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**UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN – WESTVILLE**

**THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12  
LEARNERS IN THE DISTRICT OF MOUNT FRERE  
OF THE EASTERN CAPE**

**C.N. CANCA**

**2004**

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**The poor performance of grade 12 learners  
in the District of Mount Frere  
in the Eastern Cape**

by

**C.N. CANCA**

A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirements  
for the master of education degree  
(Educational Management)

of the Faculty of Education

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Supervisor: S.D. Bayeni

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**DECLARATION**

I,

**CHRISTELLA NOKUZOLA CANCA,**

declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted for any degree in any University. The supervisor whose name appears on the title page has monitored this work and the views have been extracted from experts acknowledged and listed in the bibliography.

This declaration was signed by me in April 2004

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(Researcher)

(i)

## ABSTRACT

Despite the numerous intervention programmes provided by the Department of Education to make a difference in Grade 12 exam results, there are schools that are still performing below expected national and provincial standards. Although the Department of Education has provided strategies to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners, the four schools investigated in the Mount Frere district of the Eastern Cape are still performing poorly.

These schools performance has been compared with the National and Provincial percentages from 1998 to 2001 and exhibits an alarming failing gap. During these years the pass percentage increase in the Eastern Cape was 7.72% in 1998, 14.6% in 1999, 15.9% in 2000 and 22.3% in 2001, showing a great decline during the years 1999 and 2001.

Respondents believe that full involvement of stakeholders in schools and availability of resources would yield better exam results. Supervision by the School Management Teams is another important aspect that seemed to be neglected by the principals, deputy principals and heads of divisions. Educators' attitudes towards supervision should be made positive so that they see it as a development strategy more than an evaluation procedure.

Limitations which include incomplete information, time constraints, the attitudes of stakeholders towards research, sampling and the compilation of the findings, did not have a severe impact on the recommendations. An important advantage of this investigation is that openness from respondents was achieved to a very great extent.

Clearly there is a need to investigate this poor performance of Grade 12 learners which ranges from 33% to 20% pass rate during the 1998 to 2001 in the four schools. The provincial averages were 44.6%, 40.1%, 49.8% and 45.6% during the years investigated.

Surely this investigation and the application of its recommendations can improve the performance of Grade 12 learners in these schools and those operating under the same conditions.

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to

all the learners, educators and all those who need to be educated, and interested  
in improving performance in education

&

My family:

My children Awonke, Akhona, Namala, Andisiwe, my parents, brothers and  
sisters

&

finally to:

My friends, brothers and sisters in Christ

(iii)

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My immediate maiden family who also encouraged me tirelessly to work hard towards writing this dissertation.

### **Abbreviations**

1. **NDoE:** National Department of Education
2. **SCE:** Senior Certificate Examination
3. **DD:** Daily Dispatch
4. **EC:** Eastern Cape
5. **EW:** Education Week
6. **SGB:** School Governing Body
7. **SASA:** South Africa Schools Act
8. **NRPIS:** National Report on the performance of individual Schools
9. **C2005:** Curriculum 2005
- 10 **OBE:** Outcome Based Education
11. **OFSTED:** Office of Standards in Education
12. **SADTU:** South African Democratic Teachers Union
13. **FET:** Further Education and Training
14. **DAS:** Developmental Appraisal System
15. **WSE:** Whole School Evaluation
16. **LLL:** Life Long Learning
17. **SMT:** School Management Team
18. **SWOT:** Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

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# CHAPTER 1

## WHY THIS CONCERN?

### 1.1 Introduction

As an educator who has been in teaching-learning situation for the past twenty years, I have noticed with great concern, the general decline in the existing standards of education in Mount Frere district, a rural area situated in the Eastern Cape. This was confirmed to a very great extent when students performed poorly in their matric exams. Surely this tendency warranted a need for empirical evidence to be gathered in a scientific way in order to identify the key probable causes of the poor performance. In order to pinpoint reasons for the poor Grade 12 results for the past four years (1998-2001) it was important to move away from the tendency to generalise what the causes may have been.

The profile of the schools selected included those with a low or decreasing pass rate at Grade 12 for the past four years. There were four senior secondary schools of the same district in which this investigation was conducted with an average of thirty learners in each class.

### 1.2 The background of the study

The democratization of the education system has created certain expectations, as there seemed to be an increase in provisioning for education in the form of providing stationery, conducting workshops for educators, training on Outcomes

Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (C 2005) approaches and more authority given to School Governing Bodies (SGB).

In January 2000 the National Department of Education released for the first time, the National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools (NRPIS). The same exercise was practiced in 2001 with a list of all schools in the country arranged in rank order based on frequency intervals of 20% as shown in the national report, on the performance of individual schools in the 2000: Senior Certificate Examination January 2001. Whilst the national trend showed a rise of 3.8% from a year 2000 to 2001, the Eastern Cape province average percentage pass showed a decline of 4.2% producing the worst return in the country at 45,6% pass when the national matric pass was 61.7% (Daily Dispatch-Dec. 28, 2001).

Two of the four schools identified for this investigation fell between 00-19,99% and two between 20%-39,99% pass rank order in frequency intervals at least once between the years 1998 and 2001.

According to the merit list of the district, all these schools were between 10 and 15 out of 15 schools. The district average failure rate for the year 2001 was 57,22% and 43,2% in 2000, the years 1998 and 1999 had 59.45% and 72,06% respectively. These four years had an average failure rate of 57,73% which is more or less the same as the last years (57,22% in 2001). The four schools

therefore were outstandingly identified as those in need of finding out why their performance was so poor. This province is the one that was referred to as "requiring our concerted attention". The South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) (Daily Dispatch, 28 Dec 2001) also noted that the legacy of apartheid and gender discrimination continued to reflect the irregularities within the education system. The irregularities included minimum supervision, very little resources, poor facilities and lack of commitment. The lowest pass rates were from the poorest provinces where black and rural communities compromised the vast majority. In the Eastern Cape there were few schools in historically disadvantaged areas that received awards, implying therefore that there was room for improvement even in the most remote areas (Archives: New articles-11 January 2002).

In this way education would transform as we need to learn how to study, think creatively and know how to access each other's knowledge. Egol (1999) in his article "Transforming education" claimed that the existing system was designed to tolerate, even produce high failure rate. We needed fundamental change for a new era, not mere improvement. This implied therefore that we must redesign our institutions of learning for the information age. Simply correcting deficiencies of the current system would not do. An economy based on brainpower required an education system in which all succeed to mastery of much higher skills including lifelong-learning skills. The prospect of average or failing performance

and pressure to perform, crushed out natural love of learning and created mental dropouts. For most students, school became an onerous place.

There was great belief that education systems in overseas countries are like United Kingdom (U.K.) education systems and would automatically make a better learning environment and produced good results. A learner who could not cope with his school work in Britain was sent to a school in Ghana where he achieved excellent grades (Sunday Times, January 27, 2002). This implied therefore that we had to conduct research for our own environments in developing countries like South Africa and change the situation for better.

### **1.3 The purpose of the study**

As indicated before, the concern was about the poor performance of Grade 12 learners during the past four years in the district of Mount Frere (Eastern Cape Province). The aim of conducting this investigation was to find strategies that will assist in improving their performance which was usually indicated by the exam results.

Egol (1999) believes that the theory of knowledge employed by most of today's schools in which knowledge is viewed as a thing to be transferred instead of created was not valid. Students were treated as empty vessels into which knowledge was poured. This process was not conducive to genuine learning and contributes to poor understanding trends that will someday have to be unlearned.

It ignored modern cognitive science, which told us that children learn best from immersion purposeful work they choose to do because they could see relevance and meaning. The increasing pace of knowledge development and its rapid obsolescence meant knowing lots of answers was not sufficient; no one can know enough. In a more complex world, there were more questions than answers. In this way education would transform as we used to learn how to study, think creatively and know how to access knowledge.

Comparison was also necessary in showing that schools operated under the same environmental conditions could differ. Further, the performance of a learner in a disadvantaged school could be better than in a well resourced area. Mbilwi Senior Secondary School in Thohoyandou district which was poorly resourced produced a top learner (Archives: New Articles January 2001). Such occurrence makes one pose a question of how this learner managed to excel where other learners could not cope. This study would therefore come up and account for such differences and ultimately assist other schools too.

#### **1.4 The scope of the study**

The study was conducted from May to November 2002, looking at the analysis of the results for the past four years (1998-2001) of fifteen schools out of which four were identified as bad performers. The results were found from the district office and further analysis was done by the researcher.

From each senior secondary school, the principal / deputy principal, six educators, one SGB members, twenty learners were participants. The principals or deputy principals were interviewed about what they liked about their school, the trend of the Grade 12 exam results and the challenges they were facing as management. Ways of encouraging both learners and educators were asked for and learner support services (financially, academically and emotionally) were also raised as concerns. Learners were asked about the learning areas that needed attention in their studies and which teaching strategies would they prefer to make learning meaningful. Other questions posed to learners included the ways in which they would like to participate in class and how they would benefit from this involvement. The learners' attitude towards the discovery method was also investigated. Ways of encouraging learners to do better in their work was asked and the role played by parents and stakeholders' support assessed.

Educators were asked about their strengths and weaknesses in the teaching-learning situation. Further, reasons for offering the subjects they were teaching were sought. Strategies used when teaching was investigated as well as the exam results of subjects taught. How the educators intend improving on their previous performances was another concern. Educators were also asked about how often they gave homeworks, assignments, group projects, classwork exercises and tests and how these were marked and processed.

School governing body members were mainly asked about their participation in school matters and whether they understood the difference between governance and management. Such questions were included to alleviate the pressure that is usually exerted on the principal by SGB members trying to take over the day-to-day running of the school.

Researcher questions included the following:

- What are the causes of poor learner performance in Grade 12 in Mount Frere district?
- What are the possible strategies to be used to address (improve) the situation in Mount Frere district?
- What contributed to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners in this district?

### **1.5 The significance of the study**

The results of this investigation would assist the four senior secondary schools chosen to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners. Further, schools operating under similar conditions and environment would also benefit from this study in the district, region, province and South Africa as a whole by making use of recommendations that would come of the study.

Some strategies that could be derived from this study could also assist in providing the performance of those good schools by choosing the relevant recommendations to target their weak teaching-learning areas.

