In this way, teachers can create quality programmes and can also modify internal programmes to meet the specific needs of their learners. This reminds me of P1 who proudly said that at her school they do things their way and use their own resources and do not wait for the Department to provide resources, but they always ensure that what they do benefits the learners in a positive way (Interview and Questionnaire, 2012). This study is, however, revealing that not many teachers think this way.

It is also true that the process of curriculum development can be complicated by political posturing. Ornstein and Hunkins maintain that:

Developing a curriculum involves many people from both school and the community. It also involves planning at the classroom, school, district, state and national level. Sometimes curriculum planners are at odds with one another. This is especially likely when different political interest groups are competing for resources and influence (2013, p. 208).

The teachers interviewed were thus justified in their assessment that political involvement can be held responsible for the frequent changes in South Africa's school curriculum. Each time a new political party takes control of government, the previous government will be judged as having failed in the area of school curricula and changes will be implemented (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 208).

None of my respondents specifically mentioned the learners or the school principal, yet both of these stakeholders are mentioned as possible role-players in the literature. Marsh maintains that students are "an important element in the learning environment and are the ultimate consumers" (2009, p. 212). This tells me that learners are key players in school reform and decision-making. However, research has shown that even in matters pertaining to school management and governance, learners are hardly acknowledged as partners in their learning endeavours (Hunkins and Ornstein, 2013, p. 212). It is unlikely, then, that the learner voice would be granted legitimacy in the field of curriculum change at schools. They are usually not seen by teachers as individuals who could collaborate in modifying the curriculum (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 208; Marsh, 2009, p. 212).

This was evident during my research, as none of my participants mentioned learners as being important role players in curriculum development and change. It seems that teachers tend to ignore the fact that involving learners in curriculum decision-making could be in itself a learning experience, which could result in them being more motivated to learn that specific content. Involving them in this process would also communicate that their opinions and choices matter (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 208; Wilson, 2002 as cited in Marsh, 2009, p. 212). Of course this would imply taking a position where the teacher does not regard him/herself as the sole authority and holder of knowledge, a position which teachers in this study could not identify with as discussed earlier. This point of view is reported in other studies, for example, Marzano (as cited in Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 203) who reports that conservative teachers would disagree that learners should be involved in this

process because it may negatively affect the teachers' authority to make decisions and maintain discipline. They would maintain that the teacher is the chief decision maker to ensure order and a disciplined learning environment (Abraham, as cited in Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 203). The failure to include learners as curriculum developers points to a pedagogic position and a style of learning, rather than a question of policy.

Principals are considered as the curriculum leaders in the school setting. For curriculum planning to be successful, the principal must be the 'ring leader' who should be extensively involved and committed to curriculum development (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 208). That is why Fullan asserts that where schools have been successful in creating quality education; their principals have given strong leadership (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013). Furthermore, Fullan notes that the principal should be seen as a gatekeeper of change (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013, p. 208-9). During my research, I discovered a principal (P2) who was an excellent example of this, as she spent time in discussion with her teachers as to the way forward for the implementation of CAPS (Journal Entry, 2012).

P1 also took the lead at her school and was confident that her school was capable of successful implementation of the new curriculum. She maintained that with CAPS there seemed to be a reintroduction of the old system of teaching (behaviourism). She indicated that her School Management Team would be meeting at the end of the year to plan for the new year and each teacher would have a say as to what he or she thinks should be the area of focus (Questionnaire, 2012).

This provides a good example of the role that a hard-working principal must play in ensuring that all the teachers are informed and prepared for curriculum change. Yet the principals were not mentioned by other respondents as curriculum developers or even managers of curriculum implementers. It seems principals are not regarded as

instructional leaders by these teachers, which seems a missed opportunity and raises questions about what the schools see as their core business.

Finally, according to Marsh:

Parents' influence on curriculum issues occurs most frequently through involvement on school boards/councils. In fact, school boards can be an ideal vehicle for parents and teachers to work together on curriculum decision-making (2009, p. 210).

We see here the importance of parents being involved in the curriculum decision. Although others such as Fullan (1991), Halford (1996), Lambert (2003), Maclure and Walker (2000) and Reeves (2004) (cited in Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 196), may not feel that parents play a significant role in curriculum development, they are expected to assist learners with homework. If they have no idea of what the curriculum entails, the parents would find it very difficult to help his or her child with homework. Again, though, parents were not mentioned as potential curriculum developers. This serves to underline the notion of a curriculum as a static document, a product rather than a process: it is something to be delivered, not developed.

