

# **EXPLORING COPING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY TEACHERS TO MANAGE DAILY WORKLOAD.**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

This work would not have been possible without the support and sacrificial love of my family.

- To my husband Fortune: I thank you my love for giving me the freedom to explore my passions and for nurturing the beauty within me, kwande Fola!
- To my children Sphamandla, Luyanda, Simphiwe, Sikhulile and Zoe : I could not have asked for better children. I pray that you each fulfil God's plan for your life without compromise. I love you all very much.

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I am privileged to have two beautiful ladies as my 'girl friends'.

- To Gugu and Bernice: I truly value your friendship and feel blessed to have you in my life. Love you lots.

- DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment / partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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I, HLENGIWE ABIGAIL NGUSE, declare that

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HOD	Head Of Department
IEB	Independent Examination Board
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LO	Life Orientation
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
RNCS	Revised New Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SAGS	Subject Assessment Guides

## **ABSTRACT**

Teacher workload has been the subject of interest for both local and international researchers alike. These studies have sought to investigate: how teachers perceive their workload, actual teacher working hours, possible solutions to work overload and coping resources used by teachers to manage their workload. The findings have consistently shown that teachers are faced with heavy workloads. As a teacher who once exited the profession due to burn out, I sought to conduct an investigation into how other teachers were managing to cope with workload. The majority of the previous studies employed quantitative research designs and made use of questionnaires and surveys as data generation methods. I identified a gap and saw the need to conduct a qualitative study on how teachers cope with workload. A teacher's workload is divided into teaching duties, extra and co-curricular duties, administrative duties, interaction with stakeholders and communication. The focus of this study is on teacher workload as it relates to the teaching duties. These duties include planning, preparation, assessment, recording and reporting. The study has adopted a qualitative research design and in-depth interviews were conducted with seven teachers from two high schools. Domain analysis and open-coding were used to categorise data into themes during the data analysis stage.

Apple (1986)'s theory of work intensification and Gromm's concept of distributed leadership formed the framework underpinning this research. The findings revealed that work intensification may yield both negative and positive results. The study reported that the participants faced heavy workloads in the form of administrative and co-curricular duties, working in one-man departments, and working long hours. It was, however, found that teachers were finding ways of managing this overloading. The report of a heavy workload was therefore found not to be synonymous with the inability to cope. Some of the coping strategies reported in the study included collaborative teaching, the use of archived assessment tools, planning in the holidays, the use of written feedback and archived report comments.

It is a recommendation of this study that school leaders actively research ways of promoting teacher collaboration as well as creating platforms through which teachers can freely share their experiences in non-threatening environments. I also recommend as an area for further research that studies be conducted with the aim of establishing compatibility between teaching time and the syllabi for various teaching subjects.

## Table of Contents

<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	2
1.3 PURPOSE .....	3
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	3
1.4 RATIONALE .....	3
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	4
1.6 DELIMITATIONS .....	4
1.7 LIMITATIONS.....	5
1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS .....	5
1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS.....	5
<b>2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	6
2.2 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON TEACHER WORKLOAD .....	6
2.2.1 Teaching duties.....	7
2.2.2 The seven roles of an educator .....	7
2.3 WHAT STUDIES REVEAL ABOUT TEACHER WORKLOAD.....	9
2.3.1 <i>Teachers' views of their workload</i> .....	20
2.3.2 <i>The impact of overloading on teaching and learning</i> .....	21
2.3.3 <i>Coping with work-related stress</i> .....	22
2.3.4 <i>Possible solutions to excessive workload</i> .....	22
2.4 EXPLORING THE FIVE AREAS OF FOCUS.....	23
2.4.1 <i>Preparation and Planning</i> .....	23
2.4.2 <i>Assessment</i> .....	24
2.4.3 <i>Recording and Reporting</i> .....	27
2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	28
2.5.1 <i>THE THEORY OF WORK INTENSIFICATION</i> .....	29
2.5.1.1 How intensification manifests .....	30
2.5.1.2 The effects of Intensification on teachers .....	31
2.5.1.3 How teachers deal with intensification .....	32
2.5.1.4 The effect of intensification on school leaders .....	34
2.5.2 <i>DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP</i> .....	34
2.5.2.1 Why distributed leadership.....	35
2.5.2.2 Division of labour .....	36
2.5.2.3 Collaboration as a feature of distributed leadership .....	36
2.5.2.4 Benefits of teacher collaboration .....	37
2.5.2.6 Some limitations of teacher collaboration.....	37
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>40</b>

3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	40
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	40
3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN .....	40
3.4 DATA GENERATION .....	41
3.4.1 Data Generation Instrument.....	41
3.5 THE SAMPLING PROCESS .....	42
3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	43
3.6.1 Gaining access and acceptance.....	43
3.6.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality.....	44
3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF FINDINGS .....	44
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS .....	45
<b>CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	47
4.2 TEACHERS' RESPONSES .....	47
4.3 ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE FINDINGS CHAPTER .....	82
<b>CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>86</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	86
5.2 STUDY SUMMARY .....	86
5.3 KEY FINDINGS.....	87
5.3.1 Emergence of a heavy load on teachers.....	87
5.3.2 Existence of systems, structures and resources to assist teachers with workload. .	88
5.3.3 Teachers as life-long learners .....	90
5.3.4 Insufficient non-contact time.....	90
5.3.5 Planning is the key ingredient to managing workload.....	91
5.3.6 Pro-active thinking and creativity as ways of coping with workload .....	91
5.3.7 Emergence of teacher - collaboration.....	93
5.4 CONCLUSION.....	97
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	99
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>APPENDIX B .....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>APPENDIX C.....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX D.....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>APPENDIX E .....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>APPENDIX F .....</b>	<b>110</b>

# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The new democratic dispensation in South Africa saw a shift in the education system away from apartheid policies, which were aimed at creating and maintaining racial segregation. Attempts at reforms in the education system resulted in the formulation of new policies aimed at redressing past imbalances left by the old regime. Two main policies that came into implementation after the 1994 democratic elections were the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and the Revised New Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Both these policies are significant for this study because of their impact on teacher workload.

The IQMS is rooted in the teachers' struggle against a differentiated system of inspection, control and appraisal. Under this system, inspection in Black schools was characterized by bureaucratic and autocratic control. The need to bring in a new curriculum saw the formulation and implementation of the RNCS. This new curriculum was implemented in three stages. The first stage came immediately after the 1994 elections and was aimed at 'cleansing' the curriculum of all its racist and sexist elements (Chisholm, Hoadley, Mbithi, Brookes, Prinsloo, Kgobe, Mosia, Narsee and Rule; 2005). The second stage involved the implementation of the Outcomes Based Education (OBE), an assessment-driven curriculum through Curriculum 2005. The third and final stage was the review of Curriculum 2005.

In 2004, ten years after the first democratic elections, the Educator Labour Relations Council (ELRC) called for a study to be conducted for the purpose of establishing the number of hours that educators spent on various activities. A study like this was necessary because the schools were still experiencing the implementation of the IQMS and RNCS. Chisholm et al (2005) conducted the study on behalf of the ELRC. The aim was specifically to gather information on the actual work done; compare the impact of national policy on workload as set out in the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) document, with practice; evaluate the impact of policies like Continuous Assessment (CASS) and Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) on educator workload and establish the extent of various other factors that might have had an impact on educator workload (Chisholm et al, 2005).

The findings of the study revealed that three out of four educators felt that their workload had increased significantly since 2000. Areas that were reported to be having an impact on educator workload were: the assessment, planning, preparation, recording and reporting requirements of the OBE; lack of resources and understaffing; big class sizes; the IQMS; the



inclusive education policy and numerous other departmental requirements. I believe that the impact of the implementation of the IQMS and the RNCS is still felt by teachers in many South African classrooms today as these policies were foundational to the current education system.

Various other international studies have been conducted with the aim of establishing the number of hours spent on work by teachers, the causes of work overload in teaching, coping strategies employed by teachers and possible solutions to excessive workload (Butt & Lance, 2005; Dibbon, 2004 and Ingvarson et al, 2005). On the local context, related literature has “drawn attention to the impact of post-apartheid curriculum, assessment and policy change on teachers’ working lives” (Chisholm et al, 2005; P. 8). South African writers like Mbelani, 2008; Vandeyar, 2007; Beets & van Louw, 2005; Bansilal, 2010 and Reyneke, Meyer & Nel, 2010, have all contributed towards the existing body of literature on the working lives of teachers.

Research into both international and local literature reveals that most of the studies that have been conducted on the topic of teacher workload have been quantitative in nature involving large quantities of data and employing questionnaires and surveys as data collection methods (Chisholm et al, 2005; Dibbon, 2004; Butt & Lance, 2005; Ingvarson, 2005 and Matthes, 2011). While this form of research has its benefits in that it allows data to be collected from a larger population which justifies generalisation of findings, it is, however, limited in its ability to allow generation of quality data that cater for depth in participants’ responses. This study arose as a result of the need to have more qualitative studies done on the topic of teacher workload. A qualitative study like this, which involves a smaller sample size (seven educators) is necessary in that it makes allowance for in-depth interviews with educators, thus giving opportunities for the researcher to probe the thoughts and feelings of educators.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Studies show that the South African education system is facing major challenges due to the inability to attract enough young people to supply their skills (Pitsoe & Machaise, 2012; SACE, 2010). According to the report by the South African Council of Educators (SACE; 2010), the current inflows into the profession are not enough to balance outflows from the profession. It is estimated that to maintain the system, 15% of the current matric students will need to join the teaching profession instead of the current 3% (SACE, 2010).

Teacher work-overload has been cited in many studies as one of the possible causes of teacher attrition. Teacher attrition describes a phenomenon in which teachers exit the profession prior to retirement age. Some research has been conducted with the aim of investigating teachers' coping strategies and possible solutions into the problem of teacher workload (Butt & Lance, 2005; Dunham, 1992; Lewis, Roache & Romi, 2011 & Lun Hung, 2012). While findings from these studies have shed some light on how teachers cope with work related stress and their views on what external measures can be put in place in order to lessen the workload, there seems to be a gap in the knowledge of how teachers are coping specifically with their teaching duties.

### **1.3 PURPOSE**

This research is aimed at investigating coping strategies used by teachers as they do planning, preparation, assessment, recording and reporting.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question is: What coping strategies do teachers employ in order to manage the daily workload?

#### *SUB-QUESTIONS*

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their workload?
2. What mechanisms do teachers believe must be in place to enable better workload management?

### **1.4 RATIONALE**

My own experiences as a teacher have inspired me to conduct this research. Like many teachers I know, I made a conscious decision to study towards becoming a teacher because of my love for children. The initial teacher training I received was good and effective in many ways. However, it is my opinion that this training was not enough preparation for facing the work environment. Some of the challenges I was faced with as a new teacher were: big class sizes, under-resourced classrooms, ill-behaved learners, overcrowded curriculum, pressure to account, assessment demands, diverse classrooms which accommodated learners with different learning abilities and lack of support. My experience was characterized by burn-out, stress and eventually resignation.

Having gone back to teaching in a different environment, and having had the opportunity to interact with teachers from various teaching backgrounds, I have come to realise that different teachers attempt to cope with work demands in diverse ways. I agree with Fullan (2010) that teachers continuously reflect on their practice and come up with ways to improve on their work and that teachers themselves carry the answers to the challenges they face. It is for this reason that I made a decision to embark on this project.

It is my belief that the study of this nature is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, as indicated in the background section, there is scarcity of local literature on this topic. Secondly, a qualitative study provides an opportunity to gather more intense data on teachers' experiences and perceptions of workload.

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The majority of South African schools are still characterized by over-populated classrooms, shortage of resources, and low levels of learner achievement in literacy and numeracy skills (SA Department of Education, 2011). These types of challenges will not disappear overnight, but regardless of these hardships, teachers are still expected to perform their duties in the most efficient manner. A study like this is significant, because very little is known about how teachers actually cope with their teaching duties. It is my belief that new teachers need all the help they can get in order to make their initial teaching experience as easy as possible. It is therefore my hope that a documentation of the coping strategies that other teachers have developed during the course of their careers will somehow make a contribution towards helping these new teachers.

### **1.6 DELIMITATIONS**

The delimitations of the study refer to the research boundaries or factors that limit the scope of the study (Simon, 2011). The first delimiting factor relates to the scope of the research question. The subject of teacher workload is multi-faceted. However, this research sought to look specifically at planning, preparation, assessment, recording and reporting. The second delimiting factor pertains to the geographical area of the schools and the participants chosen for the study. The study design would not allow for a larger number of participants; hence seven teachers from two high schools in the Pietermaritzburg, Midlands area were chosen due to their accessibility in terms of distance. The study did not seek to be representative of teachers in South Africa. However, it is hoped that the result will shed some light onto how some teachers cope with the aspects of their workload defined in the study.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS**

The size and nature of the study as well as the fact that convenient sampling was used means that the results cannot be generalised into other contexts. However, as mentioned before, it was the aim of this research to generate qualitative and richer data, hence generalization of results was not this study's priority.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

*Workload* – the work that teachers do on a daily basis, including the hours of work as prescribed in the Policy on Administrative Measures (PAM) document (Department of Education, 1999).

*Overloading* – The inability to complete one's work within the specified time-frame.

*Work intensification* – Stress induced by the overwhelming feeling of not being able to manage or cope with one's workload.

*Teaching duties* – the aspect of a teacher's workload that relates to classroom activities, like preparation, planning, assessment, recording and reporting.

*Teacher / Educator* – For the purpose of this study these terms refer to a classroom teacher who may also occupy the position of an HOD.

*Manager* – Those to whom classroom teachers report, which may include an HOD, the principal or deputy principal.

## **1.9 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one provides an introduction, background and the rationale for the study. In the second chapter, the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework will be explored in detail. Research methodology, which introduces the research paradigm, sampling methods, sampling procedure, research instruments and methods of data analysis, will be covered in the third chapter. Chapter four will provide the discussion of findings and the last chapter will conclude the study and offer recommendations based on the findings and offer suggestions for further research.

## **2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides an account of the literature reviewed in the study. The purpose of this literature review is to contextualize the study into a larger body of knowledge by linking it within a broader framework, as well as integrate it into current debates that relates to the topic. It rests on the idea that research builds and accumulates on the knowledge of prior work done by others (Neuman, 2011). This review is divided into three sections. The first part is the review of the body of local and international research on the subject of teacher workload. Secondly, I present literature on the theory of work intensification, which forms theoretical background to the study. The last section presents literature on the concepts of teacher collaboration, distributed leadership and Gronn's concept of division of labour, all of which form part of the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

### **2.2 SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON TEACHER WORKLOAD**

International literature on teacher workload can be divided into calculations of workload, reasons for increased workload, the impact of workload on the teaching practice and what needs to be done in order to manage workload (Butt & Lance, 2005; Swanepoel, 2005; Chisholm et al, 2005). This literature review will touch briefly on the work done previously in each of these areas.

Policy on Administrative Measures stipulates that the work done by educators includes core duties covered during a formal school day (with or without contact with the learners) and outside the formal school day. During the formal school day, duties include scheduled teaching; relief teaching; extra and co-curricular duties; pastoral duties (ground, detention, scholar patrol etc.); administration; supervisory and management functions; professional duties (meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences etc.); planning, preparation and evaluation. Duties outside of the formal school day involve planning, preparation and evaluation; extra and co-curricular duties; professional duties (meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences etc.) and professional development (Department of Education, 1998).

A post- level one teacher's job description is discussed below to provide the scope of a teacher's workload as an overview. Only teaching duties will be discussed, as the focus of this study is on preparation, planning, assessment, reporting and recording, which all fall within the scope of teaching duties.

### **2.2.1 Teaching duties**

With respect to teaching, eight areas are highlighted as constituents of a post-level 1 teacher's core duties. Firstly, a post-level one teacher is expected to manage a classroom as a register teacher. Secondly, she / he has to engage in class teaching, which fosters a purposeful progression in learning and which is consistent with learning areas and programmes of subjects and grades. Thirdly, teachers are expected to prepare lessons, taking into account orientation, regional courses, new approaches, techniques, evaluation, aids, etc. in their field. The fourth requirement states that a teacher must take on a leadership role in respect of the subject, learning area or phase, if required. Fifth, a teacher is required to plan, co-ordinate, control, administer, evaluate and report on learners' academic progress. Sixth, he /she should recognize that learning is an active process and be prepared to use a variety of strategies to meet the outcomes of the curriculum. Seventh, a teacher must establish a classroom environment that stimulates positive learning and actively engages learners in the learning process. Finally, a post-level one teacher must consider and utilize the learners' own experiences as a fundamental and valuable resource (Department of Education, 1998).

In order to perform duties as prescribed in the policy document on teacher workload, teachers must either be in possession of certain creative abilities and skills or they must be prepared to acquire such competencies. To validate this point I refer to the third, fourth, sixth, seventh and eighth teaching duties highlighted above. To prepare lessons taking into account new approaches and techniques, participate in leadership, use a variety of strategies to meet the outcomes of the curriculum, establish a classroom environment which stimulates positive learning and actively engage learners utilizing their own experiences, requires creativity, skill and time. I therefore aim to research what strategies teachers have come up with as they attempt to cope with their teaching duties as prescribed in the policy document.

I move on to discuss the seven roles of an educator which, together with the eight duties listed above provide a clearer picture of a teacher's teaching duties, as well as of the level of competency required to perform those duties. These roles and competencies describe the theoretical level of competency required from a qualified educator.

### **2.2.2 The seven roles of an educator**

The seven roles and associated competencies for educators describe what it means to be a competent educator in a manner appropriate for an initial teaching qualification (Department of Education, 2000). The policy on Norms and Standards for Educators lists these roles as:

Learning mediator; Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; Leader, Administrator and Manager; Scholar, Researcher and Lifelong learner; Community citizenship and pastoral role; Assessor; Learning area and subject/discipline/phase specialist (Department of Education, 2000). These roles provide the exit level outcomes and their associated assessment criteria and should not be confused with the teaching duties of an educator described above. However, both the teaching duties and the seven roles provide a clearer picture of the workload and the level of competency required of an educator in a public domain.

I will briefly summarize some of the competencies that accompany each of the seven roles as prescribed in the policy document on Norms and Standards of educators.

(1) As a learning mediator, a teacher will be expected to mediate learning and construct learning environments in a manner that is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners in accordance with a South African context. (2) An Interpreter and designer of learning programmes role requires that a teacher understands, interprets and designs original learning programmes, selects and prepares suitable textual and visual resources for learning as well as sequences and paces the learning in a manner sensitive to the differing needs of learners. (3) To be competent as a leader, manager and administrator, a teacher will make decisions appropriate to the level, manage learning in the classroom, carry out classroom administrative duties efficiently and participate in school decision-making structures in a democratic and supportive manner. (4) As a Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner the educator will pursue on-going personal, academic, occupational and professional growth. (5) Community citizenship and pastoral role requires that an educator upholds the constitution and promotes democratic values and practices in schools and society. (6) The assessor role requires an educator to be able to integrate assessment into teaching and learning, provide helpful feedback to learners, design level-appropriate assessment, keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment and know how to interpret these for learner progression. (7) Finally, as a learning area and subject/discipline/phase specialist an educator will have to be well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures relevant to their learning area and know about different approaches to teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2000).

These seven roles of an educator provide a theoretical framework for what a trained educator should be able to demonstrate practically. However, dealing with people is not as straight forward in practice as it may sound in theory. I believe that no amount of initial teacher

training can fully prepare a teacher for participation in school leadership and administration, nor for the handling of learners with diverse educational needs. These competencies are learned on the job. The question that arises is when and how teachers plan and prepare activities related to their teaching duties, while simultaneously acquiring necessary competencies and skills, in order to effectively execute their various roles. Is there enough time allocated within the school day to plan, prepare lessons and mark learners' work? The point I am attempting to drive home here is, if workload is the amount of work to be completed within a specified time frame, then overloading will occur in cases where time allocated is not sufficient to allow work completion. Studies that have been conducted in the area of teacher workload reveal that teachers are complaining about heavy workloads (Butt and Lance, 2005; Chisholm et al, 2005). This current study hopes to investigate the coping strategies used by the participants to manage daily workload.

### **2.3 WHAT STUDIES REVEAL ABOUT TEACHER WORKLOAD**

This section of the thesis aims to give an account of the results of research done in the area of teacher workload. In this section, seven reviews of previous studies done on the topic of teacher workload are presented. These studies were selected because of their variations in terms of where the research was conducted, the approach (qualitative/quantitative) and the conclusions the researchers derived from their findings.

#### **STUDY 1: Educator workload report by Chisholm et al (2005): South Africa**

A study was conducted by Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivulu, Brooks, Prinsloo, Kgobe, Mosia, Narsee and Rule (2005) on behalf of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) to investigate the number of actual hours teachers spent in various activities in comparison with national policy, as well as other factors contributing to teacher workload. The study was conducted in 900 different schools across all provinces around South Africa. A questionnaire was given to 3909 participants with closed and open-ended questions. This questionnaire and time diaries were used for data analysis. In-depth case studies were further conducted with 10 schools to validate the findings of the survey.

The study revealed that there is a gap between policy and practice. Teachers in South Africa were reported to be spending an average of 41 working hours per week instead of the expected 43 hours. The study showed that 41% of the total time was spent on teaching; 14% on planning and preparation; 14% on assessment, evaluation, reports and record keeping, 12% on extra-curricular activities; 7% on management and supervision; 5% on professional



development; 3% on pastoral care; 2% on guidance and counselling. It was further shown that only an average of 16 hours was spent on task (teaching), while the remaining 25 hours were spent on administration and non-administration-related activities. The statistics above reveal that the majority of teachers in South Africa, at the time of the study, spent more than 60% of their time in administrative work. Planning, preparation, assessment, reporting and record-keeping accounted for 40% of the total time of these teachers' workload.

The study further revealed that South African teachers believed that their workload had increased since the inception of Curriculum 2005. (Chisholm et al, 2005). Areas of increased workload as reported in the study were: assessment requirements, reports and record-keeping, management and supervision associated with outcomes-based education, the overcrowded curriculum resulting in expectations on educators to teach too many subjects across too many grades without necessary resources, the preparation of learning programmes, work schedules, and plans, the preparation of learner and educator portfolios, learner profiles, progressions and progress schedules. The marking, recording and reporting requirements of learners' work were seen to be repetitive and unnecessary.

Other factors that were reported as having a bearing on teacher workload were school size, class size, teaching phase, background of the school, learning area or teaching subject, age, gender, number of years or teaching experience and qualifications. With regard to the school size, it was shown that the larger the school, the more administrative work there was for teacher and the less teaching took place. When it came to class size, the study found that educators with smaller class sizes spent more time on administration, preparation and teaching than those with bigger class sizes. While this sounds like a contradiction, as one would expect educators with larger classes to spend more time on administration and preparation, it could only be concluded that the unmanageability of work due to big classes rendered it difficult for these educators to devote more time to preparation, administration and teaching. The type of administration referred to in these findings would probably include more clerical work like filing, as opposed to marking and recording, as these activities would increase with the number of learners. Educators with smaller classes may be involved in teaching extra classes, remedial work or multiple grades, which would explain the increased amount of time spent in teaching, preparation and administration.

