

**CURRICULUM CHANGE
AND
OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION**

A CASE STUDY OF TWO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
RESERVIOR HILLS

BY

SHALINA NAICKER

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

1998

CURRICULUM CHANGE AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

**A CASE STUDY OF TWO
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
RESERVIOR HILLS**

**RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTERS OF EDUCATION DEGREE:**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The financial assistance of the Centre for science Development (HSRC South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

**UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

1998

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO DEDICATED THEIR PRECIOUS TIME IN ASSISTING ME TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE MY DISSERTATION:

1. MY SUPERVISOR ~ PROFESSOR CLIVE HARBER
2. MY HUSBAND ~ KRISH NAICKER
3. MY SON ~ DUVEAINE NAICKER

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	1
INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1	
THE PAST AND EXISTING CURRICULUM IN S.A.	7
CHAPTER 2	
THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN THE NEW S.A.	22
CHAPTER 3	
WHAT IS OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION?	48
CHAPTER 4	
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	79
CHAPTER 5	
TEACHERS' VIEWS	102
CHAPTER 6	
CONCLUSIONS	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	133
APPENDIX	137

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore, through a qualitative approach, teachers' attitudes towards curriculum change in general and OBE in particular as a curriculum innovation. Teachers' perceptions, understandings of and readiness to implement OBE are assessed. The research attempted to explore their problems and fears concerning their role in this process of curriculum change.

Curriculum change as a process and outcomes-based education as a new innovation is explored in relation to the peculiarities of two schools in particular and the South African context in general. The argument centres around the past curriculum and the post (1994) curriculum in relation to outcomes based education and briefly considers what lies ahead for the future curriculum. The practicality of implementation in the present, in schools, like and similar to those in this study and the views of several scholars, especially those of Fullan (1982), Bishop (1986) and Jansen (1997) on the process of curriculum change is examined.

The impact of politics on educational transformations in general and in the South African context in particular is debated. The role of curriculum change in such a milieu and the impact it has on the teacher as implementor is examined through the views of the participants of this case study. Socio-economic criteria also influences

what happens within schools, and this study shows that poverty hampers the process of curriculum change.

A case study approach was used so that an in-depth study of the schools could be done. The study focused on how the teachers in two schools in Reservoir Hills are engaged in the actual implementation of OBE including the question of what in-service training they received and how effective and relevant it has been thus far.

This study served as an enlightening exercise for myself . A discussion of the participants views and my own observations and recommendations are presented. The constraints I encountered and the limitations of such a study are also outlined. I hope that this study adds to the pool of research data that is rapidly developing, in this particular area of study in our context, and inspires others to further the research.

INTRODUCTION

Educational change will stand a better chance of being successful in society in general and in educational structures in particular if society and those in education see a need for it. Only then it will be considered significant and taken seriously. The theories of Michael Fullan (1982) and G. Bishop (1986), informed the basis this work to a large extent. They claim that before any changes take place, the change agent, for example the government, the teacher or the local educational authorities, must first determine if the schools possess the human and material resources to facilitate that change. Otherwise no real change will take place, as the agents become bogged down in rhetoric. Teachers must be considered in any educational change as it demands their professional involvement both in theory and practice. Drastic and sudden change in education is not always good, therefore any change must be considered very carefully and realistically before any attempt is made to implement it. Any educational change should be brought about by engaging parents, teachers and learners in a process whereby they all work out the meaning of change collaboratively as,

" Educational reform is complex, non-linear, frequently arbitrary, and always political. It is rife with unpredictable shifts and fragmented initiatives." (Fullan , 1982 : 13)

Therefore some of the key questions that this study seeks answers to include:

- (1) Are we ready for change in terms of our socio-economic circumstances?
- (2) Do the schools possess the resources , both human and material?
- (3) Have the practitioners been consulted and adequately prepared in terms of skills and knowledge?
- (4) What planned strategy do the change agents (government) have to facilitate the effectivity and efficiency of the changes introduced?
- (5) Why is it so significant that these changes to take place immediately? The time frame is questioned in terms of government politics.

Introducing a new curriculum into schools does not necessarily mean that it is better than the one in use. Bishop, (1986) expresses a similar view that, sometimes a completely new innovation can become highly problematic as both teachers and learners grapple with the sudden change. The ability to adapt to changes resulting from curriculum innovation will vary for both teachers and learners in different contexts. Teacher acceptance, development, understanding, and preparation for the new curriculum in terms of implementation and production of resources should have the effect of empowering educators. Michael Fullan (1982), discusses this view in his text entitled: The Meaning of Educational Change. However the role of the teacher and learner in the curriculum already being practised in relation to a new curriculum must be taken seriously, as it may involve changes that may be too different to adjust to without adequate planning and preparation, as this study and other such studies conducted by Professor J. Jansen (1997) clearly indicates.

The educators in this study were certainly not coping well with the sudden changes in curriculum that were introduced at the beginning of 1998. The effect of frustrated and confused teachers will no doubt be seen eventually in our learners. Besides struggling to make sense of all the new terms and the laborious task that a lesson preparation record now entails, teachers are barely managing to keep their heads above water as far as the lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms are concerned. It seems that teachers feel that the central government did not take into consideration the reality of teaching in a public school in South Africa when they decided to implement outcomes based education in 1998. This view is shared by many educators in South Africa. The most vociferous among them has been Professor J. Jansen. For any change to be successful, it must be understood and accepted by those who will be responsible for implementing it. This does not seem to be the position in the two schools explored in this study.

It became apparent during this study that gaining access into schools to conduct research can be quite problematic. Some teachers were not too eager to allow strangers into their classrooms and it became clear that others were simply not interested in the present curriculum innovations. Teacher strikes and student stayaways that marked 1998, only served to delay this study.

Although, this was a case study of just two schools, it was an indepth study. Generalising the information gained, to an extent is possible, as I attempted to enhance the validity of the study through a process called methodological

triangulation. I have discussed at length the procedure I used in conducting this study, so that it could be replicated by others. Despite the limitations of the approach used in this study, I feel that it offers one the kind of 'real-life' information that other educators and researchers will find valuable.

CHAPTER ONE

PAST AND EXISTING CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of the South African education system paints a very bleak and upsetting picture of the state of education. Education during the apartheid era created a great deal of anger and turmoil for the oppressed. Education became a site of struggle for equity and equality. As the fight for equality progressed, the curriculum became the focus for radical intellectuals. They demanded changes, so that the history of the oppressed would be included. There was an insistence for the history of the black people to be portrayed in a more objective light. Clashes between the natives and white settlers had to be presented in an unbiased fashion. Curriculum changes were also demanded to eradicate indoctrination and to create learning opportunities that encouraged teachers to teach critically and learners to question critically.

PAST EDUCATION

In the early years of white settlement education was viewed as a means of 'civilizing' the slaves. The white colonists decided that the appropriate curriculum for the natives of South Africa would be basic Dutch and Christianity, to ensure that they could fulfil their role in that social order as slaves. This education served the purposes of the whites as it was meant to ensure that the whites

could communicate easily with the natives and therefore function as slaves. It was a curriculum designed to subordinate the black people of this land:

"...the first school was intended for the instruction of the younger slaves in the rudiments of the Dutch language and the Christian religion so that they might fit into their new positions of servility and become efficient and pliant labourers. The slave owners therefore forced their conceived and planned curriculum down the slaves' throats."

(C.T.P.A. 21st Annual Conference, Alternative Education Report, 1988.)

Later the church took over the responsibility of black education, which was controlled by the mission schools. This education was very basic. It was limited to reading, arithmetic and writing in English and Afrikaans and biblical studies. Again the aim was simply to "civilize" the natives, and prepare them for a life of slavery. Eventually in 1915, a new curriculum for the Africans was introduced, which merely added industrial training to the old curriculum. Gradually, black education became more "advanced" as more students enrolled and progressed to secondary and even tertiary levels.

In 1948, the National Party came into power and introduced the policy of apartheid that was designed to treat races separately and unequally. In 1953 education was used as a political weapon by the

National Party to ensure that the Black people remained oppressed. Dr H F Verwoerd, the Minister of Native Affairs in 1953, said,

" When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them."
(Christie, 1985, 12)

The curriculum was designed by whites following such a philosophy of education. The aim was to domesticate the natives. Education was not compulsory for them. The black children were deliberately discouraged from schooling by the exorbitant school fees they were required to pay, the expensive text books, stationery and uniforms. The government it seemed preferred them to remain uneducated, so that they could fulfil positions in the unskilled labour force. This philosophy becomes transparent when one scrutinises the curriculum at the time.

The curriculum emphasised subjects that would not prepare learners to move into the skilled arena of the labour force. Subjects like science and technology were either not on the curriculum or not emphasised as significant. Arts and Christian religion was encouraged. The teachers basically lectured to the learners uncritically from textbooks designed by white Afrikaners. Aspects of history were presented in history textbooks purely from the point of view of the white Afrikaner. The "Great Trek" for example, described the hardships and struggles of the whites in their efforts to fend

off attacks by the natives of South Africa. That the natives were merely defending their rights to their lands which belonged to them for centuries from white foreigners was a view that was never presented. The impression created was one of the whites fighting off black savages heroically. Students were never presented with tasks to question the texts. Teachers too were not allowed to question or draw learners attention to content matter. Content was to be accepted as fact (Dean, et al. 1983).

As the years went by, learners were lead to believe that they knew nothing, and that their teachers knew it all. Children were seen as empty vessels that needed to be filled. They could not question or criticise anything. Indoctrination was accepted as education. The curriculum was set by the state department and had to be followed strictly. It was an offence to deviate from the curriculum handed down from the department as it signified that the teacher was protesting against the state and this was illegal. Teachers who attempted such curriculum activity were treated as political enemies and dealt with as such. School inspectors were sent into the schools to enforce the principles of the oppressive regime. The curriculum served as a means of controlling the lives and the career opportunities of the oppressed masses.

White education was free and encouraged. The curriculum included a whole range of subjects to ensure that upon graduation, white children were prepared to enter the labour force as skilled workers. The underlying philosophy behind the syllabi in white education was

to lead white children to believe that they were superior to blacks. The curriculum was designed so that white learners were allowed to participate in the classroom, but only to certain degree, to ensure that they did not attempt to criticise the government in any way. The norm was to believe in their superiority and that the non-whites were inferior. Whites who dared to question the principles of apartheid was treated as traitors and silenced.

However, by the 1970's opponents of apartheid from all race groups had begun to speak out against apartheid education and the inequalities that existed. Black parents and their children began to protest against this education for domestication that was designed for them by the oppressive regime. The black Consciousness movement rejected apartheid in general and apartheid education in particular. The black people began to speak out for themselves. The white government, however decided to make their course difficult by arresting and detaining protestors, and altering the curriculum to make acquiring a real education an even greater difficulty. In 1975/6 the curriculum was altered in certain areas, so that black children were to receive instruction through the medium of Afrikaans. The government dictated a new policy which stated that black schools located close to white Afrikaner communities would have to receive instruction in subjects like mathematics and science in Afrikaans. The black children were already disadvantaged as they were struggling to cope with learning English as a second language and Afrikaans as a third language. Learning subjects like science and mathematics through the medium of English was considered

difficult already. Introducing this new ruling was clearly aimed to make the lives of the black children more difficult and sabotage their progress in education. This motive to ensure that black children do not progress in these two fields he was so obvious and infuriated the Black children so much that they gathered together in protest. This led to the 1976 Soweto uprising and subsequent killings. The school curriculum became a key site of the struggle for freedom and equality.

Parents in the black community were forced to take a stand with their children in the rejection of apartheid education. These people realised that apartheid education was designed to subjugate them and desperately sort ways to reform it. The black leaders tried to discuss changes in black education with the white education officials. However, such talks did not satisfy the black community, as the kind of changes they sought, in terms of equalising funds and resources and the substance of the curriculum were not forthcoming. They realised that education was being used to propagate apartheid, racism and capitalism. (Christie, 1985)

Recognising that education was the only avenue to a better life and liberation, they introduced the idea of People's education, in the 1980's, which was articulated in such slogans as, " People's Education for People's Power," and "Education for Liberation". The curriculum for People's Education was designed by blacks for blacks, the aim being to achieve emancipation through education. 'Alternative Education' which was organised by white business

people, who appeared to be making changes, was rejected as the curriculum was considered to be of no real value to the conscientised blacks. They found that alternative education did not address real issues that concerned their situation. Alternative education consisted of programs that claimed to be better than the education in public schools. However upon close scrutiny it became clear to many that it merely attempted create the impression that education and politics were separate and that politics should not interfere with educational matters. Such a philosophy was rejected by the black people and so was alternative education. The following quotes succinctly portrays the philosophy behind 'Alternative Education' and 'People's Education' curriculum :

"The fashionable concept of 'alternative education' has become a misnomer, acting as a blank cheque to wealth and status. Even big business uses it in its own programmes... We the NECC counterpose to such notions the concept of 'People's Education'. Our position is that since education as we have known it has been used as a tool of oppression, 'People's Education' will be an education that must help us to achieve people's power. 'People's Education' is therefore decidedly political and partisan with regard to oppression and exploitation... 'People's education is fundamentally different from the 'alternative education' programs that shun the reality of the conflict in South Africa and in some cases have an hidden agenda of the

depoliticization of education and the creation of an apolitical black middle class. In reality, of course, these hidden agendas and intentions have a blatant political purpose: the defence of the present situation. People's Education by contrast becomes an integral part of the struggle for a non-racial, democratic South Africa." (Mashamba, 1992, 43/44)

At this stage 'People's Education' was more important as a political symbol and its details were rather vague. The struggle for education had become a political struggle as well and this struggle continued, with changes to the curriculum being made by defiant black politicians and conscientised black educators. One of the most significant changes that black politicians and black educators demanded was the inclusion of black history in history textbooks. They wanted the history of the native people of this country to be portrayed from their point of view. They wanted the role that they played in history to be presented truthfully. Also, the curriculum should include subjects that would prepare black students for more than just menial labour. Science and mathematics had to be accorded more significance and encouraged more instead of subjects like biblical studies. Developing students' critical awareness was viewed as vital.

However, up until 1994, despite this resistance, in many schools the power of the state apparatuses meant that the school syllabus was treated as a bible. Every section in the syllabus had to be

completed. Consequently, the teachers were in a constant rush to "complete the syllabus". This momentum determined the nature of the curriculum. The school curriculum was very rigid. The teacher knew everything and would 'educate' the learner who was treated as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge. The learner could not question the teacher or contribute, as this was equivalent to insulting the teacher who was considered the all-knowing being. Here teaching was defined by the teacher standing before the class and basically lecturing to the children rather than teaching them.

There was no such thing as that of sharing knowledge, discussions or groupwork. Once the teacher was satisfied that the lesson was "taught", the teacher would set tests to assess whether the learner had learnt and understood the lesson. Here assessment involved the learners memorising and regurgitating the same information that was presented to them in the form of a lesson. Monthly tests and quarterly examinations were set where the learner was required to remember volumes of work. Intelligence was assessed by the amount of work one could remember, which really only tests one's short term memory capacity.

The textbooks that were prescribed portrayed a view of the world, that the government wanted learners to accept and believe as true. Content was carefully designed by white Afrikaans speaking males to ensure that there was a distinct Christian National flavour to it. (Dean et al, 1983). It was always the whiteman's point of view that was portrayed and both whites and non-whites were required to study

the life stories of white pioneers and heroes. The other race groups of this country did not appear to have a history, but were portrayed as hindrances in the efforts of the white heroes to survive in this land, according to these textbooks.

Non-whites, were forced to learn Afrikaans as a second language. The various mother tongues of the blacks were not considered significant enough to be taught in schools. Although, music formed part of the curriculum, it was either English or Afrikaans music. Even the morning prayer was either in English or Afrikaans. The curriculum was designed such that it attempted to socialise all the non-white people of this country along the lines of a Christian National Education (CNE). This was the quality of education that most young people received under the leadership of the National Party.

THE PRESENT

With the shift in political power in 1994 came many significant changes in education. The era of Afrikaner Nationalism came to an abrupt end when the African National Congress lead the government. The latter began to make changes in education. These changes served to bring about some sense of equality both in terms of the distribution of resources and the revision of the past syllabi. It is stated in the White paper of 1995 for example that,

"The Constitution guarantees equal access to basic education for all. The satisfaction of this guarantee must be the

basis of policy. It goes well beyond the provision of schooling. It must provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how and at what pace they learn." (Department of Education, 1995: 15/16)

" Educational and management processes must ... put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs." (Department of Education, 1995 :15)

This led to official approval of changes in approaches to teaching in the classroom. Learners were now encouraged to debate, analyse and criticise, while at the same time use their personal experiences to understand and make meaning of the knowledge that they were confronted with.