### 1.6 Sampling

Schools that were investigated were chosen from 15 schools in the district of Mount Frere. As the merit list on the performance of Grade 12 learners was drawn, the four schools with the highest percentage fail for the four schools was 84, 86%, 63, 68%, 58, 79% and 79.61% as shown in table 1.1 below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>1998 % Fail</b>	<b>1999 % Fail</b>	<b>2000 % Fail</b>	<b>2001 % Fail</b>	<b>Average % Fail</b>	<b>Average % Fail</b>
School 1	86,05	87,13	80,04	84,62	84.46	84.46
School 2	86,07	59,45	56,00	53,19	63.68	63.68
School 3	76,00	69,03	49,04	41,09	58.79	58.79
School 4	72,09	73,80	83,50	89,00	79.61	79.61

Table 1.1: A summary of schools identified for investigation indicating the failure rate from 1998-2001

The average percentage fail was 71, 64% which means a 28,37% average pass rate for the year 1998 to 2001. The four schools that were chosen for investigation were the lowest in the district merit list of fifteen schools, with

percentages varying in each year. This was done in four schools of the same district for period of four years from 1998 to 2001

The table that follows shows the percentage failure rate of schools 1, 2, 3 and 4, the position in the district and on the NRPIS. The schools were chosen as a result of their performance as displayed by the percentage failure rate on the table. Schools number one and four have their failure rate percentage as ranging between 72.09% and 89%.

<b>Year</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
School 1	10	14	14	14
School 2	11	07	11	08
School 3	09	10	08	13
School 4	08	13	15	15

Table 1.2: Position in the Mt. Frere district merit list out of 15 senior secondary schools.

<u>Rank order in frequency</u>	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
	00-19,99%	20-39,99%	20-39,99%	20-39,99%

Table 1.3: Extracted from the National Report on the Performance of Individual Schools in the 2000 Senior Certificate Exams.

## **1.7 Limitations**

### **1.7.1 Sampling**

The fewer the schools, the less the in depth and scope of the investigation as the researcher needed different methods of collecting the data. From so many schools in the province and fifteen in the district only four were chosen.

The sampling was done by listing all fifteen schools of the district with the percentage pass rate for the past four years from 1998 to 2001. The years chosen too could be a limiting factor as issues like instability of educators and change of management happened during the years of the investigation. Processed Grade 12 results from the district, provincial and national offices were available during the years of the investigation.

### **1.7.2 Different environments**

The unique environment under which these schools operate would make it difficult for other schools that work under different conditions to use the results of this investigation. Even if the surroundings are similar, they could never be exactly the same. Therefore the recommendations of this research project can be used to the school operating under the same conditions within the same district. Fewer recommendations might be applicable to other provinces.

#### **1.4 Scope of application**

The different environments make the application of recommendations not to be fully utilized nationally. This implies therefore that the results could only be applied to fewer areas like Limpopo and Northern Province, only those has similar environmental conditions that are remote. The Eastern Cape province has similar environmental characteristics, which makes only three out of nine provinces. The application of these findings will therefore have a very limited scope of application.

#### **1.7.4 Frequency of visits**

The schools targeted were not visited regularly as desired or planned because of slippery roads and rainy weather. Some learners could not avail themselves during revisits as they were preparing for exams. This retarded the progress of the investigation. Some learners' responses could not be received in good time and this delay necessitated repeated visits.

#### **1.7.5 Honesty and Openness**

Also, responses from both educators and learners were not be genuine and open as I would have liked them to be. The topic investigated was a sensitive one and would give a certain perception and image about them.

Such responses were carefully designed cognitively before they were given out to the researcher in order to present a "better" picture about how things were

going on in their school. This study would be more valid if responses were honest.

#### **1.7.6 Collection of all information**

The collection of documents on the instruments used (e.g. questionnaires, survey, interview schedules and test marks) might not be received back in full. In three schools 2% of learner questionnaires were not received, as learners were absent from schools. 1% of the educators' responses were not handed in.

#### **1.7.7 Attitude towards research**

Most educators do not have a positive attitude towards research as they think that information sought might be used against them negatively. A lot of convincing has to be done therefore for full cooperation and participation so that all prospective participants can open up honestly.

#### **1.7.8 Time is of essence**

Properly researched projects needed ample time to conduct all the necessary activities. Because of the holidays that interrupt the school programme, this factor might lead to incomplete activities and lack of sequential flow of events during this process.

### **1.7.9 Distance**

The distance too might give hindrances for the schools investigated were quite far from the researcher's point of operation and the dirt road cannot be used when raining.

### **1.7.10 Funding**

Coupled with the above two concerns is the question of funding. This is a constraint and I would be very glad if the university or any available donor would finance the project. Its significance would be very remarkable if thoroughly conducted.

## **1.8 The overview of the research project**

The purpose of this chapter was to contextualize the question on which this research focused. This chapter also serves to "set the scene" for the rest of this research report.

Chapter Two outlined the literature reviewed on the performance of Grade 12 learners in senior secondary schools and what had been done to improve the situation. This included education journals, books, internet extracts, newspaper articles, NDOE & provincial and district analysis, comments from different forms of sectors and educators.

The methodology used in this study was described in chapter three. The approach encompassed a number of instruments designed to solicit information that will assist in getting reasons for the poor performance.

Chapter Four deals with the analysis of the research data and Chapter Five uses literature reviewed in combination with the findings to make recommendations to improve performance of Grade 12 learners in senior secondary schools operating under the same environmental conditions.

In South Africa, education is in a period of change. This research was carried out during this period. I believe that it will contribute to solve some and most problems that encourage poor performance.

Comprehensive policies have been laid down to guide the teaching-learning situation for better performance (the expectation for improved exam results) but Clarke (1998:110) believes that if the necessary implementation is not monitored, these policies are doomed to fail.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHAT DO OTHER RESEARCHERS SAY?

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the poor performance of the learners as analysed by researchers. I will analyse literature on poor performance and make comparison.

In 1999 the Eastern Cape's education MEC issued a public statement about schools that had a percentage pass rate that was less than 50%. He stated that such poor performing schools would be visited by government officials and would have to account for the poor exam result. Schools identified to be lacking skills would be developed in order to improve Grade 12 learners performance and will be helped with study skills necessary for better achievement. It is also in the interest of all to see that learners do well especially at matric, as this level was a "passport" to job acquisition (Koooverjee 1998).

I will start by looking at how the other writers view indicators of educational performance, the assessment and evaluation procedures, expected results

through meaningful teaching and learning. The effect of tests, exams and remarks from politicians and other interested parties would be analysed.

## **2.2 Analysis from other investigators, politicians and authors**

One of the reasons why this research is a never ending process emanates from the expected desired performance of Grade 12 learners after realizing that remedial strategies were unsuccessful. The process can never end until the results display achievement of goal, which in this case are better results. The improvements include inter alia, increased percentage pass rates, life long learning, discovery of facts with the educator as a facilitator, a thirst or curiosity about life and constant change in knowledge and how this is attained. Curzon (1990:377) believes that how students learn is more important than what they learn whilst understanding constant change in knowledge.

For as long as these improvements and outcomes realized do not match the input or are not realized, research should continue until results correlate with expectations.

Senator H. Howe who was once an education Commissioner feels that a high school that lets 25% or 40% or 50% of its students drop out before graduation can't call itself excellent no matter how close it comes in other respects to the ideals projected in all the major education reports. How a person learns therefore is very important. When Manganyi (1997) introduced the concept of

OBE, he referred to it as transformational outcomes based education. This approach emphasizes the promotion and encouragement of a “hunger” for sustainable learning abilities and the love of it. Berdford’s advice is that one can learn a lesson a day, but if one can teach one by creating curiosity about life, one would continue the learning process as long one lives, (Department of Education 1997) (DOE).

### **2.2.1 An understanding of educational performance**

How then do we know and understand that there are some improvements and what methods do we use to evaluate and assess achievements? Are these methods (such as matric examinations) of evaluating Grade 12 performance justifiable and acceptable enough to assess and judge those who perform well as well as those who do badly?

Hillier (1995) argues that: standardized tests may not be the most meaningful yardstick of education quality but the results (performance) attract close attention and political pressure on schools. Schools have to look for partners in test results that will clue them into possible improvements. There is also doubt about whether the way educational performances and hence exam results are a genuine yardstick to measure students achievements. Let us assume therefore that Grade 12 examinations as this is the measuring tool used for the years investigated would be taken as “standard” as all other learners were evaluated using the same method. Therefore, even if there are concerns around methods

of assessment and evaluating educational performance this is uniform and affects all learners. The unfairness of the current evaluation procedures should be taken as a factor that is common to everyone, because the same method and measuring technique is uniform to all.

### **2.2.2 Evaluation procedures**

According to Vally (1999) matric is a less than perfect indicator of what a learner has learnt. It is largely a selection measure, whilst Hindle (1999) feels that it remains the most invisible and tangible indicator.

Mc Ewen (1996) examines how current evaluation procedures and indicators aimed at improving the quality of education can influence the decision making process in France. It involved collecting data on a regular, basis, conducting evaluation at all levels of the system and publishing indicators about schools, regions and the country as a whole. As a result politicians and administrators found themselves under an obligation to improve the quality of education in relation to cost. The development of educational evaluation on a significant scale is one of the original systems to provide schools with information on themselves to help them improve their performance.

### **2.2.3 The importance of passing Grade 12**

Kooverjee (1998) emphasizes the importance of passing matric as a “bridge” to further education. Because of the importance of the knowledge imparted to

learners at Grade 12 level, it must be ensured that they fit the next standard of education attempted. Such need was displayed by the way learners struggle to cope with their first year studies at tertiary institutions on the basis of symbols they obtained. It is also surprising to note that even those learners who seem to have obtained a good pass find it difficult to be successful in their first year of study. Many end up doing a bridging course or orientation before they can study their first year (Bonnet 1996). Do examination results therefore indicate the performance of a learner or what the student has learnt and achieved?

#### **2.2.4 The role of assessment**

The role of assessment and examinations in learning had always been the subject of controversy. It was interesting to note, in the early history of the City of Guilds of London Institute, that craftsmen who were otherwise completely competent in the trade in which they practiced were unable to answer fairly simple questions about the scientific theories on which that trade was allegedly based. This indicates the imbalance that exists between what is examined, what the tests intended to evaluate and the type of questions asked to see whether the desired outcomes have been achieved.

The researcher has also noted with great concern the misuse of examination papers by educators and the repetition of questions by examiners for about four consecutive past years. These papers are used from the beginning of the year to teach learners so that they are in line with what was asked and how it was asked.

Previous papers are therefore no longer used for revision purposes but as teaching strategies to pass examinations. This statement was proved to be true, as questions set would be selected from these previous exam papers. In such a case, drilling learners on possible questions for their next exam uses exams as a form of assessment incorrectly. This practice is not teaching at all but an unfair way of making learners to pass with very little knowledge gained. Ultimately the results looked good as the learners would obtain a pass but the method through which this was achieved was unethical as the learners have not been properly taught but trained in ways of answering questions phrased differently from previous exam question papers. Examiners should always keep in mind what they would like to achieve after evaluating learners by changing questions and design them in such a way that students and educators are unable to track and know the questioning trends.

