

**A Critical Analysis of Social Sciences Learning Materials in the
National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of
KwaZulu-Natal.**

**A research report submitted to the Faculty of Education of the
University of KwaZulu-Natal in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters in Education**

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research study is entirely my own effort. All sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged. It is submitted for the Degree of Masters of Education (M.Ed) at the University of KwaZulu- Natal and it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any university.

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Signed on this _____ day of February 2013

ABSTRACT

The key purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how the social science education subject for the intermediate phase of schooling was conceptualised as a distance education learning material and what learning was intended through this learning process.

The process of data collection was presented thematically within three sections. The first section presented data produced through the interview with the author of the learning material for the social science (SS) NPDE module. The second section presented a global analysis of the SS distance learning material. The third section presented a fine-grained analysis of a unit of learning within the history section of the distance learning material for the social science education. The findings of the study revealed that there was an error in the conceptualisation of the social science curriculum as an integration of history and geography. The learning material clearly shows that the construction of the social science distance learning material has clear and distinctive sections of history and geography with no indication of the integration.

This study reveals a lack of alignment between curriculum intentions and the conceptualisation and construction of learning materials to support teacher learning. The analysis clearly indicated that pedagogical content knowledge development through distance learning material is minimal. On this basis the researcher proposes that should the intention of the learning programme be on developing teaching skills, then the content of learning materials need to be supported by other appropriate forms of learning.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my precious parents Mrs and the late Mr Lalljith Nundlall, to my amazing husband Shalill, and my two wonderful daughters Sheetal and Shreya. Without all of you, my life would be incomplete.....

List of Acronyms /Abbreviations

ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education

C2005 – Curriculum 2005

CHE - Council on Higher Education

DE – Distance Education

FDE – Further Diploma in Education

HSS – Human and Social Sciences

IP – Intermediate Phase

LA – Learning Area

LM – Learning Material

NADEOSA - The National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South
Africa.

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

NPDE- National Professional Diploma in Education

OBE – Outcomes Based Education

REQV - Relative Education Qualification Value

RNCS – Revised National Curriculum Statement

SS – Social Sciences

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research study consists of five chapters. Chapter one is the background to the study, which covers the introduction, provides the purpose of the study, the rationale and the research design. The intention of the first chapter is to present the reader with a comprehensive outline as to what this chapter entails and how it is presented.

The purpose of this study is to explore how learning and teaching of the integrated social science curriculum occurs within the National Professional Diploma in Education.

The research questions, aims and research methods are also presented in this chapter. This provides the reader with the justification of the research study as well as to remain focused.

The research methods provide a description as to how the study was conducted. The research methods provided the reader with rationale as to why the methodology selected for this study was appropriate for this study.

The conclusion of this chapter provides the reader with a summation of the imperative position that this chapter takes on.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

When conducting research it is crucial to understand why it is being conducted. Questioning the purpose of the research allowed the researcher to stay focused during the study. This research intended to complete an analysis of the social sciences learning materials in the National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

In the curriculum reconstruction of school education, there had been many shifts, both in terms of the philosophy of education in schools as well as within the curriculum itself. There were subjects that were taken out and new subjects brought in, one of the subjects brought in was social science education. With the introduction of Curriculum 2005, Revised National Curriculum statement, and the National Curriculum statement, these curriculum policies replaced school subjects with learning areas and the introduction of the social sciences curriculum was one subject that integrated history and geography within the intermediate phase of schooling.

South Africa employs almost 400 000 teachers within its school system. With the introduction of new curriculum policies within the school education system, all of these 400 000 teachers had to be re-skilled to implement the new school curriculum policy. This re-skill and training also included the training of teachers to teach subjects that were newly included as part of the curriculum transformation within the school education system. The scope of re-skilling and training was clearly a mammoth task and therefore new ways of re-skilling these teachers had been put in place.

There were several mechanisms put in place to introduce the current teachers to new curriculum policy and to provide training for these teachers to implement the new school curriculum policy. These mechanisms included the introduction of a new interim qualification, called the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE), the use of existing Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) to re-skill teachers and the adoption of the cascade model of teacher development to reach all teachers in the training process. This study focuses its attention on one of the mechanisms for the training of its teachers, that is, the NPDE programme. The NPDE programme had two broad objectives. The first was to upgrade current teachers to a newly pegged qualified teacher status. That is, there were teachers who had only teaching experience but no formal qualifications in teaching and there were teachers who had teaching qualifications of two years and below and these identified teachers were required to take the NPDE as a partway to obtain a qualified teacher status. Why this happened is explained in several government documents that can be accessed widely and is beyond the scope of this study simply because of its contested nature. The second objective was to introduce these un- and under-qualified teachers to the new

school curriculum policy and train them to implement this new curriculum policy in their teaching of the learners. This study focuses on the second objective where teachers were being trained to develop their competence in teaching a newly introduced school subject, i.e. social science education (SSE).

The NPDE in addition, was envisaged as an interim qualification, was designed to improve access routes into the new qualifications framework for teachers and was meant for the upgrading of un- and under-qualified educators. The focus of this study is specifically on the NPDE programme and on the teaching and learning of SSE intermediate phase (IP). Due to teachers being full-time at schools, most of them were students who had to come into the university or learning sites and had sessions face-to-face and were supported by distance learning materials.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

Having presented a background to the study, the purpose, then, of this study was to explore how the SSE subject for the intermediate phase of schooling was conceptualised as a distance education learning material and what learning was intended through this learning process. The research questions presented below guided the research process.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These research questions have been presented to provide focus to the research:

- 1. How was the NPDE learning material in social science education, intermediate phase conceptualised?**
- 2. How was learning of social science education promoted through the distance education learning material for the NPDE students?**
- 3. What learning within the social science education subject was being developed through the NPDE distance learning material?**

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research was to analyse the social sciences learning materials in the National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with a view to understanding what influenced the construction of the distance education learning material. Through this analysis it would be interesting to see how the learning was organised within the learning material, what learning was being targeted and how students within the learning programme would be trained. This exploration would then be able to influence the construction of distance learning materials for teachers who would require in-service training.

There is no universal remedy or a magical potion to cure challenges in education, but governments have adopted a variety of strategies for increasing the supply of teachers, and improving their skills Perraton (1993), and one of these strategies involves using distance education. (Komane, 2002: 8) concurs with the above statement by stating “Education is seen as a major impetus behind fundamental change or transformation in many societies”. Bearing this in mind the researcher would further state that there has been an explosion of distance education (DE) programmes and the expansion of education. Therefore the explosions of DE programmes like ACE and NPDE saw many institutions around the country having this as face-to-face intervention, and relying on centres of delivery to bring education and training closer to teachers. DE represents a major component of the provision of higher education in South Africa. The importance that DE played was in increasing access to higher education for those students whom either because of work commitments, personal, geographical distance or poor quality inadequate prior learning, were inaccessible as endorsed by the (Council on Higher Education, 2004: 177).

An in-service programme in South Africa has to address three issues simultaneously, i.e. providing access, improving teachers’ skills in the current curriculum and giving them an opportunity to re-skill themselves in new areas of the curriculum (Report on the National Review of Academic and Professional Programme in Education, 2010: 105). During the post apartheid period the government commenced the most important reform to realise equity in education while considering the skills deficit created by the apartheid regime.

The new government sought to redress the inequities of the past as well as to improve the bleak situation. The government's first major intervention to re-skill or upgrade teachers' initial qualifications was the introduction of the Further Diploma in Education (FDE). In 2000, the FDE was renamed the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) which was similar to FDE but also opened doors to higher level of studies, which included post graduate, which encouraged continuing professional development. Later in 2002, the state introduced the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE).

1.6 BACKGROUND OF THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION (NPDE)

The NPDE, which was implemented in 2002, emerged from the phasing out of certificates and outdated diplomas, although many teachers are still in possession of such certificates. The NPDE was envisaged by the National Department of Education as an interim qualification for the upgrading of un- and under-qualified teachers in schools. The NPDE was meant for those teachers whose qualifications are classified according to the relative education qualification value (REQV) 12 or lower, to a minimum of REQV 10. Under-qualified teachers are those with matriculation plus one or two years of teaching qualification i.e. REQV 11 or 12, while unqualified teachers are those with only a matric certificate. But at present the minimum recognised qualification for a professional teacher is matriculation plus three years, although there are signs of teacher unions pushing to have this increased to REQV 14. The programme is designed to recognise students' knowledge and skills gained from their prior learning and experience by awarding credits towards the qualification. The NPDE programme is therefore a means to re-skill teachers with new knowledge to enable them to teach within the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) system at the level of school education and according to the National Curriculum Statement.

When the first teacher certificate was introduced for Black South Africans, two years of teacher training were allowed for primary school teaching for teachers with a standard six certificate. Therefore the training of Black teachers is inevitably now perceived to be inferior to that of other racial groups as mentioned by (Nkabinde, 1997: 35).

For a variety of reasons, many Black teachers are unable to employ innovative methods of teaching and devise-teaching aids as argued by (Nkabinde 1997: 37) who also goes on to state that it has become difficult for Black teachers to move away from rigid and outdated methods of teaching. (Nkabinde 1997: 41) therefore argues that there has always been a lack of qualified Black teachers and this shortage has resulted in hiring untrained and unqualified teachers in most Black schools.

The effect of this inadequate and inferior training is reflected in multiple ways. Since the training Black teachers received were dominated by transmission teaching, it is unreasonable now to expect Black teachers to produce curious, analytic pupils Nkabinde (1997). Poor training of teachers affects their creativity, motivation, and the effective use of talents. Nkabinde (1997) believes that as a result of poor training, many Black teachers cannot devise teaching aids and materials to fit the conditions found in their schools. These teachers rely heavily on prescribed textbooks and their teaching process emphasises chalk and talk methods, inevitably leading to reliance on rote learning. Nkabinde (1997) argues further that in order to explore creative teaching methods that will encourage development, a trained sensibility, the habit of reading and the opportunity to travel are vital, but few Black teachers have had these experiences. Reading for pleasure is not a common practice among many Black teachers, which is due to their upbringing as well as a limited means to develop the habit. Teaching in a language other than one's own can be problematic since the use of a foreign language such as English is generally limiting to most Black teachers who are not proficient in it. Black teachers, as argued by (Nkabinde, 1997: 39), have never been given the opportunity to think independently or to discover for themselves, which translates as teaching methods they adopt as teachers in the classroom. Christie (1985) believes that most Black teachers have never developed a critical awareness of the world, and this lack of awareness implies that they, in turn, cannot instil the same values in their pupils. Christie (1985) referred to this limitation as education for domestication.

Perhaps the most serious issue related to inadequate teaching methods is the lack of professional morale among teachers in schools in which the culture of teaching and learning is broken down, as argued by (Nkabinde, 1997: 39). Black teachers work in academic isolation, even within the same school.

Therefore the lack of support from other peers with regard to teaching strategies and curriculum thinking also contribute to poor teaching methods. She further contends that the employment of unqualified teachers perpetuates the vicious cycle of poor teachers, producing poor students, and resulting in high failure rates. Therefore, there is a need for reform in teacher education for Black teachers by raising the quality of Black teachers. Educational change in South Africa must rely on changes in the way teachers are trained and socialized.

1.7 SOCIAL SCIENCES (SS) AS A LEARNING AREA OR SUBJECT: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In terms of the history of the school curriculum within South Africa, Curriculum 2005 merged the subjects of history and geography into the learning area human and social sciences (HSS). Chisholm (2005) mentions that some proponents of the integration supported the idea that history should have a separate status in the junior phase, but others like Selati (1997) argued that history is a specialised subject that is not underpinned by the same procedures as geography. A vital change in the structuring of social sciences compared to its predecessor, namely HSS, saw the subjects of history and geography being separated so that each had their own set of outcomes, but formed part of the renamed learning area of social sciences, according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R-9, which was introduced in 2002.

An interesting question the researcher wants to focus on in this research is why SS was introduced. Researchers in this field (Beets & Le Grange, 2008; Chisholm, 2005; Fataar, 2006) made mention that subsequent to South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, curriculum reform involved a „cleansing’ of the syllabus to remove explicit racist and sexist content which existed during the apartheid regime and introduced a new curriculum C2005, which resulted in merging the subjects of history and geography into the human and social sciences (HSS) learning area which combined the outcomes but did not distinguish between history and geography. Thereafter the RNCS introduced the SS learning area whereby interrelatedness of the learning outcomes took place.

The definition of the SSLA, according to the National Curriculum Statement Assessment Guidelines (2002: 3), is that it comprises the study of relationships between people as well as the environment. These interactions are contextualised in space and time and have social, political, economic and spiritual dimensions.

The purpose of the SS learning area (LA) was concerned with the development of responsible citizens who would be able to operate in a culturally diverse, democratic society. This LA also helps learners to make sound judgments to achieve the sustainable development of society. It further enables learners to develop distinctive skills and critical awareness.

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) sought to develop learner's knowledge, skills and values, identify the needs of learners, enable teachers to reflect on their own practice and identify learners' strengths and weaknesses. The SS LA "does not entail the learning of historical and geographical facts off by heart or by rote" (NCS: 4). But what it does encourage is the ability to pose thoughtful questions, as well as answer in-depth and to think in a critical manner. These skills are meant to support our democracy and their development is essential within the SS LA.

1.8 THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework can be distinguished from a theoretical framework as it is a less developed explanation of events. The researcher provides an introduction by briefly explaining what a theoretical framework is. According to (Vithal and Jansen, 1997: 17) a theoretical framework could be described as a well-developed, coherent explanation for an event. This study is located within a theoretical framework of teacher development. "Good teachers need to be made: we cannot assume that enough are born to allow reasonable staffing ratio" (Perraton, 1993: 5). This study is in agreement with Perraton (1993).