Policy in the White Paper of 1995 provided a framework so that teachers were less restricted and were suddenly granted the opportunity to use the syllabi as a guide only. Circulars were sent to schools that offered teachers guidance as to the scope and degree to which they could now use the syllabi in each subject area. A more general circular (KZN Circular No: 3/95) entitled: **'IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERIM SCHOOL PHASE CURRICULA/PHASE PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS ...'** clearly allows teachers the academic freedom to choose aspects from the syllabi they felt were of interest and significance to their contexts. Teachers were encouraged not to focus on completing

volumes of work, but rather to concentrate on the quality of teaching and strive to improve this. Further, teachers were finally acknowledged as people with judgement and insight, when they were instructed to first determine where their learners were academically and proceed from there. There was less pressure on teachers and learners to strive towards goals laid out by unseen officials.

There were no unreasonable inspectors demanding explanations that teachers did not really pay attention to anyway. Lessons could now be aimed at developing the learners to think and question critically, to analyse and discuss as well as to solve problems both independently and within groups. Whereas in the past groupwork was discouraged on the pretext that the noise displayed lack of discipline, now groupwork was being encouraged in all subject areas. Curriculum designers were busy designing workbooks that assisted the teacher to include more lessons where groupwork was employed. SACHED Trust is an example of an organisation that was at this time engaged in creating workbooks designed to make teaching more exciting and creative. These workbooks also began producing workbooks, charts and textbooks that took into account the multicultural nature of South Africa and included aspects that related to all race groups. Previously materials were designed from a white eurocentric perspective only and were unrelated to the South African context.

Teachers were officially not allowed to engaged in any sort of indoctrination. The 'jug-mug' approach to teaching and learning was to be discarded as it was now considered backward and unacceptable.

present grade. With this system it was very difficult for a learner to fail a grade unless his or her marks were too poor.

CONCLUSION

Although, I have been using the past tense in describing education and the school curriculum in the latter part of this chapter, we are at the present moment following the system just described. It is only the grade one teachers in schools who are not, as they were instructed by the department of education this year, 1998, to employ the new out-comes based approach to teaching and learning. The existing curriculum has not caused any group in South Africa to protest against it. Having combined all education departments to form one unitary system that would serve all of South Africa's people equally, the present government had satisfied everyone's educational needs. Or so it seemed, until we were suddenly introduced to out-comes based education in 1997, and told that this was a new curriculum that would be practised from 1998. The new curriculum was called Curriculum 2005, as the new approach would be fully realised in all grades in South African schools by the year 2005. What is out-comes based education? I examine this in chapter three of this paper. Clearly, there is a great deal of overlap between out-comes based education and the changes that took place in education post 1994.

CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICS OF CURRICULUM CHANGE IN THE NEW S.A.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of any change to a school curriculum should be to make it more efficient in terms of the desired goals of education. There must be a need for any change if it is to be taken seriously by educators. It should serve to bring about improvements and progress that serve to inspire the implementors. Any planned change must be considered worthwhile and progressive by the implementors in order for them to want to implement the changes or innovations. Before initiating or introducing change, change agents (innovators of change or initiators of change) should first attempt to change their own ways of thinking about change and innovation. Changes in ones thinking and in one's attitude is necessary for one to be able to actually become engaged in curriculum changes and or innovations. A change in attitude is necessary if one wants to capture the essence of change in practice.

CURRICULUM CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

almost always born of some political strategy. As South Africa's political history has progressed the curriculum has altered accordingly.

THE POLITICS FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION

Today, the economic arena imposes a great deal of pressure on the curriculum to prepare learners to enter the employment market. The changing South African economy has lead to a demand for changes within the school curriculum. Since the school is considered as the epicentre of any society, the focus is on schools to prepare the youth to function effectively in the economic arena. South Africa is no exception, as the focus is on making changes in the system of education in an attempt to uplift society as a whole. The new government in South Africa started their vision of social and economic reform by beginning with the schools. This meant major changes to the school curriculum. These changes are designed to create a generation of youth that are highly skilled, yet well informed and critical. According to the Department of education,

"Education and training are central activities of our society. They are of vital interest to every family,

community and to the health and prosperity of our national economy. The government's policy for education and training is, therefore, a matter of national importance second to none." (From Curriculum 2005 Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century, 1997 : 4)

The major innovation that was introduced in S.A in 1998 was outcomes based education (hereafter OBE). OBE means that changes must be made across the curriculum. Both teachers and learners are directly involved. However, unlike the previous curriculum innovations it demands changes in the thinking and role of the South African parent. The latter has to take a more active role now than before. The South African teacher also has to learn to think and teach in a whole new way.

The decision to introduce OBE in all schools in 1998 was also due to political pressures to bring about changes in education. This was due to the feeling among many people that, despite the post 1994 changes described in chapter one, our education system was still the same as that of the apartheid era. The curriculum and mode of teaching was felt to be lacking. A whole new system of teaching and learning was needed to satisfy politicians desire for drastic change that would eradicate all traces of the past education system that they felt was designed to render the black people to a life of tamed servitude and poverty. Lifelong Learning through a National

curriculum Framework document is based on the aims of the government as set out in the White Paper on Education and Training (1995). The government's objectives and vision is captured succinctly in the following quotation from a later document,

" A prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice." (Department of Education Foundation Phase Policy Document, 1997, 1)

OBE is viewed as the system of education that would serve the needs of all people in the new South Africa. OBE was adopted by politicians as it was seen by them to be the only way to recreate the school curriculum to disengage society from the chains of apartheid education. The Department of Education states that,

" In the past the curriculum has perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and has emphasised separateness, rather than common citizenship nationhood. It is therefore imperative that the curriculum be restructured to reflect the values and principles of our new democratic society." (Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) Policy Document, 1997 : 1)

In an attempt to help to transform society as a whole, it seems that South Africa has opted to accomplish this by transforming our education system. The nature of outcomes based education implies that there are influences of the economic sector as well. Our economy needs to be improved by an influx of skilled labour. OBE focuses less on content and more on general skills education. The option for the latter is to ensure that learners acquire the ability to create new knowledge, develop their skills and to attain the potential to work well both independently as well as in groups, in the real world of the work place. A general skills education approach instils in the learner and in the teacher the valuable quality that learning and teaching never comes to an end, but rather continues throughout life. According to the Director-General of Education, Dr Chabani Manganyi,

“ The human resource development programme must expand the way in which people are able to acquire learning and qualifications of high quality. Owing to the growing concern about the effectiveness of traditional methods of teaching and training, which are currently still content based, standards will in the future be defined in terms of learning outcomes. New, flexible and appropriate curricula are needed that cut across traditional divisions of skills and knowledge.” (Department of Education, 1997 : 1)

Certainly this view is different from the one many teachers and learners have come to believe and accept in our society for centuries. Both teachers and learners believe that when one graduates from school, one is well educated. Tertiary education is considered as the road to specialisation in a particular field, and therefore higher education. OBE serves to present a different perspective on the issues of teaching and learning, by preparing learners in a more general way, to cope with learning, living and working. Eventually it is hoped the result will be a transformed society, when teachers start doing what OBE expects them to do and learners start to display their teachers success with the new system of teaching and learning. OBE will be discussed in detail in chapter.

Clearly education is a political issue, when one considers that it is being used as a vehicle to transform the broader society of this country. There is no doubt that in South Africa education is influenced by the present, political, social and economic spheres of the country. The change in the system of teaching and learning to OBE is really geared towards bringing about widespread social transformations that the new government considers necessary and appropriate to their political agenda. According to Salama Hendricks, a Superintendent in the Department of Education,

" The Department recognises the constitutional imperative of advancing not only the development of political democracy but also of economic democracy. (Hendriks, 1997 : 27)

THEORIES OF CURRICULUM CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF IMPLEMENTORS

Although, on the surface, change is often thought of as positive and good, this may not necessarily be the case. Change can be sometimes more detrimental than one may expect. It can sometimes cause stagnation, dissatisfaction and chaos. Therefore before implementing or introducing changes, change agents (government agents, teachers, politicians, or any or initiators of change and innovation) must first ascertain whether those who will be directly involved think that the change is necessary, appropriate and worthwhile. Consultation is therefore a vital factor that should be placed at the top of the list of criteria to be taken into account before the change agents take any action. So the important questions are, according to Fullan:

"...who benefits from the change, and
how sound or feasible is the idea and approach."
(Fullan, 1982, 13)

The other questions are, whose ambitions are being fulfilled and can the approach be implemented effectively in the varying contexts that make up the country, in this case South Africa? These questions aim to foreground the fact that change agents should ensure that any form of curriculum change or innovation that is introduced does not have the opposite effect to the one that they were intended to have. Any change or innovation should therefore be carefully deliberated before any steps are taken to have it implemented.

Deliberations on curriculum change should include representatives of the actual implementors. The success of the change would depend on the implementors view and impressions of the innovation. Whether the change is self-imposed or imposed by an external agent, within schools, the teachers, who are the implementors can actually work to make the changes a reality. When change is introduced by an external agent, it becomes a more challenging task to bring those changes to fruition, as this is totally dependent upon the teacher-practitioner. The latter is more likely to eagerly become engaged in the changes when they have been consulted and their views taken seriously. Consultation means actually looking at the needs and circumstances of the teacher in the classroom, not merely talking to non-practising educationists steeped in rhetoric, with idealised views concerning curriculum change.

It would stand to reason that before introducing any innovation the

change agent must consider the possibilities of it being workable within the context it is intended for. Do the circumstances make it a feasible prospect? Will the practitioners be able to obtain the resources to operate in this new paradigm? Does the environment serve to retard rather than encourage practice? Are the implementors or teacher-practitioners equipped with the skills and knowledge to operate in this paradigm efficiently? What kinds of strategies are the change agents going to embark on to assist educators to interact meaningfully and function effectively in the new paradigm?

The aim of change is to provide new solutions to old problems as well as introduce new and better ways of realising goals. Change should therefore serve to improve our efficiency and make one more effective at what one does best. Unless change agents prepare the implementors adequately to function in the changing environment and provide them with the resources or the skills to produce the necessary resources, their attempts may fail hopelessly. Therefore change agents need to take cognisance of the peculiarities of each context before actually introducing a new innovation or paradigm shift. As the important thing is to ensure that changes intended to improve do not actually have a counter effect. Fullan (1982) examines the school reform movement in the 1970's in the United States of America and states that,

" ... the reason the reform movement failed was "the fact that its prime movers were distinguished university scholars"; ... they show that well intentioned, intelligent university authorities and "experts" on education can be dead wrong. The reforms failed because of faulty and overly abstract theories not related or relatable to practice, limited or no contact with or understanding with the school..." (Fullan, 1982 : 18)

Although many may argue that the time is right for educational changes in South Africa, the environment within which these changes or reforms are to take place may not be prepared or ready for the implementation of the reform. Teachers may not be adequately informed and trained, basic resources maybe lacking and the entire project may not have been well planned and executed by the change agents. according to Hopkins et al,

"If the implementor is not in charge, and the materials are conspicuously lacking, as in many situations in England and Wales at present, then the implementation becomes far more problematic." (Hopkins et al, 1994, 25).

Theoretically, change may seem unproblematic for the intended context but when put into practice unforeseen problems crop up,

causing the project to fail. OBE in South Africa is an innovation introduced by the ANC led government with the intention of significantly reforming a very traditional and out-moded curriculum.

These change agents are however, ignoring the realities of the educational context and are going to be faced with the problems later, once the excitement at having introduced the change wears off and reality sets in. Consequently those who this change is intended to benefit the most may not benefit as expected. According to Fullan,

"Desirable goals and good intentions are not sufficient.

The plans and details of implementation are frequently unattended to or their importance underestimated. Reforms which explicitly purport to improve the life chances of the least advantaged groups in society may fail to make a difference, either because on closer examination these groups do not really benefit, or because the plans and resources necessary to accomplish implementation are not adequate to the task." (Fullan, 1982, 22).

There are different strategies of curriculum innovation. Bishop (1986: 15) describes four models used to describe curriculum change.

- The Research, Development and Diffusion Model (R,D and D), is often also referred to as a 'top-down' approach to innovation. In this model the change is initiated by some central agency and then introduced to the rest of the target audience, who is expected to implement the innovation without question. It is a very well organised, systematic and rational model.

- In the Social Interaction Model change is more incidental, as people learn from each other both in formal and informal settings. The success of this model is due to personal interest of the people involved. It is considered as a more natural process.

- In the Participative Problem-Solving Model the change is introduced by the people themselves to improve their own situation. Often there is a need for these people to attempt to bring about a change to solve some problem that is peculiar to their context. The problem is solved by the individuals concerned whether it is in a school, a community or just one person. It is a bottom-up approach that stems from a grassroots level. According to Bishop (1986) represents this strategy in the following manner:

- Need -> Diagnosis -> Search for solutions -> select the best alternative -> Try out and evaluate the innovation -> Implement the innovation." (Bishop, 1986, 19)
-
- The Linkage Model is when agencies intervene to assist individuals in the process of innovation. These agencies are situated away from the school and acts as a mediator, rendering assistance through workshops, seminars, in-service courses, and related activities designed to assist teachers.
-
- Power-Coercive Strategies is employed in instances where individuals or groups such as the government, education authorities, inspectors, headmasters, teachers, etc who have political, legal, administrative and economic power and resources to impose power, (Bishop 1986). It is often used where there is a need for efficiency or to overcome inertia.

Outcomes based education it seems would fall into the R,D and D model and can easily be classified as an example of a Power-Coercive Strategy. It is a top-down policy that was introduced and enforced by the central government in South Africa. Outcomes-based education falls very neatly into this model, when one considers the way in which the South African government had appointed a team to plan and develop this innovation, to test out the innovation in

selected pilot schools in 1997 and prepared educators via workshops, conferences and literature to implement it in all grade one classrooms in 1998. Such an approach has both its advantages and disadvantages. It is a good approach to introduce innovation that has to be implemented country-wide. However, teachers do not have a choice to decide whether to adopt it or not as, given such an opportunity, they may never adopt it at all. When time is of the essence then such a model is very effective. It ensures uniformity in the schools of the country and allows for easy movement of students. However, such a model could result in what Bishop refers to as:

" ... 'mechanical' or 'superficial' conformity with the directive... power-coercive strategies have a propensity to stir up a divine discontent." (Bishop, 1986 : 21)

This according to Bishop did happen in the IPAR project in Cameroon, because the attitude views of the inspectors and teachers were ignored. Already in South Africa there is a great deal of discontent among educators concerning the implementation of out-comes based education. (This will be elaborated upon in chapters five and six.) Yet despite teacher discontent and resistance, out-comes based education has become known to both educators and parents very rapidly. Had it not been imposed upon everyone in this country, it would not be a practice in our classrooms at this time. Some

educators would still be thinking about implementation while others would have discarded the innovation without any serious consideration.

OBE is a major change that marks a 'paradigm shift' in teaching. This shift in paradigm has been initiated by politicians in government and takes the form of a central policy that will have to be followed by all educators in all schools. This change has clearly been imposed upon schools and teachers from the centre. Contextual circumstances were not necessarily taken into account. Whether educators are ready for this change has been ignored. The views of educators from different contexts were not considered.

However, although top-down approaches are often criticised, they are often the most effective way to encourage or even enforce change. It allows for effective co-ordination and some structure and uniformity in the activities and actions of the various roleplayers, whether it is the government authorities, school officials and educationists or parents. It can be an efficient way to ensure that the central government is in control of the happenings at grassroots level. Bishop (1986,20) mentions two examples of top-down projects that were a success, namely the education project in rural Columbia and the Jombang Youth Project in Java. So top-down approaches in education can be very successful, if it is lead by individuals equipped to handle the challenge and provide support and materials

to those involved in the implementation at grassroots level.

