

**Grade 9 teacher attitudes towards Common Tasks for Assessment
(CTA): A Case Study of Economic and Management
Sciences (EMS) in two schools.**

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Grade 9 teacher attitudes towards Common Tasks for Assessment
(CTA): A Case Study of Economic and Management Sciences
(EMS) in two schools.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the standardised tests as administered in Grade 9 in the form of Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA). The main focus of the study was to understand the attitudes of Economic Management and Sciences teachers toward the CTA (EMS) and how they were engaging with the CTA (EMS) during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. The study was undertaken in response to my observation of the negative attitude of EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS) during the EMS workshops. The literature revealed that standardised tests have negative consequences such as the narrowing of curriculum, over-reliance on tests preparation materials, unethical test practices, unfair test results, unintended bias against population subgroups, increased tension and frustration in schools, increased grade retention, and regression of pedagogical practice. In responding to the pressure and stress associated with the standardised tests, teachers end up leaking test papers prior to test writing and gave answers to learners during the writing of tests. Teachers in ‘high-stakes testing’ environment tended to feel more pressure to increase test scores than their counter-parts in low- or moderate-stakes testing environments.

The data was generated through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and lesson observations. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the participants. Results indicated that: (1) teachers and learners experienced problems with the language used in the CTA (EMS); (2) the content of the CTA (EMS) was biased; (3) CTA (EMS) put pressure and stress on EMS teachers; and (4) the CTA imposed unfair curriculum expectations on EMS teachers. These problems made EMS teachers develop a negative attitude toward the CTA (EMS). It was also found that EMS teachers had difficulty in engaging CTA (EMS) during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. It is recommended that policy makers should regularly interact with schools in order to acquaint themselves with teachers’ experiences during CTA (EMS) administering. Furthermore they should take the views of the teachers into consideration during the policy formulation on CTA (EMS) administering.

If the policy makers continue to ignore the concerns of the EMS teachers and to distance themselves from the reality in schools as far as the CTA (EMS) administering is concerned, the implementation of assessment policy will remain an elusive reality.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, my three young children who had to endure life without me as I was busy with my studies at the university. Furthermore, it is dedicated to my caring mother Sarah and my two younger brothers, Myrone and Bezile who tragically succumbed to the strong currents of a raging Mabhikili river in September 1980, on their way from church. Incidentally, this is the same month in which I and my twin sister Alecia were born.

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- To my wife Hlengiwe and three children Nosipho, Khangelani and Sambulo, for their understanding and support and encouragements as I toiled the nights away in pursuit of knowledge.
- To God the father of all creation for being the ever-flowing river of energy and strength.

DECLARATION

I, Alec Wittie Sithole, declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any university.

Alec Wittie Sithole

Dr S.M. Maistry (Supervisor)

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

AYP	Assessment Year Plan
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CTA	Common Tasks for Assessment
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
L.B.O.T.E	Language background other than English
LP	Learning Programme
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
STD	Secondary Teachers Diploma
WS	Work Schedule

CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teachers toward the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) and how they engage with CTA (EMS) in their 'normal' course of curriculum development. According to Wilmot (2005), in 2002, the implementation of Curriculum 2005 started in Grade 9, which is the exit level of General Education and Training (GET) band of the National Qualifications Framework. In the same year, a new national assessment system, leading to the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) was introduced. The Grade 9 assessment model follows trends in assessment evident in international literature. Firstly, the model's outcomes-based orientation places assessment at the heart of teaching and learning. Teachers are told to start with outcomes before selecting the assessment type and activity. Teachers must have 'clarity of focus', that is, a clear picture of what is expected at the end, and there must be a shared understanding of what is required (Department of Education, 2002a, p.3).

Secondly, the Grade 9 model has a heavily weighed school-based teacher assessment component, known as Continuous Assessment (CASS), which counts for 75% of the learner's mark and an externally set component, the CTA, which counts for 25%. The CTA consists of Section A (the developmental component) and Section B (a validation component written under controlled circumstances). CASS constitutes a major part of high-stakes assessment, *i.e.* an assessment linked to formal qualification, namely, the GETC. The significance of our first national assessment, the GET certificate, as a form of 'high-stakes' assessment needs to be understood. As the exit point of Level 1 of the NQF, and as a pre-requisite for admission to the Further Education and Training (FET) band, the GETC has considerable currency. Firstly, the results of the GET assessment will provide the state with a powerful indicator of how well provinces, districts and schools are faring in relation to the expected national standards. According to Wilmot (2005), the introduction of a national assessment in Grade 9 heralds in a new era of increased

accountability to the state of individual schools and teachers, as is the case with the matriculation examinations.

It has long been argued that traditional or standardised assessment strategies often disadvantage many students due to socio-political and cultural aspects of the procedures used. It has also been argued that traditional assessment has often been misused and that its purpose is not clearly related to students' needs. Tyler (in Horowitz, 1994), as early as 1942, argued about the inequities of assessment procedures and proposed a move away from the traditional assessment methods of standardised testing towards more processed, focused, alternative and authentic assessment methods.

The disadvantages of traditional assessment strategies, which are experienced by many learners, often impact on how teachers develop the school curriculum. Furthermore, they are likely to impact on teachers' attitudes towards traditional types of assessment. The form of traditional assessment implemented in Grade 9 is the Common Tasks for Assessment, which is the focus of my research. Through the course of this research project, my aim is to understand the attitudes of Grade 9 EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS). Furthermore, to understand how they engage with the CTA (EMS) in their 'normal' course of curriculum development.

1.2 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes of selected EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS).

1.3 Critical Questions

- What are the attitudes of selected EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS)?
- How do EMS teachers engage with the CTA (EMS) in the 'normal' course of curriculum development?

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The focus of the study is the CTA for EMS in Grade 9. The intention is to understand the attitudes of selected EMS teachers toward the CTA for EMS. Further, I aim to understand how they engage with the CTA (EMS) in their 'normal' course curriculum development. The schools that were selected were a multiracial school and a predominantly African school. In the multiracial school, the majority of learners derive from the African community, yet the majority of teachers were Indian. In the African school, all teachers were African. In the multiracial school, all participants were Indian teachers and in the African school, the participant was an African teacher. The educators were chosen on the basis that they were Grade 9 EMS teachers and were in a good position to provide data that answered the critical questions.

1.5 Rationale for the Study

Since the inception of the CTAs in 2002, I have noted a negative attitude being displayed by EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS) in the District workshops that I have attended. As the coordinator of curriculum development in my school, I have also observed poor learner performance in the CTA (EMS). Through this research project, I wish to gain a deeper understanding of the attitudes of EMS educators toward the CTA (EMS). In my general conversations with EMS teachers, I observed that they have difficulty in engaging with the CTA (EMS) in their 'normal' course of curriculum development. It is my intent to embark on an in-depth study of how teachers engage with the CTA (EMS) in their 'normal' course of curriculum development. Studies on CTA administration are lacking in South Africa. Ngubane (2002) evaluated the Outcomes-Based Education policy in public schools within the Empangeni Region, where the focus was on primary schools. The study did not focus on the CTA for Grade 9. Similarly, in a study carried out by Naidoo (2006) on the impact of the socio-economic contexts on the curriculum practices of Grade 9 teachers, the focus did not fall on the CTA. In another study carried out by Kondowe (2003), the focus was on the extent to which Grade 8 educators understood Outcomes-Based Education and the extent of their readiness to implement

Curriculum 2005. I noted that in the findings of these studies there was no mention of teacher attitudes toward the CTA. In light of this gap in research, I decided to undertake a systematic study to understand the attitudes of selected teachers toward the CTA, with the focus on EMS.

The findings from this research could be useful to schools chosen as research sites, examiners of the CTA for EMS, as well as the EMS Provincial and National curriculum developers. These findings are also likely to highlight several new research questions that could be explored in the future. The focus of the study is to gain an understanding of how Grade 9 EMS teachers experience CTA (EMS) and what their likely perceptions and attitudes toward them might be.

1.6 Research Methodology

A qualitative research design was used in this research project. The study thus gathered and interpreted qualitative data, with interpretivism chosen as a guiding methodology. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling was used. This research design allowed me to understand the attitudes of the Grade 9 EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS) and how these educators were engaging with the CTA for EMS in their 'normal' course of curriculum development. In the process of conducting research, I opted to base the study on symbolic interactionist principles. I decided to use this approach in the study as I was trying to elicit a broader understanding of the process of 'human interaction', since it focuses on the meanings, actions and interpretations derived through social interaction. Qualitative methods and procedures were used in attempting to understand teachers' attitudes towards the CTA (EMS) and also, how they were engaging with the CTA (EMS) in their development of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis. In this research, interviews, observations and document analysis were chosen as research instruments used to generate data. These multiple instruments assisted in triangulation of the data received.

The interviews were conducted with two Grade 9 EMS teachers from two schools. These were followed up by lesson observation of the interviewed teachers. The final means of

obtaining data was through document analysis. The documents for analysis were the selected teachers' portfolio files and assessment year plans, as well as learners' portfolio files. During the interpretation and analysis of data, a process of open-coding was used.

1.7 Preview of the chapters to follow

1.7.1 Chapter Two

This chapter provides an outline of the broad research conducted in areas that shaped this study. It begins with an analysis of existing, relevant literature about research conducted on standardised testing. It also presents literature on how standardised testing impacts on curriculum development. The form of standardised testing that is the area of focus is the CTA, a standardised testing tool at Grade 9 level. It concludes with a reflection on the implications of the literature review for the purposes of the present study.

1.7.2 Chapter Three

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework, research design and methodology that has been employed in order to generate data for this study. Qualitative data was generated through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis. A detailed discussion of the qualitative design, methods used to conduct research and ethical considerations will be provided.

1.7.3 Chapter Four

This chapter provides a presentation and analysis of findings based on the research questions. It begins by providing a thick description of the empirical field and the two cases under investigation. This initial process is meant to give an understanding of the context in which the data was generated. It then presents data that answers the two critical

questions which this study aims to address. The chapter concludes by giving an overview of the generated data.

1.7.4 Chapter Five

This chapter offers a synthesis of the arguments developed and provides recommendations that have been derived from the study. It concludes by highlighting areas of research that need further investigation.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an outline of the purpose, scope, rationale and methodology of the research study. It concludes with an overview of the research study by providing a preview of the chapters to follow. In the next chapter, a detailed review of literature on high-stakes tests will be embarked upon.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I provided an introduction to the study by explaining the rationale and the critical questions. In this chapter, I will engage in a review of the relevant literature. The literature review in this chapter mainly focuses on research undertaken internationally since local research on high-stakes tests is limited. A review and consultation of the available relevant literature is necessary not only to contribute valuable information to my own research, but also to enable me to discern what gaps there may be in current literature, as well as to address these issues, so that this dissertation may hopefully bridge some of these areas in the field. The review will be undertaken beginning with a description and the background of standardised tests, which are also referred to as “high-stakes tests”, a preferred concept in this dissertation. An understanding of the literature in the field is important since the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) for EMS form the focal point of my research. The literature will cover aspects such as high-stakes tests and curriculum narrowing, high-stakes tests as it relates to ‘teaching to test’, teacher pressure, and bias, pedagogy and teacher attitudes.

2.2 High-stakes tests

Traditional assessment is the use of testing as a form of assessment that focuses on the achievement of learners at a particular point in time. This is referred to as the ‘snap shot effect’ (Walsh & Weir, 1999). Traditional assessment takes the form of high-stakes tests, standardised tests, public or external examinations. According to Rehmani (1998), the purpose of public examinations was clearly that of promotion, selection and certification and indicates the extent to which learners have covered a prescribed syllabus. These tests are normally set and marked externally, such as the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations in South Africa. Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) for Grade nine learners are set externally but are administered and marked internally at school level. The

purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes of Economic and Management Sciences teachers towards the CTA and how they engage with CTA for EMS in the 'normal' course of curriculum development. In 2002, the implementation of C2005 started in Grade 9, the exit level of General Education and Training (GET) band of National Qualifications Framework (DoE, 2006). The CTA is the final examination for Grade 9, the exit phase of the General Education and Training (GET) phase. The 'Common Tasks for Assessment' is an instrument used for external assessment purposes in Grade 9. They are set in all learning areas, including the Additional Languages (DoE, 2002a).

High-stakes tests are those tests that are generally set and marked externally. Herman and Golan (1991) define high-stakes testing as testing that promotes pressure and behavioural change by associating test results with important consequences. Standardised tests are norm-referenced tests that compare individual scores to those of others at the same grade level, also known as the 'norm', and usually only a small sample of content is tested (Ballard & Bates, 2008). Moreover, the tests are sometimes defined in terms of their importance. According to Langenfeld, Thurlow and Scott (1996), a test can be considered high-stakes if the results of the test have perceived or real consequences for students, staff or schools. The term 'high-stakes testing' refers to the test "for which the consequences of a student's score are extremely serious" (Janesick, 2001: 112).