The teaching phase was also found to play a significant role in some cases. Teachers in the foundation phase reported to be spending more time in teaching, planning and preparation compared to Further Education and Training (FET) teachers who spent more time doing

administration work and pastoral care. This could be attributed to the amount of work and disciplining that is required of teachers in the FET phase. Not only is the work more demanding in terms of difficulty levels, these teachers also find themselves with increased administration as they deal with class management issues and compilation of reports pertaining to learner behaviour.

The history of the school was a significant factor, as the study reported significant differences in the activities of various schools, depending on the background of the school in the history of South African schools. It is a known fact that former Model C schools were well-resourced schools with facilities like laboratories, properly resourced classrooms, sport grounds and highly qualified teachers, while previously disadvantaged schools lacked such facilities. Teachers who find themselves in these various schools will thus be involved in different activities depending on the background of the school.

With regard to the demographics of the school, the study showed that teachers in rural schools spent more time on professional development, pastoral care and breaks; those in semi-urban schools spent more time on curricular activities, while those in urban schools spent most of their time in counselling and guidance. These differences in teacher activities, according to the demographics of the schools, would be expected in South Africa, due to the policies of the apartheid regime, which sought to separate people according to racial groups. Schools in rural areas, where the majority of Black people were placed, were imbued with poorly trained teachers and lack of resources for teaching and learning. Most employable adults left to find jobs in the cities, which resulted to children being raised by elderly grandparents. This would explain why teachers in rural schools would spend most of their time on professional development and pastoral care. When the new government came into power after the 1994 democratic elections, it became one of its paramount duties to redress the past imbalances in the education system left by the previous government. Semi-urban schools became target recipients of sporting facilities and exposure to other forms of extra-curricular activities, which would have resulted in teachers spending more time in these activities. There could be a variety of reasons why teachers in urban schools were reported to be spending most of their time in counselling and guidance, ranging from drug abuse by learners to troubled backgrounds such as absent parents due to work commitments or divorce.

These findings are relevant to the current study, because they shed light onto the factors that cause a disparity between policy and practice on teacher workload. In a sense, the study

reveals how teachers across South Africa cope with their workload as it relates to time allocation.

**STUDY 2: ‘Secondary teacher workload and job satisfaction: do successful strategies for change exist’? by Butt & Lance (2005) : United Kingdom**

This study was an evaluation of an interventionist project, which sought to “reduce significantly the hours worked by teachers and to increase the proportion of teachers’ time spent either teaching, or on tasks directly related to teaching” (p. 408). Data was collected from 32 schools through questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that teachers’ working hours had shown a slight decrease across the board as a result of the intervention, with the exception of faculty heads. The mean hours of class teachers had gone down from 49.9 to 49.1. The study also revealed that 96 percent of all teachers interviewed did work in the evenings and 90 percent worked at the weekends, including Sundays.

I have mentioned before that the inability of teachers to finish their work within the time allocated in the timetable may be an indication of excessive workload. While it is to be expected that teachers do some work after school hours, a feeling of being overloaded may result if teachers believe that time that should be allocated towards family is spent on school-related work. The majority of teachers in this study reported that they did work in the evenings and at weekends and voiced their concerns about the insufficiency of non-contact time to attend to duties like planning and marking during school hours.

Concerning teachers’ views on the causes of excessive workloads, the study uncovered five main reasons for excessive workloads. The extent of non-teaching tasks like photocopying, filing, money collection, paperwork, typing and pastoral duties was the most popular reason. Secondly, teachers reported that monitoring, assessing, recording, reporting and accountability all took too much of their time. The third reason for increased workload, according to these teachers, was covering lessons for absent colleagues, which led to the loss of non-contact time allocated for planning and preparing lessons. Fourthly, the study reported that teachers were unsettled by the government-school initiatives and curriculum demands, such as the creation of resources and the need to produce differentiated learning programmes, which were seen to be too time-consuming. Poor school or departmental planning was the fifth reason stated as the cause of excessive workload.

The above account reveals that the number one cause of excessive teacher workload as this study reported was clerical and other administration duties. This is not surprising, because

teachers are primarily trained to teach and manage teaching related-activities like assessment and giving feedback to learners. Clerical work becomes cumbersome, because the time that should be allocated towards marking, planning and preparation goes towards filing and other related paperwork.

Reporting on teachers' suggested solutions to excessive workload, Butt and Lance (2005) indicated that across all the schools, teachers were asking for more time to do their work within the day. Other suggested solutions included a call for more teachers, smaller classes, reduction of bureaucracy and the number of government initiatives, a better use of support staff and better trained teacher assistants.

Class size did not feature in the list of the top five main causes of excessive workload. However, this factor will always be a cause for concern, as was seen in the first study. The overall theme that emerged in this study was that teachers felt that their time was consumed by administration-related work and were calling for protection of their non-contact time. The findings of this study are useful for the current study because they give insight into how teachers in other countries feel about their workload, and provide a platform for comparison of findings with the current study.

### **STUDY 3: Secondary teacher workload study report by Ingvarson et al (2005): New Zealand.**

This study was conducted in New Zealand in order to research “the work of teachers and middle managers in New Zealand secondary schools, identify factors that affect teachers’ workload, and the connections and relationships between these factors and identify areas where improvements could be made” (Ingvarson et al, 2005, p. 11). Research methodology involved case studies with six schools and surveys involving 1150 teachers, 936 managers and 235 school principals from 357 schools. The study reported a good coverage of age, gender and experience amongst the respondents to the survey and data were collected from schools of different size, location, social context, and traditions of governance.

The findings of the study suggest that factors that affect workload are largely common to all schools and teachers. The views of the school principals were that additional staff, guaranteed planning time, more support and more specialists were the most essential supports that would assist in making teachers’ workload more manageable. Managers felt that additional staff, guaranteed planning time, reduced compliance requirements and the capacity to attract good teachers were most likely to assist with improvement of teachers’ and

managers' workload. Teachers viewed additional staff, smaller classes, guaranteed planning time and more specialists as among the most important factors for assisting with their workload.

A call for a guaranteed planning time and more support were the themes that arose from teachers at all levels of the school hierarchy. It would appear that even the principals agree that teachers need to be given more time to do planning. This report is consistent with the findings of the second study reviewed, where teachers indicated the need to have their non-contact time protected.

Teachers and managers reported spending most of their time on professional activities outside the classroom, which mostly included marking and preparation. These activities were done after and before school, in non-contact periods during the day, at weekends and in holiday periods. Staying late at school to finish work was common practice reported among some teachers and school managers. The study reported low relationships between workload and school characteristics such as school size, leadership style, geographic location, governing authority, or decile level.

Teachers reported that they did marking and preparation mainly outside of school time, including weekends and holidays, which implied that non-contact time provided within the school timetable was not enough. Providing teachers with this guaranteed planning time would reduce the amount of time spent outside of school doing school-related work and would give back to teachers their time with family. Most of the suggested solutions to the problem of excessive workload indicate a need for external interventionist programmes. It is my belief that these findings do not uniquely apply to teachers in New Zealand but that South African teachers face similar time constraints. This study seeks to understand how teachers are coping in the absence of interventionist programmes to help them with their workload.

**STUDY 4: It's about time: a report on the impact of workload on teachers and students by David Dibbon (2004): Canada**

This mostly quantitative study involved 681 surveys with teachers. However, open-ended questions were formulated to capture qualitative data. The questionnaire was designed to collect information such as teacher demographics, teacher job satisfaction, class size, categories of students taught, preparation time, assigned supervision time, curriculum implementation, professional development and time spent testing, correcting and reporting.

The results from the qualitative portion of the survey indicated that 20% of the teachers felt that lack of assigned preparation time was the biggest factor which rendered their workload unmanageable and unreasonable. This lack of preparation time according to the teachers contributed to teacher isolation, an unwillingness to take on extra-curricular activities, and health-related issues, like depression and sickness.

When it came to assessment and feedback, the study showed that teachers viewed these as critical to learner achievement and most reported spending three hours per week on assessment and 20% reported they spent over 5 hours. The study found that most of this assessment time was spent on marking, and it was reported that correcting of learners' work took long and this had an adverse effect on quality of feedback provided. It was also found that reporting period was very stressful for teachers and led to compromises in assessment, classroom preparation, planning and teaching. Other areas of work that were reported to cause stress for teachers were learner supervision, attendance of meetings, meetings with parents, large class sizes, shortage of resources and implementation of new programmes.

This study linked the impact of teacher overloading to actual learning. The findings revealed that teacher overloading impacted negatively on teaching and learning. Lack of preparation time caused work to intensify and resulted in feelings of stress for some teachers, which resulted in compromise on effective teaching and learning. A large class size would have a negative effect on learning, because it robs learners of individual interaction with the teacher, which is fundamental to effective learning.

This study was selected, because it touched on how teacher overloading impacted on teaching duties such as planning, preparation, assessment and reporting, which are the focus of this current study.

**STUDY 5: Can leadership help teachers deal with change-associated challenges? by Andrew Matthees (2011): Australia**

This qualitative study aimed to answer two questions: What challenges are primary teachers facing as a result of changes in their professional working environment? What is the relationship between the principal's leadership characteristics and primary teachers' ability to deal successfully with the challenges associated with change? Interviews were conducted with 28 teachers, twenty-four of these were face-to-face, while four were conducted telephonically.

The study found that the two major challenges faced by teachers were the scarcity of time, under-resourcing and increased likelihood of litigation. For these teachers, the scarcity of time was due to the increase in teachers' professional role expectations. Handling paperwork relating to government requirements, meeting occupational health and safety (OH&S) requirements, reporting academic results, submitting requests for government resources, and preparing for accreditation were all seen to be areas of most increased workload. Teachers reported that their time was not consumed with teaching, but rather with increasing paperwork due to government requirements and school administration.

The study also reported that constant curriculum reforms and greater parental and government expectations on teachers increased workload. Teachers were now expected to take on parental roles and responsibilities in providing special programs for talented, gifted and special-needs learners. With regard to fear of litigation, the study reported that teachers lived in fear of being sued by parents, owing to the political structure of the Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) system.

Teachers reported their third major challenge as being under-resourced to carry out their duties. Their interpretation of "under-resourced" was that they were not given opportunities to develop their knowledge, access information, or acquire adequate support to do what was required of them. Areas identified as lacking resources were the transference of curriculum changes into the classroom, dealing with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, adopting of programmes to address students with special needs, dealing with the greater range of student behaviour, finance and time to adopt the latest technology. It was further reported that resources were needed in the area of staff training, mentoring and preparation to meet new roles.

The study found consensus amongst teachers that the kind of principal who was able to help teachers with the challenges they faced was the one who was people-oriented; displaying appropriate positive attitudes to teachers (*people focus*) and also generated systems in supporting teachers with completing their tasks (*task focus*). It was further shown that for teachers to deal successfully with change, principals needed to address the issues of resources, knowledge and skills through providing opportunities for professional development, networking, advanced study, personal guidance and induction for new teachers. Providing appropriate time allocations and allowing time to talk about issues were seen as ways of lessening the burden for teachers. Finally, putting up policies to assist with behaviour

management, learner discipline and arrangement of teacher visits to other schools were all seen as effective initiatives by some principals.

In seeking to find out the role of school-leadership in helping teachers cope with change-related challenges, this study revealed that both the attitude of the principal towards teachers and the availability of support structures were key to helping teachers cope with change-related challenges. Change will always bring with it new programmes and new ways of thinking. While these programmes would be initiated from above, by policy-makers, the actual implementers are teachers. It has been a recurring theme from most of the studies reviewed above that government initiatives create extra workload for teachers. This increased workload is a result of unrealistic expectations, with inappropriate targets and tasks poorly matched to time allowances for completion. While change is necessary and cannot be avoided, it is important to consider how teachers can be assisted with coping better with implementation of new programmes. It is the role of the school principal to ensure that teachers are able to carry out their duties effectively.

The issue of availability of time came up again in this study, as it has in the previous studies reviewed.

#### **STUDY 6: Educators' conceptions and practice of classroom assessment in post-apartheid South Africa by Saloshna Vandeyar and Roy Killen (2007): South Africa**

This qualitative study sought to answer two questions (1) Can educators' conceptions of assessment be identified from their assessment practices? and (2) Do educators' assessment practices reveal single or multiple conceptions of assessment? The study targeted Grade 4 teachers in three primary schools in a large South African city. The purpose of the study was to describe and explain the different ways in which primary school teachers sought to cope with new assessment demands in multicultural classroom contexts. Data generation was done through sustained classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and an analysis of key documents (learner transcripts, teacher workbooks, grading schemes, diagnostic tools, etc.). The sample consisted of three teachers working in multilingual classrooms and formed part of a multi-year project conducted over a three year period.

The results from the study revealed that teachers were still teaching and assessing according to the old system. Although the elements of the new curriculum like group-work were present, these were symbolic of the precepts of the policy, but did not in themselves promote conceptual learning. Lack of knowledge of the new curriculum and training in this regard



resulted in teachers misappropriating policy, as they used their own interpretation of its elements. The study also found a high correlation between the professional confidence and professional consciousness of teachers in the analysis of policy texts. Teachers who were able to construct their own professional interpretation of the government policy had a high level of professional confidence. Alternatively, a low level of professional confidence resulted in teachers failing to engage with the contents of the policy in a manner that enhanced teacher professionalism.

This study provides a practical example of challenges faced by teachers in implementing government policies. Previous studies revealed that teachers are calling for a reduction in government initiatives, because they are viewed as sources of increased workload. The results of the study showed that teachers had not been provided with enough training to equip them to implement the new assessment curriculum. This is the reality that faces many South African teachers (Chisholm, et al, 2005). The findings from this study are relevant for the study at hand, because a new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (SA Department of Education) has just been introduced into South African schools.

**STUDY 7: English teachers' perceptions of workload by Abdullah Salem Al-Balushi (2006): Oman.**

This seventh study was conducted in the Dhahirah Region of Oman and involved 72 senior teachers of English and 114 ordinary classroom teachers. Data for the study were collected via questionnaires and sought to answer the question: What are the views of Oman teachers and Senior Teachers about the demands of their workload? Three sub research questions were: (1) What aspects of their work do Oman teachers and Senior Teachers of English find most demanding? (2) What is it about these aspects of their work that Oman teachers and Senior Teachers find demanding? (3) What kind of support do Oman teachers and Senior Teachers feel that they need to better cope with the major challenges of their work?

The study discovered that for senior teachers, the three aspects of their work that were reported to be most demanding were organizing teaching materials in a specific order, as it relates to the syllabus, organising workshops for professional development and writing reports for teachers after observing their teaching. These demands were reported by both female and male senior teachers, although not in the same order.

Both male and female classroom teachers reported that the most demanding aspects of their work were teaching more than five lessons a day, teaching extra lessons to replace absent

colleagues, preparing to teach more than one level every day and checking learners' work in their portfolios. Overall, the three factors which were reported to be the most influential in adding to workloads were the length of the school day, the learners' levels in achieving the goals of the lesson, and the follow up of continuous assessment regarding learners' progress.

With regard to what could be done to help with reduction of workload, the study reported that reductions in various aspects of teachers' duties and providing additional resources, such as teacher assistants to help with weaker learners, were regarded as possible solutions.

The findings showed that senior and classroom teachers were finding some aspects of their work demanding. While Apple (1986) came to a conclusion that female teachers find their work more demanding than their male counterparts do, owing to family responsibilities, this study showed that there were common features between what male and female teachers found to be the most demanding aspects of their work.

Like the other six studies discussed above, this study is relevant to the current paper because of its focus on teachers' views about their workload. It is interesting to see that teachers in the Middle East are reporting similar experiences of workload to those in Europe and other parts of the world. This serves to substantiate this study's assumption that regardless of the school context, teachers will always face demands and challenges when it comes to their workload. How they cope with some of these demands is the question this paper hopes to answer.

The seven studies reviewed above were conducted in various countries at various times. While the majority of the studies were quantitative in nature, there were attempts on the part of some researchers to bring in the qualitative element in the form of interviews and time diaries. Even though the studies asked different questions and approached the topic of teacher workload from different angles, some common areas were noted. The first theme that emerged was that teachers find certain aspects of their work demanding, due to insufficient time and lack of resources. Secondly, this review of literature revealed that there is insufficient time provided within the school timetable to allow teachers to do preparation and planning, as well as conduct proper assessments and provide feedback. This finding is very important for this current study, which aims to investigate how teachers cope with these activities. Lastly, it emerged from these studies that provision of resources and support structures like extra teachers, smaller classes and the reduction of government initiatives would make workload more manageable.

The seven studies can be summarised into four main topics which are: (1) teachers' views of their workload (2) the impact of overloading on teaching and learning (3) coping with work related stress and (4) possible solutions to excessive workload. Each of these four topics will be explored further in this next section.

### **2.3.1 Teachers' views of their workload**

Studies by Butt and Lance, (2005); Ingvarson et al (2005); Whiteley and Richard (2012); Gunkel (2010); Chaturgoon, 2008 and Chisholm et al (2005), show that teachers are finding certain aspects of their work demanding due to time constraints. The bulk of teachers' time is shown to be consumed by administrative tasks and paperwork, which results in teaching-related work, like marking, preparation and planning being taken home or being completed outside of school- allocated time.

To illustrate how administration consumes most of teachers' time, I will make reference to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (SA Department of Education, 2011), which states that all teachers are expected to keep a file containing evidence of their teaching and assessment. These files should contain an annual teaching plan, assessment plan, formal assessment tasks and memoranda, indication of textbook(s) and any resources used, record sheet containing learners' marks for each formal assessment task and informal notes or any intervention that is planned by the teacher to assist learners who require additional support (where they exist). Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the information in their assessment files is kept up-to-date. The time spent preparing teachers' files and the amount of administrative effort that goes into it contribute to the increase in the magnitude of teachers' workload.

It also appears that initial teacher-training does not fully prepare teachers for the number of administration duties they encounter in real practice. In any job, some kind of administration is to be expected. However, in teaching, it would seem that duties that would normally be performed by a trained administrator fall within the job description of a teacher. This lack of administrative skill and training has an effect of doubling the amount of time teachers spend doing paperwork. New teachers are the ones affected most by administration demands. However, Matthes (2011) shows that even older and more experienced teachers are also affected by curriculum reforms.

Teachers' views that their time is consumed by paperwork has been a recurring theme in this study. This has the potential of increasing teachers' workload in two ways. Firstly, in order to

concentrate on administration, teachers have to put on hold activities like preparation, planning and marking. These activities are either completed before school, after school or in the evenings, when teachers should be resting or taking care of their families. This then creates a situation in which teachers are working overtime. Secondly, when teachers fail to find time outside of school to catch up with planning, preparation and marking, this work is often shelved, with the result of work piling up. In the absence of time, this creates pressure and more workload as work intensifies.

### **2.3.2 The impact of overloading on teaching and learning**

Dibbon (2004) found that administration and other demands placed on teachers have a negative impact on the process of teaching and learning, because they have an effect of misdirecting time that was initially allocated to planning and preparation of lessons. During busy periods of compiling summative assessments and preparing reports, teachers are expected to carry out their normal duties and responsibilities within the same amount of time. This unrealistic expectation results in learners being short-changed in crucial areas like assessment and feedback (Matthes, 2011). Research and experience also show that the need to account to internal and external authorities forces teachers to cut corners (Dibbon, 2004; Albrechtsen, 2005). The amount of effort that should go towards teaching lessons ends up being channelled towards ensuring that teacher files look decent and presentable. Often what is presented on paper is not actually what goes on inside the classroom. Day (2012) refers to this phenomenon as ‘neo-liberal performativity results-driven agendas’.

An increase in workload is further associated with stress and burnout. Literature reveals that burnout contributes to teachers leaving the profession, increased absenteeism and teacher ineffectiveness (Schulze and Steyn, 2007). Stress will result if the pressure of work intensifies to a point that a teacher feels overwhelmed by this intensification. If this is prolonged it may result in the experience of burnout. My personal experience of burnout is that it makes a person believe they have nothing more to give to the profession. Teachers that start off motivated or believing that they were called to teach begin to question this calling. Those who remain in the profession do so to the detriment of quality teaching. Ladebo (2005) found that some teachers remain in the teaching profession for financial benefits, because they cannot find alternative employment.

Overall as can be seen, teachers’ work overload has negative consequences for the schooling system as a whole and research shows that teachers are calling for external intervention geared towards alleviation of work-related pressure.

### **2.3.3 Coping with work-related stress**

Teacher stress, also referred to as intensification of teachers' work by Albrechtsen (2005), is often connected to the implementation of government policies and has negative implications for teachers and the teaching profession. Coping resources are means of avoiding, alleviating or eliminating teacher stress. Literature reveals that there are various coping resources used by teachers to manage stress (Dunham, 1992; Lewis et al., 2011; Lun Hung, 2012).

Dunham (1992) asked the question: 'How do you try to reduce your work stress?' The findings of the study suggested that teachers use a variety of skills, techniques, knowledge, experience, relationships, thoughts and activities, which Dunham classified as personal, interpersonal, organizational and community resources. Likewise, in the study investigating coping strategies used by novice mathematics teachers, Lewis et al. (2011) found that teachers used collective, social, self and physical strategies. Both these studies by Dunham and Lewis et al revealed that in coping with the demands of their work, teachers rely on their own personal experiences and creativity, as well as on experiences and expertise of other people. Lewis et al (2011) further revealed that novice teachers placed a greater value on socially-oriented coping resources.

It is my belief that at some stage in their careers, every teacher faces some kind of work-related stress. However the kind of stress that is referred to in this section is stress that arises due to increased workload. Dunham (1992) conducted his study in early 90's, two decades later Lewis et al. (2011) reveal similar findings. Both these studies show that teachers do find ways to cope with stress. Perhaps one of the most crucial coping mechanisms mentioned in literature thus far is the support teachers receive from their school principals. Research shows that those teachers who receive support from their principals experience less stress compared with those who do not receive such support (Day, 2012; Schulze and Steyn, 2007 and Matthes, 2011).

### **2.3.4 Possible solutions to excessive workload**

Possible solutions refer to ideal mechanisms that teachers believe would lessen the workload demands if put in place. These suggested solutions would emanate from what teachers believe to be the sources of increased workload. Literature reveals that teachers are calling for more time to do their work within the day, the employment of more teachers, smaller classes, reduction of bureaucracy and government initiatives, a better use of support staff and better trained teacher assistants (Butt Lance, 2005; Whiteley and Richard, 2012). Other

suggested solutions include more support (especially from the principal), employment of specialists, reduced compliance requirements and reductions in various aspects of teachers' duties (Ingvarson et al, 2005; Al-Balushi, 2006).

It is interesting to note the areas of commonality amongst the studies in various countries. The call for increased resources and preparation time as well as a reduction in class size and the number of government initiatives was common to most studies. The need for the employment of trained teacher assistants was a recurring theme in the studies conducted abroad. However, in South African schools the use of teacher assistants is not common. Hence this element was absent from the findings of the South African studies reviewed.

The four topics discussed above are relevant to the current study, as together they provide a fuller picture of the findings from international and local research that has been conducted in the area of teacher workload. These findings reveal that teachers across the world are facing similar work demands. The implication of this point for this study is that regardless of the background of the school, the views of the teachers from this study may not differ considerably from the views of teachers in other school settings.

## **2.4 EXPLORING THE FIVE AREAS OF FOCUS**

This study focuses on the aspect of teacher workload which relates directly to the core function of teaching and learning. It seeks to investigate how teachers cope with preparation, planning, assessments, recording and reporting on learner progress. These areas were developed anecdotally, as they relate directly to the teaching duties. Data collection questions were formulated and classified around these five topics. As literature was reviewed on the topic of teacher workload, the emanation of these five areas could not be ignored. The next section provides discussions around each of these five areas for the purpose of highlighting what each entails.

