

**Teaching Across the Curriculum -
Narratives of Teachers' Experiences in the Primary School**

by

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Declaration

I, Selvanaigee Govender, acknowledge that the following research is my original work, that all the narratives of my participants are supported by evidence, and the views quoted throughout my research are in accordance with my reference list. This research has not been previously submitted for any degree at this or any other university.

Miss Selvanaigee Govender

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Professor Labby Ramrathan
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Date

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Abstract

There have been some fundamental changes to the education system within post apartheid South Africa. Firstly, in the primary school there are some teachers who were trained as specialist teachers before 1994, and some teachers were trained to teach in the new approach called Outcomes Based Education. A new school curriculum within an outcomes based approach was introduced systematically over a decade. This new curriculum required new ways of teaching and organization. One of the significant changes to the schooling structure was the introduction of a phase-based structure, divided into foundation phase, intermediate phase, senior phase and further education phase. Within this new structure of schooling, curriculum policies guided the teaching and learning in each of these phases of schooling. In the primary school, teaching across the subject curriculum was introduced, where teachers were now expected to teach up to as many as 9 subjects to learners in a class. Of concern is that these teachers had specialized in three subjects during their initial training as teachers, and were now expected to teach subjects that they may not have specialized in. When teaching across the curriculum, the mismatch between training and teaching is increased and results in more curriculum and teaching demands being placed on teachers. This mismatch makes it very difficult for experienced teachers to cope with subjects that they are not familiar with. There are no specific qualifications that develop teachers to teach across the curriculum. Qualifications, at most, develop competence in teaching across three school subjects, but the practice of teaching across the curriculum often requires teachers to teach more than three school subjects to a grade. Teachers have specialized in subjects that are different from what they are currently teaching.

My study is a focus on narratives of teachers' experiences teaching across the curriculum in the primary school. I used a qualitative research methodology within the interpretivist paradigm. I used purposeful sampling, where the participants were handpicked. Data was generated through intensive interviews and document analysis. Audio tapes were used to record the participants' voices, and later retrieved. Data was reconstructed by me, and retained for analysis. The recorded data was analyzed, using codes, themes and categories.

Member checks were used to ensure rigour and trustworthiness. It is evident from this study that teaching across the curriculum requires professional training, ongoing professional development and correct placement in schools to alleviate all the stress and anxiety teachers face in the primary school. Teacher training institutions must look at the curriculum and see how best they can assist trainee primary school teachers to fit into a generalist curriculum. This means that teachers who teach across the curriculum were burdened with more administrative and accountability regimes than other specialist teachers because of the larger number of school subjects that they were responsible for. This administrative overburden is coupled with the greater teaching demands and, therefore, makes it very difficult for these teachers to cope with the workload.

List of Acronyms

OBE	Out Comes Based Education
GET	General Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Teachers
ELRC	Department of Education and Labour Council
CHE	Council OF Higher Education
COTEP	Committee of Teacher Education Policy
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
AMESA	Association for Mathematics of South Africa
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Organisation Of South Africa
NSW	New South Wales

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction and Background to the Study

There have been some fundamental changes to the education system within post apartheid South Africa. The curriculum, that underpins the school education system, underwent fundamental changes, altering the fabric of schooling in South Africa. The extent and scale of this curriculum change was phenomenal, and involved almost all stakeholders in education. It spanned more than a decade, and yet there is no clear evidence of a transformed and re-conceptualized society. The transformation of the education system, especially the school system, is well documented (Jansen, Taylor, 2003; Chisholm, 2000), and continues to be site of inquiry for education researchers. This study contributes to this field, focusing on teaching across the curriculum. The phenomenon of teaching across the curriculum is not new, but has been given added impetus in the re-conceptualized school curriculum within an outcomes-based framework. Similar concepts do exist, largely related to cross-curricular teaching and multi-grade teaching. In this study the focus is on teaching across the curriculum by a classroom-based teacher in the general education and training phase of schooling.

The new school curriculum within an outcomes-based approach was introduced systematically over a decade. This new curriculum required new ways of teaching and organization. One of the significant changes to the schooling structure was the introduction of a school phase-based structure, divided into foundation phase, intermediate phase, senior phase and further education phase. Within this new structure of schooling, curriculum policies guided the teaching and learning in each of these phases of schooling. In the primary school, teaching across the subject curriculum was introduced, where teachers were now expected to teach up to as many as seven subjects to learners in a class. Of concern is that these teachers had specialized in not more than three subjects during their initial training as teachers and are now expected to teach subjects that they may not have specialized in. What are the experiences of such teachers who teach across subjects in a class? This study attempts to illuminate the experiences of such teachers and to

document what challenges these teachers faced and how they addressed these challenges in attempting to provide quality education.

The teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum are also located within the transformational agenda of the country, where there is a striving for equality of educational provisioning. This study attempts to understand the implications of systemic changes on quality issues related to educational provisioning. Hence, the policy provisioning that guides different aspects of school education is also under review in this study as it impacts on teachers' ability, training and management of their teaching responsibilities. New demands have been made on teachers within this transformed agenda, and the effects of these demands are part of this study's brief, as it tries to understand the challenges that these teachers face.

1.2. FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.

The purpose of the study is to explore teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum in the primary school. This was accomplished by a narrative inquiry approach. I was also guided by a set of sub-questions, in order to understand the „lived' experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum in the primary school.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the experiences of teachers teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

This research question is guided by the following sub-questions:

1.3.1 How do teachers cope with teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

1.3.2 What opportunities and challenges are presented to teachers who teach across the school curriculum in a primary school?

1.3.3 How do these teachers feel about teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

1.4. The Rationale for the Study.

My interest in the topic stems from my experience of doing classroom-based teaching for the past fourteen years, being a Grade 7 Science and Maths specialist. In the primary school there are teachers who are not all primary school trained specialists. Some are trained as secondary school specialists, but are now teaching in the primary school. Teaching across the curriculum for me was a great challenge as I was often not coping conceptually with the demands of this kind of teaching. This study will provide me with an understanding of how other teachers are experiencing this phenomenon of teaching across the curriculum.

Contextually, within the general education and training phase of schooling (GET), teaching across the subjects is guided by a Department policy (Norms and Standards). The intention of introducing this policy is related to re-sourcing and curriculum coherence. This study will provide me with an understanding of how curriculum coherence can be achieved through the experiences of teachers teaching across the curriculum. Therefore I chose a novice teacher who qualified after the introduction of the OBE curriculum, and who was trained in a Further Education and Training phase, with specializations in Maths and Science. The other was an experienced senior primary History and Art trained specialist and an experienced secondary school English specialist. Transformation of education after 1994 draws on concepts such as quality, democracy, equity and redress, which are stressed in government policy Knoke (1999, p. 3). Part of the strategy in implement equity and redress included a redeployment process, to address the teacher-pupil ratio. Some secondary school teachers were therefore redeployed to the primary school and had to face teaching across the curriculum, but with no training. I wish to put this under the spotlight and assess the impact of such re-deployment.

Although the policy has been in place, it is unclear whether the teaching opportunities provided are adequate for the GET phase. In Van Laren's view (2008), teacher specialization in the phase, according to the National Curriculum Statement is premised on the notion of primary school teacher being generalist and not specialists. This means they have to teach all subjects to a particular class of learners. This study will contribute to the policy discourses on curriculum planning and implementation at the school level within a transforming context such as South Africa.

1.5. Methodology

Narrative inquiry was seen as the most appropriate methodology, given my critical questions. The research approach accommodated the individual identities of the three teachers I used in my study. It helped them to construct meaning of who they are, and to articulate their identities. Three teachers who were trained specialists in their fields of study were interviewed about their experiences of teaching across the curriculum. The narrative approach involved the lived experiences of the teachers in their classroom practice. It tried to ascertain how they managed to cope with the challenges they faced, not only as specialists in their field but also as classroom practitioners at the phase level that they taught. Document analyses were also undertaken, and this included learners' books, teachers' portfolios and the number of assessments that were given in all the learning areas.

My study employed the qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm. In the qualitative approach, the researcher engages with the participants in person, reflecting on the varying impressions that are conveyed (Denzin and Lincoln (2005)). Therefore, I saw it appropriate to construct narratives of these teachers. The tools used to generate data were semi-structured interviews and document analyses. Narratives were constructed by what each of participants had said about their experiences. In the interpretive paradigm the researcher gathers "as much information as possible about the problem, with the intent of analyzing, interpreting, or theorizing about the phenomenon" (Merriam (1998, p. 38)).

The school in my study is located in an urban area in Durban. This is a primary school with specialist teachers in their different fields of study, and training in different phases, which includes Secondary and further Education and training specializations. This study was conducted with three teachers from the school. I am currently a teacher at the same.

1.6. Outline of Chapters

Chapter one introduces the research study. The background of the study gives a brief explanation of the changes in the education system that led to this type of approach. . The focus and purpose of the study are then presented. This was accomplished by the Narrative Inquiry approach. To understand the „lived’ experiences by teachers I was guided by a set of sub questions which followed the research question. The rationale for the study indicates my interest in the topic. I also outlined the methodology, paradigm and research approach of my study. I found the Narrative Inquiry to be the most appropriate methodology given my critical questions. I used the qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm.

Chapter Two

This chapter of the study is the literature review. It provides an overview of the changes, as recorded in the literature, that took place in the curriculum and the implications of such change for the experienced specialist subject and phase teachers in this study. It also describes the concept of teaching across the curriculum, and how teacher education and training has adapted to the demands of the Norms and Standards policy. These roles manifest themselves in teachers’ becoming professional in their practice. How teacher identities were been informed, formed or reformed by interaction with colleagues from their own schools and various professional development workshops attended are also considered. I will consider some of the demands made on these teachers and how they have overcome these challenges. I also include the conceptual framework for the study that I used, which related to the Norms and Standards policy.

Chapter Three

This chapter gives a detailed explanation of the research design and methodology that was used to generate the data. The methodology used was the Narrative Inquiry. A qualitative approach was employed within the interpretivist paradigm. The participants and context of the study is presented in detail. The discussion of sampling follows with the methods of generating data. A

detailed discussion involves semi-structured interviews as well as document analysis. Validity and ethical considerations are discussed in detail. In my Data analysis I discuss how the interviews were transcribed and coded according to themes. Limitations of my study are also discussed in great detail.

Chapter Four

I presented the data that I generated from my participants in the form of narratives. The interview transcripts were used as a basis for reconstruction of the stories of the three participants in a way that illuminates their experiences thematically. The three participants relate their actual experiences of teaching across the curriculum. Details are related about their training, adjusting to their new phases and how they find ways to cope and develop in the classroom. The information presented by the participants were re-organized structurally in order to present a coherent narrative.

Chapter Five

This chapter provides a discussion on the data analysis and findings of my study. The analysis is divided into four themes that are apparent to me from the data during the content and discourse analytic phase of the data analysis process. The themes that emerged from my study are, How did teachers come to teach across the curriculum, training and development for teachers to enable them to teach across the curriculum, dealing with deployment into classes that required teaching across the curriculum, and challenges experienced in teaching across the curriculum. Within in each theme, central issues are identified and discussed with supporting evidence extracted from the narratives.

Chapter Six

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of my study. Teachers are prepared to teach across the curriculum amidst all the adversities, however there is lack of expertise, professional development and training to assists these teachers. The mismatch makes it very difficult for experienced teachers to cope with subjects that they are not familiar with. I also address the

limitations in this study. Implications on how non specialist teachers should be made to fit into the generalist curriculum is discussed. Working collaboratively, teachers could all contribute to the planning and preparation of teaching across the curriculum.

1.7. Limitations

My study was done in one primary school with 3 educators; therefore, with these findings, it is not possible to make generalizations from this study. Nonetheless, this study offered an in-depth understanding of teachers who teach across the curriculum. More information could have been collated if I used more than one school in the same district, and considered other teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum. Due to time constraints and being in full time employment, I was not able to use a larger number of participants for the narrative inquiry. A limitation of my study may also be seen in terms of the power dynamics. My role as a researcher, rather than as a colleague, would have made the participants more inhibited.

In this chapter an executive summary of the entire study is discussed. It includes the background to the study, focus and purpose of the study, research questions, the rationale for the study, methodology, outline of chapters and limitations. In the next chapter the literature review will be discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Introduction

Teaching across the curriculum within the South Africa schooling context was introduced through the curriculum transformation process within school education. In this chapter, I present a review of relevant literature related to the focus of teaching across the curriculum, and it includes literature that contextualises this phenomenon within the South African schooling system. The literature review attempts to present a background on the emergence of teaching across the curriculum within a transformational agenda in South Africa, in order to understand its relevance to the education system and its intended purposes. The literature review extends to include discourses on the concept, “teaching across the curriculum”, research related to teaching across the curriculum, and the theoretical framework of the study. The literature reviewed for this study covers curriculum issues in education, education policy and training, conceptions of teaching across the curriculum and how this has impacted on teachers’ workload in the classroom. The literature review concludes by exploring the challenges that the introduction of a re-conceptualized school curriculum presents to teachers in general.

2.3 The emergence of teaching across the curriculum within the school curriculum in South Africa

South Africa faced many challenges during the democratic process, and this was especially true in education. The spotlight began to move from policy formulation to implementation, where the importance was on the structural transformation which was required to be completed in education. The main challenge was to place eighteen different education departments under one Ministry so that one policy could be implemented; it also included redressing the curricula, qualifications frameworks, support services and teacher education Donald et al (2002).

Curriculum 2005 was at the heart of school reform. This developmental model was founded on the philosophy of Outcomes-Based Education Jansen and Taylor (2003). This then called for learner-centred education and the teacher was seen as a facilitator. There was an introduction of specific learning outcomes rather than allowing the practice of ambiguous and meaningless

teaching to persist. Continuous and formative assessments were compulsory rather than a once-off examination, which was the feature of the traditional education system Jansen and Taylor (2003).

The reconstruction of education aimed to bring about equity in the education of the students. In this transforming process there was a need to amend the values and actions of professional educators, parents, students and the community. This transformation process had to be facilitated by new policies and structures Donald et al (2002).

The Outcomes-Based approach was adopted and C2005 was the curriculum framework that was implemented in schools Keevy (2006). This curriculum was only introduced from grades 1-9 in the General Education and Training (GET) band. The Revised National Curriculum (RNCS) was developed in the General Education and Training band which made schooling compulsory. This allowed for incorporation of different knowledge structures, and school subjects were revised into 8 learning areas.

This National curriculum was ready to do away with the old traditional methods and bring in the new as quickly as possible. There were complexities that exposed the viability of the OBE approach. There were many complaints related to lack of training, programme designs, Departmental support, as well as the pace at which the implementation process was executed. Jansen (1998) states that implementation of the OBE Curriculum was hurriedly implemented and was done in isolation and ignorance of the many years of accumulated experience with the respect to curriculum changes in the first world and developing countries. Although According to Jansen (1998) Spady believes that OBE has changed South African Education however, its implementation has forced us to re-engineer the way we look at curriculum and teaching styles. Empowering educators through well structured In-Service Education and Training was a major concern Jansen (1998). However, to strengthen and streamline the curriculum, in 2001/2 the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was introduced with much emphasis placed the implementation process (DoE, 2002). For school as an organization the staff needs create a instructional delivery system and assessment policies that suit their needs Spady (1994) According to Spady (1994) indicates that for curriculum to be successful teachers must analyze

and align the organizational structure, policy, procedure and practice that is consistent with the vision of the school. Spady (1994) also state that enormous demands are placed on the teacher to fulfill individual instructions, plan remediation and enrichment programmes and administer diagnostic assessments as well as keep extensive records. OBE will founder if there is not enough high quality staff development and and provision for sufficient support Spady (1994) The curriculum included activities in the different subjects in the school day as well as after-school activities, which included sport and activities of societies. This was to allow learners to develop attitudes linked to critical thinking, with the expectation that education and training would extend them. There was a demand on the learners to expand their critical thinking, away from the conservatism of the past Lombard and Grosser (2008).

2.3. Policy issues and the impact on the curriculum

There has been a vast number of policies that were introduced to regulate the implementation of the new curriculum framework. Most of the policies were moving in the path of integrated and holistic educational practices, and the implementation depended on educators and education managers David and

Lazarus (2002). In the main, these policies were designed to help teachers, and to make certain that they are accountable for what they are doing. Therefore, the Norms and Standards for educators was one of the policies that was replaced by a content-based curriculum, so that teacher education could be structured, where the competences of teachers and their seven roles were clearly delineated (DoE, 2002). The Norms and Standards policy for educators uses an outcomes-based approach for teacher education and presents a comprehensive description of what a capable educator should demonstrate Parker (2003). The policy outlines this in clear and unambiguous terms: *A competent educator is required to be a specialist in a particular learning area, subject or phase, a specialist in teaching and learning, a specialist in assessment, a curriculum developer, a leader, administrator and manager, a scholar and lifelong learner and a professional who plays a community, citizenship and pastoral role* (DoE, 2007, p. 3.).