Jones and Egley (2004) describe high-stakes tests as those tests that have serious consequences for students, teachers, as well as school systems, such as student retention, school ratings and monetary incentives. Furthermore, these tests are usually used as the basis for taking major decisions which affect stakeholders in the education system. Jones & Egley (2004) elaborates that high-stakes tests are those tests that have consequences that are serious for teachers, students and other relevant stakeholders. These tests are normally introduced with the intention of improving the standard of education in the country concerned. Herman and Golan (1991) assert that standardised testing has assumed a prominent role in efforts to improve the quality of education in American

schools. Standardised testing is used for various purposes, such as an evaluation of the performances of educators and schools. These tests scores are utilised by policy makers to evaluate schools, teachers and educational programs (Herman & Golan, 1991).

Initially, standardised tests did not impact in any way on curriculum development in schools. Shepard and Dougherty (1996) proffer that traditionally standardised tests of achievement were used as a means of reporting to parents, in addition to monitoring state and district trends; further, they had no effect on instruction because little attention was paid to them by the teachers. It was in the 1960s that teachers began to take note of standardised tests. According to a United States survey conducted by Goslin in 1967, teachers only infrequently used the results of the standardised tests and reported virtually no influence of test content on teaching methods or course content (Shepard & Dougherty, 1996). It was in the 1970s and onward that policymakers in the United States began to deliberately impact curriculum development in schools through standardised tests. This picture changed, however, beginning with the ‘minimum competency’ testing movement in the 1970s and educational reforms in the 1980s, whereby reformers intentionally began to change instruction by imposing tests (Shepard & Dougherty, 1996).

2.3 High-stakes testing and curriculum narrowing

Like any other educational innovation, standardised testing and the curriculum are interlinked. In the literature it is clear that the standardised tests affect curriculum development by narrowing it. Curriculum narrowing refers to the teaching of some parts of the content of the curriculum and the non-teaching of other parts of the curriculum content. The testing culture and high-stakes status are linked to a heavy reliance on standardised tests as the principle source of curriculum content (Peterson & College, 2005). Public examinations are conducted in many countries and have been considered to play a significant role in determining what goes on in the classroom in terms of ‘what’ and ‘how’ teachers teach and students learn; subsequently, they can have an impact on

both teaching and learning (Rehmani, 1998). Other studies point to standardised tests' narrowness of content, or their lack of congruence with curricula and instruction (Herman & Golan, 1991). Standardised testing also influences how teachers develop the curriculum. Moreover, the negative consequences of standardised tests are the narrowing of curriculum, over-reliance on test preparation materials, unethical test practices, unfair test results, unintended bias against population subgroups, increased tension and frustration in schools, increased grade retention, and regression of pedagogical practice (Slomp, 2008).

Standardised tests sometimes cause teachers to focus on the test's content at the expense of teaching the curriculum in totality. Noble and Smith (1994) found that teachers emphasized the exact content of the mandated test rather than the underlying concepts and goals around which the test was constructed. According to Volante (2004), the high-stakes testing procedures have interfered with the application of both learning and thinking skills in North America. These tests tend to make some subjects more important than others. Volante (2004) points out that teaching to test not only reduces the depth of instruction in specified subjects, but also narrows the curriculum so that non-tested disciplines receive less attention during the school day.

Sometimes, teachers involved with standardised tests plan their lessons to be in line with the content of the previous tests (Herman & Golan, 1991). Moore and Waltman (2007) found that in a high-stakes situation, teachers reported a narrowing of the curriculum, but that not all teachers considered this to be a bad thing. Shepard and Dougherty (1996) argue that the standardised tests would have a deleterious effect on the quality of education by narrowing the focus of instruction to only tested content and by encouraging the presentation of content as fragmented bits.

2.4 Standardised tests and ‘teaching to test’

Schools have been known to align the curriculum, as well as the focus of teaching, to the content and structure of the test (Walsh & Weir, 1996), in order that students might perform well on the tests. Standardised tests therefore cause teachers to engage in the ‘teaching to test’ phenomenon. Teaching to test is a phenomenon where the teaching mirrors the objectives of the standardised tests. This means that the focus of the teacher is on preparing learners for the test. Teaching to test is simply considered good instruction if test items mirror the given objectives (Noble & Smith, 1994). A study of the ‘No Child Left Behind (NCLB)’ programme in the United States revealed that it encourages the reduction of schooling to test preparations. In a study conducted by Janaik (1997), it was found that standardised tests narrowed student learning to what is being tested. A similar finding on how the standardised tests impact on what is being taught in class is evident in the research carried out by Marvin, Thomas, Ivy and George (1991). They found that the teaching was being narrowed to those topics that were likely to appear in the examination. In a study of Economics teaching in South African schools, Maistry (2001) reflects on how students were adopting a memorisation approach to learning Economics at an expense of the development of their critical thinking capacities.

Teachers, in the process of developing their curriculum, tend to refer to previous tests to ensure that their curricula encompass all or most of the test content (Herman & Golan, 1991). It may well be the case that the pressure on teachers to have learners perform well in the standardised tests has prompted them to align the content of what they teach to that of these tests. In a study carried out in Arizona schools, it was found that teachers replaced teaching with test preparation activities two or more months before the test schedule (Noble & Smith, 1994). When a curriculum is narrowed, content knowledge is more likely to be emphasised over higher thinking skills. In a study of standardised testing within a secondary education phase in Indonesia, it was discovered that the pressure of having to ‘make learners pass’ compelled the teachers to teach students to

answer questions, which they sometimes rehearsed during the extra hours after school (Syahril & Lesko, 2007).

In some instances, test preparation results in learners being forced to memorise and cram those aspects that their teachers deem necessary for test preparation. Additionally, Bishop (1995) argues that preparation for high-stakes tests often emphasises rote memorisation and cramming. Drill and practice masquerade as teaching. A similar view is expressed by Volante (2004) on the link between high-stakes tests and memorisation. Teaching to test emphasises memorisation more than the application of skills and knowledge into a novel situation (Volante, 2004). In a study carried out in Canada, it was found that in courses where students were being prepared for external examinations, the writing of assignments was more narrowly focused on both the audience and the type of writing required by the external examination (Slomp, 2008). The aspects that were not examination related were not taught.

Teaching to test and the teaching process are intertwined. The research by Jones & Egley (2004) reveals that high stakes tests result in an increase in the phenomenon of teaching to test. It is true that through teaching to test, some teachers succeed in making students do well in the standardised tests, although their depth of knowledge may, arguably, be shallow. Bishop (1996) argues that some methods of teaching permit students to do well in examinations without recourse to higher levels of cognitive activity. Teachers believed the main reasons for teaching about the test were to get good scores on state-mandated tests, and notably, the fact that the test scores are published as public information creates competition within and among schools (Ballard & Bates, 2008).

The phenomenon of teaching to test seems to be a phenomenon that is inseparable from the institutions where standardised tests are the order of the day. Herman, Klein and Wakai (1997), in their research involving students and teachers in Los Angeles, found that teaching-to-the-test has resulted in a distortion of the curriculum for many students, narrowing it to basic, low-level skills. The use of tests as an accountability mechanism appears to define the curriculum very often, with substantial attention given to the form

and format of the questions on the test. Furthermore, regardless of the school's poverty level, a great deal of class time is devoted to reviewing and practicing for state tests, increasing in intensity until testing is completed (Moon, Callahan & Tomlinson, 2003).

In the current study, I examine teachers' attitudes toward a high-stakes test in a South African context and the extent to which they engage with such tests in their normal curriculum, within the lens of EMS.

2.5 Standardised tests and teacher pressure

Teachers experience pressure that is associated with the administering of standardised tests. Teachers who are involved in administering such tests feel a sense of pressure to increase the pass rate. The pressure that is associated with the quest to increase the pass rate has resulted in some teachers and administrators engaging in a number of activities, some of which are unscrupulous. Reflecting on research carried out in districts in Arizona in the United States, the pressure of high-stakes assessment led to the alignment of the entire curriculum to the standardised tests (Noble & Smith, 1994). A number of teachers and school administrators have been reported to facilitate cheating practices during the national exit examination. In Indonesia (Syahril & Lesko, 2007), it was found that the pressure of aiming to make learners pass resulted in the following practices occurring:

- Firstly, papers were leaked prior to the examinations and sometimes, learners were asked to come early in order to copy the answers
- Secondly, during the examination session, answers were given to learners either through the distribution of small papers, text-messaging to students' hand phones, or by having the answers written on the chalkboard or read to the whole class
- Finally, the examination supervisors revised students' answers after the

examinations, prior to the packing of the papers.

Test scores are sometimes used as the yardstick for deciding upon the readiness of learners to progress to the next grade. Such dependency on these tests is likely to put pressure on both teachers and learners. Herman and Golan (1991) argue that the pressure of accountability felt by teachers in terms of improving students' test scores emanates from the fact that decisions get taken based on learners' performance. Findings from research conducted by Moore and Waltman (2007) revealed that teachers in high-stakes testing environments tended to feel more pressure to increase test scores than teachers in low or moderate-stakes testing environments.

2.6 Standardised tests and bias

Many of the traditional assessment tests that are currently in use are culturally, socially and to a certain extent, gender-biased and do not assess students equally (Monty, Neill & Medina, 1989). These traditional tests are set externally and only tend to test the knowledge aspect of learners' aptitude. Furthermore, these tests are said to be biased in terms of culture and knowledge in that they normally favour a certain group of learners in schools (Walsh & Weir, 1999). The standardised tests are normally devised by the dominant racial grouping in any society, which in turn, tends to favour learners from that racial grouping. Since these tests were devised by members of the dominant culture and social grouping, those being middle to upper class, the questions and knowledge required to complete the test reflected the understanding of culture of this group (Garcia & Pearson, 1999). Standardised testing therefore results in the creation of inequalities for minorities and disadvantaged groups, *viz.* the Aboriginal, Native American, African American, Latino and lower social classes (Walsh & Weir, 1999). In Australia, standardised tests have re-emerged and are used for the purpose of monitoring the standards of schools, as well as serving as a means of curriculum reform also (Walsh & Weir, 1999).

The 'norming' process may be described as the implementation of a trialing procedure in the development of new tests, in which a randomly selected group is utilised as participants (Welsh & Weir, 1999). In South Africa, this process is currently underway, where a sample of 100 schools in KZN and a total of 1300 schools nationally (which is approximately 10% of schools offering Grade 9) is chosen to administer the CTA; as such, they become the first group of Grade 9 learners to be issued with the Certificates (DoE, 2009b).

The critics of standardised tests have complained that these tests are unfair, since they normally contain questions that require a certain set of knowledge and skills more likely to be possessed by children from a privileged background (Kohn, 2000). In the South African context, a similar situation prevails; the education system seems to favour South Africans of white descent, who comprise a minority, and who benefited greatly under the apartheid education system. Particularly, there is evidence of this form of bias within formative assessment in the South African education system. In South Africa, the historically advantaged schools were flourishing with C2005 and those mostly from disadvantaged communities appeared to be floundering (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). The legacy of the apartheid education system still lingers on, in that even the current educational innovations are still tilted in favour of those who benefited under the apartheid rule.

In addition, the design of the new curriculum seems to have a particular teacher and school in mind, mainly the kind deriving from ex-Model C schools (Kgobe & Mbele, 2001). A similar view is echoed by Harley & Wedekind (2004) who argue that C2005 as a pedagogical project is working counter to its transformational social aims as it is widening, not narrowing, the gap between the formerly historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools. It may well be the case that learners from well-to-do families are likely to perform better in these tests. The standardised tests provide a powerful advantage to students whose parents are affluent and well-educated and it is little more

than ironic to rely on these biased tests to “close the gap” between rich and poor (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). The same sentiments are echoed by Jones & Egley (2004), who argued that it is unbelievable that low socio-economic schools with high mobility can be expected to compete with schools from affluent areas.

Since learners from low income communities are affected negatively by the standardised tests, so are the teachers who work in such communities. Learners who are negatively affected by the curriculum innovations are likely to drop out of school. “The reality in the American education system is that, in the last few years, with the increased emphasis on accountability and more high-stakes testing, the consequences of poor performance on standardised tests for students and for educators have grown steadily more serious” (Wagner, 2003: 667). He also argues that the high-stakes testing approach to change appears to be increasing the failure rate and drop-out rate in American schools, and that a further widening of the gap is forming between the education ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, which stands in stark contrast to what is happening in Denmark. According to Wagner (2003: 668), “there are almost no school dropouts in Denmark, despite the fact that the education system is now educating an increasingly diverse population”.

The issue of content has been raised by many researchers as a major area of disadvantage to minority groups as they do not belong to the group that dominates policy-making. The content of many tests largely reflects the dominant culture’s knowledge and understanding (Walsh & Weir, 1999). Research in America has shown that students who come from language backgrounds other than English (L.B.O.T.E.) are disadvantaged through the use of traditional assessment methods. Students need a firm understanding of the language used in the test in order to communicate their abilities (Walsh & Weir, 1999). Students from L.B.O.T.E. backgrounds and those who speak non-standardised dialects of English, such as Aboriginal and African American students, do not always have a firm understanding of the formal use of the English language as used in a test situation. These students face difficulties with interpretation of unfamiliar vocabulary and the use of ‘culturally inappropriate’ synonyms (Walsh & Weir, 1999). In South Africa,

the students from L.B.O.T.E are those who are from disadvantaged communities. Such learners encounter numerous problems as they engage with the high-stakes tests.