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In trying to understand this phenomenon, a case study of an institution, the researcher has chosen the SS NPDE programme, to further understand how the SS learning material contributed towards quality school education. Within the case study methodology the researcher has chosen document analysis and discourse analysis to understand how the SS learning material contributes towards the SS intermediate phase. Researchers have used the case study method to answer “HOW” and “WHY” questions as mentioned by (Maree, 2007: 75) who further goes on to explain that “case study” has multiple meanings, as it can be used to describe a unit of analysis or a research method. In this study it is used to describe the SS NPDE IP learning material. (Cohen, Manion and Morison, 2007: 254) understand a case study as portraying „what it is like to be in a particular situation by looking at a case in its real-life context.

1.10 RATIONALE

The researcher’s personal interest in this focus area relates to the teaching of social sciences within the OBE framework by under-qualified teachers. She is a teacher of social science education at a local primary school and has noticed that there are a few under-qualified teachers who are experiencing problems and difficulties with teaching the integrated social science learning area. They have stated that during the course of the year they only teach the history component of the social science learning area, as they do not understand the geography component. These teachers had little or no geography background knowledge, and therefore they went on to state that due to their lack of knowledge and understanding they were unable to teach the map work sections.

This study therefore hopes to get a sense of the nature of the learning and teaching experiences that emerged for the under-qualified teachers during their study of the social science modules (towards the NPDE), and what they did with this learning once they went back into their classrooms. The researcher hopes that this study could contribute towards the discourse on how to improve the quality of intervention in

terms of teacher development. This study contributes towards the discourse by looking at how the NPDE SS learning material has enabled quality development and training for the teachers so that they can develop both the content knowledge of the subject, as well as knowledge of how to teach the subject within the phases.

1.11 LIMITATIONS

By limitations the researcher means what compromised the ability to do this study. This study started off when the programme was up and running and had matured over the five years, however the researcher is writing the report now acknowledging that there have been several changes including the fact that the NPDE programme has now come to an end and the Teach Out programme is in operation, whereby no new intake of students is being taken to the NPDE programme. Since the beginning of 2012, the programme is no longer being offered; those students who are currently in the programme will be taught out until they finish. The findings of this research may not necessarily apply to the NPDE programme per say, but it could be extrapolated to DE learning in general and for information relating to the introduction of new school subjects and the training of teachers thereof.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMATION

In terms of structure, the remainder of this dissertation is organised as follows:

- ❖ Chapter two will focus on presenting literature review that underpins the conceptualisation of the study.
- ❖ Chapter three presents the methodology designed for the production of data.
- ❖ Chapter four is a presentation of data and analysis thereof.
- ❖ Chapter five summarises the key findings and makes recommendations.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a broad picture of what the study entails, why it was conducted, and how the study unfolds. The next chapter presents a review of relevant literature to locate the study purpose and process.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Having presented the context for this study detailing the focus and delimits of the study in the first chapter, this chapter presents a review of relevant literature with the purpose of grounding this study within a theoretical discourse. The literature review includes a focus on teacher development that attempts to show how teacher development has been conceptualised and implemented within the South African transforming context. This landscape of teacher development then presents a context to understand the mixed mode delivery of teacher development within which learning to teach social science education (SSE) in South African schools is presented. The chapter then presents an analytical description of social science as was introduced within the recently conceptualised outcomes-based education curriculum. The literature review concludes with a presentation of literature that argues for teacher development for SSE within a context of upgrading un- and under-qualified teachers. The final section of this chapter then presents a conceptual framework that guides this study's methodological and analytical processes to arrive at the conclusions that emerged from this study.

2.2 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 2000

As is expected of any new political changes to a nation, there were fundamental changes to several systems and processes within South Africa since the start of democracy. Education within South Africa had undergone radical transformation with the introduction of outcomes-based education that required a new way of thinking, teaching, learning and assessing. With a current teaching force of approximately 400 000 teachers teaching in South Africa's public schools, this new way of thinking, teaching, learning and assessing could only be successful if all teachers were targeted for teacher development. This brief contextual expression of the need for teacher development therefore presents a backdrop to understanding the modes of teacher development that have been implemented by the state in attempting

to get all teachers trained to implement the new outcomes-based education. In addition to the large-scale teacher development intervention that was needed, a further reality needed to be faced by the state. This reality related to the qualification status of professional teachers. During the apartheid period, there were all sorts of qualifications for teachers, which were dependent upon the racial groups, access to education and geography of the country. There were teachers that had no formal qualifications in teaching, with some not even having a Grade 12 pass. Then there were teachers with one, two, three and four year teacher qualifications. With a new norm (minimum requirement) for a teacher to be regarded as a professional teacher, being set at matric (Grade 12) plus a three year post school education in teaching, the country found itself in a situation where at least a third of the teachers were under-qualified. This then meant that with any new teacher development activities that the state planned, they needed to take into consideration the level of professional qualification of the current corp of teachers. One way to manage these uneven qualification levels of teachers was to introduce an interim qualification that would bring all un- and under-qualified teachers to a matric plus three year status, colloquially know as M+3 qualification. This interim qualification was known as National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE). This study focuses on this interim qualification and the teacher development process for developing their knowledge and skills for teaching SSE.

Having this contextual background, teacher development within South Africa, largely from the year 2000 onwards, took on a range of forms. The researcher has chosen to take the year 2000 as a starting point because it is from this period that a heightened awareness of teacher development began. The implementation of Curriculum 2005, a process to introduce outcomes-based education into the school curriculum, had just commenced and it is from this instance onwards that the challenges, policy expansion and implementation processes begun to get public attention.

The most common form of teacher development was through mixed mode delivery systems using a cascading model of teacher development. This mode involved the training of a group of specialists at the national level and this group then had the task of training groups of teachers at the provincial levels, who, in turn trained groups of teachers at the district levels, who in turn trained teachers at the school level and

finally reaching teachers within the school. The training involved the use of leading sessions to transfer information, supported with learning materials and consultative workshops. The mixed mode delivery system was more biased towards materials-based learning, largely in the form of distance education learning materials. Using this methodology as a basis for teacher development within South Africa for the introduction of outcomes-based education, other teacher development processes, for example the upgrading of teachers to minimum qualification status, used similar strategies. Mixed mode delivery of the new learning for upgrading of teachers became the norm for developing teachers. Most institutions of higher education that offered the NPDE used this delivery method – materials-based support to teacher development that included some contact time with tutors and lecturers. The SSE curriculum was taught to existing teachers using this method of delivery. SSE was also a new school subject introduced through outcomes-based education; its design and purpose will be presented in a subsequent section of this chapter.

2.2.1 MIXED MODE OF DELIVERING TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Considering the range and scope of delivering teacher development programmes across the country, various modes of delivery were needed depending upon what kinds of programmes and the purpose of programmes that were needed. The modes of delivery ranged from full contact modes of learning to full distance modes of learning. Clearly these two extremes are not possible within the country's capacity and resources to support teacher development, as not all teachers are able to take face-to-face contact learning due largely to the policy regulations relating to leave for teachers as well as the lack of adequate capacity for an expanded higher education system to manage face-to-face contact delivery. Full distance education also has limitations related to, among others, access to support, language and time. The most appropriate mode of delivery, especially within the South African context, would be a mixed-mode of delivery. As distance education seem to have a major component of the mixed-mode delivery system, the rest of this section will review relevant literature related to distance education so that an understanding of the issues related to this mode of delivery will allow for a clearer analysis and understanding of learning to

teach SSE through materials-based support. It also takes on a teacher development bias in line with the focus of this study.

2.3 DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A MODE OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Education is seen as a major force behind crucial transformation in many countries. Komane (2002) is of the view that distance education (DE) can be aimed at enabling people who have missed an educational opportunity to recapture what they have lost without necessarily going back to the classroom. DE provides many people with a second chance to receive education. The term „distance and open learning’ is used as an umbrella term to cover educational approaches that reach teachers in their schools, provide learning resources for them, or enable them to qualify without attending college in person (Unesco, 2001). The flexibility intrinsic in open and distance learning and the fact that it can be combined with a full- or part-time job makes it appropriate for un- and under-qualified teachers as well as for teacher’s career development as they seek promotion, or aim for their next qualification. DE can be traced back to the 1700s (Mitchell, Smith, Louw, Tshesane, Petersen-Waughal and du Preez, 2007) but has gained popularity over the past 150 years, passing through three different phases. The first phase is correspondence study, followed secondly by the rise of distance teaching universities, and thirdly, the integration of distance education elements into most forms of education (Schlosser and Simonson, 2003: 3). DE is generally understood as a structured teaching and learning process, delivered through a collection of methods, where educators and the learners are physically separated for part or all of the time and where the course materials are the main means of communication of the curriculum. Saide (1995) is still of the opinion that DE in South Africa is essentially correspondence education, with very little assistance other than from study materials; virtually everything depends on the quality of the study materials.

Komane (2002) states distance education can be aimed at enabling people who have missed an educational opportunity to recapture what they have lost without going back to the classroom, meaning that DE provides many people with a second chance to receive education. Saide (1995) believes that DE programmes for teachers have a

significant role to play as noted by the national Teacher Education Audit, since DE has the capacity to reach large numbers of students in wide geographical areas, which was cumbersome for those teachers who had to work and attend university.

Kamanja (2007: 722) explains, “distance education is a learning process in which learners are separated in time and space from those conducting the learning”. Open and distance learning covers education approaches that reach learners in their environment. Imperative to distance education is that teachers can study while continuing to teach, making it less disruptive for teachers and schools.

There is a great demand for education in the African continent and especially for higher education. The continent cannot cope with this demand due to the expense in putting up infrastructure to create new institutions of higher learning. (Kamanja, 2007: 722). This has therefore resulted in Africa providing DE to many adults in full time or part time employment. DE is providing the alternate route, which will allow Africa to provide the much-needed skills for development and also meet the demand for higher education, as well as providing the learners in DE with education that is much cheaper. DE is capable of providing education to numerous students because DE „relies more on capital and methodology-intensive investments than on manpower-intensive ones to reach their students who study from home’ (Kamanja, 2007: 723). By this Kamanja is of the opinion that reproduction cost of learner guides can be very low while their teaching quality remains constant.

2.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (DE) IN SOUTH AFRICA

Crucial to quality in education is a formal commitment to distance education by government. In South Africa we have been blessed in this regard, especially as the country moved into post apartheid South Africa. The government’s assurance to increase access to education through the use of distance education was apparent in the 1994 Policy Framework for Education and Training (ANC Education Department):

“The development of a well-designed and quality distance education system based on the principles of open learning is the only feasible approach to meeting the needs of the vast numbers of our people who were systematically deprived of educational opportunity in the past, while at the same time providing opportunities for the youth

coming up through the educational system at present. It will allow people access to education and training and the ability to determine where, when, what and how they want to learn.” (ANC, 1994: 78).

The new South African government sought to encourage massification of the higher education system, meaning the government wanted to provide higher education to as many people as possible. South Africa also followed international trends towards lifelong learning, which resulted in high expectations of the role of DE.

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2004), one major role for distance education was to increase access into higher education, including the crucial need for increasing access for poorer students. The Department of Education through its Directorate of Distance Education took the initiative of improving the quality of distance education. The National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa (N ADEOSA) drafted a draft policy statement entitled Criteria for Quality Distance Education in South Africa and the framework for the 1996 and 1998 documents was drawn from a range of international sources and included within it are the thirteen criteria representing the main elements for quality DE provision. With regards to the NPDE SS module, the researcher will not be able to discuss all thirteen of the criteria due to the scope of the study. The five criteria chosen for discussion relate largely to the study focus and will frame the analysis of the study material for the SSE DE materials. These five criteria are: (Nadeosa, 2005, pp. 20, 22, 26,28, 29, 30, 32, 33):

- Learner profile
- Course design
- Course materials
- Assessment
- Learner support

The quality of learner materials relating to these five criteria are presented below:

1. Learner profile that identifies the characteristics and situation of distance learners should include the:

- ✓ Demographic factors such as age, gender, geographic location and employment/occupation.
- ✓ Language profiles, including language ability in the main language of teaching and learning and language background.
- ✓ Motivation for learning
- ✓ Educational background, prior learning and experience.

This is an important criterion that should frame quality DE materials. It speaks to resonance between learning outcomes, target groups and student background. The success of DE materials would then depend upon how such demographic profiles of the learners are considered when designing, structuring learning and linking learning to students' current levels of communication and understanding.

The above-mentioned information on the learner or target audience is critical in distance education as learners are not very often met face-to face. Therefore extra effort needs to be made in understanding the needs and varying contexts of learners. If learner profiles are not known, the course would not be able to do justice with regards to needs, knowledge and experience of the learners, demographic factors, language profiles, motivation for learning as well as educational background; and this may lead to unnecessary drop-out and failure. This criterion does bare significance in relation to this study focus as the majority of the NPDE teacher learners are of the African population, and they are not first English language speakers, yet all programmes are offered in English (CHE, 2004:102). It is illustrated by the CHE investigation that (DE) is a major access mechanism for African students, for whom either because of work commitments, personal social circumstances, geographical distance, or poor quality or inadequate prior learning experiences, full-time contact education is inappropriate or inaccessible (CHE, 2004:30).

2. Course design, whereby the course curriculum is well researched, with aims and learning outcomes appropriate to the level of the study:

- ✓ Is designed with national needs as well as the needs of the learner.

- ✓ Teaching and learning strategies, content outline, items in the learning package including study guides, textbooks, audiotapes and videotapes.
- ✓ Content, teaching and learning strategies and assessment are carefully structured to facilitate the learning outcomes.
- ✓ Various forms of learner support are built into the design of the course.
- ✓ Teaching and learning strategies of the course acknowledge learners' existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for guided integration of new knowledge.