The notion of applied competence is crucial to the Norms and Standards (DoE, 1997). The policy outlines three interrelated competences, which are the *practical* (this allows people to

contemplate options, and make judgments, consider decisions on their chosen options and follow them); the *foundational* (the learner displays knowledge related to the actions taken), and the *reflexive* (where the learner is able to connect and integrate all the decisions that have been made through implementation with understanding). The Norms and Standards allows educational institutions to be accommodating in their choice of curriculum designs, so that they could attain the competences which are required of the seven roles. Teachers are expected to rise to the challenge and play the required roles in the classroom.

The vision for education that emerged within the transformation process, post apartheid, was to integrate education and training into lifelong learning Chisholm (2000). Therefore, a Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) and a subcommittee of HEDCOM had to broaden the Norms and Standards for teacher education, to certify „teacher education programmes and qualifications’ Parker (2003, p.23).

This practice allowed for the growth of teacher professional competence. The Norms and Standards for educators of education is a benchmark which “normalizes” teacher education, thereby allowing for professional teacher proficiency. The amendment of the Norms and Standards in teacher education was within the parameters set by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Thomen (2005, p 813). SAQA and NQF have been set up so that learners in South Africa may attain quality education. Through these objectives, there was an attempt to regulate teacher education, by integrating three core competencies, which were academic, occupational, and professional.

1. The academic competence relates to foundational learning, which is regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).
2. The occupational competence concentrates on the practical skills that are necessary for the teacher to function, and this is regulated by the Department of Education Labour Council (ELRC).
3. Professional competence relates to critical reflexivity, and is regulated by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (See Ramrathan 2002).

There is a contest over the development of qualifications for education among DoE (with its Norms and Standards), SACE (with responsible for the regulation of qualified teachers), SAQA (with its focus on the educator in relation to school qualifications), and the Council for Higher Education (CHE), which is responsible for all higher education, and which form part of the overall qualifications framework. Clearly, there will be different positions on teacher education qualifications HSRC (2005, p. 5).

Teacher education providers are expected to provide newly qualified teachers with the skills to operate in the Outcomes-Based Framework Sayed (2004). All teachers need to develop their skills, not necessarily their qualifications, for the delivery of the new curriculum. They need to strengthen their knowledge base, content knowledge and teaching skills DoE (2007, p. 16).

Specialization is necessary, but can take a variety of forms and combinations. It can be connected to other phases, such as the foundation phase or specialist subject phase, where the teacher may specialize, for example, in Maths and Science. This role states clearly that the qualification must be planned around the specialist role, because this indicates the purpose of the qualification (DoE, 1997). In the primary school, teaching across the curriculum was introduced where teachers were now expected to teach up to as many as 8 learning areas to learners in a class. Of concern is that these teachers had specialized in not more than three subjects during their initial training as teachers and are now expected to teach subjects that they may not have specialized in. One of the significant changes to the schooling structure was the introduction of school phase-based structures, divided into foundation phase, intermediate phase, senior phase and further education phase. The Foundation phase has three learning areas, which are Numeracy, Literacy and Life Skills. In the Intermediate phase, Mathematics and Languages are key areas, but schools may choose the number of learning areas based on the school organization, as long as the development requirements of learners are seen in relation to the phase. The senior phase has eight learning areas, where the focus is on the learning area statements (DoE, 2002a).

The policy and pedagogy are prescriptive, and the content in the learning areas is vague Blignaut (2008). Teachers had to develop their own learning programmes because content is not clearly set out Blignaut (2008). Integration of content was to take place over the eight learning areas.

When teaching across the curriculum, it is not very easy to integrate the content across all the learning areas. Therefore, teachers had to play a new role in executing the new curriculum.

With the new curriculum, importance was given to „active learning’, ‘understanding’, „group work’, and „learner-centeredness’ Blignaut (2008, p.106). The teacher was seen as a facilitator in this process.

Franzak (2002) believes teachers are too isolated in their practices and that they do not have a voice in decisions that impact on their teaching. When management structures advocate a curriculum that a school has to follow, teachers are just compliant and do not question. The experienced specialist teachers who are teaching across the curriculum have no training in that field; however, they practice through trial and error. Therefore, the „one-size-fits-all’ approach is not appropriate for teacher development. The school context, teacher specialization and the ability levels of the learners are not taken into account. The experienced teachers prefer their ‘old’ practices, and when willing to work in new ways, they are unable to do so without support Carrim (2003). It is for this reason that teachers are cited as implementers rather than formulators of policies Carrim (2003).

However, there is a gap between the seven professional roles recognized in the policy and the practice in the classroom, according to Sayed (2004). In practice teachers are unable to fulfil the requirements for all seven roles sufficiently. However, the Norms and Standards for educators, together with the „7 Roles’ document, ignores the reality of the situation in which the majority of teachers in South Africa work and, in a way, gives credence to the perception that the workload is excessive Morrow (2007). According to Parker and Adler (2005), teacher development and improvement of programmes presented opportunities for under-qualified teachers in service to upgrade their qualifications and get ready for the new curriculum. The Higher Education Institution is accountable for creating (researching, developing, and implementing) curricula for all teacher education qualifications under the NSE policy Parker and Adler (2005). Teacher education curricula should have more meaning and relevance for school practice, and the university courses should be more coherent and integrated Hoban (2005). Students select a specialist area in which they would achieve their specialized training of the specialist academic area.

2.4 Review of the Curriculum 2005

A ministerial Review Committee was selected in February 2000 by the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal. This was to present recommendations on the implementation of the curriculum from Grades 4 to 7. It was considered the successful factors that strengthened the implementation of the new curriculum and the level of understanding of OBE Chisholm (2000, p. 3). The Review Committee presented to Professor Kader Asmal on the 31 May 2000 some of the key findings. The findings included a list of criticisms: a skewed curriculum structure and design; lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy; inadequate orientation and training and development; lack of learning materials; and lack of variation and good quality in the learning materials. They also drew attention to policy overload, limited transfer of learning in the classroom, and shortage of personnel to implement the curriculum Chisholm (2000). Chisholm (2003) indicates that the Review Committee anticipated the introduction of a reviewed curriculum structure, which should permit support in teacher orientation and teacher training. Therefore, there was a reduction in the number of learning areas in the school curriculum. A significant feature of the training was to shift the teachers' understanding of the curriculum from where they were to their current understanding. However there was not enough time to clarify the new curriculum, and teachers were not given sufficient opportunities to grasp fully the recommended thinking on current planning, assessment and teacher activities Hoadley and Chisholm (2005).

2.5 What do we understand by the concept, Teaching across the Curriculum.

The term, teaching across the curriculum, while being a worldwide phenomenon, has a more nuanced notion within the South African context. "Cross-curricula teaching" is more commonly used in the literature, and will be used as a starting point to unpack our current understanding, and especially within this study. Cross-curricular teaching, according to Savage (undated), suggests an approach wherein teaching becomes a synthesis of knowledge, skills and understandings from various subjects. The emphasis in this iteration is on the skills of the teacher to harness the knowledge and understanding from, perhaps, cognate or related subject areas and to present this to learners in a way that attempts to enrich learning, so that it has a

wider purpose than just narrow subject content knowledge. This prompts a series of teaching and learning configurations that are located within individual subjects as well as teaching across the subjects (Savage undated). Others (e.g. Bainton, undated) argue that, in order to move beyond text book learning, cross curricula learning attempts to contextualize the knowledge that the child has learnt. In this iteration, learning seems to be the central issue where the learner is presented with knowledge that s/he can make sense of and apply in context, and shift from concrete to abstract learning. The cross curricular approach develops on the particular subject culture and supports the connection between subject knowledge and pedagogy (Savage undated).

The above two iterations of cross curricular teaching and or learning is slightly different from the South African notion of teaching across the curriculum. In our context (South Africa), teaching across the curriculum is a school structural concept and is guided by the school phase structure. Schooling in South Africa takes the form of General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET). Within the GET, there are three phases – Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, and Senior Phase. Teaching across the curriculum usually happens in the Foundation and Intermediate phases of schooling where one teacher becomes the classroom-based teacher and is responsible for teaching a number of teaching specializations.

In this iteration, while integration of learning traditional school subjects to learning intentionally, the focus is on the structural arrangement of schooling, rather than on integrated teaching and contextual learning. The role of the teacher is to teach a set of main subjects that will continue to be appropriate to the subject culture. This has been a long standing pedagogy. Programme organizers have played a significant role in integrating daily and school knowledge; therefore there was no lesson that was planned according to a conceptual issue, such as „addition’ or „nouns’. A theme was identified and this was integrated with all the other learning areas (Jansen and Taylor 2003). Now, the learning outcomes and assessment standards have to be integrated with all the learning areas. Because of fluctuating student admissions, teachers are forced to teach across the curriculum in a mono-grade structure Little (2005).

When teaching across the curriculum, the teacher usually has a single grade and has to plan, prepare and teach for every subject in the curriculum. Teaching across the curriculum involves

either one main teacher teaching all the subjects or teachers teaching several school subjects. There are slots on the time table for individual subjects, which are supposed to be taught by specialist teachers. However, one teacher may go through the timetable from one subject to the next. It is assumed that these teachers can handle this kind of teaching. In reality, teachers lack the support and training, and are therefore not very effective Juvane (2005). The training of teachers in the GET phase was done through the cascading model, where a small group of trainers would receive training and they would take them through to various levels of education. Small groups of teachers were briefed on the new curriculum Jansen and Taylor (2003). The subject advisors themselves were inexperienced in the new approach to teaching and learning and had an inadequate knowledge base in the other learning areas. Although they were specialists in their field, they lacked depth in other fields. In addition, little was done to strengthen GET-based structures when it came to implementation Jansen and Taylor (2003).

Integration of content knowledge in Outcomes Based Education (OBE) allowed for classroom-based teaching; however teachers were trained to specialize in certain subjects of their choice and therefore did not do justice to subjects in which they did not specialize. As much as it is an effective approach, our education and training for teachers does not allow them to be effective in the classroom.

In doing this kind of teaching, although it is based on individual subjects, there is a connection between the different levels of the curriculum and the concepts of the learning process (Savage undated). Much of this can be appreciated and understood if there was proper orientation.

2.6 Teaching and Learning when Teaching across the Curriculum.

Teachers should be effective agents in the process of learning, especially in the school setting in which teachers work. They should be offered opportunities and support, so that they can examine their own teaching Shulman (2004). In other words, the school should provide teachers with opportunities, through courses, workshops, networking and administrative support, so that teachers understand what must be taught and how to teach it Shulman (2004, p. 261, 262). How do teachers develop their expertise in their subject and classroom practice? The environment in

which teachers work must stimulate and encourage teachers with continued, professional learning. Continued support from all stakeholders will give them confidence about their competence in classroom practice. According to Nieto (2003, p. 86), teaching „is not just a technical activity’, it has to be based on the teacher’s beliefs, attitudes, values, intuition and, even, uncertainty. Teachers are not necessarily over-confident about their teaching, and many teachers will be concerned about their next lesson, and whether they are giving of their best Nieto (2003). It is essential for programmes to present various possibilities for teachers, so that they are able to comprehend the principles of teaching specific subjects or many subjects. The shift in the curriculum from subject-based teaching to teaching across the curriculum needs to be fully understood.

Teacher learning requires collaboration, where teachers can work together and support each other’s learning. Schools can be seen as „communities of practice’ for both teachers and learners, where opportunities may occur for co-operation with colleagues, so they can interpret and make sense of the learning programmes Frazer et al (2007). Discussions can take place about their curriculum design in tandem with their regular classroom practice, and how their assessments and portfolios can be developed. This will give the experienced teachers as well as the novice teachers the ability to learn from their own experience. The knowledge and experiences of other colleagues would also prove useful.

Learning communities should include the classroom and the school, which become the sites for ongoing critical reflection and creative collaboration Shulman (2004). Teachers should work together in their grades or across the subjects and reflect on their classroom teaching so that they can help one another. This is especially necessary, given that many teachers are teaching subjects that they are not qualified in and, more so, they are teaching across the curriculum. These communities of practice also need a great deal of external resources to assist them in their encounter with different challenges in their teaching and learning. They also give teachers the opportunity to assume different responsibilities and roles in the school situation Lieberman and Mace(2008). Therefore learning communities must be encouraged to support teacher expectations in the classroom. Professional development can take place in these learning communities. An array of diverse, interactive relationships, rather than „uniformity and conformity’, will support a

culture of professionalism. When curriculum packages are work-shopped, teacher inputs will prove important, as this ensures reality checks and relevance. For far too long, teachers have been forced to conform to policies which do not take into consideration the actual context of the school.

2.7 Enhancing Continuing Professional Development.

According to Day (1999), professional development occurs in three ways. Firstly, there is learning in school (with peer coaching, appraisals, and working on tasks together); secondly, there is learning out of school (networks with different schools and clusters in the area); and thirdly, there is learning in the classroom through the learners' responses. However, there is need for additional knowledge and skills, so that teachers could improve the quality of their teaching, especially in those instances where teachers teach all the subjects to their classes Day (1999). There is not much support during the pre-service education and training phase for teachers because the emphasis is on specialization.

Much is left to continuing professional development, and teachers discover what they need to know through their experiences on the ground Day and Sachs (2004). Teachers appreciate that they are learners and that they must engage in learning in different forms during their careers. Irrespective of what the curriculum offers to them in their particular schools, they need to explore their subject material continuously and seek out new material that will motivate their learners Nieto (2003). „The Department of Education also emphasizes that a priority in teacher education was the re-skilling and ongoing in-service development of teachers' Parker (2003, p. 37). This re-skilling was largely for the benefit of under-qualified teachers, but may be extended to others. Teachers who have to upgrade their qualification should be encouraged to do so, so that they could be ready for the implementation of the new curriculum Parker and Adler (2005). The National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) was a short-term measure which was introduced in 2000. The Advanced Certificate and Training (ACE) was introduced for upgrading the teachers and principals in a variety of specialist skills. The need, with respect of the new curriculum, was for teachers to enhance their skills rather than attain (paper) qualifications. There was a great need for teachers to increase their pedagogical content knowledge, teaching

skills and their subject knowledge (DoE 2007). However, the only form of re-skilling that is provided by the Department for experienced qualified teachers is when new policies are workshopped. „Continuing professional development’ is required because teacher education programmes cannot include all the propositional understanding that is needed in the classroom Knight (2002, p.230). So whatever educational workshops, conferences or clusters that are made available, they should be seen as purposeful change by teachers who are willing to engage in professional development.

Therefore the professional development of teachers is essential to enhance the value of teaching and learning Day (1999). „Professional development should become part of teaching and can no longer be an activity that is tackled in a day, week or year’ Fitzgerald et al (2000, p. 187). „It must be woven into teachers’ daily work, allowing teachers opportunities to work with colleagues and establish communities of practice and to learn from one another’s successes and failures’ Fitzgerald et al (2000, p. 187). Networks and cluster formations among schools and teachers are an invaluable way of decreasing isolation. This serves to encourage individual teachers to take advantage of opportunities to form learning communities Day and Sachs (2004).

The need for retraining of teachers was to facilitate the implementation of outcomes-based education. The re-orientation and training was non-formal and did not lead to any qualifications Parker (2003). However, dealing with the new curricula and maintaining the old put severe strain on teachers in the classrooms. Teachers had to attend workshops weekly and, to make matters worse, the workshops were not co-ordinated or of particular relevance Parker (2003).

While professional development seems to ensure that teachers will be headed in the right direction, there is not much support from the Department of Education. Instead of building a culture of professional learning, teachers are faced with a culture of compliance. This means that teachers are handed a curriculum which may or may not be suitable to the classroom Lieberman and Mace (2008).

One of the reforms at school level is learning from experience, and teachers are required to generate circumstances for learning that they may not have encountered before Shulman (2004).

Many teachers have specialized in subjects, but do not teach those subjects solely. They are forced to teach across the curriculum, which means teaching up to nine learning areas. The teacher has to go through immense preparation before the lessons are taught. Sometimes teachers are not confident with the content matter. This predictably leads to intensification of the teachers' workload. Teachers have to integrate subject knowledge and organize opportunities for students to learn. This has to be done by trial and error. I used the Ofsted report to indicate the importance of the primary school curriculum.

Woodhouse (2009), on the primary school curriculum in the United Kingdom, illustrates the significance of subjects in the primary school and encourages teachers to make sure that all pupils are making the kind of progress they are capable of. The report also states that teachers must be able to be aware of how pupils become skilled in different subjects by the time they complete stage 2. Therefore, there is a demand on the teachers' to expand their subject knowledge. While there is widespread national training in mathematics and English, there is very little prospect for primary school teachers to remedy weaknesses in other subjects. There is concern for provisions in specialist subjects or generalized learning areas Kruss (2009, p. 170). In the years since C2005, there has been greater emphasis on content knowledge and subject Specialization, and this need has been compounded by the differentiation between the foundation and intermediate phase, where these phases expect teachers to be more generalist, and FET teachers, who are expected to have possess specialist knowledge Kruss, (2009, p. 170).