However, top-down approaches are now being increasingly questioned, in terms of their effectiveness in eliciting curriculum change. Educators of the present are not as willing as those of the past to take orders from unseen dictators. Rather, many prefer to think of themselves as professionals and curriculum developers in their particular contexts and are unwilling to be coerced or ordered to function in particular ways in their classrooms and schools. Coercion in such circumstances can breed contempt and defiance. Bishop (1986, 21) describes an example of such an instance that occurred in the IPAR project in Cameroon as well as in Indonesia and Sierra Leone. According to Bishop, (1986),

"... in Indonesia when a radically new kind of education in which teachers 'don't really teach' and children appear to 'play' at learning was being introduced. There was mistrust, misgivings and even opposition." (Bishop, 1986: 21)

Introducing new innovations in a top-down manner can become highly problematic unless all parties participate in the process on the same level. Negotiation, understanding, shared meanings and purposes between the various agents is necessary. Bishop, (1986), points out the while top-down approaches are an easier, faster and less expensive method of making changes, he acknowledges that,

" With 'participative' approaches, change may be effected more slowly, but resistance will be less than an 'authoritarian' - 'Here it is, use it - approach. Strategies based on 'persuasion' are generally longer lasting."
(Bishop, 1986, 22)

Change that is imposed does not always work out the way that it was intended, simply because many of the people involved have a tendency to reject changes that are imposed upon them. It stands to reason that no critical thinking individual wants to be forced to do something. There is also a danger that some may attempt the change only because it is being imposed and then deliberately try to subvert it by either not seeing it through like it should be or altering it to suit their own personal agenda. Frustrations can intensify when the implementors of imposed changes feel that their own particular circumstances were not taken into account, especially when they fall into the category of being in a disadvantaged context.

The situation deteriorates when in the early stages the change agents presents workshops, aids and other training to assist the implementors and then suddenly begins to lose interest and pays less attention to the activities in the schools. The practitioners operating in the new paradigm begin to stagnate and eventually revert back to their old trusted modes of teaching and learning. To

ensure that this does not happen in South Africa, the politicians responsible for initiating this shift in our paradigm of education must constantly work to ensure that interest is not lost, and that the needs of teacher-practitioners are always catered for and not ignored. The change agents (innovators or initiators of an innovation) must always engage with the practitioners to ensure that they are functioning effectively with adequate resources and in the proposed manner. Fullan, echoes this view when he states that,

"...there is a strong tendency for people to adjust to the 'near occasion' of change, by changing as little as possible - assimilating or abandoning changes which they have initially been willing to try, fighting or ignoring imposed change." (Fullan, 1982 : 29)

Besides taking into consideration the needs of teachers, it is vitally important that the change agents take into account the effect that their changes will have on the learners in different contexts. The change may work well for one set of learners in one context, yet prove ineffective to another group of learners emerging from a different context. This can be a dangerous reality within the South African context, because of our unique case of diversity in culture, lifestyle and values, as well as our history of deprivation and inequity both in education and life in general. According to

Fullan,

" New curricula emphasize the importance of being sensitive to where students are, what they think and why, but these curricula are often introduced in a way which ignores what teachers think and why."

(Fullan, 1982 : 119)

Fullan (1982) describes open education, which in essence is really OBE, in North America, which can be cited as an example of an innovation that did not work as it did not benefit all learners. It failed because the innovators did not take into consideration the needs of all learners. Sharp and Green (1975) cited in Fullan (1982) found that open education did not prove beneficial to lower class children and children who were not intrinsically motivated to perform well at school. This study then indicates that an innovation will have differing impacts on children from different contextual backgrounds. If such studies are to teach us to learn from our past errors in judgement, then politicians and economists need to take such findings into account before making decisions that encompass all children under the same umbrella.

Curriculum change in the new South Africa should be a gradual, realistic enterprise geared towards empowering teachers and learners to succeed and progress meaningfully within their contexts.

Fundamental to achieving this is to assist teachers to conceptually understand what they are going to be doing and why, and then encouraging them to develop their skills and ability to teach better and produce curriculum materials. For teachers to become dedicated to the changes being introduced in their midst, they must believe in what they are doing and this can only take place over time, therefore, gradual change is more beneficial than sudden changes that demand immediate implementation.

Otherwise there is the danger of teachers attempting to practice in the new mode by using inappropriate materials and resources. This may create the impression that they are operating in the new paradigm, but are really barely skimming the surface. Therefore it is important that change agents realise that change is a process, and processes take time. Gradual changes allow the teachers, learners and parents to accept that the changes taking place are part of the process of learning and progress. Accepting the process of change is part of the process that they need to undergo in order to benefit from changes.

Therefore the Planned Linkage Strategy which includes aspects of the Research, Development and Diffusion Model, the Social Interaction/Diffusion Model and the Participative Problem-Solving Strategy would appear to be a more effective approach for South Africa. The advantage that this strategy has is that here there are

links between the centres of educational change and the users. All parties involved in the process of change collaborate together. (Bishop, 1986 : 20) Agencies such as teachers' centres, resource centres and educational institutes provide educators with support, advice, resources, in-service courses, workshops, seminars, support committees and groups and opportunities to meet departmental officials. In this way educators are provided with a stronger support system and are able to grasp the process of change better and become personally involved in the process. The whole experience seems less top-down. It allows educators to relate the innovation to their own context. Here there is more time for the implementors to assimilate the process of change and accept the innovation with less resistance as the support system is stronger.

THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Looking at our recent past, when the apartheid government dictated what should be taught and how it should be taught, in a thoroughly top-down approach, it was hoped that the new democratic government would be more progressive in their thinking and approach to curriculum change. However, it seems that instead of realistically taking into consideration the needs of teachers and learners, the politicians in charge would rather selfishly function at their own pace than that of the people they should be serving. Since the aim

of curriculum change and innovation was to improve learner outcomes, OBE as a process of innovation has been fundamentally top-down and its time table politically driven to achieve the ideological ambitions of the politicians. This view is shared by Professor Jonathan Jansen who asserts in a paper entitled: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes Based Education that,

" ... OBE is primary an attempt to push forward something innovative into schools at all costs in order to reclaim political credibility for a Ministry of Education which is still charged, within and outside of government, with having delivered little concrete evidence of transformation in the schools. Not a single official interviewed in the Department of National Education believed that OBE should be introduced so soon; yet they all work feverishly towards implementation at all costs in 1998. There is no other way of understanding such behaviour outside of a political analysis of state and curriculum in the South African transition." (Jansen, 1997)

CONCLUSION

Curriculum 2005 is a very ambitious project for a country still adjusting to the many changes since becoming a democracy. Such a curriculum change takes a great deal of time to be properly and successfully implemented. Attempting to implement it now when teachers are struggling to cope with unreasonably large teacher - pupil ratios, lack of vital necessities and learner disinterest is sure to guarantee its failure. OBE is not just a curriculum innovation, but rather it implies a shift in the South African educational paradigm. Therefore the changes that it implies are profound and need to be carefully considered and understood by teacher-practitioners, parents and learners. This requires time, preparation, capital, resources and suitably qualified educators.

However, teachers have not been granted time to assimilate all the changes that are happening around them, to allow it to happen within them. The rush to implement the new curriculum, leaves one with no time to think, analyse and criticise. How does this process separate itself from the conservative curriculum practices of the past? How

are teachers to succeed in this new paradigm if they are not given the opportunity to truly engage with it and assimilate its principles and practices as teachers should before attempting a new and different approach. Unless this happens, such externally introduced curriculum innovations will not be sincerely attempted and eventually these innovations will simply lie dormant in their documents, rather than exist as an active tool of change in innovation.

Teachers view curriculum change personally, as it affects them in many different ways. Teachers need to understand how the changes will affect them in their classroom work, in terms of lesson preparation, actual teaching, assessment, upgrading their knowledge and skills, further training and the new work load, in relation to that they already have. Change introduced by government officials does not always take into consideration how it will affect teachers and all that they have to deal with as educators, besides the actual task of teaching. The complexities that educational change creates in the world of the teacher is captured in the following quotation by Hopkins et al,

" Educational change is, then, a complex phenomenon that involves a chain of events over time leading from policy, through to the local context and the

interpretation of policy, to classroom action before it can hope to have any impact on the achievement of the students." (Hopkins et al, 1994, 25)

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT IS OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

WHY OBE WAS INTRODUCED?

✓ The new South African government after 1994 seemed to be determined to change the entire system of education in South Africa. The curriculum changed considerably when the African National Congress came into power. Textbooks were revised. Syllabus guidelines were revised and handed to teachers allowing them more latitude in the classrooms. Critical thinking and problem-solving was emphasised, so that strong minded, critical and empowered learners could enter society. These were the initial, quick changes designed to bring about rapid changes to mark the takeover of the new government.

“...the Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee decided to consider short-term syllabus revisions as one means of intervening in the education crisis.” (Jansen, 1997a : 2)

The interim changes that were introduced in 1994 were welcomed by teachers, parents and learners as it was seen to be propagating principles that most agreed with. This led to changes in content, teaching approaches, assessment and certification in 1995 when it was decided that an outcomes based education was to be the approach to future education and training in South Africa and that it was to be realised in the projected Curriculum 2005. It was an attempt by

the government to further improve the educational and training opportunities of the people. This new approach to teaching and learning was designed to adapt the school curriculum to meet the changing nature of this country. According to the Minister of Education, Professor S.M.E. Bengu,

" Curriculum 2005 will begin to integrate education and training, and incorporate a view of learning that marries academic and applied knowledge and skills. It will produce learners who are creative and critical thinkers, ready to take their places in society." (**The Daily News Supplement**, 20:10:97)

✓ Outcomes based education is concerned to achieve desired outcomes. It is practical and concerned with what people can do rather than how much they know. OBE has been linked to the work of such scholars as B.F. Skinner, Benjamin Bloom, Ralph Tyler. (Jansen, 1997a: 66) The emphasis here moves away from the content-based approach to teaching and learning. The difference between this new outcomes based system and the old content-based system is that in the latter students were required to memorise volumes of information which they then regurgitated in formal examinations. The effectiveness of outcomes based education in comparison to content-centred education is that the former is concerned with developing the practical abilities of all students and hence display evidence of the desired outcomes. ✓ Spady, for example, asserts that OBE,

✓ "means having all students learn well, not just the fastest the brightest, or the most advantaged." (Spady, 1988 : 10)

✓ The familiar content based approach to education did not serve to equip students with practical skills and knowledge to function effectively after leaving school, as the focus was on content not applicable to practical life. (Unofficial Department Document, 1995)

✓ The aim of curriculum 2005 is to create an education system that would produce learners who are confident, critical, creative, active thinkers, problem solvers and inventors of knowledge. Learning is viewed as an act of discovery and enjoyment. Failure is considered as a 'stepping stone to success'. This system is designed to prepare learners to function in real life effectively and therefore advocates lifelong learning. It is geared towards addressing the inequalities and inequities of the prejudiced past and present system of education. Curriculum 2005 achieves that by changing the approach to teaching and learning in South African schools to an outcomes based approach. (Unofficial Department Document, 1995)

UNDERSTANDING OBE

Many people at this point in time are trying to understand what OBE really means. Educators especially are grappling to find out exactly what outcomes based education is. From the time I began working on

this paper I discovered that the topic, outcomes based education, was not very popular among educators, many of whom either did not know what it was really all about or were only vaguely aware of what it was. Sharma Bhikha, a general science and biology teacher at Durban Girl's Secondary School, conducted a survey which indicated that,

" Of the random sample of 50 teachers who were interviewed, 45 did not know what OBE is, they had not heard about it and knew nothing about it. All the teachers, I may add, were qualified teachers, all were graduates amongst whom were honours and masters graduates." (in Goolam and Khumalo, 1997, 51)

I personally could not get anyone to explain what it was to me in 1997, therefore I decided to base my dissertation on the subject. I finally discovered this definition, which is that of the Department of Education and Culture:

✓ "...a learner-centred, results-orientated system founded on the belief that all learners can learn." (Vermaak, 1996)

✓ The aim of OBE then it seems is to define what learners are to learn. Here clearly defined outcomes describe exactly what learners should be able to do after a series of lessons. These outcomes are learner-centred and focus on skills and context. The teacher's task is to facilitate learning towards the achievement of these outcomes. Learning is designed to take into consideration the needs, interests

and the level of each individual learner. The learner will often be an active participant during the lesson. Each lesson should allow the learner to either gain knowledge from experience or use previous experience to make sense of the task. Each lesson is considered a unit of learning. The learner is then assessed on each unit separately. Learner progress is assessed upon demonstrate achievement. A learner's achievement of outcomes and ability to apply learning rather than content is emphasised. Learners progress to the next grade is according to their achievement of the relevant outcomes. The emphasis is on individual achievement rather than competition. According to Professor Sibusiso Bengu,

"...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 and orientations needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training. Its guiding vision is that of a thinking, competent future citizen."

(from Curriculum 2005, Lifelong learning for the 21st century)

In OBE the teacher has to accomodate each learner's needs through multiple teaching and learning methods and assessment strategies. Teachers become facilitators who facilitate the learning process by reflecting upon and analysing whether the needs of the learner are actually being met.

One of the tenets of OBE is that the teacher has to ensure that every learner is allowed the time and assistance to realise his or her potential. Here learners are to strive to become responsible for their own learning, to make proper decisions in relation to their learning and to become more capable at assessing themselves. The learner is allowed as much time as necessary to achieve any one outcome. The learner is encouraged to seek as much assistance as he or she may require to achieve an outcome.

OBE seems to be based on the underlying assumption that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn. This assumption is questionable, as there exist students, who for psychological, cognitive, physical reasons, especially those from lower income backgrounds, are not commonly intrinsically motivated in school.

The main principles underlining OBE it seems are its emphasis on ends and purposes, that is, what learners ought to know and be able to do, ensuring that the goals of education and expectations thereof are clear and changing the focus of educators from teaching to learning. The focus of learning demands a responsibility of the learners that is new, while changing the pressure upon teachers, as students assume more accountability. According to Bill Spady,

" A profound paradigm shift towards OBE is the realisation that the ends are clearly defined and the means variable, rather than the ends variable and the means clearly defined." (**The Daily News**, 25 June 1998).

✓The teacher-facilitator in OBE organise the knowledge, competencies and qualities that they expect learners to demonstrate as outcomes. Learners are then to be provided with the learning opportunities to achieve these outcomes. These outcomes are considered achieved when the learner is able to demonstrate this to them in real life experiences. Once the outcome is demonstrated, the teacher-facilitator can safely assume that the learner has gained understanding and therefore learn't something new. But then how can one know this for certain. Individuals are unique. Each learner may take different amounts of time before outcomes are displayed.

OUTCOMES

There are three different kinds of outcomes in OBE that every educator needs to understand. These are 'critical outcomes', 'specific outcomes' and 'learning area outcomes'. Critical outcomes are also termed essential outcomes or critical cross field outcomes. There are eight critical outcomes which apply to all the learning areas and are applicable across the curriculum. They describe the fundamental abilities and those aspects that learning should aim towards. These outcomes were formulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). It is meant to be used as a guide to classroom methodology. Each critical outcome would begin with words that are directed at considering the expected achievement or outcome of the learner.

CRITICAL OUTCOMES

There are eight critical outcomes that are demonstrable according to OBE. They demand that learners must be able:

- 1.to communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation;
2. identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking;
3. organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
4. work effectively with others in a group;
5. collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
6. use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;
7. understand that the world is a set of related systems - this means that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation;
8. show awareness of the importance of effective learning strategies, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, education and career opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities.

(Talk Out, 1998 : 4)

The learning area outcome outlines the expected result or outcome of any one learning area. These are broad outcomes which focuses on the general skills, abilities and values a learner should be able to demonstrate eventually. There are eight learning areas. These learning areas comprise of the old subjects with some new aspects. The learning area outcomes contain several specific outcomes, which inform the teacher's lesson preparation.

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

The specific outcomes outlines the expected result of a 'specific' or one particular learning program. It refers to a particular skill or type of knowledge, attitude or skill that a learner should acquire from a particular lesson or experience. These outcomes should be achieved by the learner relatively quickly. These then form the core outcomes for each new lesson or task within the classroom. These outcomes aim to determine whether the learner has acquired the intended skills and or understanding of the concepts that the lesson demanded.

A teacher will have to understand the critical outcomes and learning area outcomes well before actually drawing up their specific outcomes. This is important as specific outcomes take the context into consideration. The teacher will be expected to begin the learning program in any one context by first establishing where the learners are. This means every teacher should find out what the learners know and what they are able to do. Therefore when planning lessons teachers will have to define the learning that is to be assessed and outline the criteria for success. Describing exactly what learners should be able to do and know at the end of a lesson directs the learning, teaching and assessment so that the outcome is clear.

'Specific outcome' statements must be stated so that they are clear and easily understood by both the teacher and learner. It should describe behaviours that can be assessed, observed and demonstrated. Action verbs should be used to describe specific behaviours, attitudes or values, as well as knowledge, skills and feelings. The statements should not be too narrowly defined, but rather broad enough to include everything that is expected of the learner.