#### **2.2.5 Why do learners fail?**

Hillier (1995) wonders why students were not successful in their studies, as he believes that learning is supposed to be an enjoyable experience. What makes students not to be successful in their studies is still a question to be answered. failure This is the question that the researcher has – what reasons could be attributed to the failure and poor performance of Grade12 learners at the four schools investigated. Davis (1983) argues that meaningful teaching and learning as a remedy to rote learning which has been a traditional approach for quite a long time should help improve a pupils performance on acquiring knowledge and

achieve better results on tests and examinations. If this is not so, what could be the cause of the decrease in outcomes? Hillier (1995) feels that it was essential not to rely solely on one assessment strategy at the end of a process of teaching and learning. To recognize the achievement to be done on a modular or unit basis, so that those candidates who by choice or because of their ability, are unable to complete their qualification, can get credit for what they have achieved.

This has contracted with the education system in England and Wales, where 30 per cent of the candidates fail to achieve a standard that has any practical or commercial value in that it does not secure either employment or access to higher education, and having spent at least two years of their young lives in pursuit of what has turned to be unattainable. Unit based qualifications and the modular learning programmes that often accompany them do present some difficulties however. It is clearly possible although not desirable to divide a subject in such a way that the sum of the parts is less than the whole. It is necessary to structure very carefully the units of assessment to make sure that overall understanding of an occupation or a subject is not jeopardized by the assessment which are integrative that is, bringing together various strands from various parts of what has been learnt as well as assessments which relate solely to particular units of achievement. In that way the best of both worlds in assessment can be achieved.

### **2.2.6 What do we test?**

Similarly, the early history of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (Foden 1989), another examining body, shows much discontent about the effect of somewhat pedestrian examination questions in the process of the learning that were produced in schools. The phrase “what you test is what you get” characterizes much education and training. It can be seen as a problem...or it can be seen as an opportunity, and this however involves integrating the process of assessment with that of learning in ways in which modern approaches have yet to be fully explored (Bradshaw 1995). In this way the poor performance of grade 12 learners can be improved. This implies that the way in which the test has been designed influences the results. For example, multiple-choice questions cannot really determine how much a learner knows as there can also be successful guess-work. Other factors like memos influence the results. Was the performance displayed according to the outcome genuine or did it assess the knowledge attained by the learner in an acceptable standard form?

### **2.2.7 The need for effective and efficient educational system**

Haffajee (1999) was concerned about the high matric failure rate that has costed the state more than R100 Million, raising questions about the efficacy of the examination system.

The United Democratic Movement (UDM) released media statements based on the 1997 – matric results. Isaaz Retief (1997) looking at the decreasing performance tendency supported the call for an urgent summit involving all educational stake-holders, suggested an agenda on issues affecting learner performance rather than distributing the blame. He cited a 5% decline as giving a gloomy picture of our school environment without an adequate educational system, and all our other national efforts to curb joblessness, poverty and crime and becoming a nation of hope and a world player in the new millennium would come to nothing. Effective and efficient educational systems now, more than ever, needed to become an urgent national priority.

Further, a careful and thorough analysis of the whole education system was necessary in order to satisfy the demands for a system offering the best possible value for money. The Mail and Guardian supported this statement (Evelleth 1997) when comparing the effect of scarcity of resources in the Northern Province and Western Cape, resulting in very poor matric exam results. This province displayed the same environmental learning conditions as the Eastern Cape especially the area under investigation. The evidence was not scarcity of resources but no resources at all. Schools would therefore cost the state a fortune to improve the performance of learners that would make them resourceful.

### **2.2.8 How are policy-makers, planners and other stakeholders affected?**

Surely there was a need for a continuous investigation for as long as there is no improvement in this situation so that planners, examiners and policy makers are in a position to know the various problems that are still in existence under different environments in which educators as practitioners operate. When “new” theory has been discovered, teachers, students and management would focus on areas of weaknesses thus motivating the students to perform better. Further, curriculum developers together with examiners, learners, lawmakers, markers, tertiary institutions and training providers would have sight on focus areas to concentrate on to combat this high failure rate. Teacher trainers and in-service training lecturers would identify and know the areas of need when doing capacity building. Primary teachers could also be informed of the areas of emphasis whilst learners have enough room for improvement. Learners, parents and other stakeholders could also benefit from this investigation as an encouragement to play their role using weaknesses identified. The gap that exists between theory and the real classroom situation can be minimized.

According to Kanjana (1999), the school policy should consider the active involvement of learners, parents and industry in deciding what skills each of those needed.

### **2.2.9 The impact of remedial strategies**

Mwamwenda (1994:1) stresses remedial strategies like discovery and meaningful learning. He believes that when informal observations, tests, questionnaires for both learners and educators and interview schedules would be used to try and expose what problems students have in grasping the content. Class visits would be conducted and the important points during the tuition period would be noted. Tests though not regarded as the best way of assessment will be administered. Continuous assessment in the true sense would be an ideal approach of assessing the validity of the instruments used, but it will not be easily applicable. Participation by students in the teacher learning activities would be encouraged to see whether the implementation of the OBE approach is possible. Educators in the remote areas always complain about not having resources to apply certain approaches. Guiding educators to improvise where possible should also be looked at. Always remember that the OBE dictates the outcomes not the methods (Curriculum 2005, 1998).

Educators feel that research activity is something else and is so far removed from the classroom. They believe that it will help and solve their immediate instructional problems. In fact, the work that is done by educators often results in the need for further research (Weaven P: 983). Further, educators should realize that in any teaching-learning situation research occurs consciously or unplanned. It is important therefore for educators to keep records and track of changes or

"abnormal" discoveries that they come across. These track records could be indicative of certain changes that are needed to improve the learning situation.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

It is important to know what other investigators, authors, politicians and the general public say about the topic. The following questions should be responded to: Why do students learn and why do Grade 12 learners perform badly? Is the evaluating and assessment system (tests and exams) a reliable way of finding knowledge attained?

In January the 17<sup>th</sup> year 2000, an article entitled "Seven challenges for the Eastern Cape education department" cited the following flaws that had to be addressed: insufficient work ethics; lack of textbooks; lack of basic facilities (toilets, electricity, desks, water, sport, and libraries, classrooms); losing skills rather than gaining them; the lack of accountability; and the incorrect use of media by learners (Daily Dispatch). All these factors can lead to improved learner performance when attended to. Now that this is 2003, have these been changed for better? A special assignment programme showed in 2002 on television proves the opposite as the presenters quoted the same flaws.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE WAY TO DISCOVERY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains in detail the ways in which the investigation was done. It starts by formulating a “criteria” for the schools to be visited and reasons for such identification. Since the study was concerned about the poor performance of Grade 12 learners, the researcher started by graphically representing and tabulating the results of all 15 senior secondary schools in the district. This approach showed the trend of schools whose results kept improving and those schools whose failure rate was increasing. The failure rate of the investigated schools ranged from 58.79 to 84.46 percentage fail from the years 1998 to 2001.

The analysis of results received from the district office was done looking at:

- The schools merit list;
- The percentage per school for the past four years (1998-2001) and their trends (improving or declining);
- Percentages of district compared with the regional, provincial and national performances. Lists from the offices were found and compared with the National Report on Performance of Individual Schools in rank order and frequency intervals of 20 percent.

This exercise led to the identification of the schools whose performances were investigated.

### **3.2 The nature of the research**

The first phase of the investigation was to contact the exams officer at the district office to get the general picture of the performance of Grade 12 learners. This was followed by questions (Annexure A) relating to the decreasing trend (or poor performance) of at least 50% of the 15 schools in the district. Questions were asked to find out whether the district had done the critic analysis of the schools I regarded as bad performers and what they were actually doing about it. Furthermore, the district examination officer was asked about the method of assessment of Grade 12 learners and whether there has been research conducted by them about the bad performing schools.

Permission was also sought in writing (Annexure B) from the district office so that they were aware of the research conducted, asking them to co-operate therefore by actually encouraging the schools to be visited to open up and accept the researcher with a positive and constructive attitude.

All the correspondence and instruments used (interviews and schedules, questionnaires, qualification survey, letters, school environment assessment

form) are attached as annexures at the end of this chapter. The letters that were sent to the principals (Annexure C) clearly stated what the researcher would be doing in the process, who would be interviewed, how, what time was needed and what instruments would be used to conduct investigation.

Teaching and learning was also observed as two educators were asked to teach different subjects in the same Grade 12 class. Perusal of records (like looking at class tests, assignments and daily exercises) formed part of the investigation.

### **3.3 The details of the spade work**

#### **3.3.1 Communication with schools to be investigated**

Management of the schools to be researched was approached to make all stakeholders aware of this investigation. This approach intended to condition the interviewees psychologically to enable those to be interviewed to give out information freely so that when I started asking questions everyone was ready and at ease.

This was a very important step indeed to encourage co-operation to the full. For this reason managers of these schools were also urged to explain and request acceptance and receptiveness of the task to be performed from the school governing body and participants. Experience has confirmed that if this

step was ignored, resistance could be experienced and would jeopardize the process by being reluctant to give genuine, open and honest answers and responses. .

### **3.3.2 Discussion with management**

The key structure in any school was the management team to open up the whole institution. Although there were issues raised in their (principals) questionnaire, (Annexure D) historical background information about the school was sought. This 15 minute interview was informal but included direct questions to get specific answers. This also helped me in assessing other aspects like human relations and how management interacted and communicated with the school as a whole. In this way some "evaluation" of leadership skills and potential was assessed.

### **3.3.3 Interviews with educators**

Focus was on educators teaching in the class to be investigated. At the beginning of these interviews I tried to find out whether the request for research was communicated in good time. These discussions included the effect of available resources on their class work, the type of subject they handled, students' initiatives, new strategic approaches like OBE and curriculum 2005. Human related matters and support services were discussed to try and get the feeling of educators around those areas.

Questions (Annexure E) were designed to trigger the thought of an educator and were asked to put them at ease to answer with honesty and openness. The researcher convinced them that even negative remarks and discussions about certain relations towards one another were expected. Some senior secondary school teachers still entertain some fears of being victimized should they speak against management, especially the principal. But even then, constructive criticism was encouraged to dig out on other academic issues especially the teaching-learning situation.

Questionnaires were filled and educators asked to elaborate where possible. They were also requested not to write their names on them but only in the qualification schedule. This was also means of assuring them that what they wrote was confidential. They were also persuaded strongly to ask for clarification where questions were not very clear. Ambiguity was also clearly ruled out in this way so that specific answers could be found.

Questions to the educators included strategies used by each individual when teaching, his or her strengths and weaknesses as an educator, the pass rate for the previous four years in the subjects taught and how the educator intended to improve on the performance.

Qualifications were also recorded in the form of a survey (Annexure F) to see whether the educators were fit for handling the subjects they were teaching.

#### **3.3.4 Lesson observation**

This was the one of the most important strategies of investigating the problem as it focused on the way in which the real teaching and learning took place in class. Not only was the session used for looking at teaching and learning taking place, but also looking at class work exercises, records of test marks, question papers, assignments, collections of learning material done by students and educators' learning material, the resource material in class displayed and kept in cupboards. In this way a full picture of the learning environment was obtained.

However, the researcher also found out from both learners and educators about what methods were used to learn outside the classroom situation. It should also be emphasized that learning does not only take place in class and that some information can be gathered elsewhere, even other reading material besides prescribed books will be of great use in class. The observer or researcher sat at the back of the classroom and tried not to disturb the presentation in progress.