### **2.4.1 Preparation and Planning**

Dibbon (2004) defines preparation time as “the teacher’s art and skill in taking the curriculum outcomes and other learning material and blending them with his or her subject area knowledge and organizing a classroom so that students are engaged in the learning process” (P. 13). Preparation and planning are often used interchangeably by teachers and writers. However, in this paper, preparation refers to the collection of physical and digital teaching and learning material. Preparation of slides for a power-point presentation, preparing laboratory apparatus, building models and printing of worksheets are all types of preparation

that teachers embark on. In this age of technology where teaching entails creativity and teachers are expected to cater for learners with diverse educational needs, preparing lessons has become more demanding and time-consuming. How teachers cope with preparation is the question that this study hopes to answer.

Planning on the other hand has to do with the thought-processes that precede preparation. It involves individual and collaborative efforts, as teachers deliberate on preparation, teaching, assessment, feedback etc. Over the years, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has made attempts to come up with programmes to assist teachers with planning due to the realization that most teachers struggle with this activity. The CAPS is the most recent curriculum for the FET phase. This curriculum statement is designed in a way that makes planning easier for teachers. The mathematics curriculum, for instance, provides an annual programme, which breaks down planning for each term and provides clear guidelines for the allocation of teaching time. While these government initiatives are noticeably good, each teacher, however, still needs to consider his/her own subject and classroom dynamics, as teaching and assessment programmes are planned.

Factors that influence planning may vary, depending on the type of school, class size, the teaching grade and phase, the number of teachers available for that subject, the teacher's personality and experience, and the background and academic abilities of learners being taught. While studies show that teachers often battle to find planning time, organizational routines like staff development meetings may provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate in planning. If this planning is done effectively, teachers may find themselves doing less work than would have been the case if they were working alone. This is one of the premises that underpin this study. However, I will discuss it in more detail under Theoretical Framework.

#### **2.4.2 Assessment**

Attempts to redress past imbalances in the education system brought more progressive and stringent methods of assessment, which aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in South African schools (Mbelani,2008; Vandeyar,2007; Beets & van Louw,2005; Bansilal, 2010 and Meyer,2009). As mentioned before, the latest of these curriculum reforms is CAPS. This new curriculum was introduced to South African schools in 2012 “to mitigate the challenges associated with the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, Grades R–9)” (Annual National Statement report, 2012, p. 6).

CAPS defines assessment as “a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners” (Department of Education, 2011, p. 3). This policy document further states that classroom assessment should provide an indication of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner, by ensuring that sufficient evidence of achievement is collected, using various forms of assessments.

The types of assessments endorsed in the CAPS document include both formal and informal assessments. Informal assessment (assessment for learning) is done for the purpose of monitoring and enhancing learner progress. This form of assessment is used as a tool to close gaps on knowledge and skills, provide feedback on learner progress and to improve teaching. Informal assessment may constitute an observation or a simple verbal comment and teachers are not obligated to record it. On the other hand, formal assessment (assessment of learning) is a systematic way of evaluating learner progress. It includes projects, oral presentations, demonstrations, performances, tests, examinations, practical demonstrations, etc. Formal assessments are recorded and feedback is provided on learner progress for learner progression.

If teachers are to assess their learners continuously in the most effective and efficient manner as the policy statement stipulates, they need to set aside time to plan and prepare carefully the assessment programmes and tools. Failure to do this properly may result in learners being incorrectly diagnosed, which in turn may result in wrong decisions being taken with regard to a learner’s academic future. This point is meant to illustrate that teachers like doctors are handling people’s lives and wrong diagnosis may have serious repercussions. This moral obligation puts teachers under extreme pressure, when it comes to designing and administering assessment tools. Designing an appropriate tool is not easy given the diversity of learners that have to be considered for that assessment.

The demands of assessment have an effect of increasing the overall workload of individual teacher, which in turn may lead to the use of less effective ways of learner evaluation. Reyneke and Nel (2010) reported that workload had increased for South African teachers due to continuous assessment, the nature of assessment tasks, marking, big classes and careful recording of each learner’s marks. As teachers’ work intensifies, assessment or learner evaluation does not receive the attention it deserves. Big class sizes and lack of resources in most schools render it almost impossible to assess according to the needs of the curriculum. As a result of these restraints, teachers resort to traditional and less effective ways of



evaluation (Bansilal, 2010; Vanderyar and Killen, 2007). To lighten the work load, teachers in Canada resorted to using multiple-choice tests, worksheets, lectures and fewer written assignments (Dibbon, 2004). While these teachers confessed that these assessment methods were not effective in encouraging critical thinking, they gave justifications that the increased workload and time constraints prevented them from using more effective assessment tools. Likewise, local studies show evidence of teachers using teacher-centred and traditional approaches to learner assessment (Beets & van Louw, 2005; Vanderyar, 2005). Summative or formal assessment in the form of tests is a predominant feature of learner evaluation despite the requirements of the policy statement that teachers should use both formal and informal types of assessments.

In the South African context, it is not surprising that most teachers would be challenged by the ideals of policy. Having been trained in the old system to meet the needs of a particular race group, some teachers are finding themselves in multi-cultural classrooms, for which they were not trained (Vanderyar and Killen, 2007). The value of the context was explored by Bansilal (2010). She posed the question, ‘How are teachers dealing with the demands for shifts in practice, made by the new curriculum?’ The study employed a case study of one teacher with data being generated from 7 classroom observations, two interviews with the teacher and one focus-group interview with six learners. The findings from this study indicated that both learners and teachers in multicultural classrooms were challenged by the ideals of policy.

I have so far attempted to show that there is more to consider when it comes to the process of assessment. Teachers are not operating in a vacuum. There are numerous factors to consider when it comes to the work that teachers do and how effectively they do it. For policy-makers to use the words “effective” and “efficient” in describing how teachers should conduct assessment would be to assume that all conditions at the school level are conducive to conducting such assessments. Research, however, proves otherwise, as I have demonstrated above. Hatch et al (2005) remark that a number of reform initiatives are launched as efforts are made to raise standards, invent better curricula, and improve teacher preparation and professional development. However, “few reform efforts reach directly into the classroom to look carefully at what teachers do” (Hatch et al., 2005, p.3). The issue of time as teachers race to finish the syllabus comes up constantly as a cause of frustration and an area of concern. The nature and diversity of assessment tasks in some cases call for teachers to collaborate within and across schools, which leads to teachers working overtime. Moreover,

most of these teachers lack the necessary skills to design and administer the kinds of tasks endorsed by the new curriculum.

In light of this information and the claim made by Reynecke and Nel (2010) that the demands of assessment increase teacher-workload, this study hopes to investigate ways in which some teachers in South African classrooms cope with these assessment demands.

### **2.4.3 Recording and Reporting**

Recording is a process in which the learners' performance is documented. Teachers are required to develop and keep careful records of assessment. The records that should be kept at school are record sheets, teacher files, learner profiles, report cards and schedules. The record sheets are used to compile a schedule that is in turn used to compile reports. Records of learner-performance are also used to verify the progress made by teachers and learners, monitor learning and to plan ahead.

Recording and reporting are closely linked and in the main chain of events, reporting follows recording. Reporting is the communicating of learner performance to learners, parents, schools and other stakeholders such as employers, tertiary institutions, potential funders, etc. Learner performance can be reported through report cards, parents' meetings, school visitation days, parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, letters, class or school newsletters, etc.(SA Department of Education, p. 27). It is stipulated in the policy statement that learner progress reports should be sent to parents at the end of every term. Over and above this written feedback, teachers are required to schedule meetings with parents to discuss the contents of the reports.

Studies conducted in the area of teacher workload reveal that teachers across the globe generally find the end of term period the most stressful time of the year (Butt & Lance, 2005; Ingvarson et al, 2005; Whiteley and Richard 2012; Gunkel, 2010; Chatturgoon, 2008; Chisholm et al, 2005 and Dibbon, 2004).The stress arises from teachers having to set tests and examinations, administer and supervise the taking of assessments, do marking and recording and finally prepare reports with comments. All of this work takes place within short amount of time and often coincides with the process of teaching and learning. The chase to meet deadlines often creates tensions as teachers try to meet both internal and external requirements.

According to the CAPS policy document, a report card is an official document that is used to give feedback to parents on the achievement of the learner. Formal report cards should be

sent to parents once a term and must provide a clear holistic picture of the learner's achievements in different subjects. These reports are prepared carefully and cautiously, as the policy document stipulates that "schools should ensure that there are no errors, erasures or corrections that will compromise the legal status of the report cards" (SA Department of Education, 2011, p. 24).

Records of learner progress and achievements in the form of marks are the only physical evidence available to support a teacher's claim that teaching and learning have been taking place in the classroom. Failure to document this learning may disadvantage both the learner and the teacher. At the end of each term, the marks have to be compiled and weighted for the purpose of reporting on a learner's progress. Recording of learner's work and reporting on learner-progress are the two components of a teacher's workload that are administration intensive. Time needs to be set aside in order to give this administration work the attention it deserves. Considering that there is no time set aside on the timetable to allow teachers to concentrate on preparing reports, it is no wonder that most teachers find the end of the term very stressful. It is the aim of this study to find out what strategies are used by teachers to cope with recording and reporting.

There are two main messages that emanate from the discussion of the five areas of focus. Firstly, the teaching duties which involve preparation, planning, assessment, recording and reporting overlap. This overlap implies that teachers have to continuously think holistically, having the bigger picture in mind. This may not be easy for new teachers. However, through experience teachers gain the skills to multi-task and strategise as they become more familiar with the teaching content. This study seeks to investigate what these skills are and how they are used by teachers to cope with workload. The second message is that policy makers assume that teachers have in their disposal time and the necessary skills to perform their prescribed teaching duties. Studies, however, have proven otherwise as has been demonstrated in this chapter. The question that is of interest for this study is how teachers cope with work, given this mismatch between policy and practice.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is underpinned by the intensification theory of Apple (1986). Apple argued that external and internal pressures on teachers intensify and increase workload. Barlett (2007) defines intensification as "a growing external pressure on teachers, as they have to execute more and diverse tasks, without having sufficient time and resources" (p.3). Ballet, Kelchtermans and Loughran's study (2006, as cited in Ballet, 2007), highlights three

refinements of Apple (1986)'s thesis. The first refinement states that the experience of intensification is not solely induced by changes at the macro level, but that multiple sources of intensification exist. Secondly, the intensification impact does not operate in a direct and automatic way, but is mediated, by processes of teachers' sense-making as well as by the specific school characteristics. Finally, the impact of intensification is not always negative and turns out to be differentiated among different teachers. This theory was chosen for this study because not only did it prove to be suitable but literature reviewed also proved that there are not many existing theories on the subject of teacher workload.

As supplementary framework, I will borrow from Gronn (2003) and Gronn (2009)'s concepts of distributed leadership and division of labour. The reason for this additional framework is that at the heart of distributed leadership are concepts like teacher collaboration, teamwork and collegiality, which all describe the process of teachers working together and hence sharing the burden of workload. Gronn (2003) defines distributed leadership as a concerted action, which encompasses the practice of delegation, sharing, collaboration, dispersion and leadership democratization. By the same token division of labour entails breaking the task, so that more than one person can perform it. Gronn (2009) believes that when two or more people are required to perform a task, it is more necessary to break the task into smaller more manageable parts and to form teams to engage with various sections of the task. Both these concepts and their application to the study will be discussed later on in the chapter.

### **2.5.1 THE THEORY OF WORK INTENSIFICATION**

Apple (1986) remarked that teachers are increasingly faced with the prospect of being de-skilled owing to the intrusion of technical control procedures into the curriculum in schools. Apple stated that "the integration together of management systems, reductive behaviourally, based curricula, pre-specified teaching competencies and procedures, combined with student responses, as well as pre and post testing, lead to a loss of control and a separation of conception from execution" (p. 32). This technical control leads to work overload which, according to Apple (1986), is the manifestation of intensification.

Gronn (2003) explains intensification this way:

It is partly about task overload, not just in the sense of occasionally having more things than there are hours in the day to do them, but also the experience of a never-ending treadmill effect, in which the awareness of overloading is constant, sustained and compounded by numerous deadlines with incredibly short lead times. (p. 65).

Gronn (2003) further asserts that “the effect of intensification is to increase the space of the individual job-holder but without increasing the number of occupants to fill the inflated space (p. 68). In addition, Ballet (2007) says “intensification is more than working extra hours or having to manage additional and diverse tasks or even an increased number of administrative duties” (p.5). Intensification as Ballet (2007) describes it, is specifically about struggling with the experience that one’s professional self as a teacher is at stake. Albrechtsen and Hansen (2005) refer to intensification as “teacher-stress that is often connected to the implementation of government policies” (p.7).

An interesting point that Apple (1986) raises is that the process of control, increased ‘technicization’ and intensification is misrecognized as a symbol of teachers’ increased professionalization. A paradoxical situation is created where the responsibility placed on teachers for technical decisions causes them to work even harder. Teachers accept working long hours because of the responsibility placed on them for decision-making. The need to do a good job due to the belief that this makes them rational people causes teachers to accept long hours of work.

#### ***2.5.1.1 How intensification manifests***

Intensification can manifest itself in various ways. Three of these ways are identified by Penrice (2011). Firstly, the number of tasks and varying degree of complexity over time may give rise to intensification. When teachers are required to implement new programmes, they often go through a time of uncertainty, as they feel the pressure to prove that they are capable of delivering according to the expectations of their colleagues. Secondly, intensification may arise from increased classroom-related work, like implementing a new curriculum and accountability demands that come as a result of such reform initiatives. To illustrate, the introduction of OBE meant that South African teachers who were qualified to teach in the old system had to be re-trained to use different methods (SACE, 2010). Teachers possessed the subject knowledge, but had to learn new pedagogy, which came with its own demands and resulted in work \*intensification as reported by the Chisholm et.al (2005) report. Thirdly, teachers’ workload may intensify as a result of responsibilities outside the classroom, as stipulated in the policy document on teacher workload. These duties vary from attending

workshops, supervising extra-curricular activities, playground and break supervision, and collaborating with other teachers. Time spent doing school related work may coincide with personal and family time and an imbalance is created in-which teachers feel that their work has taken over their lives (Day, 2012). Other potential sources for work intensification may include society, policy makers, school boards and parents.

#### ***2.5.1.2 The effects of Intensification on teachers***

Intensification has the effect of replacing quality with quantity and job well done becomes job quickly finished. Teachers no longer have time to be creative or imaginative. They just want to get the work out of the way. Apple (1986) raises a point that intensification contributes towards deskilling and de-professionalization of teachers. The introduction of new programmes results in what he terms ‘intellectual de-skilling’ a phenomenon describing acquisition of diverse skills which does not result in professional development. In Galton and MacBeath (2008), teachers reported a loss of confidence and feelings of being de-skilled as a result of policy changes imposed on their practice. This intellectual-deskilling results in loss of time to keep up with professional development in one’s own field.

The concept of teacher professionalism is further explored by Hargreaves and Goodson (1996). These authors talk about a paradox that exists in teachers’ work lives. They make a claim that this paradox exists because on the one hand some parts of the teacher’s work are becoming re-professionalized in ways that involve broader tasks, greater complexity, more sophisticated judgment and collective decision-making among colleagues. On the other hand, parts of the work are becoming de-professionalized in terms of more logical training, reduced discretion over goals and purposes and increased dependence on detailed learning outcomes prescribed by others.

Penrice (2011) found that taking on of extra roles and responsibilities tended to limit teachers’ time and inhibited the critical reflection on practice. This led to the conclusion that “the intensified demands of teaching tend to emphasise the technical ‘doing teaching’, or the humanist caring for the learners and their achievements, rather than the critical examination of teachers’ underlying pedagogical practice” (p. 110).

Perhaps the most damaging effect of intensification is teacher apathy. Over time, good and highly motivated teachers may feel exhausted and resort to just doing the bare minimum of their job requirements. This may happen because teachers feel overwhelmed by constant change initiatives and technological innovations (MacBeath and Galton, 2008). When this happens, standards are compromised and learners are deprived of quality teaching and

learning. Teachers may also choose to remain in the profession only for financial benefit, because they cannot find alternative employment (Labelo, 2005).

Albrechtsen and Hansen (2005) in their summary of the intensification thesis state that intensification (1) leads to reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including “no time at all” for lunch; (2) creates chronic and persistent overload (as compared with the temporary overload that is sometimes experienced in meeting deadlines), which reduces areas of personal discretion; (3) leads to lack of time to re-tool one’s skills and keep up with one’s field; (4) inhibits involvement in and control over longer-term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise; (5) leads to reductions in the *quality* of service, as corners are cut to save time; (6) leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can in turn create excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service; (7) creates and reinforces scarcities of preparation time; and (8) is voluntarily supported by many teachers and mis-interpreted as professionalism.

As can be seen from the above discussion, intensification has negative effects on both teachers and learners and has long-term implications for the entire education system. Intensification, however, does not always produce negative results. Dunham (1992) found that by working harder teachers raised their self-image and hence coped better with work-related stress. Some teachers even reported enjoying some pressure, as long as it was ‘pressure with a purpose’. Intensification, therefore, does not only arise from external pressure but may also result from teachers putting pressure on themselves. (Ballet, 2007) remarks that how teachers perceive their own teaching abilities and responsibilities towards their learners pushes them to work harder to implement reforms. This desire to prove one’s professional self ends in work intensification and increased workload.

Given the presence of both negative and positive effects of intensification, it is important for writers and researchers to consider both sides. Most studies tend to focus on the negative effects that government reforms create on the working lives of teachers. Conversely, the realization that pressure is not always a bad thing might lead to some teachers welcoming school-based reforms.

### ***2.5.1.3 How teachers deal with intensification***

Lewis et al. (2012) define coping as “the cognitive and affective responses used by an individual to deal with problems encountered in everyday life” (p.55). In Apple (1986)’s

study, teachers' responses to curricular control varied from subtle changing of the 'irrelevant' parts of the pre-specified objectives to resisting the intensification by slowing the pace or discussing topics of their own choice in a relaxed manner with the students. Gibbon (2004) also states that when new policies are implemented, teachers may simply replace the old with the new and pretend that nothing has changed. Teachers may also interpret and negotiate demands imposed on them by filtering the changes in their work conditions through personal beliefs and perspectives and by using specific cultures and structures that exist within the school (Ballet, 2007). In Penrice (2011) it was found that school structure and culture can be used by teachers to avoid intensification. For instance, a teacher may refer a learner to a school counsellor, instead of dealing directly with a problem.

On the other hand, the culture and structure of the school may become potential sources of pressure and increased workload on teachers. While a culture of teacher collaboration can facilitate burden-sharing by enabling teachers to work together, it may also produce a situation in which some teachers find themselves working harder than others because of their expertise or qualifications. When these teachers are unable to negotiate their working conditions, an expectation is created for them to go beyond their call of duty. Some of these teachers feel a moral obligation to perform according to these expectations for the sake of their professional image. Penrice (2011), however, shows that teachers have the freedom to evade potential stress by using the same existing structures as illustrated in the previous paragraph.

Another way in which teachers may deal with unmanageable workload is to make a decision to change careers. Teacher attrition refers to the decrease in teacher supply. The decision to exit the teaching profession may be the result of a variety of factors including the inability to cope with the demands of the profession, lack of support structures and feelings of apathy. Sometimes the decision may just be to move to another school where working conditions are different and perhaps more bearable. At times, teachers exit the teaching profession for a period of time, only to return at a later stage, because of the feeling that they have been called into this profession and cannot find fulfilment in anything else.

It is, therefore, evident that teachers deal with intensification in various ways, depending on the extent of the manifestation of pressure, as well as on the individual person's conviction about their work.



#### ***2.5.1.4 The effect of intensification on school leaders***

Decentralization as a world-wide feature of school reform has brought huge accountability demands on school principals and their management teams (Mertkan, 2011). In a study on an Abu Dhabian school conducted by Thorne (2011), there was evidence of intensification as the school principal in the study had to account to various authorities. The study further revealed a lack of coordination and agreement between the parties involved. Although this was a small qualitative study consisting of a single principal as a unit of analysis, the results are consistent with findings by Mertkan (2011). Mertkan (2011) found that a number of head teachers in England retire before the retirement age due to stress and mounting job demands, while at the same time there is an unwillingness on the part of the deputies and middle managers to take up headship positions. This, as Mertkan (2011) remarks, leads to a potential leadership crisis.

However, Cranston (2013) calls for a challenge on the orthodoxy that is constrained by external accountability demands. He suggests that the debate about school leadership needs to shift from one dominated by accountability to one grounded in the notions of professional responsibility. His argument is primarily that accountability demands on school leaders are made by those outside the school profession and argues that there is a need for school leaders to be the ones driving a critical examination of their profession. He asserts that the term *professional responsibility* emphasizes a moral imperative driven by professionals (teachers) in the interest of their client (learners) in their own field.

While Cranston raises an important point about the shifting of professional responsibility to school leadership, one wonders, however, about the practicability of such a notion. The fact of the matter is that school leadership does not account only to government officials but also to other stakeholders like parents, financial and tertiary institutions. It is also not clear whether the move towards school-based management in South African schools has resulted in fewer accountability demands on teachers.

#### **2.5.2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP**

Distributed leadership is a fairly new conceptualisation of leadership that has surfaced, to replace the model of a single “heroic” leader positioned at the top of the hierarchy (Spillane and Healey, 2010; Gronn, 2003 and Timperly, 2005). Developing its roots from the prevalent ideas about the cultural and historical influences on individual cognition in the 1980s and early 1990s, distributed leadership has become the focus of serious consideration in the research literature (Timperly, 2005). The term ‘distributed leadership’ carries different

meanings for different writers and is used interchangeably with shared leadership, team leadership and democratic leadership (Spillane, 2007).

Gronn (2003) places distributed leadership within a progressive activity theory, also known as socially distributed activity theory. The activity theory aims to take a more holistic perspective on the study of organizational work. Central to this theory is the division of labour and the notion of a collectively performed activity system as the unit of analysis. Gronn (2003) focuses on activity theory or collective action with a view of distributed leadership as a concerted action, which encompasses the practice of delegation, sharing, collaboration, dispersion and leadership democratization. Likewise, Harris and Spillane (2008) approach distributed leadership from a social context and emphasize inter-relationships amongst members to solve problems and to take action.

Distributed leadership is considered as first and foremost to be about leadership practice, as opposed to viewing it as a function or role of a single leader. Spillane and Diamond (2007) assert that leadership is the work of multiple leaders, with leadership not being equal to leadership position. Distributed leadership takes into account the leader-plus-and the practice aspects. The leader-plus-aspect considers the leadership and management contributions of people in formally designated positions, as well as individuals who do not occupy these positions and the practice aspect recognizes a web of leaders, followers and their situation. Spillane (2005) further states that leaders interact with others and also have interaction with aspects of the situation including a variety of tools, routines, and structures. These are the means through which people act. Student assessment data, protocols for evaluating teachers and grade-level meetings constitute an example of organizational routine and structure.