While content knowledge is important and necessary, it alone cannot determine whether the teacher is able to teach so that students learn. There needs to be coherence and integration when designing the course material. This aspect is an essential criterion that should frame quality DE materials. The success of DE materials would then depend on whether the course design acknowledged learners' experience and existing knowledge as well as the pertinent aspects discussed above. This criterion is a significant factor as this study aims to investigate whether these were considered when designing the NPDE (DE) materials.

3. Course materials should teach in a coherent way that engages the learners and also ensures the evaluation of the course materials. High quality learning materials are critical for successful distance delivery, because in distance education it is the materials that are the main teacher, rather than a lecturer standing in front of a class or a tutor managing a tutorial.
 - ✓ The content and teaching approach support learners in achieving the learning outcomes.
 - ✓ Learner-friendly introductions, linking and summarizing passages motivates the learners and provides coherence to the materials.
 - ✓ The content of the course is accurate, up-to-date, and relevant to aims and outcomes, free of discrimination and reflects awareness of the multilingual and multicultural reality of South African society.
 - ✓ The language level of the materials is appropriate for the target learners and the materials assist learners with the particular difficulties that learning through- reading and learning at a distance require.

- ✓ Understanding the contexts in which learners live and work as well as their prior knowledge and experience. This knowledge should be used in the design of the materials.
- ✓ The materials are periodically reviewed in the light of ongoing feedback from learners.

Education is not only important to an individual but also to a nation. Research demonstrates that among all educational resources, the crucial contributors include understanding the context of the student as well as how to teach effectively, including content knowledge that incorporated language, culture and support.

4. Assessment is the essential feature of the teaching and learning process.
 - ✓ Assessments are designed and administered in ways that do not disadvantage learners in a range of contexts.
 - ✓ The level of challenge of the assessment in a programme is appropriate for the level of the qualification to which it leads.
 - ✓ A range of assessment strategies, for example, self-assessment, peer assessment, tutors assessment or assessment by workplace mentors.
5. Learner support, whereby learners are provided with a range of opportunities for communication such as contact tutoring, assignment tutoring and the stimulation of peer support structures.
 - ✓ Academic support is built into the design of the course materials.
 - ✓ There are sufficient contact sessions to ensure that the learners are able to achieve the outcomes of the course.
 - ✓ There are opportunities for individual academic support for learners either by telephone, by appointment, or online.
 - ✓ Learners have access to counselling for personal difficulties/advice related to study.

In chapter four, data analysis will further investigate the NPDE SS module's adherence to these five criteria that are pertinent in the delivery of quality DE. The researcher now briefly introduces the National Professional Diploma in Education.

The National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) is a qualification registered on the NQF and is designed to meet an immediate need, the upgrading of the thousands of under-qualified teachers in the country. NPDE is a qualification driven by the National Department of Education, and is designed to upgrade un- and under-qualified educators from (Relative Equivalent Value) REQV 10, 11 and 12 to REQV 13. The NPDE has been in place since 2002, originally the National Department envisaged the programme only needing to last five years, but this has not happened and the programme remained. However since the beginning of 2012, the NPDE programme is no longer being offered, and those students who are currently in the programme will be taught out until they are completed.

In concluding the distance education aspect of this chapter of the literature review it will be appropriate to make mention of the fact that the majority of the students registered for the NPDE social sciences (SS) at UKZN are of the African population and in this respect these students have diverse home languages covering most of the official languages of South Africa, and according to (Breier, 2008: 109) many of these students use English as a second or third language and this “inhibits their ability firstly to grasp the concept and secondly to express their reflections in written forms”. This therefore directly affects how successfully a student can interact with learning materials written in English or take part in discussions. Most of the teachers enrolled for the NPDE would have studied in the heyday of apartheid that led to knowledge gaps and teaching practices that were taught to be problematic as mentioned by (Breier, 2008: 109).

Therefore distance learning requires that some kind of support mechanism be available to students in order to help them overcome their learning difficulties, get supplementary information and exchange ideas with their fellow students and tutors. Nadeosa, (2005). This however becomes complicated as there are just four contact sessions offered when studying the SS NPDE, which are held on Saturdays in which a minimum of six hours of interactive teaching and learning are expected to be achieved.

Having focused on distance education and quality distance education materials, it is then necessary to reflect on other kinds of learning materials as a way to show how learning is structured through printed materials. In this respect, the researcher has chosen to focus her attention on how the textbooks facilitate learning and then to identify key markers that will influence quality printed learning materials in general. Further, text books have been used quite extensively across the history of education worldwide and therefore would provide a reference point to exploring how distance learning materials could support quality teacher development processes, especially the re-skilling of existing teachers to teach a newly introduced school subject like SSE.

2.4 TEXTBOOKS AS A LEARNING RESOURCE FOR EDUCATION

„Both local and international research has shown that the textbook is the most effective tool to ensure consistency, coverage, appropriate pacing and better quality instruction in implementing a curriculum,‘ (Department of Education, 2009: 9).

While some people are of the opinion that textbooks are old-fashioned, biased and boring, others regard textbooks as very useful educational resources. Textbooks are an essential part of teaching. They are designed in order to help students learn and are used in educational institutions such as schools and universities. While worksheets and popular media may trigger learner experience and interest, they seldom include content knowledge or conceptual development needed for good learning (Saide, 2010: 179).

Textbooks are important in developing (Saide, 2010: 207)

- The higher-order reading skills and analytical skills that popular magazines, newspapers and popular media can’t do.
- Means for developing independent reading.
- Structured learning in an educationally sound manner.

Textbooks are selections of the content required to learn and teach a particular subject. Good textbooks organise information in a manner that encourages learning and do not simply present bits of fragmented information. Good textbooks also summarises key points, which allows readers to read with a focus, and they would know what is important in the chapter as well as make connections between one topic

and the next, by referring back to the previous chapter, which in turn assists learners in understanding subjects holistically instead as bits of information. The information and the learning activities in a good textbook are presented in a coherent manner enabling the learners to see how one activity is linked to the next. „Poor textbooks do not always give a clear indication of the purpose of the information, or of the activities that have been included,’ (Saide, 2010: 198).

2.4.1 ‘GOOD TEXTBOOK’ SELECTION CHECKLIST

(Saide, 2010, pp.188-189).

1. Is the textbook written in a style and language that is accessible to learners?
 - ✓ Difficult and new words and concepts are explained when they are first used, and reinforced when used thereafter.
 - ✓ The textbook is written in a conversational style and uses short, active sentences.
 - ✓ The textbook provides the language support learners need. It includes activities that develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

2. Is the textbook’s structure and sequencing clear and logical?
 - ✓ The textbook includes a clear and descriptive contents page.
 - ✓ Titles and headings clearly indicate what will be covered in different chapters or sections
 - ✓ Paragraphs are well structured, with clear topic sentences that are followed by the logical development of ideas.

3. Is the textbook written in a manner that links with the lives of the learners?
 - ✓ New information is linked to what learners already know (to the learners’ existing background knowledge).
 - ✓ It also extends learners’ understanding of familiar concepts in creative and critical ways.
 - ✓ The textbook demonstrates how knowledge can be used in life: it encourages a ‚hands-on’ approach to learning.

4. Is the textbook structured so as to develop higher-level conceptual knowledge in the subject/learning area?

- ✓ The textbook covers the required content, concepts and skills of the subject/learning area in sufficient detail.
- ✓ Teaches the subject in a clear and logical manner, so structured in a way that demonstrates an understanding of how learners learn.
- ✓ The textbook builds the required skills of learners and not just their content knowledge.

5. Is the textbook designed in an attractive and user-friendly manner?

- ✓ The textbook includes a range of text types and varies the ways in which information is presented on the page.
- ✓ Presents information in the form of pictures, diagrams and tables, and not only in text form.

6. Is the textbook committed to teaching in a non-discriminatory and critical way?

- ✓ The textbook reflects a diverse range of race, culture, gender, class and geographic contexts, and avoids using stereotypes.
- ✓ The textbook encourages learners to think about and question their own values and attitudes, and acknowledge the diverse beliefs in our society.
- ✓ It provides different views on an issue and encourages learners to make informed choices.

The above-mentioned detailed explanation of the good textbook selection checklist according to (Saide, 2010, pp. 188-189) provides clear criteria on how to choose good textbooks, as not all textbooks are good, and poor textbooks will be the absence of some of the good textbook criteria. This good textbook checklist plays a fundamental role in assisting educators/tutors/ facilitators choose texts. An illustration of such a choice can be found in the history and geography textbooks that are available and were used in schools, and these two subject areas are incorporated into the new social science school subject.

2.4.2 OLD HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

School history textbooks have generally presented a particular version of events during the apartheid era. The old history textbooks present biased content, for instance „the history of Indians in South Africa was titled „the Indian problem’, while White settlement was never regarded as a problem, although it clearly created a lot of problems’ (Saide, 2010: 185). Old South African textbooks portray information in a didactic, educational way that lay emphasis on the recall of facts. This manner of teaching is at odds with the main aims of the new education changes. Old history texts did not teach learners how to read critically and how to analyse texts and do not encourage learning for understanding but rather encourages rote learning. According to Chisholm (2008), textbooks played a critical role in legitimating and promoting apartheid. Therefore post apartheid curriculum change in South Africa has resulted in the restructuring of textbooks in terms of their content, style and pedagogical approach. Texts were re-written to cater for the transition to a skills-based and outcomes-based policy.

2.4.3 SOCIAL SCIENCES: (HISTORY) ASPECT OF TEXTBOOK: A SHIFT FROM CONTENT TO PROCEDURES FROM OLD TO NEW

The focus on the new history curriculum, a component of the social sciences learning area is on „doing history’ in the local community through the infusion of values, human rights and indigenous knowledge systems. This view of history involves teaching learners to develop interpretations of the past, so that learners are meant to not only demonstrate „what’ they know but also „how’ they know. Chisholm (2008) suggested that learners should be taught how to recognise bias propaganda by inculcating a critical attitude to all material, which would then enable learners to understand history as interpreted and constructed.

For most teachers, the new history curriculum (SS) is a challenge as it involves the eradication of rote learning in the subject-based, content-laden history curriculum as mentioned by Chisholm (2005), consequently replacing it with a curriculum that focused on the constructed nature of history. Post-apartheid curriculum change has

resulted in textbooks being re-structured in terms of content, pedagogical approach and style. Beets and Le Grange (2008) mentioned that texts were revised to embrace the transition from rote to skills-based and outcomes-based learning.

History textbook writers had to produce books that represented the new curriculum and its principles, as history knowledge was re-written, and re-organised so as to be acceptable by the education department. The pedagogy of the texts had to change in order to focus more on a source-based, enquiry-based approach to history, in keeping with a constitution based on democratic values, social justice and human rights, therefore the new textbook content had to reflect a more inclusive and balanced history. According to the (RNCS, 2002: 6) the SS learning area statement has been designed to give space to the silent voices of history and to marginalized communities. It further promotes critical questioning as a basis for developing responsible citizens in a democracy.

2.4.4 GEOGRAPHY TEXTBOOK

The past decade has brought with it several changes to the school geography textbooks. The knowledge focus especially from Grades 7 to 9 was primarily on the transmission of factual knowledge and not on the development of enquiry skills. When Curriculum 2005 was implemented, there were concerns among geographers and geography teachers that the „distinctive character of geography could be lost since aspects of human geography were located in the human and social sciences learning area and physical geography was located in the natural sciences’ (Beets and Le Grange 2008: 69). The curriculum revision was concerned with eradicating racial content as well as outdated and inaccurate subject matter from the school syllabuses as argued by Beets and Le Grange, (2008) and they went on to say that the „superficial cleansing’ of the apartheid curriculum meant that geography did not change extensively following the dismantling of apartheid.

The focus remained mainly on the transmission of factual knowledge and not on the development of enquiry skills. The older geography textbooks included sections such as map work, weather and climate, water, population of South Africa, forestry, fishing, manufacturing ,industries and rail, road, water and air transport New Geography, standard 3. Shah, Huri, Narismulu and Naidoo, (1980).

Map work - scale, direction, map-reading with reference to South Africa, capital cities, weather and climate with reference to Africa, conservation of our natural resources, population geography, Africa, primitive societies in Africa, developing countries of Africa, neighbouring countries of the republic of South Africa and urban geography, New Geography, standard 4. Shah, Huri, Narismulu, and Naidoo, (1982) as well as discovering the world, political and physical geography of the world, population geography, transport and communication, regional geography, Great Britain, The Netherlands, New Zealand and the Amazon New Geography, standard 5. Shah, Moodley, Pillay and Pillay, (1987). These books were published ranging from 1980, 1982 and 1987. They contained more content information and few activities.

As mentioned by Wilmot and Norton (2004: 28) there was a shift towards a generalist curriculum with „a collapsing of discipline boundaries resulting in history and geography being included within the human and social sciences learning area’.

Curriculum 2005 saw the concern among geography teachers and geographers arguing that the distinctive character of geography could be lost since aspects of human geography were located in the human and social sciences learning area and physical geography was located in the natural sciences learning area (Binns, 1999).

The South African geography community based its criticism of these curriculum developments on the fact that geography as a discipline comprised several fields of knowledge such as economics, conservation, hydrology, politics, demography, development studies, regional studies, spatial literacy, environmental studies, energy studies, pedology, biogeography, meteorology, climatology, geophysics, geology and astronomy (Earle and Keats, 1996; Van der Merwe, 1996), and these fields might become lost or diluted if not integrated into a separate geography learning area Mosidi, (1998). Since the request to have a separate geography learning area was not granted by the national Department of Education, geography remained split, with physical geography located in the natural sciences learning area and human geography in the social sciences learning area. (Pemberton 1990: 5) mentions that „attempting to solve many important geographic problems without geography’s physical or social component leads to unsatisfactory solutions’.

The author is of the opinion that human geography and physical geography should not be separated. Such a concern of geography being diluted is justified because geography teachers in parts of the USA and Australia are struggling to regain the subject's identity since it had been integrated into the social studies framework Binns, (1999).