4.7 Will Annual National Assessment (ANA's) strengthen teaching and learning?

I have included questions on the ANA Tests because they are part of the CAPS package that the government and the public thought should be instituted in South African schools. As pointed out earlier in Chapter Two, the government brought in ANA to improve the poor passing levels of South African learners. This programme is meant to resolve the problem of depending on assessments done by individual schools. Now the government is responsible for setting examination papers and the testing is mostly in Mathematics and Literacy. This programme prompted me to include a question or two in my questionnaire to find out if teachers were comfortable with these tests. The introduction of ANA also resulted in a lot of

criticism from teachers and parents. The following are some of the responses that the teachers gave during the administration of the questionnaires.

Firstly, when asked if ANA tests would strengthen the way that we teach Mathematics and Literacy in the lower Grades, T5 said:

ANA would work well if the government showed the school their results because they will help teachers to target the growth of weak and strong areas in learners (Questionnaire, 2012).

Secondly, T6 said:

Yes, we are ambitious for our children to fare well and be confident in their abilities. They are an incentive for our school to be self-reflective and analyse our weaknesses (Questionnaire, 2012).

T7 said that she thought these tests were:

good in terms of gauging the progress of my kids according to national standards. ANA tests will also help to standardise what learners are being taught across the board (Questionnaire, 2012).

T8, who was a new teacher, said that although she did not understand ANA well, "These tests would prepare the children for future written exams in higher Grades" (Questionnaire, 2012). T4 said:

ANA tests will strengthen teaching and learning in schools but the department must be prompt to give us pace setters in time to ensure thorough preparation (Questionnaire, 2012)

T3 felt that ANA tests may work and hoped they would, but said that:

This is just an instance of trying to make the Education Department appear to be doing something clever, when all that teachers needed was professional assistance (Questionnaire, 2012).

T3's response aligns with an article by Hayward which says there is much debate worldwide about standardised tests. For example in Australia and England teachers have boycotted this confusing system of testing. Furthermore, Australian teachers also protested because they are opposed to the publishing of results in the national media and on the national Department of Education's website, maintaining that this resulted in the children and teachers of disadvantaged schools being humiliated by the negative publicity (Hayward, 2011, online).

T1 similarly criticised the testing:

ANA tests are causing teachers to stress as teachers feel an obligation to focus only on those topics that would be examined during the ANA tests (Questionnaire, 2012).

And T3 said, cynically:

ANA tests may work - I hope it does - I hope it is not just another waste of our precious time - to make someone at the Education Department appear to be doing his job. We never seem to get any help or feedback or professional assistance (e.g. for our LSN learners) (Questionnaire, 2012).

From the responses above it is evident that some teachers are happy with ANA tests, because they see no reason why these tests should not be given to learners in schools. However, others are not happy and feel that the Department officials might not send moderated test results back to the schools timeously. There was also a degree of cynicism suggesting a loss of faith in the DoE's ability to do anything meaningful about the schooling crisis.

In the next and final Chapter Five, I summarise my main findings, make recommendations for practice and research, and discuss the study's shortcomings.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter I highlight the main findings and discuss the issues resulting from my research work. I also present recommendations for further research and for practice and discuss the limitations of my study. I will indicate which factors should be taken into consideration when designing a curriculum for the country, and communicate ideas for overcoming resistance to curriculum change.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 The chief finding is in some ways contradictory though after consideration a clear pattern does in fact emerge. The element of contradiction is apparent in respondents' virtually unanimous rejection of the pre-1994 'apartheid' curriculum as discriminatory and biased and equally strong rejection of the post-1994 curricula, C2005 and NCS. On closer examination this apparent contradiction is easily understood though. Participants were virtually unanimous in seeing and accepting the need for curriculum change after the 1994 election. Everyone agreed that the government needed to make a strong statement to break with the past, and the new curriculum, based on an internationally recognised teaching and learning philosophy (OBE) seemed an important and welcome step. The reason for this response, though, was political and ideological rather than educational. The C2005 documents were characterised by pages of rationale and motivation, nearly exclusively explaining how education should be used to bring about social, political and educational transformation. In this sense, C2005 was of symbolic importance. As time passed and teachers continued to struggle with the terminology and wordiness