2.8 Construction of Teacher Identity in the Classroom Practice.

The question of identity is important in teaching. Identity is not something one is born with, but rather grows into and builds up during one's entire life. According to some theorists (see Knowles, 1992; Nias, 1989), professional identity is associated with a teacher's idea of „self“. This clearly determines a teacher's techniques in teaching and his/her outlook towards educational change. The teacher's identity development is rooted in their personal and professional lives. We view teachers as persons and professionals, whose lives and work are influenced by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school (see Goodson and Cole 1994, p 88). Teaching encapsulates the different roles a teacher has to undertake so that

he can perform the functions that are required of him, whereas teacher identity is personal. It indicates how one identifies as a teacher and how one feels Mayer (1999). This is established on core beliefs about being a teacher in practice, and these beliefs are shaped and transformed continuously through experience Mayer (1999). Such a notion constrains the teacher to be an adaptable, lifelong learner, and to develop confidence to contribute to ongoing changes that are taking place (Mayer 1999). Learning how to teach involves great effort. It is more than learning techniques and content knowledge. It encapsulates “who” and “what” is a teacher. Teacher identity is also constructed by all those teachers who come into contact with - learners, parents, peers, and administrators. It is also shaped by theoretical issues or practical experiences in varying and changing educational settings Smit & Fritz (2008). Teacher education programmes support subject specialization. However, when teachers commence their practice, they confront a totally different scenario. The novice teacher as well as the experienced teacher in most cases are given subjects that they have not specialized in. This will result in teachers having an identity crisis, because they are faced with a huge transition from what they were trained in to what they encounter in practice Franzak (2000). The experienced teacher’s role in mentoring the functional teacher can be seen as one of socialization, modeling and appraisal. According to Franzak (2000) there’s always tension between oneself and fitting into the role of a teacher in the classroom. Therefore the mentoring of the experienced teachers to the novice teachers will help them gain the independence and commitment to the profession Franzak (2000).

Therefore, the mentoring relationship between the experienced and the novice teacher is unique and allows for learning opportunities for both of them. For each one of them it brings opportunities to transmit skills and knowledge and to become aware of their potential for enhancement Walkington (2005). Organization of teaching and learning should be based on the teachers own „lived’ experience as a learner, in the home and communities Samuel (2009). The novice teachers will “*teach as they were taught*’ It is a portrayal of their personal experience of „being taught in school and been taught at home and by their families’ Samuel (2009, p. 130). No matter what mentoring or support teachers are given they will conform to what worked for them as learners and they will try this out in their own classroom practice. Theorists such as Franzak believe that in the collaboration inquiry model, where teachers at all levels encourage and mentor one another which allows teachers to gain confidence and independence as well as commitment

to the profession. Teachers will advance over time through interaction with others Franzak (2000). The novice teachers will be inducted into the practice and they will be exposed to professional development and they will examine their own evolving practice in the content areas they teach Franzak (2000). Therefore, each teacher's teaching style is formed by his personal identity. It is for this reason that every classroom appears different as it epitomizes and reflects the individual teacher.

2.9 Demands made on the teacher in terms of Teaching across the Curriculum.

Teachers in primary schools are portrayed as having a great deal of experience of the whole school curriculum Hargreaves, (1994) As far as collaboration, professional growth, and leadership goes they have many opportunities for development. However, teachers are also subject to mandated curricular activities, and they have to pursue a step-by-step technique of instruction Hargreaves (1994). This leads to the intensification of teachers' professional work. The workload of teachers is increased by an overcrowded curriculum, the number of learning areas to be taught per grade, and accountability requirements Chisholm (2005). There is accountability to parents over the kinds of programmes administered, and how tests and projects are marked. There has to be a great deal of planning and preparation in the nine learning areas. Accountability has brought with it a lot of paperwork in terms of form filling and accounting for everything that has been done Hargreaves (1994). According to Jansen (1998) the level of teacher competence does not exist in South Africa. The new curriculum requires teachers to take on new roles as classroom manager, curriculum developer, and learning mediator Jansen (1998) Therefore they are portrayed to having great deal of experience.

All the time and effort put into planning and preparation comes with compliance with external demands, instead of dedicating oneself to doing a fine job Hargreaves (1994). The administrative work has increased because there has to be planning and preparation for all learning areas in the grade. Teachers have to keep detailed records of the learners in these learning areas. They do not have the necessary training in these subjects but have to teach in them. Therefore subject knowledge remains important, and teachers at all levels will need to have some sort of specialization, according to Burgess (2004). Teachers are trained in a particular phase and for specific learning areas. However, when they are placed in schools they are liable to fill the gap in

whatever phase or learning area the school needs Morrow (2007). This places a demand on most of the teachers because they do not have the necessary specialization and qualification to teach. The school curriculum is quite unpredictable; so unless the teacher education programmes present teachers with some field of knowledge deeper than the current school curriculum, they are being set up for „frustration and failure in their professional careers’ Morrow (2007, p. 18). Notwithstanding, teachers in most schools are working hard to improve their skills to cope with the demands brought about by change De Waal (2004).

According to Morrow (2007), “the nightmare” of continuous assessment is plaguing the teachers. The teachers need to continuously track the progress of learners in order to give feedback Morrow (2007, p. 7). Teachers who teach nine learning areas will have to continually assess these pupils throughout the year. This leads to excessive paper work, with much planning and recording. This is over and above the large classes that teachers have to contend with. The class ratio was supposed to be 1:35 but there are classes of up to 51 learners. Teaching across the curriculum in the senior primary phase drives teachers into a „frenzy’ about assessments and portfolios; with the result, they have little time to teach Morrow (2007).

Over and above this, teachers are faced with the issue of language or the medium of instruction. This is a challenge for many learners and teachers, given that some learners will be learning in their home language while others are second language learners. There are inconsistencies in the practices in schools, with learners having to read, write, follow instructions and respond orally when they are not competent to do so Lombard and Grosser (2008). Teachers become frustrated when more time is spent repeating instructions, rather than being used in direct classroom teaching.

Outcomes-Based-Education has endured assessment overload for a long time. Already teachers were struggling with planning demands and now they have to deal with a „new enemy’ which is assessment. Eltis (2003) indicates some of the comments made by teachers on a recent NSW Government commissioned report on OBE:

„Teacher workload, including paperwork, preparation and selection of assessment tasks, rewriting of report formats, has increased enormously since 1995. Not only are we still coming to terms with all of the new syllabus and associated documents, there

are too many other pressures on teachers that are expected to be included in an already overfull teaching load'. (Eltis 2003, p.41)

The shift in the local context is also having an effect on the daily lives of the teacher. Teachers will have to know about the practices and principles of the new school curriculum with its components of integration in all the traditional subjects. With this requirement at the professional level, they have to face the new and challenging quality assurance initiatives, for example, whole school evaluation, development and appraisal Robinson (2003). On a broader scale, these teachers also have to be part of fund-raising projects, to address the effects of poverty on learners. In addition, in an age of advancing technology, they have to deal with information overload Robinson (2003).

2.10 Framing of the study in terms of the concepts of Norms and Standards.

The purpose of the study, within the interpretivist paradigm, is to explore the experiences of teachers teaching across the curriculum in the primary school. The critical questions give some direction to the methods of data collection and data analysis which, according to Henning (2007), will have to be qualitative. My study is guided by the conceptual framework of the Norms and Standards policy, which serve as a benchmark to regulate education and teacher training (DoE, 1997). According to Parker (2003), the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) endorse an outcomes-based approach to teacher education and offer's a description that specifies what a competent educator can express. This policy outlines the roles and identities that teachers are expected to aspire to in their teaching and learning environments. Therefore, an educator would be required to perform seven roles: *„aspecialist in a particular learning area, subject or phase, a specialist in teaching and learning, a specialist in assessment, a curriculum developer, a leader, administrator and manager, a scholar and lifelong learner and a professional who plays a community, citizenship and pastoral role (DoE, 2007, p. 3).*

The Norms and Standards were gazetted for education as a national policy in February 2000 by Professor Kader Asmal. Norms and standards were seen as being significant for underpinning transformation in South African schools, and providing guiding principles for pre-service and in-service development of competent professional educators (DoE, 2000). This policy was to

transform the pedagogic identities of experienced teachers who were long in the profession, and produce new teachers who are prepared and competent to take on this transformation. Teachers were to implement the different roles that are advocated by the Norms and Standards Parker & Adler (2005). Teacher education is now seen as lifelong learning, with teachers developing their professional competencies Thomen (2005). Whatever formal educational transformation is envisaged, professional practice will essentially depend on the professional development of teachers. As mentioned, teachers need to be reflective practitioners who reflect on their teaching, connect theory to practice and enhance their practice through professional development and learning Thomen (2005). Therefore the Norms and Standards policy was necessary to regulate teacher education in the new curriculum and training system, by specifying the Seven Roles and competencies of teachers, as well as minimum specialist requirements for specialization, according to DoE requirements for phase and learning area/subject.

„The cornerstone of this Norms and Standards Policy is the notion of applied competence and its associated assessment criteria. Applied competence is the overarching term for the three interconnected kinds of competence which are explicated as follows:

***Practical competence** is the demonstrated ability, in an authentic, context to consider a range of possibilities of action, make considered decisions about which possibility to follow and to perform the chosen action. It is grounded in **foundational competence** where the learner can demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge and thinking that underpins the action taken, and integrated through **reflexive competence** in which the learner demonstrates the ability to integrate or connect performances and decision making with understanding and with the ability to adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances and to explain the reasons behind these adaptations’. (DoE, 2000b, p 10)*

The above competencies and the „seven roles’ were not used only to plan and design teacher education programmes, or evaluation of teacher education qualifications when in employment, but also „served as an instrument for teacher appraisal’ SAIDE (2005 p.15). The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) has being clearly subjected to the Norms and Standards for Educators. But there are seven performance standards which have detailed criteria, and they guide the educator to evaluate his/her performance and to see whether the performance is “unacceptable”, “good”, or “outstanding”.

The teaching of specialized subjects or learning areas should be demonstrated because it is one of the competences in the Norms and Standards. However, with teaching across the curriculum

there is no specialization, because teachers are expected to teach all the learning areas in the grade. The teacher's subject knowledge should be pivotal to their competence and this can be demonstrated in their classroom practice Welch & Gultig (2002). Although teachers have trained and specialized in two or more subjects they do not only teach these subjects. Instead of outlining the necessary subjects teacher education should contain, the policy describes what teachers are expected to do. Many teachers are fairly well skilled in basic assessments, conducting group work and keeping records, but lack content knowledge of what learners require Parker (2002). Therefore it is the teacher's role to use the most effective strategies to help learners develop their potential. By adapting the relevant knowledge, skills and information, learning programmes must be designed to suit the appropriate levels and the specific needs of the learner Donald et al (2002). Therefore, Outcomes-Based Education allowed for the integration of subjects, where it was seen most appropriate to do so. There should be a clear focus on subject or content knowledge for teacher education institutions, as well as training in how teachers can teach and assess their subject content when they teach Welch & Gultig (2000).

With reference to the FET mathematics teachers, to take one example, the policy does not prescribe what ought to be taught, with regards to content, knowledge and methodology, according to Parker and Adler (2005). Although there is emphasis on specialist roles, the other roles have to be integrated. However, there is no indication on how this integration should take place and how the competence should be assessed Parker and Adler (2005). Shalem and Slonimsky (1999) argue that teachers need to be experts in their fields and design their own curricula, so that they would be creative in teaching mathematics, and present learner-centred activities. Teachers should not only demonstrate foundational competence in learning areas but also reflect on their experiences, in order to improve their professional practice. Therefore, the „Seven Roles' within the conceptual framework of the Norms and Standards have been identified as relevant to my study, together with the National Qualifications Framework, because teachers are training to teach the new curriculum. Van Laren (2008) draws attention to the point that teacher specialization, according to the National Curriculum, is founded on the notion that primary school teachers are generalist and not specialist.

Norms and Standards were developed by the Head of Education Committee for Teacher Education Policy (COTEP), which came up with the idea of outcomes-based education. This set into action a more competence-based national core curriculum and accreditation of qualifications Welch & Gultig (2002). With the „change to the competence-based education and training system’ there was an introduction of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for every rank in the system Parker and Adler (2005, p. 63). Education was linked to the NQF, which was organized and supervised by the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Parker and Adler (2005).

According to SAIDE (2005, p.16), teacher education allows for „a performance-oriented outcomes-based approach At the same time it asserts very strongly an integrated approach to curriculum design and assessment of teachers, with strong emphasis on subject knowledge and on reflexive competence, where there is critical reflection on both theory as well as practice.

2.11 Summary

In this chapter I widened the understanding of the concept of teaching across the curriculum, by looking at its policy derivations. The policy of Norms and Standards, in terms of Outcomes Based Education, led to the integration of the school curriculum. In doing so, subjects were integrated into learning areas according to the Foundation Phase, GET band and FET Band. Even though teachers were trained specialists in their chosen fields of study, they now had to teach up to nine subjects. This has impacted on the teachers in that they have had to reconstruct their identities. Teachers have also been constrained to engage in continuing professional development and teacher learning.

The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology that has been used to generate data in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Methodology

3.2 Introduction

In chapter 2, I presented a literature review which provides an overview of current thinking on my field of study, which are teachers' experiences when teaching across the curriculum. In this chapter I present the research methodology that I employed and argue for its appropriateness for this particular study. In presenting the methodology and the choices made, I firstly outline the reasons for the chosen research design and settings. Secondly, the research sample and methods of data collection are described and argued for. Finally, the data analysis procedures and ethical issues are presented.

As stated already, the study is focusing on teachers experiences of teaching across the curriculum in a primary school. With changes to the school curriculum within the OBE curriculum framework, teaching across the curriculum is one of the significant changes in the professional practice. Within this focus, the research questions addressed by this study are:

What are the experiences of teachers teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

This research question is guided by the following sub-questions:

- 3.1.1 How do teachers cope with teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?**
- 3.1.2 What opportunities and challenges are presented to teachers who teach across the school curriculum in a primary school?**
- 3.1.3 How do these teachers feel about teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?**

3.3 Research Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

The aim of this study is to have an in-depth understanding of the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum in the primary school. I used Narrative Inquiry as the methodology, where the „lived’ experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum in the primary school are solicited. The value of this approach is that the narrative can, in turn, shape the individual identities of the three teachers I used in my study, as they reflect and construct meaning of who they are and expresses their identities. Pithouse (2007) argues for, and uses, narrative inquiry to do a self-study as a novice teacher, where she uses writing as a „method of inquiry’ to find out about „herself’, and which leads to further realization of the need for professional development and growth. The intention, therefore, of using narrative inquiry as a methodology was twofold. Firstly, to get teachers to express themselves through their stories, is a way of learning about themselves; and secondly, to create stimuli for on-going professional development. Narrative inquiry is a collaboration between the researcher and participant through conversational interviews, to understand their experiences in the school setting Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

Pillay (2003, p. 1) used narrative inquiry in her study about „successful teachers’, through their „lived’ experiences. Therefore, I feel this methodology was the most appropriate for studying the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) further explain that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding, through „stories lived and told’, „collaboration between the participant and the researcher over a period of time in a place of social interaction’. Through a series of interviews, my participants were able to recall what it was to be a teacher in the past; they were also able to describe their role and experiences of the new curriculum, where they teach across the curriculum. The key term to narrative inquiry is „temporality’, because experience is temporal, as correctly pointed out by Clandinin & Connelly (2000). It means that what we have to say about a person or school is ‚bounded by time and context, with this meaning likely to change as time passes’ (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 19).

The preference for narrative inquiry is directed by the notion of how one ‚mirrors one’s experiences’, and how ‚one puts together one’s experiences, and these are often accomplished by the stories one tells’ (Gudmundsdottin, 2001). The participants in my study

reflect on their experiences of being specialist teachers who have to teach across the curriculum, amidst all the challenges they are faced with. The choice of narrative involves coming to terms with life in the classroom, school and the educational landscape Clandinin and Connelly (2000). It deals with the experiences of teachers as they go about their classroom practices as they both adopt and adapt the changing curricula policies. According to Johnson and Golomek (2002, p.1), teachers are marginalized because they are ‚told what they should know and how they should use their knowledge’. However, researchers using narrative inquiry help to reflect the knowledge teachers display back to the teachers. Therefore, educational experiences are illuminated when studied in the narrative mode Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

The focus of my study is teaching across the curriculum and how different teachers relate their experiences to this phenomena. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use Dewey’s criterion of ‚continuity’. Here, the cyclical nature of experiences - where past experiences impact on present experiences which, in turn, impact on future experiences - is understood and harnessed. The specialist teachers will learn from their experience in the classroom and from that of their colleagues.

As with any research, this study has its limitations. Time commitments did not allow for a large number of participants, given the fact that close, in-depth collaboration with the participants was called for. . As a researcher, I found it difficult to separate myself from the research, and the issue of subjectivity became more and more relevant. Given the nature of this study, a qualitative approach within the interpretivist paradigm was the logical one to use. In the qualitative approach the researcher will use up extensive time with the participants, personally reflecting and changing descriptions of what is on offer Denzin and Lincoln (2005). In the qualitative approach the importance is on analysis and interpretation. I used the qualitative approach to explore and understand the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum. It is important to my study because it helped me understand other educators’ experiences of teaching across the curriculum. Qualitative research is a more naturalistic approach and captures the data in a ‚real life setting’. This research methodology includes semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis Patton (2002). Sometimes, the participants get drawn in to engage in all the activities; however, a great deal will depend on the researcher’s perceptions,

expertise, and integrity Patton (2002). In my study, it must be borne in mind that the teachers are teaching across the curriculum presently, and this can change to teaching a specialization if the need arises. Therefore, qualitative studies employ rigorous methods of data collection, taking into consideration the crucial changes that may occur in participants' experiences from one context to another, and how they understand or make meaning of their own practice.