#### ***2.5.2.1 Why distributed leadership***

There are two reasons why distributed leadership forms part of theoretical framework in this study. Firstly, I believe, like Spillane and Diamond (2007) that leadership is not the sole attribute of those in formally designated positions. I believe that leadership exists at every level of the school hierarchy. The implication of this contention for the current study is that teachers take initiatives for addressing the issue of workload whether through negotiations of their working conditions, as Ballet (2007) and Penrice (2011) suggest or by leading development programs. In other words, teachers must assume leadership over the work they do. Secondly, an assumption is made that when teachers work together they share knowledge, skills and resources, which results in burden-sharing and acquisition of better coping strategies or even a decrease in workload.

### ***2.5.2.2 Division of labour***

The concept of division of labour is at the core of distributed leadership. Gronn (2003) states that the idea of the division of labour refers to the totality of the work to be performed in a particular sphere of human endeavour, how this work is arranged into segmented and specialized tasks, and the necessary technological capability, i.e. tools and information needed to complete the task. Division of labour only exists when two or more people are required to perform a task. Gronn further argues that the changes in the division of labour result in new workplace inter-dependencies, which require the adoption of different mechanisms of co-ordination.

To cope with excessive workload, teachers may decide to divide the work into smaller sections to be performed by different individuals, instead of one teacher doing the work from start to finish. It is not uncommon for the teachers in the same department to divide the work, so that one teacher covers some aspects of the syllabus, while another teacher covers the remaining sections. By tapping into their particular competencies, each person performs a specialized labour in a concerted action. This enables members to rely on the strengths of their peers, while enhancing their lesser skills through frequent talks and observations (Gronn, 2003).

### ***2.5.2.3 Collaboration as a feature of distributed leadership***

Collaboration in distributed leadership circles often refers to shared leadership and is linked to the concept of collegiality. Collay (2011) states that collaboration is a difficult concept to define, as it manifests itself in different forms, is known by many names and can be both structured and/or unstructured. For the purpose of this paper, collaboration refers to teachers working together to share ideas and materials. It includes teamwork, professional learning communities, collegiality, peer-coaching, mentoring, and networking.

Jarvis (2012) states that collegiality is strongly linked to distributed leadership. Collegiality “refers to teachers conferring with other teachers, relies on consensus being reached through collaboration, and is value-driven and normative in orientation” (Jarvis, 2012, p. 481). Spillane & Diamond (2007), however, argue that shared leadership does not imply agreeing on ideas. They extend their view of collaboration to including instances where leaders do not see eye-to-eye and contend that leadership practice can be stretched over leaders, even if they strive for different ends. These leaders, it is argued, still work collectively in co-performing a leadership routine.

#### ***2.5.2.4 Benefits of teacher collaboration***

When teachers collaborate, it enhances the quality of teaching and learning. Miller in Hargreaves (2005) states that teachers in reforming schools are re-constructing learning and teaching at the same time. They evolve and re-invent themselves and their practice away from a technical model towards a more collegial model as they set aside time for planning together, teaching together, and talking together. He further says that such leaders develop a professional culture, which accommodates risks, mistakes and sharing of secrets. Different writers link collaboration to division of labour, which in turn leads to burden-sharing and hence a possible reduction in individual teacher work load (Bacigalupo and Cachia, 2011; Grant, 2010 and Hargreaves, 1992, Jarvis, 2012)

Collaboration may also result in the emergence of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership can best be described as empowering others to lead (Harris, 2004). As teachers work in teams, experienced teachers lead novice teachers in instructional matters. As more diverse forms of collegiality such as group work and team work emerge, opportunities are created for different members of the team to lead and hence the emergence of distributed leadership. The emergence of distributed leadership enables the development of leadership skills in teachers at various levels.

#### ***2.5.2.6 Some limitations of teacher collaboration***

Gronn (2003) asserts that collaboration may lead to work intensification. Team efforts intensify the workplace in that when people work in teams they have a highlighted view of the work they do. What this means is that team expectations make the work more meaningful than was the case when teachers were working individually. This becomes both emotionally and mentally demanding on individual teachers. Collective decision making as a result of collaborative and participative work practices may also result in conformity. Group-think may surface as teachers go with the majority rule even when questionable decisions are taken.

Albrechtsen and Hansen (2005) argue that the implementation of teams creates interdependence, which challenges freedom of method for individual teachers. They assert that teachers have always welcomed the idea of sharing resources and discussing ideas. However, when team work becomes mandated, it poses a danger of undermining freedom of practice for individuals. Albrechtsen and Hansen (2005), however, emphasize that whether the consequences of implementation of teams reflect a tendency towards professionalism or de-professionalism will depend to a large extent on how teachers cope with the new demands. A similar concern was raised by Hargreaves (1999) when he stated that mandated teacher

collaboration gives rise to contrived collegiality. This term describes a phenomenon in which teacher collaboration takes place superficially and does not achieve the objectives for its implementation.

It is a premise of this study that teacher collaboration leads to burden-sharing and a possible reduction in individual workload. It remains to be mentioned, however, that time constraints on teachers need to be considered when collegial models are adopted by schools. This study has already shown that time constraints make it hard for teachers to cope with workload. Setting aside time to collaborate with colleagues may prove to be difficult for some teachers who might already be struggling to keep up with the demands of their workload.

## **Conclusion**

I want to conclude this chapter by reiterating the aims presented in the introduction. The chapter has provided an account of literature reviewed, in order to contextualize the study by integrating it into current debates on literature that relate to the topic. The review was divided into three main sections. The first section sought to present literature on the body of local and international research on the subject of teacher-workload. The second section was a presentation of literature on the theory of work intensification and lastly, the concepts of distributed leadership, teacher collaboration and division of labour were reviewed.



## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Neuman (2011, p.2) says “methodology means understanding the entire research process, including its social-organizational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of new knowledge from the research enterprise”. This research methodology chapter describes the process of data collection, the population, the research design, sampling procedure, tools used in data generation, how data was analysed, as well as how the whole process unfolded. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the study aimed to explore the strategies used by teachers to manage the daily workload. The study was designed to answer the question: What coping strategies do teachers employ to manage daily workload?

Two sub-questions were formulated to support the main research question and these are:

- 1) How do teachers perceive their current workload?
- 2) What coping mechanisms do teachers believe should be put in place in order to enhance workload management?

The chapter starts by introducing the research paradigm and design and proceeds to describe the data generation method and issues of ethical considerations and finally, gives an outline of how data was analysed.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The study is located within the interpretive paradigm. Neuman (2011) explains that this paradigm seeks to explain why people act the way they do and how they interact with each other. He defines it as “the systematic analysis of socially meaningful actions through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (p.102). This study sought to understand and give an interpretation of how teachers cope with workload in their daily teaching practices and as such, the interpretive paradigm is a more fitting approach.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN**

This qualitative study utilized exploratory and descriptive designs. The purpose was to explore the feelings of a selected number of male and female teachers about their workload,

as well as to describe coping strategies employed by these teachers to manage workload. Qualitative data is soft (words or symbols) and non-numerical. The purpose of the study was the compelling factor in choosing a qualitative approach. Neuman (2011) reminds us that in qualitative methods we attempt to generate new hypotheses and to describe details of the causal process for a narrow set of cases. This approach was used to conduct in-depth interviews with a few research participants (teachers), in order to gain deeper understanding of their experiences of workload.

### **3.4 DATA GENERATION**

This section provides an explanation of how data was generated. The choice of data collection method always depends upon the research problem (Silverman, 2007).

This study made use of in-depth face-to-face interviews as a method of generating data. The research problem required that the researcher gains a closer perspective into teachers' thought processes as they describe their coping strategies. This data would not have been obtained through other methods like surveys and questionnaires, because these methods do not allow for detailed explanations. Another reason why in-depth interviews were more appropriate for this study is that the nature of a teacher's workload is multi-faceted and it was therefore necessary to indicate to the participants that the focus of the study was the teaching duties of an educator. Other methods of data collection would have failed to clarify this. Interviews also gave opportunities for the researcher to probe and to observe non-verbal communication.

#### **3.4.1 Data Generation Instrument**

A semi structured interview schedule was prepared as an instrument for data generation (APPENDIX E). The schedule was designed categorically to collect data in order to answer the main research question as well as two sub-questions. The first section sought to find out teachers' perceptions of their workload. The second section dealt with the question of coping mechanisms that teachers believe should be in place, in order to enhance the manageability of daily workload. The third category in the interview schedule was aimed at collecting data about preparation, planning, assessing, recording and reporting strategies used by teachers to cope with workload. The three categories were designed to complement each other and to collectively give a holistic picture of the concept of a teacher's daily workload as well as coping strategies used.

The interview schedule was piloted with the head of department (HOD) of School B and a female teacher in School A. These pilot interviews were aimed at ascertaining whether it



would be necessary to conduct more than one session per participant. Each interview lasted more than one hour. A decision was taken that two sessions of one hour each would be necessary in order to cover all the contents of the interview schedule.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with seven educators. Two one-hour sessions were held with five ordinary classroom teachers. One session lasting just over an hour was held with each of the two deputy principals. The first session dealt with the questions: 1) How do teachers perceive their workload? and 2) What coping mechanisms do teachers believe should be put in place in order to enhance workload management? The second session was aimed at generating data to answer the main research question: What coping strategies do teachers employ in order to manage daily workload? The schedule was used as a guide, as teachers were allowed to speak openly about their experiences of workload. The role of the researcher was to probe and channel the interview in the right direction.

Five out of seven interviews were tape-recorded and hand notes were taken simultaneously. The other two interviews were not recorded at the request of the participants. The tape-recorded data were later transcribed into written format. Even though it was time-consuming to transfer data into solid hard copy, it later proved to be more beneficial to work with written transcripts at a later stage. Taking notes also proved to be helpful in one interview, where the recorder ran out of recording space and the researchers had to rely on hand-written notes. For two interviews that were not recorded, hand written notes became the primary data-recording instrument, the secondary one being the interviewer's memory.

### **3.5 THE SAMPLING PROCESS**

Sampling refers to the process of choosing fewer cases out of a larger population and using them to study and draw conclusions regarding a larger set of cases. Non-random or purposive sampling was used in the study. Purposive sampling, which is a feature of non-random sampling, was used in this study. What this implies is that all the participants were systematically picked because of their relevance to the study.

Teachers were chosen from two schools, one of which is the researcher's work place. School A (the researcher's work place) was chosen first because of accessibility in terms of distance. This school is, however, quite small in size, relative to the majority of South African schools. It therefore became necessary to choose a second site of research which reflected the South African context better. School B was hence chosen because of its location and size. This is a public high school under the Department of Basic Education

School B is located within a one-kilometre radius of School A. At the time of the study it had a learner intake of 1065 and boasted more than 50 staff members. The class sizes averaged between 32 and 33 learners per class. School A, hosted learners from grades 4 to 12. The high school section consisted of 170 learners 12 full-time and 2 part-time teachers. The classes averaged between 18 and 22 learners per class, with the biggest class consisting of 27 learners.

In School A, teachers of English were targeted, because the intention was to target teachers in the same department and the English department happened to be the largest in the school. All three of these English teachers were female. The deputy principal was the fourth participant from School A. In School B, Mathematics teachers were interviewed (a male and a female) as these were teachers who agreed to participate. The deputy principal, who also participated in the study, suggested that a pilot interview be conducted with an HOD, (I believe this was done for the purpose of ensuring that the questions were not damaging to the school).

Classroom teachers were targeted, because they are the ones who have first-hand experience of workload and can give rich data concerning this phenomenon, while the deputy principals were targeted for the purpose of triangulation of responses.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

When dealing with human participants, issues of ethics will always arise. Walliman (2011) mentions two aspects of ethical concerns in research. The first aspect deals with the individual values of the researcher relating to honesty, frankness and personal integrity. The other aspect addresses the researcher's treatment of the people involved in the research. It relates to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and courtesy. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) assert that ethical issues should be considered throughout the whole process of the interview, from the start of the investigation to the final report.

#### **3.6.1 Gaining access and acceptance**

In order to gain access and acceptance to the schools, I had to comply with certain procedures. First, I wrote a letter to the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) requesting permission to conduct research in School B. Permission was granted in writing, with the condition that prior permission be obtained from the school principal. Upon receipt of written permission from the principal, three teachers were approached and the purpose of the study explained to them. The potential participants were also informed of their right to

refuse or to withdraw from participation at any stage of the interview process. All three agreed to participate by signing a consent form.

The principal of School A, was approached and he gave written permission for the research to be conducted at the school and for willing teachers to participate in the study. The same procedure as in School B was followed in gaining consent from the teachers. Four teachers from School A agreed to be part of the research.

### **3.6.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Confidentiality and anonymity are about ensuring that the information provided does not reveal the identity of the participant. Teachers were informed that pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names in order to protect their identities. The schools are referred to as School A and School B in order to further protect the identities of the participants.

## **3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF FINDINGS**

Two approaches were used in this study to ensure trustworthiness of findings. The first approach was the piloting of the interview schedule and the second approach was member-checking. At the start of the second session, participants were given an opportunity to check and confirm whether the researcher's documentation of the first session was accurate. The second session scripts were returned to only three participants owing to time constraints.

Since one of the sites of research was my own school as a researcher I believe it is important to mention that my position as a post- level one educator, in my view did not pose a threat to teachers who participated in the study. All the teachers were given a consent form which clearly stated that their identities would be kept confidential. Furthermore, the nature of the study was non-threatening, hence the data generated from these participants would not in my opinion have jeopardized the trustworthiness of the findings.

In considering the research design, I was careful to ensure that the design chosen would produce valid results. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that although earlier versions defined validity as the ability of the research instrument to measure what it purports to measure, the more recent versions of validity in qualitative research include honesty, depth, scope and richness of the data. Taken in this context, validity in this study was ensured through the choice and design of data generation instrument. In-depth interviews were used in order to obtain data that is rich and clearly captures the views and feelings of the participants. The interview schedule was designed categorically to cover the three research questions and a

domain list was formulated to answer the main question. A domain list is “a list of the meaningful and unique topic areas examined in the interview” (Hill, 2012 p. 104).

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis refers to the process of taking the data apart and then reassembling it into meaningful chunks that fit together to form themes or patterns. The techniques used to analyse data depend on the nature of data to be analysed. This study is qualitative in nature, hence qualitative methods of analysis were chosen. The aim of the study is to investigate coping strategies employed by teachers to manage daily workload. Three research questions were formulated in order to generate data for the study. The questions are: (1) What are teachers’ perceptions of their workload? (2) What coping mechanisms do teachers believe should be put in place in order to enhance workload management? (3) What coping strategies do teachers use in order to manage daily workload?

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) caution us about dangers of not considering data analysis early in the research process. They assert that it is too late to ask questions about analysis after the interviews have been collected. These authors emphasize the importance of considering how the interviews will be analysed prior to the actual process of conducting interviews. The method of analysis should inform the preparation of the interview guide; interview process and the transcription of the interviews. In designing the interview schedule, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009)’s caution was heeded. The interview schedule was categorized into 3 sections, with each section aimed at addressing one of the questions of research. This categorization enabled the researcher to make sense of the findings during the data-generation stage. After all the data had been collected, further categorization was achieved through coding and putting of data into themes. Neuman (2011) emphasizes that in qualitative research, coding is an integral part of analysis and is achieved by organizing raw data into conceptual categories and creating themes or concepts.

Domain analysis was used to group data generated from the question: What coping strategies do teachers use in order to manage daily workload? Neuman (2011, p.520) defines domain analysis as “a method of qualitative data analysis that describes and reveals the structure of a cultural domain” and continues to explain that a cultural domain is “a cultural setting or site in which people regularly interact and develop a set of shared understandings or ‘mini-culture’ that can be analysed” (p. 520). A domain list is made up of the cover term or domain name; included terms which refer to subtypes or parts of the domain and a semantic

relationship, which provides an explanation of how the included terms fit logically within the domain.

The five areas of focus which form part of teaching duties are preparation; planning; assessment; recording and reporting. These five areas of workload were treated as domains, while themes that emerged from each domain became the included terms. To illustrate: in answering the question “how do you cope with planning?” data revealed that teachers were classifying planning according to lesson planning, term planning and five year planning. During data- analysis a worksheet was developed with the five domain lists. One domain list consisted of ‘planning’ as the domain, with *lesson*; *term* and *five-year* as the included terms. The semantic relationship that exists between the domain and the subtypes is that lesson, term and five-year are all “a type of planning”. The final stage of data analysis involved re-grouping the data in order to answer the research questions.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this methodology chapter was aimed at describing the research process. It sought to provide details of the methods used to generate data, give account of the sampling procedure, ethical considerations, research rigor and the process of data analysis. The next chapter presents and discusses briefly data generated from the interviews.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to present an analysis and discussion of the findings of the study. The study sought to investigate strategies employed by teachers to manage daily workload. The study aimed to answer three questions: 1) What are teachers' perceptions of their workload? 2) What strategies do teachers use to cope with planning, preparing lessons, assessments, recording and reporting? 3) What role does or can the school play to help teachers cope with workload? In answering these questions data was collected through interviews. This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings of the study.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, seven teachers from two high schools were interviewed. The interview recordings were later transcribed. A narrative approach will be followed in the discussion of the findings, which follows below. Each participant was introduced to the research questions, and was allowed to talk freely about their experiences. The researcher only interrupted to probe, ask follow-up questions or to steer the interview in the right direction. The discussions will flow from the first, second and the third question respectively. The aim of this chapter is not simply to record the responses but to offer analysis and discussion of the responses simultaneously.

I will start by highlighting each participant's background and then move on to a detailed account of interview conversations. To structure this presentation chapter, I have chosen to follow the approach in which responses to the first question from all participants are presented and emerging themes highlighted, before proceeding to the second and third questions respectively. The emerging themes section will be aimed at making meaning of the findings through the lens of the theoretical framework and other relevant literature. Pseudonyms have been used for all seven participants for the sake of confidentiality.

### **4.2 TEACHERS' RESPONSES**

#### **Question 1: What is your perception of your workload?**

In response to the first question, Megan (Participant 1, an English and Life Orientation teacher) had this to say: *My perception of my workload is that I'm often busy and that it is quite heavy. I think that even though I don't have as many teaching hours as a full-time teacher would, so I'm on a reduced time table, there is still far more on my plate. Things like trying to put together the curriculum for the whole high school for English and monitoring*

*that, designing timetables, dealing with correspondence relating to academics and helping with planning in general... when you are a manager sometimes it is not easy to measure at a glance what you do.*

I went on to probe whether she is involved in any extra- mural activities and her response was: *I'm more on the cultural side or arts side of things. I help in coordinating the matric ball and recently I coordinated the play. Funk (musical dance) demanded a lot of my time in the evenings. I had to transport kids until late at night, making sure that they all arrived home safely. I'm also involved in debating. I love debating and that's why I'm doing it.*

As an HOD, Megan is on a reduced teaching schedule. Her perception that her workload is heavy stems from her management duties. Although she mentions part of what her job entails, her words “when you are a manager, sometimes it is not easy to measure at a glance what you do” give an indication that she is not able to pinpoint exactly the extent of her job description. A paradoxical situation is created in that, while on the one hand she experiences a heavy load because of her formal duties, on the other hand she chooses to add more ‘informal’ load on her plate, in the form of participation in the musical production and debating.

Responding to the same question, Carol (Participant 2), also an English and Life Orientation teacher, who works closely with Megan (Participant 1) said: *My workload is heavy, very heavy, stressful.* Wanting to hear more about what makes her workload heavy, I continued to probe: Please explain what makes you say that.

Carol continued and said: *I think it is because I teach two subjects that every learner has to take, and that makes things stressful, especially when it comes to English. There is so much work and the syllabus is huge, especially with essays. There is a lot of content I have to mark.* I continued to probe and asked: *Are you involved in any extra-curricular activities,* to which she answered: *No, not any more, I was involved but now I have stopped because of my workload.*

Carol’s response indicates that she faces a heavy workload due to the nature and the structure of her work, the syllabus and assessment demands. Teaching General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) phases simultaneously can be taxing on teachers, because of the nature of the syllabus. At the GET phase, teachers find themselves teaching a more diverse content, because the learners have not yet made their subject choices for grade 12. Also at this phase, teachers tend to deal with more disciplinary issues in the

classroom because of the learner's age-group. At the FET phase, the work is streamlined and teachers have to cope with a more intense content, which requires a lot of research and preparation. Teaching both phases can therefore be quite demanding in terms of planning, preparation and assessment. Carol complained mainly about the volume and the amount of marking. Unlike scientific subjects like mathematics and physical science, where concepts are easy to assess and mark, English and Life Orientation require that learners write long essays which may be challenging and tedious for teachers to read and to allocate marks. It also appears from this extract that Carol had been exempted from participating in extra-mural activities, because she was not coping with the amount of workload she was carrying. This would have been the school's way of supporting Carol in managing her workload.

Gail (Participant 3), a History and English teacher, who works closely with Megan and Carol, also responded to the same question. In response to the question about how she perceived her workload, Gail said:

*My classes are not that big. They are so much smaller, but there is a lot of content to teach and a lot of marking. Kids write so much and you end up with so much marking. You've got to be well organized. Essay writing, long questions, take so much time. It is very hard, I battle with marking. My grade 11's are a class of 20 and they write so much and to try and read all that, although the model answer is there, one cannot mark exactly according to it. They might talk about some of the points, but in a way that is completely different from my model answer, so I have to try and make sense of it. Because I'm a one-man department, there has been a lot of work. I've been battling, setting exams and beginning to mark them, because I mark alone unlike having another teacher that I can share the marking with. I'm having to do it on my own, and it's all long essays. There's always marking coming in. You are never on top of it. It never gets finished so you end up using your weekends.*

*...But with experience, I now know how to mark faster because it improves with time. I make my own notes and again, it's the issue of what should follow what in sequence. I have a vague idea of what I want to cover.*

Are you saying that your teaching practice has improved over time? I probed? Gail's response was:

*Each year I have learned more about the content and now I can become creative in my lessons. I can research new ways of teaching because now I know more about Martin Luther King and I can look for videos and different things and with more experience. I've got a*



*better idea of time and time constraints, how long are we gonna take to finish this section, you know. The more you know your content, the more you are prepared to embarrass yourself. You can wear funny clothes and do silly stuff whereas in the beginning, you are too terrified to try out new stuff.*

And how do you find English? I asked.

*Now that I'm doing it for the second time, I'm coping. Last year, it was very hard, especially because I have stuff I don't remember being taught at school, you know. I enjoy teaching History and English literature, but language is not my favourite. My qualification is in English literature, not linguistics, but I can teach it.*

Are you involved in any extra-mural activities? I asked Gail, who then said: *I do debating. There are two practices a week in the afternoon and then the biggest thing is that there are now the finals and then you get home at about eleven.*

Gail's response reveals that while her classes are smaller, she still struggles with marking because of the nature of her teaching subjects. Being the only History teacher in the FET band, Gail finds herself in a one-man department, which implies that she often finds herself having to plan and prepare the teaching content and do marking on her own. She expresses a longing to have another teacher in her department, with whom to share the load. Being able to mark faster could be as a result of the experience gained from marking the national paper for the IEB.

It is the number of years in teaching the same subject that has helped Gail grow in confidence in her teaching content. It appears that Gail's first experience of teaching English language was not an easy one. However, she states that with time and experience she has begun to cope better with this work. Another point that Gail raises is that she was not trained to teach language but has had to learn to teach it and has improved with time.

The fourth participant was a Mathematics teacher (Sonja). Her response to the question was:

*I teach two grade 8 classes, two grade 9 classes and one grade 10 class. I feel my workload is spread out nicely over the two week cycle that we run. It gives me enough time to do more-or-less all my administrative stuff and coming from a previous tertiary environment, I do not feel that this is too much right now. So I'm managing.*

I probed by asking: How is your workload spread out?