The educators could also be requested not to present a lesson taught before but preferably a new one. What was avoided was a situation whereby learners already know the answers more than trying to find out solutions on questions posed to them on them of something they had never heard of

before. However, prior collection of materials (that were used in the lesson) was not discouraged, as a means of preparation by both the learner and educators.

Two observation schedules (B1.1 and B1.2) (Annexures G and H) were used to look at teaching strategies and learning approaches. Giving scores on each item made assessment of every aspect listed. This evaluation gave an indication of good or bad lesson presentation. Comments were also being sought from educators to allow learners to assess and/or comment on the lesson. This was done immediately after the lesson when everything was still fresh in everyone's mind. In this way learners were encouraged to indicate the type of teaching and learning environment they would like to have. Lesson plans could contribute significantly to the performance of Grade 12 learners as the educator is able to impart the knowledge to the learners logically and meaningfully.

### **3.3 5 Questionnaires for learners**

In these forms (Annexure I) learners were told not to write their names. This would make them feel free to give honest and genuine answers and not to hold any information in fear of being victimized.

Learners were also encouraged to elaborate as much as they could without losing the theme or content of the meaning of the questions. Questions

asked were designed in such a way that they make a swot analysis of the teaching-learning situation and further suggest strategies and remedial approaches that could make them improve on their learning. Learners were the centre of focus on this investigation and a deep critical Analysis from them would also lead to revealing facts.

Questions had been formulated to have the following effects:

1. Triggered the thoughts of the learners about their learning environment.
2. Assessed their educator's performance directly or indirectly.
3. Identified teaching methods that can assist in improving learner's performance.
4. Devised motivational methods to boost the morale of both learners and educators.
5. Looked at approaches that would encourage students to participate fully in their lessons.
6. Made them see and realize the assistance brought about by the discovery methods in trying to improve their cognitive skills.

The facilities of the learning environment, other support services and their effects were investigated. In this regard, some factors would be collected by informal talks with students and those (if possible) that are ex-learners of the school. Careful listening and recording of specific answers was very

important and honesty and openness was encouraged to get to the root feelings of how learners see their teaching-learning situation.

The relationship between learners and educators was also investigated to find out whether there wasn't an "us and them" situation. This situation would be assessed by asking questions such as whether the educators do find out when students have other problems except those that are academically related and subsequently what they did about them. Educators should always bear in mind that they were not only teaching the subject content to the child but have also many other roles to play according to the child's needs (a parent, counselor, advisor, moulder, brother/sister, motivator and a role model).

### **3.3.6 Interview with SGB (school governing body) member**

Gone are the days when community members who were parents in the school vicinity used to "throw" learners at the beginning of the academic year and wait for reports without any follow-ups made during the course of the year. Their participation in the school activities was nowadays demanded for various reasons. When learners saw that their parents were interested in what they do, they got motivated to demonstrate and show them what they learn. This interaction with community members made them realize their importance and their indirect positive contribution to the learners' performance. Talking to the stake-holders evaluated their involvement in

school matters which also brought close ties to the educators and the community at large.

Schools did no longer belong to educators and this should be emphasized. In this regard it should be found out whether the community did take part in school activities, in which ways, what they did to get involved, where and how often. This was asked from the chairperson of the committee or his representative. Proper communication and transparency was also investigated. SGB's should be highly involved in decision making and management and educators implement and see to the day-to-day running of school activities. It should be found out whether this approach was applied and if not, why?

The level of education of community representatives and the distribution of various stakeholders in the governing body was carefully looked at. These were some of the issues that caused disharmony and mistrust. People elected to constitute such structures should be knowledgeable, have expertise in the various field of curriculum, can assess whether proper tuition does take place and have great interest in school matters-this was researched. Educators need a lot of assistance from experts which could be solicited in "open" school days.

### **3.4. Concluding remarks**

Teachers normally act as if a learner's mind is a blank slate or an empty computer disk on which effective teachers can record whatever information they like. Research suggests otherwise: each learner's mind is more like a computer programme than a computer disk (Curzon 1990).

This implied that teachers had to find ways and means, strategies and methods, which would be meaningful for successful learning to take place. Instead of teachers covering a prescribed body of knowledge to learners, they should be self-directed and be taught how to learn in a system that nurtures love of learning, the foundation of lifelong learners.

Rather than covering the curriculum, it should be uncovered through a self-direct discovery process. Learners should be responsible for their own learning with a facilitator's support and counsel (Egol 1999).

## CHAPTER 4

### NEARING THE DESTINATION: FACTS AND SOLUTIONS DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1. Introduction

Research provides new knowledge, skills and strategies to be employed to match up the new demands and challenges. As a researcher I identified a situation which needs to be addressed and improved (Mc Niff:1996). I aimed at clarifying my understanding around the area of investigation to make tacit knowledge explicit. The purpose of this chapter is to provide in the form of facts, tables, graphs and charts the reasons why the four senior secondary schools identified performed so badly. To collect data about schools I used both quantitative and qualitative methods.

#### 4.2. Techniques used

I will start by looking at the deductive approach by putting order on chaos in the material and information that I have collected. Respondents gave different answers to the same questions. These responses were grouped together and observations giving rise to similar patterns, variations and extremes were noted. The data collected were about lesson plans, written work, marking of registers, processing of marks, the analysis of the teaching-learning situation, and supervision by management, learners support materials, commitment to learn by

learners as well as educators and policy issues. In each of the focal areas enumerated above, responses were collated and analysed.

In an ideal school situation, each educator is expected to plan lessons according to the basic requirements as provided by the department of education. Such preparation will assist in ensuring that all what is needed to make the lesson meaningful is not left out. Expected in the lesson plans are the introduction, the core of the topic to be taught, the concepts, the questions to be asked, the class work exercises and the conclusion. The introduction, which is at the beginning of each preparation explains what the lesson is all about and gives the topic to be dealt with. At this stage the purpose of the lesson and the desired outcomes are clearly stated. Following the introduction stage is the content where the details of the lesson are spelt out. The detailed content of the lesson plan should emphasize the key facts about what is being learnt. From the beginning of the lesson plan the desired outcomes should be stipulated. The educator will be able to compare the expected results with the output at the end of the teaching session. At this stage the key concepts that bear the meaning of the lesson are earmarked and defined. Concepts that bring the meaning of the topic must be identified. Such terms include the key words, the relevant vocabulary to the subject content, their meaning and how they relate to one another.

Teaching aids, learning material and media used should be included at this stage. The learners themselves could even collect some materials so that they

are involved in the lesson preparations. It is always encouraged that learners be involved in setting tasks to be learnt and done in class. Questions that differ in their level of difficulty are formulated and class work exercises worked out by the educator before going to class. The learners themselves whilst others could be chosen from the prescribed and reference books could even ask some questions.

When the educator's files were looked at, there was no evidence of lessons taught. There were no details about the lesson content and the way the lessons would be presented. After scrutinizing the files, it became clear that lesson plans were not done at all. Only the daily records of work done could be found. What is expected in a lesson should have a positive impact on the learning and grasping of the subject content. Lastly the conclusion summarizes the whole lesson to keep in mind the main theme of the topic. A lesson should be prepared in such a way that it has a positive impact on the learning and grasping of the subject content. If the lesson plans were properly prepared the performance of Grade 12 learners in the senior secondary schools investigated could have improved.

The teaching and learning activities should be planned such that they run smoothly from one teaching session to the other. Care should also be taken that the teaching activities are introduced appropriately and have a variety of practical real life examples. A very long period of educator talk, for example, followed by a period of hectic practical activity, is likely to bring a degree of mayhem during the

latter. Similarly, a lesson which contains nothing but teacher talk is likely to write its own brand of disruption from the children.

Even in the best planned and organized lesson, particular attention should be given to the mechanics of how the different activities will take place coherently. Such movement, together with the periods at the beginning and the end of the lesson, is always potentially difficult times, when the teachers ability to guide and administer what is going on is under particular strain. The successful educator is the one who makes it clear to children in advance what is expected of them during the specific times. He monitors carefully what is going on and draw attention immediately to any deviations from the laid-down instructions. If the lesson plans were thoroughly prepared by the educators, better performance could be attained and the matric results improved.

Written work which included tests, assignments, projects, homework, class work exercises and certain aspects were looked at. The main focus was on the frequency of tasks given, the nature of questions asked, relevancy and syllabus coverage, marking, corrections and revision. Written work should be given regularly to encourage the learner to interact with the subject content continuously. This approach also assists the learners to work independently even during the holidays. In tests, questions should be mixed in terms of being "easy", "fair" and "difficult" to enable all learners to attempt to answer the questions. Sometimes educators choose topics for assignments and projects that have very

little or nothing to do with the subject content. In such conditions, relevancy to the syllabus should also be checked to avoid teaching content that is not required by the department of education.

After looking at the educators files, three out of four schools gave comprehensive tests at least once a month which is what was expected. In such circumstances better performance could be achieved as regular exposure to different approaches on testing can assist both educator and learner to identify areas not well understood. Only one of the four schools was regularly giving homework, assignments and projects. If all four schools were continuously giving written work to learners, the exam results could be improved.

Written work should be monitored by supervisors to check whether quality work has been done. The absence of control measures show that the educators were not monitored. Both supervision and the quality of work done have an impact on the performance of Grade 12 learners. Supervision which should be confirmed by stamp and signatures (of the heads of divisions, principals and deputy principals), written comments as a form of guidance and corrections as well as class visits could not be traced. Written work, the educators' files and the information given by management were compared. There were no monitoring tools at the school that were used to establish whether educators were actually doing their work or not. On this issue, it was found that only 20% of the management teams conducted some sort of supervision by simply looking at

teachers files and appending their signatures without comments. If the heads of departments would check on work done by educators according to expected acceptable monitoring standards by correcting the educators' files, better performance of Grade 12 learner results is possible. The essence of supervisory management is guidance and advice and these should be done properly if better results are to be achieved.

Turning to class management, organization and administration, it is clear that class problems can be created by failure to provide children with the right conditions in which they work. Cramped classrooms, for example, in which there is insufficient space for learners to carry out practical activities, could lead to disruptions during teaching periods. Where there are playing grounds next to classrooms the noise from other learners could disturb teaching and learning. This was the situation in all four schools investigated because of the shortage of classrooms. So are seating arrangements which prevent all learners from easily seeing the work being presented or demonstrated by the teacher.

Where facilities and learning aids are not available, the educator can often cause problems for him or herself simply by failing to ensure that all the necessary equipment is readily at hand. The activities going on in one part of the classroom should not conflict with those being carried out in another part, and that the learners are aware of a few simple, sensible rules designed to make everyone's work easier. This is crucial in secondary schools where experimental or technical

or creative work such as science, craft, physical education, drama and art lessons is underway.