of the new curriculum, frustration levels grew. The problem was that C2005 was educationally problematic. Respondents repeatedly referred to the jargon in the curriculum, the absence of clear goals and content and the constructivist pedagogical underpinnings. Some believed these were inappropriate for a country like South Africa and could only work in well-resourced schools and countries, and schools with well qualified staff. Indeed, it became apparent that one of the schools used in this study, the ex-Model C school, expressed fewer misgivings about OBE. One respondent said they had been 'doing OBE' for a while anyway. This is because the school is well-resourced, the teachers well qualified and classes comparatively small, all important criteria for effective teaching in a learner-centred approach. Hence the contradiction is resolved: the 'apartheid' curriculum is rejected on ideological grounds, the new curriculum is welcomed for the same reason, but ultimately rejected for the reasons given above.

5.2.2. Closely related to the first point is a finding I think is of great significance chiefly for what it suggests about the teaching profession. The post-1994 curricula (C2005 and NCS), drawing heavily on OBE and informed by constructivism, positions the teacher in a new role: facilitator rather than teacher. Respondents were eloquent in their rejection of this paradigm shift. One respondent said the old (apartheid) curriculum made them feel "like teachers", a very significant comment. What she meant was that the curriculum presented content in such a way that suggested strong teacher-led instruction, a position she found comfortable. Equally telling was a comment by another respondent who said the new curriculum (C2005 and NCS) "robbed" her of her position as teacher. There are rich layers of meaning behind this sense of disempowerment. One is the sense that the curriculum is very difficult to understand. If one is looking for a clear idea of what to teach and when, one is wasting one's time. As one respondent put it that OBE had confusing terminology, unrealistic goals and many grey areas in assessments; this is disempowering. Then there is the radically different conception of the role of the teacher. Experienced teachers who did their training years (or decades) ago would be understandably thrown by notions of learner-centredness and social

constructivism. So, this is also disempowering. Finally, the relentless demand for assessment was experienced by many as turning their jobs into clerks, doing nothing but paper work, a third disempowering factor.

5.2.3 Again building on the previous point, the respondents' unanimously positive reception of CAPS confirms the picture of the role of the 'teacher' that is emerging in this study. Respondents praised the clear content, the clear goals, the lesson plans and the work schedules. One respondent asked for a greater concentration on the "tools" of the trade, rather than "words", and this is what CAPS delivers.

5.2.4 It is unsurprising then that most of the respondents' idea of a good curriculum is one which tells them what to teach, and when to teach it. They want to be told what to do. They also want the curriculum to be designed by experts who know South Africa and are aware of the realities faced by schools. Hence a curriculum that is idealistic – ignoring the fact that many schools have few resources and are overcrowded – is of no use at all. They also want teachers involved, consulted and used by curriculum planners. And finally they want a curriculum that, while recognising local realities, also makes our learners internationally competitive.

5.2.5 Teachers and learners have experienced a significant amount of curriculum change in South African schools since the country became a democratic nation. This has been met with considerable resistance as the study has shown which is not surprising in the circumstances. Curriculum changes have had a big impact especially on primary school teachers. My research has shown that these teachers need continuous guidance during the implementation of a new curriculum for them to understand what the new system requires of them. They also need resources to help them reduce the fear of failing during the implementation of such changes. While this study has not focused on change as a phenomenon, we need to look at it closely, it seems appropriate to make some comments on this matter, drawing on relevant literature.

Although teachers do not often initiate curriculum change, they are the key agents of change because they implement the changes in their classrooms. It is thus vital that they are provided with a clear understanding of what is required by the new curriculum.

However, even if teachers are willing to face the challenges of introducing a new curriculum, they will build resistance if the process is not driven by qualified facilitators. Many teachers complained about unfruitful workshop training sessions run by facilitators who did not know what they were supposed to do.

Teachers will also resist change if they find that the educational authorities are lacking in understanding of what curriculum change entails or if they do not understand the need for curriculum change (Fullan as cited in Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013, p. 231; Fullan, 2007, p. 88). The respondents in this study seemed to see the need for change, though their arguments were politically and ideologically motivated rather than educational.

Teachers will also be opposed to a new curriculum if they feel that it is a threat to their values or if they simply cannot see how it will operate in their context. Many respondents maintained that the OBE curriculum drew too heavily on other countries and was not applicable to the majority of South Africans who are poor and live in rural areas (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009, p. 216).