A main problem experienced by such learners is the translation of test questions into their first language, and the time taken to translate questions and answers for the purposes of encoding is an issue also highlighted by Walsh & Weir (1999). The other problems experienced by such learners are that of misinterpretation of language and time restraints during the course of engaging with the high-stakes tests. Reflecting on a study conducted in the US, Walsh & Weir (1999) demonstrated that in the comparison of test scores between bilingual Hispanic students and monolingual students, Hispanic students were often too slow to complete the test in the given time due to the extended thought processes they went through and subsequently scored poorly compared to the monolingual students. This is likely then to be a major factor in the performance of the L.B.O.T.E learners in the high-stakes tests for Grade 9, namely the CTA, which is the hub of my research. Research has indicated that the result achieved on a test score can be used to drive the curriculum being taught in a school and the way it is taught. This has led to further inequalities in education and resulted in those from non-dominant backgrounds continuing to be disadvantaged (Garcia & Pearson, 1994).

2.7 Standardised tests and teacher attitudes

The impact of the standardised tests on teaching and learning has resulted in teachers adopting certain attitudes toward them. In a study conducted on National Board Certified Teachers in Ohio, it was found that 100% of the teachers believed that teachers' voice should collectively be heard in the development of educational policy (Rapp, 2001).

For any curriculum innovation to be successful, the attitude of teachers toward it should be positive. The attitude of teachers with regard to testing is important since they are in a good position to assist the policymakers to understand the effects of testing policies on

teaching and learning (Jones & Egley 2004). A similar view is echoed by Janaik (1997), who argues that the attitudes of teachers are important in the dynamic of educational reform and that they are central to successful reform initiatives. There are instances where curriculum innovations result in teachers developing a negative attitude towards them. Many teachers tend to believe that standardised proficiency tests are harming education and that such tests are not the best assessment tools of student success (Rapp, 2001). In America, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, in his address to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, called for the scrapping of standardised tests and stressed that they should not be relied upon as they are flawed measures by which to judge school performance (Shanker in Jet & Schafer, 1993).

2.8 Influence of standardised tests on pedagogy

Test preparations tend to dominate normal curriculum development in class. In most cases, teachers tend to focus more on the tests rather than the actual teaching process itself. The standardised tests compel schools to allow for preparation aligned with such tests in order that they may dominate teaching and learning, albeit at an expense of 'normal' teaching and learning (Kohn, 2000). The standardised tests sometimes persuade school teachers to allocate more time to preparing students for test-writing at the expense of actual teaching. Neill (2008), in his review of the NCLB campaign, proffers that NCLB is encouraging the reduction of schooling to just preparation for tests. Normally, the standardised tests put teachers in a dilemma in terms of striking a balance between time spent on teaching and the time spent on test preparation. High-stakes tests, also regarded as standardised tests, have an influence on pedagogy. Teachers were found to alter their instructional materials to resemble the format of mandated tests (Noble & Smith, 1994). The implementation of standardised tests sometimes creates a situation that leads to teachers failing to dictate the terms of what is to be taught and how the teaching should take place. As a result of the emphasis on test results, teachers were found to pay attention mostly to paper-and-pencil computation and there was a decrease in attention to

project work, activities that involved the use of calculators and computers, as well as co-operative learning activities (Noble & Smith, 1994).

Rapp (2001) found that teachers conceded to spending too much time preparing students for tests. Furthermore, studies which were carried out reinforce the idea that educators believe that classroom instruction is becoming synonymous with test preparation, ultimately resulting in losses of autonomy, insight, creativity, and love of learning for both students and teachers. High-stakes external tests always dominate teaching and assessment (Black & William, 1998).

During the test preparations students are likely to find themselves spending more time engaging in becoming prepared for the standardised tests. According to Rapp (2001), the majority of teachers in Ohio believe that students spend too much time preparing for tests; what is more, they believe that such tests do not support developmentally appropriate practices for students. During the process of test preparation, the tendency is that learners sometimes engage in a memorization and cramming process of those aspects that are likely to be covered in the standardised tests. The study conducted in the Chinese examinations, revealed that such examinations are criticised inside and outside China since they emphasize rote learning. Furthermore, the education reformists in China argue that such examinations deny learners the opportunity to develop creativity and independent thinking (Li, 2005). Some are of the view that, due to their nature, the standardised tests are devoid of aspects that are adequately preparing learners for their future (Bishop, 1995: 691).

It is likely then that test preparation skills take precedence to the idea of 'real' knowledge acquisition. Students are inclined to learn test-taking tricks rather than real knowledge (Kohn, 1999). In the American education system, teachers who teach classes constituting a high number of minority students have been found to focus more on low-level abilities, *viz.* test-taking skills and tested topics, as they feel a sense of pressure to improve scores. The teachers spend substantial classroom time on test preparation activities, and they give more than a moderate amount of their attention to drilling students in basic skills

(Herman & Golan, 1991). A similar view is echoed by Moore and Waltman (2007), who found that teachers spent an inordinate amount of time preparing for tests rather than focusing on the regular curriculum.

My understanding of the influence of high-stakes tests on pedagogy will enable a clearer grasp of how the EMS teachers are engaging the curriculum in their ‘normal’ course of classroom practice.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has laid a foundation for a better understanding of the high-stakes tests and their influence in terms of classroom practice. This knowledge will help in aiding an understanding of the EMS teachers’ attitudes toward the CTA for EMS, and how they engage the CTA in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. Furthermore, the literature review serves as the theoretical basis for this dissertation. The next chapter explores in detail the methodology that was used in the process of carrying out the research.

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the literature that serves as a theoretical basis for this research was explored. The two critical questions that the study set out to answer are, firstly, to understand the attitudes of the EMS teachers toward the CTA for EMS and secondly, how do teachers engage with CTA for EMS in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology used in this study. In plotting the methodological frame of this research, it is crucial to emphasize that the choice of the method is predisposed to the chosen topic and kind of data to be generated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). This chapter locates the study within the interpretive paradigm. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998, p.273-274), the “interpretative paradigm involves taking people’s subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them (ontology), making sense of people’s experiences by interacting with them and listening carefully to what they tell us (epistemology), and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information (methodology)”. The chapter then gives a description of the context of the study, participants in the study, procedures of data generation, method of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**3.2.1 Qualitative Approach**

A qualitative research design was used in this research project. Before engaging in the discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research methodology, I will outline the principal aspects of qualitative research that informed this research project. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter (2006, p. 563), “qualitative research

seeks to preserve the integrity of narrative data and attempts to use the data to exemplify unusual core themes embedded in contexts”. Qualitative research afforded me the opportunity to understand the social and human behaviour as it is experienced by the participants (Arkava & Lane, 1983). It allowed me to understand the attitudes of the Grade 9 EMS teachers towards the CTA for EMS and how were they engaging with the CTA for EMS in curriculum development. Geertz (1979) argues that understanding comes from the act of looking over the shoulders of actors and trying to figure out (both by observing and conversing) what the participants think they are up to. The idea of acquiring an ‘inside’ understanding is a powerful central concept for understanding the purpose of qualitative inquiry. Bryman (1988) argues that one characteristic of qualitative research is that it is essentially concerned with looking at events, processes, values and actions from the perspective of those being studied.

This research is positioned in the interpretive paradigm that emphasizes interpretation and experiences. The interpretive paradigm was used because I was dealing with the participants in their context. Furthermore, I was trying to understand the phenomena through the eyes of the participants. In this interpretive paradigm, the focus is on harnessing and extending the power of ordinary language and expression to help us understand the social world we live in rather than on isolating and controlling variables (Babbie & Mouton, 1998). I used this paradigm because I was working with the participants in their natural environment. Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues that the interpretive paradigm is based on the assumption that human life can only be comprehended from within. It is for this reason that the research was conducted within the school context. The interpretive researcher assumes that human mind is the purposive source of meaning and social world does not exist independently of human knowledge because human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Furthermore it allowed me to try to understand the phenomena through the eyes of the participants.

According to Babbie and Mouton (1998, p.270), “qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of the attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and

surveys”. This methodology makes sense in situations where we know in advance what the important variables are, and we are able to devise reasoning. Furthermore, I was trying to understand the phenomena through the eyes of the participants. The aim is to grasp how to interpret our own and others’ action as meaningful. The idea of interacting with the participants in their natural setting and trying to understand the phenomena from their point of view is further emphasized by (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 5) when they argued that “The qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring”. In this research, I used an inductive approach. In this approach a researcher begins with a set of vague speculations about a research question and tries to make sense of the phenomena by observing a set of particular instances (Terre Blanche *et.al*, 2006).

3.2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is said to have originated within the social psychology discipline and it seeks to find common symbols and understandings that emerge to give meaning to people’s actions. Interactionism is a process of action between individuals. Blumer (1969) argues that, people interact with each other by interpreting the actions of each other instead of merely reacting to the actions of each other. The perspective’s central idea is that people act as they do because of how they define situations. According to Blumer (1969) symbolic interaction rests on three premises. Firstly, human beings act on the basis of meanings which they give to objects and events rather than simply reacting to social stimuli such as social forces or internal stimuli such as drives. Secondly, meanings arise from the process of interaction rather than simply being present at the outset and shaping future action. Thirdly, meanings are the results of interpretive procedures employed by actors within an interactive context. Furthermore, Blumer (1969) maintains that society must be seen as an ongoing process of interaction involving actors who are constantly adjusting to one another and continuously interpreting the situation. In this research project I was trying to understand the perceptions of Grade 9 EMS teachers towards CTA for EMS. Furthermore, I wanted to understand how they were engaging CTA for EMS in the curriculum development.

In the process of undertaking the research I ensured that I based the research on the interactionism principles. I used this approach in this study because I was trying to understand the process of human interaction, as it focuses on the meanings, actions and interpretations derived through social interaction. Haralambos & Holborn (1990) argue that from the interactionist perspective, an understanding of action requires an interpretation of the meanings which the actors give to their activities. The three sociological perspectives are the macro perspective, the micro perspective and the interactionist perspective (Meighan in Naidoo, 2006). Principles of symbolic interactionism guided this research project because human interaction and context are important in this qualitative interpretive study. Furthermore, the need to explore the phenomena in its natural setting lead to the use of the symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism involves interpretive research that is concerned with how people see things, and how they construct their meaning. It involves interpreting research that is concerned with how people see things, and how they construct their meaning (Henning, 2004). The same sentiments are echoed by Haralambos and Holborn (1990) when they argue that from the interactionist perspective, an understanding of action requires an interpretation of the meanings which the actors give to their activities.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Selection of a case

The research design helps to indicate the direction to be followed when generating data and how it will be analysed. Maree (2007) describes a research design as a strategy which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques and data analysis to be done. An intrinsic case study is a study that is undertaken because one wants to have a better understanding of this particular case (Stake, 2005). An intrinsic case study was used in this research because I wanted to obtain information about social issues. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998) the research design is where the researcher explains why certain methods

were used and what type of data is to be captured. The research project thus constituted and interpreted qualitative data with interpretivism as a guiding methodology.

According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005) case study research is that which serves the purpose of facilitating the researcher's gaining of knowledge about social issues. In this research, an in-depth case study was used, which according to Radnor (2002) is the essence of interpretive research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.36) "the case study relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis." In line with Denzin and Lincoln (2003) interviews, observations and document analysis have been chosen as a means of data collection in this research project. A case study is an intensive study of a specific individual or a specific context. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) defines a case study as a type of qualitative research in which in-depth data are gathered relative to a single individual, programme or events for the purpose of learning more about unknown or poorly understood situation. The case study's commitment is to "come to grips" with the social world (de Vos *et.al* 2002). This study focused on "coming to grips" with the specific participants' attitudes towards the CTA for EMS.

This research was confined to only two schools as it was felt that the data gained would be sufficient for this particular study. According to Huysamen (2001) the term 'case study' indicates that a limited number of units of analysis such as an individual, group or institution are studied. The case study was selected as the most appropriate design for this research after careful consideration of the practical and financial implications as well as the time constraints. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), a case study enables a particular individual, programme, or event to be studied in depth for a definite period of time. In this study I wanted to gain new insight on the attitude of Grade 9 EMS teachers towards CTA, and how they engaged them in their 'normal' course of curriculum development.

According to Welman and Kruger (1999) a case study should be defined or demarcated. In respect of this research project, the focus was on the Grade 9 EMS teachers. They also point out that its aim is to search in an inductive fashion for recurring patterns and

consistent regularities. The interpretive perspective uses case study, as the researcher strives towards a comprehensive understanding of how the participants relate to each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of phenomena (Maree, 2007).