Relevant policies like the Developmental Appraisal System (**DAS**) and whole School Evaluation (**WSE**) have been identified as those that might have a positive influence on the performance of Grade 12 learners if correctly used. In the **WSE** the areas for evaluation include: the basic functionality of the school, leadership, management and communication, governance and relationships, quality of teaching and learning, educator development, curriculum provision and resources, learner achievement, school safety, security and discipline, school infrastructure, parents and the community. If all the areas were evaluated each school would know its status quo and strive to improve. Amongst those is the quality of teaching which should lead to better performance and achievement. The **DAS** serves to encourage educators who show commitment in their work which ultimately improves the performance of learners.

Responses from educators and principals were collated and analysed and interpreted. The information for each of the four schools was combined and compared to give meaning. The four schools seem to concur on the following issues: lack of lesson preparation, poor supervision, non-application of policies, written work mainly confined to tests and use of old teaching methods. This was confirmed by the evidence obtained from files of educators and management. Also, learners listened without or very little participation when taught in class.

On the question of lack of facilities and resources, 50% of the educators felt that if there were prompt supplies of resources, learning and teaching could be improved. The reason for this is that cognitive skills can only be developed in an environment that is conducive to learning.

At the end of the interpretation an overall view of the whole scenario would be given to arrive at certain findings and recommendations. In this way an attempt was made to try and answer the following questions:

- Why do Grade 12 learners perform badly in the four senior secondary schools?
- What teaching methods do they use that led to bad results?

To answer the critical questions instruments such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires and observation schedules were used. Joseph (cited in Fraenkel and Wallen, 1998) highlights the importance of 'observation' as a means of collecting data in research work. He believes that data collected from observing phenomena, listening to people talk and interact is very useful.

The reason for using different techniques in data collection is that they complement one another. Not one technique is perfect in collecting data. Therefore the use of many strengthens the validity of the findings (Meriam1988).

I obtained learners' and educators' files and in addition to these primary sources, interviews, questionnaires and qualification surveys were conducted. The files contained daily record of work done. I looked at the type of tests, assignments and home works, the nature of questions asked and content for the projects. I also checked whether these met the required standards and how many were given weekly, monthly and each year.

It was found that all four schools gave tests at least once a month for each subject through out the year. Less work was given in the form of assignments, homework and projects. About 25% of the work was marked with the exception of tests that were corrected and marks allocated to each task. Further, test corrections were made but no encouraging comments were written for learners that were improving and above 50%. The daily records of work done were presented in the old way of the scheme of work recorded for each week.

#### **4.3. Approach to data analysis**

Responses from learners, educators and management were clustered together in terms of similar patterns. Some kinds of order seemed to be universal (Berlin and others), whilst kinds of patterns were also showing up (Kane and de Bruin 2001). There were common patterns that showed similar responses whilst others differ.

For example, some remarks from educators, learners, **SGB** s displayed in questionnaires, surveys and observation schedules were the same and others

differed. Fraenkel and Wallen (cited in Jospeh, 1998:34) highlight that observation are a primary source of data collection in research. Data collected from observing phenomena, listening to people talk and interact is very useful. When observation takes place in class, the researcher get the full picture and reality of what occurs during the teaching and learning session. The reason for using different techniques in data collection is that flaws on one method are often the strengths of the other, and, by combining these methods, I would be able to achieve the best of each method (Merriam, 1998:69).

In the face of ambiguity and misunderstandings of certain responses, I had to go back to the relevant schools to get more information and precise answers to certain questions. These relate to the use of the Development Appraisal System (**DAS**), Whole School Evaluation (**WSE**), the educators' qualifications, visits by subject advisers and examiners' reports.

#### **4.3.2 Analysis and interpretation**

##### **4.3.2.1 Lesson plans**

Lowman (1984:146) emphasizes the planning of subject content in maximizing learner interests. Teachers who carefully consider what content should be presented and how it should be organized are more likely to give virtuous performances than those who leave everything to chance. He further makes an example thus:

Suppose you wanted to get to know a tract of a country, the worst way to do it would be to jump into a car, drive straight from one end to the other, then turn your back on it and walk away. In such a case the place would not be found. Yet that is what many teachers do with (complex) subjects and that is why then pupils seem stupider than they really are. How much better would they learn the country if before setting out, they were briefed and given maps to study, if they were tested and oriented once or twice during the trip, and if they were shown photographs of the best spots and taken once over the map when they reached the end of their journey?

Highet (1950:79-80) believes that planning a lesson by knowing and stipulating step by step all the activities entailed in it will be the best way of preparing for successful teaching and learning. If well organized lessons would be the order of the day, better learner performance and achievement could be attained, thus resulting in improved Grade 12 results.

According to Martin and Schitter (1995:178) the content and structure of a lesson plan should contain only relevant information which must be viewed in the light of the learners perspective and stage of development. One way of reducing content is to categories it as 'must know', 'should know' and 'nice to know', and use only the 'must know'.

Four different subjects were taught in the four schools: Economics, English, Mathematics and Physical Science and these were randomly chosen but had focused on those subjects that have very low marks and bring the average of the exam results down. Coincidentally, I as a researcher know these subjects and had an advantage of teaching them. The lesson taught at school number 1 (S1) was on Economics (trade unions) and a very interesting topic indeed. There was no structured prepared lesson as described previously except summaries done by the educator in his preparation book. The educator explained that he was basically using the textbooks to teach. There were no teaching aids prepared to create relevant meaning of the lesson to the learner's mind. There was virtually no lesson preparation done but the educator went to class as he had been teaching the same subject during the previous years. No file was produced by the educator to confirm the lesson plans.

In school number 2(S2) an English lesson was taught and students were asked to summarize a passage. The lesson plan was there but not structured to highlight the important objectives to be achieved as indicated before. The content too, lacked introduction and the purpose of the lesson so that learners could understand the reasons why such a lesson has to be learnt. There were no concepts identified which would have led to an easier understanding of the whole paragraph. The lesson plans were in the form of the old scheme of work that were used previously as record books.

A lesson in Mathematics (Trigonometry) was prepared in steps by the educator in school number 3 (S3). No teaching aids were prepared to make the lesson a lot easier. Relevant practical examples for learners to understand why this topic of the syllabus was taught were not mentioned. The preparation shown was in the form of exercises done in class. These were presented in the form of a worksheet than a structured lesson plan. The educator explained that because she had been teaching the subject for the past seven years, she felt that this was best way of preparing for class presentation. As the qualification surveys of the educators were scrutinized, it was evident that due to the teaching the same subject for several years, the educator felt efficient in using the worksheet approach.

The educator in school number 4 (S4) had prepared a lesson in Physical Science. There were daily preparations but the lessons were not explicitly structured to see how the educator presented them to the learners. The file was well organized at it had the scheme of work, record of test marks, tests and names. Class work exercises were given regularly everyday in class especially those that involve calculations and derivation of formulae.

#### 4.3.2.2 Overall interpretation of lesson plans.

There is a saying which argues that if one fails to plan one plans to fail, thus emphasizing the importance of planning and what the results might be if there are no lesson plans.

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In the four schools investigated, two of the educators had been handling the same subject for more than five years and two for less than two years. The period during which all four educators taught the same subject confirms the years of experience in teaching it in the same class. The same response of using experience for not preparing lesson plans was given by all educators, trying to justify themselves. But the result as shown by the table given below indicates that detailed lesson plans can improve their planning. This is confirmed by the fact that results seem to be much better in a Physical Science class which has daily preparations although they were not standard lesson plans as indicated previously. The performance of Grade 12 learners could improve if lessons were properly planned. The percentages of ten, twenty six (for Economics) and fourteen, twenty three for English are enough proof for the need to planned lessons.

Management, subject advisors together with all concerned stakeholders should emphasize the necessity of planning lessons. Although this exercise might be seen as time consuming, it is obvious that detailed lesson preparations could improve the readiness of an educator. Comparison should also be done with the syllabus to identify areas not properly covered. Improvements on lesson preparation could also be achieved by changing teaching strategies, learning aids, concepts and tasks given to learners. There is a tendency of being tempted to use the same approaches without reviewing the lesson preparation according

to its effect. In this regard, the educator could record the rate of understanding the subject content by doing a class work exercise immediately after the lesson and work out the average performance as an indication of content absorption.

Years	1998	1999	2000	2001
Subject taught & School				
S1 Economics	15%	56%	10%	26%
S2 English	20%	100%	14%	23%
S3 Mathematics	31%	45%	40%	34%
S4 Physical Science	41%	42%	59%	40%

Table 4.1: Percentage pass of subjects taught

The exam results of the subjects taught when the investigation was done are shown in Table 4.1 for the years 1998-2001. Looking at the percentage pass rate of school 1, preparing a lesson by summarizing the textbook and giving notes to the students has proved to be a failure. Summarising a textbook for learners leads to rote learning rather than making them understand the subject content.

Confirmation is displayed by the fact that Economics had the lowest pass rate of all four subjects.

It was also difficult for the researcher to look at the nature and content of the lesson prepared and the relevant examples to be used in class as there was no evidence of lesson plans. Preparing for a lesson is one aspect of teaching that should be emphasized by management and closely monitored as it might hinder the expected improvement on class performance. Though we know that there are other contributing factors to bad performance, I feel that the lesson plan is the most important tool to impact positively on the Grade 12 exam results.

#### **4.3.2.3 Teaching in class: observation**

Two observation schedules B1.1.and B.1.2.were also used for assessing teaching and learning respectively in class. These instruments were specifically chosen to see how teaching and learning occurs in a structured classroom situation. Although this approach implies a snap judgement of one observation from a six months period, this might give the researcher a better understanding of classroom dynamics and some reflection of how teaching and learning takes place.

In school 1 (S1) the educator used the telling method right through the lesson, writing notes on the chalkboard. The learners listened attentively, quietly and passively. There was no independent class work, no demonstration, no debates

nor discussions, nor media or teaching aid used. The educator could have made the lesson interesting by asking probing questions such as: Do you think that there is a need for Trade Unions in South Africa? If so why? A debate would surely follow showing the students the application of trade unions in work places and the reasons for their existence.

School 2 (S2) had a similar approach where students were asked to read a passage and summarize it with the intention of bringing its core meaning. The educator herself explained the concepts instead of asking the students to find them from the dictionaries which were not in class.

The same approach of telling the students how to solve a Trigonometry task was used by the educator. No students for example were asked to come forward to the chalkboard and work there independently as proof of grasping the method of solving the class exercise. There were no teaching aids and learning material additional to the textbook as the exercise was already worked out by the educator in the workbook. This lesson was taught in School (S3).

In the Physical Science class that was taught in school number 4 (S4), the learners were lively and joined the teacher in balancing the chemical equations as a group. Although there was no teaching aid, the different strategies used by the educator to keep the whole class actively involved were successful as he continuously asked learners randomly about certain concepts and their relevance

to the formulae derived. I believe that the strategies, approaches and methods of imparting knowledge to learners are of vital importance.