5.3 Limitations of the study

The chief limitation of this study, as discussed in Chapter Three, is the fact that none of the findings are statistically generalisable. This is an unavoidable consequence of small scale case studies. However, statistical generalisation of the positivistic kind is not the only form of generalisation. Kaufman, as cited in Smulyan, emphasises this:

By viewing [a phenomenon] through the lens of individual experiences, we are able to move away from infinite generalisation and abstractions and into the realm of individual constructions of meaning (2000, p. 43).

What a case study offers is richness of data and context which provides validity and makes the study believable. I hope I have achieved this. One measure of whether the study succeeds in this respect is whether or not readers recognise the scenario sketched here, whether it seems 'true' in terms of their experience.

Another limitation discussed earlier is my role as a researcher due to the fact that I was one of the staff members of one of the schools and friendly with many of the staff at the other. As it turned out, these limitations worked to my advantage, since I could continuously engage in my research without any inconvenience. It also gave me a unique opportunity to acquire a deep understanding of the issues. The question of whether this position posed a threat to my role as 'objective' researcher is perhaps one the reader could answer.

5.4 Recommendations for research

While my research into the perceptions of teachers about the recent changes in curricula was enriching and very useful, it raised a question as to whether teachers really understand the new curriculum well enough to implement it successfully. I would thus suggest that a further study be conducted after CAPS has been fully

implemented. In particular, teachers need to be engaged on the question of pedagogy. This study has found the respondents' understanding of matters such as 'rote learning', 'content', 'lesson plans' and 'teaching schedules' simplistic.

Further study into how CAPS is being received and implemented needs to be carried out in schools all over South Africa, and with teachers in all phases. It is possible that the Foundation Phase teachers have a particular view of curriculum, not shared by Intermediate Phase or Senior Phase.

In a study of broader scope, teachers' actual classroom practice would be a useful source of data. This study did not set out to look at practice, choosing instead to focus on perceptions. This was partly due to the scope of a half-thesis. Classroom data – in the form of videos, observation notes and lesson plans – would be very strong evidence of how the curriculum is being accepted, understood and taught.

I also believe it is also essential that further research be done within the rural and black school environment as this would provide useful information for application across all school environments in South Africa.

5.5 Recommendations for practice

The following are some of the recommendations that I feel would help to reduce the resistance to curriculum change:

- There should be frequent provision of in-service training for educators whenever educational reforms are introduced, in the form of workshops. This would ensure effective communication around curriculum change.
- Teachers should be encouraged to improve themselves academically so that they do not become out of touch with the constant changes taking place

within the education sphere in the country. Current education courses (such as the B Ed and B Ed Honours) routinely discuss teaching and learning theories, an area that emerged as weak in this study. The cluster moderators should also be trained properly so that they are able to effectively guide teachers about the new changes in the curriculum.

- Research has shown that it is not only teachers who struggle during times of curriculum change. Thus, changes designed to improve learners' achievements must be technically sound and should be based on research about what works and what does not work when implementing a new curriculum.

The other recommendation comes from Ornstein and Hunkins, who state that:

Implementation of successful change efforts must be organic rather than bureaucratic. Strict compliance, monitoring procedures, and rules are not conducive for change; this bureaucratic approach needs to be replaced by an organic or adaptive approach that permits some deviation from the original plan and recognises grassroots problems and conditions of the school (2004, p. 305).

From this, it is clear that teachers should not be forced to accept change immediately as it happens. My study has shown that some schools experience fewer problems when innovations are introduced, because their environment is more conducive to flexibility and creativity. Thus, lenience should be extended to teachers working in difficult environments.

According to Ornstein and Hunkins:

Those enacting curricula changes must comprehend the environmental context within which they are operating. An external audit should be made in the initial phase of curriculum development to gather and assess information relating the demographics of the community and its sociocultural, politicolegal, and economic aspects (2004, p. 305).

- Although continuous assessments are useful for assessing the learners' capabilities, I suggest that these tasks should not be done every term. These tasks have affected teachers' abilities to teach effectively because they result in a heavy workload. Instead of concentrating on teaching, they are always busy with marking such tasks which of course have deadlines. I also suggest that summative tests should be utilised as they will lessen the pressure on teachers because these are done only at the end of the term.
- There should be incentives like certificates of attendance of a workshop or a completion of a post-graduate Diploma or Degree. This will make teachers feel honoured for a job well done. In Zambia those teachers who upgrade themselves are acknowledged with a function and are given tokens of appreciation, all of which encourages others to do the same.