*I seem to manage my planning because I teach two grade 8; two grade 9 classes and one grade 10 class. So my planning is halved and instead of planning for five different grades I do only three.*

Would you say there is enough time provided in the time-table to finish all work at school? I asked Sonja? She continued and said: *In my timetable, and I speak for myself, yes, I mean there is also extra-curricular and even considering that, I don't have an issue with time. Maybe my timetable load is different.*

How so? I probed, concerning her time-table.

*I teach more juniors than seniors except for the one math literacy grade 10 class.*

I posed another question: How do you cope with administration?

*I love admin. I will choose it any day over invigilation. It can be a bit cumbersome, but I think being able to have everything computerized is a very quick and easy way to monitor and to keep admin on track. So that's helping me a lot, having a computer resource.*

Unlike the first three respondents, Sonja reported that her workload was manageable. She attributed this manageability to the structure of her work. Sonja mentioned that even though she teaches five classes, having two classes of each grades allows her to halve her planning and preparation. She mentioned that her coping with her work may have been facilitated by the fact that she had come from a more demanding tertiary environment. Sonja also mentioned that the availability of computers assisted her in managing her administration work.

Terence (Participant 4) expressed that he was uncomfortable with being tape-recorded. His responses will therefore be narrated. Terence's answer to the first question revealed that although he believed that teachers in general were overloaded, he himself was coping well with his workload. At the time of the interview, Terence taught five classes daily and every second Friday, he took a remedial class for two hours. His teaching load consisted of two grade 10, one grade 11 and two grade 12 classes. He mentioned that he appreciated that the lessons were 55 minutes long, as this gave him enough time to cover all the contents of his lesson plans. At the beginning of the year, the school embarked on an initiative to improve the mathematics results. The implications of this intervention were that the junior grades wrote tests every Friday. These tests had to be marked, recorded and an analysis produced by

the next Monday. Terence expressed that, even though this work could be tedious at times, he was coping, because the teachers took turns and his involvement was only fortnightly.

Terence also took extra-mural activities, which involved debating, squash, soccer, cricket, volleyball and tennis, which he said were taxing on his time. The school policy stated that teachers should be involved in extra-mural activities at least two hours a week. Some matches, as Terence explained, were played over weekends, which according to him put a strain on the teachers involved, as learners did not always co-operate. He, however, added that being involved in sport did help him relax to a certain extent.

When asked about why he believed that teachers in general were overloaded, Terence expressed that he felt teachers were overloaded with admin (lots of admin) and dealing with parents.

When Terence was asked whether or not he believed there was enough time provided on his timetable to do his planning at school, his opinion was that there was insufficient time provided for planning to take place during school. He expressed that he sometimes stayed two- to-three hours after school to finish his work and from time-to-time spent his Sunday afternoons finishing marking. He also stated that he would appreciate having four instead of five classes “as five classes are pretty heavy” (his exact words).

Although Terence mentioned that he was coping with his workload, the word ‘coping’ was not, however, synonymous with ‘a light workload’, as is indicated by his response that five classes were pretty heavy but overall he was coping with his workload.

The first research question aimed to generate data from five classroom teachers in order to answer the question: What are teachers’ perceptions of their workload? The issues that emerged from the data suggested that teachers find certain aspects of their workload heavy. Teachers mentioned that time allocated for planning, preparation and marking was insufficient to enable them to finish these activities within time-tabled time. Involvement in extra-curricular activities and administration was also mentioned by teachers as creating a heavy workload.

**Question 2: How does the school assist you with workload management and what more can be done to assist you in this regard?**

Responding to this question Megan said:

*I love to pioneer things and James (the principal) has been very supportive. If I come to him with an idea, he always encourages me to go for it... I would spend hours in his office just chatting and he listens. So I would say the kind of support I receive from James is both emotional and financial. Christine (the Deputy principal) is also my source of strength. We chat and pray together often. Christine is not like me. She is more of a global thinker and I like to draw strength from her.*

I posed the question: Are there any other ways in which you believe the school can further assist you? Megan's response to this question was:

*I feel that I could do with physical support. You know people will often come to you and say "Oh what you are doing is wonderful" and stop there. It would be nice if people volunteered to get involved, and so I feel that I could use some physical support in that sense. I also feel that the school needs to employ people with bigger capacity, people who can do more than just their subject. We also need efficient administrative support. We need a person, whose job is to be in an office and attend to all correspondence from the IEB, print out SAGS and access past papers for teachers and deal with anything to do with academic correspondence. It would make a huge difference to have all the paperwork and circulars available at your finger tip. You know, a lot of my time is taken by matric admin and correspondence with the IEB.*

This interaction reveals that as a teacher, Megan feels that she has been given wings to fly by her principal and her deputy principal. The kind of support she receives is not the kind that would lessen her workload. However, the freedom to be creative and to take leadership initiatives is the kind of support that she feels she needs and is subsequently receiving. The school allows Megan to grow in her strengths by offering emotional and financial support.

On what Megan believed should be done by the school to help her cope with workload, Megan mentioned that she needs physical and administrative support. Physical support, as Megan describes it, refers to the involvement of other staff members in activities that she (Megan) has initiated. It means that if someone else takes the initiative to set the ball rolling, the rest of the team should be willing to dive in and get their hands dirty as well. Megan is therefore calling for the school to build and encourage this culture of involvement from the rest of the staff body. For this to happen, however, other teachers would have to buy into these initiatives. Time is another issue that has to be considered, because if teachers feel that time is insufficient to do mandated duties, how would they find time to get involve in these initiatives?

Administration comes out strongly from this account as the main source of Megan's heavy load. This issue also emerged from the findings of the first research question. Megan is of the opinion that the tedious administrative work in which she and other teachers are involved should be done by the administrative personnel. There is therefore an indication that the school needs to support teachers by employing an extra person to take care of administration. This would then free teachers to concentrate on the aspect of their work that enhances teaching and learning.

Responding to the same question, Carol said:

*Last year, we had this buddy system, where teachers worked together to check each other's report comments. I thought that was fantastic. Also in my first year of teaching, we used to meet with Megan and Christine to discuss problems and they helped us with teaching methods. I enjoyed that.* I re-phrased the question:

How do you think the school can help you with your workload?

In response, Carol said: *We really do need another teacher in our department. Having to do all of the English and all of the LO is a lot of strain and having one extra teacher would alleviate that pressure. Obviously management can't help me mark. They can't help me teach so, I think the only way they can help is by expanding our department. I think also we do come from a school where you constantly have to re-invent your own syllabus, and it is definitely hard to do that.* "What do you mean by re-inventing your own syllabus?" I asked.

Carol explained further:

*I mean finding your own resources, coming up with an entire section of work, designing a worksheet from scratch.* Carol continued: *I do think that if you teach a certain load, then admin should be taken away from you. It will alleviate your workload slightly. Trying to run around after a registration class and making sure that all your classes are taught at the same time...can you imagine for each subject having one teacher assigned to do admin? How beautiful that would be. You wouldn't have to worry about photocopying, printing, stapling papers...*

Is there anything else you would like to add? I asked Carol before moving on to the next research question.

*Yes, it would be nice if everyone of us had a classroom or if management could at least dedicate a classroom to each subject. It would make life so much easier for some of us. On a Wednesday, it takes me about fifteen minutes to settle into a classroom.*

Carol is one of the few teachers who has been exempted from participating in extra-mural activities and has not been given the responsibility of managing a registration class. However, in spite of all this effort by the school to assist Carol with managing her workload, she still feels that more could be done by the school management committee. Teachers in smaller schools have the advantage of teaching smaller classes in terms of the number of learners per class. However, this advantage is countered by an increase in the number of grades that these teachers find themselves having, compared to their counterparts in larger schools. The work is intensified by the amount of planning and preparation that go towards each different grade.

In most cases, teachers in small-sized schools find themselves in one-man departments, which requires them to play the dual role of teacher and subject-head, without being recognized for the latter role. Furthermore, these teachers in most cases have no one to collaborate with in pedagogical matters, hence Carol's call for an addition of teachers in her department.

Administration is mentioned as another source of increased workload for Carol. Carol is suggesting that the school can assist teachers with administrative duties by hiring an administrator to help teachers specifically with administration. Megan had a similar suggestion, as was reported earlier in this section.

Gail was also asked the question: how does the school help you manage your workload and what more do you think the school can do in this regard?

*They help by setting achievable deadlines and they send constant reminders of those deadlines. I think they are doing the best they can, considering that they too have their own workload and they have more responsibilities than we do. We seem to be improving each year. Things are getting better, but I think our biggest issues are time and numbers, the number of people we have on staff and the time you have to achieve the task. Staff is so much smaller, so each staff member has so much responsibility. They should try and bring in specialists. Matric teachers in other schools do not get involved in extra-mural activities.*

Gail's report suggests that work is intensified by the shortage of teachers on the staff team to do the work in the required amount of time. This coincides with Gronn's definition of work intensification. Gail suggests that specialists should be hired to attend to specialized work, so

that teachers can concentrate on teaching. She is also of the opinion that matric teachers should be exempted from participating in extra-mural activities.

Sonja responded to the same question and said

*Okay there is a lot of support structure and I also find that everybody is really helpful and also you have your HODs for your grades, as well as for your subjects, who assist. First thing is, the deadlines are achievable, so that helps and then obviously there is flexibility to move deadlines, if you find yourself overwhelmed at a certain point. Some terms go quickly and other terms you find that everything piles up. So there is support in terms of deadlines that are well set.*

Gronn (2009, p.65) defines work intensification as the awareness of overloading that “is constant, sustained and compounded by numerous deadlines with incredibly short lead times” If one is to go by Gronn’s definition, Sonja’s response then suggests that when school management sets clear, achievable and flexible deadlines, teachers find their work more manageable. It therefore follows that Sonja’s ability to cope with her work is linked to the way her work is structured by school management, the availability of a number of HODs to assist and the efforts of management to work with teachers by setting achievable deadlines.

Is there anything else that you think the school does or can do to help you?

*I think they are doing their best. I have been amazed at how helpful everyone is and how approachable the school management is. Even the admin staff assists in terms of having the reports ready, report envelopes and with any queries, you can just go to them and ask.*

Sonja’s response reveals that she is satisfied with the role played by school management in assisting her cope with workload.

How does the school assist you with workload management and what more can be done to assist you in this regard? I asked Terrence.

Terrence reported that he believed the school was already doing enough to assist teachers manage their workload and the onus was on the Department of education to do its share. Terrence reported that the school assists by keeping class sizes at less than 35 learners; ensuring that teachers have access to computers at all times; setting deadlines well in advance; and giving teachers constant reminders. He also mentioned that teachers are given assistance with administrative work, like typing of tests and examination papers.

His suggestion was that the teaching load be reduced to 4 instead of 5 classes so that teachers can focus on other areas of their work, including discipline. He also recommended that struggling learners be allocated a separate teacher, as dealing with an inclusive classroom is exhausting for full-time teachers.

John and Christine were asked to respond to the question: how does the school assist teachers with workload management? Both these participants occupied positions of Deputy Principal in their respective schools. In response to this question, John (Participant 6) said:

*In terms of what we do to help teachers, we help them to be more organized. You know, the amount of work is not gonna get less. Whatever you do, that's just the amount of work that's involved with teaching. Now we do try and make sure that workload is equitable as far as possible. A post- level-one teacher has five- fifths or a full teaching load and the HOD has four- fifths and the deputy has a two- fifths workload to try and free them to do other duties. So uhm, we do try as far as possible to make sure that workload is equitable and if a teacher has a particularly demanding situation, uhm, like for example, let's say the art teacher does not have any assistance with the art room, there is a lot of work involved in maintaining the art room, so we try to give that person less responsibilities. Things like not give them a register class, so that they will have a bit more time. The computer teacher has a lot of maintenance to do on the computers...which takes a lot of time, so he generally does not have a register class. It equalizes things a bit.*

*But apart from that, uhm we, and this is something I'm still busy with at the moment, we try and work the plan for the next year where in November we actually set up all the academic dates for the following year. So every teacher gets a copy of this (showing me the copy of the plan) at the beginning of the year. And they can take this and say 'right, in the first term, which ends over there, these are the deadlines that I have to meet in terms of meeting the school's requirements'. And the teacher and the subject head and the HOD can then sit down and say 'in terms of meeting this requirement, this is what we will have to do and this is what we start with' instead of leaving things to the last minute. So then they will take this (year plan) and apply it to their particular subject and come up with their plan for the term, which fits in with this but is specific to their subject, so that they get their things done on time. And if you ignore the fact that all the marks are due on the 10th of March and you suddenly realize it on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, then you are going to have a huge problem. But if you have had that in mind, right from the beginning, then it's not really an issue and I actually think that*



*this is the main thing that helps teachers to cope with workload- being on top of your planning.*

*And from the school's point of view we have a pretty good structure. We are quite organized. We have an organized structure, not just ad hoc, and if someone were to come to me and say, why is this the deadline for this, I would say I haven't just suddenly told you that. It was done last year in November and you have known this since January. It was actually there. So in that sense there is no excuse for not being organized as such, but we do it that way in order to be completely up front with what actually needs to be done and by what time and help people to actually fit in with the planning in terms of being organized. In most State (government) schools, they only have a certain number of teachers and very large classes, but in this school we employ governing-body paid teachers over and above our quota from the State and that does reduce our classes to a more manageable level. And that's also a major strategy that the school has in place to try and reduce workload and that also benefits the pupils in terms of having a conducive learning environment.*

How do you assist struggling teachers? I asked John.

*Uhm, well, we certainly issue reminders of the deadlines frequently. We put up what must be done every week (shows me a calendar for the term with all academic dates). Each week, we write up in the staff room whatever is on this calendar for the week and I frequently remind teachers in our morning briefings. And then we rely on the HODs to monitor what's happening in their different subject areas and that's not a problem. They are usually able to recognize if someone is lagging behind and offer them some kind of advice on how they can go about doing things, and if there is a need, we speak to the person and find out what we can do about it. And obviously if it is things like finishing the marking and the person does not have their mark ready on time then we have to wait, but we try and avoid that as far as possible, but generally we have no problems. And another thing we do to monitor progress is, we have this analysis sheet as you can see from the 4 grade 9 classes. You can see how many passed, how many failed and the average and so on and so on and we are able to pick up where there might be problems.*

Is there anything else that management can still do to assist teachers? I probed further.

*The class sizes to me is the biggest factor to teacher work load and in a school like this, we have done as much as we possibly can to limit the class sizes to about 35. If we didn't have those extra teachers, our class sizes would be above 35.*

John's report is that the school is doing various things towards helping teachers cope with workload. Firstly, the school ensures that teachers are well organized in their work. This point will be expounded more in the next section. Secondly, John mentions that the school takes measures to make certain that teachers' workload is equitable, by giving less responsibility to teachers who are already carrying a heavy load. Teachers in management positions are given less teaching load and teachers with more demanding duties are exempted from certain responsibilities like managing a register class, etc.

John's report reveals how the school attempts to help teachers with organizing their work. John being the deputy, has the task of drawing up a year- plan for the school, which he does in November of the previous year. Every department receives a copy of this annual plan. The departmental leaders then sit down with their teachers and discuss how the plan would be implemented in terms of meeting deadlines. This gives a picture of teachers working in collaboration to plan curriculum matters and to collegiate about the year ahead.

The school expects teachers to be well-organized and John mentioned that the school keeps itself accountable by first being organized. The structures are put in place so that teachers can plan their work around and within those structures. The school management team therefore feels justified in holding teachers accountable for meeting deadlines, because measures have been put in place to facilitate the meeting of deadlines. John also mentioned the use of existing structures to monitor how teachers are progressing in various departments. This is probably done through the monitoring of teacher files and various planning documents. Being accountable to the HODs for their progress dissuade teachers from being complacent and from procrastinating with starting and finishing work. This intervention allows for early diagnosis of problem areas and provides enough time for further intervention where necessary.

John continued to talk about the governing-body paid-teachers that the school employ in an attempt to reduce class sizes. Unlike most township and rural schools which house mainly learners from poverty-stricken backgrounds, former Model C schools accommodate learners whose parents can afford to pay school fees of up to R1000 a month. This money is then used to employ more teachers and upgrade facilities, so that classes are reduced and learners receive a better education. When classes are smaller, individual teachers do not have as much workload as teachers with larger classes.

John's report echoed what Sonja and Terence had said about the role of management in assisting teachers with workload. Frequent reminders are issued, so that teachers are aware of

fast approaching deadlines. Teachers as professional practitioners are expected to keep diaries of important dates. However, the nature of the work is so diverse that it is easy to overlook up- coming events and constant reminders are very helpful.

Class-size has come up before in this report. John reported that the school recognizes that teachers' workload is heightened by the number of learners they have in their classrooms. He had mentioned before that the school has employed extra teachers with the aim of reducing class- sizes. However, he seemed to be of the opinion that more can still be done in this regard.

John went on to mention that they encourage teachers to work collaboratively. They initiated something they call team-marking, also referred to as committee-marking. He explained how the grade eight teachers would team up with the grade 9 teachers to mark an exam paper. He showed a mark sheet with mark analysis, which he explained had been produced by a group of four teachers in one day. He went on to mention that while most teachers participate in team-marking, the school does not force any teacher to participate. This is merely a management strategy to help teachers cope with workload. Those teachers who prefer to mark on their own are welcome to do so.

I asked Christine the same question I had asked John. The interview with Christine was not recorded and will therefore be narrated.

Christine explained that she breaks down what needs to be done according to dates. Her exact words were "people are more likely to achieve their goals if you let them know what is expected of them in advance, and then they can pace themselves". She mentioned that she gives out constant reminders at briefings and believes that the most important thing is to remain flexible on deadlines. "As a manager I never expect other people to do what I'm not prepared to do, I try and get my marks done, so that I have headspace to deal with others", Christine said.

She reported that teachers have a lot of administration to deal with on top of their teaching load and explained how she had to organize the after-care teacher to do typing and photocopies for teachers in order to help them cope with admin.

Another area she mentioned as part of the school's initiative to help teachers cope is the area of teacher-development. The school believes in sending teachers for training, including marking the national papers. The school also embarks on in-house teacher-development programs in areas of need, as identified by the school management committee.

According to Christine, the school encourages team-work amongst teachers. She explained how the teachers in her department work together in setting examination papers and developing teaching material. Below is an account of how this collaboration takes place:

There are three teachers in the Life Sciences Department. The work load is split between these three teachers. The teachers work collaboratively to collect teaching material, which often includes video clips and slides. All teaching content for the subject is stored up in the computer on the file named Teacher-shared. When a particular content is taught, each teacher accesses it from the digital folder, so that everyone teaches the same content. Christine explained that the goal is that irrespective of who is teaching, the learners are exposed to the same content. The second reason for this uniformity of content is that if a teacher is absent for any reason, it is easy for the other teachers to step in and fill in the gap.

What does the school still need to do to help teachers manage workload? I asked Christine

In response to this question, Christine reported that she would like to see teachers being financially compensated accordingly, especially having an appraisal system that allows teachers with large capacity to be compensated for their work. Other things that Christine mentioned included a more teacher-friendly staffroom environment; employing a professional counsellor to deal with learners, so that teachers can concentrate on teaching; having technology that is more accessible to most teachers; and an effective administrative personnel.

Issues that emerged from the question: what does the school do to help teachers with workload management revealed that teachers recognized the school management's efforts to assist them by setting achievable deadlines and sending constant reminders. Both deputies echoed the classroom teachers' views that setting achievable deadlines and issuing teachers with constant reminders on those deadlines did assist teachers with workload management. It was also reported that providing teachers with detailed annual and term-planning, creating a culture of collaboration and ensuring the efficient use of existing structure were all efforts to try and assist teachers cope with workload. In terms of what the teachers believed could still be done in order to help them, the study found that teachers' views differed depending on the type of school. Teachers from the bigger school reported that they were satisfied with management's efforts to reduce class-sizes the point which was reiterated by the deputy principal. Teachers from the smaller-sized school reported that they believed that hiring more teachers would help reduce their workload, as most teachers were themselves in one-man departments because of the size of the school.

**Question 3: What coping strategies do you use to help you manage your workload as you plan, prepare, assess, record and report?**

Megan's response to this question reflected what she had mentioned earlier about herself being a pioneer:

*I love planning. I love it because it makes my life easy during the term. That is my biggest reason for planning and that is why I plan in the holidays. In my first year, I planned during the term and I assessed during the term and it was incredibly hard and actually I felt like every day my life... you couldn't tell my classroom and my bedroom apart. I had half of my classroom in my bedroom and half of my bedroom in my classroom, because the two become so merged and you are just so busy all the time. Now I do my planning and my prepping in the holidays so that during the term, after school and vocational weekends get used to mark and assess and give feedback, so that the learners can then progress (and) so that I can give all my attention to feedback and writing and making sure that they get what they need to pass what I set as the final paper as summative assessment at the end of that term, and that's why I plan in the holidays. Also, there are no people around and there are no children demanding my attention every five minutes. So I have long spaces of time to be able to think creatively and look up stuff on the Internet and find resources 'cause also I like to work on planning from large-scale all the way down.*

*And so I like to have a five-year plan, so that when a child comes to the school in grade eight, what will every single year look like for this child? I love that and so I start off with a five-year plan, then I look at a one-year plan, dividing it into terms and then take each term and break each term down and so take the sections of work that you cover in a term and break that down into how long will this take. You will be standing in the front of the classroom and thinking, if only I had got this clip or that, so that this worksheet could have been done better, but because you were rushed and pressed for time you didn't really have the foresight to see where you were going. Planning a lesson solves the problem of classroom management. So let's say people are having problems with children being destructive. And when I was dealing with pastoral care last year and teachers would come to me or even teachers who I'm working with and mentoring will come to me and say "I have these issues and these issues". My first question would always be "what was actually happening in the lesson besides the behaviour" because I found for myself that when I wasn't prepared, I wasn't prepared for the chaos that would then result 'cause I myself was chaotic... and for me it comes down to time-management.*

Megan's strategy for coping with planning is not to plan during the term but to use vacation time for planning. It also appears that this strategy was developed later on in her teaching career. Through reflecting on her practice, Megan was able to change the way she did planning. Her description illustrates chaos and mess in her teaching during her earlier years. Her reporting that she 'loves planning' is an indication that this new strategy is more effective than the previous one. As Megan continued to explain her planning strategy it began to emerge why she chose planning in the holidays as the best time to do her planning.

The first reason Megan gives for planning in the holidays is that with planning out of the way, she gets more time during the term to focus on learner progress. Marking and giving feedback on assessment are given priority during the term. Second, planning in the holidays gives her space to think and be creative in the absence of all the distractions of the school environment. Finally, by planning in the holidays, Megan gets time to find the resources she would need in the following term. She is able to take her time searching the Internet for teaching and learning material, which is something she would not be able to do in the busyness of the school term.

Megan further explained the various forms of planning that she conducts. The first planning she mentioned is a five-year plan. While the idea of a five-year plan may be daunting for some, Megan explained that it does not have to be this way. She talked about a detailed plan that includes topics to be covered in the five-year period, as well as assessment that goes with each topic. Being clear about the difference between a five-year plan and a remedial plan (aimed at closing gaps in knowledge) makes planning much easier for her. Secondly, Megan mentioned term- planning, which is a more detailed form of a five-year plan and lastly, a lesson plan, which she believes to be key to classroom management. A lot has been said about disciplinary problems that teachers face in their classrooms across the globe. Reports have been written about how teachers' workload is increased due to disciplinary issues (Chisholm, et al., 2005). Megan makes use of lesson planning and time management as her strategies to deal with classroom management.