As indicated in the assessment on observation schedules, the frequency criteria were in intervals of 25 % on lecture (teaching), role play, independent desk work, demonstration, multi-media, debates and discussions, and topics from students. In all four schools, 75% of the teaching was used to tell the learners what the educator has summarized from the textbook. This tendency of using the textbook and telling methods clearly indicate the small importance attached to using other strategies that might have a positive impact on how the learner could probably absorb the subject content. Further, this tendency proves the resistance to use the modern teaching strategies such as facilitating the lesson. The pie diagram below illustrates the picture as summarized on the teaching strategies of the four senior secondary schools under investigation.

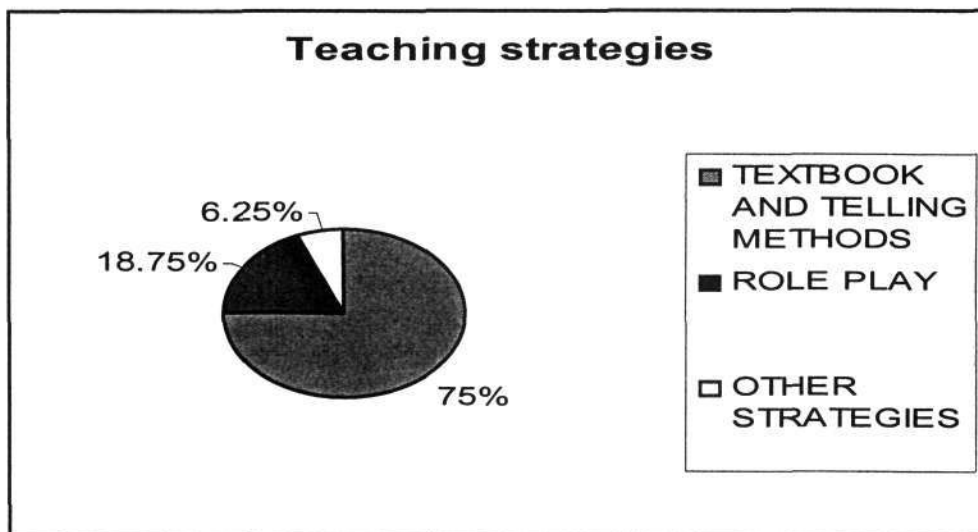


Figure 4.1 : Teaching strategies used during classroom observation

Seven teaching strategies that were enumerated in the observation schedules included the lecture, role play, independent desk work, demonstration, multimedia, debates, and topics from students. In the diagram 75% represents the use of one or two similar teaching methods (the textbook and the telling). The diagram reflects very little use of role play or student participation whilst 18,75% represents the remaining teaching strategies like learners responding to the teaching by completing answers or sentences as the educator say them or repeating the same response after the educator has said it. Educators should use multiple teaching strategies therefore to enhance their teaching performance.

Before learning was observed the class was divided into groups of five learners as indicated in the two observation schedules (Annexures G and H). Some were expected to ask questions, others set a task for the whole class, some calling the educator for assistance and other learners files were looked at. The teaching and learning period lasted for forty five minutes and class dynamics were closely monitored. The assessment was done using numbers one of five to represent the frequency of occurrences and this was combined for all four schools investigated. The frequency of one represents 'not at all', that of two indicates 'less of the time', three for 'some of the time', four for 'most of the time' and five for all 'all the time'. Under criteria the expected ways of participation have been listed and combined frequency scores given next to each criteria. The frequency levels rise from one to five indicating the extent of repetition of the participating. The scores displayed on the table reveal that learners are used to listening and this seems to

be the only way they are actively engaged in the lesson. This listening tendency is confirmed by the score of four which represents 'most of the time'. This occurrence covers 90% of the involvement of learners when teaching and learning was taking place. Further evidence is deduced from the low scores in other criteria and frequencies of 'one' which appear twice on the table that is shown below, summarizing the scores of the four schools.

<u>CRITERIA</u>	<u>FREQUENCY COMBINED</u>
Learners ask questions:	1 : not at all
Learners listen attentively:	4 :most of the time
Learners are involved in the set task	1 :not at all
Human relations between educators and learners	2 :less of the time

Table 4.2: Frequencies on learners' participation

The table clearly indicates that learners are so much used to listening with the textbook as the only source of reference. The notes given were also summaries of the same textbook as the educators had no other reference learning material. As the education system is moving from the old methods of teaching to the **OBE**, educators should be encouraged to act as facilitators in class so that learners can discover facts, knowledge and answers themselves. In this regard, a direct question was asked from the questionnaires of both learners and educators about the method or strategy they would prefer in class. The following table

summarized the picture of how the four schools feel about the preferred approach to teaching and learning:

<b>Teaching Method</b>	<b>Textbook Method</b>	<b>Telling Method</b>	<b>Discovery Method</b>	<b>Any Method</b>	<b>Did not Respond</b>
Educator	45 %	41%	13%	1%	-
Learner	10%	45%	38%	2%	5%

Table 4.3: Preferences of teaching methods

The results shown above are a clear indication of the use of the old methods of teaching as confirmed by 45% preferred by educators. This percentage also informs the researcher of the evidence to change to the discovery of method which the least preference of 13%. Quite a number of lessons could be highlighted for this tendency. There seems to be disagreement between the methods preferred by educators and learners. The former would like to use 45% of the textbook method when the latter were not happy with the same method which has 10% preference. The educators prefer this method because of the reluctance to change from the old ways of teaching which is comfortable for them. Shifting to the discovery method which is preferred by learners by 38% as against the educators 13% might used a lot of preparation which the educators were not used to. It also appears as if there is growing awareness from learners towards the need to discover knowledge on their own and develop learning skills. This is evidenced by the difference between 10% for the textbook method and 38% for the discovery method. When I observed learning in class the highest

frequency scored was 4 out of 5 which indicated that students listen attentively most of the time and scores 1 out of 5 for learners asking questions and involvement of setting asked questions and there was no demonstration done or debates or any form of discussion or topics initiated by learners.

It goes without saying therefore that there is a need to shift from having passive learners to those that are actively engaged in a lesson. Learners should be encouraged to be involved in the setting of the task from the beginning by collecting and bringing learning material relevant to the lesson. For example, for the lesson on trade unions learners could have been asked to collect articles photos, policy speeches and hang them on the classroom walls to make more meaning and create interest about the impact of their existence.

With regard to the files of learners, and educators tests, tests projects, assignments and homework were assessed as 'Good', 'Fair' and 'Poor' according to the nature of the content. It is important for this investigation to consider the nature of the content as this is the knowledge to be imparted to the learner. The educator should prepare the content of the subjects to be taught in such a way that it is meaningful and has relevance to practical real life situations. Content should be adjusted in curriculum development schemes to address this need.

	TESTS	PROJECTS	ASSIGNMENTS	HOMEWORKS
School 1	Fair	Poor	Poor	Poor
School 2	Fair	Poor	Poor	Fair
School 3	Fair	Poor	Fair	Fair
School 4	Good	Fair	Good	Fair

Table 4.4 The nature of content in tests, projects, homework and assignments

Table 4.4 gives a picture of the nature of content as shown in the files. The nature of content refers to the standard of questions asked, the marking, corrections, the syllabus coverage, the relevancy of the assignment, project and the impact it gives to the topic or section of the syllabus. All the educators' files who taught during the observation session were looked at and a sample of five books from a class of twenty five learners was chosen. On the whole a reasonable number of tests were given, at least four during a period of six months in all four schools. All the written work were marked and returned back to students. This was done by educators and learners either individually or as groups in this regard books works change in class for marking or done by the educator when not in class. Perhaps the processing of marks by indicating failures could help the educator see and compare the learners performances individually and as a class.

Very few assignments and projects were given and this is one of the areas that need to be improved because these tasks are ways and means by which learners find their way through to solutions. Giving them more exercises in class work, class tests and homework might improve the logical thinking of the learners thereby training them on their cognitive skills. In all, the nature and content of written work ranges between “fair” and “poor” and this could assist the learners to improve their performance if more work could be given to learners.

#### **4.3.2.4 Class management and supervision**

As I looked through the files of educators I observed that attendance registers were marked by learners. This was shown by the different handwritings and confirmed by the educator as the registers were given to class representatives. The researcher discourages this tendency. If the registers were marked by the educators only, closer human relations would be built between educators and learners. Further, a follow up on each learner’s concerns and problems could be done by educators if track records were kept in their files. Educators should always keep in mind that they play so many roles to the learners over and above that of teaching.

On the question of supervision there were no class visits and this was confirmed by the educators. No signatures or guidance or comments from the management team indicating professional development of educators. The evidence includes the newly employed that need close monitoring. Subject advisors only visit

school when there are crisis situations and staff behavior that is not acceptable to the teaching environment. Very little is known by the educators about policies and procedures as outlined in the PAM document. Monitoring tools that are suitable for these schools must be compiled and applied by those in supervisory positions.

There is no proof of supervision by management and this has been confirmed by the fact that there are no class visits or even signatures of the members of the school management team on the educators' files. Educators themselves indicated when asked that class visits are not done at all. Therefore no guidance is given to teachers and there are no staff meetings where analyses of exam results are done. If supervision was done to give guidance and advice to educators, better performance of examination results of Grade 12 learners would be achieved.

#### **4.3.2.5 Policy issues**

When principals and educators were asked about the use and application of the Developmental Appraisal System (**DAS**) and Whole School Evaluation (**WSE**), more than 50% of those who taught during the period of investigation never even heard about such policies. Those who heard about them did not even know what they contained and what they have to be used for. All this confirms that policies are formulated but not implemented. The **DAS** which intends to motivate

educators by recognizing improved performances could be used to encourage them to do better thus enhancing learner achievement.

Management should therefore be encouraged and monitored by district offices to see to it that those policies are not for principals to know, but to be used by all stakeholders to improve the overall performance of the school.

#### **4.3.6. Conclusion**

Now that the data, facts and information have been analyzed, conclusions and recommendations should be arrived at. The input given by the respondents indicate and reflect serious flaws and omissions of what should be done by educators, learners, management, district office personnel, stakeholders and all interested parties. It has become clear from this empirical investigation that all the activities involved in the teaching learning situation at schools especially in the classroom need to be closely monitored and corrected.

In the next chapter opinions, conclusions and recommendations revealed in the data collected and literature survey will lead to suggested solutions

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The poor performance of Grade 12 learners has been of great concern to the department of education, schools, learners, parents and other stakeholders when one compares the number of learners that sit for exams each year with those who get exemptions, school leavers and those who give up. During the year 1998, 23, 94% learners passed whilst the year 1999, 2000 and 2001 had 40.55%, 57.8% and 42.78% respectively. Coupled with this is the high failure rate in Grade 11 which makes stakeholders think that these learners are held in this class purposely to get the best ones only for the Grade 12 class in order to satisfy the expectations of government and the public- that of improving performance .

