

Implementing OBE: A pilot study of Grade One teachers' understandings of
curriculum change.

by

Elizabeth Russell

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, DURBAN

SUPERVISOR: DR. R. DEACON

NOVEMBER 1998.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer acknowledges the principals and teachers at the three primary schools. These teachers welcomed the writer into their schools and classes and allowed her to observe them grappling with change. Their frank responses during the interviews allowed the writer to gain an insight into the process of implementation.

The writer also acknowledges her research supervisor, Dr Roger Deacon, for his expertise, guidance and encouragement during the past two years.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master in Education, in the Department of Education at the University of Natal, Durban. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Elizabeth Russell

Elizabeth Russell

Place: Durban Date: 15 December 1998

CONTENTS	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER ONE. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
Part One: Paradigms in Curriculum	10
Part Two: The Meaning of Change	15
W Part Three: Outcomes-Based Education: Rethinking Teaching	18
CHAPTER TWO. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD	22
Part One: Research Methodology	22
Part Two: The Research Sample	25
Part Three: Methods employed	27
Part Four: Reflections on the chosen Methods	30
CHAPTER THREE. THE CONTEXT OF INNOVATION	31
✓Part One: Curriculum Practices in South Africa	31
✓Part Two: A Critique of SA OBE	36
W Part Three: The Context of Implementation	44
CHAPTER FOUR. INTERPRETATION OF DATA	56
CHAPTER FIVE. CONCLUSION	74
Part One: Dimensions of Change	74
Part Two: Dimensions of OBE	80
Part Three: Research Conclusions	82
Bibliography	84
APPENDIX A	89

INTRODUCTION.

The National Department of Education in South Africa began implementing a new curriculum framework in Grade 1 classes during 1998. This curriculum innovation incorporates the theory and practice of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). This process of change has been marked with political rhetoric, sharp criticism, inevitable confusion and a desperate hope for a better future. Some of these contrasting emotions are illustrated in the following quotes:

The introduction of this new curriculum [OBE] will play a major role in helping to transform our country into one in which we all want to live, by producing thinking, caring learners. I am confident that it will be a giant step forward in ensuring quality education for all the people of South Africa (Bengu 1997).

My thesis is that OBE will fail, not because politicians and bureaucrats are malintended, but because this policy is being implemented in isolation and ignorance of almost 50 years of accumulated experience with respect to curriculum change.... Rather than spawn innovation, OBE will in fact undermine the already fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms of South Africa (Jansen 1997).

This dissertation sets out to examine the implementation process that generated such opposing points of view from two prominent South African educationalists. The implementation of Outcomes based Education has moved rapidly through the initial stages of conception, development, piloting and implementation during the last two years. The researcher, who was fortunate to be involved in various Provincial committees from the very beginning of the implementation process, set out to examine this centrally developed and driven curriculum initiative. This research report describes a pilot study at three sites of the implementation of Outcomes-Based Education in Grade 1 during 1998. During this study the researcher was able to examine the initial problems encountered.

Key questions that this research initiative addressed were:

- What prior knowledge of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and what type of information regarding OBE implementation did the participants have?
- What preparations did the schools make in terms of the following: physical resources, Inset, school administration, informing the parent body?
- What meaning does OBE and this educational change have for the participants?

This study has two main aims:

- to see if the problems anticipated by teachers and other educationalists were the ones actually encountered in the initial implementation stages.
- to address the question 'Will OBE fail?'

I wish to contend that a blanket statement of success or failure at this early stage of implementation is inappropriate. In order to establish the degree of success or failure one has to examine the processes taking place in the classroom where the teachers implementing the change are grappling with the practical problems and endeavouring to construct new meanings.

The three primary schools chosen were Manor Gardens Primary, Carrington Heights Junior Primary and Mayville Primary. These schools were visited during 1997 and 1998. The principal theories underpinning this dissertation are those supporting educational change and curriculum innovation.

This research report consists of five chapters. The first chapter sets out a theoretical analysis of curriculum practices. This is achieved through the examination of different theories of the nature of curriculum and the

implications of these differences for the implementation of curriculum innovation. An analysis of the Empirical-Analytical, Hermeneutic and Critical Paradigms of curriculum practice forms the framework of this chapter that then proceeds to examine the argument that curriculum change produces different meanings and is dependent on the context. Theories on different forms of OBE are carefully examined. The second chapter describes and accounts for the research methods employed in this study. The case study approach used at the three schools enabled the researcher to gain an insight into some of the complex social phenomena surrounding the implementation of OBE. The different methods used to gather data are described and accounted for. The limitations of this qualitative method are addressed and the precautions taken to minimise these limitations are described.

The third chapter sets out to describe the context of curriculum innovation in South Africa. This involves an analysis of the official curriculum practices of the past and the present education systems. The documentation describing OBE is then examined to establish the meaning that this change has for the implementers of the new curriculum. Jonathan Jansen's critique of this notion of OBE is described so that some of these concerns can be tested against the reality of the implementation observed in the three case studies. The last part of this chapter sets out a background description of the three schools selected based on the data collected during the initial visits in 1997. This description establishes the context in which the implementation took place and describes the meanings that the participants had formed regarding the proposed changes.

The fourth chapter sets out an interpretation of the combined data collected during the course of the research to establish the common problems encountered during the implementation process. The problems anticipated by Jonathan Jansen form the framework of this chapter. The last chapter presents the researcher's conclusions of the data interpretation and relates these findings to the theoretical analysis presented in chapter one. This report ends with a

final conclusion that examines Jansen's predictions in the light of the research findings.

Implementation equals what really happens in practice as distinct from what the planners and participants consider is supposed to happen. What happens at stage one has powerful consequences for subsequent change and it is therefore vital to monitor this stage. The findings of research efforts such as this could inform the curriculum process and thus influence the passage of implementation.

CHAPTER ONE.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

This chapter sets out a theoretical analysis of curriculum practices and argues that different theories of the nature of curriculum have important implications for the implementation of curriculum change. This argument emerges from the view that the curriculum is not contained and determined by policy documents, but is “a multifaceted concept, constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas” (Goodson 1994: 111). This argument that curriculum is contextually shaped is further established by Grundy, who considers curriculum practice as a social process that

develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection. That is, the curriculum is not simply a set of plans to be implemented, but rather is constituted through an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated into the process (Grundy 1987: 115).

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part analyses the three paradigms of curriculum i.e. the Empirical-Analytical, Hermeneutic and Critical Paradigms, as set out by Atkins (1988), Cornbleth (1990), Grundy (1987), Popkewitz (1984), Schubert (1986) and Stenhouse (1975) and their implications for curriculum change. The researcher argues that although this typology has been superceded by various postmodern debates these paradigms are still significant in the practical processes involved in the implementation of curricular change. In the second part the work of Dalton (1988), Fullan (1982), Fullan with Stiegelbauer (1991), Goodson (1994) and Taylor and Tye (1975) will be reviewed to expand the argument that curriculum change has different meanings and is dependent on the context. The third part focuses on Outcomes-Based education (OBE). The work of Killian (1996), Marsh (1997) and Spady (1995) will be reviewed to examine the basic principles that underpin the theory of OBE so as to establish the nature of the curriculum change required by the teachers

involved in the implementation of OBE. In addition the different forms of OBE i.e. traditional, transitional and transformational will be examined because the form of OBE has implications for implementation as it determines the type of change that is actually required by those involved in the implementation process.

Part One:

Paradigms in Curriculum.

Assumptions, whether consciously or unconsciously held, constitute our philosophy of change (Fullan 1991: 107).

Different perspectives carry different assumptions about the nature of education and knowledge. These theoretical mind-sets influence school practice and therefore the meaning of change. Schubert (1986) examines Hultgren's analysis of three modes of inquiry that is based on the work of Giroux (1980) and Habermas (1971). Hultgren (1982) explicates three modes, empirical-analytical, interpretive and critical. These three paradigms of inquiry will be reviewed to determine the effect each has on curriculum change and implementation. The word 'paradigm' refers to a set of ideas and values that govern inquiry in a discipline and thus influence the interpretation of data and conclusions. If curriculum is conceived as a product contained in a set of documents, curriculum studies are likely to be documentary and curriculum change will focus on document revision. This strategy is evident in the analytical mode of inquiry. If, however, curriculum is contextualized as a social process then curriculum studies are likely to be linked to practice and curriculum change is likely to focus on the context; a strategy evident in the interpretive and critical modes. The following examination of the three paradigms of inquiry will reveal the dominant focus of each.

The Empirical-Analytical Paradigm serves technical interests. It posits principles of control and certainty. Knowledge is viewed as universal, independent, value- and context-free. Curriculum developers operating in this mode would see themselves as searchers for verification of lawlike propositions. Social reality, as

it exists in overt behaviour, would be unquestioningly accepted. The researchers would proceed in an unquestioned, efficient hierarchical structure with levels of control over others granted by positions held within the structure. This technocratic conception focuses on curriculum as a product contained in a set of documents and is the prevailing conception of curriculum (Cornbleth 1990: 7). Technocratic approaches decontextualise curriculum by separating curriculum as product from practice and treating this curriculum as independent from the social context. The underlying assumption that curriculum is a tangible product has implications for the process of change. Change would thus be conceived as the construction and implementation of a different product. This rational approach would be enacted through precise, controlled procedures that aimed to produce a finished curriculum product. The questions that technocratic implementers would consider being important are: What kinds of curriculum documents are most understandable and acceptable to teachers? To what extent have these documents been used as they were intended? (Cornbleth 1990: 195). The curriculum developer's main concern is in getting the product right and then marketing it. The main assumption is that the product is the correct solution almost regardless of the social context. This technocratic approach fosters a reliance on expert knowledge and the teachers are regarded as passive implementers of expert designs (Cornbleth 1990: 33). This paradigm occurs in response to rapidly changing economic and social conditions during which there is a great need for social engineering. The efficient, methodical focus of this mode provides the control perceived to be required of transformation processes. A serious problem inherent in this mode of implementation lies in the separation of the processes of change from the context of the school.

The Hermeneutic Paradigm involves practical interests. The interaction among the researchers involves the understanding of related cultural and historical issues. Knowledge is viewed as being created by individuals and society which results in a search for meaning beneath the obvious social 'reality'. It is realised that truth can only be judged in the framework of the social context of the

researchers. Education imperatives are not linked to economic interests and efficiency, but rather to the sensitive understanding of the participants involved. This interpretive approach provides the curriculum theorist with a powerful tool for reshaping educational practice (Atkins 1988). It challenges educationalists to consider the beliefs of students and communities as worthwhile knowledge. Cornbleth chose not to address this "intermediate position" (Cornbleth 1990: 7). She argues that although a more representative group creates the curriculum product this approach retains the concept of curriculum as a product. She feels that although values and the local setting are considered, conceptions of curriculum are only partially contextualized as little attention is given to the social context beyond the classroom. Curriculum questions raised by interpretive researchers could include: "What academic and social knowledge is constructed in the discourse of classroom interaction?" (Cornbleth 1990: 196). Knowledge gained from this mode of research is used to inform classroom practice rather than to reform curriculum. The process includes information of how innovations are actually taking place. The assumption, however, is again that the information being diffused is correct and there is little room for critical reflection or modification. This mode is considered able to respond to issues that may not be addressed by the empirical-analytical mode. One of these is the recognition that technological successes in society have not been able to accommodate the spiritual needs of the communities involved (Popkewitz 1984: 52).

The Critical Paradigm emphasizes emancipatory political interests. The researchers would seek to expose oppressive ideologies and 'false consciousness' controlling the social context under review. These researchers would therefore need to acknowledge their own value systems. Thus pedagogy would go beyond inquiry and would be involved in political action within the social context. This mode of viewing curriculum is characterized by wide-ranging questioning that probes beneath surface appearances and encompasses "critical rationality" (Cornbleth 1990: 24). Curriculum questions raised by critical researchers could include: "Whose knowledge is given preference? Who

has access to which knowledge? Who benefits or is disadvantaged?" (Cornbleth 1990: 197). These questions seek knowledge that will inform reform efforts as their answers create understanding regarding contradictions and tensions inherent in curriculum change. In this way the critical conception of curriculum integrates policy-making with construction and implementation. From a critical perspective, curriculum causality and change are complex and problematic. The researcher starts with a problem or need defined by the school or teacher and then proceeds in a collaborative manner to solve the problem. The teacher is actively involved and this mode fosters a reflective and responsible role for the teacher (Cornbleth 1990: 33). This mode can be viewed by as a response to inequities and structural limitations (Popkewitz 1984: 52).

Each of the above paradigms predisposes the researchers' and teachers' ways of thinking and challenging the social context. Each mode is based on different assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and education. The Empirical - Analytical Paradigm describes the context free, quantitative mode of inquiry. This technocratic approach operates in a context of rigid social control that minimizes conflict and alienates teachers from the reform process. This mode views knowledge as objective, apolitical and value-free, and the role of education as the preservation of an unchallenged set of societal values. The Hermeneutic Paradigm describes the qualitative mode. There is an attempt to engage with the context and a focus on how knowledge is negotiated in schools. This mode views knowledge as being constructed by society and the role of education being to foster an understanding of society for the individuals within that society. The Critical Paradigm represents forms of action, which seek to break down hegemonies and thus enables educators to understand the social and economic roots of the knowledge transmitted in schools. This critical approach acknowledges conflict and fosters the social empowerment of those involved in the curriculum reform (Cornbleth 1990: 34). The Critical paradigm demands a questioning of knowledge and values held by a society and challenges the dominant discourses.

Each paradigm locates schooling in a different relationship with society. I would agree with Cornbleth that "Curriculum conceptions, modes of reasoning, and practice are not value free" (Cornbleth 1990: 8). Thus the Empirical-Analytical approach is problematic because of its assumption that curricula are context and value-free. The Critical paradigm with its emancipatory perspective is also inappropriate in this context where the curriculum initiative is centrally driven with limited participation by the teachers. Taking into account the inherent problems of these two approaches this research has adopted the Hermeneutic mode both to grapple with the construction of meaning that this educational change had for the teachers and to highlight the short-comings of the Empirical-Analytical and Critical modes.