By using the interpretive paradigm, the researcher will „gather as much information as possible about the problem, with the intent of analyzing, interpreting, or theorizing about the phenomenon' Merriam (1998, p. 38). Henning, van Rensburg and Smith (2004, p. 21) assert that qualitative research „attempts to uncover real-life settings and to understand the infinite complexity of the school situation'. I constructed narratives from what each of my participants had to say during my interview. Within the qualitative approach, multiple methods of data collection may be used Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). In my study, I used semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

3.4 Participants and Context

For this study I selected a public school in the Umlazi District, which forms part of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Blossom (*pseudonym*) is a primary school that is in a predominantly urban area. The school is a multicultural institution, with 60 % Indians and 40 % blacks. At present there are 400 learners and 11 teachers, including the principal. The school offers classes from grade R to grade 7. It opened its doors to different races in 1992. It is ranked “quintile 5”, which indicates it is a privileged school. It has running water, electricity, remote-controlled gates, and is fully armed. It is fully equipped with a library and a computer room.

I chose a novice teacher, Lee, who qualified post after the introduction of the OBE curriculum in the school education system, and has currently teaching for five years. Her training as a teacher was informed by the OBE framework. She has specialized in Mathematics and natural Science in the Further Education and Training phase of school (grades 10 to 12). A second participant, was an experienced senior primary teacher, Deez, had specialized in the History and Arts, and has been teaching for 17 years. The third participant, was experienced secondary school English specialist, Olive, has been teaching for 29 years. In this primary school, several teachers were

not trained to teach at the primary school phase. Hence this school site became a site for rich data as it has teachers from all sorts of specializations, those that were trained to teach in languages in a secondary school but teaching in a primary school, those that were have trained to teach in the primary school with some subject specialization but were teaching across a number of subjects that they were not qualified to teach, as well novice teachers who were trained within an OBE framework, with some subject specialization, but teaching across the curriculum. This site was deemed most appropriate as it provided for a range of participants as well as easy access to me as the researcher.

I used purposive sampling as a process of selecting the participants for the study. Purposive sampling allows one to choose “data-rich” informants Cohen et al (2007), so that the data produced would permit one to obtain sufficient information to deeply understand the phenomenon under exploration. This sample that I have chosen may have satisfied my intentions; however, „it does not pretend to represent the wider population; it was deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased” (Cohen et al (2005, p. 104). The experiences of the participants that were selected highlighted what was relevant to the study. This study provided me with an understanding of how curriculum coherence can be achieved through the experiences of teachers teaching across the curriculum. The participants selected were not criterion-based, but rather, I considered issues of experience, specializations and training. Hence, a novice, qualified teacher, mismatched to her placement, an experience primary school teacher and a redeployed secondary school teacher, provided me with interesting configurations. The permutations within this selection brought richness to the data that allowed for in-depth analysis.

The problems that I experienced on the ground during my study were a major wage-related strike held by teachers. This strike action disrupted the mood and interests of all teachers, especially my participants. I found it difficult to get down to interviewing my participants. My participants were not available for any meeting that I tried to convene. I tried to pursue them vigorously in order to get them to commit to the interviews soon after the strike, but this proved quite difficult.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

3.5.1 Interviews

The methods of data production used were semi-structured interviews and document analysis. According to Cohen et al (2007), the significance of using an interview is that it permits greater depth than any other method of data collection. This is due to the fact that an interview provides a researcher with an opportunity to shed light on concepts, clear misunderstandings, and get accurate information Cohen et al (2007). The semi-structured interviews are less formal and allow the questions to be repeated as well as altered in order to match the situation. Most questions are open-ended, which would encourage explanations on how teachers cope with teaching across the curriculum. By doing so, this will represent personal accounts of the participants. Interviews offer face-to-face contact, which allows the interviewer to carefully plan questions and then to probe the participants about their responses, so that further information is obtained. I preferred an interview format because the participants were more inclined to express their opinions and narrate their stories freely. Gay and Airasian (2000) also attest to the effectiveness of an interview, in that it allows for probing of the participant, thereby leading to the possibility that the issue being investigated may lead to a deeper understanding. The interviews in this study will reveal experiences of the teachers who teach in the primary school.

The interview was piloted with a teacher who was not a participant. This enabled me to gain clarity, and feedback on the types of questions that would be asked of the participants. I used an empty classroom in which to conduct the interview with my three participants. Lunch breaks and their free periods were the most suitable time to conduct the interviews. Follow-up interviews were conducted during the participants' free periods, so that I could gain clarity on certain issues. The semi-structured interviews gave me a detailed picture of what teachers are experiencing in the classroom, and afforded me with the opportunity to probe some exciting and rich information which arose from the interview. I had specific questions that were put to the participants; however additional questions were generated to glean more detailed information. This was a learning experience for me because I improved with practice. By the time I got to the third

participant, I became more proficient in interviewing. This allowed me to improve the amount of data generated, as well as its quality.

The interviews were audio-taped. The interviews needed to be recorded, so that they could be turned into transcripts, for data analysis purposes. The voice recording also provides a precise, verbatim copy of the participants' exact words, and may be replayed at any time for clarification and comprehension. Knowing that some participants might be threatened by a voice recorder, and they might withhold important information from me, justified the use of the voice recorder in advance. In addition, I continuously reassured the participants that the interviews were strictly confidential and that pseudonyms were going to be used instead of their real names. The transcripts were given back to the participants to authenticate the accuracy of what I had recorded and transcribed.

Merriam (1998, p. 106) maintains that documents are a source of data in qualitative research, and that they will assist the researcher in „developing an understanding of the research problem’ Teacher interviews were based on teacher portfolios and assessment documents, such as mark sheets and learner portfolios, which were kept by teachers. This was used as the bases of conversation around their experiences.

3.5.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The document analysis which was used included the pupils' assessment records and their written workbooks. Teaching all the learning areas there are stipulated number of assessments for each subject. Teachers need to plan and record them accurately. I scrutinized the number of assessments per learning area for evidence of intensification of teachers' work. I looked at the planning for the term to see whether all assessments were covered. Educators' portfolios and planning and preparation files were used as an indication of how teachers planned and prepared for the nine learning areas they taught. Looking at the numerous record books I was able to detect the repetition of work and demands this placed on teachers. Rosters from management pertaining to sport, co-curricular, interschool and interclass activities had to be followed rigidly, sometimes at the expense of the classroom teaching. Recording of remedial work was scrutinized

to see when and how teachers fit this into the daily teaching. The interrogation of documents provided me with answers to the research question on experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum. Noticing how dates needed to match from their learning programmes to their work schedules, preparation sheets and their mark files will help me generate data for my findings. Taking all this into account will help me with the challenges teachers face in their classroom practice. Documents are a useful source of providing sound evidence of the intensification of teachers' work, or are first-hand accounts of the phenomenon that is being researched, according to Cohen et al (2007). There was a mere transcription from textbooks into the teachers file. All teachers have different training and qualification and they are exposed to so many records. This approach to data collection was intended to provide data that would be useful in answering the research questions.

3.6 Trustworthiness

As the study is utilizing the qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm, questions of validity or reliability will be less important than trustworthiness. Researchers (such as Kvale, 2002; Merriam, 1998; & Robson, 2002) maintain their support for a more fitting terminology for qualitative research, such trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and conformability. I tackled the issue of trustworthiness by following aspects of trustworthiness in Guba's model, where truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality are important Krefting (1991).

Truth-value: When dealing with the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum, the data is collected and presented accurately so that others who share the same experience will be accustomed with this immediately. Truth-value is vital when using qualitative research for trustworthiness purposes. I went back to the participants so they could test the accuracy of the interpretation. By doing so the criteria of impartiality and uniformity in this study were satisfied.

Consistency: I sought to understand the individual teacher's experience when teaching in the classroom. By using three different kinds of teachers the emphasis is on variation of their experiences rather than identical repetition.

Neutrality: According to Krefting (1991), the findings of this research will be solely of participants and the conditions of the research.

A thorough account would be made available by me on the research process to generate a clear audit trail for anyone who would like to proceed with the process in the future. I would take back the transcribed interview to the participants to check if their ideas were suitably presented. In my study I tried to achieve trustworthiness by trusting and accepting what the teachers are relating to me about their experiences, and accepting it as valid. Ethical clearance became very necessary for this study, which I now will discuss.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Cohen et al (2007, p. 51) indicate that it is “important to observe ethical principles in order to pre-empt problems that may arise during fieldwork and also to protect the rights of the participants’. Therefore, the researcher secured permission from the University to carry out the research as part of the requirements for the fulfillment of the degree. An Ethical Clearance certificate is included (see Appendix A) for this study.

According to Cohen et al (2007), the researcher will have to explain the precise nature of the research to gatekeepers so that they will be conscious of the demands that will be made on the participants and the school. I was granted permission by the Department of Education to conduct my research in the school, because it was under its jurisdiction. I negotiated access to conduct research in the school with the principal. According to Cohen et al (2007), it is advisable that the participants are well informed about the research. I had to obtain informed consent from the participants. This means that the participants have to know the purpose of the research, their role in the research and how the data or results will be used.

The participants were also informed of their rights so that they can make informed decisions on whether they wish to participate or not. Furthermore they were told that they may withdraw at any time. In addition, the researcher had to pledge confidentiality to the participants and the school, in order to protect the interests of the participants and the school. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to participants through a letter of consent, which spell out that they could withdraw from participating if they wish to do so (see Appendix B). Greig et al (2007) argue that it is the responsibility of the researcher to make sure that the participants’ best

interests are protected. This means that the researcher has to steer clear of activities that could have a negative impact on the participant, physically, emotionally or psychologically. The researcher had to ensure the confidentiality of any data that could be located back to the participants. The issue of power comes in because locating myself as a researcher gives me power and authority. For this reason, as a researcher, I am constrained to act with integrity.

3.8 Data Analysis

I used qualitative methods of data analysis. Data from each interview was transcribed and coded according to themes. I developed themes and categories to recognize teachers' experiences in teaching across the curriculum. The actual words were transformed into data. Therefore, we state that qualitative researchers make use of words in their analysis; they also gather or create stories of their participants. Codes were used to study brief actions or interview transcripts of participants in the setting. I coded the data, creating categories and integrating codes, when pertinent coding was complete Cohen et al (2007). The similarities and differences of the coded data allowed me to group the related codes and themes into categories until coding was concluded. Sometimes direct phrases and sentences of the participants will be evaluated, because direct conversation can create rich data. Description and clarification of theory linking it to the data may also be achieved Cohen et al(2007).

Separate parts of the transcripts were carefully examined for resemblances and differences (de Vos (1998) among the three participants in the study. I also wished to ascertain the challenges they came across in performing their tasks as classroom-based teachers. I used my document analysis as well as the teachers' interviews to verify my analysis. The following documents were analyzed: teacher's portfolio, learner's portfolio, learner's books, and assessments records. Data from these documents was extrapolated to some focus areas and verified; It was also merged with the data gathered from the interviews. All the data would be stored safely and later be destroyed.

3.9 Limitation of the Study.

My study was done in one primary school with 3 educators. Therefore, with these findings it is not possible to make generalizations from this study. Nonetheless, this study offered an in-depth understanding of teachers who teach across the curriculum. More information could have been collected if I used more than one school in the same district. Due to time constraints, I was not able to work with a larger number of participants. A limitation of my study may also pertain to the power dynamics in the research project. My status as a researcher may have proved intimidating to fellow teachers.

This chapter has given a detail description on the research design and methodology used in the study. The qualitative approach was used within the interpretivist paradigm. The researcher justified the choice of this paradigm. The researcher described how the participants were selected and why semi-structured interviews and document analyses were the most suitable instruments chosen. The process of ethical procedures, trustworthiness and data analysis were also discussed in this chapter. Lastly, the limitations of this study were discussed.

In the next chapter, I construct narratives of my participants in the study.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVES

Teachers' profile: Table 4.1: Table of participating teachers

	Deez	Olive	Lee
Qualifications obtained	4 year teaching diploma	Bachelors degree in teaching	Bachelors degree in teaching
Fields of of specialization	Primary education specialising in History of Arts	Secondary education specializing in History and English	Further Education and Training phase specializing in Maths and Science
Teaching experience	17 years	29 years	5 years (novice)
Shifts in employment within school context	Initially employed in a primary school and continued in this school	Initially employed in a secondary school and redeployed to this primary school	Initially employed in this primary school and continues to be employed here

4.2 Introduction

The last chapter articulated the process through which the data was generated for this study. The representation of the data in the form of narratives of the three participants is presented in this chapter. The information from participants was obtained by means of narrative interviews. This interview was transcribed and written as a first-person account of the teacher's experiences of teaching across the curriculum. The information presented by the participants were re-organised structurally in order to present a coherent narrative. The actual words of the participants were not changed. Rather, the interview transcripts were used as a basis for the reconstruction of the stories of the three participants in a way that illuminates their experiences thematically. The themes were developed from the interview transcripts. Common themes were identified across all three interview transcripts and these were used initially to construct the narratives. Other themes not common to all three participants were also identified and narratives relating to these themes were included within the respective participant's narrative. This way of constructing the

narratives provided a useful analytical framework. Common experiences across the three participants were collated, so that I could identify, describe and explain the teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum in a way that would illuminate issues at a systemic level. More nuanced findings emerged in the individual narratives and this illuminated issues that are contextually or personally related. These two levels of analysis are useful to different stakeholders and could be used differently for developing teachers' ability to effectively teach across the curriculum.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

1. To provide an explanation of how these narratives were constructed.
2. Present the narratives of 3 different teachers.
3. Discuss the analyses of the narratives.

All three participants are female because the school I chose to do my research has only female teachers, except the principal who is male. After the narratives were presented the analysis was developed.

4.2.1 **Construction of the Narratives.**

I conducted face-to-face interviews with my participants so that I could understand the lived experiences of these teachers. I interviewed each teacher at the most convenient times for them and myself, so that we would all be at ease. The interviews were done mostly during free periods and breaks, and after school. I also did telephone interviews when I wanted to clarify certain issues. I chose Blossom (not its real name) Primary school, as it was accessible to me. Other details were outlined in the previous chapter.

I listened to the interviews and thereafter they were transcribed. I had to listen to the transcripts many times so that I could identify recurrent themes that emerged from the data of these teachers experiences. Once the stories were completed and written, they were presented to my

participants for verification (the “member check” process). My participants accepted my stories after minor changes were made by them.

With regards to ethical considerations, anonymity was guaranteed; both the names of the participants and the school were changed to protect their identities. In composing each story I used the first person as this makes the narrative more authentic. I did not want to report on what my respondents had said but wanted their own voices to be foregrounded.

4.3 Description of School Site

SITE: Blossom (*pseudonym*) Primary School is 40 years old, and situated in a predominately urban area, which falls within the eThekweni region, in the Umgeni circuit. It is a multicultural school with 60 % Indians and 40 % blacks. The school offered classes from grade R to grade 7. It opened its doors to different races in 1992. At present there are 400 learners. It has a “quintile 5” ranking, which indicates that it is a privileged school. It has running water, electricity, remote-controlled gates, and is fully armed. It is fully equipped with a library and a computer room. Olive, one of the participants, has been in this school as a level one teacher for 24 years, but this is her 29th year of teaching. Deez, another participant, is currently teaching for 17 years and Lee, the third participant, is a novice teacher, teaching for 5 years.

4.4 NARRATIVE 1 : OLIVE

I am Olive. I am a female who is 47 years old. I am married with 3 children. I come from a family of teachers. I am a secondary school specialist, and am currently teaching for 29 years.

4.4.1 A New Beginning

My first day at the new school was like being in Grade 1 for the first time. My principal was this stern man with this shrill voice, who welcomed me to his home as he mentioned. I was not in his plans and time table. However, he gave me a teaching load of English and History. Then the day came to meet my form class. Oh my word! Here was a petite woman standing in front of these grade 11 pupils. This was my form class for that year. I felt intimidated by the size of these

students. I was given my syllabus for the year. I felt insecure and nervous, because I did not know where to start. My colleagues in the English Department helped me to get my journal and mark-book going. Everything had to be done manually at that time. I knew I had to assume responsibility for the tasks allocated to me. I had taught in that school for 7 years and was just settling in, when those dreaded words, RATIONALISATION AND REDEPLOYMENT, plagued the education world in South Africa. I was last in the department; therefore, I had to exit first, as this was the rationalisation and re-deployment policy guideline for schools. This was a traumatic time for me because I really felt unsettled.

4.4.2 A Tough Road Ahead

With lock, stock and barrel, I made my exit to Blossom Primary school. The Department doesn't even know I exist. I was just a number, according to the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN). I felt like a lost soul. What a drastic change. I never trained in primary education. Now I am placed in the intermediate phase, which is Grades 4-6. This was like a bad dream.