The 'specific' outcomes, performance or assessment criteria and even examples of content for lessons are found in the learning program. Each learning area has a separate learning program. A learning program is very similar to a syllabus. However, while the syllabus was very rigid during the apartheid era, the learning program is much more flexible as it allows for different teachers' interpretations in different contexts. It serves as a guide where teachers can make their own decisions depending on the demands of their context rather than having to follow it religiously like the syllabi of the old regime. The learning program is therefore similar to the old schemes of work, except that this scheme is not dictated by the educational authorities, but formulated by the teacher. So teachers can now plan their own schemes of work or learning program to suit the needs of their learners rather than the needs of those in power.

LEARNING AREAS

Then there are learning areas, which is different from a learning program. There are eight different learning areas. Learning areas are similar to the old subject areas that compartmentalised knowledge. However in one learning area, there are 'subjects' with similar themes. Various old subjects and new aspects or fields are combined here to produce a more 'wholesome' curriculum for students. There are eight different learning areas. Each is composed of several related aspects. These aspects are used to form specific outcomes that can be broken down to plan lessons aimed at achieving a specific outcome. The following is a list of the eight learning areas and the related aspects that it is composed off:

a). Language, literacy and communication focuses on the main language, that is on either the first language or language of instruction and any additional language. It looks at argumentative and alternative forms of communication, information literacy and the study of language.

b). The numeracy and mathematics area aims to develop learners abilities in areas like intuition, heuristics, investigations, procedures, modelling, contextualising, collecting, organising and analysing critically, estimating, calculating, measuring, logical reasoning, visualisation and representation.

c). The economic and management science areas seeks to educate learners in aspects such as administration, economics, finance and management.

d). Natural sciences looks at the planet earth and beyond; life and the living; energy and science as well as matter and materials.

e). The human and social science area concentrates on human and social processes and organisation; as well as the environment, its resources and development; and participatory citizenship and civic education.

f). Technological sciences aims to educate learners about modern technology and equip them with a good technical education.

g). The area labelled life orientation is composed of aspects such as environmental awareness, spiritual development, personal development, health and human movement, social development and transformation and the world of work.

h). Arts and culture deals with music, art and drama.

(Talk Out, 1998 : 5)

These are the learning areas that form the basis of education in Curriculum 2005, up to the further education and training band. The aim here is to integrate knowledge, thereby eliminating the rigid divisions and compartmentalisation of knowledge, so that there

lies clear understandings and relationships between academic and applied knowledge, theory and practice, knowledge and skills, mind and body.] The plan of curriculum 2005 may seem rather complicated, yet the aim behind it is to make learning seem simpler and more relevant to our lives rather than remote and separate.

IMPLICATIONS

This new way of teaching and learning, implies several other changes that will need to take place to complement the aims of outcomes based education. One of the most significant changes involves the teacher-facilitator in the classroom engaged in implementing OBE.

The teachers will have to undergo much in-service training to learn to adjust to the new role that they will now have to play as educators. Teachers will now have to view themselves as facilitators and guides in their learners search for knowledge. In order to become efficient facilitators, teachers must be adequately trained.

This country is depending upon teachers to bring the whole idea of OBE to fruition. Educators will have to change their approach to teaching and learning in schools and this can only be achieved by empowering teachers through adequate training and maximum participation in the process. Education should now be viewed as a process that must be shared between teachers and learners and learners and learners. If teachers are to be expected to design a curriculum that suits the needs of the learners in their context,

they themselves will have to be prepared. Curriculum planning for each school and sometimes for each class will vary depending upon the needs of the learners. It will be the task of each teacher to assess the needs of their learners and then proceed to develop a curriculum to suit their context.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Exactly how this new system of education and training is intended to benefit the people of this country is clearly outlined in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). So what is the NQF?

The NQF attempts to provide all South Africans with a proper system for education and training. It is a structure designed to register national standards and qualifications. This framework integrates both education and training. It allows all South Africans the opportunity to learn irrespective of their age, circumstances and level of education or training.

It is designed to ensure that people have the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. This is accomplished by its unique system of awarding credits on a continuous basis in school and in the workplace. Its aim is to define the needs of the people and this is outlined in the 'critical outcomes' that now will inform curriculum planning in all schools. Learners will be credited for successfully achieving outcomes. As a result of the NQF learning systems have become more flexible and realistic.

It has created rules that make it possible for credits to be combined so that one can gain certification at one of the levels.

The assessment strategies are devised for the benefit of the learners so that they can be assessed and placed on a particular level irrespective of where they had acquired their training or education so long as they are able to achieve the relevant outcomes.

Formal and informal education and training is credited as learners are allowed to move to and from education and work environments.

The NQF caters for all levels of education and training, from childhood to adulthood. The NQF is made up of levels and bands that indicate one's level of achievement. It is made up of three bands and eight levels. The learner obtains a qualification as he or she passes through each level. Grade R, which is the reception year, to grade 9 forms the first level and the first band, which is called the 'General Education and Training Band' or the GET band. Grades ten to twelve forms the second, third and fourth level and the second band. This band is called the 'Further Education and Training Band', or FET band. The last four levels forms the 'Higher Education and Training Band', or the HET band, which falls mainly into the tertiary arena.

The GET band is a compulsory schooling phase which is divided into the pre-school, foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase. During these phases learners are assessed by their teachers in terms of successful outcomes. The assessment here is internal. Each school conducts their own assessment. An external examination

will be conducted at the end of grade nine. The emphasis here is on general education.

The FET band provides post-compulsory, pretertiary learning. Here academic, technical, commercial, on the job and community-based learning are integrated. Learners are assessed against unit standards. This is accomplished by registering documents with the South African Qualifications Authority, (SAQA). Assessment is internally based, except in grade 12, where there will be external moderation, and possibly an external examination. At the end of the grade 12 or level 4, a Further Education and Training Certificate is issued to learners. The Higher Education and Training band, is concerned with much higher tertiary levels of learning such as national diplomas, degrees, professional qualifications and postgraduate studies. Certification takes place here upon qualification. (**Talk Out**, 1998 : 3)

The one remarkable quality of the NQF is its flexibility and access in terms of awarding and acknowledging qualifications. It allows one to progress both vertically and horizontally within the different bands. It destroys the barrier that existed between knowledge and skills, so that the gap between the formal and informal sectors of education ceases to exist. Graduates from both sectors can now be accorded equal academic respect. But one question remains to be answered, how are learners going to be promoted to the different levels? Will there be individual promotions during the course of the year or only at the end of each year? This is a concern that Sharma Bhikha mentions,

" In terms of equity between the more capable pupils and the less capable pupils, I am apprehensive about the effect of OBE on the more capable pupils. The OBE approach requires that slower learners be re-taught and retested if competency levels are not met in their earlier efforts. ... Those pupils who gain competence in the learning activities in the first try seem to be "treading water"..." (Goolam and Khumalo, 1997 ; 54)

ASSESSMENT

In curriculum 2005, the framework for assessment is couched in terms of the critical outcomes, specific outcomes, assessment criteria and performance indicators. Specific outcomes together with assessment criteria and range statements are used for assessment within the classroom. Performance indicators make up the criteria for every single specific outcome. Assessment criteria describe what learners must know and be able to do to show that they have achieved a particular outcome. Performance indicators provide evidence that serves to form the assessment criteria for a specific outcome. They can be used as a guide to determine whether learners are actually achieving the outcomes. Range statements indicate the degree to which the outcomes must be achieved.

Assessment is viewed as continuous and should be integrated in one's teaching. The teacher should be always aware of the learners progress and development. Such continuous assessment will encourage

learners to work consistently throughout the year. This forms a true reference of the learners' abilities and offers the teacher better evidence as to the potential of the learner. The teacher will be assessing learner competence daily to determine if the learner has achieved particular outcomes as it will be during class activities that competence will become evident.

Evidence can be displayed while learners are engaged in group or individual work, discussions, in project work, written work or any other classroom activity. The aim of continuous assessment in OBE is not to become bogged down in masses of records, but rather to assist the teacher to gain insight into the learners progress, weaknesses, their learning styles and needs. It aims to empower the learner to achieve the outcomes and thus perform well. Teachers should be positive and encouraging in their comments and suggestions. Teachers should use continuous assessment to plan future lessons to encourage learners to perform better. This will help teachers to discuss with learners their progress regularly and to offer constructive advice.

The method of assessment utilised in South African schools have always been norm-referenced, where the focus was on assessing learners ability to remember volumes of work, hence emphasising quantity rather than quality. This system is designed to ensure that only a certain proportion of children pass onto the next standard or grade each year. In OBE assessment is criterion referenced, as learners are assessed according to a list of criteria that will indicate whether the learner has achieved the outcome or not. The list of criteria that teachers will be required to use are called

performance indicators in OBE. This involves observing individual learners over a short period of time to determine whether a particular specific outcome has been achieved. Assessment here is designed to take place according to the pace of the learner. The learner is to be allowed as much time as is necessary to achieve a particular outcome, so assessment will happen only when the learner displays competence. However, the teacher is expected to monitor the learners, by looking at performance indicators and structuring work accordingly, so that all learners are always engaged in progressing further. Learners rarely fail in this system.

OBE encourages learners to become actively involved in self and peer assessment. Learners should be presented with a list of performance indicators to guide self and peer assessment as well as to improve on their tasks by constantly referring to the list of criteria. The process and value of self and peer assessment should be discussed with learners, so that they become meaningfully involved in their own learning and achievements. Teachers should be constantly monitoring the entire process and guiding learners accordingly.

Peer and self assessment is a very valuable learning experience in itself. Learners learn to take responsibility for their learning and failure, rather than projecting it onto external sources. They become more involved in their learning and therefore are able to figure out their own mistakes and rectify it themselves, thereby making them more self sufficient. They become more critical and learn to reason logically and put forward convincing arguments for their actions, work and grades.

This sort of information is very useful to both the teacher and learner. However the teacher also needs to perform a summative assessment, to assess each learners level of development from time to time. The latter can be used to build a learner achievement record, to ensure that standards are the same across the country and to add to the learners credits so that they can eventually qualify for the relevant certificate.

These are nationally designed and moderated assessments which cater for each phase of schooling. All learners are required to be assessed at the end of each phase. It comprises of several groups of integrative assessment tasks concentrating on the critical outcomes. These end-of-phase assessments have several significant functions. It serves as a means of checking that every school's critical outcome reflects the needs of our society and the principles of OBE, that knowledge, skills and values from all learning areas are being integrated and related to their context. It allows one to compare standards in each school in terms of national standards, as well as to question the internal assessments of each school. It allows for schools that require assistance and further training to be easily identified.

There are an endless number of ways in which educators could conduct assessment in OBE besides the popular examination. These are some of the ways in which educators are expected to conduct assessment. Learners can do an oral presentation displaying their understanding of the task. Drama, song, dance, roleplay, verse, etc, could be use to determine whether the outcome has been achieved. Questioning

techniques and games may be used. Written reports and assignments could be used creatively to indicate understanding. Understanding can be displayed artistically through paintings, sketching drawing, etc. Learners can use posters, diagrams, graphs, etc, to explain aspects of work to the teacher and other learners. Project work can include making models and operating them to demonstrate that aspects of work has been understood.

Encouraging learners to utilise different ways of displaying their understanding, allows all learners the opportunity to develop their confidence and skills in these areas, as well as the opportunity to display their talents in any one of the areas. The different strategies makes learning exciting and serves to make assessment fair to all learners, as some are better in some of these approaches than in others.

Assessment records must designed in a way that ensures that it can be used by teachers anywhere within the country to determine where the learner is. Learner achievement records should clearly state the outcomes already achieved by learners. These will take the form of continuous assessment. Other evidences of achievement, such as projects, can be kept for record purposes. There should be reports based on the achievement of performance indicators and the critical outcomes.

OBE it seems then is an approach to teaching and learning that may seem new to some teachers and learners, while for others it may not seem unfamiliar as they have been engaged in learning situations

that are not that different. Take myself, for example, as a Speech and Drama graduate, I have encountered and engaged in teaching and learning situations, that are very similar to those advocated by the principles of OBE. The only differences lie in the terminology. If one were to take away the terminology, many would find that OBE is really not very different and quite an exciting approach to teaching and learning.

✓ CRITICISMS OF OBE (e)

The previous section described the model of OBE to be introduced in South African Schools. This section deals with some major criticisms of the implementation process. Although the content based system education has been discarded as policy in favour of OBE, one must realise that OBE cannot function in a vacuum. There must nevertheless be some content. Content gives substance and meaning to any lesson irrespective of the paradigm or approach to teaching that is used. This means that the concern should not be with content based education, but rather the manner in which content is used to educate. In fact OBE allows teachers to choose the content as influenced by their context, which could be dangerous as it now leaves the field of education open to propagate values and the ideals of both positive and negative influences in society. The choice of content by teachers therefore means that although it may serve to achieve the relevant outcomes, the result may not be that which was hoped for. Professor Jonathan Jansen, one of the key figures engaged in the OBE debate, argues that,

" Curriculum content is a critical vehicle for giving meaning to a particular set of outcomes. An outcome such as "appreciating the richness of national and cultural heritages" ... could be based on content that glorifies a narrow Afrikaner nationalism but also valorise, in another context, a militant ethnic Africanism. Content matters." (Goolam and Khumalo, 1997 : 73)

Further, after reading, Professor Jansen's paper on, Why OBE Will Fail? one wonders whether OBE is really going to be as effective as proposed. Although teachers will be presented with specific outcomes in each learning area, these outcomes can be interpreted differently by different individuals, as there are insufficiently clear guidelines in terms of the kind of social values and morals that are considered desirable. The outcomes may be achieved in terms of the intended aims, but the process of achieving these outcomes needs to be questioned, as it is during this process a great deal of educating takes place. Professor Jansen states in the following quotation,

" Of the 17 learning outcomes identified, the closest approximation of a value statement in the phrase: " participate actively in promoting a sustainable, just and equitable society" - a statement so broad as to become meaningless especially when this unpacked in specific objectives such as 'display constructive attitudes', or 'participate in debate and decision-making'. These statements could have been written for

Hawaii or Buenos Aires or Western Nigeria. They are bland and decontextualised, global statements which will make very little difference in a society emerging from apartheid and colonialism,..." (Goolam and Khumalo, 1997 :72)

It seems that the aims of OBE were not sufficiently constructed to meet the specific circumstances of South African schools.

✓ A great deal of demand is placed on the teachers limited classroom time with learners, especially in large classes of 35 to 45 learners. It makes it an impossible task, when one considers that a significant amount of classroom time is spent doing administrative tasks and dealing with learner problems. Continuous assessment of individual learners will also place more pressure on teachers and inevitably cause them to neglect to teach as they were supposed to, through no fault of their own but that of the circumstances that are the responsibility of the central government. This could result in teacher and learner disempowerment rather than empowerment and could render the aims of OBE futile. This point of view is shared by Jansen, who points out that similar problems were experienced elsewhere. He quotes Brady (1996, 13) who also maintains that OBE cannot succeed without,

"release time, aide support, smaller class sizes..." (Goolam and Khumalo, 1997 : 72)

With all the changes taking place in education presently, it is

hoped that in order to ensure that OBE does not fail, like Jansen predicts, the central government provides teachers with the necessary requisites. This may be too high an expectation as the central government is clearly aware of the difficult milieu in which they have launched OBE. They acknowledge the problems we are experiencing in education are,

✓ " ... characterised by a cycle of mediocrity, ... the infrastructure of teaching is poor, materials are in short supply, and most schools lack laboratories" (ANC Draft White Paper on Education and Training 1994)

✓ OBE seems to be based on the underlying assumption that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn. This assumption is questionable, as there exist students, who for psychological, cognitive, physical reasons, especially those from lower income backgrounds, are not commonly intrinsically motivated in school. Dr Bill Spady, a specialist in Outcomes Based Education, claims that,

✓ " In its true sense OBE works backwards from the final "outcome" - which was for students to learn successfully regardless of speed or methodology. ... A failure of the existing system was the perception by students that, once marks were allocated, the topic was "finished with", regardless of how good or bad the marks were."
(**The Daily News**, June 25, 1998)

Therefore it seems that in order for OBE to be a success in all

schools and amongst all learners, the learners themselves will have to be very committed. This makes one wonder whether this means that the proposers of OBE believe that all learners can be depended upon to become eagerly dedicated to learning in their school environments, regardless of the circumstances of that environment.