In a context of rapid educational change the problem of change must be viewed in the same manner in which the context of schooling is viewed. There is a tendency to discuss issues at a level of shared assumptions without ever establishing whether the participants share those assumptions. These three paradigms form a framework in which to analyse the ideological shifts required during the implementation of curriculum change in South Africa. The ideological changes required by the teachers implementing OBE are dealt with in full in Chapter Three, Part Two. A review of the literature on the different meanings of change will now help to clarify this issue.

Part Two:

The Meaning of Change.

New experiences are always initially reacted to in the context of some 'familiar, reliable construction of reality' in which people must be able to attach personal meaning to the experiences regardless of how meaningful they might be to others (Fullan quoting Marris 1991: 31).

No one can resolve the crisis of change on behalf of another. Those in positions of power to initiate change cannot ignore or minimize the need for those involved in the implementation of the change to work through the 'impulse of rejection'. The policy makers have had more time to make sense of the proposed change and must allow others the same chance if change is to take place. All real change involves "passing through zones of uncertainty.... the situation of being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than you can handle" (Fullan 1991: 32). Real change represents a serious personal experience that is characterized by the anxieties of uncertainty and the joy of mastery. This personal growth pattern is central to successful educational reform as it brings meaning to the change initiative.

Meaning is thus central to making sense of educational change. These meanings must be shared by those involved in both the design and implementation of the proposed change if the change is to be successful. It is argued that the implementation of educational change must involve changes in practice. Fullan(1991) identifies three critical aspects of change: The first is that change has to be conceived of as multidimensional. Ignorance of all the possible dimensions can help to explain why some aspects of change are implemented and others are not. The second is that educational change involves people's basic conceptions of self and competence, and thus presents difficulties for the individual to develop a sense of meaning. Dalton states that one of the burdens that teachers take on in the process of change is the "burden of incompetence" (Dalton 1988: 8). This burden would have different meanings for the teacher and the external implementer. Innovations can involve teachers in skills that

they do not possess. These situations create a crisis as they put the identity and professional skills of the teachers at stake: a crisis that the external implementer does not have to face. The third aspect involves a dynamic interrelationship of three related dimensions of change: the use of new materials, the use of new teaching approaches and the alteration of beliefs. Innovations are often based on sets of assumptions about the nature of the child and the learning process that differ from those held by most teachers (Dalton 1988: 12). It is therefore important that a relationship must be fostered between the intended new educational program and the subjective realities of the individuals involved for real change to be effectively implemented. Thus there must be changes in what people think if the intended outcome is to be achieved. Fullan(1991) identifies six themes that are required in concert for substantial change to occur: leadership and vision, evolutionary change, initiative taking and empowerment, staff development and assistance, monitoring/problem-coping, and restructuring. In addition the following four issues were found to be fundamental to implementation: active initiation and participation, pressure and support, changes in behaviour and beliefs, and the overriding problem of ownership. (Fullan 1991: 91)

Ultimately educational change depends on what the teacher does in the classroom. Curriculum workers often forget that curriculum changes do not take place in a vacuum. Thus a curriculum change must be viewed as more than an adding, deleting or just altering of content. The plan for bringing about successful change must view schools as cultural systems and must include continual dialogue among all persons at all levels of decision making. There needs to be recognition that change involves both the intellect and affective personal values and in addition the norms of the institution (Dalton 1988: 225). It is argued that the structures and routines of the school workplace act as a powerful source of help or hindrance to the teacher in the process of change. To that end the principal and his/her style of leadership is crucial for real change to happen. Research proves that change can have a pacifying effect because surface changes can create the appearance of substantial change when in fact

no real deep changes have occurred. Change fails if it fails to impact on the entire culture of the school.

“A set of educational ideas cannot be developed and packaged for use at will” (Goodson 1994: 38). Goodson negates the underlying assumption of the prescriptive mode that bureaucratic accountability and central power can result in successful implementation. This is owing to the fact that this mode ignores the meaning of existing practice and structures. Although pluralistic decentralized decision-making has become a fashionable focus in educational thinking the true meaning of this theme is unclear and curriculum initiatives remain centrally and politically defined (Goodson 1994: 11). This tension is illustrated in the fact that although, in theory, the school curriculum is recognized as being socially constructed the written curriculum is most often presented as a ‘given’. The term change needs to be differentiated from improvement, as there is often an assumption that the values of a curriculum development programme are intrinsically good and therefore equal an improvement. The teachers are then allocated the uncritical task of making the new programme succeed {The Open University (1972) and Schubert (1989)}.

In conclusion it is argued that innovations cannot be viewed as ‘reified entities’ with an independent existence (Dalton 1988: 235). Meaning has to be negotiated through human interaction and it is these shared meanings that sustain the process.

Part Three:

Outcomes-Based Education: Rethinking teaching.

Outcomes-Based education means focusing and organising a school's entire program and instructional efforts around the clearly defined outcomes we want all students to demonstrate when they leave school (Marsh quoting Spady 1997: 40).

Outcomes can be defined as being clear learning results that the teacher wants the students to demonstrate at the end of an appropriate learning experience. Thus outcomes must not be vague statements about values or beliefs but are what the students can do with what they have learned. This means that outcomes are actions that reflect the students' competence in using content. This learning involves the teacher in the organisation of time and resources to ensure that the students are able to master the particular instructional outcomes. It is based on the premise that all children can learn when provided with conditions that are appropriate for their learning. This learning system is enunciated through specific core learning outcomes that stand outside and are considered to be independent of any discipline or syllabus. A framework for judging student performance has then to be developed.

Spady identifies four main differences between OBE and what schools have always done:

- OBE systems build everything on a clearly defined framework of exit outcomes;
- Time is viewed as an alterable resource dependent on the needs of the participants;
- OBE provides standards that are clearly defined, made known and 'criterion-based' for all students;
- OBE focuses on increasing students' learning and performance to the highest possible levels before they leave school. (Spady 1995: 29).

Spady differentiates between 'transformational', 'transitional' and 'traditional' OBE. Transformational OBE is described as being future orientated, committed to the success of all students, including clearly defined 'exit outcomes' as well as a variety of methods and chances for students to demonstrate the outcomes and incorporating a consistently applied criterion-referenced assessment system. (Marsh 1997: 41). 'Traditional' OBE focuses upon existing curricula with outcomes being derived mainly in terms of skills and competencies. The traditional school day hours are maintained and students have a greater chance of being successful because the specified outcomes constitute a clearer statement of intent than the past documents. Thus traditional OBE is strictly speaking not outcomes-based because the starting point is in most cases the existing curriculum from which the outcomes are derived. 'Transitional' OBE thus lies somewhere between these two extremes. Transitional OBE extends beyond the traditional OBE in those higher order competencies such as critical thinking and effective communication are required - "it centres curriculum and assessment design around higher order exit outcomes. Having graduates who are broadly competent persons best reflects its vision" (Marsh quoting Spady 1997: 41). Although Spady's typology of change cannot be used as an assessment tool I wish to contend that in the South African context the Transformational OBE that is presented in the policy and public documents will take on more Traditional attributes when it is actually implemented at the school level.

Marsh lists some of the purported advantages of using student outcome statements in several Australian states as follows:

- outcomes reflect the knowledge and skills that government school systems consider to be essential;
- outcomes enable teachers to identify individual students' progress and thus provide for further learning;
- outcomes provide the curriculum guidelines that enable teachers to plan sequential learning;

- outcomes provide a framework that indicates to the community that government school education is soundly based;
- outcomes provide a focus for development and monitoring of the performance of teachers and schools.

(Marsh quotes the Education Department of Western Australia 1997: 42).

Some of the criticisms and problems reported by Marsh are now reviewed. On the theoretical level Marsh cites Collins (1994) and McGaw's (1995) concerns with reference to Australia:

- Was it plausible that all students go through the same development sequence?
- Did outcome statements merely reflect the majority cultural patterns?
- What does it indicate if the individual student did not conform to this predetermined pattern of development?
- Was it knowledge rather than the student that was being built up in a sequential way? (Marsh 1997: 42)

McGaw (1995) cautioned that student outcomes do not represent a full range of educational objectives. Ribbins (1992) contended that in the United Kingdom the National Curriculum relied on a narrow set of indicators. Collins (1994) argued that outcomes presuppose 'normal' stages of development of students' learning that cannot be sustained (Marsh 1997: 44). On a practical level it was found that student outcomes were difficult and expensive to assess, and demanding of time. Teachers found difficulty in maintaining consistency in the judgement of student outcomes. The introduction of outcome statements increased the reporting load for teachers.

The essence of outcomes-based education appears to be that link between intentions and results. Outcomes focus on the purpose of instruction rather than the content or learning experiences (Killian 1996: 1). Community pressure for accountability in education systems as well as political pressure for community participation in education has created interest in OBE. Consequently OBE is

often more attractive to politicians, administrators, the business community and parents than it is to teachers.

This chapter set out to review some different theories of the nature of curriculum practice, the nature of educational change and the nature of OBE to create a better understanding of the change processes observed in the three primary schools.

CHAPTER TWO.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHOD.

This chapter describes and accounts for the research methods and approach employed in this study.

Part One:

Research Methodology.

This research initiative is located in the Hermeneutic mode of inquiry. This mode was chosen as it examines the diffusion of information from person to person and comments on how the innovation being studied is actually taking place. Thus this study was conducted within the social reality of the participants. I would agree with Cornbleth's criticism of this approach as discussed in Chapter One. The researcher had to view the OBE concept of curriculum as a 'given' product because the implementation process had already been put in place. This study focussed on the local settings and the context beyond the classroom could not be fully considered. Although the results of studies of this nature may well inform the curriculum process, they are unlikely to reform the process.

The case study method requires a different approach from the more statistical-experimental method. Unlike the researcher who asks standardised questions of large and representative samples of individuals, the case study researcher observes the characteristics of individual units (Cohen and Manion 1994:107). This interpretive paradigm has major implications for the practice of research. It requires researchers to observe and interact with the subjects of their research:

In short, one would have to take the role of the actor and see his world from his standpoint. This methodological approach stands in contrast to viewing the actor and his action from the perspective of an outside detached observer ... the actor acts towards his world on the basis of how he sees it and not how that world appears to the outside observer (Vulliamy et al quoting Blumer 1990: 8).

In giving consideration to methodology the researcher must first contemplate which methods are to be used, how they are to be combined and how the collected data are to be used. The first question gives rise to issues such as efficiency in the chosen context, validity and reliability of the results and the need for generalisability. How one combines the chosen methods will depend to a great extent on the objectives of the research questions. How the data is used is dependent on the answers to the first two questions. In interpretive research initiatives such as this one, the difficulty arises in validating different meanings.

This investigation is based on case studies of the implementation of Outcomes Based Education at the Grade 1 level in three primary schools. The Case Study was the chosen research method because it enables the researcher to gain insights into the processes generated by the implementation of OBE. Thus the findings will be contextualised within the social, cultural and historical framework of the chosen three schools. The researcher considers that this study is therefore limited as the observations based on this method are determined by the context and will not necessarily reflect what is taking place in other schools.

The case study approach was employed because of the need to understand the complex social phenomena surrounding the implementation of an educational change. This approach allows an investigation to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. The case study is an appropriate approach when examining contemporary events and is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined. The 'how' and 'why' questions that will form the basis of the research favours case studies. One of unique strengths of

this approach is its ability to deal with the full variety of evidence that will be generated by the research questions.

This qualitative approach is thus based on in-depth participant or non-participant observation of the nature of a unit. In this case study the unit was each of the three primary schools and the intention of the researcher was non-participant classroom observation.

The type of observation that takes place is associated with the type of setting in which the observation is taking place. Cohen and Manion describe a continuum of settings ranging from the 'artificial' environment in which the individuals are removed from the normal setting to the natural environments of the school classroom. This continuum is illustrated in a table below with the unit under investigation placed in its appropriate place on the continuum.

Degree of Structure imposed by observer.	Degree of Structure in the observational setting		
	Natural		Artificial
Unstructured	Ethnographic accounts.	Unstructured studies of an information technology	Unstructured studies conducted in a counsellor's office.
Structured	Case Study of three Primary Schools	Structured studies of an information technology	Structured studies conducted in a counsellor's office.

Source: Adapted from Cohen and Manion 1994.

The researcher agrees with Bailey (Cohen and Manion 1994:109) that whereas in theory, a researcher selects a mode of observation, factors in the natural setting intrude to determine the actual observational strategy. The researcher experienced that in the natural setting of a Grade One classroom it was very difficult not to act as a participant. This study, like most studies in natural settings, thus resulted in structured and unstructured participant observation.

This research involved a small number of initial questions; however, many more questions arose during the course of the study. These methods necessitated the observation of, and interaction with, the key actors in an attempt to identify the meanings and interpretations these actors placed on the unfolding events. In addition to the classroom observations, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as methods for gathering data. This research strategy is described in detail in Part Three of this chapter.

Part Two:

The Research Sample.

It is argued that,

it is better to have in-depth, accurate knowledge of one setting than superficial and possibly skewed or misleading information about isolated relationships in many settings (Vulliamy et al quoting Spindler 1990: 12).

Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that small-scale research efforts often resort to the use of non-probability samples because they are less complicated to set up, less expensive and can prove adequate if the researcher does not intend to generalize the findings beyond the sample in question. Two forms of non-probability sampling used are convenience sampling, which involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents, and purposive sampling in which the researchers hand pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. In this manner the researchers build up a sample that is suitable to their specific needs.

This study used a combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques. All three schools are in very close proximity to each other and to the location of the researcher's place of work. Despite this close physical proximity the schools were chosen because each had different racial histories

and different levels of resources. Thus this sample allowed the researcher to study the process of the implementation in very different resource contexts.

The three schools were visited on a regular basis to interview the Principals, some of the Grade One teachers and to observe Grade One lessons. Thus the events relating to implementation could be observed over a twelve month period in just three primary schools, Manor Gardens Primary, Carrington Heights Junior Primary and Mayville Primary.