I kept on reassuring myself that I must be thankful that I have a job. Initially, there was some form of specialisation, like English. Geography was included with English to make up my teaching load. A couple of years later, the National Policy Framework was introduced with Outcomes-Based teaching, to ensure more teachers and better teaching. This led to the intensification of my work and really frustrated me as a teacher, given the large classes and my inadequate training. Then I was introduced to teaching across the curriculum. What a change from where I was to where I am now in the teaching profession. I had to teach all the subjects in my class. Firstly, I was a trained specialist teacher; now I had to become a generalist. I didn't have a clue about any other subject. The Department had placed the burden on my shoulders to re-train in the classroom. I was just a number according to the department; it was not their concern how I coped from a secondary school to a primary school. Their purpose was to get through with the rationalisation and redeployment process. The qualification of the teachers was not taken into consideration as long they were placed somewhere by the Department. I was given all the policy documents and was asked to plan and prepare for the subjects. I did not

know where to start. This was torture. I knew I had to either „sink or swim’. I was very agitated and nervous initially in my new employment.

This was all new to me. To teach all the subjects in my class was like being „thrown into the deep end’. The thought of change was frightening and challenging to me. I was definitely not prepared for this. Firstly, I had never dealt with that age group of children at primary school level. They were always complaining and whining the whole time. I couldn’t understand how childish and immature these learners could be. It took me a while to get to understand the primary school scenario.

When I gave them a comprehension passage, some of the learners just wrote the questions down instead of answers. I then found out that I had learners in my class with severe barriers to learning. This was very difficult for me to rectify because I had no knowledge on how to help these learners. To teach one subject after another really broke the trend of thought and actions, because I had to immediately stop when the buzzer goes and get on with the next subject. How was I going to help these children?

The reality of large classes of mixed ability learners was a challenge. I was unable to get the attention of the class immediately to start my lesson. They were fidgeting with their bags and pens, or talking all the time. It takes about ten minutes between subjects to get them settled. I had to make a big adjustment coming from a secondary school to teach in the primary school. I had been in a comfort zone, with 21 students in my class, and of the same race group. Having to get used to the integration of different race groups was a culture shock for me. I had to even teach IsiZulu. Oh, my word! I could not even understand it, leave alone speak it. Then I enrolled to do a course in conversational Zulu.

There was dilemma of the seating arrangements with 40-45 children in the class. They had to be seated into groups. I had no clue how to seat them, whether it was according to ability levels or mixed abilities, or just boys and girls, as I was used to. I did not have a clue about how to do group work. When I tried doing group work for the first time it was horrendous because of

the discipline problems. When I got them back to sitting in rows, I was told to change my seating.

Teaching across the curriculum became a „nightmare’ because I had to teach nine learning areas for the first time in my teaching career. This was new to me and now to teach all the subjects in my class was like been „thrown into the deep end’. Then, I had to deal with the big class sizes and now, even worse, the teacher becomes the facilitator. I felt I was losing my identity of who I am, and felt like a lost soul. Life has been a journey for me. I grew up, studied and started teaching under the apartheid regime. I am from the „old’ school getting accustomed to the „new’. I did not know who I was anymore. I was thrown into this situation, through no fault of mine. I felt I was just a facilitator of knowledge. Initially, I was just following what my colleagues were doing. I did not know whether what I was doing was right or wrong.

I was just a number, according to the Department. It was not their concern how I coped with the move from a secondary school to a primary school. Their purpose was to get over with the rationalisation and redeployment process at the expense of teachers.

4.4.4 Overworked and Managing to Survive

Seventeen years ago the only paper- work I had I created for myself. Now twenty-nine years later, I am drowning in paperwork. I am expected to draw up plans for everything I do. I spend lots of time sitting and writing so that I can account for everything that is done. I take home tons of marking, and sit late into the night marking all the books for the nine learning areas. Teaching across the curriculum means marking books from nine learning areas. Just imagine. You have a class of 40-45 learners and they are mixed-ability learners. It took me a while to understand and adapt to the curriculum according to the ability levels of my learners, and also taking into consideration the racial composition of the class and the learners’ socio-economic status. Marking also entails their assessment tasks, tests, projects and homework. The quantity of written work increased as the term progressed. I take tons of books home to mark on a daily basis. I am unable to even do a little marking at school because of the unnecessary interruption from the office all the time. Marking must be thorough. So teachers mark during their own time

in order to be careful. Accountability is of utmost importance in the new curriculum. What was going through the minds of the curriculum designers at that time? In the old method, the testing programmes were so rigid and behaviouristic that we had to fail the students if they did not meet these requirements. Now, I was asked to change my teaching methods and testing programmes. I have to learn how to teach the other subjects that are not my specialist subjects. Technology was rather mind-boggling. Firstly, I had to do the project myself before I gave it to the learners. Then they had to bring all the necessary items to school because the school does not have any. Some of the projects are way beyond the learners. Therefore I get them to do some of it at home or in groups. I took it upon myself to engage in self-learning, which took the form of reading widely about my subject matter, internet searches and joining professional organisations.

I have to join a professional organisation like AMESA, so that I can become confident to teach maths in the classroom. I belong to NAPTOSA. However, I have to pay to attend workshops. I am not very keen on that. I attend workshops that are affordable and that will help me in the classroom. Clusters were formed in the area. However, I could not attend all because we had to share attendance with all the teachers. During the ones I attended, I felt like a new teacher in the cluster because all this kind of planning was new to me.

I had to be taught by a colleague on how to use a computer and the internet to make my lessons interesting. This was not an easy experience. I was really scared. I used to dread those computer lessons. It took a long time to become confident and comfortable. All this was done on my own to empower myself. I still feel that there is a deficit of knowledge among teachers in subjects like Economics and Management Sciences, Social Science, Technology and Natural Science. My colleagues are forced to teach these subjects. I used my traditional methods, skills, experiences, prior knowledge and expertise initially to help me function in the classroom, because I had to get into some form of mindset to help me cope psychologically. Sometimes, it is not easy to undertake this task, even with all the training and experience. I have never marked so many books, projects and tasks before. I am accountable to the parents when it is parents' meetings; I need to show them their children's books. Some parents come to scrutinize my work rather than help their children.

This is mentally, emotionally and physically draining for teaching across the curriculum. This has affected my health. I am continuously stressed and get severe headaches. With the traditional method of teaching, the needs of the special child was taken into account. I remember a classroom was set aside for these children, who had reading, and mathematical problems. This would ease the tension in the classroom for the teacher as well as the student. Now these children are left helpless and this frustrates the teacher even more, because no training is available to handle these added pressures. There are no coping strategies for the Level 1 teacher. I had started my teaching career prior to democracy, and 16 years down the line since democracy, I am looking for changes in the child with regards to all the policies that were gazetted. This has definitely not filtered down to the school. Most of my children are unable to read when they come to intermediate phase. I put this down to the changes in our teaching methods. Coming from the traditional school, I always felt that teachers should have some content knowledge to empower the student in the classroom

There is nothing we learn from Department workshops, just policy they want to implement. You go to a workshop and they expect you to learn everything in one day. There is no follow-up by the subject advisors. I feel we are left to our own interpretation and devices. There is no correlation to my classroom practice. The workshops add to the intensification of work, and do not assist me in the actual classroom practice. Information is cascaded to us and we have to interpret it at school with no help from any departmental office.

4.5 NARRATIVE 2: Deez

I am Deez and I am currently teaching for 17 years. I am a trained primary school teacher who specialised in History and Art. But for the last decade I am teaching across the curriculum, spanning all the subjects in a Grade 4 class, within an Outcomes-Based Education framework.

I took my first position at Blossom Primary school. When I got to the school as a first year teacher, I was a bit apprehensive, not knowing what to expect. During my first few years, I enjoyed teaching my specialist subjects, such as Art. I used to bring out the most creative side of some students. I planned thoroughly because I just taught Art and History. Then, suddenly, came

the change in the curriculum to Outcomes-Based Education. Everything had to change, from subjects, to planning and preparation. It was difficult to accept these changes. There was new terminology that had to be learnt and subjects were combined to become learning areas. I was given numerous policy documents in the different learning areas to start my planning and preparation before the start of the new year. The principal no longer has a teaching load, and no training had been offered to him (the principal). Teachers were the only staff that received training in OBE. So what kind of advice could he offer to his management with regards to easing the burden of the Level 1 teacher? It is important that the principal should have been given some training before implementing this curriculum.

Knowing that I am an expert in my field, I had to make this drastic change from being a specialist to a generalist. To make matters worse, this school chose to follow teaching across the curriculum, because the roll (number of learners in the school) had dropped and there was one class in each grade. I used my traditional method, skills, experience, prior knowledge and expertise initially to help me function in the classroom, because I had to get into some form of mindset to help me cope psychologically. What a drastic change for me from being a specialist teacher to becoming a teacher who had to teach all the subjects in my class. I had no formal training with teaching across the curriculum. Coming from the traditional school, change was difficult to accept. I had no formal training or proper support structures to help me cope.

With the enormous amount of planning and preparation that I put in during my December vacation, a new task lay ahead of me. I entered my new Grade 4 class to teach all the subjects in that class. Mind you, they (the learners) are very challenging at this age. They want your attention all day long. They just can't stop talking. I tried my hand at giving them some form of punishment, like writing "I would not talk unnecessarily in class". That was it! They would cry and complain to their parents. I am a firm disciplinarian, but I was finding difficulty in handling these children. Imagine how these children would have been feeling to have me for the whole day. Although I am a primary school specialist teacher this was the first time I have taken Grade 4. I have always been a Grade 7 teacher. I could not change like a light switch.

Firstly, I needed to sort out their seating arrangements in class. I had to remove my table so that I could make space for group seating. I preferred the seating in rows because I could maintain discipline. Now, of course, they had to be put into groups. What a disaster this was. The noise was unbearable. I was so used to set work and my Grade 7's would work quietly. Now, they took so long to settle down. It took me about five to ten minutes to start the lesson properly. They would be fidgeting in their bags, or playing with the toys they brought from home, or just falling off to sleep. They would take very long to start their work and write so slowly. These children were confused with so many learning areas and so many books that they would mix up all their books. Then I decided to collect all their books and give it to them during the designated periods. Lots of time was put into the planning of worksheets but these would be crumpled and thrown into some of their bags. Most of the time they would tell me that their worksheets are lost, and I needed to assess them for marks.

Most of the learners are English second language learners. They had difficulty in reading. Some of them had barriers to learning as well. I have a pupil who is mentally challenged and therefore is very slow. It is very sad because I was not trained to deal with these kinds of issues.

Before they have settled into one subject, it is time to move to another subject. This was becoming a „nightmare' for me. Sometimes, the trend of thought is disrupted in this process. The learners are unable to sit for long periods and they need a toilet break or they are hungry. After break was a real disaster, as they would not settle down. They would be so boisterous during the break that they would continue in that mood when they returned to the classroom. Perspiration will be running down their faces and would mess their written books. Some of them would forget to wash their hands. Well, I have to mark their books. Imagine going through this the whole day.

As a teacher who taught for a while, I found that parents were very demanding in terms of homework, projects and assessments given to their children. They want to know how the assessments and projects are marked. An assessment plan has to be given to the parents for the year. This outlines what assessments will be given to the children in the nine learning areas and a breakdown on how each will be assessed. Therefore, I find that I have to be accountable to

them, their children and to management. These poor children had to be burdened with a number of assessments per learning area, testing programmes, and homework. The parents do most of the projects for their children and therefore asked me how I allocated the marks if they faired poorly. Now I give them the projects to do in class.

With the nine learning areas comes a lot of paper work and marking. I have to devise mark sheets for the nine learning areas and, of course, there is computation of these marks, which has to be done manually. There are tons of marking, which include their class work, homework, tests and projects. I carry a box of work home every day. There's no family time for me. This is frustrating. With the Grade 4's you need to give them some form of reward for good work in the form of stars or sweets. They will remind you continuously. I had to decorate my class so that it is conducive to teaching and learning. Space has to be made for nine learning areas on the walls. I come from a very old school with very small classrooms.

Seventeen years down the line my practice is still being controlled by tons of administrative records. There is a lot of unnecessary repetition in the recording process. The following books were kept per class: mark-file, assessment file, planning and preparation file for nine learning area, teacher's portfolio, situation book, co-curricular and extracurricular file, professional development file, register, learner's portfolio, record of code of sport each teacher is involved in, IQMS file, remedial book, defaulters' book, and receipt book. The recording of dates must tally with all the record books. It is not always feasible to do this because of the current topics that have to be discussed, but I have to give an explanation to the subject advisor when she checks my books and the learners' books. My learners' books couldn't be marked every day. Some of them did not complete their assessments. I just assess them on what they are capable of doing. I sometimes feel I am drowning in paper work.

There are many disturbances and interruptions from the office in terms of filling forms, reading and signing circulars and messages sent by other teachers via children. I find this very difficult to cope with. I sometimes get anxiety attacks because my work demands too much of me. I am not only a teacher but also a fundraiser for the school. Market days, cake sales and other activities

have to be organised continuously to raise funds. This is time consuming and tiring when this time and energy could be used in the classroom.

I feel that a change from specialised teaching to teaching across the curriculum needed some time and „mental space’ for me to acclimatise to the classroom demands. I had to try and test methods and increase my content knowledge to enable learners to reach their outcomes. I purchased different resource materials, especially for Maths and Science. These subjects were a major „bug bear’ for me because I lacked any teaching knowledge.

I tried to gain the help of my colleagues who were much more experienced. I think teacher collegiality is important for boosting teacher morale. I managed to benefit from their experiences especially with Maths and Science. When I see that my Maths lessons were a success I feel good and I want to learn more. Teachers would speak about issues dealing with classroom management over tea breaks or after school. Important information would just crop up during these discussions. This included what information they obtained on the internet, or a book that is useful in the classroom. I could not even switch on the computer for fear. After the computer lessons that I attended with my colleagues, I felt like a child with a new toy. I could not leave it. Now I look at this as empowerment. The computer training allowed me and the other teachers to engage in the knowledge search. If I taught a lesson and it did not go well after reflecting, I could teach it on another day and see how I could improve on it. I had to be taught by a colleague on how to use a computer and use the internet to make my lessons interesting. All this was done on my own to empower myself. I am studying for a Diploma in Mathematics to improve my classroom practice. I am not a Maths specialist but I teach Maths. I am aware of my feelings that are associated with the change from normal specialist teaching to trying to learn to teach across the curriculum.

Our old textbooks had much more content to give to the child in terms of knowledge. The old textbooks had to be discarded with the introduction of OBE. I definitely went back to some of the old textbooks, especially in Maths, Science, and English. I felt they were better. I just used it as an addendum to the new textbooks. I undertook to do a Technology course held by Engen at Edgewood College of Education. This was a „hands-on’ course, which taught me how to tackle

difficult tasks and make it simple for the students in the classroom. I tried to read as far as possible to improve my content knowledge in the other subjects. I took it upon myself to join a Professional Organisation, AMESA, to help me with my Maths. The last time I did Maths was in high school. I was very nervous initially to teach Maths to my class. Really speaking, the only continuous professional development work-shop that are consistent are the Maths ones held by AMESA. There is nothing I learn from Department workshops. For me it is some time away from school. There is no correlation to my classroom practice, because I have to still plan according to the context that I am placed in. I have to decipher all the policies on my own. The workshops contribute further to my “work intensification”, with respect to my record keeping, rather than assisting me in the actual classroom practice.

Whatever workshops were available I made an effort to attend just to grow professionally. I read widely in the other learning areas where I didn't have a clue. I purchased different resource materials especially for Maths and Science. These subjects were a major ‘bug bear’ for me because I did not have any teaching knowledge. This helped me change my attitude in my classroom practice.

I used the same work-schedule and learning programme for the past five years, only change my lesson plans and testing programmes according to the ability of my class. Fortunately for us, we remain in one grade for about five years and then change our grades. If there is a change of grade then we have to do preparation all over again. This entails a lot of work in the nine learning areas. It is impossible to change grades every year with the amount of work this curriculum entails. I had to try and test methods and increase my content knowledge to enable learners to reach their outcomes. I felt my classroom was my laboratory and I was always experimenting. My learning was through trial and error.

I used to follow the timetable and go from one period to the next in the same class, and students used to be overwhelmed with the pace and speed. As the years went on, I decided to be flexible with the timetable and allowed learners to complete their work using the next period, as long as I will cover up that period. I learnt to understand that the learners are of different ability levels.

I had to either sink or swim. Therefore, to remain in the profession I managed to embrace the changes as best as I could as they were coming during that short space of time. I had no idea how to teach any of the other subjects beside my subjects that I specialised in. I felt like I was caught in a whirlpool, just trying to get a grip of anything that will make my tasks easier. I am currently reading for my Masters Degree in Psychology. Children tend to be labeled when they perform poorly and behave badly. Little do we realize that we can get to the root of the problem. Therefore, I chose psychology; this will give me more insight into my classroom practice. Therefore, the advantage of teaching across the curriculum is where my classroom is my own personal space and I am in charge.