Besides how does one evaluate whether students have achieved the outcome, of appreciating a literary work in relation to connecting a three-pin plug? The former cannot be clearly observed and is also open to several possible interpretations, while the latter can be clearly observed and can be done in one way only. The former lends itself to ambiguity in OBE that the latter does not. How will the teacher know the depth or level of the learner's achievement? The whole nature of evaluation becomes an arbitrary experience. Anyway,

"...worthwhile activities have their own built-in standards of excellence, and therefore they can be evaluated according to the standards inherent in them rather than according to some end or outcome" (McKernan, 1994 : 2)

The underlying aim of OBE it seems is to create an egalitarian society, by focusing on educational transformations. (Unofficial Department Document, 1995 : 1) In order to achieve this goal the central government must plan effectively, not create contradictions in their own attempts, as this only serves to defeat the purpose of change and innovation. Professor Jansen for example, argues that,

"...there is a fundamental contradiction in insisting that

students use knowledge creatively only to inform them that the desired learning outcomes are already specified."

(Goolam and Khumalo, 1997 : 71)

✓ Whether the teachers are being adequately trained is also highly debatable. According, to Professor Jansen, research conducted in 30 grade one classes in 15 schools show that teachers were still uncertain as to how to actually implement OBE in their classrooms. This data was taken after the first four to five months of implementation in two provinces in South Africa. (**The Daily News**, 25 June 1998) This indicates the seriousness of engaging in proper curriculum planning and educator in-service training.

✓ In order to work in relation to the demands of each context, teachers will require resources. South African schools lack resources in varying degrees of seriousness as a result of the recent history of apartheid and exploitation. One of the significant questions posed by many educators and scholars is: how teachers, especially those who are not adequately trained, are to create and or obtain the necessary resources to accomplish the goal of implementing OBE. Professor Jansen asserts that OBE in a resource poor context such as ours is certain to fail. In his study of 30 grade one classrooms in 15 schools he found that,

"... the implementation contexts for black and whit schools was so "vastly unequal" that where implementation did occur, it only amplified the racial inequalities between schools." (**The Daily News**, 25 June 1998).

This new paradigm proposes that teachers work according to the pace of their learners and not according to the demand of unseen officials. The aim then with this new approach to education for life, is not to indoctrinate, but to ensure that the purposes of the people are accomplished and not those of the government. Yet the process of implementing OBE is a contradiction. It is the unseen officials who have decided that grade one teachers engage in OBE from January 1998, despite the attempts of educators to postpone the commencement date, for the simple and valid reason that the latter are not in an adequate state of readiness to implement OBE in their classrooms. Why this rush? Is this innovation being forced upon us simply as a political ploy to create the impression of doing something worthwhile? Surely it would make sense to research, create a firm foundation with patience and community support before introducing any innovation.

In order for educators to accomplish the goals of Curriculum 2005, they have to be adequately prepared to do so. Preparation involves educators understanding the concepts of OBE and training educators to implement it. Thus far a major criticism that has been used is that the language of OBE and the process of implementing OBE has created a state of crisis among educators. Jansen (1997),

"... the language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory. A teacher attempting to make sense of OBE will not only have to come to terms with more than 50 different concepts and labels but also keep track of the changes in meaning and priorities

afforded to these different labels over time ..." (Goolam and Kumalo, 1997 : 67)

The underlying argument of Jonathan Jansen (1997a), Sharma Bhikha (1997), Dr Malcolm Venter (1998) and others is that teachers need desperately to understand and train in the OBE approach before becoming involved in implementation. These scholars feel that without proper understanding and training in the OBE approach the process of implementation will not succeed.

Lorraine Singh, the Education Superintendent (Academic) of KwaZulu-Natal, discusses in a paper entitled, 'Assessment Criteria and Range Statements in OBE', the immense challenge she faced with a group of educators in an attempt to work out exactly what range statements, performance indicators, and other related terminology meant in assessment in OBE in the classroom practice. Her description of the entire experience was,

"It was a very difficult task because it is very easy to say to people: you know about your learning areas, there's your outcomes, now sit down and write the criteria. Its easier said than done. ... we all underwent a very harrowing experience and a great learning experience." (Goolam and Khumalo, 1997, 32)

If the superintendent of education describes the process of understanding the terminology in this way, it makes one wonder how the average teacher will cope with the process of understanding and engaging with it.

✓ The major drawback of continuous assessment is that it creates more burden upon the teacher to assess student progress continuously, which results in the teacher taking up so much of time doing this, that there may not be enough time left to really appreciate learner efforts or make significant progress in terms of the quantity and quality of tasks. With large classes of 35 to 45 learners, lack of time and resources the point of continuous assessment could easily be lost.

✓ Another real drawback concerns recording assessment. Teachers will have to keep rather comprehensive records of every single task that a learner had engaged in. The teacher would eventually become so bogged down in recording everything all the time, that it may cause the teacher to forget that the learner is but a unique individual, whose capacities cannot always be assessed by a series of symbols or percentages. Also learners could easily begin to stagnate in areas that they believe they have already been assessed in and will not be returned to again. These points must still be pondered upon and addressed as problems will always surface, in whatever approach we settle upon.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the manner in which OBE has been introduced and implemented in other countries in relation to the manner in which it has been done in South Africa, it makes one wonder why the South African officials could not take the time to study other countries

successes and failures first.

Australia introduced OBE in an attempt to bring structure to its system of education, which according to Professor Malcolm lacked any real structure. He states that,

"It is essentially a matter of allowing the right amount of flexibility with the right amount of school control."

(The Daily News, 25 June 1998)

The entire system of schooling in Australia was altered to suit the OBE approach to teaching and learning. Lesson requirements were changed to suit the requirements of each school. Subjects were made to blend together so that lessons lasted according to the needs of the school. The teachers focused on the ability of the children and their individual rates and styles.

In this country, we do not seem ready to take on an approach to teaching that some developed countries have tried and discarded. Dr Bill Spady, claims that the Americans, for example have,

" ... returned to an education system which is calender and curriculum based. ... There is much greater interest in South Africa. Whether you can pull it off, I don't know." (The Daily News, 25 June 1998)

Chapters five and six will provide further clues and evidence of the extent to which South Africa seems able to 'pull it off.'

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PERSONAL INTEREST

During the course of 1996 I became aware that there was a great deal of debate about an innovation to be introduced in all South African Schools. Outcomes Based Education became popular by its abbreviated name OBE. Many teachers were at this time rather concerned and confused about OBE. I, myself, found that whoever I chose to discuss this new innovation with seemed rather unhappy about it being implemented in schools. Most of the educators I spoke to had either no idea what OBE was really all about or had not heard of it. Some were not even interested, as they thought it was not an innovation that would actually be implemented in schools. I then decided that I needed to know as much as I could learn about OBE, for two main reasons. One was purely out of curiosity or a need to know what all the fuss was about and two, to ensure that I as an educator would know how to implement it in school if it was declared compulsory. So I choose to make OBE the topic of my research dissertation.

In this study I have attempted to examine teachers' perceptions and understanding of OBE and their eagerness or otherwise to implement this new innovation. I also have attempted to explore their problems and fears concerning their role in this process of curriculum

change. My focus lay in examining how teachers in each of these two schools were engaged in the actual implementation of OBE.

RESEARCH PARADIGMS

The methodology employed in any research study must be carefully chosen depending on the nature of the study and the research questions to be asked. A researcher has to work out the area to be researched and then select the most appropriate paradigm, approaches and methods. This research employs a qualitative research methodology or paradigm.

A qualitative paradigm acknowledges that the social and physical worlds in research are different. The qualitative paradigm seeks to understand human behaviour by observing and interacting with people in order to be able to construct the social world as they construct it. Qualitative research views human behaviour as context bound. The priority of these researchers is to understand and present the world of the participants as they view it. The view of the subject is considered most significant and the meaning they attribute to their experiences and context. Qualitative educational research involves working closely with educators and learners in a particular context. Each school is a context on its own. It is characterised by its own special milieu and idiosyncrasies. My decision to study two schools as individual case studies and then compare them lead me into selecting to work in the qualitative paradigm.

This paradigm allows one to understand social behaviour by exploring the meanings and interpretations people place on events, relations and institutions in the context in which they take place, as people are seen as being continuously active in shaping and reshaping these contexts through their interpretations, languages and actions. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, (1990: 445)

"Human behaviour is always bound to a particular historical, social, temporal and cultural context; therefore the law-and-its-instances kind of explanation sought in a hypothetico-deductive approach is rejected in favour of a cases-and-their-interpretations kind of explanation."

Another name for the qualitative approach is interpretative. Researchers are expected to interpret the data in relation to the research circumstances and then draw conclusions that should give one insight about human behaviours. Such studies allow the researcher to understand the participants point of view and interpretation of their circumstances.

Qualitative approaches are reliable, in the sense that another researcher could also study the same context, that is the study can be replicated by other interested researchers. However, one of the main strengths often claimed for qualitative research is its validity, in that in-depth involvement provides a truer picture of what is being researched. This is discussed in detail later in this paper.

Nevertheless validity can still become problematic, as I discovered while conducting my research in the two schools. It became evident to me that people will only allow you to know what they choose to want you to know. Often people recreate their world simply to impress you. For example, I slowly began to realise that one teacher in particular felt that she had to prepare special lessons on the days I went in to observe her. She did not want me to simply go into her class at random. She preferred that I inform her first so that she could prepare lessons in the OBE approach. This was not what I wanted as it did not reflect the reality of that classroom as a context. She attempted to portray a different picture, thinking that it would lead me into believing that that was her daily routine. Although, such occurrences can call into question the validity of qualitative studies, it does not invalidate the data totally, if the researcher is astute enough to realise that something is not quite right and then proceeds to investigate it and then takes it into account when drawing the conclusions.

Many question whether qualitative research is 'scientific'. Lets consider qualitative research in terms of each of the conventional requirements of science in determining why it can be considered 'scientific'. Where social or educational significance is concerned, 'significance' refers to the question of importance to society or the subjects of the research. Often consequential themes are discovered and generated from the research process itself.

Contextual precision enables competing realities and contradictory

definitions of what is going on to surface where they can be inspected within that context. Qualitative exploration invites ambiguity in that rigour is achieved by fully exposing the variety of interpretations of the social world. Yet at the same time qualitative research allows one to gain in-depth information that provides a more realistic picture of situations, thereby increasing its validity. Data from qualitative research cannot be easily generalised to other social settings as it is embedded in the context in which it is gathered. Therefore tests for generalisability can only be matched against their own context. In order to draw broader conclusions several studies are normally done. To ensure that the studies can be replicated, the methodology and theoretical assumptions must be clearly laid out so that another researcher can use the same 'rules' to compare the research findings. The relationship between the 'researcher' and 'researched', where and when it is conducted are all significant information.

Qualitative data is useful in helping to determine whether a theory is true in different real life contexts and can give rise to theories that one least expects. I therefore chose to employ a qualitative approach when I began this study, as I was interested in exploring the interpretations of teachers in real life school contexts. Such grounded theories allow the data to emerge as one studies it. Although grounded theory does not always emerge, it is a good way to begin with an area of study. Here linkages between concepts are more complicated than in the case of quantitative data.

The researcher must be able to recognise the linkages and be able to determine relationships that may exist. In qualitative research the questions are often unclear and broadly outlined. The aim is to allow the data to generate questions and challenge the assumptions on which the original idea was built. The researcher therefore, needs to consider the study carefully and be open to other possibilities as well.

Qualitative research can be considered both 'scientific' and artistic, according to Patton, (1990), it is scientific as it is systematic, analytical, rigorous, disciplined and critical. However,

"At the simple level, an emphasis on critical thinking is the focus of the scientific side of analysis, the art of analysis depends on creativity." (Patton, 1990: 433)

In critically evaluating the data, the researcher attempts to look for problems, shortcomings and relationships. While the artistic part allows one to be creative, to consider new possibilities, gain insights and consider relationships and linkages. This dual focus in qualitative analysis allows one to balance one's thinking when considering data. According to Patton,

" The purpose of qualitative evaluation is to produce findings useful for decision making and action."
(Patton, 1990: 435)

So while educational research is applied, it has to support the planning of research acts in educational settings and must be of use to both the practitioner and educational researcher.

Issues of honesty, ethics and responsibility arise in qualitative research. Educational research is about people, who have rights and feelings. Obtaining the consent of the participants is very important. In educational settings, the researcher will find that consent will be necessary from various roleplayers, namely the principal, head of departments or head teacher as well as the class teachers under study. This was exactly the protocol that I had to follow, before being allowed entry into the classrooms to begin my observation. I had to explain to all parties exactly what I was planning to do, before gaining access and acceptance. I suppose being a primary school teacher myself worked to my advantage, as I was accepted quite easily.

While in quantitative research the researchers feelings are not supposed to intrude, it is more difficult in qualitative research to stop subjective interpretations from intruding when conclusions are drawn. Gaining access to groups or people is not easy. This depends upon issues of power, trust and acceptability. Qualitative researchers aim to establish a personal relationship with the subjects and are often accused of allowing their own beliefs and values to intrude in the study. However, these researchers are aware of this danger and so employ several techniques to overcome this. The most important of these is triangulation, which means that the

researcher should employ three different methods in the study to verify the validity of the data such as interviews, observations and documentation. Sometimes the rights of subjects over the data could be questioned. Moral and ethical issues must also be confronted and dealt with. Participants in an educational setting may make conditions with the researcher before agreeing to participate in the study. I found that the teachers I worked with wanted to remain anonymous. I also had to swear to confidentiality, by promising not to discuss happenings in their classrooms with anyone, especially another staff member. I hope that I was sensitive to my participants feelings and needs during this study as I think that conducting one's self ethically, as a researcher is extremely significant.

APPROACH - CASE STUDY

Dockrell and Hamilton, (1980) offer the following definition of the case study:

" Case study is the examination of an instance in action. The study of particular incidents and events, and the selective collection of information on biography, personality, intentions and values, allows the case study worker to capture and portray those elements of a situation that give it meaning." (Dockrell and Hamilton, 1980: 33)

Stake defines the case study as,

" ... the study of a bounded system." (Stake, 1988: 255)

Goode and Hart, 1952, 31, is quoted by Stake:

" The case study then is not a specific technique, it is a way of organising social data so as to preserve the unitary character of the social object being studied. " (Stake, 1988: 256)

All these definitions indicate that case studies concentrate on a single bounded system, like each of the two schools that this study focuses on. Case study researchers look for patterns of meanings and issues. Case studies can involve a range of research methods. Examples of qualitative approaches include, 'hanging around' with a group, analysis diaries, studying life histories, experiencing being treated as another and action research. I chose the case study approach and conducted case studies of two schools in Reservoir Hills, as they lie in the area in which I live. My aim was to compare how each of the school were implementing OBE in 1998. I limited my case studies to two schools, so that I could make this more of an intensive, in-depth study. Due to the constraints of time, as I am a full-time teacher and part-time student, I realised that including more schools would not allow me to do justice to this study. I found that this was a wise choice, as the time passed so quickly.

Case studies are popular in the field of education, as they present educational problems in all their personal and social complexity. The focus is on the experience of the subjects and their interactions in the natural environment. Here the subject or a group of subjects are studied in depth. Although this is one of the advantages of the case study, this type of study usually takes time. The researcher is usually concerned with how the subjects deal with changes in there midst. In doing this the researcher will gather data about the subjects' present reactions, past behaviours and possible future actions.

Such intensive study, allows the researcher to gain insights about people's attitudes, values and behaviours, that is lost in most other approaches. Yet such insights can serve as a drawback, when the prejudice and subjectivity of the researcher creeps into the study to too great an extent. The manner in which observations are drawn can influence the conclusions. Generalisations made from case studies are rarely considered valid or useful to many. However, it serves as a good way to gain knowledge or understanding of people in relation to their environment and lessons can be learned.

Case studies in the qualitative paradigm involve the researcher becoming directly involved in the research process. Very often the researcher sets out to observe and study a person or a group of people and their interactions. In my study I chose to study the grade one teachers in two separate schools and than attempt to understand their activities and practices. The method usually

employed in a case study is observation. According to, Cohen and Manion, (1980: 106)

"The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs."

In my case studies I was merely a non-participant observer. Although, I offered teachers my assistance in preparing lessons, they did not take me up on my offer, and I merely watched the teachers and learners interacting. However, when the teacher left the class, the learners would approach me with questions, queries, or show me their work, or merely try to attract my attention. I did not mind talking to the learners when they approached me as I felt they were not the focus of my study, but rather the teachers attempting to implement OBE.

Case studies have been criticised for several reasons. One is that since every case study gives rise to different results or outcomes, they lack validity. Each study is considered as a bounded case. Although it is not very representative of other cases, this depends on the purpose of the study, as sometimes it may just prove to be representative. Because such studies are often based on personal experiences, it is not considered trustworthy. Validity is not taken for granted by researchers, as in case studies the world is

interpreted by the researcher and what one researcher may swear is true another may question. Therefore, some researchers do not take case studies seriously as they see it as lacking statistically. Stake claims that,

"Many case studies do have insufficient validity for the purposes of a particular researcher or school official. We should note that validity depends on the use to which the findings are put. " (Stake 1988 : 263)

According to Stake researchers search for ways to confirm their observations, and readers of case studies are engaged in a process of understanding the validity of the observations. Each report will be interpreted differently, depending on the reasons of the researcher for studying it. The reader gives it meaning.