The Kwazulu-Natal Education department administers all three schools. Manor Gardens Primary is an ex-Model C primary school. It was selected because it has a long history of innovation and excellence in the academic sphere. The school draws pupils from an affluent feeder area and the school has been levying school fees for a number of years. Thus the school is well resourced and employs well-qualified teachers. The Governing Body using monies collected from the parents pays a number of the teachers.

Carrington Heights Junior Primary was selected because the learners are drawn from the Cato Crest informal settlement situated within the same feeder area as the Manor Gardens Primary school. The school is well resourced and caters for learners from a disadvantaged background. There are fees levied but these are insufficient to employ additional teachers.

Mayville Primary was selected because it is situated in the Cato Crest informal settlement. It is not well resourced and caters for learners from a disadvantaged background. School fees are levied but these are insufficient to employ additional teachers.

Part Three:

Methods employed in this Study.

Different methods of investigation and data collection were used, viz:

- direct observation,
- semi-structured interviews.
- Documentation from the three schools and the education department was analysed.

The schools were visited during 1997 and 1998 as indicated by the research schedule below:

Research schedule.

Month/Year	Description	Outcome
1997. October/November	Initial visit to each school. Interview Principal and two Grade 1 Teachers. Observe Grade 1 lessons.	Explain nature of research. Gather background data.
1998. February/March.	Interview Principals. Observe two lessons at each school. Interview Grade 1 teachers. Collect documents. Attend Parents' Meetings.	Collect data on initial implementation.
August/September	Interview Principals. Observe two lessons at each school. Interview Grade 1 teachers. Collect documents.	Collect data on progress in the implementation process.

During these visits semi-structured interviews were conducted with the principals and Grade 1 teachers to establish what meaning OBE had for the participants in the implementation process. The interviews also determined the extent of the participants' knowledge and preparation for this educational change. The interviews were spread over two years to assess the progress of this implementation. Grade 1 lessons were observed to identify in what ways the teachers had actually changed or adapted their teaching strategies in

implementing this change. In addition documentation was collected that the schools had either received from the Department, from other outside sources or had developed in the school to prepare teachers for OBE.

Interviews.

Direct contact with the Grade One teachers and Principals at the three schools was necessary. The Principal and at least two teachers from each school were interviewed at different stages of the implementation process as shown in the research schedule on page 27. The interviews lasted 30 minutes to approximately 1 hour. These interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Semi-structured interviews were employed to allow the researcher flexibility and freedom to ask questions that were dependent on the development and direction of the interview (See Appendix A).

Classroom Observations.

The classroom observations served to validate the information gathered from the interviews. The researcher endeavoured to observe at least one lesson each time that the school was visited. This was not always possible owing to constraints of time and teacher availability. The researcher formulated rough guidelines to focus this lesson observation (See Appendix A).

Questionnaires.

One questionnaire was administered. This method was employed to give the respondents time to consider the questions asked and to formulate their answers in their own time. The questions asked related to one topic only, viz. the respondents' understanding of Outcomes-Based Education (See Appendix A).

Document analysis.

Documents supplied to the schools by the Education authorities and other agencies as well as those generated by the schools were analysed. This analysis helped to supply the researcher with realistic insights into the processes that

influenced this educational reform. Policy documents sent to the schools to inform and implement this large-scale educational transformation were analysed to give a clear picture of the meaning that this implementation has for those producing the documents. The documents produced by the school gave additional information of the meaning that this change has for the principals and the teachers.

Triangulation.

Triangulation requires the use of two or more methods of data collection. This enables the researcher to study the data from more than one standpoint. It is possible to use this method in both qualitative and quantitative research. Research methods act as filters through which the researcher experiences the data collected. The use of contrasting methods reduces the chance that consistent findings are a result of the methods used. That is, if different methods yield the same results the researcher can be confident that these results are valid, and the greater the difference in the methods used, the greater the researcher's confidence. In this way triangulation strengthens the validity of research findings, as bias, which can distort interpretations, can be minimised.

The data collected by the methods described above was triangulated. This was achieved by identifying the main problems encountered by the implementation process.

Part Four:

Reflections on the chosen methods.

Qualitative research methods raise questions of reliability, as it is often difficult to repeat the research in exactly the same way. Any method that involves a single researcher observing and interpreting data could be considered unreliable. Thus the researcher needs to be aware of his/her own position and worldview. Theoretical issues can and do influence the selection, analysis and interpretation of data. In addition there are problems of validity. This is a problem if the data collected is influenced by the research methods used. Small-scale interpretations such as this one can result in conclusions of dubious validity. The following precautions can be employed to help overcome the stated limitations. The methods used must be described so that inferences can be tested. A natural history of the research must be included to make clear where and when the data was collected. Values must be made explicit so that the researcher can be aware of bias. In this study I will include actual quotations from the data gathered to help validate my interpretations. Triangulation by using different methods increases the chance of findings being valid.

The strength of this chosen mode of inquiry is that the research is conducted within the social reality of the participants. This approach allows the researcher to interpret the findings within this framework. It is therefore important that the researcher examines and reports on related issues within the social context in which the curriculum innovation is taking place.

CHAPTER THREE.

THE CONTEXT OF INNOVATION.

This chapter is divided into three parts. Each part will examine a different element of the context in which this educational innovation took place. The first part will examine curriculum practices in South Africa. The second will examine the South African version of Outcomes-Based education that is being implemented. The third will describe the local context in which this research took place. This part analyses the data collected during 1997 whereas the 1998 data will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

Part One:

Curriculum Practices in South Africa.

This part will involve an analysis of official curriculum practices to establish the previous and current contexts of educational innovation in South Africa. Using the work of King and van den Berg (1991), Samoff (1996) and the University of Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit Quarterly reviews of Education and Training (1997, 1998) this section will argue that official curriculum practice has been informed by the technical interests of an Empirical -Analytical Science Paradigm. This summary of the background of educational transition in South Africa over the last 5 years will provide the context for the implementation of the OBE curriculum initiative in South Africa.

Education in South Africa is a bitterly contested field. Resistance to the previous education systems was so visible in schools that there was an urgent need for a new vision. King and van den Berg (1991) argue that the history of education in South Africa is characterised by maintenance of minority power and privilege. The official curriculum development processes were characterised as legalistic, bureaucratic and authoritarian. Although legislation paid lip service to inclusive curriculum development, in reality, the committees that dealt with syllabus

revision were heavily loaded with bureaucrats and administrators. King and van den Berg (1991: 13) argue that the curriculum development structures were undemocratic, secretive, ideologically motivated and based on a narrow understanding of curriculum. The urgent need to democratise the education system led to new curriculum initiatives such as the National Education Policy Investigation (1992) and the African National Congress Discussion Document, A Policy Framework for Education and Training (January 1994). New National Education Co-ordinating committees and Councils were eventually established.

Samoff (1996) argues that in the recent years South Africa has invested substantial resources into the thinking about possible educational strategies. By 1994 when the new Ministry of Education was constituted it had at its disposal implementation plans and policy options generated during the proceeding years of debate and radical political change. Previously racially segregated provincial departments were grappling with the realities of integration, increased numbers and financial constraints. There was a democratically elected government, a negotiated constitution and a plethora of educational legislature and discussion documents emanating from the new political structures. Samoff (1996) undertook to review a number of these documents to explore the directions and trends in education policy. He identified four threads that ran through all the documents that he reviewed.

The first thread linking these new initiatives was the "long reach of the past" (Samoff 1996: 3). The new legislature recognised that "the social conditions generated by apartheid will continue to limit the possibilities of social transformation in the immediate post-apartheid era" (National Education Conference 1992: 21). A second thread was that there were widely shared, almost naive, expectations that the new education structures would have the ability to set the pace of integration of facilities and the reallocation of resources. The current reforms in educational policy all have the common aim to redress the educational inequalities and to provide "life-long education and training of good quality" (National Department of Education White Paper on

Education and Training 1995: 21). A National Qualification Framework (NQF) was structured to address the learners' and nations' needs of access to, and mobility within, the education and training systems.

The third thread was the difference in the expectations held by different groups. Thus those who had been previously disadvantaged held the beliefs indicated in the second thread. Those who had been advantaged expected the new system to secure the same excellence for the next generation as they had previously enjoyed. The fourth thread involves the nature of transition itself. Confusion generated by the new roles for the participants in the negotiated democratic structures and their supporters outside these structures acted to slow down the processes of change.

Samoff notes a number of contradictions. He states that the current educational framework developments appear not to be grounded in the extensive educational consultations and deliberations of the past. He argues that the legal processes and bureaucratic traditions proved to be difficult obstacles for the government of national unity. Tensions between the need for redress and need to maintain excellence could have forced compromise. The current documents reflected "largely nationally-centered, most often ministry-centered, initiatives" (Samoff 1996: 5). Although the Ministry of Education recognised the need for a "participatory process of curricular development" that must be "open and transparent" (National Department of Education White Paper 1995: 27), the role of the province has been constituted as an administrative and advisory one only. A further contradiction was apparent when Samoff reflected that despite the process orientation of many of the earlier educational proposals these new documents pay little attention to matters of process. He argues that the focus on outcomes represents a move away from the process model of curriculum development and learning as a process. Many of the aspects of the new system are to be driven from the center with little real consultation processes involved. Moreover, although there appeared to be widespread agreement on the importance of values such as respect and tolerance for others, the policy

documents did not incorporate them into the measurement of educational quality.

Samoff points out that the documents were surprisingly unclear on why educational transformation was to occur, what exactly was to be transformed and how this transformation was to occur. The documents directed little attention to immediate problems nor did they address the problems of the differences between what is, and what will eventually be. I contend that a context, such as that described by Samoff, fraught with tensions, contradictions and confusion, would not be ideal for the establishment of shared meanings of a proposed educational innovation. False assumptions about democracy and consensus have tended to cloud the process of policy making. Through centralised frameworks political and economic power groups can influence educational reforms.

The opening of the school year in January 1998 marked the introduction of a new school curriculum in Grade One at all primary schools in South Africa. Curriculum 2005 is a centrally developed and driven Outcomes based curriculum initiative that has during the last two years moved rapidly through the initial stages of conception, development and design, piloting and implementation. This rapid implementation has resulted in "much confusion, some resistance and significant trepidation" (Wits EPU May 1998: 13). Policy documents allocated the production of the learning programmes to the provinces. However, owing to the rapid rate of implementation, provinces were considered to lack the capacity to produce these programmes timeously. Provincial departments were then presented with learning programmes that had been centrally developed by technical committees of experts. The state driven nature of the curriculum development is also evidenced by a lack of information regarding the process and changes in the educational structures. The information that was provided was inaccessible to teachers and thus it was difficult for teachers to engage in the process in a meaningful way. The composition of the committees involved enables officials of the education

bureaucracy to heavily influence the process. During the pre-implementation period there has been an increase in class sizes as a result of teacher rationalisation. Although momentous political and ideological shifts have been made it is sobering to note that structural inequalities inherent in the education system are still clearly apparent. ✓

Having examined some of the main characteristics of the context of this OBE innovation it should now be possible to locate this curriculum change within the paradigm of inquiry that most influences its practice. Elements of all three of the paradigms are simultaneously present in the implementation plans.

The emphasis on the construction of knowledge and proposed participatory production of educational meaning indicates the interpretative approach of the Hermeneutic paradigm. I would contend that this aspect of the innovation would inform changes in classroom practice rather than create radical curriculum reform as discussed in Part One of Chapter One. NB

The implementation documentation is also saturated with the rhetoric of the critical approach. This rhetoric claims that this new curriculum is a dawning of new hope as it aims at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes that are necessary for success. The implementers paint an uncomplicated world of free autonomous individuals who will inhabit a socially harmonious education sphere available to everyone irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, ability or language. This new curriculum will foster learning which encompasses a culture of human rights, multi-lingualism, multi-culturalism and a sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building. I would contend that in this way the rhetoric masks the existence of tensions and seeks to create a hegemony of policy consensus that appears to transcend the divisions of the past, highlights the process of reconstruction and development but ignores the persisting inequalities. ✓

I would argue that although this reform context displays characteristics of the

two paradigms discussed above it is mostly located in the Empirical-Analytical Paradigm. It operates in a hierarchical centralised structure that seeks to introduce control and certainty. Although the content of the learning programmes is not prescribed the learning outcomes are centrally determined and these will drive the process in a universal way. Despite the rapid rate of implementation the focus is still on long term political goals. The need for rapid radical reform mainly ignores the need to solve the immediate problems. Curriculum developers are not involved with the process of curriculum development but with the technocratic conception of curriculum as a product. The underlying assumption is that there is consensus regarding the chosen product. This approach has been driven by expert knowledge and the teachers have been excluded from the process and are regarded as passive implementers of expert designs. This technocratic mode is deemed to be necessary to provide the control of rapid politically conceived transformations.

This brief summary that examines the background of educational transition in South Africa over the last 5 years provides the context for the implementation of the OBE curriculum initiative in South Africa. It is now necessary to examine the proposed OBE curriculum itself.

Part Two:

A Critique of SA OBE.

The current educational reform initiatives arose out of the crisis in education which was reflected in the "lack and disrepair of schools, overcrowded classrooms, high drop-out and failure rates, the lack of suitably qualified teachers and low levels of literacy and numeracy" (National Education Conference 1992:2). Change, by definition, is away from what exists or appears to exist. It is therefore vital that curriculum reformers have established clear meanings of exactly what needs to be changed and then how this needs to be changed. It is argued that change is likely to give the appearance of

excess when what it seeks to replace appears to be excessive (Taylor and Tye 1975: 192). There is thus a need to examine some of the South African reformers' perceptions of the existing educational programme.

An examination of various South African Education and Training Discussion and Policy documents reveals some of these perceptions. Table I that follows on page 38 is a comparison table showing the perceived paradigm shift in educational philosophy and practice involved in changing from the existing educational practice to one based on Outcomes.