However not all geography educators believe that geography's position in RNCS became weak and questionable. Van Harmelen (1999) for example argues that the new curriculum provided opportunities to thoroughly and radically rethink the nature of geography education in South Africa. She goes on to argue that the new curriculum breaks away from textbook based behaviourist approaches to geography education. In her view new curriculum opened up opportunities for introducing social constructivist approaches to geography education. Van Harmelen (1999) makes a valid point that new curriculum was never intended to provide learners with specialist knowledge but aimed at a general education. Learning and teaching geography in the RNCS is associated with the development of „enquiry skills to investigate key concepts and processes in geography, knowledge and understanding of the interrelationships between people, resources and the environment and critical analysis of development issues on local, national and global scale' (RNCS, 2002: 5).

2.4.5 SOCIAL SCIENCES: GEOGRAPHY ASPECT OF TEXTBOOKS

The spot on social sciences geography aspect of the learners' book covers sections such as: 1. Map work: lines of longitude and latitude, finding places on maps, trade and communication. 2. Population, where people live, continents and cities. 3. Climate: global climate and weather, continent of Africa and our natural resources. 4. Trade and development. 5. Poverty and 6. Wetlands. The researcher feels that these above-mentioned topics are dealt with in a very sketchy manner and fail to offer more knowledge focus; rather these new textbooks contain more activities for the learners to work through. The RNCS is designed to provide a general education to learners, whereby learners are to acquire the conceptual understanding, skills, values and attitudes. According to the author of the SS (history component of the NPDE learner guide), he has never been in favour of the SS learning area. The author is of the opinion that everyone, not only the NPDE teachers, should study

history and geography separately because of the separate nature of these subjects. He goes on to say that history specifically deals with „almost exclusively with development over time, while geography with both a foot in the natural sciences and the humanities, deals with place, space, people and environment’.

From the above discussion on textbooks, the researcher has found that it is important that the textbook is written in a language that is accessible to learners, that the structure is clear and logical, teaching learners how to read critically as well as how to analyse texts, without just accepting what the author has written. Most importantly it should encourage learning for understanding rather than rote learning. The next focus is on learner guides.

2.5 LEARNER GUIDES AS LEARNING MATERIALS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

McLoughlin (1999) believes that the learning materials in distance education have the capacity to cater for individual needs while enabling collaborative forms of learning. She mentions that when designing materials for a given group of learners, designers conduct a needs analysis or profile of the learners in order to ascertain the prior knowledge, motives, background interests, attitudes and experiences of learners. The information gained from the needs analysis enables the design of learning materials tailored closely to the needs of the learner. The reality faced by many institutional contexts is the pressure of high student numbers and scarcity of resources, which limit the scope of the learner, needs analyses. She further goes on to say that the learning material often remains fixed, unvaried and static as students are expected to fit into the system and to cope with it. This is perhaps one of the reasons for such high failure rates in distance education, which researchers (Morgan and Tam, 1999; Ogza and Sukhnanen, 1998) argue are not uncommon, and that impediments in information presentation and the difficulty of content are salient factors leading to high drop off rates or non-persistence of the course. Morgan and Tam (1999) mention that authors of the learning materials often neglect the individual differences such as the learning styles and strategies, which explains how individuals learn, process new knowledge and represent information. It is suggested that the learning styles and strategies can provide designers of distance learning materials with insights into

individual differences in learning and performance that can be factored into the design process.

The learning materials in a distance education programme are regarded as the crucial means whereby the curriculum is communicated, therefore it should be emphasised that a great deal depends on the course material's effectiveness. Reed (2009) suggested that the designers' selection and organisation of content on the page in distance education materials contributes to the manner in which the materials can be read. So if the students like the content of learning materials then they would read them, find them both challenging and relevant to their teaching situations. Moll (2003) is of the view that designers of distance learning materials face the challenge of choosing content in ways that predict what in-service teachers may experience as relevant, interesting or difficult, when they engage with the learning material. The above research confirms that the writer of the learning material has to choose the content and arrange the context very carefully and make it interesting so that the students would want to engage with the learning material, making it user-friendly.

2.5.1 DESIGNING AND WRITING OF DISTANCE MATERIALS

It is essential that the designers and writers of distance learning find innovative, but authentic ways, and good quality study materials cannot only consist of dumping of information but need to incorporate sound principles of education (Mitchell, Smith, Louw, Tshesane, Peterson-Waughtal and du Preez, 2007: 702).

In designing learning materials for distance education there is a new way of doing things. Reeds (2009) developed a conceptual framework that begins to frame the way in which distance materials are being presented, what content should be included and how it should be organised as learning materials. Reed (2009) also suggests a framework for analysing knowledge sections in teacher education learning materials. Although there are some variations, the following appear to be common Banks, Leach & Moon, (1999); Adler, Slonimsky and Reed, (2002); Darling- Hammond, (2006); Morrow, (2007b) and Reeds, (2009).

(Reeds, 2009: pp.180-181) framework is as follows:

- Substantive knowledge of the subject to be taught - e.g. material that relates to teaching of social sciences.
- Content knowledge or school knowledge - e.g. methods of teaching SS, teaching history separately and geography separately.
- Knowledge of how learners learn - e.g. the methods of learning SS.
- Knowledge of the curriculum - e.g. the current SS curriculum statement.
- Contextual knowledge - e.g. student's socio-cultural context and how this influences their perception of the SS content; can they identify with what's being taught?

Reeds idea of presenting this conceptual framework is to foreground, among others, what knowledge is expected to be produced through the learning material and what outcomes are envisaged. Conceptual framework allows one to begin to map out the kinds of things one needs to do in writing learning material for distance education. While this conceptual framework may be useful in designing learning materials, we still need to be reminded of the major critiques on materials-based learning presented above, which include taking cognisance of the intended learner, the process of learning as organised within the learning material and limits to what learning can be expected from the learning materials. Some of these issues will be picked up as the researcher explores the learning material for SSE, which is the focus of this study.

The learner guide explains the basic outlines of the course, such as goals and requirements and assignment due dates. It is a detailed syllabus that guides the student through the lessons and assignments. A good study guide, as recommended by Moore and Kearsley (1996) pays special attention to content and format and that the information should be well organised and clearly presented. Rowntree (1992) recommends simple and clear writing. He advocates a friendly, open style of writing, basically like a conversation between the instructor and student.

Drawing from the above presentation on learning materials and learner guides, there seems to be a general understanding with regards to design in distance education, which refers only to the physical way in which the materials are put together. There should be clearly stated outcomes and assessment strategies, together with support mechanisms to assist students. As learning programmes are designed, the needs of prospective students need to be considered. In South Africa, for example, the level of academic literacy of most first year university students is far below the level required for academic success. Therefore academic tasks that help to develop the necessary skills in an incremental way should be included in the design. Most researchers quoted in this literature review also share similar opinions in that they feel that it is crucial to know your student and how they learn. Several studies across South African universities Balfour, (2002); Bharuthram, (2007) and Ngwenya, (2010) have confirmed that the general language and reading levels of the majority of first-year students remain inadequate and a considerable number of students would be at risk of failing if no interventions were provided. For example, Balfour (2002) in an analysis of students' performance in English proficiency concluded that while students are conversational communicators in English they possess partial language and that students' reading skills needed urgent attention.

Nel, Dreyer and Kopper (2004), Bharuthram (2007) and Ngwenya (2010) believe that a common problem that most South African higher education institutions are currently experiencing is that many students enter higher education unable to read and write at the level expected of them. This situation is not unique to South Africa but is also experienced in other parts of the world. For example, (Falk-Ross, 2002: 278) said that a "...small but significant number of U.S. first-year college students commence their studies with less than adequate reading comprehension strategies." In another study conducted by the American Institute for Research (AIR), it was reported that 50% of students at four-year colleges had inadequate skills to function at a „proficient' level of literacy (AIR, 2006).

2.6 CURRICULUM CHANGES AND INTRODUCTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICA

Curriculum is a very complex concept and understood differently in different context and focus. For the purposes of this research, the researcher refers to the term curriculum as a range of subjects taught in a school. In attempting to present an understanding of how SS became part of the school curriculum within the South Africa school system, the following aspects of curriculum will be used as a guide: Curriculum content and form (which specifies what should be taught to learners about SS and how this is organised); Curriculum pedagogy (which indicates how the SS content is delivered, taught or communicated), Curriculum assessment (which indicates what aspects of SS learning are to be formally tested or measured and how this is to be done) and curriculum as an educational plan (that spells out what goals and objectives should be achieved through SS, which topics should be covered in SS and which methods are to be used for learning, teaching and evaluation). These four sub-fields of curriculum are important to understand how social science curriculum emerged, conceptualised and was taught within the school curriculum and what it intended to achieve.

Many questions can be asked when considering what should be the content of a curriculum. What kinds of knowledge should be taught? What values do they represent? How useful are they? How relevant is this knowledge? The content of the school curriculum is defined in terms of subject knowledge and also in terms of the kinds of thinking and related skills and linguistic competence that might be deemed appropriate for learning.

Researchers in the field of curriculum within the South African schooling system (Beets & Le Grange, (2008); Chisholm, (2005) and Fataar, 2006) suggest that curriculum reform which followed South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 has taken place in phases. The first phase involved the cleansing of the syllabus to remove racist and sexist content, the second phase of curriculum reform in 1997 involved the implementation of the new curriculum, called Curriculum 2005 (C2005).

This entailed „re-organisation of knowledge by subjects being fused into learning areas and taught thematically, emphasising competencies rather than content,’ (Bertram and Bharath, 2011: 64).

In terms of educational restructuring and policy changes, C2005 merged the subjects of history and geography into the learning area human and social sciences. Chisholm (2005) mentions that some proponents of the integration supported the idea that history should have a separate status in the junior phase, but others like Selati (1997) argued that history is a specialised subject that is not underpinned by the same procedures as geography. The Revised National curriculum Statement (RNCS) for Grades R-9 was introduced in 2002 which saw the subjects of history and geography being separated so that each had their own set of outcomes, but formed part of the renamed learning area of social sciences.

2.6.1 SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

There is no single authoritative definition, whether there is a single social science or a collection of disciplines that deal with society and the human condition. The important element is the focus on human behaviour. Social Science is a generic term covering the scientific study of man that must be accurate and reliable (Kochhar, 1984:5).

2.6.2 THE SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA (SSLA) IN THE RNCS

According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (School) Policy-Social Sciences (Department of Education, 2002), teaching, learning and assessment in SSLA is based around the achievement of two important purposes: firstly, developing knowledge and understanding, and secondly, the application of acquired skills and techniques in different contexts. The (NCS, 2003:4) states that “the social sciences does not entail the learning of historical and geographical facts off by heart or by rote,” which means, by implication that the ability to pose thoughtful questions as well as answer in-depth questions and to be able to think in a critical manner, are central to this learning area.

The above-mentioned skills are crucial to the development of young people as critically responsible citizens as well as supporting South Africa's democracy. It is perceived that development within this learning area is essential for young South Africans.

The definition of SSLA (RNCS, 2002: 4) is the SSLA studies relationships between people and the environment. These relationships vary over time and space. They are also influenced by social, political, economic and environmental contexts, and by people's values, attitudes and beliefs. The purpose of SSLA is to develop an awareness of how people can influence their future by confronting and challenging economic and social inequality (including racism and sexism) to build a non-racial, democratic present and future.

THE SSLA (HISTORY) (RNCS, 2002: 5) promote:

1. Enquiry skills to investigate the past and present.
2. Historical knowledge and understanding; and
3. Historical interpretation skills.

When working with history and geography within SS, various issues should be explored such as race, gender, class, xenophobia and genocide and the impact these have had in the past and in the present. It is important to examine power relations in the past and present, including access to and distribution of resources, the exercising of political power, gender relations, and the influence they have had and continue to have on people's lives (RNCS, 2002: 6).

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA STATEMENT (RNCS, 2002: 6)

1. Has been designed to give space to the silent voices of history and to marginalized communities.
2. Aims to develop a sense of agency in learners. It is important that young people understand that they are able to make choices in order to make a difference for positive change. They should be encouraged to do this not only

in an historical context of learning from the past but also to make choices in the present and for the future.

3. Aims to provide learners with knowledge, understanding and skills, which will enable them to make judgments. Respect for and appreciation of all cultures and languages is integral to this LA. It promotes critical questioning as a basis for developing responsible citizens in a democracy. In exploring the causes of conflict - both political and environmental, in the past and present - learners should gain insights that will contribute to peace and the development of non-violent responses to conflict.

A study of history within the social sciences learning area enables learners to develop:

- ✓ A general knowledge and understanding of history of all people who reside in South Africa.
- ✓ An understanding of South Africa's diverse past and mutual grasp of how that informs the present reality.
- ✓ An understanding of the interpretation of heritage and its role in constructing identity.
- ✓ An appreciation of the special contribution of oral tradition and archaeology, and of the impact of the environment on historical developments.
- ✓ The ability to become critically responsible citizens within a content where human and environmental rights are fostered;
- ✓ An understanding of patterns of social development and the impact of technology on society and the environment.
- ✓ An understanding of organisations and how to interact with and participate in them; and
- ✓ The skill of interacting critically with information from a range of sources, including sources that offer different perspectives of the same event or issue (RNCS, 2002: 4).

A study of geography within the social sciences learning area enables learners to develop:

- ✓ A knowledge and understanding of the place in which they live, of other people and places, the significance of location and of how people and places interrelate and interconnect;
- ✓ An understanding of the ways in which people and the environment interact in response to physical and human processes;
- ✓ An awareness of spatial relationships and an understanding of the changing world in a balanced, critical and empathetic way;
- ✓ An informed concern for the world around us and an ability and willingness to participate in actions for a sustainable environment; and
- ✓ Attitudes, values and actions in a world of constant social, economic, political and environmental change (RNCS, 2002: 5).