4.6. NARRATIVE 3: LEE

I am Lee, a 26 year old female who has qualified with a Further Education and Training teaching degree, and completed my Honours. I felt a sense of pride completing my degree, knowing teaching was not my first choice. But I managed to do the subjects I really liked as a student, which was Maths and Science. I was a novice teacher in the fray and was trained in the new curriculum and did my teaching practice at a high school; however, I did apply to many schools in and around Durban. I then accepted a post at a primary school, because I was eager to earn my first salary and become independent. I did not think about my qualifications then. I took it for granted that I will be able to just teach anywhere with my qualifications. I was in for a shock.

When I first got to the school I was really astonished, because Blossom Primary was an old school. This was a really multicultural school, with students running wildly and screaming and playing rough games. I did my practice teaching at a high school and this was not how the students behaved. This really threw me into the „deep end’.

This school chose to teach across the curriculum because they had one unit of each grade. I was assigned to teach nine learning areas in my class. What? My jaw dropped and I was speechless for a couple of seconds. Yes, this was my first reaction. Where do I start? I was given a Grade 6 class. As a novice teacher, I had no clue about the other learning areas, beside Mathematics and Natural Science. I was „dumbstruck’ by this type of teaching. Firstly, I had to get to know the

teachers on the staff, to see if they could reassure me that I will manage with this curriculum which was new to me.

I came with preconceived ideas about being a new teacher. I was very wary about just forming relationships with anyone, because I heard about cliques in the staffrooms when I went on practice teaching. These stories were slightly put to rest at this school. Some of my colleagues were helpful even though they had their hectic schedules. They would show me how to organise my record books accordingly. If they found interesting information in any learning area they would share it. They would sometimes help me with discipline problems in my class. Initially, I found it difficult to cope and was always anxious. I regretted being in the primary school initially. I felt like a „child’ all over again. I could not develop my leadership, my strengths and potential. I was a follower rather than a leader. There was no time for my colleagues and myself to meet and plan during the school day. Therefore, I sometimes had to plan alone.

It was frustrating because this time could be used on subjects that I specialised in, if only I were given those subjects to teach. I had to plan and prepare for nine learning areas. I had to use policy documents that were given to me. This was „Greek’ to me. My colleagues had their own classes and it was difficult for them to be helping me all the time. Science and Maths were easy to do because I was familiar with them. Most of the time was spent on reading and getting clued up with the unfamiliar subjects. It was a frustrating, time-consuming and anxious moment to start off my teaching career. I regretted being in the primary school initially. I felt like a child all over again. I could not develop my leadership, my strengths and potential. I was a follower rather than a leader. The help of my colleagues allayed my anxiety initially so that I could get settled into my practice. They were also struggling but had it under wraps from me the novice teacher. They did not want to instil fear into me because they knew I was already in an anxious state.

My classroom was so small and congested, with 45 learners in my class. I had to remove my table and just find enough space to walk through. I had to get them seated in groups. This was difficult because I did not know whether to seat them in ability groups or partner them – a girl and a boy together for discipline reasons. These Grade 6 learners were really disruptive in class;

some of them could not sit still for the period. Imagine maintaining discipline for the whole day. This was strenuous and frustrating. It took me a while to get them settled before I could commence with my lesson and before I knew it, the lesson was over and I had to continue with the next lesson. To teach different subjects following one another breaks the trend of thought and actions, because you have to immediately stop when the buzzer goes and get on with the next subject. During each period the lesson had to be taught, notes and worksheets had to be given and I had to walk around to see whether they were completing their work.

I was thrown into the „deep end’ because I had to plan so many worksheets for the day. There was no time to breathe before I could get on to the next period. The learners were getting tired and restless and this led to discipline problems. I sometimes lost my trend of thought and just allowed the learners some free time so I could gather my thoughts. What was very stressful for me in terms of recording were that the dates from the learning programmes to the work-schedules and their preparation, the assessment tasks, learner’s book, and the mark-file for each learning area all had to all match. For some reason, if these dates don’t tally then we have to give an explanation to anyone checking our record books. I always felt I didn’t have to give a reason for sometimes moving away from my daily programme.

I have to take tons of work home. There’s no time to mark in school because of the meetings, and extra-curricular activities like soccer, netball, and swimming. I take home a pile of marking on a daily basis. I work over the weekends setting tests, reading up information for my lessons for the week. I am single and find very little time for my social life. I am not a record keeper, but I have to keep so many record books it is unreal. My colleagues showed me how to organise my record books according to theirs. I had to complete stipulated assessments per learning area. It had to be prepared according to certain assessments standards. There was a marking criteria that had to be followed for projects and tasks. They lent a helping hand with the organisation of my classroom and discipline in my class. I had to just follow what the others were doing because I did not want the management to think I am not following protocol. The real me was not portrayed in my classroom practice, because I was always doing what others were telling me. I really did not know who I was and what was becoming of me. It seems my university training

was in vain. Now I am on a re-training mission in the primary school, learning to teach all the subjects. I feel that the Department of Education and the government is responsible for the state of things.

Being a newly-qualified graduate, I came with a rich array of resources to try out in my classroom practice, even though I was anxious about being junior to my colleagues. Initially I just followed my colleagues and did what they were doing, because I did not want to be different. As I got to grips with my classroom practice, I wanted to impress my management staff and older colleagues with the less time-consuming way of recording and the use of technology. I could not understand, in the growing age of technology, how complacent these teachers have become. To my surprise ninety percent of the teachers were not computer literate and therefore I tried to teach them to use Power Point presentations to make lessons interesting .I helped to empower the more experienced teachers.

I was asked to help the more experienced teachers with subjects like Maths and Science, because they did not have any knowledge about these subjects, just textbook knowledge. This made me grow in confidence; I felt my colleagues placed their trust in me as much as I did in them, although I was a novice teacher on their staff. Therefore, it is important for us as teachers to work together in decision making and staff consultation, which will thereby lead to teacher development. This is essential for a school to succeed. I think teacher collegiality is important for boosting teacher morale. With teaching across the curriculum there are lots of positive and negatives associated with this methodology; however it is good to see us committing ourselves to implementing the curriculum.

We could work together as colleagues and help each other in the most opportune moments. The problems I encountered with teaching across the curriculum were overcome by trial and error. If I taught a lesson and it did not go well after reflecting, I could teach it on another day and see how I could improve on it. I noticed that half the class did not complete their work. The problems I encountered with teaching across the curriculum were overcome by trial and error. Whatever went wrong in my first year was rectified in the second year and mastered by the fifth year. By doing so I had the opportunity to re-teach sections and lessons based on reflections. So

I took it upon myself to try to engage in self-learning, which took the form of reading widely about different subject matter, engaging in internet searches and joining professional organisations such as AMESA, and NAPTOSA, to further my learning. This was no easy task because I had to make time for all this in between my hectic schedule in the classroom. Really speaking, the only continuous professional development workshop that is consistent is the Maths held by AMESA.

Now clusters were formed in all subjects in our ward. I attended these cluster meetings during the term, to attend to planning issues for the term, so all school do the same sections. As I sat at some of these clusters, it seemed nobody had any real direction. Each one gave their input on how they planned and executed their teaching. Teachers were eager to borrow and lend each other their work-schedules and learning programmes. Unfortunately I could not attend all the learning area workshops because this had to be shared amongst the teachers. Whatever the grouse and grumble I have about my classroom practice I am getting some joy at the end of the day.

My classroom practice is not my only job description. There are many other things that I have to do during the school day. I use my breaks to do ground duty, use the duplicating machine to turn out worksheets. I sometimes do extra classes in subjects like Maths or Science, or sometimes fill in forms that are sent by the Department to meet deadlines. I umpire sports matches, like volleyball, netball or cricket matches during the breaks.

More nuanced findings emerged in the individual narratives and this illuminated issues that are contextually or personally related. Through content analysis of the narratives, patterns of framing the teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum emerged. In the next chapter I will discuss my findings and themes that emerged from the Narratives.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Data Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the narratives of the teachers teaching across the curriculum within a primary school (General Education and Training phase). The analysis is divided into four themes that became apparent to me from the data during the content and discourse analytic phase of the data analysis process. Through content analysis of the narratives, patterns of framing the teachers' experiences of teaching across the curriculum emerged. The discourse analysis of the narratives allowed me to identify common and different responses to the way these teachers had managed to teach across the curriculum. Within each theme, central issues are identified and discussed with supporting evidence extracted from the narratives.

5.2 Theme 1: How did teachers come to teach in a school context requiring them to teach across the curriculum?

The table below indicates the teaching profile of the participating teachers and tracks their path into teaching in a school where they are teaching across the curriculum, usually in excess of six learning areas.

Teachers' profile: Table of participating teachers

	Deez	Olive	Lee
Qualifications obtained	4 year teaching diploma	Bachelors degree in teaching	Bachelors degree in teaching
Fields of specialization	Primary education specialising in History of Arts	Secondary education specializing in History and English	Further Education and Training phase specializing in Maths and Science
Teaching experience	17 years	29 years	5 years (novice)
Shifts in employment within school context	Initially employed in a primary school and continued in this school	Initially employed in a secondary school and redeployed to this primary school	Initially employed in this primary school and continues to be employed here

This table clearly signals that the deployment of teachers is controlled by factors outside of the teacher's specialist knowledge and training. All of the teachers had specialized in areas that are different from their current teaching responsibilities. There seems to be varying factors that influence the deployment of teachers in schools and within schools. For example, in the case of Olive, teacher re-deployment within the policy context of rationalization and re-deployment necessitated the movement from one school (declared as excess teacher in that school) to another school where there was a need. This move was not necessarily in terms of the subject specialist knowledge and experience but in terms of body count. The rationalization process was introduced to ease the teacher-pupil ratio. This led to the rationalization of teachers in all schools and departments. The plan was to transfer teachers to schools where the ratio surpassed the norms and where there was a scarcity of teachers (Jansen & Taylor 2003). As one of the teachers in the study states: *"I taught in that school for 7 years and was just settling in, when the dreaded words, RATIONALISATION AND REDEPLOYMENT, plagued the education world. I was last in the school therefore I had to exit first. This was a traumatic time for me because I really felt unsettled."*

Employment of teachers to teaching posts was previously done through placement by the employer (in this case the Department of Education). With changes to employment policy of teachers and school governance, individuals had to make applications against published vacancies. This meant that teachers had to compete in an open market for posts in schools. And this is what Lee had to do. Hence obtaining a job as a teacher was a first priority rather than a match with her teaching specialization. *"I was trained in the new curriculum and did my teaching practice at a high school. However I did apply to many schools in and around Durban. I then accepted a post at a primary school, because I was eager to earn a salary and become independent. I did not think about my qualifications then. I took it for granted that I will be able to just teach anywhere with my qualifications. I was in for a shock."*

Even though Deez has primary school qualifications she has specialized in certain subjects of her choice, but she is not teaching the subjects that she has specialized in. *"Knowing that I am an expert in my field, I had to make this drastic change from a specialist to a generalist. To make matters worse, this school followed teaching across the curriculum. What a drastic change for*

me being a specialist teacher and now I had to teach all the subjects in my class. I had no formal training with teaching across the curriculum, although I was a primary school specialist. Coming from the traditional school, change was difficult to accept. I had no formal training or proper support structure to help me cope.”

Further to the above realities, the accounts by the three teachers suggest that teaching across the curriculum was as a result of a national policy change. The old primary/secondary school divide has changed to a general education and training (GET) /further education and training (FET) divide. Teachers trained in the old system of teacher development meant that their training and qualifications were a mismatch to the new school education system. However, there is a gap between the seven professional roles and competences recognized in the policy and the practice in the classroom, according to Sayed (2004). In practice, teachers are unable to fulfill the requirements for all seven roles sufficiently. As Deez stated: *“Then suddenly came the change in the curriculum to Outcomes-Based Education. Everything had to change, from learning areas to phases as classroom practitioners, to planning and preparation. It was difficult to accept these changes. There was new terminology that had to be learnt and subjects were integrated to become learning areas. I was given numerous policy documents in the different learning areas to start my planning and preparation before the start of the new year.”*

Some of the teachers are deployed from the secondary school to the primary school, with no qualifications to teach subjects other than what they had specialised in. Such movement needs, at least, some form of training to adapt to the primary school. According to Olive:

“What a change from where I was to where I am going. I had to teach all the subjects in my class. Firstly I am a trained specialist teacher. Now, I have to become a generalist. I didn’t have a clue about any other subject. I did not know where to start. I was given all the policy documents and was asked to plan and prepare for the subjects. I did not know where to start. This was like torture. I knew I had to either ‘sink or swim’. I was very agitated and nervous initially in my new employment.”

The changing policy landscape of school education relating to curriculum brought about, amongst other changes, teaching across the curriculum within the intermediate phase of school as

well as the introduction of new subject or learning areas. The unprecedented changes that school education had gone through and are currently going through would, undoubtedly create a situation where there will be a mismatch between training and utilization. This means that further training and development is a necessity for almost all teachers teaching within the new framework for school education, irrespective of their training background.

5.3 Theme 2: Training and development for teachers to enable them to teach across the curriculum

In this theme I explore how the participating teachers had developed themselves to enable them to teach across the curriculum. All three participants indicated that their qualification and training was a complete mismatch to their teaching responsibilities. In the case of Deez, the mismatch was in the teaching subject. In the cases of Olive and Lee, the mismatch were both in the teaching subject and the school phase (see Table 4.1). According to Deez, *“I am a trained primary school teacher who specialized in History and Art. After the many changes that I had to go through in the curriculum from traditional teaching to OBE, RNCS and NCS, now I am teaching across the curriculum in a Grade 4 class.”*

Lee stated: *“I qualified with a Further Education and Training teaching degree in Maths and Science, and completed my Honours. As a novice teacher, I had no clue about the other learning areas besides Maths and Science. I was ‘dumbstruck’ when I was asked to teach across the curriculum.”*

All these teachers are specialist teachers in their own fields and none of them had any formal training with teaching across the curriculum. In addition their initial training, and their professional development that they were exposed to in order to support teaching across the curriculum were quite inadequate. Being placed in the situation where they were expected to teach without formal training, experience and adequate support for growth and development, the teachers had to rely on a range of initiatives in order to cope with teaching across the curriculum.

For example, as Deez indicated: *“There is nothing I learn from Department workshops. For me it is some time away from school. There is no correlation to my classroom practice, because I have*

to still plan according to the context that I am placed in. I have to decipher all the policies on my own. The workshops add to intensification of my record keeping rather than assisting me in the actual classroom practice.”

Noting the inadequacy of the training needs, teachers responded differently in order to cope with the situation. Some used opportunities presented by professional bodies and unions while others used experiences and old ways of doing things.

According to Lee, *“There was very no support from Department officials in the different learning areas. Therefore, I took it upon myself to engage in self-learning whenever possible. This took the form of internet searches, joining professional organizations such as AMESA, Naptosa, and reading up information on the different learning areas to further my learning. Fortunately for me, I was computer literate and I could make use of technology.”*

According to Olive, *“I have to join a professional organisation like AMESA so that I can become confident to teach Maths in the classroom. I had to be taught by a colleague how to use a computer and use the internet to make my lessons interesting. All this was done on my own to empower myself. I still feel that there is a deficit of knowledge among teachers in subjects like EMS, social science, technology, natural science.”*

The Norms and Standards was one of the policies that were replaced by the content-based curriculum so that teacher education could be normalized by specifying the competence of educators in the seven roles (DoE, 2002). The Norms and Standards regulated the teacher training that Lee underwent, specifying the roles and competence for educator, and what teachers are expected to do. Therefore the novice teacher was a step ahead of the experienced teacher in terms of the Outcomes-Based approach, because her training was regulated by the Norms and Standards. She is currently teaching for five years, and is trained in Further Education and Training, in Maths and Science. Her training is mismatched against her classroom practice. As she states: *“It seems my university training was in vain. Now I am on a re-training mission in the primary school, learning to teach all the subjects. I had the advantage of being trained according to the Norms and Standards that were laid out by the Education Department, but it*

seemed useless to me. I feel that the Department of Education and the government are responsible for the state of things.”

Teachers felt they had to face reality in the classroom situation and face the psychological realization that comes with their employment of what it is to be a teacher in the new curriculum. According to Deez, *“I knew I had to give myself some time and adjust my strategies in the classroom. Coming from the traditional school wouldn’t be easy but I had to have patience and change my mindset. I felt that for change from specialized teaching to teaching across the curriculum I needed some time and ‚mental space’ to acclimatize in the classroom.”*

Olive could not just look at this situation as ‚doom and gloom’. Therefore, she asserts herself when she says: *“I used my traditional method, skills, experience, prior knowledge and expertise initially to help me function in the classroom, because I had to get into some form of mindset to help me cope psychologically.”*

There was a big shift for these teachers who are from the ‚old school’. To adapt to these new changes was something of a shock. The advice and support they gained from the school management did not make their task of teaching any easier, because the management itself needed training. Management is not as clued up as they are supposed to be because they themselves lack guidance and support. Deez states that *“the principal no longer has a teaching load. So what kind of advice can he offer to his management with regard to easing the burden of the Level 1 teacher. So it is important that the principal should have been given some training before implementing this curriculum.”*

According to Olive, *“With the traditional method of teaching, the needs of the special child was taken into account. I remember a classroom was set aside for these children, who had reading and mathematical problems. This would ease the tension in the classroom for the teacher as well as the student. Now these children are left helpless and this frustrates the teacher even more, because no training is available to handle these added pressures. There are no coping strategies for the Level 1 teacher.”*

Teachers felt the use of old textbooks helped them with the content knowledge in the classroom. In the new school curriculum (National Curriculum Statement) there is a perception amongst teachers that subject content has been sidelined as it is not clearly mentioned and detailed.