3.3.2 Sampling

The research was limited to two schools namely one from a rural area and one from an urban area. For the purpose of this study purposive sampling was used. Maree (2007) describes purposive sampling as the manner in which the participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for the study and it involves smaller sample sizes. For this research project, two Grade 9 EMS teachers were selected as participants from each of the two schools. Terre Blanche *et.al* (2006) state that, the decision about how many cases is enough is dependent on how much detail one is likely to gather in each case. These two research sites were representative of a bounded social setting where only Grade 9 EMS teachers were the participants. The Grade 9 EMS teachers were chosen as a unit of analysis because it was believed that they would shed optimal light on the issues that were under investigation.

Since the study sought to describe the personal experiences of EMS teachers' experiences of the CTA (EMS), the following were regarded as important as alluded to by Terre Blanche *et.al* (2006), p.29):

- Personal experience of what is being researched,
- Good communicative skills (ability to describe experience in detail),
- Openness and undefensiveness, and
- Interest in participating, as well as the perception that it may, in some way, be of value to participate

According to Holliday (2007) the interviews and observations are socially located within a bounded setting, and become valid because they interconnect via an environment which contains other actions, events, icons and so on which gives them meaning. In each

school, the social setting circumscribed the choice of the participants in that they all taught EMS in Grade 9.

3.3.3 Data collection

According to Denzin and Lincoln, (2003, p. 36) “the case study relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis.” In line with Denzin and Lincoln (2003) the interviews, observations and document analysis have been chosen as a means of data collection in this research. I will use qualitative methods to collect data as whole entities, which are forth coming from the participants in a much freer and less controlled way, with much of it occurring naturally (Henning, van Rensburg & Smith 2004).

I acted like an insider as I was interacting directly with the participants in their natural setting. Maree (2007) argues that qualitative researcher is concerned with people and systems in their natural environment, he interacts with the participants. As I conducted the research in other schools, I had to ensure that I establish a good rapport with the participant. A good rapport with the participants ensured cooperation during the data gathering process. I also succeeded in gaining the trust of the participants in the schools.

The data gathering process was not an easy one more especially in a school, where the participants spoke English as a first language. It was not an easy task because English is a second language to me; therefore I had to thoroughly prepare myself for the task at hand. My reading of literature on research equipped me for the challenge since English is not my mother tongue. The fact that I knew what I was doing helped me to gain the respect of the participants.

3.4 Methods

The interviews, observations and document analysis have been chosen as a means of data collection in this research project. Data collection in a case study may involve observations, interviews, documents of past records and audio visual material. In this research the interviews, observations and document analysis were research instruments used to generate data. These multiple instruments assisted in the triangulation of the data received. Triangulation enabled me to identify consistencies and inconsistencies. According to Holliday (2007) interviews and observations are socially located within a bounded setting, and become valid because they interconnect via an environment which contains other actions, events, icons and so on which gives them meaning. In each school, the social setting was bounded in that the chosen two Grade 9 teachers all taught EMS.

3.4.1 The Semi-structured Interviews

In this research, a semi-structured interview was used in the generation of data. Interviewing is one of the best instruments for data generation (Seidman, 1998). In this research I wanted to understand the feelings and attitudes of the teachers towards CTA for EMS. Haralambos (1985) argues that unstructured (semi-structured) are seen as more appropriate for drawing out the attitudes and opinions of the participants. The qualitative researcher who approaches qualitative research from a qualitative perspective wants to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or phenomena as they occur in the real world and therefore want to study them in their natural setting (Terre Blanche, *et.al*, 2006).

Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004) argues that the researchers who interview participants are co-constructors of meaning or data. The interviews were conducted using the interview schedule in line with Seidman (1998), who contends that some forms of interviewing depend on an interview guide. According to Bell (1993) a major advantage of the interview is its 'adaptability' where the interviewer could follow-up ideas, and probe responses, which is beyond the limitations of a questionnaire. The probing of the

responses enabled the participants to clarify and develop the responses whereas in a questionnaire the responses have to be taken at 'face value'. I used prompting and cues to encourage the participants to elaborate further. Furthermore, it enabled me to probe the participants to dispel potential misunderstandings (Creswell, 2003).

The interviews were conducted on two Grade 9 EMS teachers from two schools. This was then followed up by the lesson observation of the interviewed teachers which served as a follow up for the responses from the interviews. The reason of observing teachers in practice was because there were sometimes contradictions between what the teachers said about how they dealt with the CTA and what really happens in practice (Taylor, 1999). Through the use of probing questions, I was able to ask further questions as prompts to elicit information from the participants. According to Gay and Airasian (2003, p.224) "qualitative interviews are generally free-flowing and open-ended, with the interviewer probing to clarify the participants' comments". I found that the probing technique resulted in unexpected and unanticipated answers because interviewing was a mode of generating verbal data (de Vos, et. al., 2002).

In order to capture all the response of the participants, I audio-taped the interviews. Seidman points out that:

There is no question in my mind that in-depth interviews must be tape-recorded...I believe that to work most reliably with the words of the participants, the researcher has to transform those spoken words into a written text study. The primary method of creating text from interviews is to tape-record interviews and transcribe them. (Seidman, 1998, p. 109).

At the completion of the transcripts, I gave them back to the participants in order for them to verify that what ever was written on the scripts was accurate. The participants did not make any additions or amendments as they were in agreement with the content of the

transcripts. This process was important because it ensured the validity of the data that was generated.

Through out the interview process I maintained direct eye contact with the participants as I sat opposite them. The interaction between the researcher and the 'researched' namely the participants, was face-to-face and was conducted at an interpersonal level (Kerlinger, 1992). In one school an empty staffroom was used for the interviews where the participants were made to feel comfortable and sufficiently free and relaxed to talk. The interviews were conducted during the free periods of the participants.

3.4.2 Lesson Observation

The lesson observation of two teachers in each school who were interviewed was conducted. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007) observation when used as a qualitative data generating technique, enables the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomena being observed. In this research the purpose of the observation was to understand the attitude of EMS teachers towards the CTA for EMS and how were they engaging them in their 'normal' course of curriculum development. In this research I did not observe the phenomena from outside the system but I was part of the classroom context where the lessons were being observed. In this research, I did not observe the phenomena from outside the system but was a part of the classroom context being observed (Walliman, 2005).

Nieuwenhuis (2007) argues that observation allows the researcher to hear, see and begin to experience reality as participants do. For the purpose of this research, I used the observer as participant observation strategy. To ensure trustworthiness during the observation period, I used a member checking strategy. Member checking is a process where the researcher verifies his understanding of what he has observed with the observed (Nieuwnhuis, 2007). I discussed what I observed with each participant in order

to verify my observations. The techniques of observation assist the qualitative researcher in the process of gathering data and give a deeper insight and comprehension of the phenomena that is being observed. I personally observed the teachers during the lesson presentation to try to establish how the CTA was integrated during the normal teaching and learning.

3.4.3 Document Analysis

The final means of obtaining data was through document analysis. The documents for analysis were the teachers' portfolio files, assessment year plan and learners' portfolio files. The purpose of document analysis was to understand how the teachers engage with the CTA (EMS) during the 'normal' course of curriculum development. The use of a variety of data collection methods is called triangulation (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004). Through the triangulation of the three research strategies, cross-validation was achieved.

3.5 Rigor and limitations of the research project

In this research project, credibility was achieved through triangulation, and member check. According to Babbie and Mouton (1998), triangulation can be achieved through paradigms, methodologies, methods and many more. Through triangulation in this research project, validity and reliability were enhanced. In this research project triangulation was achieved through the use of interviews, observation and document analysis. Trustworthiness of the data collected was validated through member checking.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

I wrote letters to the gatekeepers such as the Department of Education and the school principals of the two schools requesting them to allow me to conduct research in their schools. I also wrote letters to the participants informing them about the research and its purpose and then requesting them to participate in the research. The participants in this

study were promised anonymity and that their participation was voluntary. In the letters to the participants, it was made clear that they had the right to withdraw from the research if they felt that they were no longer comfortable with further participation in the research.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided information on the methods used in this research and has expounded on the suitability of the qualitative research approach used in this study. It dealt with the nature of the study, research design, sampling method, data collection and data analysis. The data generated through the use of these methods is presented in the subsequent chapters. Furthermore, ethical issues were discussed. Chapter four will discuss the emergent themes that were obtained from the data generated from the documents and the participants in relation to the literature review. Furthermore, it will present the findings from the generated data.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the research methodology was presented. This represented a naturalistic mode of inquiry where I used a case study method of enquiry. This chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation of findings. Henning, van Rensburg & Smit (2004, p.102) argues that, the analysis process is the “heart beat” of the research. The process of data analysis involved preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into the understanding of data, representing the data and then making interpretations of the larger meaning of data (Creswell, 2003). In this chapter, the findings supported by qualitative data are presented and discussed.

Data was generated using semi-structured interviews, lesson observations and document analysis. My intention was to understand the attitude of the Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) teachers’ attitudes towards the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) for EMS. Furthermore I wanted to understand how the EMS teachers engage with CTA in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. The generated data revealed emerging themes that provided responses to the main research questions. These themes are represented in Table 4.2. These themes enabled me to understand how teachers were experiencing the CTA (EMS) in their respective schools.

The interpretation and implications of the findings will be reported under the following main headings (a) Teachers’ attitudes towards the CTA (EMS) and (b) Teachers’ engagement of CTA in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. I will discuss the findings in the light of the theoretical framework discussed in chapter three.

This chapter focuses on each research question with several assertions made in an attempt to answer the main research questions. I will describe the events that indicate how the analysis supports the interpretations that have been given.

4.2 UNDERSTANDING THE EMPIRICAL FIELD

Human interaction and context are inseparable twins. To be able to understand the human interaction one needs to have the knowledge of the context where the human interaction occurs. Society must be seen as an ongoing process of interaction involving actors who are constantly adjusting to one another and continuously interpreting the situation (Blumer, 1969). It is therefore important that I give a description of both the research sites and the participants So as to establish the context within which the empirical data was generated.

4.2.1 Ilala Secondary School

The school is situated in a rural area and is home to learners from households most of who live below the breadline. The road leading to the school is dusty and filled with potholes. The scars of earlier faction fights in the late 90's are still visible in the community in the form of many vandalized houses. The area is scarcely populated, as most people fled the area during the height of the faction fights in the 90's. The majority of the households are child-headed and sometimes grand-parents headed. The other fraction of households is headed by single parents. The fence around the school is made up of wire which shows signs of deterioration. The school gate is always monitored by a security guard, who in the mornings acts as the late-coming controller. The school yard is dusty and not level. During winter time it is dusty while in summer it becomes muddy. The school had a large enrolment prior to the faction fights that ravaged the area. Currently the enrolment is very low, ranging from 350 to 480. There is no running water at school; neither are there any water-flushed toilets. There is neither a library nor a science laboratory at the school. The school has one computer which is used mainly by the administration clerk. The school once had several computers, but the computer room was broken into and they were stolen. The teachers still perform most of their day-to-day paper work manually. The classrooms are not electrified. Desks are still in use in the school instead of the tables and chairs. This deprived environment has resulted in the

exodus of highly qualified educators. Currently about 5% of the staff is under qualified. There is only one unit of Grade 9 pupils.

4.2.2 Nightingale Secondary School

This school is located in town and has a tarred road leading to it. It is home to both rural and urban learners. The school has a high enrolment. It is a former model C school, whose student body comprises Indians, Coloureds, Whites and Black Africans who are in a majority. This is contrary to the staff make up in which the Black Africans are in a minority while the Indian teachers are in a majority. All learners reside in town except for the majority of the Black African learners who come from neighbouring informal settlements and rural areas. Some of the Indians, Coloureds and Black African learners are from needy families. The school is well-built, has running water and is electrified. It has a laboratory, computer room, library and a home economics classroom. All the classrooms have tables and chairs instead of the desks. All staff members are permanently employed, and some of them are graduates. The majority of the staff members are specialists in their subjects. The majority of the teachers teach mainly Further Education and Training (FET) classes with only one addition of the General Education and Training (GET) classes. The medium of instruction is English, which is the second language to the majority of the learners. Despite the change in the demography of the students, the composition of both the School Governing Body (SGB) and School Management Team (SMT) excludes the Black Africans.

All participants showed a variation in their schooling and family backgrounds. Their family backgrounds helped in shaping their primary and high school education as well as their tertiary education. Their teaching experience had a bearing on how they conducted themselves in class; furthermore it had a bearing on how they were implementing the new curriculum innovations in the form of the CTA (EMS) the focus of my research. The varying qualifications of the participants is shown in table 4.1

Table 4.1 Teachers' general background

NAME	GENDER	AGE	TEACHING EXPERIENCE (SCHOOLS & YEARS)	FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS	CURRENT STUDIES
Thando	F	20-25	Rural Secondary School: 5 months	Only matric	None
Lynn	F	25-30	Urban school: 9 years	STD:3 Year Diploma	None
Derrick	M	20-25	Urban school: 6 years	STD:3 Year Diploma	None

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

In line with thematic data analysis, all issues discussed in this chapter came out of the data generated through semi-structured interviews, lesson observation and document analysis. The use of the three data generation methods was aimed at the validation of generated data through the process called triangulation. Triangulation refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data (Denzin, 1970). In the process of data analysis several themes emerged that were responding positively to the two critical questions namely:

- What are the attitudes of the EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS)?
- How do EMS teachers engage with CTA in the 'normal' course of curriculum development?