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a landscape of literature in three different fields, which makes this chapter a complex one. These fields included teacher development, distance learning and curriculum, each being itself a highly complex field of exploration. The landscape of literature in these three domains were important as all of them come to bear the development of teachers through largely distance education for the teaching of a new component of school curriculum that was introduced through the RNCS and NCS in South Africa's attempt to transform its school curriculum. The literature presented important conceptual and process-related issues that relate to the core of this study, i.e. to explore how teacher learning is structured through distance learning materials for the development of teachers to teach this new curriculum intervention within the school curriculum. These conceptual and process-related concepts have guided the presentation and analysis of the data for this study. The next chapter will focus on how the data was produced for this study and includes the methodology employed, the source of information and how the data was analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH STRATEGIES

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION PLAN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on the research methodology discussed in this study. The purpose was to provide the reader with reasons as to why these strategies and methodology were suitable for this study. The data collection plan was also discussed. Methodology presents the description of the sources, methods and instruments of this research whereas methods refer to the techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering as pointed out by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). Methods also encompass a range of approaches used in research to gather data, which could be used as a basis for inference, interpretation, explanation and prediction.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying assumptions to specifying the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done as revealed by Maree (2007). “The plan of how to proceed in determining the nature of the relationship between variables is called a research design,” (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995: 46). In this study the researcher made use of qualitative data collection and analysis methods. Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular context, intending to develop an understanding of what is being studied. Qualitative research places little importance on measuring the size of the phenomena but focuses on describing and understanding phenomena within their naturalistic context. This is the opinion of Maree (2007), who is further of the belief that the research question will help determine the choice of data gathering instruments as a ‘best-fit approach’. The researcher’s choice of a research approach depends on the aims of the research enquiry as stated by Lee (1993).

This qualitative approach taken in this study was guided by the focus and purpose of the study. The researcher wanted to explore how the social science education (SSE) distance education learning material enables the learning of SSE and the teaching thereof. This information could only be ascertained through a qualitative research design as the exploration needed to include an analysis of the conceptualisation of the SSE distance education learning material to get a sense of the intended learning process envisaged through the learning material. Hence, the qualitative interview with the author of the learning material. Further, the learning material needed to be analysed in a way that exposed the learning content and learning process with a view to understanding what was being taught and how it was being taught through the SSE learning material. This meant that a qualitative document analysis was the most appropriate way of exploring these issues (content and pedagogy of the SSE).

3.3 PARADIGM

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that paradigms represent what we think about the world but are unable to prove it. Paradigms also serve as the „lens’ by which reality is interpreted. (Schwartz and Ogilvy, 1979: 1) describe paradigms as enabling us to tell a coherent story by depicting a world that is meaningful, functional and subjective. (Maree, 2007: 47) offers another explanation, which is “A paradigm is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular world view”.

The researcher has located this study within the interpretive paradigm and it is conducted as a case study. The interpretive paradigm was chosen as it works explicitly from within the human perspective and is relevant to this study. The interpretive paradigm assumes that reality is constructed through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially in that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. This paradigm assumes that the researcher’s values are inherent in all phases of the research process and that the truth is negotiated through dialogue.

The ultimate aim of interpretivist research according to (Maree, 2007: 60) is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyse the situation under study to provide insight into the way a particular group of people make sense of their situation.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The term case study has multiple meanings. It can be used to describe a unit of analysis or to describe a research method. A case study could be positivist, critical or interpretive. Case studies can be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are vital to understanding the phenomena being researched. Researchers working on methodology issues Bromley, (1991); Creswell, (1997) and Yin, (1994) suggest the case study method to develop rich and comprehensive understandings about people within natural settings bounded within its particular context.

The case study strategy is thought to increase validity since it uses multiple sources of evidence to analyse or evaluate a specific phenomenon. Most case study research is interpretive and seeks to bring to life a case (Bartlett, Burton, and Peim, 2001: 54).

The strength of a case study design is that it is very useful for learning about situations, which might be poorly understood, or about which not much is known, as in the case of the SS IP NPDE learning material (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000), the case study approach is advantageous to research as it provides a large amount of information and detail about the research topic. “Another strength of case study method is the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process whereby the researcher determines in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research question,” (Maree, 2007: 76).

The case study methodology was selected for this study. The intention was to deeply explore and understand a component of distance education by exploring the conceptualisation of the SSE distance learning material for the development of SSE teachers within the NPDE programme. It was not possible to explore how distance-learning materials are conceptualised, nor was it possible to explore how teacher learning was envisaged through the NPDE programme in a generic way, as there are many variables and considerations to take into account. For example, the conceptualisation of the learning materials is not done by one person. Hence to understand how the learning materials are conceptualised would be a difficult task in terms of scope, scale and purpose.

A more appropriate methodology would be to explore the conceptualisation of distance education learning material would be through a case study methodology as it would provide a scope to explore a single, bounded process of conceptualisation of distance learning material through which rich, deep information can be produced to show, e.g. how personalities or biographies influence conceptualisation of distance learning materials. This influenced the researcher's choice of a case study methodology for this study.

The case study selected for this study was multi-layered. The NPDE programme was initially selected for this exploration, as this was a (then) current programme that focused on upgrading of under-qualified teachers with a further focus of providing training to experienced teachers in teaching the newly introduced OBE curriculum for school education in South Africa. The next was to select an institution that offered the NPDE programme. Access was the main driver in the selection of the institution. The researcher was a student of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and this provided her with access to information about this programme. Hence, UKZN was a natural choice of the institution for the exploration. The next was to select the course for the exploration. The researcher's teaching of SSE within the school system influenced this choice. The researcher had the experience, knowledge and insights into learning and teaching SSE and therefore decided that this course choice would be the most appropriate choice for the delimits of the exploration.

Within this case study methodology, the following methodological design unfolds:

- 1. Semi-structured interview with the author of the Social Science Intermediate Phase NPDE learning material.**
- 2. Document analysis of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) - Social Sciences.**
- 3. Discourse analysis of the NPDE Social Science learner guide.**

3.5 QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING

3.5.1 INTERVIEWS AS QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING

An interview is not an „ordinary, everyday conversation’ (Dyer, 1995: 56), rather it is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer learns about the ideas, views, opinions and beliefs of the participant when collecting data by asking the participant questions. The intention of qualitative interviews is to „see through the eyes of the participant,’ (Maree, 2007: 87), and they can be a valuable source of information when used correctly. The interviewer endeavours to obtain rich descriptive data that will assist in understanding the participant’s conception of knowledge and social reality. Maree (2007) reveals that “if the person being interviewed is of the opinion that the topic is important and they trust the interviewer, then they will provide invaluable information conversation where one person, the interviewer, is seeking responses for a particular purpose from the other person, the interviewee”. The interview is a flexible tool for collection, enabling the use of verbal and non-verbal. The interview is a constructed rather than a naturally occurring situation, therefore the researcher has as obligation to set up, and abide by, the different „rules of the game’ in an interview as mentioned by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007).

The purpose of an interview is to test or develop hypotheses, to gather first hand data, and the interruptions such as people knocking on the door and telephone calls should be minimised.

3.5.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher chose to use semi- structured, face-to-face interviews to corroborate data emerging from other data sources, which is the document analysis of the NCS and the NPDE SS learning material, which allows the participant to answer a set of predetermined questions. (Ezzy, 2002: 45) argues that to “gain access to people’s ideas and thoughts, their perceptions of change and their fears and concerns in their words rather than in the words of the researcher” and this influenced the decision to use semi-structured interviews. The researcher therefore interviewed the author of the SSE distance learning material that was used by the NPDE students of UKZN.

The researcher endeavours to gain additional information by means of the interview. Holstein and Gubrium (2003) describe interviewing as a unique form of conversation, which provides the researcher with empirical data. A benefit of conducting face-to-face interviews is that it allows the interviewer to gain the cooperation of the participants Leedy and Omrod, (2001).

The researcher recorded the interview using a digital recorder, and supplemented it with the use of handwritten notes.

The use of semi-structured interview was conducted with the author of the NPDE SS IP learning guide. Before conducting the interview, the researcher assured the participant of confidentiality and requested the participant sign the declaration of consent. The interview questions were designed to elicit specific information about the NPDE SS IP learning material. The researcher contacted the participant, introduced herself as an M.Ed student who was currently writing her dissertation and requested some time in which she could briefly outline the focus of the study. Permission to conduct a one-to-one interview with the participant was requested, and the participant then obliged and further discussions continued with the researcher requesting the participant to suggest a convenient date, time and venue in which the interview would be conducted. The researcher also asked the participant consent in order to make use of a digital voice recorder, to which the participant agreed upon.

When the researcher arrived at the university to interview the participant, she had a pre-planned interview schedule, digital recorder and a notebook. The atmosphere was very relaxed and she introduced herself again, giving a background to the study and then requested permission once again for the use of the digital voice recorder, and informed the participant that his participation was voluntary and he could feel free to withdraw from the study at any time without any pressure from the researcher. Once again, the researcher guaranteed that all information would be kept confidential. Thereafter she began interviewing the participant. Throughout the interview the digital recorder was used to ensure all the data gained was recorded and preserved for analysis. Once the interview was completed the researcher thanked the participant and expressed her gratitude and appreciation for taking time off his busy schedule to accommodate her.

3.5.2 Document analysis of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) - Social Sciences and the NPDE SS learner material.

Document analysis is regarded as an unobtrusive technique, in that one can observe without being observed Krippendorp, (2004). It focuses on looking at data from different angles with the intention of identifying key ideas in the text that will assist the researcher to understand and interpret the data. Document analysis is also referred to as being an “inductive and iterative process, whereby the researcher aims to look for similarities and differences in the text that could corroborate or disconfirm a phenomenon,” (Maree, 2007: 101). (Bailey, 1994: 296) states that document analysis has several attractions; it can allow the researcher to reach inaccessible subjects or persons. But conversely documents also bring difficulties, they might be highly biased and selective, as they were probably not intended to be written as research data, but were written for a different audience and context. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest that when conducting a document analysis, a series of questions must be asked depending on the context and the writer.

Here are some of the questions the researcher focused on when analysing the context of the two documents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 202):

- ❖ What is the document and where has the document come from?
- ❖ When was the document written and what kind of a document is it?
- ❖ What is the document and what is the focus about?
- ❖ What are the political and social contexts surrounding the document?
- ❖ What was the original agenda that the document served?
- ❖ What does the document both include and exclude?
- ❖ What does the document’s author take for granted in the readers?

The researcher focused upon these few questions when analysing the writer of the document (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 202).

- ❖ Who wrote the document?
- ❖ What can be inferred about the writer?
- ❖ What were the interests of the writer?
- ❖ What were the position, knowledge ability and status of the author?
- ❖ What does the document say about the writer?

The above-mentioned questions played a significant role in assisting the researcher while analysing the data.

3.5.3 Discourse analysis

“Discourses can be regarded as sets of linguistic material that are coherent in organisation and content and enable people to construct meaning in social contexts,” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 389).

In offering an explanation the researcher had read a few books and decided to choose the works of Maree (2007), as his discussions are beautifully explained and easily understood. Discourse analysis can be used when studying and analysing written texts, interviews, and spoken words. Discourses are used in everyday texts for building power, knowledge, for regulation and normalisation, for the development of new knowledge and power relations (Maree, 2007: 102).

Discourse analysis is conducted with working with the document or interview, applying the following questions (Maree, 2007: 112).

- ❖ How is the text shaped by what it does in the world, what is it about, how is it related to the world of the audience?
- ❖ How is the text shaped by what human language is like in general, and by what the text originator’s particular language is like?
- ❖ How is the text shaped by who the audience is, who the speaker is, what the relationship between speaker and audience is?

- ❖ How is the text shaped by what people expect to hear in this context, how they expect it to be said, what they expect it to be meant to mean?
- ❖ How is this text shaped by its medium?
- ❖ How is the text shaped by purpose, intention, or by what speakers are trying to accomplish?

Discourse analysis is conducted by following a number of steps Patton, (1990). Firstly begin by reading the text in an uncritical manner, like an ordinary reader. Then it will be reread in critical terms applying the above-mentioned set of questions to it. In doing this, the researcher would be able to locate the type of text, e.g. is it a policy document, or is it a political speech (Maree, 2007:112). Finally engage in analysing the sentences, words and phrases and deconstructing the text, enables the researcher to analyse the power elements in the text. Using these guiding questions and processes, the researcher did the discourse analysis to explore how the text (SSE distance learning material) was developed and represented in the learning material and what influenced the way it was presented in the learning material.

3.6 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

There is “no single or correct way in which to analyse and present qualitative data,” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007: 461), but the researcher should abide by the principle of fitness for purpose. The researcher should be clear in what he or she wants the data analysis to do and this will determine what kind of analysis is to be taken. Good data analysis depends on the researcher’s understanding of it, and encourages the reading and rereading of the text or interview. Although interviews have been transcribed, they must be listened to several times until a clear understanding is obtained. Qualitative data analysis could be said to be an ongoing and iterative process whereby the data collection, process, analysis and reporting are intertwined, whereby researchers often go back to the original notes and verify conclusions. The analysis of texts and narrative data must be guided by the rigour and procedures of the specific type of analysis that the researcher will follow, determining the way in which you collect your data (Maree, 2007, pp. 99-104).

Maree (2007) confers that qualitative data analysis is based on interpretative philosophy and focuses on establishing how participants make meaning by analysing their attitudes, understanding, feelings, knowledge and experiences. The researcher has transcribed the interview data with the author of the NPDE SS IP learning material and then analysed the data for common themes in order to answer the research questions. The data obtained was manually coded, compared, organised into workable themes and then analysed. The identification of the themes was influenced by the data that was produced. The data was therefore presented in three sections and the sections were influenced by the process of data production. The next chapter (chapter 4) will present a more detailed account of how the data was presented and analysed.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE DATA PRODUCTION PROCESS

Validity is an important factor to successful research; if a part of a research is invalid then it is worthless. Mayan (2001) goes on to describe validity as the accurate presentation of a particular context or event described by the researcher. “Reliability refers to the degree to which the reader can be convinced that the findings indeed occur as the researcher says they did,” (Durrheim and Wassenaar, 2002: 64).