As mentioned above, one way to improve validity is through triangulation, where one attempts to obtain understanding by using a range of different methods. Triangulation offers the researcher other avenues to determine whether the conclusions drawn are really true and valid. There are several types of triangulation that a research could use to enhance validity of the data. The type that I used in my study is referred to as methodological triangulation, as I used different methods to investigate each of the two schools manner of implementation of OBE or lack of it. I interviewed teachers from the two different schools, observed them in the classroom and kept a diary of notes, examined their records and the records of the learners in these teachers care. I then compared my

findings, in order to draw conclusions. I found this method of triangulation most appropriate and useful to my study.

According to Stenhouse, (undated) in field research, such as case studies, one must aim to gather information in such a way as to make it accessible to subsequent critical assessment, both internal and external and to triangulation. He states that case studies conducted by one researcher, should be made available so that it can be examined and or replicated by others. The procedures used must be clearly stated so that other researchers may replicate it. Since case studies focus on studying human behaviour, actions and intentions, subjects have a right to access the data. This Stenhouse views as a shortcoming.

RESEARCH METHODS

INTERVIEWS

In case study research interviews are commonly used to gather data. Interviews present the interviewer with accounts of the subjects behaviour, practices and actions. Powney and Watts, define the interview as,

"...a conversation between two or more people where one or more of the participants takes the responsibility for reporting the substance of what is said." (Powney and Watts, 1990: 355)

In interviews verbal interaction and personal contact is considered important. To be successful this method has to be formally consistent with the philosophical assumptions of the research. Interviews suggest that people are to some extent reflective about their actions. The researcher must be able to offer reflective accounts and test them against experience. The interviewer can direct the interview so that it allows for reflection and processing within the interview itself. Here he or she is able to summarise and clarify his or her own interpretations. It allows for better understandings between the interviewer and interviewee. The researcher is viewed as the subject with authority and therefore the accounts he or she later presents will be considered to be true.

Although tape recordings give accurate information, they can prove to be intrusive. Note-taking is more personal and establishes a better relationship between the interviewer and interviewees. It allows the interviewer to interpret it as it is being collected.

Although tape recordings allow one to go back to the data, it is less personal, can intimidate subjects and interpretations are not as effective. Interviews allow for negotiation between the researcher and the subject. It captures the responses of the subjects thereby allowing the researcher the opportunity to gain insights into their views, attitudes and feelings. It presents a great deal of incidental information.

Schedules can be used to guide the interview and to ensure that the focus remains on the issues of the research. These are referred to

as structured interviews. Small scale studies allow one to ask open-ended questions and taboo questions. These are considered to be more 'real questions' in terms of obtaining information. Here the aim is,

"...not simply to ask questions in order to secure answers for later analysis but rather to set signposts, to indicate a tone, to set going a line of thought and analysis." (Walker, 1990: 229)

Reporting interviews involves constructing a story around the events that have taken place and the outcomes of the process that took place between the interviewer and interviewee. The information provided is totally dependent upon the reputation of the researcher. We have to trust the researcher's conclusions and implications, as well as information concerning how it was obtained. A description of the interview and rationale for the interview method is important. Reports must indicate the context and structure of the data from each interview as well as a clear statement of purpose for the interview.

I chose to interview the teachers I planned to observe before beginning my observation. I prepared an interview schedule to guide me through the process, to ensure that we do not stray away from the area of focus, (see appendix). I interviewed four grade one teachers from two primary schools in Reservoir Hills in order to explore their attitudes towards the past (apartheid) and present (post-apartheid) curriculum, as well as their understanding of OBE in terms of concept and implementation. The interviews focused on four

main areas, namely, the present and the past curriculum, curriculum change, implementing OBE, and the future curriculum. The interview took place after school was over for the day, in a rather informal manner. These were in-depth interviews where interview schedules were used to guide me in my line of questioning. Each interview session lasted for approximately two hours.

Two of the teachers were quite eager and we often found ourselves beginning to stray away from my area of focus. However, I always remembered my interview schedule and quickly turned the conversation back to the topic at hand. One teacher was not too eager to commit herself and tried to be as 'short and sweet' as possible. The other seemed to be too upset and frustrated with everything to do with the state of affairs in education and preferred to use this opportunity to vent her anger. All things considered interviewing these teachers served to be quite an exciting learning experience for me. I was happy that I had selected this method as a way of obtaining data as I was amazed at the wealth of information I was able to obtain simply by engaging in a face-to-face interview. I discovered that sometimes what is really revealing is not what is actually said but the way in which it is expressed to you that really conveys a great deal of the interviewee's feelings, thoughts, attitude and actual behaviours.

The interview has both its advantages and disadvantages in such studies. The fact that interviews allows one to really delve into issues immediately, offers the researcher an advantage, as it allows for issues to be clarified. The interviewer can get the interviewee

to elaborate on particular points on the spot. This idea is also shared by Cohen and Manion, (1980) when they claim that the interview,

" ... allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection." (Cohen and Manion, 1980: 272)

Cohen and Manion, (1980), also point out an important shortcoming of the interview. During the interview both the interviewee and the interviewer are engaged in conversation on a one-to-one basis, dealing with topics or issues that the interviewer may feel strongly about. The interviewer in such circumstances can become 'carried away' and then unintentionally and often unconsciously become so involved with the issues that subjectivity and personal bias can easily taint the data.

I felt that the interview generated a great deal of information that would have been lost to me had I used another method. For I found that, besides the verbal cues, the non-verbal cues 'told' me things that I would have otherwise lost out on. For example, although one of the teachers stated that she did not mind participating in the study, it became clear in the interview from the manner in which she answered the questions that she was not really happy to participate in the interview. She definitely did not want to commit herself in terms of her responses and her body language clearly displayed her unease and dissatisfaction.

Although interviews have the advantage of non-verbal cues there can sometimes be problems of validity. This is exactly what Cannell and Khan (1968) quoted in Cohen and Manion (1980), discovered in their study of peoples bank accounts. It was discovered when they actually checked that people had lied about the existence of them and the amounts of cash in them, (Cohen and Manion, 1980).

However, I was lucky that I did not have to deal with such problems because the interviewees were told in advance that they were going to be observed. Although, two of the four teachers preferred me to tell them exactly when I would be observing them, as they wanted to prepare for me, I made it a habit of turning up later or earlier than planned, as I wanted to catch them in all their spontaneity and reality, rather than watching lessons designed specifically for me. I felt that planned lessons were not going to tell me about the happenings in everyday, real situations as that was exactly what the aim of the study was, any research study for that matter.

Many criticisms have been levelled against interviews as a research technique. Interviews let loose information, especially where sensitive issues are concerned, that the researcher may not expect. It could lead to the subject feeling vulnerable. Tripp (1990) argues that interviews must provide more coherence for the subject. Semi-structured interviews depend on language, content and the order of questions as well as non-verbal cues, silences and practical organisation. The interviewer's influence through probing and prompting could change the direction of the interview.

According to Cohen and Manion the cause of invalidity is often bias. They quote Lansing, Ginsberg and Braaten, (1961) who define bias as,

" ... a systematic or persistent tendency to make errors in the same direction, that is to overstate or understate the "true value" of an attribute.

(Cohen and Manion, 1980: 281)

Cohen and Manion offer a solution to overcome this problem. They suggest that they compare the results with some other source that has been shown to be valid. If the two sources are found to be similar then it can safely be assumed that the results obtained are valid.

OBSERVATION

Observation presents one with first hand information about what is actually done. It is done by recording impressions and happenings in their natural environment, to describe and understand events as they occur. However it is important when utilising this method of data collection, not to deviate from the topic of the study, but rather to fit the technique to the task. Here one is able to obtain a wealth of information and it is very easy to stray from the task on hand. Maintaining one's focus is necessary to obtain accurate data.

I conducted classroom observation in an attempt to verify the information that the teachers presented at the interview by observing them in the classroom. I spent one week in each of the teachers' classrooms from 08h00 to 13h00 observing all the lessons for the day. I chose to conduct my observation in this way because in a grade one classroom lessons vary in terms of duration. Some lessons last thirty minutes, some take sixty minutes while some even go on for ninety minutes. The time frame in grade one classrooms are quite relaxed and often teachers continue with a lesson although the time allocated for that lesson initially may have passed. I recorded as much as I could of what happened during these lessons in a special diary that I kept for each of the four teachers. On average I observed about ten to twelve lessons in each classroom. I focused on the way the teachers employed the OBE approach to teaching and to see if they reverted to the old way approach that they were used to.

DOCUMENTATION

I found that studying documents presented me with a great deal of significant data that I used to verify information gained from my observations and interviews. However, the major limitation of documents, is that documents describe what people say and intend rather than what they actually do and are therefore useful if used in conjunction with other methods. (Harber, 1997b)

I spent a great deal of time examining the four teachers preparation books, mark books and journals which contain a record of their schemes of work for the year. I searched for evidence that they were actually preparing their work using the OBE system. There definitely was evidence that they were trying, but sometimes went back to the previous way of preparing and teaching a section, that they felt they could not teach using the OBE approach. I also looked at the learners' efforts to ensure that the lessons recorded in the teachers' documents were actually taught. Pupil efforts were either placed in each learner's record file or displayed in the classroom.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

I selected two schools from Reservoir Hills for convenience, as I reside here. I found that selecting schools was a more complicated process than I had anticipated. The first school principal whom I had approached was open to the idea of participating in this study, but informed me that I would first have to obtain the permission of the school governing body to prevent future problems. I did. However I was rather disappointed with the governing bodies lack of enthusiasm, the unnecessary procedures and waiting process, before a firm answer would be given. Waiting for an answer from this school meant losing three weeks, so I struck that school off my list.

The next school I approached was more enthusiastic. Here the principal informed me that she would first need to consult with her junior primary head of department and grade one teachers. I was to receive feedback in two days. Two days later I visited the school and was told that the teachers would be happy to participate in the study.

In the next school, although the principal was eager, the junior primary head of department and teachers were not. This principal requested that I write a letter to the school governing body explaining the nature of the study.

After having made arrangements with the four teachers to conduct interviews and observations, I was rather disappointed when my plans were disrupted by the teacher strike and stayaway of students, during the month of March. Schooling was disrupted for about two weeks. Eventually things settled down and I was able to get on with my study. I spent a month in each school, during which time my work was often delayed when teachers went on sick leave or had to attend meetings or workshops.

During the months of May or June there were more strikes and stayaway disruptions. Consequently I was still busy in the second school during the last week of the second term, which was rather hectic as the school was engaged in fund raising drives and other fun activities for the children. Work had drawn to a virtual standstill.

The most disheartening experience was when the junior primary head of department in one of these schools informed me that her teachers were not employing OBE in their classrooms at all, due to lack of resources, classes of 38 and 39 learners, lack of space in these classrooms and because her teachers were not adequately trained in the OBE approach. She informed me that her teachers that her teachers could not prepare a lesson specifically for me. I then informed her that that was not required at all. She also requested that I prepare a workshop for her grade one teachers. I enlisted the assistance of a colleague and did this, only to be informed that the grade one teachers at that school were tired of workshops and were rather busy with the term reports and really required in-service training.

CONCLUSION

Qualitative approaches to studying educational phenomena, offers researchers and educators the opportunity to understand real issues that concern them directly, despite their weaknesses or disadvantages. They offer us a way into looking at the complexity and richness of human behaviour and making sense of participants experiences and their interpretations of reality.

A copy of the interview schedule that was used in this study has been reproduced as the appendix. The next chapter discusses the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHERS VIEWS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

As a major curriculum reform, OBE affects all educators in South Africa. It is of particularly great concern among grade one teachers who were required to implement this new approach this year. It is a highly controversial issue and is widely debated by educators, parents, learners and academics. Many are highly critical of OBE and many of them are teachers who are feel unprepared to adopt it at this particular point in time. Professor Jonathan Jansen's (1997) predictions in his paper, Why OBE Will Fail? seems to becoming an reality. Sharma Bhika (1997) (edited in Goolam and Khumalo, 1997), like the teachers (who requested anonymity) in this study, are clearly frustrated with the pressure to implement OBE when they have not had time to truly understand and engage with it.

THE PAST AND PRESENT CURRICULUM

Three of the teachers felt that the past curriculum was unjust and did not cater for the needs of all South Africans, especially the black children. One teacher stated that she did not find the past

curriculum for grade ones problematic. She claim that it worked well for her in all her years of teaching. The present curriculum was seen as better than the past as it allowed teachers more latitude in the classroom and catered for all learners. Teachers were allowed to work at their own pace and at the pace of their learners. The time frame that they had to work in, in the past was very rigid and did not take into account the fact that learners develop at different rates. The present curriculum was seen as more flexible and realistic as it allowed teachers to work from where learners are and proceed at the learners' pace. According to one teacher,

"Now we are allowed to decide what to do and how depending upon the needs of our children, rather than, having to follow the syllabus strictly." (Anonymous grade one teacher, 1998)

CURRICULUM CHANGE

All the teachers felt that curriculum change was inevitable and significant in a progressive society. Three teachers indicated that curriculum changes should be initiated by the teachers, as they felt teachers are the people who have first hand experience of the real situation and that they were the ones who would have to eventually implement it. One teacher stated that the central government should work with the teachers in such matters. She also felt that the

central government should provide all teachers with curriculum guidelines, in-service training and all the necessary resources to bring about the desired changes, otherwise change will only exist on paper,

"We can all promise to make a change, and pretend that we are doing what is expected of us, but what actually happens in our classrooms, depends on what we can do, not what we should do." (Anonymous grade one teacher, 1998)

✓ This philosophy of teaching seemed to be shared by all the teachers interviewed as they seemed to be undecided about the present changes taking place. They were not sure about how they were to make sense of these changes as they felt that it was happening too quickly. Although, on the one hand they welcomed the changes that were taking place, on the other hand they felt that they were not ready for these changes. The general feeling was that the government had not prepared them for the present changes. The teachers felt that the time was not right to implement innovations in education in this country, because of the poor funding and lack of resources, as well as large classes and overworked, insecure, ill-equipped teachers.

✓ Although, all the teachers thought that OBE was a good, holistic and exciting approach to teaching, three of them indicated that they were unsure and sceptical of it, because of the lack of training, insufficient resources and their large classes. They were not ready

for the change to OBE, as yet, as they were not prepared for it. They were merely ordered to implement it this year. Their views were apparently not considered.

✓ "How can we be expected to teach in OBE when we can barely manage to teach in the traditional approach in such poor conditions. Where are the resources? My teachers simply cannot start OBE this year. They are not ready." (Anonymous junior primary head of department, 1998)

✓ The remaining teacher was the most confident of the four and felt that it was possible to use the OBE approach to some extent. However, all agreed that if they had a maximum of twenty learners in their classroom, they would find it more easy to implement OBE in their classrooms.

THE SCHOOLS

✓ The milieu of the schools and the surrounding district where these students reside, is poor. The school, had according to all four teachers interviewed, classrooms that were too small in size, but had to accommodate 38 to 40 students. This left very little room for movement and activity. Further, the classrooms were in need of renovation, as windows were cracked, cupboard doors did not lock, light bulbs were either damaged or remained unrenewed. The teachers claimed that they did not have equipment such a television,

a video tape machine, overhead projectors, etc, at their disposal, as these machines were either not working or the school did not have the funds to purchase them. The teachers interviewed as well as others that I had had informal discussions with claimed that teaching creatively, in the OBE approach without the necessary equipment and resources, was too difficult a task. Besides, one teacher stated,

" How are we to obtain such equipment to use in lessons, when the school cannot provide these children with such basics as pens, pencils, rulers, textbooks and writing materials. The schools just don't have the funds anymore. The parents too do not have the money to provide their children with the little necessities to make a simple lesson a great lesson." (Anonymous grade one teacher)

Looking at the surrounding area where the children reside, it is clear that black children who form about 80% of the population of both schools, come from a very poor socio-economic background and mainly reside in shacks that border the N2 Durban highway.