How do you cope with assessment and how do you give feedback to your learners? I asked Megan, who responded:

*One thing that I have been doing for the past three years is plan my final summative assessment before the exam time. Not necessarily put the whole paper together, but have all the components that are needed so that I plan backwards for my term. It is just so helpful for me. One thing that James (the principal) actually showed me right at the beginning, when I*

*first started working here was, he said “use the informal assessment of the smiley faces”. And I really like the idea of, every single lesson there needs to come a conclusion of assessment. The children need to know that they have learned something and I need to be able to gauge whether they have or haven't. So there needs to be a thing of: this is what we did in the lesson, this is the knowledge that was put out there, “how many of you grasped this? How many of you didn't?” For me assessment doesn't necessarily mean me marking every book; it doesn't mean me standing in front of a classroom and reading out a memo that's quite formal assessment. Informal assessment is something that I try to do every lesson, wherein I will make sure that every single group gets my attention and try sum up within that group where each child is.*

*I was going around the groups checking for comprehension of how to do a comprehension. So all I did was I walked around while they were doing it and I'd say “what step are you at, in your comprehension skill?” and I would expect them to say to me “oh I'm at step one. I'm reading for the first time or I'm at step 4 I'm re-reading after having done the answers”. It didn't matter what step they were at, I was looking to see whether they realized they were doing a process. So that for me is formal assessment 'cause I try to see where they are, and the feedback could be as simple as “Well done. You are on the right track. What is your next step?” to see whether they know what was before, what will come after and where they are at now. I think most teachers do this naturally. They just don't formalize it by putting it on a piece of paper that you can look back over for a term and say ‘Hang on this child is getting mainly a 1 in all the skills department to start off with but now they are getting a 2 maybe even a 3’ and you can see where they need to improve. And that for me is easier to manage time-wise, because it's not easy to sit at the end of the fourth term and see, where did this child go wrong? I can't cast my mind that far back. I can't think about all those little nuances, and you miss some of those little things. So work smart not hard on your lesson, use the time wisely, use all the time that you have in your lesson.*

And in terms of giving feedback, is there anything you would like to add? I posed the question to Megan:

*I prefer to give written feedback and by that, I mean go all out to explain to the child what your expectations were. Often I get handed in like a blank piece of paper because they (learners) haven't done anything and that's not to say then I say “Oh go home and finish it” I just take the piece of paper and write feedback on it. Sometimes I write more than the child*

*has written. I tell them what they should have written in the introduction, what the body should have looked like and move on to comment on the conclusion.*

Summative assessment suggests assessment taking place at the end of the period. However, Megan's report shows that planning of assessment is not synonymous with conducting the assessment. Summative assessment would involve formal assessments like tests and examinations, which normally take place at the end of the term. She reported that she plans her summative assessment at the beginning of the term. This report is consistent with what she has been reporting all along, that planning ensures a smooth flow of the practice of teaching and learning and should not be done haphazardly. By planning her summative assessments at the beginning of the term, Megan achieves two goals. Firstly, she puts herself in a position whereby she does not have to stress after all the term's work has piled up, and is able to pace herself accordingly. Secondly, Megan is able to teach with the end in mind. She knows what her assessment looks like and that enables her to structure and plan her teaching according to the requirements of the assessment.

Megan proceeded to explain one of the assessment methods she uses. The smiley faces are used as a form of informal assessment. A learner is either given a smiley or a sad face. A smiley face indicates that the learner has performed well while a sad face shows that the learner has not met the required outcome. Smiley faces are used by Megan as both an assessment tool and as a form of feedback. Not only does this method save time, but it is also easy to use and can be applied in self and peer-assessments.

By now, it has become apparent that for Megan, assessment and feedback can be as straightforward as giving a verbal comment or showing a smiley or a sad face. A misfit between policy and practice can be caused by a mere misinterpretation of policy intentions. Megan portrays an understanding of policy and hence her practice is made easier. Megan also raises a number of important concepts in her report. Firstly, assessment is not always done for the purpose of recording marks. Her learners are assessed verbally to ascertain whether or not they understand fully what they are doing. Secondly, more than one assessment method can be applied in a single lesson, depending on the purpose of assessing. Megan uses verbal assessment to gauge where her learners are in their understanding of the process, as well as a form of immediate feedback to the learners. The second assessment method applied in the same lesson is a 1-3 scale. In this method, a 1 may be used to indicate that a learner has not achieved the outcome, a 2 would indicate that an outcome is partially met and a 3 signifies



complete achievement of the outcome. This assessment method as Megan suggested, is recorded for future reference.

Megan's last comment on assessment and feedback strategies reiterated the importance of planning. She demonstrated that her strategies would only work for teachers who are prepared to utilize fully all of the contact time they have with their learners in the classroom. With regard to feedback, Megan's report was that she gives feedback in writing. Her feedback is constructive. It shows the learner where he went wrong and highlights for him how to correct his mistakes. This saves time on having to address each individual learner at a later stage. This form of feedback also serves as a permanent record for the learner to go back to at a later stage.

How do you keep your records? I asked Megan

*I store my marks on the computer in my office. My actual mark sheet that I work on is quite different because I work a lot on ticking and crossing and I work on a three scale system so I will have a 1, a 2 and a 3. So, 3- I understand it, 2- I partly understand it and 1-I did not understand it at all and these don't actually get added to marks (informal assessment). And if I'm standing in front of a classroom and I've taught a lesson and let's say they are now doing an application part, I just carry a piece of paper with me and I just say okay 'this child is 3, this child is 2, this child is 1' and I just see that through simple question and answer or reading over their shoulder to what they've written so far. And it's just for me to gauge 'cause I'm not necessarily looking to see whether they got the answer right.*

Megan went on to demonstrate that recording and assessment are all part of the same package. She carries a mark sheet to class with her which she uses to record learner progress. This mark sheet is mainly used to record informal assessment. Her formal assessments are stored in an electronic form in her computer. Sometimes she carries a piece of paper to record learners' progress as she reads over their shoulders to see what they have written. This again is in line with the CAPS document policy's requirement on informal assessment. The last point pertains to the issue of time. Teachers often complain that they do not have enough time to finish all their work and meet end-of- term deadlines. Megan's strategy gives her back that time at the end of the term. As she proceeds during the term, she records marks so that she does not have to rush through trying to collect marks, as some teachers often do. Megan is also in the position to give quality feedback on the learners' progress, because this progress has been properly monitored and recorded

Carol was asked the same question as Megan and in response, she said:

*What seems to alleviate a lot of pressure is that Megan and I, we team-teach, so the grades 10, 11 and 12's have 4 hours of English a week. For 2 hours they are with me and then they swop and they are with Megan for the other 2 hours, so I only have to plan half a lesson, which really does help when it comes to time and stress management. For the first term, I would do language and Megan would do literature and for the second term we swop Megan does literature and I do language. So the children are receiving different view- points and I also think that it does help because where I lack, like in essay writing skills, Megan is able to help, whereas I'm really good at visual literacy so we are able to use our strengths. I have an idea of what I need to do and I plan term by term, but then again I often turn to Megan. She is incredibly knowledgeable when it comes to English language and sometimes I think I'm still a baby when it comes to teaching English. You know I've only been teaching for three years. Every time I have an idea I always run to her and say oh my goodness do you think this will work? So I do involve her a lot but she also gives us a five-year plan, so we know what we have to teach to what grade and we know what they need to learn before they leave that year. So it does help.*

Team-teaching is the way in which Megan and Carol collaborate in the teaching of English. This collaboration yields two vital results. Firstly, instead of planning and preparing for four hours, each of these teachers only plans for two hours, thus creating time to concentrate on other areas of work. Secondly, each one complements the other in knowledge and skills. In this way, the learners receive the best of both teachers. Carol continued to highlight the role played by Megan in her planning. This help received from the more experienced colleague goes a long way towards enabling Carol to cope with planning. She mentioned that she and the other English teacher were given a five-year plan by Megan, which gives them direction in terms of what to teach to various grades. Megan also spoke about this five-year plan, as reported earlier in this section. Having this five-year plan at Carol's disposal allows her to conduct her term-by-term planning.

*And with LO I'm pretty much on my own. Carol continued. Every now and then, I would go to anyone who is in the staff room and say, Hey I've got this idea, do you think it will work? I'm not a one-man department, because obviously I have other people teaching LO but I'm on my own in grade 12. The people I work with in other grades are actually quite great. They are willing to go out there and collect stuff and are willing to share. So, over two years I have collected a bank of resources to teach from because I have other people helping me. And I*

*also have a file that I inherited from Megan, because she used to teach LO. I think in my first year of teaching, I used everything that she used to teach word- for- word and note- for- note, but once I got feedback from moderation, I decided to change all that and that's when I pretty much re-invented the whole syllabus. I also work with my cluster. They are very helpful but once you become familiar with your content, you are able to have fun with it. You begin to incorporate games, film studies, videos and other stuff into your lessons, and with assessments you are able to be creative.*

Carol is the only Life- Orientation teacher in matric, but shares the other grades with Megan and Jean. At the time of the interview with Carol, the five-year plan for Life- Orientation had not been formulated. Without this plan, in place each teacher works on her own even though there is sharing of resources. Teacher-collaboration is demonstrated here in two ways. Firstly, an informal kind of collaboration exists where Carol feels at liberty to bounce ideas off her colleagues in the staff room. Secondly, teachers help each other and freely share resources. The culture of the school may either hinder or promote teacher collaboration and in this case the school's culture appears to promote collaboration and sharing.

Carol went further:

*You become more confident with experience as you get to know your content. My first year of teaching was a disaster. You try to plan but nothing ever goes according to plan. My planning has changed now, because I make a rough outline of what I want to do term- by- term and because now I know my content, I'm free to do more exciting things with it. In the beginning, I was very terrified of the kids and then I realized, you know what, at the end of the day you can't know everything. And now if they ask me a question, I can honestly say "I actually don't know, but you know what? We can actually look it up together" That's why I now take my computer to my classroom and I can sit there and my computer is always on and I can open up web files and we can Google stuff together. And at the same time it's showing them that you have to be willing to go that extra mile to learn, but you have to be humble enough to say "You know what? You don't have to know everything".*

It emerges from the above excerpt that experience has been the best teacher for Carol. Being more familiar with her teaching content implies that she is now more comfortable about taking risks and using more creative teaching methods. The use of technology in the classroom also emerges as a concept which improves with time and experience. While being terrified of learners is an experience that all new teachers can attest to, Carol shows that technology can be used by teachers as a resource to research information, which leads to

teachers gaining an upper hand in the classroom. The difference between novice and veterans in teaching is not so much that the former lack knowledge, as it is that the latter have gained confidence through experience and are therefore more at ease to try out new ideas and approaches. Over time, Carol has developed both the confidence and the ability to use innovative approaches in her teaching, which include the use of media and group work.

When do you normally do your preparation? I asked Carol

*I normally try to use my free periods to do prep, but a lot of the times, I find that during my frees, I end up catching up with admin. For me that is the only time I get to respond to e-mails that are school-related. I try not to do school work at night and on weekends, but it's impossible. Your family suffers. So I stay late at school during the week, so that I don't have to take my marking home, but if you have a deadline coming, you have no choice but to take work home. Every lesson has to be fun and innovative. You have to be creative. I mean, to make a good power point presentation takes a good- what, three hours? I made one for LO recently and it consisted of 28 slides and it took me about two and a half hours to put together and I use videos in English all the time for my lessons.*

While there is time provided during normal school hours, Carol indicated that for her this time is not sufficient to do all her preparation. Administrative work, which mainly consists of school- related correspondence, takes most of this non-contact time. Most of the preparation takes place after school, in the evenings and at weekends. Having to prepare power-point presentations and video clips require creativity which, for Carol, ends up being time-consuming.

How has your planning and preparation changed over time? I asked

*I think I have become more innovative in the sense that I'm using more power-point presentations, video clips and things like that in class, instead of printing out notes. I think that's how my prep has changed and also bringing in the element of group dynamic, whereby learners have to work in groups. It's more OBE style, because you are watching them figuring it out on their own.*

My next question was aimed at ascertaining the assessment strategies that Carol applies in her practice. The question I asked was: How do you conduct your assessments and has your approach changed over time? To answer this question, she said:

*I use a rubric a lot and I also use peer-marking from time to time, because there are some things you can use peer-marking on and I rely heavily on the rubric. Working with a rubric, I think is a hundred times easier than working with a model answer. I try and do stuff that we can mark as a class but obviously you still have to go through the marking just to ensure that they haven't given out marks for nothing. So ja group-marking and peer-marking. With respect to setting papers, the IEB is so helpful by making past exam papers available to teachers. With English, once you've got a bank of past exam papers, you can use bits and pieces over and over. So I think we are lucky in that sense that we don't have to put too much effort into setting an exam, because obviously those questions have already been moderated and we just have to make sure that they are Blooms-appropriate.*

I needed more clarity on this statement so I asked: Do your learners not get access to those papers?

*Uhm, a lot of those questions we re-work, because the matrices have access to all of the IEB papers through the IEB website, but we don't use those for exams. We are given other grades' resources on the website and those aren't open to the kids. For instance, with a comprehension, we can use the same as the previous year's but we re-word and re-phrase according to how the kids responded to it. So you are using the same material but changing the wording and the way in which you assess and that is much less time-consuming than doing it from scratch.*

Peer-marking, the use of a marking rubric and group-marking are assessment strategies that Carol mentioned in her report. She had mentioned earlier that marking is one of the reasons why her workload is heavy. It is, therefore, not surprising that she would come up with easier ways to handle marking. Past exam papers and using assessments from previous periods is one way of saving time, as Carol explained. The assessment material is adjusted or changed slightly to ensure the assessment has some originality in it. Carol's hesitation before answering the question could either mean that some questions are given to the learners with no adjustments or that she was not expecting a follow-up question. It has been known to happen that some teachers would use the same tests year after year.

I carried on and asked the next question: How do you give feedback?

*If I gave them a test, I go through that test with them, making sure that every person knows where they went wrong. My feedback is not always as quick as it should be, but I make sure*

*that I always give feedback. I also think written feedback is the best. I give written feedback in their books or test papers.*

Teachers are often told that if learners are given an assessment it is imperative that the teacher marks that assessment promptly and gives feedback to the learners within two to three days. Whilst this may be the ideal, considering the fact that if feedback is left too late it may lose its purpose, especially if the teacher has moved on to the next section, it is not an easy goal to achieve for most teachers. Teachers with big class sizes, who end up marking between 40 and 60 scripts would find it difficult to finish these within 3 days. In Carol's case, she mentioned that her feedback is not always quick, probably due to reasons she mentioned earlier about being inundated with marking.

How do you keep your records? I asked Carol, whose answer was quite prompt:

*I have a spread sheet on my computer and once I've finished marking, all the marks are entered on the spread sheet and I focus on four assessments a term and whatever assessments I do towards the end of the term, I take them for next term's mark. So I'm really constantly assessing. I'm merely choosing which marks to take in and which not. Sometimes I will have nine different assessments for my grade 9's and I might actually choose four or five of the ones that I think accurately represent how well they have done, and I will choose those marks. I try and give everything that we do a mark allocation.*

We had come to the end of our interview session and I posed the last question to Carol: How do you cope with reporting and the-end-of-the term deadlines?

*Last year Megan, Christine and myself, we put together a list of comments. We had about four or five per category and I think it worked very well. I'm not gonna lie to you, I've got all the reports from the previous years on my laptop. I have all the comments that every single teacher has ever made. I will just give Joe Soap this comment and just make sure that he doesn't suddenly become a she. So you have to be alert.*

Do you feel the school is doing enough to help you during this time? I probed.

*At times they give you deadlines and then they say "on your marks, get set, go!" and just before you reach the finish line they come and say "Oh how are you doing. Are you okay?" I do think they can work more closely with certain people at times instead of leaving things to the last minute and then the rest of the staff has to pitch in and help. I also do think that management needs to show more face and be more visible. I know that they are supporting*

*us, but for instance Christine sitting in the staff room is fantastic and we need more of that. Don't get me wrong. Our management team is very approachable but at the end of the term, when things get more stressful, that's when they need to show face more.*

Unlike Megan who does not believe that every assessment must be allocated a mark, Carol chooses to put a mark on every assessment, so that at the end of the term she has a variety of marks to select from. Immediately entering marks onto a computer spread sheet is also used as a strategy to save time, as this ensures that records are stored permanently. Carol also mentions that even after the marks have been put together for that particular term, continuous assessment still carries on with some of the marks falling into the next period.

Working in collaboration with two colleagues, Carol came up with a bank of report comments which she said had been useful for her. Furthermore, she mentioned that she has copies of previous years' reports in her lap top. This not only enables her to work from home but also allows her to sift through some good comments that had been written by other teachers in the past, thus saving herself time and energy of having to formulate a new comment for every learner.

Carol mentioned in her report that she felt that school management should be more visible during the busy time of preparing reports. She reported that some teachers require constant assistance during this period, which in her opinion is not happening and results in other teachers having to do more than their share of work.

When and how do you do your planning and preparation? I asked Gail.

*At night, I had a plan to stay at school and work till 5pm, but then you get stuck in traffic and you end up getting home so late, so that defeats the whole purpose. And there is just so much that you actually can't finish it all at school. So you end up having to take work home.*

*And already I have to start planning for next year, because the syllabus is changing, so I have to re-learn the whole thing, because they added on another section.*

When will you be doing this planning? I asked.

*I will be doing it in the holidays because there is no time during school.*

Do you find that you do lots of planning and preparation in the holidays? I continued to probe.

*Oh ja, a lot.*

I continued to probe: How do you do this planning?

*I have managed to create a year- plan for most of my classes, but the problem is the syllabus keeps changing and so I keep having to adjust it. So, if a new section is brought in, I have to create notes and tests and learn the stuff myself and you can only have time to do that in the holidays. I use power point in all my lessons and videos and to find the videos takes hours because there is so much. You have to sift through the videos. You can't just type 'cold war'. You have to sift through them until you find the right one.*

Gail reported that she takes work home and does marking and preparation at night and at weekends, because there is not enough time to finish all the work at school. She expressed that her desire is to finish all the work at school, instead of taking it home. However, the volumes of work render this impossible. This extract reveals that Gail does planning in the holidays. The reason for planning in the holidays is attributed to the fact that Gail uses media in her lessons and researching material to be used in the lessons takes time. Like Megan, Gail finds it easier to do planning in the holidays, because of time and space.

What assessment methods do you use?

*I have used peer-assessment when I would first mark their essays but not put a mark on and then I would give it to them to mark each other's work. Then I would say "right, what did you give them?" and they would say "Oh I gave them 80%, and I would say "Actually it was worth a 70%". So with essays I use peer-marking to get them to understand how I mark, as opposed to trying to lessen my workload. Other than that it is difficult for me to use other types of assessments in history, because of the nature of the content.*

Gail uses peer- assessment as a strategy to coach her learners to understand how marks are allocated in essay- marking. A similar strategy was encountered in the report from Carol's response. These teachers are showing that formative assessment can be used to build learners up towards summative assessment.

Do you ever work with other teachers? I asked Gail.

*For matric trials, we share a cluster paper. I set the essay question and the memo, another teacher will do a source-based question and we end up with a pool. We only need three essays but in the end we might end up with seven questions in the pool and we choose which ones we prefer, so the papers are identical.*

Do you find that that helps in terms of workload? I asked



*Yes definitely, you don't have to set a paper from scratch. When it comes to English, I do everything on my own, but Megan gave me a guideline of what needs to be covered in grade 8, so I just make sure I cover what she told me to. How I do it is up to me and then the tests, I always ask her to moderate them and she is generally happy with that.*

Working collaboratively with teachers from various schools helps Gail to cope with assessment in terms of setting papers. Setting a cluster paper ensures that each individual teacher does not worry about the standard of the assessment. Gail had reported being in a one-man department at her school. This collaboration benefits her and makes her work easier as she does not have to set all the assessments on her own. While Gail works in collaboration with other teachers to set matric papers, when it comes to other grades, however, she sets her own papers.

Is there anything else you would like to add on the subject of assessment?

*I have been teaching for four years, so I've got tests from before and I just jumble some questions here and there. One exam now was on the section that I had never taught before. There were no questions in the text book, no model answers, nothing. I had to make up every question and it probably took me six hours to set one paper. I had to try and find pictures, and sources for it. I had to try and find newspaper articles, but next year it will be much easier, because I've got this now and I can add to it. When I look back, I can't believe the types of questions I used to set and the lay-out of the question paper. It was really bad. Now I have learnt that instead of making every task for marks, rather choose four instead of ten tasks and make it for marks, and I have learnt you don't set twenty questions in the paper, because it goes on and on. So now I set four because it is easier to mark.*

Gail reports that she uses questions from past papers that she had set in previous years. Each year gets easier for her because she does not have to find new material. Again Gail shows that experience has been the best teacher for her. She now sets an assessment that is easier to mark. This does not necessarily mean that the level or standard of assessment is lowered. It simply implies that with experience, she has discovered that she can achieve the same results with a less tedious assessment tool.

How do you give feedback after an assessment?

*With the grade 12s, I give oral feedback but I make sure that I write down all the corrections. With grade 8 English you've got to show them where their faults are. I sometimes set aside the entire lesson to go over a test and give feedback.*

Every written piece of assessment must be followed by some kind of feedback. Gail reported that she gives both oral and written feedback. The nature of this feedback depends on the type of assessment. While both oral and written feedback are effective, written feedback provides a learner with a permanent record of the corrections, while oral assessment provides an opportunity for a learner to ask questions and get more clarity from the teacher. A combination of both of these forms of feedback is even more effective than each one separately.

How do you keep your records? I asked Gail the next question.

*I use drop offs for keeping records*

How does that work? I asked trying to get Gail to explain more about drop-offs.

*Drop- off allows you to store your records permanently on the computer. It is useful, for instance, if your computer should crash, you are able to still access your information from another computer. All you have to do is simply type in your pass word. It is like e-mailing it to yourself but you can have a group drop off. I use drop off with (a colleague in England) where he e-mails stuff to me and I e-mail him back. So you can work with colleagues from other countries and your records are kept safe for future use. They can't get lost.*

The use of drop- offs gives Gail the assurance that her records are safe. With the inclusion of continuous assessment on the final summative mark at the end of the year, teachers have to be very careful to keep all records of their assessment during the year. Different teachers have come up with various methods to ensure the safety of their records. Gail uses drop- offs to store her records.

Do you record all your CASS marks? I asked Gail

*With grade 8 English, it is quite easy. I can end up with 10 or 12 CASS marks because if we finish early, I will just do orals and I would give them a mark out of 10. Sometimes I include oral marks, sometimes I don't. With history, on the other hand, I stick to three CASS marks, and one test because it is so time- consuming.*

Three continuous assessment marks and one controlled test per term are enough evidence for Gail to show how a learner is progressing. The quality of assessment is more important than the number of tasks given. For teachers like Gail who end up with high volumes of marking, it is imperative that quality be given more priority than quantity and that the assessment recorded is reflective of the learners' progress.

I finally asked Gail about her reporting techniques: How do you cope with the end of the semester period and the preparation of reports?