In keeping with the spirit of ensuring anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were adopted for the participants namely Thando, Lynn and Derrick. The themes and related categories are presented in this chapter in Table 4.2. Direct quotes of the participants are

utilized and the findings recontextualised by using literature from chapter two to support or refute the themes and categories. The quotations from the participants are written in italics. The results of this study followed by discussion are contained in this chapter.

4.3.1 THEMES AND CATEGORIES:

Table 4.2: Themes and Categories

THEME 1: TEACHER ATTITUDES AND CTA
Category 1: Language in the CTA a challenge to both teachers and learners
Category 2: Content bias of CTA.
Category 3: CTA pressure and stress on teachers
Category 4: Unfair curriculum expectations
THEME 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH CTA DURING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
Category 1: CTA and teacher planning
Category 2: Teaching to test
Category 3: Curriculum narrowing

4.3.1.1 THEME 1: TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD CTA

4.3.1.1.1 Introduction

The data generated during the semi-structured interviews, document analysis and lesson observations gave an indication of the attitude of teachers toward the CTA. The aspects that had a bearing on the influence of teacher attitudes toward CTA were, language bias of the CTA, content bias of the CTA, and the pressure on teachers emanating from the CTA administering.

4.3.1.1.2 Category 1: Language in the CTA; a challenge to both learners and teachers.

It emerged during the interaction with the participants that they viewed the language used in the CTA as a problem. They felt that the language was responsible for the poor performance of learners from learners whose first language is not English. This view was reflected in some of their responses during the interviews. The participants alluded to the fact that the language problem manifested itself through the difficulty that such learners experience in understanding many of the words used in the CTA.

Derrick: *In my school, I have a lot of second language speaking learners who experience language barrier in dealing with the CTA.*

Lynn: *The problem is in understanding the words used in the CTA and that the questions suit the first language speakers.*

The phrase ‘my school’ and the word “I” as used by the Derrick clearly indicates that he had the interest of the school at heart. He regarded himself as part of the school community. It is clear therefore that whatever he does he does it in the interest of the school and its learners. Derrick was concerned that the language was a barrier to most African learners. He was aware that some African learners reside in the urban areas while the majority reside in the rural areas. Such a problem affected the performance of these learners in a negative way. According to the teachers language used in the CTA had a bearing on learner performance. They felt that the level of the language disadvantaged learners whose mother tongue was not English.

The participants were of the view that the examiners of the CTA were first language speakers. Through the interaction I also learned that teachers were aware of the complaints about the language of the CTA from their learners. This was evident from the response of the participants:

Lynn: *The questions suit the first language speakers. The examiners of the CTA are first language speakers; they don't know how to come down to the level of non-first language speakers.*

Thando: *Ok, CTA have Part A and Part B. In part A, learners participate in a positive manner. It's in part B where they have to write on their own, they always complain that questions are difficult.*

Thando did not mention any thing about a language being a barrier to learners during the interviews. While she gave an impression that she did not view language as a major problem she did in fact address this problem by clarifying the CTA content by engaging in 'code switching' when she dealt with Section A of the CTA. This is evident from the following extract of the lesson observation report on Thando's lesson.

Extract of Lesson Observation Report: (30.07.09)

She ... asked those that were not writing, the reason, why they were not writing.

Learner: "asizwisisanga futhi asiqondi kahle ngemibuzo le".

Themba meant that they did not understand when the teacher was explaining the task. Realizing the seriousness of the problem, the teacher explained everything again, but now in a mother tongue. As she was explaining again, learners were engaging her by asking questions. She explained the term budget and said: "I budget isho uhlelo lokwabiwa kwezimali nguhulumeni ehlangabezana nezidingo zomphakathi".

She pointed out that learners complained about Part B. Part B of the CTA are the pen and paper assessment which is administered under examination conditions similar to those of Grade 12. During the CTA (Section B) administering, teachers only act as the invigilators. Teachers were of the view that difficult language played a key role in the learners finding Part B being difficult to answer.

Lynn assumes that ‘examiners’ of CTA are first language speakers. She felt that the examiners of the CTA were out of touch with the reality in schools. She was of the view that, had they been in touch with reality in South African schools they would have understood the context within which learners function. For Lynn, the tests appeared to be beyond the experience of the learners. She felt that tests were unfair, and were disadvantaging those learners who had not yet mastered English. Derrick mentioned that learners may know the ‘content’ but have difficulty in expressing the correct answers because of the language barrier. By the term ‘content’ the participant meant that learners may know what the question requires, but had difficulty in expressing the answer in the language of instruction namely English. He therefore meant that had the learners been allowed to express answers in their mother tongue, they would not be experiencing problems with the CTA. This was evident during the lesson observation of Thando.

Extract of Lesson Observation Report: (30.07.09)

Learner: trading partners means ...eh, eh the p...p...person you sell and buy.

The teacher realized that the learner has an idea, since she mentioned the key words although the sentence does not make sense. She then asked her to present the answer in her mother tongue, isiZulu. Without any hesitation the child gave a correct answer.

Nomah: trading partners, kusho abantu ohwebelana nabo, ngokudayiselana kanye nokuthenga.

Derrick viewed his learners as his own children and was concerned about their performance in the CTA. Furthermore he was concerned that his learners were experiencing English as a language barrier. He was certain that the language used in the CTA favoured English first language learners. The international literature also highlights the problem posed by the language in the multilingual societies. Research in America has shown that students who come from L.B.O.T.E. are disadvantaged through the use of high-stakes methods. Students from L.B.O.T.E backgrounds and those who speak non standardized dialects of English such as Aboriginal and African American students do not always have a firm understanding of issues; the problem they experienced was the

translation of test questions into their first language and the time taken to translate questions and answers for encoding (Walsh & Weir, 1999). From the responses of the teachers in this study we can see similar patterns in these schools.

During the lesson observation, I witnessed a situation where the teachers spent some time clarifying the questions to learners before they could answer given tasks.

Extract of Lesson Observation Report: Thando (30.07.08)

After she had finished discussing the task, she then allowed learners to do the task. To her surprised only a handful of learners were writing. Because most learners were not writing, She asked them why they were not writin? Themba answered,

“Asizwisisanga futhi asiqondi kahle ngemibuzo le”. Themba meant that they did not understand when the teacher was explaining the task. Realizing the seriousness of the problem, the teacher explained everything again, but now in a mother tongue. As she was explaining again, learners were engaging her by asking questions.

Having to make sure that all learners understood what was expected; Thando had to explain again using mother-tongue. The code-switching worked well because learners who initially did not understand the nature of the task were able to do the work like every one else.

In the extracts of interviews below, we see the participants conflating issues of language difficulty with language competence.

Lynn: *The level of questioning is too high, the language is difficult, and they don't know how to come down to the level of the child.*

Derrick: *The level of questioning and language is a little bit difficult to the majority of the learners and that while learners may know the content, they may not understand the questions due to the language problems.*

Lynn: *The main difference and problem that I have is the level of questioning and the language. It is not suitable for learners who are not first language speakers. The problem is in understanding of the words used in the CTA. The examiners are first language speakers; they do not know how to come down to the level of non-first language speakers.*

The responses of the participants have indicate that there are two issues at play in the CTA that impact negatively on student performance, namely that the standard of the questions is high and that the language in which the CTA are constructed is a compounding impediment to good performance.

4.3.1.1.3 Category 2: Content bias of CTA.

In a community such as South Africa, the policies of the past apartheid dispensation have entrenched the dominance of one race over the others. This is reflected in the content of the Grade 9 tests which tend to favour the previously advantaged learners. In my interaction with the participants, they indicated that the content of the CTA (EMS) was biased. They were of the view that the some of the content in the CTA favour former model C learners. These are the learners whose first language is English, the majority of whom reside in urban areas. This emerged from the discussion I had with Thando during the lesson observation.

Extract of Lesson Observation Report: (05.06.09)

She replied that sometimes the content of some of the questions in the CTA becomes a problem. Since our school is in a rural area it becomes difficult to make learners understand questions such as those that require the knowledge on how ATM and Banks function.

Thando was referring to learners whose parents are illiterate and live below the bread line since the area was ruined by the faction fights in the late 90's. It was therefore not easy for such learners to be familiar with how banks operate since they had never

witnessed their parents using banking facilities. The participants felt that the CTA certainly prejudiced impoverished, working class children who may not have had the experiences those urban middle class children were exposed to. It is clear from the teacher's remarks that former model C learners were likely to excel while learners from rural areas were frustrated by such questions. It is therefore clear that such learners were being disadvantaged and could not compete on an equal footing with former model C learners when confronted with questions that had a class bias.

4.3.1.1.4 Category 3: CTA puts pressure and stress on teachers

According to the responses from the participants during the interviews it became apparent that the CTA were adding more pressure on the participants. The pressure linked to the CTA manifests itself in a number of ways. This pressure manifests itself in the form of additional marking of CTA experienced during last term when the CTA are administered. Teachers were concerned about the curriculum coverage before the administering of CTA. This was reflected in the responses from the participants:

Extract of Lesson Observation Report: (30.07.09)

While learners were busy with the task, I checked with her if she had already covered the topic. She made it clear that the reason why she explained the topic, key terms and the graph, was that she had not yet covered that topic during her teaching. She went on to show me also those topics that do not form part of the Grade 9 syllabus but yet they are being tested namely the Income Statement and Balance sheet.

Lynn: *Administering CTA is very stressful, CTA are done according to timeframes... You find that my children will take thirty minutes in trying to understand questions. This becomes stressful; here I am dealing with a case study.*

The participant felt the pressure of having to contend with letting learners write CTA especially when certain sections had not been taught. They were referring to the instance where they were to administer CTA in the second term instead of the fourth term as it has

been the policy in the past (DoE, 2002). To the participants' surprise, the CTA covered the work that was normally dealt with up to the third term. She was under pressure because she had to make some means of ensuring she did find time to introduce those aspects to learners prior to them answering those questions. Failure to do so would result in poor learner performance in those questions. The failure of her learners to perform well would appear as if she had not done her work well. The poor performance of the learners may have negative consequences for learners. They could be discouraged and develop a low self esteem. The poor performance of learners would also negatively affect the image and reputation of the school.

The use of the word 'stressful' by Lynn was a clear indication that this participant experienced much pressure and anxiety. She found herself in a predicament, because she had no alternative but to devise a plan that was to ensure that learners were ready for all questions. Failure to come up with a plan would have spelt disaster for her learners, who were going to be frustrated and demoralized by failing to answer questions based on the aspects of the work they had not yet covered in class. The poor performance of her learners would have meant a drop in her morale as she would be viewed as having failed to prepare learners well, yet she had been set up to fail by the examiners, CTA administration procedures and the timing of CTA administering..

Lynn's use of the adjective 'stressful' was a further indication of that she was under extreme pressure, filled with anxiety and frustration. She mentioned that, it took her about thirty minutes to ensure that learners had understood the case study before they could answer questions based on it. Generally anything that creates anxiety in you and puts you under extreme pressure and frustration, that you develop a negative attitude toward it.

The use of the noun 'my' indicated that the Lynn viewed learners as her own. Under normal circumstances if someone that belongs to you is experiencing problems, you don't take pleasure to that which is the source of those problems. In this case the participant

was likely then to develop a negative attitude toward the CTA administering because it was a source of the stress that she was feeling.

The participants were disgruntled that the CTA added to their already burdensome workloads. This is reflected in the responses the participants gave.

Thando: *Yah, CTA increase the workload for the teachers, may be you have to calculate CASS, and at the same time you have to administer the CTA.*

Derrick: *As CTA normally comes towards year-end, we find ourselves with a pressure for marking because we are normally left with a week or so before school closes.*

The responses of the participants indicate clearly that the CTA administering comes with added pressure on them since they had the work of other classes to attend to. The teachers then put more emphasis on the CTA work so as to get it done away with, thus finding less time and energy to focus on the other school work.

4.3.1.1.5 Category 4: Unfair curriculum expectations

In my interaction with the participants, I noted that there was a gap between policy and practice during the CTA administering. This was evident when the participants revealed that they found themselves having to teach the Grade 9 learners work that was beyond their scope of the CTA guidelines which are contrary to the dictates of the policy. This was reflected in the responses that they gave.