This table was constructed from a similar table that appeared in an unpublished assignment produced by the researcher. This assignment, produced for a Bachelor of Education Degree, examined the proposals put forward in two of the main documents that were guiding the implementation of OBE viz.:

- Discussion Document developed by the Consultative Forum on Curriculum (CFC) issued by the National Department of Education in December 1995
- Discussion Document - Lifelong Learning through a National Qualifications Framework - a Report of the Ministerial Committee for the Development work of the NQF produced in February 1996.

TABLE I

	'Old' Educational Philosophy & Practice.	New Philosophy & Practice of OBE.
CURRICULUM	Core syllabi developed at National level, with Provincially adapted syllabi.	Curriculum framework - National guidelines and learning areas. Learning Programmes to be developed.
	Content-based (factual).	Outcomes-based (Skills, processes, attitudes & values).
	Long prescribed content, to be mastered by all. Rigid approach.	Modular, flexible, relevant approach.
	Fragmented, discrete discipline based content.	Integrated content and skills.
	Content to be mastered in fixed time periods.	Time periods to be negotiated i.e. not fixed.
KNOWLEDGE	Undisputed facts which learner receives from the teacher.	Constructed by the learner.
	Objective, apolitical & value-free.	Socially constructed.
LEARNING	In formal institutions only- school isolated from the community & workplace.	Takes place in formal & informal settings- therefore can be life-long, with the school, community and workplace integrated.
	Memorisation of facts.	Ability to think about content, development of skills and attitudes.
	Competitive & individualistic.	Co-operative.
	Uniform approach.	Allows diversity.
ASSESSMENT	Testing memorised content.	Demonstrating outcomes.
	Norm-referenced only.	Criterion-referenced with norms applied during moderation.
	Mostly summative.	Mostly continuous and formative.
	Accent on certification at key stages only.	Accent on building up credits in flexible way.
	Restricted access points to Higher education.	Allows many access points to Higher education.

This table highlights the perceived differences between 'old' and 'new' initiatives of the planners involved in the implementation of this educational change. The implementers perceived that the previous curriculum initiative was entirely centrally driven because the syllabi were developed at the National level. The new initiative, which was also centrally driven, was perceived to be inclusive because representative participation had taken place in some instances. Education policy-makers indicated that the new curriculum design would be based on intended learning outcomes and that these outcomes will then "define, derive, develop, and organise all our curriculum processes i.e. curriculum design; instructional planning; teaching; assessing and advancement of learners" (Lifelong Learning through a NQF 1996: 24). These outcomes were centrally defined, derived and developed. The NQF proposed a common overall philosophical framework for the development of curricula that would provide guiding principles for curriculum development

All the knowledge of the 'old' system was perceived to be content bound and undisputed whereas all the 'new' knowledge would be constructed. No link between the two was acknowledged. "Knowledge can no longer be equal to content only but must be recognised as having an interdependent relationship with skills and attitudes - all of which contribute towards competence" (Lifelong Learning through a NQF 1996: 20).

Only the formal learning context was acknowledged in the previous system and this was then contrasted against a multiplicity of proposed learning contexts, some of which already existed and others that might never materialise. The teaching and learning in the 'old' system was portrayed as rigid and uniform. There was no mention of existing diversity. OBE was perceived to be student-centered with knowledge and learning being negotiation through individual learning programs.

The assessment techniques in the 'old' system were perceived to be entirely examination driven. The description of the 'new' system made no mention of

the fact that the exit examinations would remain a characteristic of the assessment practices.

Thus the 'new' and the 'old' practices were perceived to be mutually exclusive. This discourse has grown out of the perceived failure of narrow, content-based vocational qualifications. It is argued that this gulf of perceived differences impeded the establishment of clear meanings and direction necessary for successful change.

Jonathan Jansen of the University of Durban - Westville, has voiced a powerful critique of the notion of OBE and its application in the South African educational context. His arguments do not deal merely with technical issues such as the speed of the process, but with concerns regarding the impact of outcomes-based education. My research seeks to test some of these concerns against the reality of implementation in three case studies.

Jansen has the following criticisms of the OBE initiative:

1. The complex, confusing and at times contradictory language associated with OBE. Jansen contends that the only certainty about OBE and its language is that it is constantly changing meaning so that most teachers will find the new concepts inaccessible. This impacts on the teachers' ability to give these policies meaning through their classroom practice.
2. The assumptions made by the developers of OBE about how schools and classrooms operate. He argues that the policy reforms have been made in isolation from the real context of the education system of South Africa. He makes the claim that if transformational OBE is to succeed it will require highly qualified teachers to make sense of the challenge to the existing practice. His concern is that there are insufficient human and physical resources present and in that context a mechanical model of behaviourism will evolve in the majority of South African classrooms.

3. The undesirable development of preconceived learning outcomes in a democratic and supposedly open learning environment. He raises the concern that OBE will be interpreted and applied in a mechanical way as knowledge has been organised around discrete outcomes.
4. The extent to which teachers were actually included in the OBE initiative. He sees this as contradictory to the ANC's process orientated educational platform. He asks if OBE is just a political response to the need for radical innovation to gain political credibility?
5. That OBE will place additional administrative burdens on already overburdened teachers. The system of continual assessment will increase the teachers' load. He claims that OBE will fail in the absence of adequate teacher support. The current policy of teacher rationalisation and the subsequent increase in class size will militate against successful implementation.
6. That OBE trivialises curriculum content. He reminds us that children cannot learn outcomes in a vacuum and that content is a vehicle for establishing meaning for the outcomes. He claims that content does matter. He asks the critical question: Who will choose which content?
7. That such an implementation to succeed will required much teacher training. He contends that for successful implementation teachers, management, parent bodies and in short the entire educational human resource base will need to be retrained.
8. The need for new assessment procedures. He observes that a change in assessment practices is the key to successful educational innovation. He notes with caution that the Matriculation Examination has not been withdrawn from the system and feels that the powerful effects of this exit examination will continue to determine educational practice.

Two of Jonathon Jansen's issues were not addressed in this research. This study did not test his challenge regarding the assumption that the curriculum can impact on our society and economy in the ways stated in many of the policy documents and his claim that the values and commitments to combat racism and sexism were absent from the core outcomes.

It would appear that the implementers of OBE in South Africa have made certain underlying assumptions regarding OBE:

- The assumption that outcomes can be measured in the same way as behaviourable objectives. Competencies are a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes. The educational authorities indicate that these competencies will be able to be measured by the demonstration of specific outcomes. There appears to be a tension between the intended open-endedness in learning outcomes with place for alternative diverse views and the closure of competence-based education with centrally determined meanings. The process of experiential learning with learners and teachers learning together and constructing negotiated meanings may not be realised within the constraining framework of centrally determined learning outcomes.
- The assumption that the skills developed in one context will be transferable to another different context. The further assumption is that these transferred skills will then be able to be reliably and validly assessed in the new context.
- The assumption that all students will want to and will be able to gain these competencies.
- The assumption that all teachers will be able to foster the acquisition of these competencies and then be able to assess them in a valid and uniform way. This OBE educational reform espouses a view of knowledge as always being open to question and different interpretations. This has significant

implications for the teacher. It implies that the teacher cannot have mastery of knowledge and therefore he/she has to acknowledge his/her lack of knowledge. It also implies that the very act of teaching creates a new condition for knowledge to be constructed. Thus teachers are called on to become facilitators of experiential learning situations in which the teachers' role is one of interpretation with no 'right' or 'wrong' judgements.

- The assumption that all schools are able to introduce the perceived paradigm shift as indicated by the table above.

Jansen acknowledges that the previous educational curriculum requires radical reconstruction. He cautions, however, that "such innovations must take account of the resource status of schools and classrooms in South Africa" (Jansen 1997:9)

This critique of South African OBE has examined the perceptions held and assumptions made by the planners of this curriculum innovation. In addition some criticisms of this change have also been put forward. The next part of this chapter will examine the practical context of this curriculum innovation.

Part Three:

The context in which implementation place took place.

This chapter establishes the context in which the implementation of OBE took place in each of the three selected schools. The meanings of this curriculum innovation for the participants are determined by the perceptions of Outcomes-Based Education held by the participating teachers and their principals. The key questions (already stated in the introduction) to be borne in mind:

- What prior knowledge of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and what type of information regarding OBE implementation did the participants (principals, teachers and parent community) have?
- What preparations did the schools make in terms of the following: physical resources, Inset, school administration, informing the parent body?
- What meaning does OBE and this educational change have for the participants?

The Context: Setting the scene, October 1997.

Manor Gardens Primary School.

Manor Gardens Primary is a thirty-year-old, ex-Model C primary school administered by the Kwazulu-Natal Education department. The socio-economic conditions of the learner population have changed over the last few years. The shift has been from homogeneous white, English-speaking, middle-class families to a much greater range of economic conditions, race, and language. The school accepts all children considered to be within an area whose boundaries had been established over a number of years. There are feeder pre-primary schools whose learners have traditionally been accepted at the school. Those not in the area are accepted if they are able to pay fees, are considered to be school ready by Manor Gardens and do not have behaviour problems. Language is not a

criterion. The school has been levying school fees for a number of years and those children from the lower socio-economic levels who attend do so through a bursary system. The fees for 1998 are R3600. Thus the school is well resourced and employs well-qualified teachers. The Governing Body using monies collected from the parents pays a number of the teachers. Absenteeism levels are very low. The school buildings and grounds are well maintained. There are well-equipped administration offices and many additional facilities for the children. The children wear uniforms and most of them are transported to school by their parents.

The first Grade 1 lesson attended in October 1997 took place in a classroom that was brightly decorated and well resourced with pictures and examples of the children's work. This classroom observation guideline is available in Appendix A. There were 20 children whose tables were grouped together leaving a central area ~~were~~ free for group activities. The children sat in this area to discuss a topic with the teacher writing on a whiteboard. The children then formed groups and performed tasks determined and allocated by the teacher. The teacher allowed the children to respond at their own rate and there was group and individual work taking place at the same time.

Carrington Heights Junior Primary

The Natal Education Department formerly administered this school. The white children who moved to Glenmore Primary School vacated the school. Carrington Heights was re-opened in 1995 when the Cato Manor Development Association bussed 2000 people to the ex -Model C school buildings and demanded that a school be opened for their children. This happened within four days. At least 90% of the learners are drawn from the Cato Crest informal settlement situated within the same feeder area as the Manor Gardens Primary School. The families are impoverished and live in shacks. The school has no selection criteria, only a birth certificate which was considered essential to authenticate the age of the children. The school has experienced many problems with under-age children. In 1997 the school fees were R80 per annum with a registration fee of R20.

Approximately 80% of parents pay these fees. The Principal was hoping to raise this amount to R120 in 1998. The teachers are actively involved in fund raising to collect money for needed resources. The Education Department does not supply any extra funds to this school. The fees levied are insufficient to employ additional teachers. Absenteeism is very high because it cost the parents R2 per day to transport their children to school. This often results in children being absent for up to 40 days a year. The school has resources in each classroom mainly through the efforts of the teachers. There is a small library and adequate administration offices. Most of the children wear uniforms but most have only one that is worn all week and many do not have shoes.

The first Grade 1 lesson attended in October 1997 involved 40 children. The desks were arranged in groups leaving a central area for the entire group. Thus the classroom was arranged in a similar pattern as Manor gardens Primary classroom. The children were in groups doing an activity that had been introduced by the teacher. Although the children were free to respond and work at their own rate, they were all doing the same teacher driven activity. The teacher determined the groups. She had placed all the slower workers together and gave them more guidance. There was a general air of quiet activity with the teacher moving from group to group giving guidance. The teacher needed to give many of the basic instructions in Zulu.

Mayville Primary

Mayville Primary is situated in the Cato Crest informal settlement and housed in buildings that were previously used by Phambeli High School. Phambeli had been closed in March 1996 due to faction fights in the settlement area that had made it unsafe for the children and the staff to attend school. Mayville Primary opened late in 1997 and many parents already had sent their children to schools out of the area. The Principal hoped that these children would attend Mayville next year as he had 4 classrooms that were not being used. The socio-economic level of the school community is very low, as most of the parents were unemployed. There were no selection criteria and all the children in the

settlement area could attend this school. The school fees were R50 per annum but most of the parents do not pay. These school fees are insufficient to employ additional teachers. In 1998 the principal wanted to raise the fees to R80 with a registration fee of R20. There was a school uniform that some of the children wore. English is the medium of instruction even though the majority of the children do not speak English at all when they enter the school. The school buildings had only the basic equipment. The administration offices consisted of the principal's office with one telephone.

The Grade 1 lesson started off with two classes together as one of the teachers was late. When these children left there were 29 in the class. These children were formed into groups of 6 each. The children answered the teacher's questions in unison as she wrote the answers on the blackboard. The children were asked to respond by show of hands. All the children were doing the same work, which was directed by the teacher. The emphasis was on one correct answer. Some of the children were able to participate by writing on the board. The teacher judged learning by most of the children calling out the correct answer. The children were passive but attentive. The teacher had to use Zulu for some of the more difficult questions.

Prior knowledge regarding OBE implementation of the participants (principals, teaches and parent community).

The teachers.

The Manor Gardens teachers had attended an information evening in 1996 which was initiated by the school. Early in 1997 the department organised a Foundation Phase workshop which the teachers from all three schools had attended and discussed the possible outcomes for their phase. The teachers have not received any feedback from their input at that workshop. Later in 1997 they received information regarding the nature of the Specific and Critical outcomes that had already been set in place. The department organised more workshops and some teachers from each school attended. These teachers were

then meant to report back to the other teachers at their schools. On average the teachers received 8 days of training out of the classroom. One of the teachers became an active member of the training programme. A weeklong workshop was planned before the end of 1997.

The Principals.

There were no workshops for the Principals who obtained most of their knowledge about the implementation of OBE through articles in the Daily newspaper and other public media reports. The Draft Documents for each Learning Area provided the schools with the Learning Programmes and Programme Organisers. These were received late in October 1997. The principals from the department received reports and other OBE literature. The principal of Manor Gardens had been writing OBE materials for Maskew Miller for the past two years. The principal of Carrington Heights had been introduced to the concept of OBE in 1996 at a College of Education.

The parents.