*I find that there is very little time between when they finish their exams and when deadlines are due. All the deadlines are due in the same week. So you have to figure out your own mark and enter it, and do comments. Plus there are other responsibilities, for instance, tomorrow afternoon I have the debating AGM, so that's the whole afternoon out for me. So there are other school responsibilities. It's not just marking or just report comments. And there is this research project now that you have to work on throughout the day, so you can't just have time to concentrate on your marking.*

*I have a bank of comments. It's not personal, but I don't have time to put a new comment for every child, so if I choose a comment from 80 to 90 range, they will all get that comment if they get that mark, except I will put a child's name and change 'he' or 'she'. I have them on Word document and all I have to do is change the name. That saves a lot of time, also I have had these comments spell-checked already.*

Entering report comments and marks can be quite tedious for teachers. In an attempt to save time, Gail like Carol who was interviewed previously, keeps a bank of report comments from which she chooses her comments. Gail's complaint is that deadlines are due on the same week and this puts pressure on her, because while she tries to chase after deadlines, the rest of the work carries on as normal. Other work-related responsibilities are not put on hold to allow teachers to attend to the pressing issue of meeting the end- of-semester/year deadlines. Work-intensification results from the expectation that teachers must meet deadlines without neglecting their other duties.

Responding to the same question, Sonja said:

*The school finishes at 3 o'clock, so sometimes I'm here till half- past 3, 4 o'clock depending on what planning I have to do. And trying to get everything done in school rather than at home because you know what happens when you get home, there are too many other things. So literally, it's just time-management and knowing your time-table and planning for a subject a couple of lessons in advance, so that I have the next grade to deal with. And that's how I do planning. It's continuous. Every planning has to be continuous.*

Do you involve other teachers in your planning?

*Every two weeks, we have a meeting in the department and everyone is checking where they are at in terms of how far along they are moving. And whatever assistance comes in at that meeting, you know any kind of material that can be shared ...it helps with your planning, as well if someone has a worksheet that was helpful in their class or an exercise that others can use. It gets passed along. No pressure for one person to do all of it. So everyone just contributes.*

Would you say your planning has improved in the eleven months that you have been here? I continued to probe?

*Oh yes*

Would you elaborate on that please?

*At the beginning, it was very scattered because I was still finding myself and getting used to the syllabus. But I must say now it is more structured and I find that uhm, if I do it very well this year, then next year, it is going to be even easier because I have a foundation. This year, I was working from nothing. Everybody is assisting me but I still want to find my own resources and do certain things my own way, according to my personality. So it's definitely much easier, because I'm more familiar with what is expected of me administratively, as well as in the classroom.*

Do you do work during school holidays?

*Yes I do, not because I'm catching up, just because I want to look for new ways...So after work and the holidays, it is just to find new ways. You know, the concepts have not changed since the time we were at school. You still have to add, subtract, divide and multiply, but it still does not get through to the learners. They don't get it. So working during holidays, it's just to find new worksheets on the Internet to make the work also manageable.*

Like many teachers, Sonja gives the same meaning to preparation and planning. Her response reveals that she stays late at school to do planning and avoids taking work home. She also reported that she plans her lessons well in advance. Time-management comes high up in her list of coping strategies.

There is no indication that Sonja takes an initiative to involve other teachers in her planning. However, it does emerge from her response that the school encourages the culture of sharing and that organizational routines like departmental meetings are used as a platform for such sharing to take place.

As with the other teachers who were interviewed before her, Sonja reported that she was not on top of her practice when she started teaching. Her eight-year teaching experience in a tertiary institution had not prepared her for high-school teaching. Her practice improved with experience and within eleven months, she is feeling more relaxed and at ease with her work.

Sonja reported that she does her planning in the holidays, because this gives her time to search for resources. During the term, there is not enough time to plan and prepare creative lessons because of the pressures of work. The nature of mathematics as a subject requires that teachers find creative ways to explain the concepts and Sonja uses school holidays to search the Internet for worksheets and other teaching and learning material to help her in her classes.

How do you conduct your assessment? I moved to the next set of questions.

*With the juniors we have tests for them every single week, short tests and they are designed to make the sections easy and at the same time consolidate after a week of maths, instead of being tested once a term when too many concepts have been taught. And we can get through the marking and give them some feedback as quickly as possible, so that they can see where they are at, and obviously every term we also do standardized tests and everyone is assessed accordingly.*

How do you cope with these weekly tests? I asked Sonja.

*Those are shared tasks, so one person isn't setting all the time. The work is rotated. So at the beginning of the term, you know when and how the assessments are going to fall and what date, when you will have to set and you know which topics are gonna be covered. So even though the topic has not been taught yet, you still know what is going to be in the test so you can even plan in advance. This is the first year that the programme has been implemented, so there are a lot of issues that need to be ironed out, as in any trial run. I firmly think that it is an excellent tool and I think that come next year, it will be more perfect.*

The school embarked on an interventionist program in an attempt to improve mathematics results. Reform initiatives aimed at school improvement and school effectiveness often put pressure on teachers, who are expected to see to the implementation of such programmes. Sonja and the other mathematics teachers are tasked with seeing to the smooth implementation of this initiative, while carrying on with their normal workload. Sonja's response revealed that the school has put measures in place to assist teachers in coping with the programme. The school has put a plan in place, so that the work is rotated amongst the

teachers involved. Furthermore, a detailed plan of action has been designed with the aim of giving teachers guidance, so they can plan in advance.

How do you conduct informal assessment?

*Okay the kids are aware from the very beginning, I tell them these are the kinds of assessments I'm going to take down for marks. For instance, homework assessment counts, even though it does not count that much for marks. I just tell them they must assume that every piece of work they do may be taken in for marks because they should give the same priority and quality of work at all times. So at the start of the lesson, they will know if homework will be assessed or not. I tell them on a Monday, this section will be assessed on Friday- a couple of exercises as well, but there is also spot assessment.*

How do you do this spot assessment?

*Get into the class after having taught a concept the day before and say to them this exercise is your assessment. It's not a comprehensive exercise. It is like a test but they do it in class and they have all the resources and their text books. And they have the confidence, because they can see what they are doing, they can check using their text books. And the mind-set is not the same as if they were writing a test, where they fear the worst. They are more relaxed. I also assess by marking books I will make a comment in their book for the parent to sign, and if they are not happy they can come and see me or they can phone me. I check out for basic things like ruling off after a day's work and underlining. I think maths is logical thinking and you have to do a lot of background work in order to get the background right. It is the nature of the game. We run on a two week cycle. Every two weeks on a Friday they leave their books and they get them back on a Monday. That is when I do marking and check on the work. You have to do a lot of background work.*

Regarding her assessment practice, Sonja reported that she does various forms of assessments, but not all of them are taken down for marks that count at the end of the term. Learners are informed beforehand about the types of assessments that would be taken in for marks. However, they have to expect that any piece, including homework, may be recorded. Sonja does this to ensure that her learners give the same priority to all their work. She also mentioned that she does spot assessment which appears to be one of Sonja's strategies to encourage her learners to come to class prepared at all times. Spot- assessment, as Sonja described it, is a form of open- book test. The learners are at a disadvantage, because they have not been told to prepare for this assessment. However, this is countered by the fact that

resources like textbooks and class notes can be consulted during the test. It is not clear from this response whether the marks obtained from spot- assessments are recorded or not and what percentage of these marks counts towards the term mark.

How do you give feedback? I asked Sonja.

*Comment on the books and depending on the state of affairs, I may ask them to come and see me during break to talk about what is happening, eh, and in extreme cases, there are parents' evenings and also calling parents in is an option. I personally like writing in their books and I then know that if the parent is signing the acknowledgement, then the parent is looking at the book, and I think that is very important. That book is the child's product of coming to school. The parent must be able to see what you are doing. They must be able to see what they are paying for.*

How big are your classes? I enquired.

*This new program is designed to create smaller maths classes, so we can have more one- on- one interaction with the learners. So the classes are between 20 and 24.*

Does feedback not become cumbersome? I probed

*It gets a bit hectic but I do it every two weeks. Some learners don't get comments, because they are doing okay but it just means that this week I don't have something to say to them but in two weeks' time I may write something, but it is not everything that you comment on.*

For generations, teachers have been using the marking of learners' books as the primary method of assessment. This method has not become redundant with the introduction of the newer and more progressive approaches. Sonja reported that her feedback approach is writing comments on the learners' books. Her approach promotes accountability from all parties involved. This tripartite alliance necessitates the flow of communication between the parent and the teacher, the parent and the child, and the child and the teacher. This communication is initiated in the learner's writing book and may extend to face-to-face conversations, with the aim of giving feedback on learner progress.

20 to 24 learners per class is quite a small and manageable class size and John (deputy) did mention in his report that this is one of the school's strategies for helping teachers to cope with workload. However, if Sonja marks and gives feedback to every learner she teaches, then it would mean that between a Friday and a Monday, she would be expected to give written feedback to between 100 and 120 learners' books. Sonja did admit that giving

feedback could be a tiresome task and so she reported that she only gives feedback when it is necessary to do so.

How do you keep your records? I asked Sonja.

*Everything is recorded on a mark list. The learners also have to keep a file of all their assessments. Every single mark that they are awarded is recorded. They have to keep a book for all homework assessments, so it is all in one place. And then, that can be recorded at the end of the term. The marks are entered on the spread sheet and the computer works out the averages for you. If you keep it simple from the beginning, at the end of the term it is just a matter of entering the marks into the excel spread sheet and then it gives you the answer. So that makes it pretty easy in that sense.*

Do you carry your mark lists to all your classes? I probed

*We are classroom-based, so I have all I need with me in the classroom.*

Recording marks on the mark list makes life easy for Sonja because the mark list already consists of all the learners' names according to their classes and grades. These marks are later transferred to a computer spread sheet. To ensure that marks are not lost, learners also keep records of their assessments in a file. Having her own designated teaching classroom enables Sonja to store her records and prepare for lessons without interruptions.

How do you cope with reporting?

*Kids get reports at the end of the term. The major reports are obviously your midterm and end of the year reports. I have a registration class and I'm responsible for that class. I make basic comments and judging from the mark on the report, the subject teacher will make a comment. It is lots of admin, but it gets easier as you get to know the pupils.*

Issues emerging from the third research question (what coping strategies do teachers employ to manage daily workload?) reveal that teachers do planning and preparation after school, in the evenings and at weekends, because there is not enough time provided within a school day to finish these activities. Teachers further reported that using vacation time to plan ahead, familiarize themselves with the content of the subjects and to search through the Internet for teaching and learning material.

Participant teachers also reported that their planning, preparation and assessment methods improved with time. Most of them mentioned that at the beginning of their teaching career,



they felt unprepared and insecure, but with time they gained confidence and learned to use time- saving techniques in their practice. These techniques includes the use of past exam papers, making a collection of report comments and setting up assessments that do not produce a high volume of marking. Time management and proper planning were reported to be the crucial elements in workload management by these teachers.

Another point that emerged from the study was that teachers do work collaboratively through team- teaching, team-marking, sharing of assessment material and conducting long-term planning. Teachers in the study did comment that this collaboration has the effect of reducing the amount of work that each individual teacher has to do.

The practice of giving written feedback was reported to be the most used by the teachers. The teachers prefer giving detailed written feedback to each learner as a strategy to save time so that more time is spent teaching in order to finish the syllabus on time. It also emerged from the study that the use of computers to store records is the preferred method, as teachers reported that this method helps to ensure that the records are kept safe and that they are easily accessible. The study also found that teachers carry mark sheets or class lists to the lessons, in order to record assessments on the spot, thus preventing procrastination, which in the long-run results in the piling up of work.

#### **4.3 Issues emerging from the findings chapter**

As mentioned earlier, in this section, I aim to make meaning of the findings through the lens of the theoretical framework and other relevant literature. This fourth chapter was aimed at presenting findings from the data generated from interviews with seven teachers, with the aim of answering the question: what coping strategies do teachers employ in order to manage daily workload? The findings reveal that teachers perceive their workload to be heavy due to insufficiency of non-contact time within the school timetable to complete planning, preparation and marking of learners' work. The study found that teachers use their non-contact time to do administration, which was also reported by teachers to be unmanageable at times. Previous studies reported similar findings (Butt and Lance, 2005; Ingvarson, 204; Dibbon, 2004 and Matthees, 2011). To cope with this time constraint, teachers reported that they do their planning, preparation and marking before school, after school, in the evenings, at weekends and in the holiday time.

Planning in the holiday time was reported by teachers to be the most effective, because of time and space it provides, away from the demands of the work environment. It was reported

that teachers used school vacations for planning and preparing teaching and learning materials for the following term. The results further reveal that the school size and background did have a bearing on the amount of work that teachers were faced with. Teachers from the private, smaller-sized school reported the need to have more teachers added to their departments, because of the overwhelming volume of marking that faces individual teachers. They further called for the school to employ specialists to handle extra-curricular activities, counselling of learners and administration in order to free teachers to concentrate on teaching duties. In the bigger-sized school, it was reported that 15 extra teachers had been employed on governing body posts in order to assist teachers with workload management. The financial support received from the Department of Basic Education, coupled with the school fees paid by parents, made it possible for this school to employ these extra teachers. Chisholm et al (2005) also found that the school size and background influenced teacher workload.

Teacher collaboration and sharing of resources were found to be common practice amongst teachers. The study found that both schools encouraged the culture of collegiality and teamwork amongst teachers. Teachers reported working together to do planning, marking and setting of examination papers. This collaboration was done within departments and across schools. In the school where teachers found themselves in a one-man department, collaboration was done with a cluster group. Writers like Bacigalupo and Cachia, 2011; Grant, 2010; Jarvis, 2012 and Hargreaves, 1992 have all linked teacher-collaboration to a possible reduction in individual teacher workload.

Teachers reported that the support received from the school management in the form of flexible and achievable deadlines and the availability of support structures, like assistance from HODs, having a bank of report comments, and supportive school leadership. Penrice (2011) also found that school structure and culture can be used by teachers to avoid intensification. It was further reported that teachers regard the availability of technology such as computers, professional development like marking end- of- the year matric papers and manageable class sizes as crucial to the enhancement of workload management.

Another finding of the study was that, although teachers complained about facing heavy workloads, this did not stop them from being innovative and finding ways to cope with the demands of their work. Teachers reported that their teaching practice improved with time. The confidence gained from improved understanding of the teaching content led to the use of technology in teaching and to the employment of more progressive teaching methods, like the

use of power-point presentations. What also emerged was that teachers over time discovered more time-saving methods of assessment and giving of feedback, like the use of past exam papers, archived assessments and using written feedback to learners after an assessment.

Vanderyar (2007) found a high correlation between professional confidence and professional consciousness of teachers in the analysis of policy texts. Her study showed that teachers who were able to construct their own professional interpretation of government policy had a high level of professional confidence. Similarly, this study found that Megan, a teacher who was highly praised by her colleagues for her professional confidence in pedagogical matters reflected a sound knowledge of government policies when it came to assessment methods. This professional confidence led to the use of more effective methods of assessment and thus a report that workload was manageable.

The study was underpinned by Apple (1986)'s theory of work intensification and Gronn (2003)'s concepts of division of labour and distributed leadership. Apple (1986) stated that teachers are increasingly faced with the prospect of being de-skilled owing to the intrusion of technical control procedures into the curriculum in schools. This technical control leads to work overload, which, according to Apple (1986), is the manifestation of intensification. The study found evidence of work intensification, especially in the reports of teachers from the smaller-sized school. Gronn (2009) states that the effect of intensification is that it increases the space of the job-holder, without increasing the number of occupants to fill that inflated space. The teachers from this school reported that the size of the school created a situation in which teachers found themselves working alone in their departments and teaching up to four different grades in high school, which left them with high volumes of marking.

Apple (1986) also raises a point that intensification contributes towards de-skilling and de-professionalization of teachers. Intensification has the effect of replacing quality with quantity, and 'job well done becomes job quickly finished'. Teachers no longer have time to be creative or imaginative. They just want to get the work out of the way. This de-skilling effect of intensification was seen in the replacement of originally designed assessment tasks with past examination papers and archived material. The role of 'Interpreter and designer of learning programmes' is undermined by work intensification, as teachers become dependent on externally produced materials and expertise. Cutting of corners was also seen as teachers resorted to using existing comments in reporting on learner behaviour and progress. Ballet (2007), however, showed that intensification does not lead only to negative consequences. The positive effect of intensification in this study was that due to scarcity of time during the

school-term, teachers opted to do their planning and preparation in the holiday time. It was reported that this time was not used to catch up on missed work, but rather to research teaching and learning material properly and to become more familiar with the teaching content. This planning has an effect of enhancing the role of teachers as researcher, scholars and life-long learners.

Work intensification further promoted the culture of teacher collaboration. In the smaller-sized school, where work intensification was more evident, teachers valued working together. In one instance it was reported that teachers divided their teaching load so that one teacher taught English literature and the other taught language. These teachers reported that this division of work was done systematically for the purpose of halving individual teacher workload. The aim was also to allow each of these teachers to teach only the section of work they were good at. Gronn (2003), states that the idea of the division of labour refers to the totality of the work to be performed in a particular sphere of human endeavour and how this work is arranged into segmented and specialized tasks. This enables members to rely on the strengths of their peers while enhancing their lesser skills through frequent talks and observations. Gronn (2009) further states that distributed leadership is a concerted action which encompasses the practice of delegation, sharing, collaboration, dispersion and leadership democratization. By tapping into their particular competencies each person performs specialized labour in a concerted action.

## **Conclusion**

This fourth chapter was designed to present findings of the study. The study sought to investigate strategies employed by teachers to manage daily workload. The three research questions were: 1) What are teachers' perceptions of their workload? 2) What strategies do teachers use to cope with planning, preparing lessons, assessments, recording and reporting? 3) What role does or can the school play to help teachers cope with workload? In answering these questions data was generated through interviews with seven school teachers from two high schools. The discussion of the findings was done through the highlighting of pertinent issues that emerged from the study by drawing from literature reviewed in the second chapter and linking this with the theoretical framework.

## **CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate and summarize the results of the study and to offer recommendations based on the results. I will begin by offering a summary of the study, and then proceed to provide a discussion of the findings and will end by making some recommendations based on the findings and conclusions drawn.

### **5.2 STUDY SUMMARY**

The study aimed to investigate coping strategies used by teachers to manage daily workload. This research made use of interviews as a tool to generate data and three questions were formulated to facilitate data generation. Seven high school teachers from two schools were interviewed. Five of these participants were interviewed in their capacity as classroom teachers and two as members of the school management team.

It is my belief that the methods adopted for data generation were perfectly suited to the study. The three research questions allowed rich data to be collected, which were then analysed and used to draw conclusions in order to answer the research questions. It is also my view that the theoretical framework for the study assisted greatly with the analysis of the findings, as well as in drawing conclusions.

The study made use of Apple (1986)'s theory of work intensification. This theory states that teachers are constantly under pressure due to the intrusion of technical controls into the school curriculum. Scarcity of resources and time constraints result in work overload and this is what Apple refers to as the manifestation of intensification. The study did find evidence amongst teachers of work intensification, resulting from time constraints, increased number of administrative duties and understaffing.

The study also employed Gronn (2003)'s concept of division of labour. The idea behind the concept of the division of labour is that work to be performed is arranged into segmented and specialized tasks. Members of a group bring their individual expertise to perform their share of work and the burden is shared equally amongst members of the team. The results of the study show that teachers value working collaboratively and do use the concept of division of labour to cope with workload.

## 5.3 KEY FINDINGS

### 5.3.1 Emergence of a heavy load on teachers

Participants reported that they were facing a heavy workload. Words and phrases like “I’m often busy”, “quite heavy”, “very heavy”, “stressful”, “a lot of strain” indicated that the perception on teacher-workload was that teachers were overloaded. The consensus was that the overloading was due to administration duties, involvement in extra-curricular activities and lack of time to do preparation, planning and marking.

If leadership and management are two sides of the same coin, then administration can be said to be the glue that keeps the two intact. Teachers have a dual responsibility of leading and managing in their classrooms. However, if this responsibility is to be executed effectively, teachers themselves need to be in possession of good administration and self-management skills. In the absence of time to properly acquire these skills, teachers find themselves with extra workload as they juggle between finding time to plan and prepare lessons, while staying on top of administrative tasks. This leaves most teachers feeling that they are not in control of their work.

The mention of the word ‘admin’ in teaching is often associated with tasks like filing of papers, taking the register, collecting money, recording and reporting (Butt & Lance, 2005; Ingvarson et al, 2005; Whiteley and Richard 2012; Gunkel,2010 and Chatturgoon,2008 and Matthes 2011). The study discovered that on top of the above mentioned tasks, teachers also needed help with handling of correspondence. Suggestions were made by teachers that schools need to employ specialists in the field of administration in order to handle correspondence and other administrative tasks. Even though administration was reported as one of the causes of teacher-overloading, the study did find that there were some attempts by the schools to assist teachers with coping with administrative tasks. These included the employment of personnel to type test and examination papers, prepare-end-of term reports, photocopying, stapling and printing of notes, sending reminders about up-coming events, etc.

Marking also emerged as a source of increased workload for teachers. The study found that in subjects like History, English and Life Orientation, teachers struggled with the amount of marking they had to complete. All three of these subjects are language and grammar-intensive. Technical subjects like Mathematics and Science only require that learners understand and apply concepts, without much use of language. Hence, teachers of these

subjects reported that they were coping with assessment demands. Chisholm et al (2005) found that significant differences existed between the amount of time spent by teachers teaching various learning areas, and Bansilal (2010) and Vanderjar (2007) show that teachers in South African schools are struggling to cope with assessment demands in multi-cultural classrooms.

Class-size has often been linked to increased marking (Chisholm et al, 2005; Dibbon, 2004; Ingvarson, 2004). This study, however, found that it was the nature of the teaching content, rather than the class size, that contributed to the increased marking for teachers. Teachers of History, English and Life Orientation reported being inundated with large volumes of marking, which was time-consuming. Failure by the study to link class-size to increased marking could be attributed to the fact that in the bigger school, measures had been taken to reduce class sizes by employing governing-body paid teachers. Al-Balushi (2006) also found it interesting that teachers in his study did not mention class-size as a problem when it came to the question of coping with workload.

It is worth mentioning that although the majority of the teachers interviewed reported that their workload was heavy, none of these teachers, however, reported not coping entirely with their work. What this implies is that teachers are constantly discovering ways to cope with their workload.

### **5.3.2 Existence of systems, structures and resources to assist teachers with workload.**

Matthes (2011) found that when the school management displayed a task-focus attitude towards teachers and the work they do by generating structures and systems to provide support with task completion, there was a consensus amongst teachers that their workload was alleviated. Some of the systems that were found to exist within the two schools in the study included a reminder system which both deputies and classroom teachers reported was helpful in ensuring that teachers were aware of approaching deadlines. Both schools reported giving verbal and written reminders to teachers during meetings and morning briefings to facilitate an awareness of fast approaching deadlines. Other reminders came in the form of term calendars and planning schedules, which highlighted details and dates of all up-coming events.

Availability of technology was also reported to go a long way towards helping teachers with workload management. President Barak Obama was asked a question by a student teacher at the University of Johannesburg during a youth summit. The young teacher trainee wanted to know if the United States' President had any solutions to the problem of overcrowded classrooms in many South African schools. In his response President Obama stated that the problem was prevalent even in the United States and went on to suggest that the use of technology in the classroom may be the answer to this dilemma. (SABC broadcast, 2013). This study found that teachers were able to keep computerized records, search the Internet for information, as well as use computers in their classrooms.