IMPLEMENTING OBE

All four teachers indicated that they could not implement OBE in a grade one classroom from the beginning, simply because the learners would never be able to cope. They felt that it was first necessary to teach the learners the basic "three R's", reading, writing and

mathematical skills. The general consensus was that without this foundation there would be nothing substantial achieved with OBE, as the learners upon first entry could not perform these basic skills, and could not be expected to acquire them adequately in the OBE approach. So all teachers did not attempt OBE in the first two months of this year, but two teachers had attempted to implement OBE afterwards, mainly in the life-skills area. This also became apparent in a study conducted by Professor Jansen, in January 1998,

"Many other teachers felt that implementing OBE in the first six months of grade one was "appropriate" as the preferred focus for teaching was on language and life skills. (**The Daily News**. 25 June 1998)

One of these two teachers was now attempting to implement OBE across her curriculum. She was finding it challenging and exciting despite having a class of 37 learners. The remaining two teachers were not making any attempts at all, as they felt that it was not possible in their context. Clearly, the teachers in this study did not seem to find the implementation process of OBE that much fun. There were too many 'obstacles' to deal with in the process. According to my most enthusiastic interviewee,

" How am I to enjoy my work if I do not have the resources. If I had a smaller class, interested parents, and more training, I would be so happy to teach in the OBE approach. Anyway, at least I'm doing more than the other teacher in this school. (Anonymous grade one teacher)

These teachers felt that the few workshops that they had attended had not adequately prepared them to implement OBE in their classrooms. The workshops were too theoretical and intensive. The teachers want more practical in-service training. They felt that long-term courses would be of more benefit to them. This supports the view that,

" ... teachers are taking crash courses in how to implement the new curriculum." (Moore, 1997 : 81)

The teachers were struggling to understand and make sense of the array of terminology required to plan a lesson. Before starting to prepare a lesson, teachers need to understand terms such as, learning areas, learning programs, phase organisers, program organisers, performance indicators, range statements, outcomes, specific outcomes, learning area outcomes and critical outcomes. There are many more. Then the teacher is expected to page through three separate official manuals that outline which specific outcome will go with a particular learning area outcome and performance indicator.

I actually tried to plan a lesson and teach it myself. I thoroughly enjoyed the latter but was highly irritated with the former part of my experience. As a model lesson that involved planning with nothing else to do, it worked beautifully. The learners were remarkably well behaved and attentively followed my instructions. This exceptional result I would attribute to the fact that after being taught by the same teacher for six months, these children were suddenly faced with

a different teacher and found it a novel experience. On the other hand it could also be attributed to the inertia of the teacher, who probably was not putting enough effort into her lessons.

The teachers felt that the time-table did not allow them enough time to function effectively as an out-comes based facilitator. The time table was too rigid and not as flexible as that of the Australian schools. However, two of the teachers in this study claimed that they simply ignored the school siren that sounded at thirty minute intervals and continued with the lesson until they were ready to stop. The other two teachers indicated that the rigid time table made it difficult to employ OBE. These teachers stated that there was no time on their time-tables allocated for lesson preparation, research, resource development and other administrative responsibilities that they had to fulfil on a school day. Further after their grade one charges were dismissed at 13h00, they were then required to teach senior primary learners from 13h00 to 13h30. Then from 13h30 to 14h30 they had to coach students on the sports field, or attend meetings or workshops either in school or out of school. This meant that all preparation had to be done at home after school hours. This became clearly evident, during observation, when one teacher realised that she had left the worksheet she had prepared at home. This resulted in her becoming frustrated and upset. This in turn caused her to reprimand the learners and lash out at the department of education.

The teachers preferred more realistic training, rather than short courses that merely skimmed the surface of the approach. They stated that they would like to see lessons conducted with large classes of about 38 students of first and second language learners. All the teachers interviewed were disappointed that they were not provided with guidelines and other texts to assist them with lesson preparation. One teacher claimed that she had spent a great deal of her own money purchasing texts that she now used to assist her in her lesson preparations. Like the other teachers, she also felt that this was the responsibility of the department of education. They did not receive any training during these workshops to produce their own resources. They were only given a few workbooks that were suitable for a few introductory lessons. Learners did not possess textbooks as they were all now considered outdated as,

"...all textbooks were to be rewritten." (Moore, 1997 : 81)

117

These teachers were struggling with the amount of paperwork when preparing a lesson. They felt that recording and preparing their books involved more work than actually preparing aids for the lesson. They were also finding the terminology very frustrating and unnecessary. All four conceded that OBE demanded a great deal of the teachers time, therefore teachers should be given more free time to prepare lessons and complete records. One teacher stated that had the teachers been allocated time for preparation and administrative tasks teaching would be a greater pleasure for both themselves and the children.

They found assessment techniques, which involved the teacher assessing each child individually on every task, in OBE to be rather time consuming and difficult with the large numbers of learners in their care. The learners were too many and too young to be left on their own and this lead to chaos. However, they kept files of the learners' worksheets and attempted to assess them later. I examined these files and found that only one teacher could be seen to be really employing OBE. This teacher had more material in the children's files than the other three. There were two teachers from these three that did not seem to really put much effort into their lessons. I was rather disappointed with the lack of genuine effort reflected in the preparation books of these two teachers. Yet the other two teachers preparation books showed evidence of research and planning. But of these latter two teachers, one only seemed to really be practising OBE. The other seemed to be still trapped in the traditional approach, yet I admired her initiative.

During my observation, I noticed that either due to the large number of learners or poor teacher management, the discipline of the learners often deteriorated. Upon discussing it with the teachers concerned, I was told that it is due to the OBE style of teaching and learning. One teacher stated,

"If you want the children to do things, then this is the kind of disorder and mess you will get in your classroom. You just cannot control them in these type of lessons.
(Anonymous junior primary head teacher)

What makes matters worse is that there is no support for these teachers within their schools. In informal discussions with the school management, I found that they knew even less than the teachers did about OBE and were not involved in what actually took place in the classrooms. Although I had not planned initially to do so, this occurred incidentally, and proved to be enlightening, as I assumed that the management, which comprised of the principal and two head teachers, would be equally involved with the process of implementing OBE in their schools. My assumption was incorrect. Both schools junior primary head teachers were rather frustrated with the idea of OBE, as they had no training and could not really offer their teachers any assistance. One head teacher made it clear that she would not encourage OBE because teachers required in-service training. Consequently grade one teachers were found to be completely on their own, while the other grades continued to function in the traditional paradigm. The scenario is therefore set for failure.

The milieu of the school and the surrounding district where these students reside, is desperately lacking. The school had according to all four teachers interviewed, classrooms that were too small in size, but had to accommodate 38 to 40 students. This left very little room for movement and activity. Further, the classrooms were in need of renovation, as windows were cracked, cupboard doors did not lock, light bulbs were either damaged or remained unrenewed. The teachers claimed that they did not have equipment such a television, a video tape machine, overhead projectors, etc, at their disposal,

as these machines were either not working or the school did not have the funds to purchase them. The teachers interviewed as well as others that I had had informal discussions with claimed that teaching creatively, in the OBE approach without the necessary equipment and resources, was too difficult a task. Besides, one teacher stated,

" How are we to obtain such equipment to use in lessons, when the school cannot provide these children with such basics as pens, pencils, rulers, textbooks and writing materials. The schools just don't have the funds anymore. The parents too do not have the money to provide their children with the little necessities to make a simple lesson a great lesson." (Anonymous grade one teacher)

Looking at the surrounding area where the children reside, it is clear that the black children come from a very poor socio-economic background.

The learners did not come to school with all the necessary requirements to conduct lessons successfully. Learners did not possess such necessities as pens, pencils, rulers, crayons and books. Some did not even come to school dressed in the correct uniform, as they were poverty stricken and came from the shacks that bordered the area. The school did not possess any supplies either, and did not have the funds to purchase these requirements. The teachers claimed that as their classrooms were not designed to

accommodate large classes, the congestion prevented them from arranging the tables so that learners could be seated in a manner more feasible for groupwork.

The underlying assumption of OBE that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn is a debatable one as the majority of the learners in this study emerge from home backgrounds that do not foster a culture of learning. This due to illiteracy, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and other social ills. Any grade one teacher is faced with the toughest challenge in education, and that is to motivate learners to learn. Then there is this mistaken impression of OBE that exists among these grade one teachers, that the learners are to acquire the basic skills on their own. This teachers in this study viewed as tantamount to leaving a newborn baby to fend for itself. According to one interviewee,

" I do feel that grade one learners cannot be left on their own from day one to discover for themselves." (Anonymous grade one teacher.)

I pointed out to this same teacher that the children are not to be left on their own, but rather should be guided in lessons designed to allow them to acquire the basic skills. Her response was that the department of education had not prepared her to do that.

During my period of observation in these teachers' classroom I found that two teachers in particular were not interested in attempting to seriously employ OBE. In this same school, the head teacher shared

the views of her teacher and requested that I prepare a workshop, which she then claimed they were too busy to attend. I finally drew the conclusion that some teachers are merely content with complaining and not interested to actually make changes. Although I stated that OBE falls into the R, D and D model and employs power-coercive strategies that are designed to enforce this innovation, it appears that there exists schools like the one in this study that will defy such coercion and function as they consider appropriate.

The other two teachers were desperately trying to implement Obe the best way that they could. In fact one of these two was more eager than the other. This became even more apparent when she showed me all the texts and workbooks designed for grade one classrooms that she had purchased with her own money, because the school had refused to purchase them, due to the lack of funds.

Yet during the observation period I noticed that none of the teachers could cope with their classes without actually reverting to the traditional approach from time to time. When I later brought this up in informal discussions, the teachers all seemed to agree as all claimed that it was not possible for them to function effectively without resorting to the traditional approach. Amazingly, in some lessons the teachers were found to be operating in OBE approach and then suddenly it would become apparent that they were now operating in the traditional approach. For example, teacher one would claim that she was now doing OBE, and begin her lesson in this approach. Yet halfway through the lesson she would stop the

children's activities, ask a question or make a statement, then proceed to tell the children that what they are doing is wrong and show them what to do. Inevitably, the teacher would end up completing the task rather than the children. Observing these teachers made me realise that they were not patient enough to simply guide the children, but could not get out of their old habit of telling the children what to do. When I chose to discuss this with one teacher, her response was,

" Oh, I just don't have the time to leave them to mess about and run around making a noise. It is sometimes better to just tell them, otherwise they will never know. (Anonymous grade one teacher)

Upon examining the learners files (each learner possessed a file in which all class worksheets, projects and tests were placed) I found that very often the manner in which the work was completed indicated that the teacher had either not allowed the children enough time to complete the task or had given them the answer, before they could reach it on their own. Yet the preparation books of these teachers indicated that the lesson was achieved.

CONCLUSION : FUTURE CURRICULUM

All the teachers interviewed felt that unless the central government heeded the calls of the teachers, OBE will fail. These teachers all agreed that there was a great deal that had to be considered and sorted out in education before OBE could be viewed as a reality for the future. The feeling is that if it is implemented realistically with all the necessities it demands then it can be realised fully, otherwise we will be merely playing at the idea of OBE, and that this could serve towards our society's detriment.

The general consensus among the teachers is that the planning of OBE was very poor. The top-down approach may seem to work, because it is more of an ultimatum to teachers than an introduction of a new approach, but in reality it will not work, because teachers will attempt it only to the degree that they understand it. When teachers find that they simply cannot cope anymore, they will revert back to their old traditional approach that they know well. Unless in-service training is introduced intensively, the crash courses will cause teachers to lose interest and become disempowered.

The feeling among all these teachers is that they were not consulted. They do not consider the consultation of non-practising officials in such matters as worthwhile. Teachers at grassroots have to actually bring such innovations to fruition, and therefore need to be consulted. It was felt that the introduction of OBE in 1998, on the eve of the elections, was merely a political ploy aimed at

presenting a picture of making significance changes. According to one of the teachers interviewed,

" This government is not concerned to bring about real change for the people, they are using us to appear to be bringing about change. Real change takes proper planning and happens gradually over time." (Anonymous grade one teacher, 1998)

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION

It seems that change and innovation in the field of education at the present time in South Africa, is a highly sensitive issue. Educators are the people who are the target implementors of change and innovation. Educators are expected to make policy a reality in their classrooms. Even if major curriculum change needs to be initiated and coordinated by central government it would still be reasonable to expect policy-makers in a democratic society such as ours to take into account the views and circumstances of teachers before actually encouraging policy to become practice. For change to take place successfully, in society, it must be wanted by people eager to accept changes and innovations. Assuming that educators will automatically accept and implement changes that are forced upon them would be a very naive and simplistic way of considering the issue of teaching, learning and change in a democratic society. Unless change is handled diplomatically, it could encourage passive resistance, among educators.

This study clearly illustrated, that these teachers were definitely not ready for the changes that were taking place in their midst. What the officials seem to forget when initiating such changes is that they themselves will not have to make the actual change but it is the teacher who will have to make significant changes to their ways of thinking, acting and working in the classroom and for this the latter require time and preparation (Bishop, 1986). In the South African context educators were not afforded this. It seems to these teachers that the changes are taking place more around them than amongst them. They seem to be trapped. These teachers are barely struggling to teach their multilingual classes, and are scraping by with the minimum of resources in classrooms with maximum capacities. Implementing OBE in their grade one classrooms is something that some cannot consider, while others attempt the challenge and hope that they are on the right path. Changes like OBE was supposed to empower educators, yet some of these teachers seem to be at their most vulnerable at this point in time. According to Professor, J.Jansen, as a result of introducing OBE,

"...we have not done much except affirm people's
disempowerment in the system." (Bradley, 1998, 7).

The teachers I interviewed were clearly unhappy with the state of affairs in education in general and in the preparation of teachers to implement OBE in particular. They feel that they cannot perform

miracles without adequate training, the proper resources and facilities and large classroom populations. The feeling that OBE and curriculum 2005 are rather ambitious projects, is shared by educators and academics alike. Professor J. Jansen in several papers, and most particularly in, "Why OBE Will Fail", warns the education officials that unless they prepare our context for OBE, it will not succeed. His call was not heeded, and yet all the issues he highlighted in that paper have become a reality now.

THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION ON LEARNERS

The underlying assumption of OBE that all children are intrinsically motivated to learn is a debatable one. The majority of the learners in this study emerge from home backgrounds that do not foster a culture of learning. This is due to illiteracy, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and other social ills. Any grade one teacher is faced with the toughest challenge in education, and that is to motivate learners to learn.

It seems that there are teachers in this country who welcome change and innovation and are willing to participate in such processes. The problem it seems lies with the officials, who did not plan their strategies sufficiently to facilitate change such a top-down strategy as this is more appropriately referred to by Bishop(1986)

as a power-coercive strategy. Although Bishop (1986) points out the value that such strategies can have, he also outlines the disadvantages of such a process. OBE in the eyes of these teachers is clearly a power-coercive strategy designed to force educators to implement OBE, an innovation geared more to create a political impact rather than to overcome our educational hurdles. Reliance on coercion in a democratic society is an unreliable strategy as the users, the teachers, are more critical than the government expects. What these teachers would have appreciated was the respect and consideration of officials where implementation of OBE is concerned. Bishop (1986) captures the feeling of teachers in this study, in the following quotation,

“ To instruct a staff of a school to change to a new and unfamiliar method of teaching often results only in a limited ‘mechanical’ or ‘superficial’ conformity with the directive, only in compliance with the ‘letter of the law’; at worst it can invite teachers to ignore the directive altogether or even defy it.” (Bishop, 1986 :21)

Ignoring the cries of teachers and pretending that the areas of need do not exist does not allow for success, rather it guarantees disaster. Bishop (1986) describes the IPAR project in Cameroon, where the educators and inspectors’ attitudes to change were

ignored. As mentioned earlier these projects did not succeed as expected. The same thing happened in Indonesia, when a new approach to teaching and learning was introduced. This approach was so different from the approach that the teachers were used to that it frustrated them, as they were not prepared for it. These studies indicate that educators must be given more participative power in decision making concerning curriculum innovation. Sierra Leone officials recognised the significance of doing this and have allowed their teachers to become actively involved in curriculum innovation (Bishop, 1986).

It would make sense, therefore, for the government ministers of education to learn from elsewhere and to pause and first attempt to rectify other problems in education before implementing OBE. Although our problems are many, they are not impossible to overcome. It would make sense to master swimming in the shallow end of the swimming pool first before diving into the deep end. The education department has not only jumped into the deep end, but has also dragged the confused teachers in too!