Quite a number of factors could be seen as contributing to this poor Grade 12 learner performance. Some of the factors are: poor or no planning for lessons to be taught in class, no supervision of educators by SMT s, use of old methods of teaching (like the textbooks and the telling method), lack of involvement of learners in the formation of the task and its solution, little management and lack of discipline, few assignments and homework, and poor marking of tests.

In the following paragraphs I will highlight my findings of each school and give recommendations.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

After the year 1990 there has been a general decline in the performance of Grade 12 learners in South African schools. In 1998 where the pass rate was 48,9%. Very few schools met the academic standards.

This investigation in the Mount Frere district of the Eastern Cape was conducted from June 2002 at the time when the Grade12 learners had already covered a lot of subject content (syllabus). This was done strategically to get the picture of how teaching and learning takes place in the four schools chosen.

The result of this survey will provide useful focus for future empirical studies not only for the Mount Frere district school, but for all learners in the Eastern Cape studying under the same environmental conditions as well as other provinces of South Africa. The purpose of this research is to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners in senior secondary schools.

Revealed in this study are the following flaws:

- Poor planning for teaching and activities that are related to it.  
Educator's files did not show any proof of lesson preparation although some had daily preparations in their records.

- Assessment of work done was mainly through tasks and every little on home work, projects and assignments. Class work exercises were done only by the Mathematics educators as teaching was done by the learners whilst the educator guides and facilitates the solution to task.
- Supervision by management was hampered by the negative attitude towards authority and lack of understanding for this need by educators. As a result, no class visits were made but only files could be looked at by the **HOD** s in at least two of the four schools investigated. **HOD** s were not allowed to conduct class visits.
- The strategies used for teaching in class are still the old ways of the telling (spoon-feeding) and textbook methods. In the Outcomes Based Education there is a general shift from these approaches to encourage learners to work on their own or at least participate fully in their lessons. Educators seemed to be resisting this change which is of great necessity.
- There was no or very little practical work like drawing of angles of different kinds of which the learners are exposed. Because of this, the subject content taught became alienated and abstract to the learners as they did not know why certain theories had to be learnt. For example, learners doing Mathematics were just told that right angles will be used in manufacturing tables and chairs in technical and vocational studies. From

these conclusions certain recommendations, both general and specific will be suggested to all those schools affected.

### **5.3 General recommendations**

#### **5.3.1 Introductory remarks**

This research explicitly presents a number of flaws that were found in schools. The flaws include, inter alia: poor lesson planning, old teaching methods, very little learner participation, lack of resources, lack of discipline, lack of good managerial skills, absence of quality assurance measures, lack of learner support services, lack of motivation and an environment not conducive to teaching and learning. All these problems are common to all schools but worse in schools 1 and 4.

#### **5.3.2 Lack of resources**

Resources like stationery, learning material, teaching aids, laboratories, libraries, toilets and general facilities like school furniture are necessary basics to make learning possible and enjoyable. Without them very little effective, meaningful teaching can take place. Some schools and educational institutions have classrooms or blocks of schools and educational institutions have classrooms or blocks of rooms used as resource centres. These are meant to assist learners to see and know all the resource materials used in different fields of study. For example, a learner taking Biology as a subject should be exposed to learning aids like models of the human anatomy, the heart, the brain, the nervous system,

the respiratory system, the kidney and others. In all the lessons taught and classes visited, no teaching aids were used. Also, educators did not draw charts for learners to see what educators were teaching about.

Both the Department of Education and educators at schools should make means to avail teaching and learning resources. The former can provide these and the latter improvise by making their own drawings. Educators should be creative and be prepared to go an extra mile to make learners more interested in school-work.

It is therefore highly recommended that the basic teaching and learning material be made available in good time. If government takes a longer period to provide resources, parents can be requested to contribute towards the purchase of these resources. I suggest that the school fund be increased to at least to R500.00 per learner per year. Increasing the fees will enable the school to budget properly and buy the school basic teaching needs. The current school fees per annum range between R200.00 and R300.00 depending on the needs of the school. Schools must begin to register learners the previous year so that parents can budget for school fees earlier.

### **5.3.3 Lack of discipline**

Teaching and learning cannot take place properly if discipline is not part of the school's values and norms. Both management and educators should always bear in mind that they are moulding learners to be adult citizens of South Africa. Schools must use alternative ways of punishment as disciplinary measures. It is more important for learners to understand its policy on discipline. Also important is for learners to know why they are disciplined.

Discipline includes punctuality at school, regular attendance of classes by learners and educators, obedience, loyalty, self-discipline, respect for others, self-respect and acceptable behavior. If all these are properly adhered to more effective learning would take place. There should be orientation of learners about those issues which make teaching and learning easy. A school policy should be in place and be properly explained to learners and induction lessons conducted in class and to the student body. None of the four schools investigated has a school policy, some educators did not even know what this was all about, and hence the student's strikes and crisis management that seems to be the order of the day in our schools.

Parents and stakeholders should be involved in the formulation of school policy so that they understand when disciplinary measures are taken against their children. The school and the community should work collectively by assisting management to enforce discipline. Gone are the days when the school used to

belong to the teachers-all stakeholders should get involved in governing the school and should channel their ideas through the **SGB** members. The whole community should actually own the school by participating in all the activities of the school. School management should be fully conversant with the application of relevant disciplinary laws. This does not stop there as the real measures should be implemented when necessary. Laws are not only meant to be known by authority but to be used.

#### **5.3.4 Lack of managerial skills**

Management has been a concept commonly used in the industrial world though applicable to all fields of study. The teaching field has thus realized its importance and training needed by educators to cope with all managerial activities in a school. The curriculum developers identified the need and introduced educational management as a course.

Most educators were trained to teach in class and found themselves through promotion in managerial positions. Management involves multiple skills and functions like planning, co-ordination, direct, control and implementation. Some other activities include holding meetings, creating links with communities, bookkeeping work, administration which needs serious training. The introduction of **SGB s** has complicated the important role of **SGB s** and **SMT s** as people do not know the difference between governance and management. These two have

to complement one another as one deal with policy formulation and the other with the administration of the policy.

More complication emanates from crisis and risk management caused by the transformation process as it unfolds. Most academic years are characterized by strikes, lack of learning interests and academic lawlessness. The abnormalities have to be handled by managers who haven't properly trained. Like in other sectors, school management begins with self management where the educator is capable of managing his or her own affairs. This managerial ability enables the educator to handle class management and lastly the school as a whole.

Management nowadays needs good listening, planning and influencing skills that will lead to a proactive approach to avoid taking decisions under pressure. More often than not, poor planning is the cause of this pressure. Above all, management should be characterized by participation and involvement of all stakeholders in both governance and managerial activities thus building the schools. It is obvious therefore that all educators should also be trained as managers so that the school activities like class management, departmental management, sports management and extramural activities can be handled effectively and efficiently.

### 5.3.5. Quality assurance measures

Learners should be taught so that they are able to compete with their global counterparts. The quality control measures like the appraisal system should be applied regularly to assist the standards of both learner and educator. Class registers should be checked regularly to confirm continuous inspection of the work done. In the educators' files seen at the four schools, no sign of checking was done by the **HOD** s except when term marks have to be collected for schedules in preparations for the June and December reports.

There already exists the **DAS** and the **WSE** to encourage educators to do better in areas where improvement is needed. Although school inspection seems to be outdated, some effective way of supervision which is transparent should be in place to maintain good quality standards in the education system. In certain countries, for example, students are also allowed to assess the educators and write reports on work done in class to management teams. If this approach can be taken positively by the educators, it may produce outstanding good results, the student assessment approach could lead to great improvement of Grade 12 learner results as reports would be on both successes and failures of the educator.

Further, quality education is not passing exams but about what we refer to nowadays as lifelong learning (**LLL**). This approach postulates learning as a

prolonged thirst for knowledge not only about what the curriculum or syllabi entails but to unfold the truths not yet discovered. Thus this could be one of the ways in which quality assurance could be measured. Although we assessed performance by looking at the percentage pass of the Grade 12 learners, quality assurance is about the symbols per learner and per subject.

#### **5.3.6. Lack of learner support services**

Learner support services is an area which is a concern in many institutions as the tendency to concentrate on academic achievements without looking at support services that encourage the learners to perform better. However, it should always be borne in mind that learners are to be supported academically, emotionally and financially. All the four schools investigated have no support services and were only aware of the need for the academic support only. One educator said that if they can get the teaching aids, learning materiel, a library and the stationery delivered in good time, a 99 % pass would be easy to achieve. This statement clearly indicates that this is what the learner needs to improve their performance, according to educators in that school.

Financial support is necessary to assist learners in need and fund other services like counseling. These support services should be made available to the learner at earlier stage before reaching the metric classes. There should be for example, a vocational or career guidance teacher at lower primary school level to advise the learners on the choice of subjects according to their interests. For this very

same problem counseling should be at the school and done regularly for different kinds of emotional disorders that learners might be exposed to.

In some schools there are feeding schemes that are not regular and closely monitored by those in supervisory positions. No one can learn with an empty stomach and these are some of the services directly needed in the schools as a basic support. Most learners that attend the four schools investigated came from poor families with very little or no food. A learner cannot concentrate when taught if the learner is not properly fed.

Equipment like computers should be introduced in each primary school so that by the time a learner leaves the schools, the basics have already been grasped. Learning such subjects at lower classes enhance the logical thinking of a learner and would improve learner performance by the time Grade 12 is reached.

### **5.3.7 Participating of stakeholders**

The results of the investigation on the involvement of community members indicate that there is very interaction between the school and the outside world. In two schools parents' meetings were called during the years 1998 and 1999 but none was attended.

In the remote areas people still believed that the school belonged to the principal and most **SGB** members are illiterate and have had no knowledge of what is

expected of them. The way in which they were chosen of –that of considering the most popular and rich person needs to be corrected. What is important in identifying **SGB** members is shown by prospective community leaders whose focus is not to gain anything but derives pleasure is developing projects.

The department of education in the district has conducted a series of workshops but has not yet instilled a sense of responsibility and understanding that the school is owned by all interested parties which include parents. This is one of the areas which need attention by encouraging the parents to be directly involved in the governance of a school. However, this does not simply taking over the managerial aspect of the educational institution although these are linked. The misunderstanding of governance and management roles sometimes creates some hassles in terms of who runs the school. One community member commented that they do not want to appear as if they want to rule the school and disturb the principal. Whilst this is so, the principals do not want to see the **SGB** members taking control of the school by actually telling them what to do. The responsibility of who runs the school has been a problem in remote areas for quite a long time where each party does not know his roles and responsibilities and understanding the difference between governance and management.

There is a direct need therefore to educate the communities so that they can understand how important participatory management is to the school.