Thando: *CTA requires what is beyond the Grade 9 textbooks.*

Thando: *Sometimes there will be questions that relate to Grade 10 and 11 work, so learners will complain saying that the questions are difficult.*

Derrick: *Currently the Subject Advisors expect us to teach Grade 10 work to Grade 9 learners.*

Lynn: *We were told to use Grade 10 Economics book in teaching Grade 9.*

What comes out of the participants' responses is that the CTA contain work that is beyond the Grade 9 curriculum. Derrick was adamant that Subject Advisors expected them to include Grade 10 and 11 work in the Grade 9 curriculum. This is in breach of the policy which is explicit the Grade 9s have to be taught Grade 9 work. Teaching Grade 10 or 11 work and also having it covered in the CTA is not contributing positively to the well being of both the teachers and learners. Teachers are not concerned about the expectations that violate policy; they just feel that to be unreasonable. This puts teachers under pressure since in one year they have to teach all the Grade 9 work and on top of that to also cover some sections that are beyond the requirements of Grade 9 curriculum. This practice adds more challenges to learners who have difficulty with language, as they find it difficult to contend with both the language and content of Grade 9 CTA work. These learners have to now try and contend with the added content and language for Grade 10 and 11.

The participants through their responses indicated that they were also experiencing problems with the policy of CTA administering. This was evident in the mixed signals that were sent by policy makers with regard the administering of the CTA. This was evident in the participants' responses:

Lynn: *Although we hold a number of learning area meetings during the course of the year, we focus on the CTA only on the last (4th) term, because it generally features in the fourth term. Since the CTA administering this year has changed, Section A will be administered in the second term, there is a possibility that CTA will now feature in our meetings during the course of the year.*

Thando: *So in actual fact, syllabus coverage for this point in time has stopped.*

Lynn: *In our School the principal gave the directive that normal teaching and learning should stop while full attention is focused on CTA administering that which is contrary to the policy (Lesson observation report 1).*

Thando: *the directive from our school was that we have to alternate the CTA administering and the normal curriculum development.*

It is clear from the participants' responses that a different policy on CTA administering was introduced in 2009. All Grade 9 learners in all schools were to be assessed through the CTA in all the eight Learning Areas, including the Additional Language, during the fourth term (DoE, 2002, p.12). The circulars that were issued to schools informing them about the changes in the CTA administering were also a source of confusion both in terms of when and how they were to be administered. Initially it was indicated that Section A of the CTA was to be administered in the second term and that a certain number of schools were to be used to pilot the process of the issuing of Grade 9 certificates (DoE, 2009). While both the schools that were to be used for pilot purposes and those which were not part of the pilot project were aligning their school programmes to the changes as expounded by the new policy, a second circular on changes about CTA administering was sent to schools. The second circular nullified the contents of the first circular, as it indicated that the pilot project on GETC was being shelved. Furthermore it indicated that Section A of the CTA was to be administered and completed in the third term. Both circulars were not clear on how the CTA were to be administered in relation to the normal teaching and learning in the classrooms. This resulted in schools devising their own programmes of administering the CTA, as reflected in the responses of the participants:

Thando: *In our school we were told to alternate the normal teaching with the CTA administering.*

Lynn: *The policy laid down by our school principal on CTA administering was that all normal teaching should be stopped, and focus be directed to the CTA. The normal teaching and learning was to be resumed during the fourth term.*

The policy on CTA, Section A, administration was not properly communicated to schools as it is reflected in the respondents' responses. In one school the policy that was adopted was that when the CTA was to be administered, normal teaching and learning should be

stopped. The procedure that was followed was that in one week teachers should administer the CTA and in the following week they should engage in the planned curriculum. In another school teachers were instructed by the principal to stop the normal curriculum and just focus on administering the CTA. Such procedures were a clear indication of different understanding of the policy on the administering of the CTA. According to the policy the CTA administering should form part and parcel of curriculum development. Teachers should incorporate the CTA in the day-to-day teaching and not treat the CTA as independent of the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development (DoE, 2002). It becomes evident that schools have not quite worked out the relation between the externally administered CTA and the internal school programme. More specifically, there appears to be lack of understanding of how CTA could be meaningfully integrated into the school curriculum.

4.3.1.2 THEME 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH CTA DURING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1.2.1 Introduction

The data generated during the semi-structured interviews, document analysis and lesson observations gave an indication how teachers were engaging CTA (EMS) in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. The aspects that had a bearing on how EMS teachers were engaging with CTA (EMS) in the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development were, CTA (EMS) and teacher planning, teaching to test, and curriculum narrowing.

4.3.1.2.2 Category 1: CTA and teacher planning

The during the document analysis revealed that teachers had not given consideration to the inclusion of the CTA during the development of their Learning Programme (LP), Work schedule (WS), Assessment Year Plan (AYP) and lesson planning. There was no

mention of CTA and how it was to be used during the course of the year in the Learning Programme, Work Schedule, Assessment Year Plan and lesson plan.

Extract of Document analysis report from Thando: *In the LP, WS, AYP and lesson plan, that I analysed, I did not see any evidence of reference to how the CTA were to be used during the course of normal curriculum. The resources that were mentioned in these documents were the textbooks, calculators etc.*

The report on analysed documents of Thando shows that she did not engage with the CTA during curriculum development. The CTA were only mentioned in the assessment year plan where it was indicated that they were to be administered in the fourth term.

4.3.1.2.3 Category 2: Teaching to test

The data emerging from the lesson observation indicated that the teachers were engaging in ‘teaching to test’, which is a world-wide trend in those countries which administer the high-stakes tests. I observed that they only engage in this phenomenon only during the actual CTA administering. During the lesson presentation the teacher began by teaching learners the content on which the CTA task was based.

Lesson Presentation Report 2 from Derrick: *The teacher began by first presenting a short lesson on “The role of the foreign sector in the economic cycle of South Africa”. He then asked learners to explain the term ‘foreign trade’. The classroom was a multiracial class, although Black African learners formed about 80% of the classroom learner population.*

Lesson Presentation Report 2 from Thando: *After she had finished discussing the task, she then allowed learners to do the task. To her surprised only a handful of learners were writing.*

Both Derrick and Thando had decided that they would first teach learners briefly what was to be asked in the task since they had not taught that aspect. They went further to discuss the questions with the learners, the aim of which was to ensure that learners were

able to provide answers to the questions. The act of teaching learners first had positive results because all learners began to answer the questions on the task given to them. The teachers were of the view that had they not briefly taught learners what featured in the tasks; learners were to find it difficult to do the tasks. During the earlier lesson observation for both teachers, they never used CTA during their lesson presentation.

Document analysis Report 1 from Thando: *All of the lesson plans in Thando's file did not show any evidence of the use of CTA during curriculum development.*

From the report it is evident that Thando did not engage the CTA during curriculum development.

4.3.1.2.4 Category 3: Curriculum narrowing

The narrowing of the curriculum occurs when a teacher focuses on a particular aspect of a curriculum, with the aim of preparing learners to be able to answer a certain set of questions. In this instance teachers chose specific topics in the CTA and briefly taught learners about them in order to enable them to answer given tasks. This phenomenon of curriculum narrowing was evident during the classroom observations. Teachers in their quest to avoiding high failure rate on those questions adopted a practice of teaching learners specific topics prior to learners being given those tasks from the CTA.

Lesson observation report 2 from Derrick: *The teacher began by first presenting a short lesson on "The role of the foreign sector in the economic cycle of South Africa". He then asked learners to explain the term 'foreign trade'. The classroom was a multiracial class, although Black African learners formed about 80% of the classroom learner population.*

Lesson observation report 2 from Thando: *In her presentation she then focused on South Africa's trading partners and trade agreements in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). She then focused further on what the task requires.*

She outlined the goals of SADC. She further explained the significance of the bar graph on the task. The graph was representing six African countries that have trade with South Africa.

The term 'foreign trade' was referring to the trade conducted by South Africa with other countries in the world. The teachers were guided by the questions in the tasks on which countries to focus on. The focus of the teachers then was on South Africa's trade with SADC and the rest of the other countries were neglected. The danger of curriculum narrowing is that those aspects not covered by the questions tend to be neglected. When these learners get to Grade 10, their commerce teachers would expect them to have been taught about South Africa's foreign trade not only with SADC, but with other countries too. This will then disadvantage learners since they cannot compete equally with those who were taught South Africa's foreign trade with other countries either than SADC only. The curriculum narrowing phenomenon offers temporal relief, in that learner performance is increased and both the learners and teachers become happy. In a long run the learners suffer because they end up having limited knowledge when compared to learners who were taught the whole curriculum without any limitations.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the key issues that emerged from the research findings. An analysis of how the EMS teachers viewed the CTA for EMS was given. This was followed by an examination of how the different EMS teachers engaged the CTA for EMS in the 'normal' course of curriculum development. In this chapter I discussed the research sites and the profiles of the participants. I went further to analyse the data which resulted in the emergence of two themes. The first theme was about the teacher attitudes towards the CTA. The categories of this theme were language problems during CTA administering, the bias of the content of the CTA, CTA pressure on teachers and unfair curriculum expectations. The second category was the CTA engagement during the curriculum development. The first categories that emerged during the data analysis were

CTA and teacher planning. The second category that emerged was teaching to test and the third category was curriculum narrowing.

The next chapter will draw conclusions from the issues that emerged in this dissertation and then put forward the recommendations that emerged from the findings, limitations and suggestions for future research. The findings provide a basis for the recommendations that will be made for the improvement of the CTA administering in schools. Further, more they will be used in improving the engagement of the CTA by teachers in the 'normal' course of curriculum development.

CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the data and provided an analysis thereof. In this chapter, I will consolidate the findings of the study with reference to the attitudes of EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS) and how teachers engage with CTA during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. This chapter therefore begins with a brief summary of the issues dealt with in previous chapters. It provides a synthesis of the key findings of the research study, makes recommendations and suggests areas of further research.

5.2 A synthesis of the study

In Chapter 1, I provided the orientation of the research topic. The rationale for the study, the purpose of the study as well as the critical questions were presented. The main aim of the study was to understand the attitudes of EMS teachers toward the CTA (EMS) and also, to understand how they engaged with these tasks during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development.

Chapter 2 was dedicated to the literature review. The review began with a description of the background of standardised tests, which are also referred to as ‘high-stakes tests’, a preferred concept utilised in this dissertation. The process of sourcing and understanding relevant literature in the field was important since the CTA (EMS) formed the focal point of my research. The literature covered aspects such as high-stakes in relation to curriculum narrowing, ‘teaching to test’, teacher pressure, bias, pedagogy, as well as teacher attitudes.

Chapter 3 provided a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical and conceptual framework, research design and methodology that was employed in order to generate data for this study. This chapter also revolved around the criteria used in the selection of

the schools that formed the sample. The fundamental motive behind the issues explored in this chapter was to ensure that the relevant processes and procedures had been adhered to when conducting research. It forms the bottom line of the assurance in so far as validity and reliability in the study are concerned. The process of how EMS teachers and schools were selected was explained, and the protocol of the research process was given. Qualitative data was generated through semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

The focus of Chapter 4 was on the analysis and interpretation of data. The issues that were explored in-depth emanated from key questions that were formulated earlier. The intention was to analyse the relevant documents, lessons that were observed, as well as comments raised by the educators who participated from the different schools. Thereafter, to draw my own conclusions and deductions, as well as my personal interpretation of the data. This process of analysis was verified against the backdrop of the literature review in Chapter 2. The analysis and interpretation of data exposed the following critical issues as the main categories to be addressed:

- Language in the CTA (EMS) a challenge to both teachers and learners
- Content bias of the CTA (EMS)
- CTA (EMS) pressure and stress on teachers
- Curriculum narrowing
- Teaching to test
- Unfair curriculum expectations.

An exploration of the above issues and participants' responses assisted me in gaining a deeper understanding of the manner in which the CTA (EMS) were administered. The unearthing of these categories that present themselves as challenges, serves as a contribution to the body of knowledge regarding the administering of high-stakes testing. This body of knowledge can, if presented clearly to education stakeholders, play a crucial role in the successful implementation of the CTA (EMS) in schools.

In this chapter, the final focus is on findings, conclusions and recommendations. The findings in this study are directly linked to the critical questions upon which the study was based. The intention of these findings was to highlight existing gaps that are likely to occur with regard to the process of administering the CTA (EMS). It is expected that these findings will create awareness that there is a need to re-examine the manner in which the CTA (EMS) are designed. Further, that there is an important need to empower and enable educators in order that they may be able to successfully administer them. In the light of the research questions, these are the findings that emerged from the data analysis:

5.3 A Synthesis of the main findings of the study

The aim of the study was to understand the attitudes of EMS teachers toward CTA (EMS) and also to understand how they engaged with CTA during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development. The findings show that they experienced a variety of problems in their efforts to administer the CTA (EMS).

5.3.1 Category 1: Language used in the CTA (EMS) is a challenge to both teachers and learners.

During the research, I found that the challenge that EMS teachers encountered was that learners from language background other than English (L.B.O.T.E) had difficulty in understanding the language used in the CTA (EMS) questions. The other difficulty was that the questions were of a higher level, which compounded learners’ problems. These problems caused learners to perform badly in the CTA (EMS), which was a great concern for the EMS teachers. The language problems emanating from the high-stakes tests were similar to those experienced in other countries. In a study carried out in American schools, it was found that learners from L.B.O.T.E had difficulty in understanding the formal use of English language as used in the high-stakes tests (Monty, Neill & Medina, 1989). These learners were found to be spending more time in answering each question,

because they had to first translate each question into their mother tongue and there after take time to translate questions and answers for the purposes of encoding (Walsh & Weir, 1999).