As a developing country struggling to rectify the damage caused by apartheid, change agents should have taken time to study the old system and then make changes to it so that the innovation they plan to introduce can work. This study made it clear that OBE was not considered carefully before it was introduced. These schools were functioning at present as they always did in the past, the only

change being that grade one teachers were expected to teach in the OBE approach. The rest of the school functioned as before. It became apparent that the system was not working out. Change cannot happen in a vacuum. It takes place in a social context. According to Havelock and Huberman in Bishop (1986), innovation is really a process of system change and system building in society. Change requires essentials to ensure that it will be workable. Bishop (1986), points out that,

"...careful diagnosis of needs, specificity of objectives, detailed organisational planning and development of competencies and materials, can be instrumental in the success of innovative projects..." (Bishop, 1986, 4)

What these teachers desperately need, is to see the theory of OBE being translated into practice in situations similar to their own. Perhaps even a 'mentor' or leader, someone or some group to help them actually make this approach become a possibility. Pilot projects were considered with a great deal of scorn, as the teachers felt that they did not reflect reality at all. Dr Bill Spady, an international outcomes based specialist,

"...believes there is not a single outcomes based system operating in the world, and that the concept is an 'ideal'". (The Daily News, 25 June 1998)

The teachers interviewed confessed that they did not have a proper understanding of the concept OBE. They feel that this is through no fault of their own, but due to the poor planning of the central government and department of education. Expecting teachers to learn everything about a new approach suddenly in a matter of seven to eight months in short workshops that were hosted by different people each time and which possessed no real structure or continuity is surely being over ambitious.

The lack of a profound understanding of this concept and a lack of proper training to implement this innovation has caused the grade one teachers to function in a rather schizophrenic manner. Their policy this year should have been designed to implement OBE, yet this research shows that they are attempting to follow a policy that implies that they need to employ traditional methods of teaching most of the time and OBE methods sometimes. It seems that because of poor training in OBE teachers simply resort to their 'old and trusted' methods to teach many significant aspects of the curriculum. These teachers stated quite firmly that it was not at all possible to implement OBE in a grade one class, as the learners did not have any foundation skills, therefore they had to use the traditional approach, but were now (in June 1998) trying to teach in the OBE approach.

Sadly, this means that there is no real policy informing the practices of these grade one teachers this year. They have not undergone any real change from the traditional approach to the OBE approach of teaching. To me it seemed more like they were "playing" with OBE. The underlying message was that they were doing their best without any support or assistance from the department of education and should not be criticised, for the state of affairs as it was not of their own making.

According to, Jansen (1997),

"...OBE is destined to fail in the South African education system because it is based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system."

The post-apartheid revisions were welcomed by the teachers interviewed as they felt that this system was different and better than the one that prevailed during the apartheid era. It allowed the teacher greater freedom to choose content and approach, whereas they saw OBE as a set approach that they are being told to follow. One teacher felt that it would have been better if the changes that took place post 1994 were extended and gradually the education system

could move towards OBE. He felt that the rush merely served the purposes of the politicians, who want to seem to be making changes. Having a new government does not mean that we have to change the education system completely, as all was not bad in the old system. Bishop asserts that,

" Social systems (and innovation systems) ought to exist for the people and their welfare, not the other way round. And just because something is new or different it need not necessarily be better than the system it is transplanting. ... over-ambitious, 'cuckoo', solutions seldom get into orbit." (Bishop, 1986 :5)

Teachers in grade one classes in both schools studied were found to be functioning in a state of desperate discontent. The data of this study is therefore very similar to the findings in other such studies. Professor Jonathan Jansen claims that,

"...data already collected and based on the first four to five months of implementation showed that teachers held vastly differing views of OBE and that they were uncertain of how to implement it in their classrooms."
(**The Daily News**, 25 June 1998)

If South Africa has any dreams of making a success of OBE in this

country then educational officials need to realise that it can only be accomplished by making radical and expensive decisions to rectify the present situation. Rich countries like Norway was able to succeed, because they did not suffer shortages in education like we do in South Africa. In Norway, the teacher-pupil ratio is definitely smaller than the South African teacher-pupil ratio (Harber and Davies, 1997 : 14). The teacher-pupil ratio in the two schools studied were on average 1:38. The teachers themselves have suggested a more workable ratio of 1:20, in all South African Schools. Yet these teachers accept that this is rather unrealistic in terms of the departments policy to end the previous policy of unequal spending on educational provision. The end of the latter will result in larger teacher-pupil ratios in all South African schools. Despite what teachers would prefer the ratios to be,

'In light of the expanding school numbers overall it has been agreed between the government and teacher unions that class sizes will be set at 1:35 for all secondary schools and 1:40 for all primary schools across the country.'
(Harber, 1998 : 249)

According to one of the teachers interviewed, she feels that we would also have to follow Australia's example and change our rigid time-tables to a more flexible system that allowed teaching and learning to take place for the benefit of the learner. Further,

grades will have to be replaced by classes with similar abilities if all learners are to benefit in the system. The present system of grades ignores the case of talented learners who demonstrate performances sooner than others in a grade. Children learn and develop at different rates and paces. The fast learners will surely be frustrated and stagnate while the facilitator waits for the others in the group to display their competence. In Australia,

" Teaching was done according to levels of ability and not grades, and focused on individual learning rates and styles." (**The Daily News**, 25 June 1998).

However, some may argue that this could be compared to the old system of streaming, which is regarded with a great deal of disdain in South African Schools. Clearly, these are vital issues that have been ignored and need to be seriously considered, by the educationalists in our society, if OBE is to be the approach for our future.

The feeling among these teachers is that there are many social problems in the schools that require attention, before any innovation can be introduced. Teachers claimed that they spent a great deal of time teaching the children basic hygiene and social skills, which took up most of their class time. The question posed to me by one teacher was,

" How am I going to do OBE when I can't even get the children to follow basic instructions, like cleaning and washing themselves..." (Anonymous grade one teacher, 1998)

The flexible time-table should allocate time for teachers to prepare their lessons, organise resources and aids, update records and time for learner counselling on a one-to-one basis. In-service training and necessary school textbooks, work books and other supplies should be the responsibility of the central government.

If the central government took their role in this process of change seriously and focused on taking care of such essential and practical problems, then schools will be much more pleasant and productive environments for both teachers and learners. Until then new problems will crop up and create more strains in a system that has not been able to solve the old problems. The education arena is already marked by unqualified and discontented teachers, lack of financial and other resources, overpopulated classrooms, insufficient teachers and the lack of proper support services, and is destined to deteriorate further with the inevitable failure of OBE. As predicted by many educators there was a recent call to stop OBE (**The Sunday Tribune**, 26 July 1998). This article supported Bishop's (1986) contention that,

" Massive changes can rapidly be initiated, but they cannot be rapidly adopted on a stable or permanent basis. This is due to the fact that a system, be it an individual, an institution or a series of individuals or institutions, is unable to assimilate rapidly a great number and variety of new elements or behaviours which are unfamiliar. Indeed, As Havelock and Huberman point out, if the assault is too massive, there will be an attempt to reject the changes." (Bishop, 1986 : 7)

CONCLUSION

The South African system seems too fraught with problems in this present time more than ever, yet the aim of the central government should have been to reduce these problems. The teachers in this study were clearly unhappy as, like many other South Africans, they expected all the post 1994 changes to serve the needs of the children, the teachers and parents. However this did not happen according to one teacher,

"The changes taking place in this country have failed to serve us and our children, rather it has served the needs

of the politicians, who are merely making changes for the sake of being seen to be doing something." (Anonymous grade one head of department)

Clearly, it appears that there are many problems that need to be overcome in our context before the education system will be able to successfully incorporate OBE. The resolution of these problems is projected in culmination of OBE in the year 2005. Whether this is a realistic projection remains to be seen.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alternative Education: The Road to a Democratic Future, C.T.P.A. 21st Annual Conference, Alternative Education Report, 20-23 June 1988, U.W.C. Bellville, 1988.

Ardendorff, M. (1997) The power of competence, The Teacher, April 1997, Vol:2, No:4, p.4, col:1-5.

Ary, D. Jacobs. L.C. & Razavieh. A. (1990) Introduction to Research in Education, (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. London.)

Behr, A.L. (1988) Education in South Africa, Origins, Issues and Trends:1652-1988, Academia, Pretoria.

Bishop, G. (1986) Innovation in Education, (Macmillan Education LTD : London.)

Bradley, V. (1998) 'Educator'warns against outcomes-based system', The Daily News, June 25 1998, P. 4-7.

Brady, L. (1997) Assessing Curriculum Outcomes in Australian Schools, Educational Review, Vol:49, No:1, 1997, p. 57 - 65.

Christie, P. (1985) (reprinted 1992):- The Right to Learn-The Struggle for Education in SA, (Ravan Press (PTY) LTD and SACHED Trust, SA.)

Cohen, L and Manion, L. (1990) Research Methods in Education, (Routledge, London.)

Cresswell, M.J and Houston, J.G. (1991) ' Assessment of the National Curriculum - some fundamental considerations,' Educational Review, Vol:43, No:1.

Department of Education and Training, (1994) ANC Draft White Paper on Education and Training, Pretoria: Government Gazette, 351(15974), 23 September 1994.

Department of Education and Training, (1995)a, The White Paper, Education and Training in a New South Africa - First Steps to Develop a New System, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Department of Education and Training, (1995)b, Circular No : 3/95 Implementation of Interim School Phase Curricula/Phase Programme Requirements, Department of Education, Pietermaritzburg.

Department of Education, (1997)a, Curriculum 2005 Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century - A User's Guide, Department of Education and Training, south Africa.

Department of Education, (1997)b, Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) Policy Document, Department of Education and Training, South Africa.

Department of Education, (1998), Curriculum 2005, Supplements: 1-10, Printed by Media in Education Trust for the Department of Education and Training, Durban.

Dockrell, W.B. & Hamilton, D. (edited by), (1980) Rethinking Educational Research, (Chaucer Press, Suffolk.)

Fullan, M. (1982) The Meaning of Educational Change, (Teachers College Press, New York.)

Goolam, F and Kumalo, L. 1997: Perspectives on Outcomes - Based Education (OBE), Proceedings at a National Conference on Outcomes-Based Education held at the University of Durban - Westville, 20 March 1997, Macro Education Policy Unit, Faculty of Education, University of Durban-Westville.

Gultig, J. (ed), (1997) Understanding Outcomes Based Education: Knowledge, Curriculum & Assessment in S.A. (SAIDE.)

Harber, C. (1989) Politics in African Education, MacMillan Publishers, London.

Harber, C. (1997)a Education, Democracy and Political Development in Africa, Sussex, Academic Press, Great Britain.

Harber, C. (1997)b 'Using Documents for Qualitative Educational Research in Africa,' in M. Crossley and Vulliamy (Editors) Qualitative Educational Research in Developing Countries, New York : Garland.)

Harber, C. & Davies, L. (1997)c School Management and Effectiveness in Developing Countries, London, Cassell.

Harber, C. (1998) 'Markets, Equity and Democracy - Structural adjustment and the tensions of educational change in South Africa,' Int. J. Educational Development, Vol : 18, No. 3.

Hendriks, S. (1997), The NQF and implications for OBE, Compiled by Centre for Education Policy Development, Johannesburg.

Hopkins, D. Ainscow, M. & West, M. School Improvement in an Era of Change, Redwood Books, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Jansen, J . (1997)a Curriculum Reform in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes Based Education, Faculty of Education University of Durban-Westville, (Unpublished article).

Jansen, J. (1997)b The reconstruction of schools: can quality be improved? Education Africa Forum - The First Edition, p.20-23, (Education Africa Forum.)

J.E.T Bulletin No. 7 October 1997, OBE.

King, M and van den Berg, O. (1991) The Politics of Curriculum Structures and Processes, (Centaur Publications, Pietermaritzburg.)

MacDonald, B & Walker, R (1975) Case Study and the Social Philosophy of Educational Research, Cambridge Journal of Educational Vol 5, No.1

Mashamba, G. (1990) A Conceptual Critique of the People's Education Discourse, Research Report no:3, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

McKernan, J. (1994) Some Limitations of Outcomes-Based Education. (Unpublished article)

Monau, A. (1997) In OBE learners 'perform' their skills, The Teacher, November 1997, Vol:2, No:9, p.12, col:1-5.

Moore, S. (1997) Curriculum 2005 - times are a changing, Living and Loving Magazine, September 1997, no:340, p.81-85, col:1-3.

Murphy, R. and Torrance, H. (edited by), (1987) Evaluating Education: Issues and Methods, (Paul Chapman Publishing LTD, London.)

Patton, M.Q. (1990) Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, (Newbury Park, Sage.)

Potenza, E. and Jansen, J. (1998) Outcomes - based Education: Will it benefit our children? Fair Lady Magazine, January 1998, no: 667, col:1-2, p. 52-56.

Powney, J. and Watts, M. (1984) Reporting Interviews: A Code of Good Practice, Research Intelligence, No. 17, September.

Reynolds, D. and Cuttance, P. (edited by), (1992) School Effectiveness: Research, Policy and Practice, (Dotesios, Trowbridge, Wilts, Great Britain.)

Skinner, K. (1997) Gearing up for Curriculum 2005, SADTU NEWS, April 1997, Vol:2, No:4, p. 1, col:1-5.

Spady, W.G. (1988) Organising for Results: The basic of authentic restructuring and reform, Education Leadership, 46(2), 9-10.

Stake, R. E. (1988) Case Study Methods in Educational Research: Seeking Sweet Water, In Jaeger, RM (ed) Complementary Methods for Research in Education, (Washington, D. C. : AERA.)

Stenhouse, S. (Undated) The Study of Samples and the Study of Cases, From:Evaluating Education: An Open University Reader, (ed by Murphy, R & Torrance, H: Assessments and Examinations Unit, Department of Education South Hampton University, (PCP Publishing LTD)

The South African Guild of Speech and Drama Teachers, (1998), Talk Out, Special Edition, May 1998, The Guild, Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes Based Education

Tripp, D. (1990) 'Socially Critical Action Research', Theory into Practice, 29, 2.

Unterhalter, E. et al, (ed), (1991) Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles, Ravan Press, Johannesburg.

✓ Venter, M. (1997) Mixed reception for OBE internationally, The Teacher, November 1997, Vol:2, No:9, p.13, col: 1-5.

✓ Vermaak, E. (1996) Paper presented at a Seminar on Outcomes-Based Education held at the University of Durban-Westville in September 1996.

Walker, M. (1990) 'Action Research in South African Schools: Gliding gutter education or transforming teaching', Perspectives in Education, 11, 2.

Zijl, v. P. (compiled by) (1989), People's Education : A Collection of Newspaper Articles, 1986 - 1988, (Resource Centre, Technikon, Mangosuthu, 1989.)

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM CHANGE AND OBE

RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

CURRICULUM REFORM

1. What do you think about the present (post- apartheid) curriculum in relation to the past (apartheid) ?
2. Has there been any changes you would term significant? What are these changes? Why do you find them significant?
3. Did you experience any difficulties implementing these changes? Why? Please provide examples.
4. What do you think of curriculum change? Why?
5. Who do you think should provide the impetus for curriculum change, the central government or the teachers? Why?
6. What are your thoughts about the present curriculum changes in respect to OBE that are taking place?
7. Do you think we are ready for these changes? Why?
8. Do you think that outcomes based education would work in our present circumstances in S.A? Why?

IMPLEMENTING OBE

1. What do you understand by the term outcomes based education?
2. Do you think OBE is different from the present curriculum? Why do you think so?
3. Are you a grade one teacher who is implementing OBE in your classroom this year? Explain in detail your reasons for either implementing it or not implementing it.
4. Did you feel that you were adequately prepared when you began to implement this curriculum? Why?
5. Describe the sort of training you received in preparation to implement OBE?

6. Did this prepare you adequately? Explain in detail.
7. What would you have liked to see included in preparing teachers to implement this curriculum, that was not part of the program? Why?
8. Do you possess all the resource materials (such as curriculum materials, textbooks, workbooks, guidelines) to implement OBE effectively? Why?
9. Have you received any training to help you produce your own curriculum materials? If so give details as to its usefulness to you?
10. Do you have a special syllabus guideline which outlines the type of content? If yes, what do you think of it? If no, do you think the department of education should have made one available to educators? Why?
11. Are you experiencing any problems with the implementation of OBE? What are they? Explain in detail.
12. Are the assessment techniques in OBE different from the present curriculum that the other grades are still engaged in? Explain with examples.
13. Have you experienced any problems when conducting assessment in OBE? What are they? Explain in detail how you have been doing it as well as if and how you resolved them?

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

1. Are your classrooms large enough to allow you to function in ways that OBE would expect you to?
2. How many grade one learners do you have in your classroom?
3. Do you find it comfortable to work with this number? Explain with examples of problems, if any?
4. What in your opinion would be a reasonable number to work with, looking at your experiences so far?

FUTURE CURRICULUM

1. Do you think that OBE and Curriculum 2005 will be a reality for our future? Explain why you think this?
2. Do you think that OBE will resolve all our educational and training problems in the future? Why and or how?