Some researchers Lincoln and Guba, (1985) and Bassegy, (1999) are of an opposing view, in that they believe that reliability and validity do not apply to case study research. They (Lincoln and Guba in Johnson and Turner, 2003) used the term ‘trustworthiness’, and argued that it is imperative in qualitative research. They further went on to explain that ‘trustworthiness’ refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the reader that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to and the research is of high quality.

In this study, the researcher ensured trustworthiness through several processes. The first was to record the interview with the author of the SSE learning material. The transcription of the recorded interview provided the basis for the analysis supported by the field notes taken during the interview process (second step). The third was that the transcript was also given to the interviewee to check for correctness of the interview that was conducted.

Some authors suggest that this is a member check process that contributes to the trustworthiness of the data produced through the interview process. The document and discourse analysis process was guided by pre-defined questions that led the exploration. Hence trustworthiness of the data production and analysis thereof was ensured by keeping to these questions in the initial reading process. Minor adjustments to these questions were done in the second reading process to obtain deeper insights through the analysis process.

3.8 ETHICAL CONCERNS

The importance of research ethics is to ensure that the researcher adheres to the responsibility to the participants. The main ethical considerations according to De Vos (2002) are autonomy and ensuring no harm came to the participants.

The researcher has obtained ethical clearance from the research proposal and ethics committee of the Faculty of Education. Data collection procedures must be non-invasive.

The participant is informed that the information generated through this interview will be used for research purposes only. Ethical issues are often deemed resolved by procedures such as voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and absence of risk or harm, as well as the participant being informed by the researcher that one can withdraw at any time from the study.

Several aspects of ethical concerns were considered for this research study including confidentiality and anonymity. Burns (2000) is of the opinion that both the researcher and the participant must have a clear picture pertaining to the confidentiality of the results. The researcher's role ensured and guaranteed that the participant's information and responses shared during the study would be kept private and the results would be presented in an anonymous manner in order to protect the identity of the participant Maree, (2007). In reporting the findings the researcher ensured that the name of the participant was not revealed. Informed consent and voluntary participation was discussed with the participant and the researcher gave the participant the informed consent form to append his signature upon.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY AND DATA PRODUCTION PROCESS

There were several limitations involved in using the research design proposed. The researcher intended to interview both the authors, meaning the author of the geography component of the NPDE SS learning material as well as the history component, but was only able to interview the author of the history component. The SSE is largely constituted from the integration of geography and history. Further, the initial study was supposed to have included a tracer study element, interviewing graduates of the NPDE SS programme who were teaching, and finding out from them how the module improved their teaching and understanding of the SS learning area or whether there was no improvement.

The researcher contacted twenty NPDE graduates who promised that they would be part of the study but when the dates for the interview was set up, no one turned up. Despite several attempts to get these students to participate, no one responded. This tracer element would have been a useful data set to explore the impact of teacher learning through the SSE distance learning material. This tracer element could become the subject for further research.

The document and discourse analysis was not easy to conduct and coding and arranging them was extremely stressful and a daunting task for the researcher. The researcher had analysed two documents, namely the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) - Social Sciences and the NPDE SS learner material and felt overwhelmed by the process. Other documents could have been analysed to explore what learning and how learning became apparent through the distance learning materials. These documents could include students' assignments, module assignments and tasks and examination papers and students' answers. This would then have given a holistic picture of the distance education through distance education learning materials.

Considering document analysis of all relevant documents would have gone beyond the scope of a Masters' coursework research component of the study programme. Perhaps further study in these areas would provide greater depth of understanding of teacher learning through distance education learning materials.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the research strategies that were employed during the undertaking of the research. The data generation methods were discussed, as well as the issue of trustworthiness and ethical concerns, and the limitations pertaining to the research design had been justified. The following chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter the research design relating to the production of the data was presented. The choice of methodology and data production process was argued for in that chapter (chapter three) and through the methodological choices made; the data was produced for this study. This data set provided the basis for the data presentation and analysis thereof. In this chapter the researcher presents the data thematically within three sections. The first section presents data produced through the interview with the author of the learning material for the social science module within the NPDE programme offered at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. An analysis thereof suggests that there was an error in the conceptualisation of the social science curriculum as an integration of history and geography.

The second section of the chapter presents a global analysis of the social science distance learning material, suggesting that the structure of the distance learning material is biased towards content knowledge learning rather than how to teach the sections of social science. Further there seems to be a bias towards geography and that the learning philosophy employed in the design is a process from simple to complex learning.

The third section of the analysis chapter presents a fine-grained analysis of a unit of learning within the history section of distance learning material for social science education (SSE). This section of the analysis suggests that the focus of learning SSE is, as indicated in section two of the analysis, largely content knowledge rather than pedagogical content knowledge. This suggests that the SS distance learning material can realistically present subject content knowledge to learners in the school context and cannot be accommodated within a written learning material. The instruments that were employed to analyse the data were document analysis and content analysis. Content analysis is an “inductive and iterative process where we look for similarities and differences in text,” as articulated by Maree (2007: 101).

Looking at the data from different angles provided opportunities to identify key aspects in the texts and formed the first level of analysis. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) view content analysis as being unobtrusive. Verification of data and reanalysis is possible as the data is the texts. Document analysis provided the guidelines to extract the key aspects from the identified documents through pre-determined foci and questions.

4.2 SECTION ONE:

THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION INTERMEDIATE PHASE LEARNING MATERIAL

This section of the analysis was developed from the data produced through the semi-structured interview with the writer of the learning material. The author of the social science distance learning material was an experienced geography and history teacher and progressed onto being an associate professor at the university. He has taught history education for a number of years and is considered to be an expert in this field of study. Being the author of the learning material, he expressed his concern at the integration of history and geography into a social science curriculum.

“I have never been in favour of it, I have never been in favour of the SS learning area, I come from a more eh, traditional school of thought in terms of subjects, so I have been socialised and I have studied both History and Geography, that was my majors, and I was both a History and Geography teacher, I think the idea with a range of other things like civics etc eh, left one with a kind of a potjiekos or a stew, of a range of eh,um educational philosophy’s field etc, that did not blend together naturally, um, and what you ended up with is literally an area without a sound eh, philosophical or theoretical grounding, contrary to people’s, by people’s I mean teachers and learner’s identities, teachers have trained for a certain field etc, although it was novel to think of, you know there’s a new way of looking at the world in a inter and intra disciplinary manner.”

This concern expressed by the author plays out in the construction of the social science distance learning material as this learning book has clear and distinctive sections of geography and history with no indication of the integration, both in its

content as well as in its pedagogy. Hence, it would not be surprising to find the learning book arranged in the two distinctive sections.

The intention of the SSE curriculum, according to the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2002), is to integrate history and geography in a meaningful way to promote social justice, equity and redress among learners. These values are enshrined in our constitution, and the social science curriculum is one way in which these values could be developed among young learners in the transforming context. The implications of separating the SSE in clear, demarcated history and geography sections means that teachers trained to teach this newly introduced school subject will first learn history and then geography (or vice versa, depending upon how they are arranged in the text (learning book) and this defeats the purpose of integrating the geography and history of the country in a way that promotes these values learning from our country's history and geography. Rather, a newly conceptualised subject could have been conceptualised without categorising the learning into clearly demarcated history and geography sections but by drawing on the history and geography of our country. The aim was to achieve the agenda of this newly conceptualised school subject that was introduced into the South African school curriculum to redress the past inequalities, as alluded to by the author of the social science distance learning material:

“I think part of the motivation, ehh, and to move beyond the staleness of what history and geography is perceived to be and also at the same time emm, you know politically, something like history of South Africa had a really bad track record, where people might feel, if this is what history is about, then I don't want it as a subject err hum and for something like geography dealing specifically with the natural sciences component, you had a large failures of certain kind of departments in the past, so the idea is to change the kind of educational landscape through the political power in South Africa, and to say Hey, we don't need History or Geography, these are kind of Apartheid constructs, we needed something new, for the new South Africa, which is, also we must understand a bigger picture merging as new as a kind of new world that was emerging.”

The introduction, therefore of the social science school subject was more of a political move rather than a conceptual move as alluded to by the author of the social science learning material:

“I have a Doctorate in history and a Masters in history and I have a Masters in geography education. So, I’m well versed, I’d like to think in both subjects, and I like both subjects, that’s why I can’t for the life of me understand how you would put things that are so disparate, and you want to force them together.”

This is further entrenched when the author of the SS learning material suggested that it was more idealistic than practical given the poor context of prior training of teachers:

“... by the time we were writing, it’s extremely idealistic to think that at that stage any new ways of learning or OBE etc had really seriously taken route, specifically when you talk about teachers that were un or under-qualified , that are now entering the system that you now have to write materials for...”

Being idealistic in conception then raises questions of how one can conceptualise a learning material to re-skill un- and under-qualified teachers, firstly to achieve qualified teacher status and secondly to achieve content and pedagogical content knowledge of a newly introduced school subject. Hence it would not be unexpected that the first attempt at developing learning materials for this school subject would be to create one that has some familiarity with the old school subjects, in this case, history and geography:

“I tried to use what was called a broad OBE format but the kind of brief that I had received was that this was as a form of distance education, what I kind of adopted in writing the history material was to kind of try and route it in terms of what you would expect a good history teacher slash a historian to be able to do, in other words it is to move way beyond rote learning which is thanks to the school’s history project ... having taught history in that manner, and geography for that matter in that manner, as well, it was quite natural for me to move eh to a more kind of skills based, slash, how to do history at least in terms of the activities. These activities invariably needed to

be grounded ehh with a strong knowledge base, so in terms of the material eh, there is a fair amount of content...”

This kind of approach to developing learning materials for teaching a new school subject by un- and under-qualified teachers will most obviously result in the dominance of content knowledge rather than how the content would be taught, as alluded to be the author of the SS distance learning material, shown in the above quote. One of the reasons for this kind of approach to developing learning materials, especially for distance education as well as for un- and under-qualified teachers, would be to avoid complex learning. This is, the learning needed to be simple with a language that is accessible and a process that is easy to understand. Hence developing the SS distance learning material had to be structured and presented in a way that made it easier for the learner teacher to learn and understand.

“... I want to make quite clear, and what I don’t make excuses for, was that I wrote it in a certain manner, in a certain language style, which I think students should level up to and I think, and I’m not sure whether students think that it would of being easier if it was an integrated approach, but that’s the approach that teachers resisted throughout, that teachers did not wanna embark on in terms of teaching.

You had a clear geography section, and a clear history section, which is most probably in terms of difficulty most probably roughly, pitched at a textbook level, for grade 10 or 11 level. So, if you expect people who want to become teachers and study NPDE, I thought that the material was very accessible...”

Drawing from the interview data and analysis thereof, it is clear that the introduction of new school subject, the nature of disciplines that one draws from in conceptualising the new school subject and the kind of learners that would use the learning material to develop their knowledge and skills of the new school subject, is a complex issue that requires deep insights, political will and communicative skills to develop a robust, aligned and transforming learning material attractive enough to get the reader interested in developing both the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge required to teach this subject competently. The alternative would be the compartmentalised learning that is based on the contributing disciplines with a focus

largely on developing content knowledge, as is evident in the document analysis of the social science distance learning material developed to train un- and under-qualified teachers within an interim qualification that has its primary aim of bring un- and under-qualified teachers to a qualified teacher status.

4.3 SECTION TWO:

GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE (SS) LEARNING MATERIAL

4.3.1 The organisation of global learning across the social science learning material

The cover page has a simple design, displaying information such as NPDE Intermediate Phase, Human and Social Sciences and Economic and Management Sciences Learning Guide. Anyone picking up this learning guide would clearly know that this learning material is for the NPDE programme for the intermediate phase that is offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. However, the title is misleading, as this learning material is focused on SSE and not on SS and economic and management sciences. The table of contents also confirms that the content of this learning material comprises a section on history and a section on geography. There are no units of learning devoted to economics and management sciences.

The NPDE IP SS learning guide has the words Table of Contents written in bold print, with a larger font, to probably emphasise the importance of the table of contents to the NPDE learners. The headings are written using a bigger font in bold, while the rest of the information is written in normal print. The table of contents presents three units of intended learning, within which are the specific chapters with a list of items and page numbers that allows for a quick reference point. The information is scant and is meaningful only when one has read the details within each chapter, for example in Unit 2, Chapter 2 starts with “The map of South Africa” followed by a section on “Relief”. It is unclear from this initial reading of the content page how learning about the map of South Africa leads to a section on relief. This link is only realised when one reads the content of this chapter in Unit 2 of the learning.

It is also unclear what the distinction is between Unit 2 and Unit 3 as the cryptic titles of the subsections suggest that they are both related to aspects of geography.

The NPDE IP SS learning guide consists of a separate history section and a geography section. After scanning the entire NPDE IP learning guide the researcher found that the geography sections were emphasised more, in fact pages 1-72 deals with the history aspect and pages 73-181 deals with geography. It would be interesting to find out why there is a discrepancy between the integration of the two learning areas. The history component covers 40% of the NPDE SS module while the geography aspect of the module covers 60%. This suggests that more emphasis is placed on geography and lesser emphasis is placed on history.

Each chapter within the learning material has a short introduction followed by a section that presents the expected outcomes of the learning that is intended from the chapter. The chapters then present content knowledge of the focus of the chapter followed by tasks that the students are expected to do as part of their learning. Some chapters have more than one section of content learning and student tasks, suggesting that where more content knowledge is presented, more student tasks are presented so that students can learn segments of content knowledge and are assessed in these learning segments before they proceed to acquire more content knowledge. Each chapter ends with a small section, approximately a quarter of a page, on suggestions on possible ways to teach the content knowledge contained in the respective chapter. The structure of the chapters suggests that the intended learning through this learning material is on content knowledge rather than on the integration of content and pedagogic knowledge.