5.6 Conclusion

Having investigated the reasons for curriculum change in South Africa over the past two decades, and having obtained a first-hand understanding of its effects on teachers in the Grahamstown area, we now have a better understanding of the current curriculum crisis in South Africa.

It is now important to focus on three challenges that need to be faced by the education community, namely the importance of overcoming resistance to curriculum change amongst teachers and of developing a curriculum which is ideal for South African conditions.

It will also be necessary to examine the importance of my study and its recommendations for the broader education community, and to consider ways in which the findings of my research can be disseminated more broadly in the education sector with a view to enhancing further study.

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Apartheid
curriculum

5. What do you think were the strengths of the OBE/NCS?

6. What were the challenge/weaknesses in implementing the NCS/OBE curriculum?

7.1 Now that you have been introduced to CAPS in your school this year how do you feel about it?

7.2 Why do you feel this way?

8. How is the implementation of CAPS likely to change your classroom practice? Give examples where possible.

9. What kind of teacher resources are you provided with for the implementation of CAPS? Describe how you are using the resources especially in Life Skills.

10. What do you think are the challenges/weaknesses of CAPS?

11. What do you think are the strengths in CAPS?

12. What learning theory(s) is/are used in CAPS? Mention it/them and explain if they are suitable for your teaching and learning in your classroom.

13. What kind of in-service training / support has been and needs to be provided in order for you to understand CAPS?

14. Do you need further workshops on the content of any Foundation Phase subjects? If yes, state which subjects and which topics.

15. What are the differences in assessment in CAPS compared to the NCS?

CAPS: _____

NCS: _____

15. 2. How do you feel about this?

16. Do you think the Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests will strengthen the teaching and learning of Languages (Literacy) and Mathematics (Numeracy) in Grades 2 and 3 in your class/ school? Please explain.

17. What kind of curriculum would you want to be designed / implemented to meet the educational needs of South African schools this time? Please explain.

18. Who do you think should be involved in curriculum development, and at what levels should they be involved? Please mention them and explain.

Appendix 2: Interview schedule

1. Is there a need for curriculum changes at times?
2. In 1994, South Africa became a democratic nation and the Government decided to change the Apartheid curriculum to OBE. Why do you think South Africa embarked on changing the Apartheid curriculum to OBE?
3. How did you feel when NCS/OBE was implemented in South African schools? Have you been comfortable with the implementation of OBE?
4. What are the differences between the Apartheid and NCS/OBE curricula? If any, what are these?
5. Why do you think that the Government has introduced CAPS in our schools? Do you feel CAPS will change the way we are teaching and learning? If yes or not, why do you say so?
6. Are you familiar with the way the assessment guidelines for your grades are framed (Foundation Phase-Grades 1-3). Are there any changes/differences in which the assessments and the National Rating Codes are framed in CAPS and NCS? If there are what are these?
7. Have you received any support on how to implement CAPS? If any, what kind of support have you received? Are you satisfied with the support rendered to you?

Appendix 3: Information and letter

Dear Principal

I am investigating the perceptions of Foundation Phase teachers of the recent changes in the curricula in South African schools, especially now that CAPS is in progress this year (2013).

Since democracy in 1994, South Africa has had a number of curriculum reforms intended to redress the inequalities and injustices caused by the Apartheid regime's policies. As we all know, these curriculum changes have not always had the desired effect and OBE in particular has been strongly criticised. This is why the DoE has recently introduced CAPS. My study will attempt to capture the responses of teachers who actually use these curriculum statements, and the effect the changes have had on their teaching.

I kindly ask you to participate in this exercise by answering the questionnaire questions that I have prepared for you and also to avail yourself for an interview. I would also appreciate your permission to interview selected Foundation Phase members of staff.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated and I thank you in advance for your kind assistance.

Kind regards
Ruth Nakaonga
Masters Student: Education Leadership and Management (ELM)
Rhodes University
Grahamstown

Appendix 4: Interview consent letter

Dear Colleagues

The questionnaires were successful. I thank you again for your consideration and involvement. Some of you were very busy organising for the end of term tests but you left that and came to my rescue.

In order for me obtain more in depth data I would like to also interview you once again at your convenience. Probably, I will repeat some of the questions from the questionnaire. Please let me know when you have time in your busy schedules for me to interview you.

Many thanks

Ruth Nakaonga
Masters Student: Education Leadership and Management (ELM)
Rhodes University
Grahamstown