## 5.4. Specific recommendations

### 5.4.1. Introductory remarks

The recommendations cited in the previous paragraphs covered a wide variety concerns affecting the teaching-learning situation. However, specific suggestions which emanate fro responses to the Investigation and instruments used are enumerated below. These have been discussed in Chapter 4, although the sample comprised only Grade 12 learners in 4 schools in the district of Mount Frere, these recommendations are applicable to all the schools with the same flaws and environmental conditions.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Lesson plans should be compulsory in all schools and subjects. **SMT** s should see to it that lessons plans are done properly. Lessons well planned for would give a proper layout on how to impart the knowledge and hence the subject content to learners. A properly planned lesson would make the educators' work easier in class by knowing step by step how the activities of the lesson should be followed. This would in turn minimize the tendency of educators of not knowing what to teach and where the educators actually stopped teaching the previous day.

Daily preparations should be emphasized by school management so that each lesson is well planned for. A logical presented lesson would enhance the interest of the learners in the subject content, consequently improving the performance of Grade 12 Learners.

Lesson preparation will help to determine what was already taught on the basis of lesson preparation, as it would be easy to know where to start teaching. Further, in cases where, for whatever reasons the educator stops working, the substitute educator would know where to start and understand the approaches and strategies that were used by the previous educator.

2. There should be a direct involvement of learners in the teaching learning situation in many ways. Learners could be asked to collect information on a lesson to be thought. For example on the economic lesson that was thought in one school on the trade unions, learners could have been referred to any other media from which they can get facts on the topic.

This approach would assist the learners in seeking for information rather being spoon fed. Secondly, learners would be used to search for knowledge and get answers on their own. Hence learners would also feel as part of the problem solving process which would make them understand the subject content easier.

3. Strict supervision of educators by those in management should be made compulsory by the department of Education. Monitoring tools should be used to assess whether school work is done properly. The attitude towards class visits should be positive and checking of written work should be accompanied by written reports from **HOD** s and accountability of poor performance by

educators. If such strategies can be applied and well monitored with the assistant of the district office, better Grade 12 learner performance could be achieved. Supervision should also be accompanied by an advisory, guiding developmental approach to educators. Feedback is also necessary after guidance and assessment has been done by the members of the school management team have done assessment. The educator should know whether there is improvement or not in the areas of development.

4. Project that will make learners study during the holidays should be given to inculcate the culture of learning in learners minds. Assignments should be marked by educators, marks allocated to learners and added to the year marks so that learners know that work done during school holidays is equally important. Holiday time should be used to encourage learners to get exposure to cities as they grow in remote areas where learning is limited to what is within their poor environment with no or very little recourses. Group projects and assignments also help in team building and enhance the potential of interacting, coordinating and working together with other learners towards one goal.
  
5. Class management by educators should be practiced extensively to monitor all activities in class. The duties involved which includes planning of class activities, leading, control and coordination will improve. Learning cannot take place properly if it is not managed. Learners should be well disciplined and

motivated to study on their own. The class environment should be conducive to learning. Work done in and outside the classroom should be looked at by the educator, corrected and feedback given to learners and sometimes shown to parents. There should be direct communication with parents about learner performance and potential about each individual learner so that parents can assist in the learning process.

6. **SGB** s should be encouraged in raising funds from the public to increase the school recourses. Raising funds would also result in the creation of link and partnerships with the private sector. In this way the community would feel that they are also part of the school and have a sense of ownership. The involvement of external stakeholders in a school builds up a harmonious relationship between the schools especially the management and the environment in which the school operates. Further, fund raising includes getting recourses in cash or in kind. Private companies are keen to assist schools by giving them office equipment, donation for awards, furniture, sport kits etc.

7. Training of all educators must be made compulsory to skill, reskill and upgrade them in the subjects they teach. Resistance to restructure curriculum would be minimized as educators' fear of redundancy and being unemployable. Learners would greatly benefit from training, as educators

would learn new teaching and learning approaches thus improving the performance of Grade 12 learners.

#### **5.4.3. Concluding remarks**

The recommendations provided in the text are not exhaustive and there is no guarantee that if applied will yield good results. However, on the basis of findings and responses given, I find worthwhile to give advice, to the specific problem encountered. Such advice, if analysed first and applied considering the nature of the situation, may yield good results in the form of good performance of Grade 12 learners. The conclusive remark I wish to emphasize is that all stakeholders needed to know their roles and play those roles accordingly. Also, the issue of getting all stakeholders working hand in hand in order to make schools function effectively and properly is crucial.

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## ANNEXURE A

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DISTRICT OFFICERS

These were some of the questions asked from Officers dealing with examination results at District Offices.

1. Does this office conduct an analysis of examination results and how often?
2. How do you identify senior secondary schools that are bad performers? Which criteria do you use?
3. Do you regard assessment / evaluation method as a realistic one? Elaborate.
4. What happens when they have been identified?
5. Do you compare the previous year's results? If so for how many years.
6. In which ways can these Senior Secondary School's be assisted by the Department?
7. Has there be any research conducted by government on bad performers, if so,
8. What happens after recommendations after the investigations?

ANNEXURE B

Frontier Hotel  
P. O. Box 109  
MOUNT FRERE  
5090

6 August 2002

Att: Miss N. Jara  
The District Director  
District Office  
Department of Education  
MOUNT FRERE  
5090

Sir/Madam

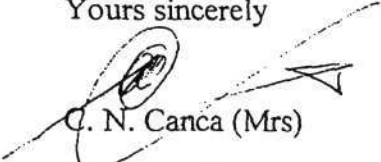
**REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SENIOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Further to our brief verbal discussions yesterday, I hereby request you and your office to grant me permission to go to senior secondary schools in your district for the purpose of conducting research on the performance of grade 12 learners.

This will be done as indicated on the attached letters, copies of which would be sent to the various schools of concern.

Your cooperation is always welcomed.

Yours sincerely

  
C. N. Canca (Mrs)

082 486 9829

## ANNEXURE C

Frontier Hotel  
P. O. Box 109  
MOUNT FRERE  
5090  
05 August 2002

The Principal  
Madzikane S. S. S

Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: GRADE 12 LEARNERS**

I am a student at the University of Durban-Westville and earnestly request you, your staff and the members of the SGB to allow me to conduct an investigation of the performance of Grade 12 learners at your school.

The purpose of this research is to find out how schools can be assisted in improving learners performance and hence their examination results.

The research session needs about 2 hours on a day suggested by you.

This will take the following form:

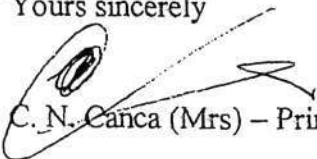
1. A 15 minute interview with the Principal / Deputy Principal;
2. A 10 minute discussion with educators handling different subjects in that class;
3. A 30 minute observation on lesson presentation;
4. Questionnaires to be filled by learners;
5. An informal talk with the member of the SGB, preferably with more than 3 years of service;
6. A qualification survey and subject allocation;
7. An in loco inspection of school facilities;
8. A feedback occasionally and after completing the investigation;
9. Assessment and recording of certain aspects of teaching;
10. Informal conversations with learners, educators, other staff members and former students of the school.

All information collected here will be strictly confidential.

A letter of admission, authority to conduct research and a copy of my I. D. is enclosed for your perusal and consideration.

I hope that my request will be met with great enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely



C. N. Canca (Mrs) – Principal of Mt. Frere Technical College (082 486 9829)

## ANNEXURE D

### INTEVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

1. What do you like about your school?
2. Is the trend on grade 12 learners pass rate increasing / decreasing?
3. Have the results changed for better / worse when you took over?
4. What could be the reason for this tendency?
5. What challenges does the teaching-learning situation face?
6. Do you have incentives / awards for both learners / educators attached to improve performance?
7. Do you have any suggestions to address the problems highlighted above?
8. Does your school have learner services? Emotionally, Financially and Academically.
9. What is the enrolment of your grade 12 learners per annum and what is the percentage rate for the past three years?
10. Are there any educators who are good performers in extra-mural activities and how do you use them in class?

## ANNEXURE E

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR LEARNERS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GRADE 12 LEARNERS AT SENIOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOL (IN THE DISTRICT  
OF.....)

1. What are your strong points or advantages and weak points that make you cope with Standard 10 work?
2. Which teaching approaches would you like to see your educators using?
3. Which area of your work needs attention?
4. If you were a teacher how would you teach students?
5. What would you suggest should the school do as a way of encouraging to do their work better?
6. In which ways do you participate in class?
7. How do you benefit from such involvement?
8. Would you like to be told when taught or rather discover things on your own?
9. In which ways do educators, parents and other stakeholders encourage you to learn?
10. What motivation “incentives” would you like to see being offered at your school?

ANNEXURE F

**SURVEY OF EDUCATORS TEACHING AT 5 SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS CHOSEN FOR INVESTIGATION**

Name of school.....

School No. 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5

<b>1. <u>Personal Details</u></b>	
Surname:	Initials:
Contact address:	Contact Telephone Number:

<b>2. <u>Qualifications</u></b>								
Degree / Diploma obtained and year (tick the appropriate box)								
B. A.	B. Sc.	B.Comm.	HDE	SSTD	JSTC	B.Tech	PTD	Other

**3. Current Employment Status**

Tick the appropriate block.

3.1 Are you employed as a teacher? 

Yes	No
-----	----

If yes, answer the following questions:

3.2 Capacity 

Permanent	Temporary
-----------	-----------

3.3 Status 

Fulltime	Part time	Substitute
----------	-----------	------------

3.4 School Phase 

Secondary	Primary
-----------	---------

3.5 Category 

Private	Ex-model C	ExHOA	ExHOD	ExHOR	ExDET
---------	------------	-------	-------	-------	-------

4. Subjects you are currently teaching 1.....2.....3.....

5. For how long have you been teaching these subjects? 0-2 yrs, 3-5 yrs, >5yrs

6. Subjects specialised in your training; 1.....2.....3.....

7. What was your pass % during the past 3 years; 1999, 2000, 2001

\*Your participation is very much appreciated especially with regard to its contributions to this research.

ANNEXURE G

**CLASS OBSERVATION**

B.1 Observation Schedule (using categories)

B1.1 Observation of Teaching

**CHANGES IN TEACHING**

Indicator: Effective teachers use multiple teaching strategies

Critical Question: Do teachers use multiple strategies;

Criteria Frequency (%)

	0	1-25	26-50	51-75	76-100
Lecture	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Role play	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Independent Desk work	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Demonstration	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Multi-media	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Debates discussions	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Topics from students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Elaboration (record any relevant information, clarification, puzzles, elaboration, types of strategies used, do they vary?) How teachers respond to topics suggested by students.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ANNEXURE H

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**B.1.2 Observation of Learning**

**CHANGES IN TEACHING**

Indicator: In effective classroom students participate actively in the lessons

Critical Question: Are students actively engaged in the lesson?

Criteria	Frequency				
	1	2	3	4	5
Students ask Questions	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Students listen Attentively	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Students are Involved in the Set task	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Human relations Between educators And learners	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Elaboration (include other relevant criteria)

Class of 5 CEO – different students should participate

5 – to ask

5 – to set task

5 – calling the educator

5 – exercises books looked at

1. not at all
2. less of the time
3. some of the time
4. most of the time
5. all the time