Teachers use textbooks in order to give them confidence and purpose in teaching across the curriculum. The experienced teachers saw content knowledge as a means to gauge their teaching. *“We look for textbooks that have content which makes us feel confident in the classroom and have something to test our students,”* according to Deez. Curriculum 2005 demands well-resourced classrooms in terms of textbooks, dictionaries, readers and teaching equipment. According to the Review Committee, it was found that textbooks and library books were lacking in many schools. There is under-specification of content and repetition of the same concepts in different grades. Therefore the experienced teachers felt the use of the old textbooks was preferred as they were more structured. *„Just between us, our old textbooks had much more content to give to the child in terms of knowledge. We had to discard the old textbooks with the introduction of OBE. I definitely went back to some of the old textbooks especially in Maths, Science, and English. I felt it was better I just used it as an addendum to the new ones,”* according to Olive.

Teachers depended on textbook-style teaching because they are teaching nine learning areas, especially in their non-specialist subjects. Looking at the new textbooks very little content was covered. *Coming from the traditional school, I always felt that teachers should have some content knowledge to empower the student in the classroom,”* according to Olive.

Another way that the teachers managed teaching across the curriculum in the absence of adequate training was through reflection and enactment by the teachers. Teachers identified issues that they had to deal with, reflected upon them and adjusted their teaching accordingly, based on their reflections. Olive stated, *“I used to follow the timetable and go from one period to the next in the same class, and students used to be overwhelmed with the pace and speed. This is the main reason their work was incomplete because they could not cope.”* According to Deez, *“As the years went on I decided to be flexible with the timetable and allowed learners to complete their work using the next period, as long as I will cover up that period. That’s the*

advantage of teaching across the curriculum. My classroom is my own personal space and I am in charge.”

Lee observes that students are not coping with the pace expected in the classroom: *“When I reflect on the students’ work and their books, it was noticed that half of the class have books with incomplete work.”* Deez also observed that learners worked at a slow pace. *“They would take very long to start their work and write so slowly. These children were confused with so many learning areas and so many books that they would mix up all their books. Then I made sure I collected the books on a daily basis to give it to them during the designated period.”*

Educational theorists have emphasized the importance of reflective practice. “The key change processes in the professional context are ‘enactment’ and ‘reflection’, according to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002). The teachers in my study used the classroom as their learning space to combine their reflections and actions on their teaching and learning. This allowed them to empower their students with a body of knowledge and skills. Now, with teaching across the curriculum, teachers were becoming more conscious of their actions in their classroom practice. Lee stated, *“If I taught a lesson and it did not go well, after reflecting I could teach it on another day and see how I could improve on it. Teaching by trial and error, where they had the opportunity to re-teach sections and lessons based on their reflections, the problems she encountered with teaching across the curriculum were overcome by trial and error. Whatever went wrong in my first year was rectified in the second year and mastered by my fifth year. By doing so I had the opportunity to re-teach sections and lessons based on reflections.”*

A teacher can develop self-learning by basing their teaching on ‘encountering role models, reading cases, viewing tapes, or holding discussions with peers’, according to Shulman and Shulman (2004, p. 261). They were self-taught in terms of teaching across the curriculum. All these teachers in my study felt that their learning was through their own experience and that learning to teach across the curriculum is a long process, sometimes over a period of five years. When they reflected on their classroom practice, whether as a novice or experienced teacher, they always knew there was room for improvement. They were their own critics.

The learning programmes and work schedules do not really change but the lesson preparation has to change with the ability level of the students in the class. The teachers saw this as some form of bonus, given the heavy workload in terms of planning and preparation. As Deez stated, *“I used the same work-schedule and learning programme for the past five years; I only change my lesson plans and testing programmes according to the ability of my class. Fortunately, for all of us we remain in one grade for about five years and then change our grades. If there is a change of grade then we have to do preparation all over again. This entails a lot of work in the nine learning areas.”*

The Department has been providing teachers with work schedules and learning programmes for all the learning areas recently. This is used in conjunction with what we have already planned for. Keeping the plans relatively unchanged for a number of years and remaining in the same grade for many years was another strategy used by the teachers to develop to teach across the curriculum. This means that in their development phase of teaching across the curriculum, stability is needed in their curriculum planning so that teachers could reflect and change over this relatively stable curriculum period. This stable period also suggests that change should not be on-going but rather after intervals of stability.

„Professional development is about teacher learning rather than getting teachers to change’ Evans (2002, p.125). The three teachers decided to learn on their own by joining professional organizations. Teaching across the curriculum offered them the opportunity to learn more about Maths because this was where Deez and Olive were not really confident. All the teachers in my study felt that their learning was through their own initiative. As Lee stated: *“I took it upon myself to engage in self learning, which took the form of reading widely about my subject matter, internet searches and joining professional organizations.”*

All of them were committed to learning how to teach across the curriculum. Their learning included purchasing books and reading widely about a particular learning area and appropriate methods of teaching in it. *“I purchased different resource materials especially for Maths and Science. These subjects were a major bugbear for me because I lacked any teaching knowledge. This helped me change my attitude in my classroom practice,”* according to Olive.

Meeting teachers from different schools helped them to develop their ideas, beliefs and knowledge in their classroom practice. By meeting different teachers they are developing socially and personally in terms of experience. As Lee reports: *“Clusters were formed in the subjects in our ward. This was to help teachers to set the same tests and teach the same sections for the term. I noticed when teachers meet everyone talks about their experiences. I found some of the advice really helpful in my classroom practice.* All of them were committed to learn how to teach across the curriculum. This really showed the commitment of these teachers. No matter what the adversities, they were prepared to overcome them at their own pace.

„Teachers learn best when they are members of a learning community,’ according to Lieberman and Mace (2008). There was a lot of collegial support among the teachers. Initially, the novice teacher found it difficult to cope and was always anxious. The help of her colleagues allayed her anxiety. She was asked to help the more experienced teachers with subjects like Maths and Science. Lee also taught all the teachers to become computer literate: *„I could not understand, in the growing age of technology, how complacent these teachers have become. To my surprise, 90% of the teachers were not computer literate, and therefore I tried to teach them to use Power Point presentations to make lessons interesting.* The novice teacher used technology such as the computer and internet to empower other teachers so that they could enhance their lessons and content knowledge. This was not easy because teachers were used to their old methods of doing things manually. Fear of technology got the better of them. Olive describes her experiences: *“I had to be taught by a colleague on how to use a computer and use the internet to make my lessons interesting. This was not an easy experience. I was really scared. I used to dread those computer lessons. It took a long time to become confident and comfortable.”* For her part, Deez was initially techno-phobic: *“I could not even switch on the computer for fear. After the computer lessons I attended with my colleagues this felt like a child with a new toy. I could not leave it down.”*

Another element that emerged from the transcripts was the issue of collegial support. Lee shows the gradual change she experiences: *„This made me grow in confidence; I felt my colleagues placed their trust in me as much as I did with them.”* It is clearly important for teachers to work

together and help each other in decision-making and staff consultations which will thereby lead to teacher development. This is essential for a school to succeed. Although they are teaching across the curriculum there are lots of positives and negatives associated with this methodology. However, they commit themselves to implementing the curriculum.

Lee states quite directly that teacher support is crucial: *“I think teacher collegiality is important for boosting teacher moral. We benefit from each other’s experience and grow during our teaching career.”* The experienced teachers helped develop the novice teacher. *“My colleagues showed me how to organize my record books according to theirs. They lent a helping hand with the organization of my classroom and discipline in my class,”* Lee states. Although the novice teacher is fairly new to the primary school curriculum she managed to help the experienced teachers with teaching of Maths and Science. *“I was asked to help the more experienced teachers with subjects like Maths and Science, because they did not have any knowledge about these subjects, just textbook knowledge.”* Collegiality in this instance helped teacher development. Teachers can learn from each other and develop their expertise in whatever field they are struggling. No matter how experienced one can be we are still in the process of learning. Deez shares her experiences: *“Teachers would speak about issues dealing with classroom management over tea breaks or after school. Important information could just crop up during these discussions, like what information they got on the internet, or a book that is useful in the classroom.”*

Incidental and informal learning were undertaken by three of the teachers in my study to empower them to be confident in the classroom. Olive asserts that *“there was a knowledge deficit in certain subjects like science, technology, social science, maths and economic management and sciences.”* What came out very strongly in my study was the commitment and positive attitude that they displayed, which shaped their opportunities to learn and improve. Deez and Olive did a Technology course, held by Engen at Edgewood College of Education. This was a ‘hands on’ course where they were taught how to tackle difficult tasks and make it simple for the students in the classroom. Technology was a fairly new subject introduced during the heyday of OBE. There was no training for teachers in the new subjects that were introduced during the introduction of OBE. Olive initially had misgivings: *Technology was rather mind-boggling.*

Firstly, I sometimes had to do the project myself before I gave it to the learners. Then they had to bring all the necessary items to school because the school does not have any. Some of the projects are way beyond the learners. Therefore, I get them to do some of it at home or in groups.” They could not rely solely on their peers for help because they were also not in the „space they wanted to be in’. They were frequently at a loss at what to teach because there is under-specification of the content in Curriculum 2005. The result is that there is sometimes unnecessary repetition of work covered in all the learning areas rather than conceptual development.

Other forms of professional development were undertaken by teachers. This included networking in clusters by teachers, or joining a professional organisation like AMESA. Deez recall her experiences here: *“I took it upon myself to join a professional organisation like AMESA to help with my Maths. The last time I did Maths was in high school. I was very nervous to teach Maths to my class initially. Really speaking, the only continuous professional development workshop that is consistent is the Maths held by AMESA.”*

Support from unions are provided to teachers but primarily at their own cost. However, NAPTOSA holds many professional development workshops for its members and even non-members, but teachers have to pay for this. Olive expresses her concerns: *“I belong to NAPTOSA; however, I have to pay to attend workshops. I am not very keen on that. I attend workshops that are affordable and that will help me in the classroom.”*

All these activities allowed these teachers to transform. This type of learning was transformative for all three teachers when they joined these organizations, because teachers at all levels can mentor and support one other. The experienced specialist teachers helped the non-specialist, experienced teachers and the novice teachers also help the experienced teachers. They come with new methods and updated information.

5.4 Theme 3: Dealing with deployment into classes that required teaching across the curriculum

Change in the curriculum for these teachers was not the only issue that these teachers had to contend with. They were deployed to their classes and had to teach all the subjects by themselves. Under this theme, I discuss how teachers managed to relate to being deployed to a school and classroom.

Olive expressed her misgivings without hesitation: *“Teaching across the curriculum became a ‚nightmare’ because I had to teach nine learning areas for the first time in my teaching career.”* She came from the secondary school and was introduced to Outcomes-Based Education. The teachers were used to their specialist subjects but when re-deployed to a primary school, had to plan and prepare for all the subjects. *“I did not know where to start. I was given all the policy documents and was asked to plan and prepare for the subjects. This was like torture. I knew I had to either ‚sink or swim’.”* Teachers were very agitated and nervous initially in their new employment.

The thought of change was frightening and challenging to Olive: *“This was all new to me and now to teach all the subjects in my class was like being ‚thrown into the deep end.”* Teachers were definitely not prepared for this. They have never dealt with this age group of children at primary school level. To remain in the class for the whole day was very stressful and exhausting for all these teachers. Both Olive and Lee were not able to cope with the pressure of the timetable as they saw it operating in its traditional form: *“To teach one subject after another really breaks the trend of thought and actions, because you have to immediately stop when the buzzer goes and get on with the next subject.”* The National Policy Framework had been introduced with Outcomes-Based Education. The idea was to ensure more teachers and better teaching, in Olive’s view. These experienced teachers are now really feeling inexperienced, because they have to learn to adapt to the new curriculum and teach across the curriculum. Deez sees the situation as one where a teacher is unsure of the outcome *“I felt my classroom was my laboratory and I was always experimenting.”* This led to the intensification of teachers’ work,

and really frustrated teachers with the large classes and inadequate training. As Olive observes: *Just imagine. You have a class of 40-45 learners and they are mixed-ability class.*”

The context of the school is not taken into consideration and teaching across the curriculum is expected to work regardless. Deez outlines the other challenges that one faces, apart from the formal teaching: *“Most of the learners are second language learners. They had difficulty in reading. Some of them had barriers to learning as well. I have a pupil who is mentally challenged and therefore is very slow. It is very sad because. I was not trained to deal with this kind of issues.”*

„There is a difference between learning from experience and just having experience’ (Shulman (2004, p.506). The reality of the situation is that many teachers have experience but it takes a very special teacher to work under difficult circumstances and learn from that experience. We have three teachers coming from different circumstances, but they have to teach across the curriculum. The reality of large classes of mixed-ability learners is a challenge. Olive faces the practical realities of the classroom: *“I was unable to get the attention of the class immediately to start my lesson. They were fidgeting with their bags, pens or talking all the time. It takes about ten minutes between subjects to get them settled.”*

Lee, for her part, finds the pace suffocating. *“There was no time to breathe before I could get on to the next period. The learners were getting tired and restless and this led to discipline problems. I sometimes lost my trend of thought and just allowed the learners some free time so I could gather my thoughts.”*

Deez also finds the classroom culture demanding: *“I entered my new Grade 4 class to teach all the subjects in that class. They are very challenging at this age. They want your attention all day long. They just can’t stop talking. I tried my hand at giving them some form of punishment like writing, ,I would not talk unnecessarily in class’. That was it! They would cry and complain to their parents.”*

Teachers must learn from the experiences they create with their learners. „Their classroom becomes their laboratory where new forms of teaching and learning are grown’, according to Shulman (2004, p. 506). In this study, teachers had to explore the new methods and had to learn from their colleagues. They use their classrooms as a laboratory to test new ideas in their teaching and learning. As teachers they had to make things work for themselves in order to survive in the classroom.

Deez appreciates the importance of formal study to improve her practice: *“I am studying for a Maths Diploma to improve in my classroom practice. I am not a Maths specialist but I am teaching Maths. I am attending to my feelings that are associated with change from the normal specialist teaching with trying to learn to teach across the curriculum. All the teachers are more conscious of their own understanding and performance in the classroom and curriculum design.”*

However, in this school all teachers are unable to attend their grade or class cluster because of the rules that limit participation, so that other teachers also get a chance to take advantage of the support. Lee explains: *“Unfortunately, I could not attend all the learning areas because this had to be shared amongst the teachers.”* Booklets of information are given at these clusters and teachers have to cascade this information to their colleagues. The experienced teachers felt just like the novice teachers, because they had to re-learn and re-plan. Olive reports on her experience: *“During the ones I attended I felt like a new teacher in the cluster because all this kind of planning was new to me.”*

Lee registers some frustration with the quality of the support: *“As I sat at some of these clusters it seemed nobody had any real direction. Each one gave their input on how they planned and executed their teaching. Teachers were eager to borrow and lend each other their work-schedules and learning programmes.”* It was not learning to teach across the curriculum but how to plan and execute testing programmes irrespective of the context.

There were a few main objections that they raised. Firstly, from being trained specialist teachers they have to become generalists in the primary school. They did not have a clue about any other

subject. Olive expresses the view of many teachers when she observes: *“The Department has placed the burden on my shoulders to re-train in the classroom. I was just a number according to the Department. It was not their concern how I coped from a secondary school to a primary school. Their purpose was to get over with the rationalization and redeployment process at the expense of teachers.”*

The Department of Education and planners did not take into account the identity of the teacher. The teacher was not of utmost importance in the transformation process. Teachers felt they were losing their identity. Olive makes the turning point that *“I did not know who I am anymore, when I got to the primary school. I was like a lost soul trying to find my way. I felt that I was just a facilitator of knowledge, I felt like a person without a purpose. Initially I just followed everyone, thinking what they were doing was right.”* These words are indeed cause for concern.

Teachers were trying to manage the heavy workload and the strain in the classroom over and above all the directives that come from “the office”. With all the adversities they are facing, yet these teachers are managing to see some changes in themselves and their classroom practice. Olive remains optimistic: *“This was my 16th year with teaching across the curriculum. I feel it was a long journey but I feel personally transformed from the frightened anxious teacher who always sees possibilities for change both personally and professionally.”*

5.5 Theme 4: Challenges experienced in teaching across the curriculum

Currently teachers are faced with numerous challenges that plague them when they teach across the curriculum. Over and above their classroom practice, teachers describe how they are inundated with some of the challenges in the classroom practice. As Lee states: *“I am expected to keep so many record books, I sometimes lose count. I am not a record keeper. I don’t even open some of the record books for the day or even the week. This is for „window dressing”*. The documents that were analyzed were the teachers’ record books, learners’ books and assessment records of learners. It was found that teachers kept too many record books and their main purpose was record-keeping. When I looked at the number of record books, I found much duplication. The preparation file, mark file and teacher’s portfolio are just a repetition of

work done. Teachers have photocopied the same information from the preparation file and put that into the teacher's portfolio. The recording process was found to be cumbersome because all this was done manually. Detailed information and marks had to be recorded on the sheet. Deez describes the numerous records that have to be kept: *"The following books are kept by me in my class: mark-file, assessment file, planning and preparation file for nine learning areas, teacher's portfolio, situation book, co-curricular and extracurricular file, professional development file, register, learners' portfolios, code of sport each teacher is involved in, IQMS file, remedial book, defaulters' book, and receipt books."* Such administrative record-keeping seems unreal. There is a lot of unnecessary repetition in the recording process. The recording of dates in some learning areas was incomplete, and this clearly presented a problem. Deez alludes to this problem: *"The recording of dates must tally with all the record books."* Teachers could not adhere to this all the time due to topics on current matters cropping up spontaneously from time to time. Deez comments on the fact that teachers actually have to account for any apparent discrepancies in their record-keeping: *"It is not always feasible for this because of the current topics that have to be discussed but I have to give an explanation to the subject advisor when she checks my books and the learners' books."*

Assessments were stipulated per learning area and these teachers had to plan and prepare for nine learning areas. Lee describes her load: *"I had to complete stipulated assessments per learning area. It had to be prepared according to certain assessments standards. There was a marking criteria that had to followed for projects and tasks."* Some of the learners' books were incomplete and their assessment portfolios were in shambles. Marking included all the learning areas, but this was not always done efficiently. Some books just had ticks, and errors were glaring. Deez describes the problem and how she deals with it: *"Learners books couldn't be marked every day. Some of them did not complete their work, even their assessments. I just assess them on what they are capable of doing."*

The Department has realised that teachers' work is intensified by unnecessary record-keeping. It is for this reason that teachers are now asked to keep one file. However, ,accountability to parents and administrators has increased and there is a sense of pressure on teachers'

(Hargreaves (1994, p. 124). Accounting for everything that is done is expected of teachers in the school situation. Accountability by teachers seems to be of utmost importance in the new curriculum. Deez sums this up: *“I experienced a lot of accountability in terms of the Outcomes-Based Education. This has brought with it a lot of paperwork and form-filling. This was more for the administrative purposes and Subject Advisors. Parents are very demanding in terms of homework, projects and assessments given to their children. They want to know how the assessments and projects are marked; therefore I find that you have to be accountable to them as well.”*

Lee also expresses her concern in this respect, and that little is left to the discretion of the teacher: *“What was very stressful for me in terms of recording was that the dates from the learning programmes to the work-schedules and the preparation, the assessment tasks, learner’s book, and the mark-file for each learning area must match. For some reason, if these dates don’t tally, then we have to give an explanation to anyone checking our record books. I always feel I don’t have to give a reason for sometimes moving away from my daily programme.”*

According to Olive, the situation was different in the past: *“Seventeen years ago the only paper work I had I created for myself. Now twenty nine years later, I am drowning in paperwork. I am expected to draw up plans for everything I do. I spend lots of time sitting and writing, accounting for everything I do and have done. Accountability is of utmost importance in the new curriculum.”*

Marking overload has really increased with teaching across the curriculum. Teaching across the curriculum means marking books from nine learning areas. This was time consuming and the added pressure were the large classes they had to contend with. Olive finds the situation untenable: *“Just imagine. You have a class of 40-45 learners and they are mixed-ability learners.”* Marking is a form of accountability to the learners. Therefore, teachers are bound to mark every bit of work they give to the learners. Marking includes their assessment tasks, tests, projects and homework. Olive describes the volume of work expected here: *“Sometimes, it is not easy to undertake this task, even with all the training and experience. I have never marked so many books, projects and tasks before. I am accountable to the parents when it is parents*

meeting, because I need to show them their children's books. Some parents come to scrutinize my work rather than help their children." Deez also finds the problem overwhelming: *"With the Grade 4's you need to give them some form of reward for good work in the form of stars. There are tons of marking, which includes their class work, homework, test and projects. I carry a box of work home every day."*

These comments point indisputably to the intensification of teachers' work. This time could be used in planning and preparation for the next day. It is not surprising that teachers are stressed and „burnt out'. With all this marking there is a lot of computation of marks. Deez alludes to this: *"With the nine learning areas, I have to devise mark sheets. And, of course, there is computation of these marks, which has to be done manually."*

Pace and speed is overwhelming for the teachers who teach across the curriculum. Teaching every subject in their class, as well as moving from one period to another, is exhausting for both the teacher and the pupil. Lee finds the scenario exhausting. *"Going from one period to the next, there was no time to breathe. The learners were getting tired and restless and this led to discipline problems. I sometimes lost my trend of thought and just allowed the learners some free time so I could gather my thoughts. I have just come out of university and this kind of working environment was a real shocker for me. I was used to the relaxed carefree life."*

There is also no time for teachers to meet, plan and share during the school day; therefore, they have to try and sometimes plan individually for the nine learning areas. Deez finds the teachers sympathetic to her problems : *"The teachers saw I was overwhelmed by all this and reassured me that I would manage, but I need to work with all of them. „I had to either sink or swim'. Therefore, to remain in the profession I managed to embrace the changes as the best as I could as they were coming fast during that short space of time. I had no idea how to teach any of the other subjects. I felt like I was caught in a whirl-pool, just trying to get a grip of anything that will make my tasks easier."*

Lee also describes her problems vividly: *"It felt like I was undergoing a re-training camp. I had to do more reading to get clued up with the content in all the other subjects I had to teach. I have*

to take tons of work home, which include marking, preparation and planning. I work over the weekends, setting tests, reading up information for my lessons for the week.”

Teachers are under tremendous pressure and stress in their classroom practice. They do not have time to relax or sometimes talk to their colleagues because of the changes that are taking place over a relatively short period of time. The demands may not have the same impact on all the teachers. Lee finds the pressure quite demanding: *“I work over the weekends setting tests, reading up information for my lessons for the week. I am single and find very little time for my social life.”* And Deez, for her part, also finds the pressure excessive: *“I sometimes get anxiety attacks because my work demands too much of me. I am not only a teacher but also a fundraiser for the school.”* Olive also adds her concerns here: *“This is taxing mentally, emotionally and physically. This has affected my health. I am continuously stressed and get severe headaches.”*

Over and above the classroom practice, teachers have other duties to perform. They are in charge of sports codes and are also fundraisers. Teachers who are in charge of different codes of sport sometimes have no knowledge on how to coach these students. Deez outlines the problem here: *“I have to teach them how to swim when I don’t even know how to. I am putting the kids at risk and putting myself under pressure which leads to my anxiety attacks. I have to coach soccer, whereby I don’t have any knowledge of the rules. I just know you kick a ball and score a goal. I managed to learn a little during the World Cup.”*

Over and above their classroom practice, the teachers’ work-load is intensified by duties that need the proper functioning of a school. Services from administration are minimal; therefore teachers have to take on added responsibilities. Lee outlines her incredible work demands: *“I use my breaks to do ground duty, use the duplicating machine to turn out worksheets, sometimes do extra classes in subjects like Maths or Science, or sometimes fill in forms that are sent by Department to meet deadlines, umpire sports matches like volleyball, netball or cricket matches during the breaks.”*

Irrespective of what the new curriculum holds for some of these teachers, they are currently empowering themselves and getting involved in the children’s learning and special needs. Some

teachers are seen as being proactive in the school situation. Deez is a good example here: *“I am currently reading for my Masters Degree in Psychology. Children tend to be labeled when they perform poorly and behave badly. Little do we realize that we can get to the root of the problem Therefore, I chose Psychology; this will give me more insight into my classroom practice.”* In spite of the many problems that the teachers encountered, it is heartening to see that they are intent on overcoming them.

In this chapter, I have explored the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum. I endeavoured to do this through their narratives. I examined their training as teachers, their deployment in the classroom, challenges encountered, and their coping strategies, all with respect to teaching across the curriculum. The findings suggest that there are many challenges teachers are faced with in terms of training, departmental support, and the coping strategies in the classroom. However, they find it in themselves to try to overcome certain challenges through collegial support. It is evident that there is a lack of Departmental support for these teachers. For this reason, they derive some support and learning from professional organisations like AMESA, NAPTOSA, and by joining clusters. This constitutes a learning curve, for both experienced and novice teachers, since both groups are not always familiar with the demands of the new curriculum. It is clear that teachers need to change their mindset for the future, and to adopt the new curriculum as the way forward.

In the next, and final, chapter, I shall provide a summary of the study, a conclusion, and a set of recommendations, for future and further research in this field.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I present the conclusions and summary of my study. I explored the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum in the primary school. I used the narrative inquiry approach, so that teachers could relate their experiences of their classroom practice. The main research question was accompanied by sub-questions. The sub-questions were:

6.1.1 How do teachers cope with teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

6.1.2 What opportunities and challenges are presented to teachers who teach across the school curriculum in a primary school?

6.1.3 How do these teachers feel about teaching across the school curriculum in a primary school?

A narrative inquiry approach was seen as the most appropriate, to elicit information from these teachers. This was a qualitative study, within the interpretivist paradigm. I was able to uncover their experiences in their „real-life setting’, which was their classroom practice. By using the interpretivist paradigm, I tried to gather as much information as possible through semi-structured interviews as well as document analyses so that I could analyze, interpret and theorize about teaching across the about curriculum. The summary of the main findings with limitations and implications follows below.

6.2 Summary and discussions of the main findings

Teachers have specialized in subjects that are different from what they are currently teaching. This mismatch makes it very difficult for experienced teachers to cope with subjects they are not familiar with. When teaching across the curriculum, the mismatch between training and teaching is increased and results in more curriculum and teaching demands being placed on teachers.

There are no specific qualifications in Teacher Education that develop teachers to teach across the curriculum. Qualifications, at most, develop competence in teaching across three school subjects, but the

practice of teaching across the curriculum often requires teachers to teach more than three school subjects to a grade. Hence, two things emerge: The first relates to the lack of further teacher development, to develop skills to organise, plan, teach and develop subject competence, to support these teachers in teaching across the curriculum. The second relates to the teachers' competence and professionalism in teaching many subjects in a grade, which gives the impression that professional training is not a necessity for teaching primary school grades across the curriculum. This impression is reinforced by the fact that teachers have been re-deployed from the secondary school to primary school, without the necessary subject specializations required for the deployment to such a school context.

Employment of teachers into teaching post was previously done through placement by the employer (in this case the Department of Education). With changes to the employment policy of teachers and in school governance, individuals had to make applications against published vacancies. This meant that teachers had to compete in an open market for posts in schools. Newly-qualified teachers are just accepting any post because of the fear of not being employed after many years of studying. Teachers should, as far as possible, be posted to schools where their services are needed in their subjects. Although policy states that primary school teachers are expected to teach all the subjects, there is no formal training for all these specialist teachers to adjust to teaching across the curriculum. For this reason, the classroom became their laboratory. They developed through trial and error. The Department had placed the burden on the teachers to retrain in the classroom.

Although teachers feel that they have no option because change is not easy to accept, especially with many years of experience, they try to empower themselves in whatever way they can, to cope with the challenges of classroom practice. This shows their dedication to their vocation, amidst all their adversities. I feel that further training and development is a necessity for almost all teachers teaching within the new framework for school education, and this is irrespective of their training background. Professional development should be an on-going necessity.

Professional development was well intended by the stakeholders; however, it is fragmented, and disconnected from the classroom practice. Professional development that teachers are exposed to in order to support their teaching across the curriculum was quite inadequate. There was no one to ensure that teachers developed new understandings of subjects that they taught. This made it difficult for teachers. Departmental support was limited. Teachers took it upon themselves to join professional organizations to empower themselves in the classroom. There was a lot of collegial support at times from the experienced as well as the novice teacher, in terms of computer skills and Maths and Science.

Too much is expected of teachers in terms of planning and preparation for all the learning areas. This means that teachers who teach across the curriculum were burdened with more administrative and accountability regimes than other specialist teachers because of the larger number of school subjects that they were responsible for. This administrative overburden is coupled with the greater teaching demands and, therefore, makes it very difficult for these teachers to cope with the workload. Two things could result from this work overload. The first is that this increased workload could result in teachers performing superficial work and just going through the motions of coping through the day, week and year. The second could manifest itself in teacher burnout.

Further, teachers were really challenged and anxious most of the times. They have to contend with large classes, different age groups as well as second language learners. It is taxing on the teachers to teach continuously, subject after subject, in one class for the whole day. Having experience is one thing but to work under these conditions is a learning curve especially for the more experienced teachers. Being challenged and anxious could also contribute to teacher burnout.

The pace and speed was overwhelming for the teachers who teach across the curriculum. They did not find the time to meet, plan and share during the school day. Therefore, they had to try and sometimes plan individually and sometimes superficially for the nine learning areas. Marking takes up most of the time, because books from the nine learning areas have to be

marked. The heavy workload was having an effect on their health which, in turn, was impacting on their classroom practice. The overwhelming demands could lead to teachers taking a superficial approach to their responsibilities. It was heartening that the teachers in my study chose to rise above the impediments they faced.

6.3 Limitations

My study was done in one primary school with three educators; therefore, with these findings it is not possible to make generalizations from this study. Nonetheless, this study offered an in-depth understanding of teachers who teach across the curriculum. More information could have been collated if I used more than one school in the same district. Due to time constraints, being in full-time employment, and the month-long teachers' strike, it was not possible to have a large number of participants.

6.4 Implications

This research may be relevant especially to all primary schools and stakeholders in education. The teachers are prepared to teach across the curriculum amidst all the adversities; however there is lack of expertise, professional development, and training. Teacher training institutions must look at the curriculum and see how best they can assist non specialist teachers to fit into a generalist curriculum. Teachers in my study are keen to learn how to teach their non-specialist subjects. However, due to staff shortages, they are all unable to attend cluster workshops in the area. More so, they lack the support of Department officials. The specialist teachers should hold workshops in the school to help others, so that the learners benefit from good classroom practice. I propose that teachers who teach across the curriculum should be given time and space in the curriculum to meet and plan together

6.5 Reflections

The main aim of this study was to understand the experiences of teachers who teach across the curriculum. My interest in the topic stems from my experience of doing classroom-based teaching for the past fourteen years, being a Grade 7 Science and Maths specialist. I was able to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by teachers and how they found it in

themselves to overcome obstacles. Teachers took it upon themselves to empower themselves in self-learning.

I was faced with challenges due to the month-long teachers' strike. I was unable to get my participants to co-operate. They were not in the right frame of mind to be interviewed. I thought I would not be able to complete my study in time. However, I persevered, and with all the support around me I managed to complete my study.

6.6 Conclusion

My concern is that there is not enough professional development for teachers to help them in their classroom practice. The non-phase specialist and subject specialist teachers need special training to adjust to teaching across the curriculum. The government is failing teachers in the classroom because current teacher training concentrates on an Outcomes-Based approach. When these teachers are appointed to schools, there is a mismatch with what they trained in. On the other hand, the experienced teachers have trained in the traditional method, and they have to adapt to the Outcomes-Based Curriculum, and even have to teach the curriculum.

It is evident from this study that teaching across the curriculum requires professional training, ongoing professional development and correct placement in schools to alleviate all the stress and anxiety teachers face in the primary school. I hope that future research could be undertaken by the Department of Education and other leading institutions, like the Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal on the important topic of teaching across the curriculum. The emphasis should be on teacher training, policy, and professional development.

I was primarily interested in the way teachers were coping with the status quo, but it is clear that teachers need to ask searching questions about what teaching across the curriculum actually means. The opportunities for the teaching of multi-literacies abound in such classrooms, and teachers need to find creative and innovative ways of linking different elements of a topic or theme with the various subject areas. In the study, I found that teaching across the curriculum was often reduced to teaching in different learning areas, and in discrete time-table slots.

Teachers were still governed by the bell! There was little effort to find organic links among the different learning areas, which vary the classroom activities to keep the learners' interest and enthusiasm going. There was a need to teach different skills and literacies, so that the learning day could be seamless and absorbing. The teachers could vary activities around a single topic, by devising, for example, appropriate Science, Maths and Geography lessons; they could include relevant drama, poetry and story-telling, as well as plan simple language and grammar activities that could all flow from the same theme. Themes like "Water", "Trees", "Our Planet", for example, could lend themselves to approaches from different angles and subject areas. Lesson could be separate, yet integrated. Working collaboratively, teachers could all contribute to the planning and preparation of teaching across the curriculum, with each teacher drawing from his/her particular expertise, skills, knowledge and interests. There could be a mix of activities, which includes Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. There are many different approaches to teaching across the curriculum and teachers should explore them from different vantage points.

Building on the narrative inquiry approach, as in this project, an action research model may be considered as another viable approach to study this field. Here, research, ongoing development and reflective practice may take place in a cyclical manner, and this is bound to have a transformatory effect on teachers and their practice.

My experiences in this field have convinced me of the value of this type of study, and of the need to find innovative ways of exploring the problem.

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