The absence of how to teach in the expected outcome presented at the beginning of each chapter supports the researcher's assertion that the focus of learning is largely on content knowledge. Possible reasons for this are that social science was a newly introduced learning area within the school curriculum and therefore the need to focus on content knowledge. Another possible reason could be that the students taking this module are practicing teachers who are assumed to have a wealth of knowledge about teaching methodologies and therefore could manage the teaching of social science based on their experiential knowledge.

One of the limitations of the global perspective of the SS learning guide is that it does not specify what sections are to be taught within the various grades of the intermediate phase. Hence teachers would need to rely on phase planning and year planning schedules to determine which sections, and in what order, they are to be taught. It seems clear from this analysis that the focus of learning is on content and not on pedagogy.

4.3.2. The history component of the learning material

(History) Unit 1 deals with Individuals in History, and this chapter takes the NPDE student from simple to complex leaning. Inductive learning is also being emphasised in this chapter. Prince and Felder (2006) are of the belief that inductive teaching and learning is an umbrella term that encompasses a range of instructional methods including inquiry learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, case-based and discovery learning. These methods are learner-centred, whereby more responsibility is being imposed on students for their own learning. These methods can also be regarded as constructivist methods, whereby students construct their own versions of reality rather than absorbing whatever is presented by the learner guide. Inductive teaching method takes the student from the specific to the general, while deductive teaching methods progress from the general concept to the specific.

Prince and Felder (2006) are of the opinion that when instructors implement inductive methods of teaching then they must familiarise themselves with best practice such as with scaffolding by providing extensive support and guidance when students are first introduced to the section. This is then followed by gradual withdrawal of support as students gain more experience and confidence. This is what inductive learning is about as proposed by Felder and Brent (2001); Felder and Silverman (1998); Tinkham and Kane (2003) and Montgomery and Groat (1998).

The history section of the SS learning material starts off with Unit 1 comprising of information and histories of famous South African leaders, most of whom the students in this module would be able to identify and be knowledgeable of.

These leaders include individuals such as Frederik De Klerk, Patricia De Lille, Stephen Biko and Albert Luthuli. This familiarity of the famous individuals in recent and present South African political history allows the learners (students) to identify with these individuals in terms of their recent contributions to the history of South Africa. F. W. de Klerk, together with Nelson Mandela, won the Nobel Peace Award, Albert Luthuli has a hospital named after him as well as the Durban ICC in Durban, and streets are named after Lenny Naidu and Stephen Biko. Many of the abovementioned heroes were involved in the fight for democracy and freedom for all South Africans and instrumental in the demise of the apartheid government. These famous people are mentioned in the old history books as well as the newer social sciences textbooks, as well as in newspapers.

From this vantage point, the students (of the NPDE programme) would be able to understand how individuals could become historical icons in South African history, what makes them historical icons and what learning could be achieved through these historical icons' contributions to South Africa.

Inductive learning seems to be adopted across the NPDE learning guide, as it seems to be the organising philosophy in the history section of this learning guide. This philosophy is evident across the chapters as well. Chapter two presents a historical account of communities and families, suggesting a learning move from individuals to families and communities, a construct which is consistent with inductive learning that progresses from simple learning to more complex learning. For example, learning about an individual, like Patricia De Lille, is much simpler than learning about the Cato Manor community that has more than one important historical issue to learn about.

Chapter two dealt with the history of communities and families. The sequence of this chapter is logical and coherent in that it elaborates on the first chapter. Here again inductive learning is privileged whereby the NPDE students move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Chapter two provides knowledge content and comprises of ten tasks, which require the student to provide opinions and explanations, substantiate their answers or their point of view, imagine an event and then describe their feelings, researching the history of community and family. Clearly, this emphasis builds on the

knowledge of how individuals (historical icons of chapter one), for example, has contributed to the history of South Africa, what relevance it has for the history of South Africa and how one could learn from these histories. In a similar vein, people could learn how particular communities have contributed to historical significance within South Africa, like resistance to dominant political forces through community actions, or communities that benefited from special emphasis projects that illuminate the intentions of community development. Noticeable is that particular individuals within communities emerge as historical icons in South African history as they engaged their communities towards development and became part of what is privileged in chapter one's learning – focus on historical individuals.

Chapter three dealt with the ancient civilizations of Southern Africa, Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe. This chapter, like the other two chapters, provides content knowledge and assessments in the form of tasks. Once again, the position of this chapter within the history section of the learning guide suggests that it follows the trends of inductive learning, shifting learning from the individual to communities to countries that are closely related in terms of both geography and political aspirations of liberation from imperialism.

Chapter four dealt with the history of transport. Transport is crucial in connecting communities and ancient societies and therefore becomes an important component in the history of communities and civilisations. Transport is well placed here in chapter four and relates to the three preceding chapters as well. This chapter is coherent and logical and inductive learning is being privileged, as it looks at the history and development of the earliest forms of transport, whereby people had to walk and carry their loads themselves. Thereafter they used animals, followed by land and the discovery of the wheel, water and air transport. Yet again, content knowledge is being accompanied by tasks. There are three tasks in this section, the first task comprises of eight questions, which include the student drawing a timeline, providing explanations and descriptions, as well as writing a two-page essay. The second task consists of ten questions, and here again, students are required to draw a timeline, provide explanations, opinions and write a paragraph, supporting their arguments with facts. The third task consists of seven questions, which include creating a date summary, providing opinions and writing a twenty-line report.

The structure of the history section of the learning material suggests that the intended learning is largely content knowledge and that the learning is organised from singular event or individual to more complex organisations, like communities.

4.3.3. The geography component of the learning material

Next, the researcher analysed the geography aspect of the NPDE SS learning guide. Before moving onto analysing Unit two, chapter one, the researcher attempts to clarify what is meant by a unit and a chapter. Unit in this learning guide is a broad topic, and is further divided into chapters. The history component of the learning guide has just one unit and is divided into four chapters, whereas the geography component consists of two units, which are then divided into chapters, for example, unit two, chapter one deals with the world map, direction and scale, which then moves on to chapter two, the map of South Africa. Unit three, chapter one, deals with population, resources and development, while chapter two looks at food, water and energy resources. Chapter three leads onto environmental issues and lastly, chapter four deals with human settlement patterns and cities in the developing world.

Unit two, chapter one, deals with the world map. The world view/world map is the basis for the geographer to know about the world and what is in it. The atlas is an indispensable tool to the geography teacher/student/learner. This unit is written around the use of an atlas, which shows the physical form of the earth's surface. This chapter also introduces the basic terminology and offers explanation of a grid, lines of longitude and latitude, sixteen main directions, scale, measuring distance, physical features, top view and cross section global circulation, world climate and biomes and political features. The student needs to know and understand these concepts in order to move on to chapter two. This section consists of seven tasks which all employ the use of an atlas, so for the student who has never studied geography before this section could be challenging. This section has a lot of information for the student to learn and apply, and includes the use of maths.

Unit two, chapter two, deals with the map of South Africa. There seems to be a coherent and sequential flow of knowledge from chapter one to chapter two, suggesting a learning move from the world map to the map of South Africa.

The writer makes use of deductive teaching methods which progress from the general concept to the specific. This chapter is relatively short and consists of three tasks, employing the use of the atlas to find lines of latitude and longitude. The intention of the writer of the geography component of the SS NPDE learning guide is that students must understand and be able to apply what knowledge they learnt in chapter one, and only then would they be able to engage and apply themselves with chapter two. This chapter sees the end of unit two, i.e. map work, and the use of the atlas, and moves on to unit three, which deals with another section, being population, resources and development.

Unit three, chapter one, deals with population growth, size and distribution and the concern with the human interaction with the environment in space and time. This section is concerned with the interaction of humankind within the global environment in space and time. This aspect does gel with the previous section and is not studied in isolation as it examines the increasing growth rate of the world's population and how this affects the earth negatively. There is a pie graph, line graph, bar graph and population pyramid, finding out the population growth rate. This section like the preceding section requires mathematical calculations. This is unlike the history aspect, which does not require mathematical calculations, rather essay writing, paragraph writing, studying of pictures and providing opinions.

Unit three, chapter two, looks at resources, which also include the natural physical environment, ecological and economical resources, renewable and non-renewable and sustainable development. This aspect ties up with the previous chapter as it also deals with issues that relate to the environment and human interaction. This section includes maps, tabulated data and diagrams to explain concepts.

Unit three, chapter three, deals with environmental issues, concept of ecosystem, global warming, soil erosion, depletion of the ozone layer, pollution, deforestation, and human impact on the ecosystems. There are some aspects relating to natural science as well. All the chapters in unit three thus far examined human interaction with the environment, and the negative affects, together with solutions such as sustainable development and nature conservation.

Unit three, chapter four, looks at human settlement patterns, urban and rural. This is the final unit and chapter of the SS IP NPDE learner guide. This chapter basically concludes as this unit dealt with population, resources, environmental issues and lastly human settlement patterns. The position of the geography component within the NPDE learning guide suggests that it follows the trends of deductive learning in that the deductive teaching methods progress from the general concept to the specific.

Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools) Policy – Social Sciences (2002) states that the knowledge focus for Grades 4-6 should include health and welfare and development issues, but these aspects have been excluded from the NPDE IP SS learner guide. It seems that the content, which has been privileged deals with map work and the use of the atlas. The researcher's experience of teaching social science in the intermediate phase of school, as well as some anecdotal evidence from colleagues, suggests that many of the students are experiencing and even failing these sections of the geography part of the syllabus. Hence, the construction of the SS learning material related to the geography section of the syllabus does not match what is expected of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Grade R to 9, but that due to the scope of the module, some sections of the geography curriculum are left out and that the sections that are included are those that have been perceived to be either difficult to teach or for learners to learn.

The assessment focus and structure of the geography component of the NPDE IP SS learning guide is unlike the history aspect which involves writing essays and providing opinions and looking at a picture and then writing about it or on it. The assessments here deal greatly with the use of the atlas and on how to locate coordinates, measuring distances between two points on a map, with reference to the maps, compiling a table with links of climatic types to vegetation types, using the physical map of South Africa to fill in the names of rivers, calculate the population growth, refer to the population pyramid and answer questions and write down solutions to problems of rural deforestation. These assessment focuses and structure require students to be focused and have a flair for the sciences and maths. This concludes the global analysis of the SS learning material and before moving on to section two, the researcher wanted to make mention of the changes brought about by the government of the day.

“The curriculum and school culture share a particular relationship with ruling class forms of social life and the power of the ruling class defines what counts as legitimate forms of school knowledge,” (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1986: 147). This could help explain the discarding of history and geography by the newly elected democratic government and the introduction of social sciences combining both these subjects. (Foucault 1979: 27) reiterates similar sentiments that „power and knowledge directly imply one another’ and power and knowledge are therefore correlative. Like the government introduced C2005, RNCS and NCS in having committed the education system to an outcomes-based education system, the emphasis is on learning areas rather than on discrete and separate subjects. They for example combined two discrete subjects into the SS learning area.

4.3.4. Concluding comments on the global analysis of the social science learning guide

The analysis of the global learning guide suggests that the learning of history and geography are compartmentalised. There is no evidence of the integration of these two dominant fields of study as envisaged by the curriculum conceptualisation. Further, there is no clear learning philosophy that informs the design of the learning material. Finally, the learning material is not comprehensive in both the knowledge focus (content knowledge and the teaching of the content knowledge) as well as what knowledge component is privileged, as this guide cannot provide learning to include grade specification, as well as the discrete number of content sections required of the social science school curriculum in the intermediate phase.

4.4 FINDINGS FROM THE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY COMPONENT OF THE SS LEARNING GUIDE

Unit 1, chapter 2, was selected as data for the analysis within this section. This was chosen because there was a preceding chapter and one could explore how one chapter leads into the next and if the next chapter makes reference to a previous chapter. This is important because it gives an indication if the intended learning is discrete or that it builds up from one to another in a meaningful way.

Ausubel (1963b) refers to this kind of learning as meaningful learning. An earlier chapter in the learning material would give an indication of what kinds of knowledge and learning are being privileged in the construction of learning material. For example, process knowledge could be emphasised in the early parts of the learning while subject content knowledge may be privileged in the latter parts of the learning material. While it is beyond the scope of this study to go into such details due to its delimits, other studies can pursue this line of inquiry. Hence an earlier chapter in the learning material was chosen for the analysis.

Unit 1, chapter 2 of the SS learning material is devoted to learning the history of Cato Manor, a local community on the outskirts of Durban city. It is very famous as a historical site and is promoted within Durban tourism as a must-see destination. Several sources of information are presented on the history of Cato Manor, and each source of information is followed by a task that students are expected to do. The sources of information include information from the Cato Manor Development Project, a former resident of Cato Manor, a play write, newspapers and photographs.

4.4.1 Summary of findings on the content and learning expected of each chapter within the SS learning material

Finding 1:

There seems to be a link between what was learnt in the previous chapter to what is expected to be learnt in this chapter.

While the foci include a remembrance of what happened in the previous chapter, it seems that the learning intended is one of process skills. That is, it uses information from the first chapter as exemplars of how one could construct the history of significant individuals. “..in the process of becoming a real historian you will then research the History of your own community ...” suggests that process skills are being privileged rather than subject content knowledge. Further, the intended learning philosophy is one of building up – i.e. a constructivist approach to learning that is meaningfully linked to the previous learning. This suggests that there is a learning plan in place when constructing the learning guide.

However, the order of the presentation of the expected outcomes of the learning within this chapter as well as the nature of the expected outcomes suggests a focus on becoming a historian, and this leads to the next finding.

Finding 2:

The construction of the learning through the presentation of content and task is vague with no direction on how the learning builds up.

The learning material is sketchily structured, with a vague introduction, expected outcomes that the learner may be able to do, meaning, how the learner is expected to use historical sources to study and write history, or be able to understand the interpretation of various historical sources or even conduct historical research in their own community and family. The rest of the chapter merely presents accounts of the history of Cato Manor, where each source of information is followed by student tasks and no commentary on how each of these sources could be evaluated and interpreted or how the various sources of information lead to the production of a balanced historical account of Cato Manor. It seems that the different information is just being presented from the different sources without showing how these sources could be used to study and write the history of Cato Manor as was the intention of this chapter – i.e. to develop historians. Hence while process skills have been the target of development, the chapter merely presents so-called “historical facts” from different sources.

Finding 3:

The tasks required of students are based on comprehension of the text presented by the source of information rather than on developing process skills.

“Select what you would regard as the five most important dates from the timeline...”

Is task 3 related to the first source of information on Cato Manor, suggests that identification and comprehension is being targeted for learning rather than becoming a historian. Further, the task assumes that the student knows what a timeline is and has constructed a timeline of events/moments of Cato Manor and an evaluation of such time lines.

Hence, how the build-up of learning is promoted through the task activities is unclear, suggesting that the learning is not constructivist but subject content focused.

Finding 4:

The concluding components of the chapter do not adequately allow for the demonstration of the expected outcomes of this unit of learning.

The two exercises that the students are expected to do at the end of this chapter focuses on the student developing historical accounts of their community and their family. The tasks attempt to develop historical research skills, but do not guide the student on how to evaluate and integrate the historical source of information in a way that presents a complete view of the history. One of the expected outcomes of this chapter requires that the student should learn how to interpret and understand the various historical sources but the learning of this skill is not evident in any of the tasks within the chapter.

4.4.2 Concluding comments on the content of learning in Unit 1, chapter 2 of the SS learning material

There is clear evidence for this micro-analysis of this chapter to suggest that there is a misalignment between the intended learning and the activities that should support this intended learning. The researcher feels that the learning material is attempting to do too many things. These include content knowledge, process knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and disciplinary research knowledge. It clearly signals a mismatch to developing teachers' ability to learn about the social science curriculum content and be able to teach this content to learners within the intermediate school phase

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the analysis of data that was presented thematically within three sections. The first section presented data produced through the interview with the author of the learning material for the SS NPDE module. The second section presented a global analysis of the SS distance learning material. The third section presented a fine-grained analysis of a unit of learning within the history section of the distance learning material for the SSE. The chapter that follows will present the key findings stemming from the data analysis and the deductions and recommendations thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having presented the data and the analysis thereof in the last chapter, this chapter provides a brief synopsis of the key research findings emanating from the data analysis and the implications and recommendations thereof. Recalling that the purpose of this study was to explore how the social science education subject for the intermediate phase of schooling was conceptualised as a distance education learning material and what learning was intended through this learning process. The research was also guided by the following research questions:

- 1. How was the NPDE learning material in social science education, intermediate phase conceptualised?**

- 2. How was learning of social science education promoted through the distance education learning material for the NPDE students?**

- 3. What learning within the social science education subject was being developed through the NPDE distance learning material?**

This chapter proceeds with a brief discussion of these key findings and concludes with some recommendations that may influence the construction of distance education learning materials.

5.2 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The key findings of the study are presented within three broad areas and are correlated to the three broad areas of the data analysis as presented in chapter four. The key findings also correlate to the three research questions presented in chapter one and reiterated in the introduction of this chapter.

5.2.1 Key finding 1

The analysis suggests that there was an error in the conceptualisation of the social science curriculum as an integration of history and geography. The author of the learning material as well as a document analysis of the learning material clearly shows that the construction of the social science distance learning material has clear and distinctive sections of geography and history with no indication of the integration, both in its content as well as in its pedagogy.

From this key finding two things emerge. The first is that the subject content and the intention of the social science education subject are lost through the conceptualisation and construction of the learning material. It is clear that there is no integration of history and geography as intended by the proponents of the social science education school curriculum. Teaching students history and geography separately merely reinforces the separateness of these two distinctive and traditional disciplines. The second is that pedagogy associated with teaching history and geography is quite separate and distinctive, thereby losing the essence of a newly conceptualised teaching subject. The implications of this finding is that the conceptualisation and construction of learning materials are crucial as a misconceptualisation and an inappropriate construction of the learning material may materially alter the intention and learning of subject content.

5.2.2 Key finding 2

The structure of the distance learning material is biased towards content knowledge learning rather than how to teach the sections of social science. Further there seems to be a bias towards geography and that the learning philosophy employed in the design is a process from simple to complex learning.

The implications of this kind of formatting of learning in a subject that was intended to teach teachers how to teach social science education are serious. Firstly, content knowledge of a subject is tentative and could change as new knowledge emerges. The production of new knowledge is ongoing and there is a rapid turnover of new knowledge. This means that the students would continually need to be exposed to new content knowledge on an on-going basis. Hence the dominance of content knowledge may compromise the intended learning outcomes of the module. It would also give the impression to the students that content knowledge is key to teaching effectively, and that the ability to teach this content is considered unimportant. The second implication of this formatting of the learning content is that integration of subject content knowledge is a difficult task for constructing learning materials.

The default position in this complexity of integration would be to teach each component separately and then expect the students to do the integration on their own. The seriousness of this is that this modelling of learning will be transferred onto their (the teachers taking this module) teaching style. This means that the teaching of social science education to school learners will follow the same separateness of the two distinctive disciplines of history and geography. The intention then of the social science education subject will be lost in the way teachers learn how to teach and in their (teachers) teaching of this subject.

5.2.3 Key finding 3

The focus of learning social science education through the distance learning material is largely content knowledge rather than pedagogical content knowledge. This suggests that the SS distance learning material can realistically present subject content knowledge to prospective students and that the teaching of this subject content knowledge to learners in the school context cannot be accommodated within written learning material.

This key finding is an important one as it relates to distance education. There is a limit to what learning is possible through the medium of studying learning materials. Students would find it extremely difficult to develop their pedagogical skills in teaching the content of a school subject and this is accentuated by the fact that this is a newly introduced school subject and that teachers have only experiential knowledge of teaching this subject. This means that the learning material must be supported by other forms of learning engagement. Hence, when one conceptualises distance education, especially when more than one kind of learning is expected (e.g. content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge), then more than one medium of instruction is needed. Other forms of learning and learner support are needed to complement each form of learning.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and analysis of this study and the literature reviewed on how learning and teaching of the integrated social science curriculum occurs within the National Professional Diploma in Education, the researcher is of the opinion that the following recommendations are imperative. The following recommendations are offered as strategies to improve how learning and teaching occurs within distance education learning materials.

Recommendation 1:

This study reveals a lack of alignment between curriculum intentions and the conceptualisation and construction of learning materials to support teacher learning. Based on this revelation, the researcher recommends that a team approach be adopted in the conceptualisation of learning materials and that the team must include, among others, persons who conceptualised the school subject (if it is a new subject) or subject advisors (if the school subject is an old one), an expert in teacher learning especially related to distance education, potential learners (i.e. teachers who may want to take up further learning through distance education) and curriculum experts. This team will then be able to address some of the concerns and findings emanating from this study.

Recommendation 2:

Noting that distance education learning materials have limits to what they can offer as part of a training, upgrading or reskilling programme, the researcher recommends that these limits be identified, acknowledged and addressed so that there would be alignment between what learning is intended and what is possible through the distance learning material. Hence, when students do embark upon distance education, they would be able to make appropriate decisions on what they want to learn and what they can learn through the medium of instruction that is available to them.

Recommendation 3:

The analysis clearly indicated that pedagogical content knowledge development through distance learning material is minimal. On the basis of this the researcher recommends that should the intention of the learning programme be on developing teaching skills, then the content learning materials need to be supported by other appropriate forms of learning.

5.4 SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER FUTURE RESEARCH

The analysis of the findings highlighted several areas for further research and development. Some of them include:

1. An analysis of students' experiences of learning a new teaching subject through distance learning modes of instruction. A tracer study of completers of this kind of learning programme is needed to explore the appropriateness of this form of teacher learning.
2. An integrated analysis of programme design, learning instructions and learning support materials would provide an opportunity to explore holistically a teacher development activity that could lead to effective teacher development.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a summary of the key findings of the study and a discussion of these key findings. Arising out of these discussions, the chapter presented some clear recommendations on how to improve the quality of distance education learning materials. This chapter, based on some of the identified limitations, presented areas for further research. The ultimate goal of presenting the chapter the way it was presented was to contribute further to the discourse on distance learning and learning materials for teacher development. This chapter, therefore, concludes this dissertation.

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Appendix A



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

22 SEPTEMBER 2009

Mrs. Seema Pudaruth (9 146776)
School of Education and Development
Education
Edgewood

Dear Mrs. Pudarath

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0613/09M

I wish to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has received full approval for the following project:

“An exploration of the learning experiences of recently graduated NPDE Social Science teachers (Intermediate Phase), and the subsequent application of this learning in the Social Science classrooms”.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

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

Yours faithfully

.....
PROFESSOR STEVEN COLLINGS (CHAIR)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor (Dr Carol Thomson)
cc. Mr. Derek Buchler

Appendix B:

Re: Consent to participate in research study.

Dear participant,

I am a registered student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Department of Education, Edgewood Campus. I am currently studying towards my Masters in Education degree. I am conducting a research study as part of the fulfilment for this degree and my supervisor is Prof. Labby Ramrathan.

My research topic is:

A Critical Analysis of Social Sciences Learning Materials in the National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

The purpose of this study is to explore how learning and teaching of the integrated social science curriculum occurs within the National Professional Diploma in Education by conducting a critical analysis of the SS LM in the NPDE at UKZN.

I would like to invite you to form part of this study by consenting to be interviewed on a -on-one basis. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any pressure from me to provide reasons. The information you provide here is strictly confidential. Any names mentioned would be substituted with pseudonyms to protect anonymity. All recorded data will be housed in a strong room by the researcher for a period of five years.

Please sign the attached form if you agree to participate in this study

Thanking you in anticipation

Seema Nundlall-Padaruth (Mrs)

0728704596

Appendix C:

Participation in research study:

DECLARATION OF CONSENT:

I.....
(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study, and I consent to participating in the research conducted by Mrs Seema Nundlall-Padaruth.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
DATE

Appendix D:

This semi-structured interview schedule is directed towards the authors of the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) intermediate phase social sciences learning material.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

The purpose of this tool is to explore how learning and teaching of the integrated social sciences curriculum occurs within the National Professional Diploma in Education by conducting a critical analysis of the social sciences learning materials in the National Professional Diploma in Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Good day sir, my name is Seema Nundlall-Padaruth and I would like to interview you. Would you mind if I use a digital voice recorder?

1. What are your views on the social sciences learning area? Do you think it would be in the interest of the NPDE teacher learners to study a module of history separately and geography separately? Would you say the best interest of the learner lies in studying the integration of these two subjects?
2. *Do you have an idea why the government wanted to include social sciences when the NPDE came about?*
3. Prior to C2005, RNCS, NCS, there was no SS, so did you come from a history or geography background?
4. The National Professional Diploma in Education, which was implemented in 2002, was envisaged by the National Department of Education as an interim qualification for the upgrading of un- and under-qualified teachers in schools.

So, it is a great challenge for graduates of the NPDE SS intermediate phase to meet policy expectations if they were educated under apartheid era, which according to Breier (2008) was a system that was highly discredited. She is of the opinion that the NPDE programme should have to engage with prior learning experiences of their students in order to show them how to renounce old habits of traditional learning, which included rote learning. How then did you cater for this during the writing of the NPDE learning guide?

5. I haven't seen anything about Indian History, Mahathma Gandhi, or the Indian arrival in South Africa. I'm teaching in a school that has about 98 percent of its learners coming from the neighbouring informal settlement. They know nothing about Gandhi and they felt that they were the only ones that were oppressed. I'm not sure whether the African teachers in the rural areas are telling them about these important aspects.

6. When did you begin to write this material?

7. What did you base your ideas on?

8. Were you and co-writer given a writer's brief?

9. How would you envision the teaching of social sciences?

10. Were you asked to consult with the learner textbook used for the intermediate phase? Did maybe one of the authors concentrate on the history aspect and the other geography, and on what basis were you chosen to write the NPDE learning guide?

11. How long were you given to write the NPDE SS learning guide?

12. What is your background, and on what basis were you chosen to write the NPDE SS intermediate phase learning guide?

13. In your opinion, to what extent does the SS learning materials reflect „best practice’ in terms of nationally recognised distance learning material?

14. How is SS ‚knowledge’ constructed in the learning materials?

15. What ideological discourses dominate, or are significantly absent, from these materials?

16. How are these discourses realised in the text?

17. The majority of the activities required the NPDE learners to express in their opinion what they felt, but sometimes they can’t actually put this down in words because they are not first language English speakers.

18. Was it offered in the eleven official languages?

19. While writing the SS NPDE learning material, did you take into consideration that majority of the NPDE teacher learners were second or third language English speakers?

20. How did you try to accommodate or neglect them?

21. In your opinion, would NPDE teacher learners who had never taught geography before now be in a better position to teach geography aspects such as map work sections after studying the learning guide?

22. Does the NPDE SS learning guide empower these teachers to implement the SS curriculum, 50% history and 50% geography?

23. What would happen if a NPDE student were not able to follow and understand the material with regards to the geography section? In this case history, were any alternate reading materials provided?

24. Have you written a revised SS NPDE IP learning guide? If the answer is no, then what is the reason for this?

Thank you for accommodating me in your busy schedule and for sharing your valuable time and patience with me. I deeply appreciate this kind gesture.