Equitability of workload was reported to be high on the priority list of management's function in both schools. Section 3.1 (d) of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document states that "there should be an equitable distribution of workload between the various post-levels and within a single post level, to ensure that one or two of the levels or an educator is not over-burdened" (PAM, p.6). It was reported that certain teachers were exempted from responsibilities like managing a class and participating in extra-curricular activities owing to the amount and the nature of their workload. The structure of the actual teaching was also found to be influential in workload management. The study found that teachers who reported not facing a heavy load were those who taught the same subject in different grades. Teachers who taught more than one subject in various grades reported that their workload was heavy.

A compilation of report comments was found to exist in both schools and was reported to be one of the most efficient structures set in place by school management to help teachers cope with end-of-term pressure. This system ensures that teachers from various backgrounds are able to cope with language demands. In one of the schools, it was reported that more than 300 report comments existed in English, Afrikaans and isiZulu.

Finally, emotional, physical and financial support was reported by teachers as crucial in helping them cope with workload. Classroom teachers reported that they felt supported by the school management team. Similarly, the report by the deputies revealed that the schools sought to offer individual teacher support through the existing structures and organizational routines. Other studies have also shown that those teachers who receive support from their principals experience less stress, compared with those who do not receive such support (Day, 2012 and Schulze & Steyn, 2007, Matthes, 2011).



Overall the study found visible evidence of existing measures within both schools to assist teacher with workload. Nevertheless, teachers reported that more still needed to be done in order to alleviate work pressure. Amongst the suggestions raised by teachers were calls for the recruitment of specialists in areas like counselling and sports, as well as trained administrators. In the smaller-sized school, there was a call for the employment of more teachers, as most teachers reported to be working in ‘a one-man department’.

### **5.3.3 Teachers as life-long learners**

The study found that most teachers lacked confidence in themselves and their abilities to teach in the initial stages of their career, due to the deficiency in the knowledge of the teaching content. This, however, does not stop teachers from working hard and showing a commitment to learn and familiarize themselves with the content of their subject as this study discovered. Most of these teachers reported working during school holidays to prepare teaching and learning materials, as well as working in teams and in consultation with colleagues in order to develop their knowledge of the content. Graven (2005) also shows that the life-long learner-role can be expressed as empowering when professionalism is seen as synonymous with the willingness to consult with others to share knowledge about the teaching content. Hansen and Albrehtesen (2005, p.1) state that in today’s world “lifelong learning is ‘a fate’ not a choice (because) the nature of teaching demands that teachers engage in some sort of continuing learning”. There was also the emergence of a sense of valuing professional development as teachers mentioned being appreciative of opportunities they were presented to attend conferences, workshops and marking papers for the senior certificate.

### **5.3.4 Insufficient non-contact time**

The policy requirement (PAM) is that all educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than 7 hours per day, except for special reasons and with the prior permission of the principal. The 7-hour day includes the breaks and the time in which the learners are not at school. The respondents reported that time provided in the timetable to do planning and preparation was not enough. The study found that the bulk of non-contact time went towards administration and keeping up-to-date with work-related correspondence. It was reported that teachers stay late after school, use evenings, weekends

and school holidays to do marking, planning and preparation. Chisholm et al (2005) also reported that Languages and Literacy teachers do not spend significant time on teaching or preparation and planning during the formal school day. Dibbon (2004) found that lack of preparation time rendered workload unmanageable. The study found that this lack of preparation time pushes teachers into recognizing the value of working during school holidays. Whereas in the past, this time had been viewed as time to relax and put work aside, teachers in this study reported using this time to plan and prepare learning and teaching material.

### **5.3.5 Planning is the key ingredient to managing workload**

Planning emerged as one of the key ingredients to workload management. Teachers reported that when planning was in order, there was no need to worry about being disorganized in other areas. When planning was properly done, teachers did not have to worry about issues of workload and classroom management. The study found that both schools went out of their way to provide platforms to facilitate planning for teachers. In the smaller-sized school, it was found that teachers valued planning together more than was found to be the case in the other school. The reason for this collaborative planning may be attributed to the need by teachers to share the load, as most of them reported working in one-man departments.

### **5.3.6 Pro-active thinking and creativity as ways of coping with workload**

The report by teachers that their workload was heavy was not synonymous with a report that teachers were not coping. The study found that teachers use creativity and a variety of strategies in order to cope with planning, preparation, assessments, recording and reporting demands.

The results showed that teachers who reported coping well with assessment, feedback, reporting and recording demands were those who somehow took advantage of policy directives in their practice, by applying a variety of teaching and assessment methods. Policy on assessment is both prescriptive and descriptive on the types of assessments required, the purpose of each assessment, as well as how these should be conducted by teachers. When teachers view policy demands as tedious and unachievable, it is often because of failure to understand policy directives and to apply these appropriately in practice. Although teachers from the study did complain about the amount of marking and the demands of reporting, a theme that emerged was that teachers were using a variety of approaches and tools to assess, give feedback to learners and to keep their records. These are discussed below.

### Assessment and Feedback

CAPS (2011), stipulates that teachers are to use a variety of assessment methods for continuous or formative assessment. Verbal assessment, looking over a learner's shoulder to read what has been written, role playing etc. are all part of formative assessment. The study found that those teachers who understood these forms of assessment and applied them in their teaching did not find assessment daunting.

When it came to the question of teachers giving feedback, the study found that although teachers viewed giving feedback as part and parcel of good teaching, they reported that they found it difficult to give quality feedback, due to time constraints. Written feedback was reported to be the most preferred method by teachers. This form of feedback does not only save time but also provides a permanent record of written feedback for both the teacher and the learner. It provides a platform for the teacher to demonstrate to the learner how he was expected to answer the question as well as gives an assurance that a learner has something to refer to in the future. Written feedback also serves as a medium of communication between the teacher and the parent, as it gives the parent opportunities to view the child's assessments, as well as the teacher's perceptions on how the learner is progressing. The parent is also able to pick up if there are any areas of concern through this written feedback. While this writing of comments may be time-consuming for the teacher, it is preferred by teachers who try to avoid spending an entire lesson giving feedback.

### Reporting & Recording

'Working smart and not hard' was a theme that emerged in recording and reporting.

Teachers reported carrying mark sheets or class lists and laptops to their lessons. When opportunities to record marks arose, this was done immediately next to each learner's name. Although policy stipulates that the assessment method should be pre-planned and discussed with the learner, the study found that some teachers recorded a variety of (spot) assessments, and chose the most representative ones to go towards end-of-term reports. When teachers already have a variety of marks to choose from, end-of-term pressure is alleviated. Most teachers reported entering marks directly into the prepared spread sheet during the term, so that by the end of the term, all the averages have already been done, and the teacher has the head-space to think about report comments.

This finding confirms the assumption made at the beginning of the study that when teachers are faced with challenges of increased workload, they reflect on their practice and come up with creative ways to manage their workload. This finding is also similar to the findings of Dunham (1992); Lun Hung (2012) and Lewis et al. (2011), who reported that in coping with the demands of their work, teachers rely on their own personal experience and creativity, as well as on experiences and expertise of others.

### **5.3.7 Emergence of teacher - collaboration**

The study found that teachers took deliberate measures towards working in collaboration with each other for the purpose of burden-sharing. Teachers reported collaborating to share the teaching load, marking load, setting of examination papers as well as in planning, especially long-term planning. This finding is consistent with those from previous studies (Bacigalupo and Cachia, 2011; Grant, 2010 and Hargreaves, 1992, Jarvis, 2012)

Gronn (2003)'s concept of division of labour, which forms part of this study's theoretical framework, states that people form teams and divide work into smaller segments to be performed separately by different teams. One of the advantages of this division of labour is that individuals are able to benefit from other team members' strengths, the work gets done faster and individual team members only do a portion of the entire job.

On the other hand, Albrechtsen and Hansen (2005) state that teams are formed because teachers have to develop several new competencies to be able to carry out complex pedagogical reflections. They contend that while team work is often seen as a solution for teachers to develop a stronger collective culture, so as to manage increasing demands on individual teachers, the idea of having teams challenges the "teacher's individual freedom of method". This study found that team work resulted from the need of individual teachers to collaborate with colleagues due to increasing work demands, which made it difficult for a single teacher to cope. Even though there was evidence of prescribed team work in some cases, the study found that overall, teachers who joined teams did so voluntarily in order to cope with workload. This does not, however, suggest that individual teacher freedom was not compromised.

Collaboration was found not only to reduce the burden of work but also to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers who collaborated in teaching did so in a manner that allowed them to complement each other and to use their individual areas of strengths to improve the teaching practice for the benefit of their learners. Those teachers who felt the strong need to maintain their

“individual freedom of method” reported that they also only consulted with colleagues if there was a need to do so. This shows that while some teachers were aware of the benefits of working in teams they still valued their independence and only sought assistance or offered help to others from time-to-time as the need arose. The study also found evidence of teachers collaborating across schools. Those teachers who found themselves alone in departments reported working with their cluster groups to set common examination papers and to moderate each other’s assessments.

Penrice (2011), mentions that teachers may avoid the experience of intensification by making use of existing structures within the school. This study’s finding is that the culture of collaboration was established within both schools to facilitate burden-sharing amongst teachers. Through organizational routines and structures like phase-meetings, teachers met together to plan and discuss teaching strategies. Harris (2004) argues that much depends on the internal conditions set by the formal leadership to support and nurture collaborative learning by creating a common culture of expectation around the use of individual skills and abilities.

The study also found evidence of the emergence of distributed leadership as teachers collaborated in teaching and planning. Teachers from the Life Sciences and Life Orientation Departments reported how each teacher was involved in collecting teaching and assessment material for the purpose of sharing with the team. While a leader-follower relationship mentioned in Spillane and Diamond (2007) was evident, the study found that individual teachers were given opportunities to lead various aspects of planning. Harris (2004) talks about a dichotomy that may exist in the form of ‘top-down’ / ‘bottom-up’ leadership initiatives. Through collaborative teaching amongst teachers of various subjects, leadership was found to be distributed in both directions. This distribution of leadership was found to be empowering to new teachers.

The key findings reported in this section emerged from the data generated from interviews in order to answer the question: What coping strategies do teachers employ in order to manage daily workload?

The study adopted Ballet, Kelchtermans, & Loughran (2006)’s refinement of Apple (1986)’s thesis on work intensification cited in Ballet (2007). The first refinement states that the experience of intensification is not induced solely by changes at the macro level, but that

multiple sources for intensification exist. Secondly, the intensification impact does not operate in a direct and automatic way, but is mediated by processes of teachers' sense-making, as well as by the specific school characteristics. Finally, the impact of intensification is not always negative and turns out to be differentiated among different teachers (Ballet, 2007). These three refinements as they relate to this study will be discussed below.

#### *Evidence of multiple sources of intensification*

The study found that the experience of intensification amongst teachers originated from various sources. I will focus on life-long learning, lack of time, extra-curricular activities and curriculum demands as sources of intensification that emerged from this study.

The study's finding that teachers are continuously learning in order to improve their knowledge of the teaching content has social and emotional implications (Hansen and Albrechtsen, 2005). The social dimension means that teachers have to work together across disciplines, as was the finding in this study. This often calls for a change in the daily routines as teachers put in extra hours of work. The emotional dimension of learning is as a result of reduced relaxation time, anxiety to meet deadlines and lack of preparation time. Both these dimensions of life-long learning result in the experience of intensification.

The study also found evidence that intensification is caused by lack of time and also creates scarcity of preparation time. The results showed that teachers do not have enough time within the school day to plan, prepare lessons and mark. Teachers reported utilizing their relaxation time (evenings, weekends and school holidays) to catch up on work and this in turn created a lack of relaxation time. Emotional stress results from lack of rest and constant feeling of tiredness. Stress causes anxiety as the work piles up and deadlines begin to approach. To cope with stress and anxiety, teachers often resort to cutting corners and abandoning proper planning in favour of externally produced materials (Albrechtsen and Hansen, 2005).

The example of cutting corners was evident in this study when teachers reported using modified past papers and archived tests for assessment instead of designing original assessment tools. It was also shown that instead of doing term-by-term planning, teachers who had been teaching the same subject for a number of years tended to rely more on their experience and their subject knowledge. While the use of experience and knowledge acquired overtime is not necessarily a bad thing, the focus should be on the process of teaching and

learning rather than on individual teacher preferences. Quality feedback on learner progress was also compromised, as teachers resorted to the use of already existing report comments.

Another source of intensification could be traced to teachers taking on extra responsibilities. Apple (1986) remarked that teachers voluntarily support intensification, as they misinterpret it as professionalism. Apple (1986) talks about a paradox that exists when teachers accept working long hours because of the responsibility placed on them for decision-making. According to Apple, teachers themselves either agree to increased workload or volunteer to work more hours because of the responsibility or the privilege of being decision-makers. Teachers mistake this extra responsibility for professionalism. With the exception of one teacher, who reported that she negotiated to be exempted from leading extra-curricular activities, all the other classroom teachers interviewed reported being involved in between one and five different activities. A teacher who had earlier reported that her workload was 'very heavy' went on to reveal that she voluntarily led cultural activities which sometimes saw her finishing work after eleven in the evening. This provides evidence in support of Apple's contention that teachers voluntarily support work intensification.

Pressure felt by some teachers to adhere to certain curriculum demands also resulted in their work intensifying. These teachers reported that their curriculum demanded creativity and the use of technology, which consumed a lot of their time. One teacher in particular reported spending at least three hours preparing 28 slides for a power-point presentation. The same teacher reported that her subject content changes regularly and this exerts pressure on her to learn and master the new content prior to teaching it to her learners.

*The intensification impact does not operate in a direct and automatic way, but is mediated by the process of teachers' sense-making, as well as by the specific school characteristic.*

The analysis of results revealed that size differences between the two schools played a role in how teachers experienced intensification. The bigger-sized school had more capacity to deal with intensification because of extra teachers who had been employed. The smaller school, on the other hand, reported that most teachers were working alone in their departments, which had an effect of increasing workload for individual teachers. Despite the differences in working environments, the study still found many areas of commonalities in which teachers reported that they needed support as has been shown.

*The impact of intensification is not always negative and is differentiated among different teachers*

While this study did find evidence that teachers were experiencing work intensification as defined by writers like (Apple, 1986; Gromm, 2003; Albrechtesen and Hansen, 2005; Penrice 2011), it was shown that this experience was not always negative and neither did it always yield negative results. I will discuss three points that emerged from the findings.

Firstly, inadequate knowledge of the subject content may cause feelings of unworthiness and the questioning of one's professional competence, either by colleagues or by the teacher himself. This has been shown to be one of the causes of stress which results in the experience of intensification (Ballet, 2007). Teachers in the study reported that their feelings of incompetence in the knowledge of the teaching content caused them to put more effort into learning and seeking to understand their subject better. Secondly, those teachers who found themselves alone in their departments reported working with teachers from other schools to set standardized papers. This type of collaboration did not only benefit the teachers in terms of gaining the experience of producing high-quality assessment tools, but it also served as an advantage to the learners in the school, who got opportunities to write rigorous examination papers. Lastly, the study found that intensification causes teachers to think and plan ahead. Teachers reported having developed creative ways of coping with workload (these were discussed in 5.3.6). While some of these methods may be viewed as cutting corners, the study found that teachers did consider the interest of their learners when applying these creative teaching and assessment strategies.

## **5.4 CONCLUSION**

The nature of a teacher's job is such that work is allocated to be finished within a specific time frame. Right from the onset, teachers find themselves racing against time in order to finish the syllabus. Failure to finish this work on time would indicate that learners move on to the next grade with gaps in the knowledge of the work that should have been covered in the previous grade. This heavy responsibility often exerts pressure on teachers, who feel a sense of duty to finish the syllabus, so as not to jeopardize their learners' future. Other added responsibilities like involvement in extra-curricular activities, managing a classroom and covering for absent colleagues often infringe on the time needed to perform teaching duties like planning, preparation, marking and keeping records.



The study found that non-contact time provided within the time-table to do planning, preparation and evaluation was consumed by administration. To cope with this time-constraint, the participants reported doing most of their planning, preparation and marking at home in the evenings, before school, after schools, at weekends and during school vacations. While doing work after hours and during vacations may seem like the solution for these teachers, dangers of stress and burnout should be considered. Teachers need all the rest they can get, because their work is demanding. Being a teacher is more than teaching one's subject. Teachers play a multiple role of counsellor, social worker, parent and pastor and these are all taxing roles, emotionally and spiritually. It is, therefore, imperative that teachers receive all the support necessary in order to cope with the demands of their employment and effectively carry out their duties.

This study discovered that there are structural support systems and mechanisms that can assist with management of workload if present within a school. These systems, structures and resources include the assistance received from HODs, the availability of computers, assistance with planning, a culture of teacher-collaboration, giving advance notices on upcoming events, constant reminder systems, computer-generated reports and the existence of a generic report comment system.

It was also found that, even though teachers reported that their workload was heavy, they devised ways of coping and managing daily with their work. Some of the time-saving techniques that the study found included the use of written feedback, keeping a bank of report comments, carrying mark lists to class in order to facilitate the collection of marks and making use of a variety of assessment methods. While these strategies worked for these teachers in terms of workload management, there was, however, evidence that some of these strategies may result in teachers cutting corners for the sake of saving time. The study further found that teachers valued working collaboratively in order to share the burden of workload.

The findings of this study support Cranston (2013)'s contention that debate about school leadership needs to shift from one dominated by external accountability to the one grounded in the notions of professional responsibility. Cranston argues that there is a need for school leaders to be the ones driving a critical examination of their profession. This study's findings reveal that although teachers may report that their workload is heavy and that there is insufficient time-tabled non-contact time to complete work, these constraints do not,

however, stop them from developing coping strategies to manage their daily workload. This study has further shown that working together with their school management teams, teachers are the ones who provide solutions to the challenges of their workload.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is a recommendation of this study that as part of their initial teacher-training, teachers be introduced to the policy on teacher workload, as it is my belief that most teachers are not familiar with this policy. At school level, platforms could be established to allow teachers to talk freely about stress and work-related pressures in a non-threatening environment. These platforms could also become organisational routines, in which teachers explore ways of working together in order to share the workload. I further recommend that some kind of guaranteed planning and preparation time be allocated within the school timetable to enable teachers to do their planning, preparation or even marking at school. This could be achieved by minimising teacher involvement in extra-mural activities and channelling that time towards supervised planning and preparation.

As an area for further research, I recommend an exploration into compatibility between the various syllabi and time allocated for teachers to finish a particular syllabus. Most research findings including this current study have shown that teachers are struggling to find time to effectively execute their teaching duties. I therefore believe that studies are needed that will explore the compatibility between teaching time and the syllabus for various teaching subjects.

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## APPENDIX A



24 October 2013

Mrs Hlengiwe A Nguse (952059614)  
School of Education  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0773/013M  
Project title: Exploring coping strategies developed by teachers to manage daily workload

Dear Mrs Nguse,

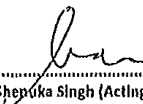
**Expedited Approval**

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Dr I Muzvidzwa  
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr MN Davids  
cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

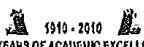
Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X64001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/03504557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: [shinban@ukn.ac.za](mailto:shinban@ukn.ac.za) / [knyman@ukn.ac.za](mailto:knyman@ukn.ac.za) / [mohunp@ukn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukn.ac.za](http://www.ukn.ac.za)

  
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## APPENDIX B



education

Department:  
Education  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:214/8/436

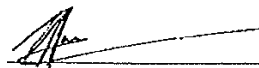
Mrs Hlengiwe Abigail Nguse  
106 Andries Pretorius Road  
Pelham  
PIETERMARITZBURG  
3201

Dear Mrs Nguse

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct a pilot and research entitled: *Coping Strategies Developed by Teachers to Manage Daily Workload*, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 June 2013 to 30 June 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the following school/s and institution/s of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education:  
**[REDACTED]**

  
Vkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD  
Head of Department: Education

#### KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa  
PHYSICAL: Office G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 3418610 Fax : 033 341 8612  
MAIL ADDRESS: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za; CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363;  
WEBSITE: [www.kzneducation.gov.za](http://www.kzneducation.gov.za)

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beyond the call of duty

## APPENDIX C

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X 01  
Scottville  
3209

The Principal  
XXXXXXXXXXXXX School  
XX XXXXXXXXXX Rd  
Pelham  
3201

I am currently doing a Masters' degree in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Research is showing that many countries including South Africa are struggling to recruit and retain teachers into the teaching profession. The results from studies on teacher attrition reveal that many teachers are finding it difficult to cope with their workload. There is a growing need for research to be done on how teachers cope with or manage their workload. In this regard I have chosen your school because I believe that your teachers can provide valuable insight in extending knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of your teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. However, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. In the interest of the participants, feedback will be given during and at the end of the study.

My supervisor Doctor I. Muzvidziwa can be contacted at [Muzvidziwai@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Muzvidziwai@ukzn.ac.za)

Yours faithfully

---

H.A. Nguse (Mrs)

## APPENDIX D

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X 01  
Scottville  
3209

The Educator

Dear-----

I am currently doing a Masters' degree in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Research is showing that many countries including South Africa are struggling to recruit and retain teachers into the teaching profession. The results from studies on teacher attrition reveal that many teachers are finding it difficult to cope with their workload. There is a growing need for research to be done on how teachers cope with or manage their workload. In this regard I have chosen you as a candidate because I believe that your experiences as a teacher can provide valuable insight in extending knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of your performance or competence and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! Your identity will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I undertake to uphold your autonomy as a participant and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, I request that you sign in the space below as an indication of your consent to participate in the study. In your interest as a participant, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

Yours faithfully

-----

H.A. Nguse

### CONSENT

I ..... (FULL NAMES) ,fully understand the contents of this letter and agree to participate in the study.

.....(SIGNATURE).....(DATE)

## APPENDIX E

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:

0-5		6-10		11-19		20+	
-----	--	------	--	-------	--	-----	--

SMT MEMBER		NON-SMT MEMBER		FEMALE		MALE	
------------	--	----------------	--	--------	--	------	--

AGE:

21-30		31-40		41-50		50+	
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=====

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### PERCEPTIONS OF WORKLOAD

1. How can you describe your workload?
2. What kind of help if any do you receive from the school?
3. What more do you believe the school can do to help you manage your workload?

#### PLANNING

4. When do you do your planning (daily, term or annual)?Why?
5. Who do you involve in your planning process?
6. How has your planning changed over time?

#### PREPARATION

7. When do you normally prepare for lessons? Why?
8. Reflecting back to your initial teaching experience, how would you say your preparation methods have changed?

#### ASSESSMENT

9. What assessment methods do you use and why?
10. How often do you give feedback on assessment?

#### RECORDING

11. How do you keep records of your assessments? Why did you choose this method?

#### REPORTING

12. Explain your coping mechanisms during busy times of preparing progress reports.

## APPENDIX F

P O Box 433  
Wartburg  
3233  
26 November 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Carole Savage (ID No. 4712220030080), confirm that I assisted with the editing of the thesis of Hlengiwe Nguse (Student No. 952059614). This comprised specifically language editing, including grammar, spelling and punctuation. Suggestions were made for changes to be made and the content and structure were not influenced in any way by these changes.

Yours  
(Mrs) C L Savage  
Email:

Cell: 076 9062 186  
*carolesav@gmail.com*