If the policy makers do not deal with the language problems that are experienced by both teachers and learners, high pass rates in Grade 9 will remain an elusive dream. The policy makers should ensure that CTA (EMS) are provided in languages that are in line with the demography of learner population. If that would be too costly for them at least they should ensure that special programmes are put in place; that are aimed at improving the English of learners from L.B.O.T.E.

5.3.2 Category 2: Content bias of CTA (EMS)

During the research I found that the content of the CTA (EMS) was a problem to learners from disadvantaged communities. There were questions that required learners to be acquainted with knowledge and experiences of the urban life. This brought pressure to bear on teachers also because they had to try their level best to relate the setting to that of a rural area learner's experiences. This problem is not unique to the South African context only. In the research that was carried out America it was found that the content of many high-stakes tests reflected largely the knowledge and the understanding of the dominant culture (Walsh & Weir, 1999). A similar finding came up in a research study where it was found that the high-stakes tests were devised by members of the dominant culture and social grouping, those being middle to upper class. The questions and knowledge required to complete such tests reflected the understanding of this group (Garcia & Pearson, 1999). Such a problem contributes in the poor performance of learners from working class backgrounds. The high-stakes tests provide a powerful advantage to learners from well educated and affluent families and it is a little more than ironic to rely on these tests to "close the gap" between rich and poor (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). If challenges that are related to the content of the CTA (EMS) remain unattended, the improvement in learner performance will remain a pipedream. The poor learner-performance will continue to impact negatively on both learner and teacher-morale. The situation can still be turned around, if the policy makers can ensure that the

content of the CTA (EMS) becomes in line with the demography of the learner population.

5.3.3 Category 3: CTA (EMS) put pressure and stress on teachers

During the data analysis, I found that EMS teachers experienced pressure and stress during the administering of the CTA (EMS). The source of this pressure and stress emanated firstly, from a lot of marking and recording which teachers had to do on the CTA (EMS) work. This pressure added on the pressure that teachers already had from other Learning Areas that they teach. Secondly, it emanated from the fact that CTA (EMS) administering is riddled with challenges that cause learners to perform poorly which make teachers to look as if they are failing in their duties. This does not auger well for EMS teachers because the pressure and stress may compel teachers for EMS to end up engaging in improper conduct in their quest to increase learner pass rates as this has happened in other countries. In Indonesia, teachers as a result of high-stakes related pressure and stress ended up firstly, helping learners to copy during the examinations, secondly, supplying them with answers and finally, helping them to revise test answers after the test session (Syahril & Lesko, 2007). In another research that was carried out, the response of teachers to similar pressure was that of increasing test scores (Moore & Waltman, 2007).

If the CTA (EMS) administering related pressure and stress is left unchecked, there is a danger that EMS teachers may also end up engaging in similar practices as it happens in other countries. To ensure that such a situation does not prevail, two options need to be implemented. Firstly, the CTA (EMS) related common papers should be introduced in Grade 9. These have to be administered during the first three terms of the school calendar, followed by the actual CTA (EMS) administering during the 4th term. If that were the case, teachers will only have the CTA (EMS) to worry about during the 4th term, since the rest of the work would have been covered in the other terms. Secondly, Section A of the CTA (EMS) should be administered in three parts spreading over the first three terms in conjunction with the normal curriculum development. The 4th term will only be

used to administer the final part of the CTA (EMS) namely, Section B. These two options will go a long way in relieving teachers of the high stakes related pressure and stress.

5.3.4 Category 4: Curriculum Narrowing

In course of this research, I found that EMS teachers were engaging in curriculum narrowing during the CTA (EMS) administering. The teachers gave short lessons on the topics that were covered by the tasks in the CTA (EMS) before allowing learners to do the tasks. The other topics that were not task-related were not taught. This curriculum narrowing only took place during the CTA (EMS) administering. This practice of curriculum narrowing in other countries it is practiced throughout the year, since teachers use questions from previous years' high-stakes tests. The high-stakes tests are used as the source of the curriculum content (Peterson & College, 2005). The high-stakes tests are used as a source of what is to be taught in class and how it should be taught and how learners should learn (Rehmani, 1998). When the curriculum narrowing is done during the course of the year it enables learners to perform better. This is contrary to the practice in some of our schools, where curriculum narrowing is only practiced during the CTA (EMS) administering. If the situation is not addressed, EMS teachers will not be able to successfully engage with CTA (EMS) during the curriculum development. This will continue to impact negatively on learner performance and teacher-morale.

5.3.5 Category 5: Teaching to Test

In the course of my research, I found that the EMS teachers engaged in teaching to test during CTA (EMS) administering in order to ensure that learners perform well. Before learners could embark on any questions teachers made sure that they first teach and discuss the questions. The content of what they taught was determined by the questions in the task that was to be done by learners. The high-stakes tests results in an increase in the teaching to test phenomena (Jones & Egley, 2004). Teaching to test has shortfalls. In Los Angeles, it was found that 'teaching-to-test' sometimes resulted in a distortion of the curriculum for many students, narrowing it to base, low-level skills. The pressure to

increase the pass rate made teachers in Indonesia to assist learners to answer questions, which they had sometimes rehearsed during the extra hours after school (Syahril & Lesko, 2007). A further problem with 'teaching to test' is that learners end up engaging in rote learning. In a study of Economics teaching in South African schools, it was found that learners were adopting a memorisation approach instead of the development of critical thinking capacities (Maistry, 2001).

If the problems that lead teachers for EMS engaging in 'teaching to test' are not addressed, poor quality teaching and learning will continue to prevail in schools. The problem of 'teaching to test' can be addressed if the idea of Grade 9 common papers becomes a reality.

5.3.6 Category 6: Unfair curriculum expectations

EMS teachers complained about the unfair curriculum expectations. Teachers were expected to adhere to changes that were brought about by Departmental policy changes in relation to the CTA (EMS) administering. For the past years EMS teachers were used to the policy, which indicated that CTA should be administered during the 4th term. This year (2009) during the 2nd term, schools received circulars that indicated that CTA should be administered during the second term (DoE, 2009). A subsequent circular was issued that indicated that CTA should be administered during the 3rd term and then completed in the 4th term as usual (DoE, 2009). I also found that there was no uniformity in the CTA (EMS) administering in schools. Some schools stopped the normal teaching and learning and only focussed on the CTA (EMS) administering, while others spent a week on CTA (EMS) administering and another week engaging in normal teaching and learning. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) prescribes that teachers should engage with CTA (EMS) during the 'normal' course of curriculum development (DoE, 2002). It was therefore clear that EMS teachers were not engaging with CTA (EMS) during their day-to-day curriculum development. If the policy makers fail understand the realities in schools thus failing to capacitate teachers on how to properly engage with CTA (EMS) during the 'normal' course of curriculum development, South African teachers will

continue to lag behind in dealing successfully with high-stakes tests. This will continue to impact negatively in learner performance. Policy makers need to understand the realities in schools (Wagner, 2003) and then work hand-in-hand with the teachers in schools. The co-operation between policy makers and teachers ensures that effective teaching and learning does take place in schools. The policy makers in Denmark understand and are committed to public education that is a reason why the Danes have moved so far ahead internationally in creating an education system that meets the demands of the 21st century (Wagner, 2003). South African teachers will benefit if the policy makers showed this kind of understanding.

5.4 Recommendations

After an analysis of the data, several implications exist for educational practice and education policy. The teachers' bid to outline challenges they encounter in the process of administering the CTA gave insight into the recommendations for educational practice and policy.

- Policymakers have to intensify programmes aimed at improving the level of English of learners deriving from L.B.O.T.E; furthermore they have to ensure that the language used in the CTA is set at a level that can be understood by all learners
- They should also ensure that the content of the CTA relates to all learners in general, and not only to a particular group of learners
- Attempts should be made to ensure that policymakers are in touch with the practical, every-day realities faced within schools
- Policymakers should put in place plans that will help empower teachers on how to engage with the CTA during the 'normal' course of curriculum development

Policymakers should ensure that schools are informed on time about any changes in or to the CTA administering.

5.5 Limitations

Due to the small sample size in this study, generalisability was problematic; however, the implications stemming from the data may be useful for similar contexts and areas of study. The hope is that the data presented in this study will raise questions at all levels of education on the factors that negatively persuade teachers' attitudes toward standardised testing, such as CTA.

5.6 Further research possibilities

This study provides policymakers with evidence that, after five years of administering the CTA in Grade 9, there still exist conditions that negatively affect teachers' attitudes toward the Grade 9 standardised testing procedure, namely the CTA. The purpose of this study was to endeavour to understand teachers' attitudes toward the CTA for EMS. Furthermore, the aim was to grasp how they engage with the CTA in the 'normal' course of curriculum development. Teachers act passively when they do not feel in control of their own professional lives, they simply act passively, they become compliant and act automatically without reflecting their own beliefs (Noble & Smith, 1994). They do not feel that they are part of the curriculum innovation, which normally leads to demotivation on their part.

Standardised testing such as CTA does appear to influence the regular course of teaching and learning within schools. A number of factors do appear to shape the attitudes of teachers toward standardised testing procedures such as the CTA. Teachers' attitudes to such standardised tests are important because they are on the frontlines and therefore in the best position in terms of their suitability to help policymakers understand how the testing policies are affecting teaching and learning.

The following areas need further research:

- What is the impact of the introduction of common papers in Grade 9?

- How does language influence student performance in CTA?
- To what extent are CTA biased towards middle-class learners?

5.7 Conclusion

EMS teachers provided powerful insights regarding high-stakes testing such as the CTA and its effects on teachers and learners. Although most teachers have some reservations about the CTA they are not totally against their administering. Currently EMS teachers have a negative attitude toward the CTA (EMS) given the current challenges that are related to the CTA (EMS) administering. Furthermore, teachers have difficulty in engaging with CTA (EMS) during the 'normal' course of curriculum development. Until policymakers take teachers' concerns seriously and make an effort to address them, teachers will not be likely to support reform through high-stakes testing procedures, such as the CTA. Without the support of the teachers, high-stakes testing such as the CTA will most likely to become 'just another' failed education reform. However, with the inputs of those on the frontlines and some vital and well-conceived changes from policymakers, testing programmes are likely to have a more positive effect on the teaching and learning processes, thus in turn eliciting a positive attitude from the teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Semi-structured interview transcript for Derrick

General questions to establish a rapport with the participant and to gauge their knowledge of the CTAs.

A. How long have you been teaching EMS in Grade 9?

D. I have been teaching EMS for the past six years.

A. How would you describe a CTA for EMS to a learner in your class?

D. I would explain to the learners that a CTA is an examination set by the Department of Education. I would also explain that CTA are the final examination after which learners can exit school if willing to go to FET.

A. What would you say is the difference between the CTA and the assessment that you give to learners during the course of the year?

D. CTA cover all the work done throughout the year, but our assessment focus on specific aspect as we treat them during the year. In my school I have a lot of second language speaking learners who are who experience language barrier in dealing with the CTA. The level of questioning and language is a little bit difficult to the majority of the learners. While learners may know the content, they may not understand the questions due to language problems. We also assist in Section A, not in Section B.

A. Does your school have an assessment policy? Can you explain how it works?

D. Yes. Our school does have an assessment policy. Because we have four EMS teachers, we have assigned one teacher to develop the Learning Programme and Work Schedules these are then presented for discussion and implementation in the Learning Area meeting. Every time a formal assessment is to be given, we discuss it to ensure that it suites all the classes since they may not have covered the same amount of work.

What are the teachers' attitudes towards CTA (EMS)?

A. How do learners react when they sit for their first CTA (EMS)?

D. Usually, learners become nervous, because every time the Department's sets papers the standard of which is always very high because they have to suit the needs of everybody whether they are model C schools or public schools. Generally, learners are very nervous and fearful. As teachers in Section A we try to simplify the questions, thus making it easier for learners to cope with the CTA.

A. How does the administering of the CTA (EMS) impact on you other responsibilities as a teacher?

D. The fact that each teacher has one CTA class, which lightens the load. As CTA normally comes towards year end, we find ourselves with a pressure for marking because we are normally left with a week or so before school closes.

A. Do you normally wait for the Department's official memorandum for the CTA (EMS) before you start marking or you just continue with the marking? Why?

D. I feel comfortable waiting for the Department's memorandum not because I doubt myself, simply because in a subject like EMS there are questions which have more than one solution/answers. With the memorandum you know exactly the expected answer. Should learners then give different answers, we now can decide which answers are acceptable and which ones are off the mark.

A. Do you hold a meeting with other EMS educators to discuss the CTA (EMS)?

D. Just one meeting held where CTA are discussed after that we hold informal meetings and sometimes chat to other teachers in corridors on some aspects of the CTA. We ask questions such as "how do you approach a certain question and how far are you".