Both Manor Gardens and Carrington Heights had held meetings for the parents to inform them of the implementation of OBE. The materials promised by the department to Mayville Primary had arrived too late for the school to prepare for parents' evening.

Preparations for OBE implementation.

The principals had ensured that all the Grade 1 teachers had attended at least one OBE workshop. These teachers were then asked to report back to the rest of the staff. The freeing of teachers for the workshops had proved very difficult for Carrington Heights and Mayville as there were insufficient teachers to supervise the Grade 1 classes whilst the teachers were away.

The staff at Manor Gardens and Carrington Heights had organised planning meetings after school that had resulted in the production of lesson plans

according to the OBE instructions. The teachers felt that this strategy was most valuable as these lesson plans were made for their individual children. The preparation sheets had been re-designed to reflect the outcomes achieved. Both schools had planned to implement OBE in all the other Grades during 1998. The teachers expressed a quiet confidence in their ability to implement OBE in 1998. The Grade 1 teachers at Mayville were also working as a team with the newly trained teachers giving guidance. The teachers at this school did not feel adequately prepared for the implementation of OBE. They felt that they needed more workshops and they were hoping that the workshop planned for the end of November 1997 would help to clarify some issues for them. They believed that they would continue teaching the way they had in 1997.

All three schools had been chosen to receive OBE materials from Maskew Miller. The schools had not yet received the materials. The staff at Carrington Heights were not in agreement with this arrangement as they had asked to be shown the published materials before they decided if they would use them in 1998. Mayville had the lowest level of resources and had received only three reading books for the Grade 1 classes from the Education department.

Both Manor Gardens and Carrington Heights had notified the parents about the implementation through newsletters from the school. Each school held a Parents' meeting to inform the interested parents and answer their questions. The researcher attended both these functions. The programme of OBE implementation was thoroughly addressed at these meetings. The Mayville parents who are mostly illiterate had not received any information on the implementation of OBE from the school.

The meaning of this educational change for the participants.

The Teachers.

The Specific Outcomes had caused the Manor Gardens teacher to think more clearly about how a teacher facilitates learning.

The outcome is most definitely considered the most important aspect. However it is at times difficult and artificial to plan and organise everything to this end. (Manor Gardens teacher)

The outcomes were perceived as being there to drive the design of the programme and not the content. The teacher felt that the first step in the process of what happened between the educator and the learner was the determination of the outcome. That decision in turn affected the 'how' and the 'what' that was taught to enable the learners to achieve the stated outcome. The achievement of the outcomes was perceived be a process that should take into account the learners' experiences. It was felt that it was essential that the learners saw the relevance and value of the process, were aware of the outcome and had an opportunity to reflect on their learning in an environment where they were valued and accepted. It was believed that educators thus needed to provide learners with many learning experiences during which they could become aware of their strengths and could overcome their weaknesses. In addition the outcomes had to be assessed in these different learning experiences. The educator therefore had to be creative in the planning and organising of these learning experiences and in assessing the outcomes. They would need to allow the learners to become part of the learning process.

OBE is a tool that will help most of our children, especially those that are disadvantaged, to be able to move in the lesson. To be able to go and find out things and come back and participate. They will be more active than before. (Carrington Heights teacher)

It was felt that this would result in learning that lasted longer and would be more useful to the learner. The specific outcomes were considered to be very

broad and difficult to define; however, it was felt that the Performance Indicators would help teachers in this regard. The Mayville Primary Grade One teacher interviewed felt that the OBE was not a new method.

Nothing is wrong with OBE. It is not so much a change, as a change in words, such as objectives to outcomes. Therefore the way it was told caused confusion. Even the facilitators were confused. (Mayville teacher)

The Principals.

The concept of OBE is quite cloudy. In terms of the way we teach here I do not see a major shift. (Manor Gardens principal)

The teachers' approach was very individualistic with the children progressing at their own rates. The children already received differentiated work according to their progress and the teachers had always done continuous informal assessment in the classroom.

The concept of OBE is measurable outcomes, it is skills based, and it is child-centered. It is very much what I think the Junior Primary Phase has been doing for years. (Carrington Heights principal)

OBE was seen as allowing educational experiences to be different for different children. The traditional curriculum was viewed as being narrow and not relevant in terms of equipping the learners for the work place.

The Mayville Primary principal viewed OBE to be a results based education system.

The children are involved in the subject. They do not just have to know from page 1 to 7. They have in-puts. Therefore it is totally non-traditional, different from what we have learned. (Mayville principal)

The children would be more involved in their subjects and be allowed to participate in their learning. It was felt that it would take time for this new method to penetrate to the children. The teachers would need time to build up resources and would need to be more creative.

The participants' main concerns.

All the teachers indicated that they needed more time to understand the language of the change so that they could do what was expected of them. Both the Manor gardens and Carrington Heights teachers main concern was the assessment and progression of the learners.

The concept of having measurable outcomes is quite risky. So much of what takes place in the classroom is not measurable and the children only benefit from it years down the track.
(Carrington Heights principal)

It had proved to be very difficult for the teachers to indicate which outcomes were being measured every week in their lesson plans.

All three schools were unsure if the Grading of the Foundation Phase now fell away. It was perceived that progression in OBE could allow children to stay longer in the Foundation Phase, but only at the end of the Phase, whereas at all three schools some children did repeat Grade 1 if it was felt that they would benefit. None of the schools had yet received the Performance Indicators that they needed to have to assess the progress of the learners.

What role is expected of us as parents? How will we be equipped to help with our children's progress? (Manor Gardens parent)

The parents at Manor Gardens felt that there would have to be more communication between the teacher and the home to foster active and relevant activities at school. The main concerns of these parents were the greater load

on the teacher and the variation of levels of ability in the classroom. Another concern was that OBE might allow too much freedom in teaching methods. It was felt that less experienced teachers would find OBE very difficult. The Mayville principal was concerned that the parents had not been informed of the changes and might not appreciate nor understand the changes that would take place in 1998.

Obtaining resources was not seen as a problem at Manor Gardens and Carrington Heights as it was felt that the teachers must either get these themselves or get the children to bring them. The one problem that all the teachers could foresee was the large classes of 40-45. It was felt that these classes might be difficult to control when they were left to do things on their own. The Mayville Primary principal felt that the Education Department would have to supply more teachers. It was felt that the activity-based teaching would cause congestion in the classrooms and that there would not be sufficient resources. The principal felt that his new and inexperienced staff would not be able to forecast the resources they needed for 1998. One of the main concerns was that there was insufficient money to maintain the photocopying machine in good working order.

Conclusion.

There was a consensus at all three schools that South Africa needed to a change in the education system. Most of the participants felt however that the proposed changes were too vast. The necessary switch from transmission mode present in most schools to the OBE mode of teaching was considered to be too difficult. Although OBE was perceived to be a good change for South Africa there were doubts expressed as to how the implementation process would proceed. OBE was perceived to be a child-centered initiative driven by the Specific Outcomes. The content was no longer being specified and could be altered to suit the class or group. OBE required the teacher to produce learning experiences and activities that were relevant and worthwhile for each child. The consensus of opinion was that the teachers needed to be highly resourced and very well prepared to cope with the envisaged change. There was a need for more workshops for the teachers to help them understand the confusing language of implementation. The teachers were all confused regarding the exact nature of the outcomes and how to accurately assess them. The absence of any information about the nature of the Performance Indicators was a concern for the teachers and principals, as these would determine the methods and consequences of assessment and progression.

A general belief was that the problems that the schools encountered would have to be solved by the schools themselves and not by the department of education, the body that was driving the change. There was a common realisation that the department did not have the expertise or the resources to solve the practical problems of implementation.

Gone are the days when you have to wait for the department.
The Governing Body and parents must sit down and solve these
problems for themselves. (Mayville principal)

All the participants felt the Education Department had not taken sufficient steps to implement the proposed changes successfully. The feeling was that too

much time had been spent on defining the terminology and not enough on training teachers. It was felt that the staff would be successful due to their willingness to change their approach and materials despite the lack of guidance from the department.

Both Manor Gardens and Carrington Heights felt that they had been doing OBE for some years and therefore would be able to cope with the change. Only in Manor Gardens was class size and resources not considered a problem although the school fees would need to be increased to ensure that the size of the Grade 1 classes stayed at about 20. It was felt that very little actual change would take place in the areas where the schools were less well resourced and teachers were not well trained.

The OBE initiative is good. We need change. The ball is in the game, but how to play the game? Implementation and presentation! The presentations were badly done and caused confusion. (Mayville Head of Department)

CHAPTER FOUR.

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED DURING 1998.

This chapter sets out to interpret the data collected during the course of 1998 to establish common issues encountered during the implementation process. (The data collected in 1997 was analysed in Part Three of Chapter Three). These issues will be measured against those anticipated by Jonathan Jansen, a critic of the OBE implementation process in South Africa.

1. The language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory.

The teachers and principals at all three schools experienced difficulty in understanding the draft documentation that was received from the Education Department. All the teachers had attended a two-week workshop at the end of 1998 that left them feeling confident about the various concepts. However when they were faced with the reality of putting the theory into action they experienced difficulty understanding the terminology. Two of the participants who had considerable experience of the practice of OBE felt that the Specific Outcomes were meaningless to most of the teachers.

I am only beginning to understand Specific Outcomes, Performance Indicators and Assessment Criteria after three years. It is a very inaccessible language. (Manor Gardens Principal)

The teachers all expressed frustration with the confusing instructions. They were concerned that they might overlook basic concepts because they did not understand the language. They felt that the implementers could have made the documentation much more accessible. The documentation left most of the people feeling that they were unable to understand what they were expected to do.

I do think that OBE has a lot of positive things. But they have to make it easier to plan and record. We found it difficult to work out what those Specific Outcomes were actually asking. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

Thus the participants were unable to construct meaning because insufficient information had been supplied. The result of this confusion was that the teachers felt threatened and insecure.

Why can they not say what children need to learn. There is nothing wrong with making it simple. Really spelling it out, without giving a syllabus. I still have to read these things over and over before I understand it. I was expecting to be able to say all these things and understand them perfectly, but I cannot. That is the frustrating part, and depressing. I felt that I could not get to grips with the thing that I love and that is the teaching. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

The participants at each school had negotiated their own meaning and strategy at this early stage of implementation.

To me I think the important thing about OBE that people miss is that what it is saying is that you must take the child and develop that child along a route that is reasonable and at a pace that the child can cope with. So I look at this class and I look at those Specific Outcomes and they do not mean any thing much. What children have to learn are those Critical Outcomes that mean something. Any activity I do will be driving towards those Critical Outcomes. That to me is enough. It is what I can cope with. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

Dr B. Spady elaborated this strategy on when he visited South Africa.

There are far too many critical outcomes in South Africa. Keep it simple. The fewer outcomes the better chance of success. (Spady 1997)

The teachers at Mayville had not started with OBE when I visited the school in March 1998. The teachers had decided to continue with their old system, the one they were using last year. They found the most confusing part was that they had to write Specific Outcomes for each activity. By September 1998 they

had decided to do the activities and try to include the Specific Outcomes at some later stage.

Right now I am confused. I cannot do this OBE thing. I cannot do this preparation. I was better off with the old method. I am still doing the old way. I am teaching my children and most of the time the OBE is something extra. The other teachers are doing the same thing, old and new. (Mayville Teacher)

One teacher said that she did not have time to do OBE and Maskew Miller. She saw the resource books as separate from the concept of OBE. She perceived that there were two OBE's, a Government OBE and a Maskew Miller OBE.

I tried to explain to the Mayville teachers you do not have to work out the Specific Outcomes and Performance Indicators. All you have to do is use the book [the Maskew Miller book] and there it is listed in the front of the book. You do not need to do all this preparation. But I could see that they were not taking this in. (Manor Gardens Principal in her role as Publisher)

Jonathan Jansen also observes that OBE calls for changes in assessment practices and that this change will be the key to successful educational innovation. The educational authorities indicated that the competencies would be measured by the demonstration of predetermined Specific Outcomes.

Now I understand that we do not have to have marks any more. So we have not decided yet [how to record]. So we are still struggling with this. (Mayville Teacher)

I have not started with all that stuff. Now we have to get together and decide how we are going to record this. We have to let them assess each other in pairs or in groups but you the teacher will have to assess. So we still have to decide how are we doing this. Are we giving ticks or marks? Because now I understand that we do not give marks any more. So we have not decided yet. So we are still struggling with this. (Mayville teacher)

We are just writing down a general comment that reflects the child's progress. It is difficult for the teacher but for the child it is better because they do not realise that they are being assessed. They are not fearful they just doing the activity. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

The teachers indicated that they assessed some of the children each day. Recording the progress with a checklist did this. They could not see the value of checklists but they acknowledged that some record had to be kept.

The teachers are doing very badly in terms of recording outcomes. I knew they were so that when I asked for the July reports. We had re-drafted a new OBE report. I asked them to submit to me the reports and their assessment records. They were of course not keeping them. A lot of the information on the children's progress is in their heads and in the children's' books. (Carrington Heights Principal)

The recording side of it, yes [is more work], because we have not yet got anything that we can work from. I think that that has thrown us and made it seem like a lot more work. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

The following quotes give an indication of the range of meanings that the participants had formed regarding the need for assessment of the outcomes. The question posed was 'Will you know that you have covered all the Specific Outcomes?'

Not unless you record them! You have to consciously record them or mark them off in some way. Then you can find the gaps and go back and fill these in. (Manor Gardens Principal)

It does not even matter to me whether I know. This might sound really odd, but this is in OBE, it is part of the philosophy that I have always had, but it is also in OBE, that it does not matter whether somebody can do that today, it is irrelevant, because tomorrow, the next day or next year he will. It does not matter whether there is a tick there. To me it is irrelevant. (Carrington Heights teacher)

The data thus indicates that all the participants experienced difficulty with the recording of the children's progress. This fact was reflected in a range of meanings regarding the nature and purpose of assessment procedures required for OBE. The data therefore substantiates Jonathan Jansen's claim. The confusing language resulted in different strategies that impacted on the pace of the implementation process.

2. OBE is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system.

Jonathan Jansen argued that the policy makers had made the assumption that all schools are equally able to introduce the perceived paradigm shift as indicated by the table in Part Two of Chapter Three. The fact that there was a wide range of both human and physical resources present in the chosen sample was clearly indicated in the description of the three schools presented in Part Three of Chapter Three. In addition to these obvious differences, the following were found to influence the process of implementation:

Carrington Heights had experience of Grade 1 children who had not yet turned 4 years old. Their entry level classes were more like pre-school classes with 40 children none of whom spoke English. Some children higher up in the school had not been to school before and some had come from very disturbed backgrounds, fleeing from violence, broken families and poverty.

We found that with the very young children we had to call in the parents and explain to them that we were on this OBE system. There was automatic progression and because the children were so young, and there was no way they were going to be held back, so they might not actually cope properly for twelve years.
(Carrington Heights Principal)

The issue of the retrenchment of temporary teachers arose in February 1998. Manor Gardens' Governing Body took over the employment of their temporary teachers. If this were not the case they would have lost two teachers and

would have had to merge two classes, one of them a Grade 1 class. Teachers at the other schools had over 40 in their classes. It was difficult for these teachers to know how each child was progressing.

Class size is a huge deterrent, because if you are going to try to get the whole class on board the whole time you just spend so much time disciplining. They assumed that all in the group would be able to do these things. It is very difficult with 44 children in one class to cater for all of them. It is chaotic. There are schools with 55. I have my doubts about OBE. Maybe it is because I have had a few days in the classroom. You try to bring order in the class and to get everyone to do things. You seem always to have some that are not doing things. By the time you get those ones to do it you have lost the others. (Carrington Heights Principal)

Spady concurred with these sentiments when he stated:

I'm not aware of OBE being used in classrooms with more than 32 learners. I'm not sure how it's going to work in bigger classes (Spady 1997). ✓

Some of the schools had managed to organise time for the Grade 1 teachers to meet together during school time. At other schools the Grade 1 teachers had to teach the higher grades after the Grade 1 children had gone home. This made it difficult for the teachers to meet together. The teachers felt that to plan OBE lessons they needed the support, input and creative thinking of the group.

All the schools had changed the way that they communicated the children's progress to the parents. The reports sent home no longer contained marks or symbols. All of them now wrote comments on the progress in the three Learning Areas.

What we neglected to take into account was that many of our parents are illiterate and that a grid is much easier to understand than all the comments. A scale is easy to understand. Most of our newsletters go home in Zulu, but the report was in English. The teachers cannot do the reports in Zulu and the reports could not be moderated if they were in Zulu. So that is something we did not take into account. (Carrington Heights Principal)

High rates of absenteeism in both Carrington Heights and Mayville caused more problems for those engaged in group work. ✓

Some of them are absent for long periods of time for no reason. They have missed a lot of the work. So we have to start afresh. The children some times get upset when things happen when they are not there, e.g. the leaders have been chosen. So absenteeism does cause problems for the teacher. (Mayville Primary Teacher)

The issue of the choice of the language of instruction arose during the observation of the lessons. OBE involves the Grade 1 children in group activities, which requires the teachers to give instructions. It was noted that those children whose mother tongue was Zulu needed to have these basic instructions given in Zulu.

We do speak more Zulu this year than last year. Some of them do not speak any English and some of them are 9 or 10 years old and they are in Grade1 for the first time. It is no use saying that the medium of instruction is English if the children do not understand what you are saying and then they will not be able to do the activities. So they are learning more slowly but doing more things for themselves. (Mayville Primary Teacher)

The observations of the Mayville Primary lessons in 1997 and 1998 clearly indicated that this fact. The Mayville Primary teacher conducted nearly the entire lesson in Zulu in October 1998, whereas in November 1997 only a few key words were spoken in Zulu.

One of the publishers acknowledged that the children who could not speak English could not use the workbooks that were published only in English. The recommendation from the Manor Gardens participants was that these children needed a whole year of English before they even started using Grade 1 materials. Thus it was felt that a pre-school year would greatly benefit these children.

Thus the data indicates that the variations in the physical and human contexts found at the three schools impacted on the effectiveness of the implementation process. The documentation that drove the process in no way addressed these differences. It would therefore appear that the policy makers had made the assumption that the real context of implementation was either homogeneous or it was not a critical factor.

3. OBE trivialises curriculum content even as it claims to be a potential leverage away from content coverage, which besets the current education system.

Of perhaps greater concern than the practical problems is the concern that in this real context, where all the participants are not equally equipped to implement this change, OBE will be interpreted and applied in a mechanical way. Jonathan Jansen argues that with knowledge (the Learning Programmes) now organised around discrete outcomes a mechanical model of behaviourism could evolve in the majority of South African classrooms. All the teachers expressed difficulty in understanding the Specific Outcomes and yet all of the schools felt constrained to use them.

We have to cover the Specific outcomes now. They are very broad but I would say we are more restricted. We have more learning areas to cover, which push us into a broader spectrum so you cannot just choose anything. We are at the point now were we having to choose themes that lend themselves to the Specific Outcomes that we have not yet covered. We do not have to follow all the Specific Outcomes but we try to cover them at some stage. (Manor Gardens Principal)

All the teachers expressed the view that they were now very focused the outcomes in their preparation.

I am more focussed on the outcome. I have to decide that that is what I want to see demonstrated at the end. That has made me think more clearly about the activity and what the children have to do to get there and letting them know that that is where they are going. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

Most of the teachers felt that they were spending longer time over the themes and the children had covered less work this year than last year.

We are spending longer time over our themes so we have done less themes this year. But this does not matter. The children are learning. The document does of course not focus on what a Grade 1 child should be able to do, it just indicates what they should be able to do by the end of a phase. So children could be in Grade 2 and still be doing Grade 1 work as it were. Previously we would never have sent a child on if this were the case. If you go with the specific outcomes first and then try to choose the activity you end up with a very broken programme that does not flow. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

There were different responses to the question, How do you see the children's progress this year?

I am not sure about that because last year we did a lot of work. We did numbers up to 20. We are doing those this year but not dealing with them like last year. The activities include numbers but not in the same organised way. (Mayville Teacher)

Faster. Especially for the quicker children because they are freer to progress. So we are not keeping those that are advanced back. The slower children are doing their best. I think it is easier to do OBE with 46 as there is less marking. You have children helping each other, which is the best way. By the time you get to a group a lot of the mistakes have been sorted out. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

Where the teachers were used to giving structured lessons they were finding it difficult to let go of that structure.

We came from the time when we used to be spoon-fed. The OBE, as far as I understand, is how you think about it. It is English across the curriculum. You design yourself themes. My teachers have come from the college. They have got no experience of what to expect, except to teach as they were taught. Now they are presented with OBE. They want the principal to do things for them. The documents from the department are not giving them any help. (Mayville Primary Principal)

It would appear that during this initial phase of the implementation process all the teachers were struggling with the paradigm shift required of them by the implementers. The fear that an OBE would be mechanically applied was not evident at this Grade 1 level. What was clearly apparent however was the tendency for the teachers to be restricted by the documentation. It is argued that there appears to be a tension between the intended open-endedness in learning outcomes with place for alternative diverse views and the closure of competence-based education with centrally determined meanings as prescribed by the Specific Outcomes. Thus it would appear that the planners expectation of a process of experiential learning with learners and teachers learning together and constructing negotiated meanings may not be realized within the constraining framework of centrally determined learning outcomes.

4. The manner in which teachers have been limited in their participation in the OBE initiative.

Jonathan Jansen saw the lack of teacher participation as contradictory to the ANC's process orientated educational platform.

This view was expressed by many of the participants.

Although the teachers are highly motivated and co-operative it is felt that they needed more support. This top-down approach has spoilt the game. The teachers have been left out. The teachers are traumatised. The teachers are very confused. The teachers should have been made part of the system. The teachers have

certain expectations according to the old paradigm. They find this new paradigm threatening. The Department has certain expectations and the child has expectations and the teacher has a dilemma. (Mayville Head of Department)

There is this spiral down thing, the cascade model. The message has been passed down and the people who were doing this for us always started by saying 'We don't know any more than you do! We are only one week ahead'. The courses were very time consuming and you were made to feel as if you were planning it your self and you were not really. It had all been worked out for you. (Carrington Heights Principal)

OBE is the right thing, but it came as a bomb. You have to undergo services first. Like you service a car on a long trip. Whereas OBE had to be put in place in about a two month period. They must give the teachers a chance to ask questions. The teachers must then get a chance to put it into practice in their training. That money was not put aside to do that. This should have been done before we start to apply it in the schools. It is a very good thing but people need services and time. (Mayville Principal)

Although all the participants were still positive about OBE they were frustrated about the way the implementers forced the time issue. Some of the participants felt that there were Specific Outcomes that were not appropriate for Grade 1.

There are some specific outcomes that I do not believe should be covered in Grade1. We have been told that in Grade 1 we should cover all 66 outcomes at least once. At the beginning of the year we thought that we had 3 years to cover these outcomes. So we took out things that we thought were not relevant to Grade 1. We made our own document. We went to a talk and we found that we had to cover them all. We would rather do it our way. We feel that we are focussing more on what is relevant to those children at their stage of development. (Manor Gardens Principal)

The resources supplied by the department were not being used by many of the teachers as they were considered to be inappropriate for their particular children. The input from the publishers did not seem to alleviate these problems.

The free supply of books from the publishers was late and also judged to be inappropriate for some of the children.

We have had photocopies of the books because the books are not out yet. We have had sections. Some of the teachers have used a little of them. The higher grades have enjoyed using them. They assumed prior knowledge and the materials are not great. We are committed to use them to a certain extent. I think they thought that we would use them more formally than we are able to. (Carrington Heights Principal)

By September some of the teachers had started to use the books.

I feel much better, although I am not saying we are OK. We are trying. The Maskew Miller books helped us. We got started with some activities. The book tells you everything. There are teachers' books and pupils' books and workbooks. They tell you exactly what to do and then you can improvise if their activity is too difficult then you can make them easier for your class. (Mayville Primary teacher)

The data thus indicated that the teachers felt excluded from the OBE initiative. This exclusion resulted in the teachers being constrained by instructions that failed to take into account the diversity they encountered in their contexts. Once again the teachers developed different strategies to give OBE meaning in their classrooms. Despite this lack of inclusion the teachers were optimistic regarding the implementation process.

5. OBE will multiply the administrative burdens placed on teachers.

Jonathon Jansen claims that certain aspects of OBE will increase the teachers' load. He further claims that OBE will fail in the absence of adequate teacher support.

The part that I found difficult this year is the administration, trying to record everything. We have tried to focus on outcomes, which has changed our way of planning. This has slowed us down a lot. Now we have to choose the outcome first and then find the activity. Your planning gets quite stilted. You do not just

get to brainstorm, as when you find the activity first and then find the outcome. So for our next theme we are going to go back to our old way of planning. (Manor Gardens Teacher)

The administration is time consuming. The teachers do not know how to fit it in. This is particularly with the restraints we have with photocopying and other resources. The individual worksheets take time. They are also writing down what outcomes they are doing. The teachers are struggling with the reports, as they have nothing to write. The report is supposed to be a report of what the children have achieved. If they cannot speak the language, they cannot recognise the words. They have a better idea on the outcomes than they do on recording the outcomes. But the expectations in terms of the administration work for the teachers were vast. The first couple of weeks my teachers just collapsed. (Carrington Heights Principal)

The Mayville teachers felt that they had not really started OBE when I visited in March.

So far it is very, very confusing. I went to the next door teacher to ask her how are you doing these outcomes, and she said that she is not doing it, she is only doing the activities. The government has given us the materials so we are taking the activities from this guide. So the activities are all here and I have numbered them. The problem is that they have not said which SO this is linked to. (Mayville teacher)

By September the teachers felt more confident.

We are trying. We got started with some activities. The Maskew Miller books helped us. They tell you exactly what to do and then you can improvise. If their activity is too difficult then you can make them easier for your class. (Mayville teacher)

Each school developed different strategies to cope with this issue. Carrington Heights have employed teacher aides from the beginning of August, one aide per Grade. Their main work is to interact with the children because of the large classes.

The Manor Gardens teachers found they had been so pre-occupied with trying to get themselves on track with OBE that their focus had not been on the children.

This has been quite a shock for us because we are suddenly at the end of the year and we realised that we have put a lot of time and energy in to trying to plan and organise, and we have had less time to get down to teaching, which has been frustrating and depressing. Not that we feel that OBE is not working, we have just realised that we cannot get bogged down by the administration we have got to get down to the teaching.
(Manor Gardens teacher)

These teachers had made the decision that they would take the pressure off themselves next year not let themselves loose sight of what they were actually supposed to do which was to teach the children.

The Mayville teachers did not perceive their workload as greater. This was because they were not engaging with the administrative work in the same way as the other two schools. These teachers were still grappling with the meaning of the change for themselves. This resulted in them taking on only those aspects of the change that they could understand and cope with.

Thus the data indicated that some of the participants acknowledged that the new system had increase their administrative load. One ironic fact that emerged was that, the Manor Gardens teachers, who perceived themselves to be doing OBE prior to the implementation in 1998, indicated the greatest increased work load. The Mayville teachers, however, who acknowledged that OBE was very different from their previous methods, did not complain of an increased workload. The lessons observed had changed to include those elements of OBE that the teachers' could realistically implement at their school. The current policy of teacher rationalisation and the subsequent increase in class size aggravated the situation and worked against successful implementation. Nevertheless the teachers were devising different strategies to cope better next year.

6. For OBE to succeed will require trained and retrained teachers, retrained education managers and parental support and involvement.

Jonathan Jansen argues that if transformational OBE is to succeed it will require highly qualified teachers to make sense of the challenge to the existing practice. Aspects of this issue have been commented on in point 4 above that dealt with the lack of teacher participation and the speed of implementation. The participants were aware of the challenge the change posed to their role as a teacher.

They just supply us with the materials and expect the OBE to materialise out of a book. So how can that happen? (Mayville Primary Principal)

If you have been working as a teacher for a number of years, you have been doing things in a certain way and it works and the children are writing nicely and you work hard and you prepare. Then, suddenly someone comes to tell you "Look here, you are being an authoritarian person. You are standing in front. In actual fact the children should be doing it this way. You should be having a different role altogether". It is a threat. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

Some of the teachers acknowledged that the change that they were required to make was far reaching and went beyond a change in teaching methodology.

One [teacher] is from England where this OBE is done. The way she was teaching we were thinking she is just playing. Now we can see that she was doing real things. We are now working together. I am worried about some other teachers who are not as strong and well trained. Teachers need more support more workshops and more time. There is no support I do not think this thing can work. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

It is much harder work to be a facilitator than to be standing up and doing something on the blackboard. Because you have to be much more creative and open. You have to look out for more materials and think of ways to make things exciting for children. (Carrington Heights Principal)

The Manor Gardens teachers felt that they had been doing OBE before 1998.

I think there is not an appreciable difference (to what we were doing before), we allowed the children to progress at their own rate and were doing OBE-like activities anyway.

The realities of OBE have had differing consequences in the three schools.

Our first year teacher, who is filled with lots of OBE theory and has seen OBE working in practice in classes of 23 children, is finding that these 46 children are running rings about him. His planning is very OBE, and his thinking is OBE and the reality in the classroom is trying to keep control. (Carrington Heights Principal)

When I get confused I would look back at my syllabus and mark book from last year and then I remember what I need to cover before the children can go to Grade 2. The other teachers are doing the same. (Mayville Teacher)

They [the teachers] work in themes. So they decide in the beginning when they choose the theme which SO's they are going to cover. From that they work out the PI's and the AC's. But we have discussed it, it is not supposed to be the right way, but it could be easier to choose an activity first, which we can then fit into the theme framework. However that way we will not cover all the SO's in the foundation phase. (Manor Gardens Principal)

All the participants acknowledged the need for more training. The workshops they had attended were considered inadequate. Two ideas put forward were:

- highly trained teachers should be seconded to work in those schools that needed more guidance.
- teachers could be released from schools to shadow the more highly trained teachers.

The teachers emphasised the need for these strategies to continue for sustained periods of time. Thus the OBE initiative made different demands on the different teachers. On the issue of the need for teacher training Spady concurred with the participants as is illustrated in the following quote:

We need highly qualified dedicated teachers for OBE to work in South Africa. Training must begin with top management in Education. People always tend to blame the teachers for things going wrong - they are the last people to blame (Spady 1997).

Perceived benefits of OBE.

Despite all the problems encountered by the participants they felt that the children were benefiting from the implementation of OBE in the following ways.

They are enjoying it. They are discovering for themselves. I think this year I have tried my best to make the kids more involved in the lesson and to let them tell me, rather than me tell them.
(Mayville Teacher)

What I am more aware of, I think, is that the focus is not just on the academic side but on the whole child, so that if they are not good in one area I am aware that they are good in another area.
(Manor Gardens Teacher)

I think particularly for the children at our school there is a tremendous benefit as you are recognising the individuality of the child. You are not ranking the child with other children of the same age group (Carrington Heights Principal)

I think any change would be good compared to what I saw of education. This includes pre-school, junior primary and high school, through my own experiences and through my own children. The system is very authoritarian. (Carrington Heights teacher)

Conclusion.

The anticipated problems were encountered at all three schools and therefore most of Jansen's claims were substantiated. The data indicated however that the consequences of these problems differed according to the context in which the implementation occurred. Not all the problems proved insurmountable. The data collected indicated that the participants charged with the actual work of implementation were aware that they were engaged in an ongoing process of curriculum innovation.

CHAPTER FIVE.

CONCLUSION.

The conclusions are presented in three parts. The first part deals with the dimensions of the change that was observed. The second part relates this observed change to the OBE being implemented. The third part forms the final conclusion of the research initiative

Part One:

Dimensions of Change.

This implementation of OBE involved a dynamic interrelationship of three related dimensions of change, the use of new materials, the use of new teaching approaches and the alteration of beliefs. Therefore it is important that a relationship be fostered between the intended new educational program and the subjective realities of the individuals involved for real change to be effectively implemented.

It is argued that the policy makers driving the educational change viewed curriculum as a set of plans to be implemented This was indicated by the mechanisms put in place by the implementers. Although all the implementation documentation stated that the process was based on participatory, decentralized decision-making the reality was that this curriculum initiative was centrally and politically defined. This tension is illustrated in the fact that although, in theory, the school curriculum was recognized as being socially constructed the written curriculum was presented as a 'given'.

They just supply us with the materials and expect the OBE to materialise out of a book. So how can that happen? (Mayville Primary Principal)

In 1997 there were no workshops for the principals whose role it was to set the implementation process in action. The teachers were introduced to the new concepts through workshops that were short and took place outside of the school context. Thus the process was mainly driven by the documentation that was sent to the schools and the participants were left to interpret these instructions on their own. In addition the participants were not included in the production of any of the elements of the curriculum nor were they asked to contribute any feed back into the process. Thus the process was centrally driven which marginalised the main participants.

This top-down approach has spoilt the game. The teachers have been left out. The teachers are traumatised. The teachers are very confused. The teachers should have been made part of the system. (Mayville Head of Department)

The contribution of the publisher followed the same pattern as that of the education department. The teachers were not included in the production of the published materials nor was the context of the schools taken into account. Thus these implementation plans were as authoritarian as the previous systems that the policy makers were trying to replace. The innovators needed to be open to ideas from those who were involved in the process. Fullan (1982), in describing examples of innovations similar to this one that included educational outcomes that were thoroughly prescribed, but without feasible plans of how they could be implemented, warned that this lack of clarity could become a source of frustration and confusion for those carrying out the process.

There is this spiral down thing, the cascade model. The message has been passed down and the people who were doing this for us always started by saying 'We don't know any more than you do! We are only one week ahead'. The courses were very time consuming and you were made to feel as if you were planning it your self and you were not really. It had all been worked out for you. (Carrington Heights Principal)

-[The] message gets badly distorted as it travels down the human chain, and teachers end up bemused by its unfamiliar terminology rather than inspired by a new freedom from inflexible syllabi. (Wits EPU Aug 1998: 16)

In contrast to this approach the participants viewed curriculum as an active process which involved planning, acting and evaluating. At each of the schools the principal and teachers arranged their own meetings and activities to create shared understandings of the new curriculum. The teachers were involved in continual evaluation of their efforts. Each teacher interviewed described plans that they and the other teachers had put into action to cope with the difficulties and ensure that the process went more smoothly in 1999. There was a clear realisation that that they would need time for the concepts to become meaningful.

I think with anything new, while we find our feet we are going to go back before we can go forward. While we are learning we are going to be frustrated. We must keep the end result (in mind). Our training was so late last year and when we got back it was a real battle. OBE has focussed us and we have grown. Our activities have become more focussed to get the outcomes. (Manor Gardens teacher)

He [the Principal] does not understand the Specific Outcomes. He allows us to go to other schools to observe. We are going to go to Manor Gardens Primary next term to observe the teachers for a day. (Mayville Primary teacher)

Meaning is central to making sense of educational change. Those in positions of power to initiate change should not ignore the need for those involved in the implementation of the change to work through the process if change is to take place. New experiences are reacted to in the context of some 'familiar, reliable construction of reality' in which people must be able to attach personal meaning to the experiences regardless of how meaningful they might be to others.

We meet every Monday and consider a different learning area. The teachers are asked to share what works for them. This has been great because although some of the teachers have been quite quiet in the sessions, I have noticed them going back to the classroom and trying things that their colleagues have shared. (Carrington Heights Principal)

Educational change involves people's basic conceptions of self and competence, and thus presents difficulties for the individual to develop a sense of meaning. Dalton's "burden of incompetence" (Dalton 1988: 8) was clearly evident in the teacher's interviews. The expected innovations involved teachers in skills that they did not possess. These situations created a crisis as they put the identity and professional skills of the principals and teachers at stake.

I was expecting to be able to say all these things and understand them perfectly, but I cannot. That is the frustrating part, and depressing. The first year teacher has remained the calmest so perhaps there is a disadvantage to having expectations built on experience. (Manor Gardens teacher)

If you have been working as a teacher for a number of years, you have been doing things in a certain way and it works..., suddenly someone comes to tell you "Look here, you are being an authoritarian person. You are standing in front. In actual fact the children should be doing it this way. You should be having a different role altogether". It is a threat. (Carrington Heights Teacher)

The teachers have certain expectations according to the old paradigm. They find this new paradigm threatening. (Mayville Primary Head of Department)

The external implementers did not have to face the same crisis as the school-based implementers. To bring about successful change continual dialogue among all persons at all levels of decision making must take place. The complex, confusing language that produced different meanings for the participants did impact on the participant's ability to give the implementation process meaning.

The diverse contexts of human and physical resources impacted on the success of the implementation process. There needs to be recognition that change involves the structures and routines of the school workplace. These structures act as a powerful source of help or hindrance to the teacher in the process of change. Change fails if it fails to impact on the entire culture of the school. This can help to explain why some aspects of the change were implemented and others were not. It was clearly apparent that the policy reforms had been made in isolation from the real context of the education system of South Africa.

We are trying our best. After school the teachers meet to talk about OBE. We are just going to push through until we get it. You know people try to write a book, for example, for this school without coming to the school to see what it is like, with no experience of that place. (Mayville Primary Principal)

I look at those Specific Outcomes and they do not mean anything much. What children have to learn are those Critical Outcomes that mean something. Any activity I do will be driving towards those critical outcomes. That to me is enough. It is what I can cope with. (Carrington Heights teacher)

Research proves that change can have a pacifying effect because surface changes can create the appearance of substantial change when in fact no real deep changes have occurred. The teachers' interviews indicated that the participants were aware of some of the main aspects of the OBE initiative. Nevertheless during the lesson observations the following contradictions were noticed. The lessons in September 1997 were often as teacher driven as those observed in March 1998 in that the teacher set the same task for all the children.

I get confused. I would look back at my syllabus and mark book from last year and then I remember what I need to cover before the children can go to Grade 2. The other teachers are doing the same. (Mayville teacher)

The children keep busy. The children like doing the activities. They like working in groups. I allow them to do these activities when they have done all their other work. (Mayville Primary teacher)

In classes of 45 you cannot cater for the individuality that is what OBE is all about. (Carrington Heights Principal)

The teachers continued to foster competition between groups. The teachers still emphasised the need for the tasks to be accomplished by all children within a set period of time. These observed facts indicated that the statements of the teachers were not always consistent with their actions. It indicates that the changes required of the teachers were far reaching. The teachers needed time for the new ideas to have meaning.

Innovations can constitute threats to the normal systems of organisation in a school. Thus any plans for change at the classroom level must face the problem of control. Most of the teachers interviewed indicated that they experienced problems with control in the classroom.

Class size is a huge deterrent, because if you are going to try to get the whole class on board the whole time you just spend so much time disciplining. Maybe it is because I have had a few days in the classroom. You try to bring order in the class and to get everyone to do things. You seem always to have some that are not doing things. By the time you get those ones to do it you have lost the others. (Carrington Heights Principal)

The curricular change involved a change in the nature of educational knowledge that threatened the teacher's control and order of the educational environment. This threat is posed when the teacher's professional skills are undermined by changes in subject content and method.

Dalton(1988) stated that the most fundamental form of innovation is the transformation of the values of teachers. The teachers indicated they were aware of the basic conceptual changes that were expected of them. They were

also however aware that they needed more time to come to terms with these changes. Meaning has to be negotiated through human interaction and it is these shared meanings that sustain the process. It is argued that the policy makers were ignorant of all the possible dimensions of the change process.

Part Two:

Dimensions of OBE.

The planners of South African OBE prepared policy and public documents to introduce Transformational OBE.

South African OBE is Transformational OBE and not ordinary OBE (Spady 1997).

Spady described Transformational OBE as being future orientated, committed to the success of all students, including clearly defined 'exit outcomes'. This system incorporated a consistently applied criterion-referenced assessment system.

To meet the challenges and demands of the twenty-first century, the new curriculum will effect a shift from one which has been content-based to one which is based on outcomes. This aims at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes which are necessary for success after they have left school or completed their training. Its guiding vision is that of a thinking, competent future citizen. (Bengu 1997: 2)

Spady contrasted that against 'Traditional' OBE that focuses upon existing curricula with outcomes being derived mainly in terms of skills and competencies. I would contend that the form of OBE that will actually be implemented at the school level will be Traditional. The traditional school day hours were maintained and the students had a greater chance of being successful because the specified outcomes constituted a clearer statement of intent than the past syllabi.

I think particularly for the children at our school there is a tremendous benefit as you are recognising the individuality of the child. You are not ranking the child with other children of the same age group. You are trying to find out their own skills and to let them grow in that area and develop their own approach to things. (Carrington Heights Principal)

When I do phonics I give them pictures from a book brought by another teacher. Then I ask them to respond to the pictures in English, which they can do. Maybe they only know two words then I do the others in Zulu. Then I ask them what is common in these two English words, some of them tell me the sound and I do not have to tell them the sound. Basically that is what OBE is all about. (Mayville Primary teacher)

I am more focussed on the outcome. I having to decide that that is what I want to see demonstrated at the end. That has made me think more clearly about the activity and what the children have to do to get there and letting them know that that is where they are going. (Manor Gardens teacher)

Thus traditional OBE is strictly speaking not outcomes-based because the starting point is in most cases the existing curriculum from which the outcomes are derived. I would argue that this second description of OBE is the OBE that I observed in the three schools researched. A failure to examine what is actually happening in the schools makes it is easy to conclude that promising innovations are “blunted on the classroom doors” (Taylor 1975: 189). Despite all the problems encountered during 1998 the principals and teachers had implemented changes in all the schools. The teachers’ planning, recording, reporting and the lessons observed during September 1998 were significantly different from those observed in March 1997. These changes may not have been recognised as significant change in the eyes of the centrally place OBE implementers. I would argue that planners construct plans for change with only one set of meanings, in this case Transformational OBE. When the proposed plans are implemented in the real context of the schools, with other players constructing their own meanings, the ‘change’ is perceived to have failed simply because the planners do not recognise the new product.

Part Three:

Research conclusions.

This research initiative, located in the Hermeneutic paradigm, attempted to examine the process of change within a local setting. The researcher set out to examine the implementation of OBE in a sample of primary schools. One of the main objectives was to test the powerful critique of the South African OBE voiced by Jonathan Jansen against the reality of the initial implementation process observed in the three case studies. This qualitative approach was adopted because of the need to understand the different meanings generated by the process of implementation. I would argue that this approach was an appropriate one as the data generated in the three contexts gave an indication of the different meanings. The researcher does however recognise that a larger sample of both contexts and participants would have provided more reliable data.

I would contend that the Transformational OBE as visualised by the central planners had failed to materialise during the first year of implementation. The data presented in Chapter Four clearly indicated that most of the issues that Jansen predicted would act as barriers to successful change did in fact impede the implementation process. Thus at one level Jansen was right as OBE had failed for the very reasons he put forward. I would argue, however, that elements of the implementation process were successful as in all three schools studied the Principals and Grade One teachers were actively engaged in the process of implementing Transitional OBE. No doubt this struggle viewed from the distance of the centrally placed planners and critics will be classified as a failure.

In conclusion I would argue that the reality that educational planners and innovators pay only lip service to the concept of curriculum as a process negatively impacts on the successful translation of policy into practice. The gulf between the meanings generated during conception and those that are

negotiated during the realities of execution creates a context of misunderstanding. I would contend that for a successful implementation process the curriculum planners need to nurture their badly sown seeds of innovation so that they flourish into a fully-grown OBE curriculum that is deeply rooted in the South African context.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

African National Congress Discussion Document 1994 'A Policy Framework for Education and Training' ANC Education Department (Bramfontein)

Atkins, E. 1988 'Reframing curriculum theory in terms of interpretation and practice : a hermeneutical approach' *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (vol 20.5.)

Bengu, Prof. SME 1997 Address from the steps of Parliament on the occasion of the launch of Curriculum 2005, 24 March 1997 (Unpublished)

Bishop, G. 1986 *Innovation in Education* MacMillan (London)

Burgess, R. 1985 *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods* Falmer Press (London)

Cohen, L. and Manion, L. 1994 *Research Methods in Education* Routledge (London)

Cornbleth, C. 1990 *Curriculum in Context* Falmer Press (London)

Dalton, T. 1988 *The Challenge of Curriculum Innovation A Study of Ideology and Practice* Falmer Press (London)

Finch, J. 1986 *Research and Policy: the Uses of Qualitative Methods in Social and Educational Research* Falmer Press (London)

Fullan, M. 1982 *The Meaning of Educational Change* Teachers College Press (Columbia University)

Fullan, M. with Stiegelbauer, S. 1991 *The New Meaning of Educational Change* Cassell (London)

- Giroux, H.A. et al (eds.) 1981 *Curriculum and Instruction*. McCuthchan (Berkeley, California)
- Goodson, I.F. 1994 *Studying Curriculum* OUP (Buckingham)
- Gross, N et al 1971 *Implementing Organisational Innovation* Basic Books (New York)
- Grundy, S. 1987 *Curriculum: Product or Praxis* Falmer Press (London)
- Hopkins, D. 1990 *A teacher's Guide to Classroom Research* Milton & Keynes: Open University Press (London)
- Jansen, J. 1997 'Why OBE will fail' Macro-Educational Policy Unit Faculty of Education University of Durban Westville (unpublished)
- Killian, R. 1996 'Outcomes-Based Education: Rethinking Teaching' (Conference paper: University of South Africa - Pretoria - unpublished)
- King, M. and van den Berg, D. 1991 *The Politics of Curriculum: Structures and Processes, Focus Series One* Centaur Publications in association with the Independent Examinations Board (Pietermaritzburg)
- Lange, R. V. 1995 'How do systems of Education Change and How shall we change our own? Some Modest Generalisations' (Convention Proceedings – unpublished)
- Lifelong Learning through a National Qualifications Framework February 1996 Report of the Ministerial Committee for Development Work on the NQF (Discussion Document)

Lubisi, C. Wedekind, V. and Parker, B. 1997 *Understanding Outcomes-Based Education. Knowledge, Curriculum & Assessment in South Africa* SAIDE (Braamfontein)

Marsh, C.J. 1997 *Perspectives: Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum 1* Falmer Press (London)

Marsh, C.J. 1997a *Planning Management and Ideology: Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum 2* Falmer Press (London)

National Department of Education 1995 A Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education CFC Discussion Document (Pretoria)

National Department of Education 1995 White Paper on Education and Training. Government Gazette Notice No 196 15 March 1995 (Cape Town)

National Education Conference 1992 Back to Learning SACHED Trust (Johannesburg)

National Education Policy Investigation. Report on Curriculum 1992 Oxford University Press (Cape Town)

Open University 1972 'Education Studies: A Second Level Course. The Curriculum: Context, Design and Development Units 13-15' The Open University Press (London)

Parsard, N. 1995 *Investigating teacher involvement in curriculum development: curriculum implementation at Topaz Secondary School* (M.Ed Thesis - University of the Witwatersrand)

Popkewitz, T.S. 1984 *Paradigm and Ideology in Educational Research* Falmer Press (London)

Russell, E. 1996 'Outline of proposals put forward in the following curriculum documents: A Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Lifelong Learning through a NQF' (B.Ed assignment – Natal University)

Samoff, J. 1996 'Frameworks! South African Education and Training Policy Documents, 1994-1996' Macro-Education Policy Unit, University of Durban-Westville (unpublished)

Schubert, W.H. 1989 *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility*. Macmillan (New York)

Shongwe, Dr P. 1992 *Environmental education in primary schools in Bophthatswana: a case study in curriculum implementation* (M.Ed Thesis Environmental Education - Rhodes University)

Simons, H. 1987 *Getting to Know Schools in a Democracy* Falmer Press (London)

South African Schools Bill 1996 (Minister of Education)

Spady, W. 1995 'Outcomes-Based education: an international perspective' *Outcomes-Based Education: Critical Issues*. American Association of School Administration. USA: Breakthrough Systems

Spady, W. 1997 'Address at General Smuts High School, Gauteng Department of Education 20 November 1997' [www page]. <http://biblebbs.nis.za/obe/newinfo.htm> (from 100076.620@compuserve.com) (visited 7 September 1998)

Stenhouse, L. 1975 *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* Heinemann (London)

Taylor, P. and Tye, K. (eds.) 1975 *Curriculum , School and Society: An Introduction to Curriculum Studies*. NFER (Windsor)

Understanding the NQF *A Guide to Lifelong Learning* 1996 Heinemann (Johannesburg)

Vulliamy, G., Lewin, K. and Stephens, D. 1990 *Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries: Qualitative Strategies* Falmer Press (London)

Wits EPU 1996 Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa. December (vol 4.2.)

Wits EPU 1997 Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa. March (vol 4.3.)

Wits EPU 1998 Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa. August (vol 5.4.)

APPENDIX A

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS.
1997.**

A. Context of the school.

1. How old is your school?
2. How would you describe the socioeconomic conditions of your feeder area?
3. How would you describe the composition of your learner intake in Grade 1?
4. What are your selection criteria?
5. How much are your school fees?
6. Do your parents pay these school fees?
7. What is the absentee rate?
8. How would you describe the level of commitment of your parent/community body?

B. OUTCOMES-Based Education.

1. Describe your introduction to the concept of OBE.
2. What does the concept of OBE mean to you?
3. Do you believe that there is a need for change in the South African Educational system? Explain your answer.
4. Do you believe that OBE is the preferred change that our educational system needs? Explain your answer.
5. How do you think this OBE will be different from what your teachers have been doing before?
6. What steps have the education department taken to acquaint you with the proposed OBE implementation?
7. In your opinion where these steps adequate? Explain.
8. What steps have you taken to acquaint your staff/parent community?
9. Do you feel these steps where adequate? Explain.
10. What problems have arisen already?
11. Who has solved these problems? Who should have solved them?
12. What immediate problems do you anticipate next year(1998)?
13. What steps have you taken already? Who will solve these problems? Who should solve these problems?

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS
1997.**

OUTCOMES-Based Education.

1. Describe your introduction to the concept of OBE.
2. What does the concept of OBE mean to you?
3. How do you think this OBE will differ from what you have been doing before?
4. Do you believe that there is a need for change in the South African Educational system? Explain your answer.
5. Do you believe that OBE is the preferred change that our educational system needs? Explain your answer.
6. What steps have the education department taken to acquaint you with the proposed OBE implementation?
7. In your opinion where these steps adequate? Explain.
8. What steps has your principal/school management taken to acquaint you with the proposed OBE change?
9. Do you feel these steps where adequate? Explain.
10. What problems have arisen already?
11. Who has solved these problems? Who should have solved them?
12. What immediate problems do you anticipate next year(1998)?
13. What steps have you taken already? Who will solve these problems? Who should solve these problems?

**LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDELINES: PRE-OBE INTRODUCTION.
1997.**

1. Teachers name and name of group.
2. Time of day - what activities have preceded the lesson being observed?
3. Nature of the lesson.
4. Length of the observed lesson.
5. Number of learners. Gender ratio.
6. How were the learners arranged? Describe the group composition.
7. What resources were available in relation to the size of the class?
8. How much of the time was used by the teacher to direct the learners activities?
9. How much of the time were the learners directing their own activities?
10. How free were the learners to move/communicate with other learners?
11. How free were the learners to interact with the resources/teacher?
12. How much of the time was allocated spent on explaining the content matter?
13. What arrangements were made for slower/faster learners?
14. Where all the learners doing the same thing all/some of the time?
15. How much of the time was allocated to fostering skills development?
16. What outcome did the teacher have for the lesson?
17. What outcome did you feel the teacher had achieved?
18. What evidence was there of learning in this lesson?
19. What problems arose in this lesson and why?
20. How and by whom were these problems solved?
21. Where the learners enjoying the lesson - did they have 'fun'?

Interview schedule for Teachers 1998.

1. Having had time to study my ideas of a working definition of OBE, how closely does that definition correspond with your own ideas of what OBE means to you?
2. How different is what you have been doing so far this year in Grade 1 lessons been from what you did in previous years?
3. How has what you have been doing this year challenged your beliefs in :
 - a) Your role as a teacher?
 - b) Your responsibilities as a teacher?
 - c) Your views on what is worthwhile knowledge to be passed on to Grade 1 learners?
 - d) Your views on what are worthwhile activities for Grade 1 learners?
4. Do you have a clear idea of:
 - a) The nature of the outcomes that you are meant to be fostering in your class?
 - b) Clearly identified methods that will foster the demonstration of these outcomes in your class?
 - c) How these outcomes that you are meant to be fostering in your class will be demonstrated by your learners?
5. Do you feel that this new curriculum was developed with the life culture of your school in mind?
6. Comment on the problems that you might have encountered with regard to:
 - a) time
 - b) funds
 - c) resources
 - d) class size
7. Can you describe your attitude to this new curriculum now that you have had a short time to implement it? Has your attitude changed from last year?
8. How confident do you feel about OBE as the chosen Curriculum for SA?

Interview schedule for Principals 1998.

1. Having had time to study my ideas of a working definition of OBE, how closely does that definition correspond with your own ideas of what OBE means to you?
2. How different is what your teachers have been doing so far this year in Grade 1 lessons been from what they did in previous years?
3. How has what they have been doing this year challenged your beliefs in :
 - a) The role of a teacher?
 - b) The responsibilities of a teacher?
 - c) Your views on what is worthwhile knowledge to be passed on to Grade 1 learners?
 - d) Your views on what are worthwhile activities for Grade 1 learners?
4. Do you have a clear idea of:
 - a) The nature of the outcomes that the teachers are meant to be fostering in their classes?
 - b) Clearly identified methods that will foster the demonstration of these outcomes in the classes?
 - c) How these outcomes that they are meant to be fostering in their classes will be demonstrated by the learners?
5. Do you feel that this new curriculum was developed with the life culture of your school in mind?
6. Comment on the problems that you might have encountered with regard to:
 - a) time
 - b) funds
 - c) resources
 - d) class size
7. Can you describe your attitude to this new curriculum now that you have had a short time to implement it? Has your attitude changed from last year?
8. How confident do you feel about OBE as the chosen Curriculum for SA?

**LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDELINES: OBE INTRODUCTION.
1998.**

1. Teachers name and name of group.
2. Time of day - what activities have preceded the lesson being observed?
3. Nature of the lesson.
4. Length of the observed lesson.
5. Number of learners. Gender ratio.
6. How were the learners arranged? Describe the group composition.
7. What resources were available in relation to the size of the class?
8. How much of the time was used by the teacher to direct the learners activities?
9. How much of the time were the learners directing their own activities?
10. How free were the learners to move/communicate with other learners?
11. How free were the learners to interact with the resources/teacher?
12. How much of the time was allocated spent on explaining the content matter?
13. What arrangements were made for slower/faster learners?
14. Where all the learners doing the same thing all/some of the time?
15. How much of the time was allocated to fostering skills development?
16. What outcome did the teacher have for the lesson?
17. What outcome did you feel the teacher had achieved?
18. What evidence was there of learning in this lesson?
19. What problems arose in this lesson and why?
20. How and by whom were these problems solved?
21. Where the learners enjoying the lesson - did they have 'fun'?

A WORKING DEFINITION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION.

The term Outcome-Based Education (OBE), implies that we will design and organise everything we do directly around the intended learning demonstration we want to see at the end.

Comment _____

An Outcome is seen as a culminating demonstration of the entire range of learning experiences and occurs in an authentic context.

Comment _____

4 Key Principles that must be visible in the method of teaching:

1. A clear focus on outcomes which has been communicated to the learners.

2. Continuous opportunities for learners to improve their demonstration of these outcomes.

3. Belief in the learners ability to achieve the stated outcomes.

4. A creative approach that will allow OBE to evolve.

What is OBE not?

OBE is not time nor content based learning with outcomes added on top.