A. How often do you hold EMS learning area meetings where the CTA for EMS are discussed?

D. I must be honest with you, CTA are discussed once at the beginning of the year and then in that one meeting before the CTA administering at the end of the year. Because during the course of the year we have certain parts of the syllabus to cover.

A. What is the general feeling amongst the EMS teachers about the CTA for EMS?

B. Teachers are generally uneasy about the CTA, because questions are difficult. Frustrations, the teachers has to explain the questions for each task in Section A. In the classes of repeaters, it is more difficult because a lot of effort has to be put in trying to make learners to understand.

A. What have been your experiences of administering the CTA (EMS)?

D. Apart from a lot of marking, we have had experiences where learners give answers identical to the memorandum and it becomes difficult to penalize the child because you don't have a proof of that the learner has really copied. They give such answers because some of their parents are teachers. Children are not the same. There is a group which flows with the tide of the CTA, while there are sometime some groups that are having difficulty in answering CTA.

A. Do you enjoy administering the CTA (EMS)? Why?

D. I kinda enjoy it because CTA relate to a number of things around us ie real-life situations such as going to make a deposit or withdrawal in the bank. CTA have diagrams which enable learners to relate to the topic being discussed. That is why I enjoy administering CTA.

A. Do you think that the CTA (EMS) should be continued? Why?

D. Yes, because CTA force teachers to conform to certain standards, since they do not deviate from the scope. Since they are being prepared to go to Grade 10, through CTA preparations uniform standard is set which introduces them to Grade 10 work.

A. In some schools, Grade 9 teachers for EMS loath the end of the year because of the stress associated with the CTA for EMS. Is it the same with EMS teachers in your school? Can you explain?

D. Yes, it is the same, because CTA come at the end of the year where teachers are busy shutting down or winding up on their CASS. CTA therefore give more burden on the already burdened teacher such as a lot of marking and conversions to be done. If the CTA were brought forward in the second or third term, it would be much easier to handle the term.

E. Have the NCS workshops helped in broadening your understanding of the CTA (EMS)? Please explain.

D. No, since only one teacher attends, and on her return, she then workshops us on what transpired in the workshop.

A. Do you feel that CTA (EMS) add more pressure on your duty load?

D. Yes.

How do teachers engage CTA (EMS) in their ‘normal’ course curriculum development?

A. In some schools, the CTAs for EMS are really a school property because they are kept under lock and key at the office of the commerce HoD, do you experience a similar situation in this school? Can you explain?

D. Yes, everything is office kept, just like a spoiled report. CTA only get issued according to the timetable and Section B is run like an examination.

A. Do you link your day-to-day assessment to the CTA (EMS)? If yes, how? If no, why?

D. I don't include CTA, although I know I should be doing it. Sometimes CTA are totally not in line with the syllabus. Because of that, teachers become reluctant to regularly use them since it is not guaranteed that those similar questions will come out. A new person in charge of syllabus wants to change the syllabus, thus creating a divide with CTA. Currently they expect us to teach Grade 10 work to Grade 9 learners.

A. What informs your administering of the CTA (EMS)?

D. My administering of the CTA is informed by the discussions that I have with the HoD, peers and the networking with other teachers.

A. Who designs the assessment year plan for EMS?

D. The EMS teacher in charge is the one who designs the assessment year plan, which is then brought to us for discussion.

A. How would you respond to a newly appointed EMS teacher who feels that the CTA (EMS) should be incorporated during the compilation of the Phase planner and Learning Programme?

D. I can't answer that question, only the teacher in charge of the Grade 9 EMS can answer that.

A. In some schools EMS teachers are reluctant to include the CTAs for EMS in their day-to-day assessment because they have difficulty with the content of the CTA (EMS), how do you do it in your school?

D. We are reluctant to include CTA in our day-to-day assessment.

A. How would the introduction of EMS Common Papers in Grade 9 affect the learner performance in the CTA for EMS?

D. Kids of different aptitudes, its difficult for them to cope well with the CTA, therefore it must be ruled out.

A. Do the CTA (EMS) have any impact on the process of curriculum development? If so, how?

D. They do impact on curriculum planning. Socio-economic barrier on majority of learners compared to model C school learners. In our case, I have a situation where I explain many times to a child something and a child simply stares at me, and I suspect that its due to problems a learner experiences at home. It may be insufficient nutrition and problems at home. Nutrition programme is just a pie in the sky.

A. Do you cater for the CTA (EMS) when planning your lessons?

D. Eh..... Not exactly, since we only deal with them during the fourth term.

I am of the view that with this modified instrument, I will be able to successfully achieve my objectives during the research.

Appendix B

Transcript of lesson observation of Thando as at 30.07.09

Lesson 2

The teacher was administering Section A of a CTA. The learners had to do Task 1 entitled “The role of the foreign sector in the economic cycle of South Africa”. The teacher began by asking learners the meaning of the words such as foreign sector, economic cycle, trading partners, trade agreement, budget and many more. Only one learner tried to give answers, but she was hesitant.

Nomah: trading partners means ...eh, eh the p..p...person you sell and buy.

The teacher realized that the learner has an idea, since she mentioned the key words although the sentence does not make sense. She then asked her to present the answer in her mother tongue, isiZulu. Without any hesitation the child gave a correct answer.

Nomah: trading partners , kusho abantu ohwebelana nabo, ngokudayiselana kanye nokuthenga.

The child meant that trading partners means the people that one trades with through buying and selling goods. As soon as the teacher allowed learners to give answers in their mother tongue, they began to give answers in turns. The teacher went on to explain that South Africa has good relations with other countries worldwide. She went on to point out that this is reflected in a number of trade partners and trade agreements that South Africa has with other countries. In her presentation she then focused on South Africa’s trading partners and trade agreements in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). She then focused further on what the task requires. She outlined the goals of SADC. She further explained the significance of the bar graph on the task. The graph was representing six African countries that have trade with South Africa.

After she had finished discussing the task, she then allowed learners to do the task. To her surprised only a handful of learners were writing. She then asked those that were not writing, the reason, why they were not writing. Themba answered,

“asizwisisanga futhi asiqondi kahle ngemibuzo le”. Themba meant that they did not understand when the teacher was explaining the task. Realizing the seriousness of the problem, the teacher explained everything again, but now in a mother tongue. As she was explaining again, learners were engaging her by asking questions. She explained the term budget and said:

I budget isho uhlelo lokwabiwa kwezimali nguhulumeni ehlangabezana nezidingo zomphakathi.

After she had finished, then learners began to answer the questions on the task. During the rest of the period she was walking up and down assisting learners with further clarity on the questions that were in the task. Most of the teacher-learner conversation was in isiZulu. At the end of the period, she allowed learners to finish the task as homework. I then had an opportunity to ask the teacher if she was using the same approach in dealing with the rest of the tasks in the CTA.

Thando: Yes, I follow the same procedure with all the tasks. I spend time giving a brief lesson on what each task is all about. I make sure that I also use mother tongue in the process. I once explained the task in English only to my learners, but the results on that task were a disaster. Learners explained to me that they were having problems in understanding English, the language used in the CTA.

Appendix C

Documentary analysis transcript

The analysis of the documents was directed at the lesson plan, work schedule, learning programme and the assessment year plan.

Lesson planning:

The analysis of the lesson plan could not be done because the participant failed to produce it. Even the lesson plans for the previously presented lessons were not available. The unavailability of the lesson plans left a lot to be desired. I was left with an impression that the teacher was unable to do a lesson plan as required by the policy on NCS.

Work Schedule:

The work schedule was available for analysis purposes. The aim was to find evidence of the inclusion of the CTA as part of the resources that the teacher was prepared to use during the normal curriculum development. The resources that were mentioned in the work schedule were textbooks, Standard Bank Financial Literacy Pack, internet, newspapers, radio and television. There was no reference whatsoever to the CTA (EMS) as one of the resources to be used at any stage during the normal course of curriculum development. The omission of the CTA as one of the resources was a clear indication of the teacher was not going to engage the CTA (EMS) during the normal course of curriculum development.

Assessment Year Plan:

The assessment year plan was not available for analysis. This came as no surprise because during the interviews, it was evident that the teacher was ignorant about this document. During the interaction with the teacher it was clear that she knew that learners

had to be assessed from time to time. She also knew that learners had to be assessed by means of the CTA (EMS) in the fourth term, as it was always the case in the previous years. As much as the teacher showed that she knew that the assessment had to be conducted, but there was not written tangible evidence to that effect. It was therefore clear that the teacher was treating the CTA and the normal curriculum development as two different entities, which are conducted separately. This was in direct contrast to the requirements of the NPA document, which requires that CTA (EMS) become part of the normal curriculum development.

Learning Programme

This document was also not presented for analysis. The unavailability of this document was another evidence of the teacher's lack of involvement of the CTA (EMS) during the course of normal curriculum development.

Appendix D

LETTER TO THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL

P.O Box 798

Scottburgh

4180

07 May 2009

The School Principal
Roseville High School
Umzinto
4200

Dear Sir

RE: A REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am currently studying for Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am required to conduct a research as part of the coursework for the degree. I therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct in your school a research project entitled “Grade 9 teacher attitudes towards Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA). A Case Study of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). The purpose of the research project is to try and understand the attitudes of EMS teachers towards CTAs (EMS). Further to this, I am want to understand how they engage CTAs (EMS) during the normal course of curriculum development.

This project involves classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. Both the interviews and document analysis shall be conducted with the teachers during

the non-teaching periods. The duration of the interviews and document analysis shall be approximately 45 minutes. The observations shall be approximately 30 minutes. The documents to be analyzed are lesson plan, Learning Programme, Work Schedule and Assessment year Plan. I will request your permission to tape-record the interviews as this will help the data capturing process. The findings from this research will be used in the writing of my dissertation. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly guarded; pseudonym will be used in order to protect your school's identity.

As an EMS teacher, I am of the view that you are a relevant resource person for this research. Please be informed that your participation in this research project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at anytime. I assure you that your decision not to participate or withdraw will not disadvantage in any way. There will be no financial benefits for your participation in the research project.

The benefits derived from this research will be reaped by your school, examiners of the CTAs (EMS), the EMS Provincial and National curriculum developers.

This study is supervised by **Dr M Maistry. Tel: (031) 2603457, Email address: maistrys@ukzn.ac.za**

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

I hope to conduct interviews observations and document analysis at your school. This research project requires me to work with two EMS teachers from your school..

My contact details are: Tel: (039) 9748220), Cell: 084617558, Email address: 935340433@ukzn.ac.za or wittiesithole@yahoo.com or ngelisambulo@atlantic.net

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

A.W. Sithole

RESPONSE SLIP

Permission to conduct research is-----

Mr. -----
(*SCHOOL PRINCIPAL*)

DATE

Appendix E

LETTER TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

P.O Box 798

Scottburgh

4180

07 May 2009

Dear Participant.

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I am currently studying for Masters in Education at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I am required to conduct a research as part of the coursework for the degree. I therefore kindly seek your permission to participate in my research project. The title of the research project is “Grade 9 teacher attitudes towards Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA). A Case Study of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). The purpose of the research project is to try and understand the attitudes of EMS teachers towards CTAs (EMS). Further to this, I want to understand how they engage CTAs (EMS) during the ‘normal’ course of curriculum development.

This project involves classroom observations, teacher interviews and document analysis. Both the interviews and document analysis shall be conducted during the non-teaching periods. The duration of the interviews and document analysis shall be approximately 45 minutes. The observations shall be approximately 30 minutes. The documents to be analyzed are lesson plan, Learning Programme, Work Schedule and Assessment year Plan. I will request your permission to audio-record the interviews as this will help in the data capturing process. The findings from this research will be used in the writing of my

dissertation. Confidentiality and anonymity will be highly guarded; pseudonyms will be used in order to protect your identity.

As an EMS teacher, I am of the view that you are a relevant resource person for this research. Please be informed that your participation in this research project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at anytime. I assure you that your decision not to participate or withdraw will not disadvantage you in any way. There will be no financial benefits for your participation in the research project. The benefits derived from this research will be reaped by your school, examiners of the CTAs (EMS), the EMS Provincial and National curriculum developers. The findings of the research project will be forwarded to the Department of Education together with recommendations. If the Department of Education acts on the research findings and recommendations your school is likely to benefit in the area of CTAs. The gathered data will be kept by the KwaZulu Natal for a period of 5 years. After this period, audio-recorded items will be incinerated and the transcribed copies of interviews shredded.

This study is supervised by Dr M. Maistry (031)2063457, Email address: maistry@ukzn.ac.za

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

My contact details are: Tel: (039) 9748220), Cell: 084617558, Email address: 935340433@ukzn.ac.za or wittiesithole@yahoo.com or ngelisambulo@atlantic.net

Thank you for your support and co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

A.W. Sithole

Please read and sign the following declaration and indicate your full names as indicated in the attached schedule.

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at anytime, should I so desire. My decision to participate or to withdraw will not result in any disadvantage to me.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE