

**An Exploration into Educators' Understanding, Implementation and Experiences of  
Alternative Assessment Approaches in English-First Additional Language.**

**by**

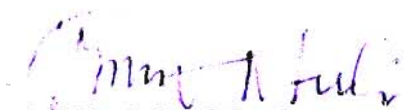
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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Education Degree  
at the Faculty of Education University of KwaZulu – Natal, Durban**

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## PREFACE

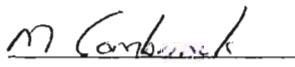
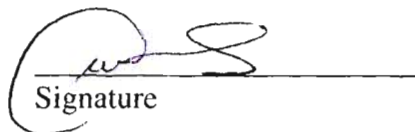

I, Victor Mlungisi Mandlakapheli Ntuli hereby certify that this research project, conducted under the supervision of Dr Martin Combrink in the Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for the acquisition of any degree or diploma at another tertiary institution. Where use was made of the work of others, these have been duly acknowledged in the text.



V.M.M. Ntuli

15 December 2007

As the candidate's supervisor, I have / have not approved this thesis dissertation for submission.

  
Name  
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## ABSTRACT

The election of a democratic government in 1994 brought many changes in South Africa, one of them being the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). The educators were confronted with new challenges regarding teaching, learning and assessment. OBE advocates that alternative assessment approaches such as peer evaluation, assessment through classroom activities, to name a few, should be used when assessing the learners (Department of Education (DoE), 1998). While it is an indisputable fact that the DoE has devised strategies to train educators as part of the processes designed to prepare them for the implementation of OBE-specific assessment policies, reality is that there is no uniformity in attempts directed towards their implementation. In the context of my study, this is in relation to the assessment processes that occur in English-First Additional Language classrooms. Research drawn upon in this study indicates clearly that old assessment strategies and practices which are grossly inadequate, unfair, and discriminatory are still in operation in some schools. It is within this context that my study aims to explore the educators' understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language classrooms.

Given the nature of the study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. This method enabled the researcher to use an unstructured interview schedule to gather data from six participants. This research instrument facilitated access to data in ways that freed the participants to elaborate on their responses to interview questions without any form of intimidation. The nature of questions enabled the researcher to explore teachers' attitudes towards their day to day assessment approaches, practices, and choices. The findings reveal that some of the educators are not ready to implement the alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language classrooms. It is on the basis of these findings that my study presents recommendations with regard to the implementation of alternative assessment approaches.

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## Chapter 1:

### Contextualising the Study

#### 1.1 Introduction

The first South African democratic elections of 1994 brought along with it many political, social, economic, and educational changes for the majority of the citizens regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, or even age. Such changes made available opportunities for the nation to re-think ways in which its younger members, the future of the country, could be prepared for responsibilities that come with freedom. As it is the case with all the countries that undergo broad social transformation, South Africa's educational system bore the responsibility of ensuring that the younger generation receives quality education so that the country may compete successfully with the international community. This meant legislated, broad curriculum changes in post-apartheid South Africa which manifested itself through the constitution of the Republic of South Africa's *Act 108* of 1996. This *Act* provided the basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa and guided the National Education and Training Forum processes that were designed to shape strategies for syllabus revision and subject rationalisation. It is out of these processes that the outcomes-based education (OBE) was introduced. Writing about this system of education, Tiley (1997) points out that:

The Outcomes-Based Education model in South Africa has been developed out of a need to redress educational inequalities in place since the apartheid order. These inequalities have resulted in the majority of the population being inadequately prepared for technological advancement and lacking in the skills needed for economic growth. The OBE model is aimed at promoting a democratic approach to education by wide consultation across business, industrial and educational stakeholders with regard to educational change. This consultation was intended to identify knowledge and skills and attitudes that learners need to develop as competent, responsible citizens of the next century (2).

Given the atrocities of the *Bantu Education Act* (1953) (McArthur, 1998) and the resultant separation of schools according racial and ethnic differences, there was a need in South Africa for a major paradigm shift in the education system in general, and in the

assessment practices in particular. The OBE system seemed promising in terms of the assessment strategies it proposes. In terms of OBE, the assessment policy in the General Education and Training Band (Grade R-9) and ABET, for instance, was introduced in response to a need to come up with assessment practices which are in line with the newly introduced curriculum. The DoE (1998) Assessment Policy states that:

This policy replaces a policy which was previously used, known as a Resume of Instructional Programmes in Public Schools, Report 550 (97/06), which served a maintenance function in terms of the old curriculum and the summative examination that occurs at the end of Grade 12, known as the Senior Certificate Examination...The policy introduces a shift from a system that is dominated by public examinations, which are 'high stakes' end, whose main function has always been to rank, grade, select and certify learners, to a new system that informs and improves the curriculum and assessment practices of educators and the leadership, governance and organisation of learning sites (11).

This assessment policy means January 1998 marked the introduction of firstly, a new curriculum and, secondly, new assessment strategies, both of which presented South Africa a lifetime opportunity to transform its assessment procedures, approaches and strategies. During the launch of the new assessment policy for the GET Band in 1998, Professor Bhengu asserted that "The new assessment policy for the GET band, alongside with the new National Curriculum Framework, provides the pedagogic bases for our new education and training system" (DoE, 1998: 2). This was exactly eleven months after the introduction of new policies. As a paradigm within which the South African education was reconfigured, OBE forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa, with its main aim as being to enable the learners to achieve to their maximum ability. Setting outcomes to be achieved at the specific exit level for each Grade represents strategies to achieve these goals. The implementation of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1998, furthermore, enshrines democratic principles of justice, human rights, healthy environment and inclusivity. All of these measures represent attempts by the South African government to implement the philosophy, paradigm, precepts and principles of OBE.

In January 2001, Professor Asmal, the then minister of education, appointed a Review Committee with a task to streamline, strengthen, and consolidate Curriculum 2005. This curriculum was implemented from the Foundation Phase to the Senior Phase. The final

phase of its implementation was scheduled for 2008 in the Senior Phase (Grade 9). The Review Committee managed to revise Curriculum 2005 and came up with the New Curriculum Statements (NCS). The revision of Curriculum 2005 lies in that the NCS has critical development outcomes, 36 learning outcomes, and assessment standards, time allocation and themes. According to the DoE, “this Revised National Curriculum Statement reduces these to three: critical and developmental outcomes, learning outcomes and assessment standards” (2001:3). The DoE further states that NCS is not a new curriculum but a streamlining and strengthening of Curriculum 2005 with one main objective: to hold the principles, purposes and thrust of C2005 intact, thus affirming a commitment to outcomes-based education. In order to align the assessment practices with the NCS, the National Protocol on Assessment for Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Band (Grade R-12) was introduced in 2006. To further develop and strengthen assessment strategies, the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band has recently been introduced.

It is on the bases of these broad changes in the curriculum that my study wishes to investigate ways in which assessment practices by the educators have observed these changes. I now turn to the discussion of the problem statement, aims of the study, key research questions and brief engagement with the research methodology used in this study.

## **1.2 The Problem Focused**

Assessment policy in the General Education and Training Band for Grade R-9 and Adult Basic Education and Training was introduced in December 1998. The policy was part of C2005 and based on OBE and states categorically that alternative approaches and strategies of assessing learner achievement must be implemented. The policy states that these alternative approaches must take into consideration the formative assessment aspect in the summative assessment. The principles of access, equity and redress should therefore form the bases of these new approaches to assessment. In the words of the Department of Education, in order to:

...help learners to achieve their full potential, assessment should be transparent and clearly focussed; integrated with teaching and learning; based on predetermined criteria or standards; varied in terms of methods and context; and valid, reliable, fair, learner-paced, and flexible enough to allow for expanded opportunities (2002:114).

As is the case with processes that precede policy implementation, educators were trained in order to apply the policy from informed and logical bases. Some of the educators, however, seem to be holding different understandings and interpretations of these new approaches to assessment. There is thus limited uniformity in the implementation of the policy and, for the purposes of my study, particularly in the English-First Additional Language classrooms. Given the fact that English is the language used in most formal education institutions in South Africa, my study investigates whether or not there is consistency between what the policy advocates and what is actually taking place in some of the English-First Additional Language classrooms. My study also wishes to investigate the extent to which changes in the curriculum within a short period of time as discussed in the introduction of this chapter have created confusion in policy implementation within the context of the classroom.

Research (Alausa (1999), Berry (2003), Louw (2003) and Matshidiso (2007) shows that the old assessment paradigm and practices which are grossly inadequate and unfair to deal with the challenges presented by the new curriculum policies aimed at transforming our education system are still in operation in some schools. Such research has identified problems with the implementation of educational assessment, and have suggested that further study should be conducted on this subject. My study thus represents attempts to respond to calls by such researchers and explores the educators' understandings, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches (alternative to traditional assessment practices) in English-First Additional Language as advocated by the assessment policies. In the next section I turn to the discussion of literature that concern itself with the nature of educational disadvantage that comes with having English as the First Additional language.

### *1.2.1 English as the First-Additional Language*

Debates about the transformation of the education system (from primary, secondary, and tertiary levels) in South Africa, as demonstrated by the discussion so far, often tend to

concentrate on the establishment of broad principles to guide the restructuring of institutional policies regarding access and democratisation. While the addressing of these issues may be regarded as laudable in the attempt to democratise learning institutions, a micro-approach that relates to the transformation of the quality of the teaching, learning, and assessment processes within them, is also required. Educational institutions' central premise for their existence is supposed to be teaching and learning and, because of this, as Watson (1987) correctly puts it:

...teachers need to develop a clear philosophy of...teaching which will give support and direction to their day-to-day classroom practice. As James Briton has pointed out such a rationale 'provides us with a running code of operational principles, a way of monitoring our own practice, a way of effectively influencing other people and defending our own position' (2).

To suggest a shift of focus from broad principles guiding the restructuring of institutional policies regarding access and democratisation, to a micro-approach that relates to transformation of the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment processes is, however, not an attempt to undermine the involvement of those committed to redressing institutional inequalities. In the context of this study, the shift is meant to direct attention to ways in which the transformation process could be tackled on a micro-level in terms of the quality of assessment learners who speak English as the First Additional Language go through. Coming to terms with the quality of assessment strategies with an intention to critique, rethink, and transform them, among other things, can be made possible by gaining access to students' classroom experiences. It is on the basis of access to actual assessment strategies implemented by teachers in English as First Additional Language classrooms that this study investigates ways in which such strategies are in line with national policy as enshrined in NCS documents.

Most learners who speak English as the First Additional Language from Black township schools receive very poor exposure to English in environments unconducive to effective learning. The South African history of discrimination, the impact of which we are still witnessing, accounts for most literacy setbacks that schools are confronted with today and

the unavailability and/or limited educational resources in Black township schools<sup>1</sup>. In 2003 the Gauteng Province Education Ministry expressed its concerns about a massive immigration of learners from most South Western Township (SOWETO) schools to former whites-only schools, a consequence of which, according to South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) president, is the fact that most township schools are still appallingly under-resourced (SABC 1 News: 13/02/2003).

The majority of learners who speak English as the First Additional Language is absolutely monolingual because instead of having English used as the medium of teaching and learning, translation occurs. Even though this makes their mother-tongues to be the media of instruction (by default), it does more harm than good. Contrary to code-switching, which facilitates further learning for bilingual learners (Baker et al, 2001), the use of the mother-tongue in this context becomes nothing more than the translation of English texts, and this confuses learners even further during self-study and when they have to write tests and exams, all of which is set in English. Writing about the teaching and learning process that occurs in former DET schools, Samuel (1995) notes that:

The supposed medium of instruction in such schools is English. In reality the classroom is characterised by a mixture of both Zulu and English. Such a linguistic environment may be said to promote the experimentation with the language acquisition process. However, with the emphasis on producing the accurate second language form that dominates within this environment, the classroom usually resorts to a process of grammar translation (17).

Writing about the teaching of English in Black South African schools after the introduction of Bantu Education, furthermore, Balfour (2000) correctly points out that, "...English teaching for Black South Africans also began to change, becoming vocationally orientated to prepare pupils for semi-skilled forms of labour that did not require anything more than basic literacy and communicative competence" (46). These tendencies cause teachers to ignore learners' general and individual difficulties. Often when they want to ask questions they get scared and end-up not learning the additional language. When it comes to tests and/or exams on what was read in a novel or taught from certain worksheets, learners simply look for passages with words or phrases that

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<sup>1</sup> Most Black township schools still suffer from the scarcity of educational resources such as school-owned television sets and tape recorders; the absence or poor quality of school and community libraries, and home

appeared in the questions, and rewrite, either the whole paragraph or sentence, written in the set works. The most troubling factor is that learners often pass such tests and/or exams.

Other teachers are an epitome of what Balfour (2000) refers to as “the transmission mode of teaching with its emphasis on the authority of the teacher and passivity of learners” (48). In these contexts, because of the shortage of set-works, teachers are the only people who carried copies of the novels or short stories prescribed. Because of this, during reading lessons learners watch the teachers walking around the desks reading a novel or short story. Learners have no choice but to remain absolutely silent. Such silence is often so obstructive to learning that even if there are areas learners do not understand as the teacher reads to them, it is almost impossible to raise a hand and ask the teacher to repeat or clarify something.

The teaching of the grammar of English as the First Additional Language usually involves exercises drawn from teachers’ textbooks as it is usual for learners not to carry their own copies. Often the lessons end with gap-filling exercises on the board and learners have to copy on their exercise books, and then furnish the missing words correctly. These are based on such areas as articles, tenses, and parts of speech. Most of the learners receive high marks in such activities, but this does not mean they understand how and when to use some of these language structures within the context of extended texts, not to speak of understanding their functions within a specific discourse.

When learners have the so called ‘orals’, teachers simply focus on how long learners’ presentations are and whether they are confident or not. The emphasis is thus more on communicative competence than on evidence of conscious understanding and reflection on the words learners choose during oral presentations. In relation to this point, Balfour’s (2000) research shows that Black schooling during the apartheid era “came to focus more on communicative than on analytical competencies for second language speakers of English” (47).

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environments that are not conducive to learning (Hart, 1995).

Some teachers of English often miss their periods on basis of reasons ranging from sheer laziness to being engrossed with their own studies. On occasions where learners are fortunate, teachers will come to class to teach what they call 'good essays'. One example of this is that a teacher will come and write on the board what she considers to be 'good essays' for the whole class to copy. During exams such teachers would set questions that include topics that formed part of examples of 'good essays' read to learners and copied from the board in class. In his research report entitled "What students have to tell us about writing?", Hart (1995) writes about key aspects of a three-year study in which he wanted to understand factors which have impacted on, and shaped learners' knowledge and perceptions of, writing. Referring to one of his respondents in the study, Hart (1995) notes that:

Thulani spends much of his school day copying notes from textbooks. There is a strong reliance on a teacher's judgement. When asked why teachers wrote notes, Thulani stated that 'the book sometimes mentioned the things that are not very much important. The teacher will give the notes because he knows what the test needs' (84).

Hart's study reveals exactly what most learners experience in English as the First Additional Language classrooms. It has to be pointed out, however, that the post-1994 period (with notions of national equality and equal access to schools that were catering for specific race groups) saw many learners who speak English as the First Additional Language migrating from former DET schools to the former Model C schools. It is these schools, private schools, and those in former House of Delegates meant for Indians and Coloureds that have relevant educational facilities with better qualified teachers, most of whom have university degrees (see HSRC Report, 1981 and DET Annual Report 1988, Table 6:355). Perhaps these more fortunate Black learners may be experiencing a different set of circumstances from schools investigated in this study. Learners in the schools investigated in this study have parents who cannot afford fees in these other schools, and so their experiences of learning English as the First Additional Language are as alluded to in this section. I turn to the aims of this study in the next section.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

The preceding section outlines clearly the context and the circumstances within which learners under investigation experience the teaching, learning, and assessment of English

as a First Additional Language. It is within such a context that the aim of this study is to explore the understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in OBE by English-First Additional Language educators in the senior phase. The key research questions for my study are:

- i) What are English-First Additional Language educator's understandings of alternative assessment approaches?
- (ii) How do English-First Additional Language educators, implement alternative assessment approaches?
- (iii) What are English-First Additional Language educator's experiences in implementing alternative assessment approaches?

In order to access answers to these questions, the interpretative paradigm and qualitative research approach were adopted. Furthermore, I identified phenomenological approach a further useful methodological choice to access qualitative data. The relevant research instruments to complement these broad methodological choices include the unstructured interview schedule, lesson observations, educators' and learners' portfolio analysis.

In order to obtain the right to conduct the study in the three schools at Sayidi Circuit identified as research sites, permission from the Department of Education was granted. These schools were selected on the bases of their proximity and their convenient accessibility. Three Grade 8 English educators were interviewed in English using unstructured interviews, 10 lessons observations were conducted in each classroom. Before each interview permission was requested from the participants to tape-record the process of the interviews. Another research instrument used was the analysis of educators' and learners' portfolios in all three schools. As the interviewer I had the opportunity of dealing with each individual in accordance with their situations, consequently there is little chance of objectivity in this type of interview. An analysis and discussion of questions is discussed in chapter three. This study is informed by the interpretive paradigm and qualitative style, hence the assumptions underlying OBE and alternative assessment.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

This chapter indicates that the institutionalisation of policies in formal education has been

a feature throughout the first twelve years of South Africa's democracy. Characteristic of these events is a constant thinking and re-thinking of these policies. Such re-thinking represented the central pursuit of the DoE: to redress the inequalities of the past. It seems apparent, however, that what actually goes on in English as the First Additional Language classrooms leaves much to be desired. While it is true that there are policies in place to address such limitations, old assessment practices still thrive. It is the contention of this study that there is a need for further research on assessment strategies, and on the implementation of alternative approaches as enshrined in the policies discussed. This is particularly crucial in relation to assessment strategies in English as the First Additional Language classrooms. English is the medium of instruction and neglecting researching assessment strategies in this area effectively amount to setting up learners who speak it as the First Additional Language for failure. Such failure is not limited just to English but, most importantly, to access other knowledge areas in the entire curriculum which is taught and learnt in English.

Chapter two discusses and reviews literature relevant to the study, the principal theories upon which this study is constructed, assessment in education, and alternative assessment approaches and strategies. Chapter three describes the research methods and research instruments used in gathering data. This will cover such areas as reasons for using qualitative methods, unstructured interviews, lessons observations and, portfolio analysis. Chapter four presents the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of data gathered through these instruments. Chapter five concludes the study by presenting the findings and recommendations seen to be relevant to the aspirations of the DoE.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theories, Concepts, and Frameworks: Thoughts on Alternative Assessment**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In recent decades constructivist theories have extended the traditional focus on individual learning to address collaborative and social dimensions of learning. Social constructivism puts emphasis on the construction of an agreed-upon, socially constructed reality. Given the fact that this study concerns itself with the educational policies (constructed reality) designed to bring about alternative assessment approaches that draw on learners' social backgrounds; this section discusses literature on social constructivist theories and on theories of assessment. This is the reason the first section discusses the primary theorist upon which this study draws: Piaget (1977). The second section discusses literature on Vygotsky (1978). Both theorists focus on social constructivist learning theories, and this is relevant to the purposes of this study as discussed in chapter one. The third section discusses literature on Torrance and Pryor (1998). Their theories focus on assessment, the central focus of this study in relation to learners who speak English as the First Additional language. Finally, the chapter concludes with the discussion of literature on Outcomes Based Education's assessment strategies. Spady's (1994) work on theories concerning Outcomes- Based Education assessment form part of the discussion in this section.

#### **2.2 Social constructivism: different orientations**

The choice of theorists in this study brings together the work of social constructivists and assessment theorists. Together, these theorists enable my study to access a set of assumptions about the nature of human learning that guide the constructivist learning theory which value developmentally and contextually appropriate teacher-supported learning that is initiated and supported by the learner. This is made possible in the study because constructivists believe that the learner is the builder of knowledge, and not the mere receptor.

Constructivism is a theory of learning that has roots in both Philosophy and Psychology. The essential core of constructivism is that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences (Fosnot, 1996; Steffe & Gale, 1995). Philosophically, this essence relies on an epistemology that stresses subjectivism and relativism. Within the context of this thinking, the concept that while reality may exist separate from experience, it can only be known through experience, resulting in a personally unique reality. Von Glasersfeld (1990) proposes three essential epistemological tenets of constructivism:

- (i) Knowledge is not passively accumulated, but rather, is the result of active cognising by the individual:
- (ii) Cognition is an adaptive process that functions to make an individual's behaviour more viable given a particular environment.
- (iii) Cognition organises and makes sense of one's experience, and is not a process to render accurate representation of reality (19).

In Papert's (1993) terms, furthermore:

Constructivism is both a theory of learning and a strategy for education. It builds on the "Constructivists" theories of Jean Piaget, asserting that knowledge is not simply transmitted from teacher to the learner, but actively constructed in the mind of the learner. Learners don't just get ideas; they create ideas. Moreover, constructivism suggests that new ideas are most likely to be created when learners are actively involved in building some type of external artefacts that they can reflect upon and share with others (23).

Constructivism is attributed to Piaget (1977) who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalised by learners. According to Piaget (1977), individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences through the processes of accommodation and assimilation. He asserts that one of the main influences on children's cognitive development is what he termed maturation, by which he means the unfolding of biological changes that are genetically programmed into us at birth. His second factor that facilitates child development in language is activity. The second factor leads to an increase in maturation process. This facilitates an increase in children's ability to act on their environment, and to learn from their actions and, not too long after that, leads to an alteration of children's thought processes.

A third factor in Piaget's (1977) child development theory is social transmission, by which he refers to a stage where the child begins to learn from others. As children act on their environment, they also interact with others, and learn from them to a differing degree depending on their developmental stage. Piaget (1977) believed that accommodation occurs when individual's experiences are aligned with their internal representation of the world. Individuals assimilate the new experience into an already existing framework, the process that Piaget (1977) calls accommodation which involves reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit new experiences.

Contrary to Piaget (1977), Vygotsky's (1978) main interest was the study of language development. Vygotsky's (1978) believed that initially language develops separately from thought. Later on it starts to overlap with thought more and more as the child grows up. For him, a non-overlapping part still remains later in life, some non-verbal thought with some non-conceptual speech remaining even in adults. He argues that it is children's interaction with others through language that most strongly influences the level of conceptual understanding they can reach. He thus believed that we could learn with and from others, both of the same age and of the higher age of developmental level. These theories are relevant to this study because in alternative assessment approaches learners are assessed through interaction with others, the learners become the learning resources themselves. They have opportunities to assess themselves and their peers, hence Vygotsky's theory that we can learn from others, both of the same age and of a higher age and developmental level. One of the main ways this operates is through *scaffolding* in the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD).

This latter concept, one of Vygotsky's (1978) main contributions to learning theories, refers to the gap between what a learner is able to do alone and what s/he can do with the help of someone more knowledgeable or skilled than him/herself. It is here that the role of teachers, adults and peers comes to the fore in children's learning, in that they can help bring the child's knowledge to a higher level by intervening in the zone of proximal development by providing children's thoughts with so-called scaffolds, which once the learning process is complete are no longer needed by the child. Not all children are as *educable* in this respect, some being able to learn more in the zone of proximal

development than others. Thus, for Vygotsky, it is *co-operation* that lies at the basis of learning. It is – formal and informal – *instruction* performed by more knowledgeable others, such as parents, peers, grandparents or teachers that is the main means of transmission of the knowledge of a particular culture.

Knowledge, for Vygotsky, as it is the case with Piaget, is embodied in actions and interactions with the environment (or culture). Contrary to Piaget, however, Vygotsky stresses the importance of *interaction* with a living representative of the culture. Piaget, on the other hand, stresses the articulation mechanisms by which knowledge is internalised by learners. He insists that individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences through the processes of accommodation and assimilation and believes that accommodation occurs when individuals' experiences are aligned with their internal representation of the world. Individuals assimilate the new experience into an already existing framework. Accommodation is the process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit new experiences. Vygotsky (1978) claims that the only 'good learning' is that which advances cognitive development. Such development can only be ascertained through assessment, and the next section discusses literature that focuses on the theories of assessment.

### **2.3 Assessment: concepts for alternative approaches**

The principles which underpin the learning theories discussed in the previous section articulate, and in fact complement, the theories of assessment focused upon in this section. This section discusses literature that pertains to a conceptually distinct approach to assessment: divergent assessment. In writing about divergent assessment, Torrance and Pryor (1998) point out that this type of assessment is related to constructivist view of learning principles and is more in line with current theories of learning which advocate learner-centeredness. The principles of divergent assessment relate to constructivism in that they are based on the assumption that assessment aims to discover what the learner knows, understands, and can do as a result of relevant experiences provided by and within a specific social environment (a classroom, for example). Teaching practice within this context is situated within the zone of proximal development, and thus designed to attend more closely to the contemporary theories of learning and applause the

complexity of formative assessment. A learner's ability to operate within this zone enables the educator to design assessment tools based on identifiable tasks that learners can do independently. In this context, divergent assessment is viewed as accomplished jointly by the educator and the learner.

The practical implications of this aspect of divergent assessment are, first, flexibility through planning which incorporates alternatives, second, open forms of recording and, third, an interaction between the learner and the curriculum which is analysed from the point of view of both the learner and the curriculum (the researcher calls this the *dialogue* between the learner and the curriculum, the curriculum communicates with the learner and the learner responds to the curriculum). Here the emphasis is not only on the curriculum, but also on the learner's understanding, interpretation, perception and experience of the curriculum, open questioning and open tasks, descriptive rather than purely judgemental evaluation of the learner's performance and, finally, involvement of the learner as the initiator and recipient of assessment (Torrance and Pryor, 1998). Torrance and Pryor (1998) further argue that:

A divergent approach by teachers would communicate to pupils that they are interested to them as people: thus children might come to understand that it is not a 'correct answer' per se that the teacher is anxious to elicit (i.e. a cued performance), but the child's own perception of the issue under discussion, that is, their developing understanding of knowledge under discussion (45).

This argument implies that in many respects, divergent assessment is interested in the learner's understanding rather than the agenda of the educator as an assessor. The correlation between constructivist theory and divergent assessment approaches as discussed so far suggests that alternative assessment approaches are more useful as tools designed to assist learners achieve expected learning outcomes.

#### **2.4 The concept of outcomes-based education.**

In writing about the uniqueness of an Outcomes-Based Education system, Le Grange and Reddy (1998) point out that:

An outcomes-based curriculum views the learning and teaching process differently from the traditional curriculum. Knowledge is not seen as being transferred intact from the teacher to the learner. Instead knowledge is seen as being **constructed** in the mind of the learner. Learners make sense of new

knowledge in the context of their own knowledge and then develop their original concept as learning takes place (6).

Spady (1994), the main proponent of outcomes-based education, identifies as the central premise of this system of education the alignment of outcomes, curriculum, and assessment strategies. He defines outcomes-based education as:

A comprehensive approach to organising and operating an educational system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstration of learning sought from each student. Outcomes are clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences that embody and reflect the learner competence in using content, information, ideas, and tools successfully (2).

He further adds that OBE:

Outcomes-based education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all learners to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experience. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure that learning ultimately happens (Spady, 1994: 1).

In relation to these diverse, yet similar understandings of OBE, Killen (n.d) asserts that an OBE approach presupposes that someone can determine what things are “essential for all learners to be able to do” (2), and that is possible to achieve these things through appropriate organization of the education system and through appropriate classroom practices. Spady and Marshal (1994) also write that:

Outcomes are clear, observable demonstrations of students’ learning that occur after a significant set of learning experiences. They are not values, attitudes, feelings beliefs, activities assignments, goals scores, grades, or averages, as many people believe. Typically, these demonstrations, or performances, reflect three things: (1) what the student knows; (2) what the student can actually do with what he or she knows; and (3) the student’s confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration. A well-defined outcome will have clearly defined outcome or concept and be demonstrated through a well-defined process beginning with a directive or request such as, ‘explain’, ‘organize’, or ‘produce’ (20-21).

Commenting on Spady’s (1994) work, Moodley (2003) observes that “for Spady, learning is not significant unless the outcomes reflect the complexities of real life and give prominence to the life-roles that learners will face after they have finished their formal education” (24). Such observations suggest that the learning outcomes comprise

the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes that the learners will acquire to enable them to reach their full potential and lead successful and fulfilling lives as individuals and members of society. It is these outcomes that are assessed against the assessment standards or criteria agreed upon and also known to the learner. This implies that assessment in OBE is more than memorization: the learner should be able to demonstrate the skills acquired through learning. In this context, the judgement of the learner's performance cannot be based on tests and examinations alone, but alternative approaches and a variety of strategies need to be put into place in order to assess the learner's achievement of outcomes fairly and equitably. There is thus a need for the use of multiple ways of determining the outcomes of learning. In relation to this point, Furman (1994) concludes that "OBE implies that the educator must develop original, authentic, performance-based assessment linked to the specific outcomes" (429-430).

In the context of this study, the exploration is in relation to ways in which English-First Additional Language educators in the senior phase understand, implement and experience these alternative assessment approaches beyond just tests and examinations in an attempt to expose their learners to multiple ways of achieving the outcomes of learning. This study does not suggest that there is no place for tests and examinations in outcomes-based education, for these serve the purpose of summative assessment. Rather, it wishes to suggest that other alternative assessment approaches to assess what Malan (2000) calls "learners' totality" (26) should be included as well. Malan (2000) further states that this approach takes a holistic approach in ascertaining the competence of a learner in terms of knowledge, skills and values, and assesses competence by using a variety of assessment approaches. This is the thrust and heart of this study.

In addition to the idea that outcomes should describe the long-term significant of a learning process, Spady (1994:9) states that OBE is based on three key assumptions or premises:

- (i) all students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way
- (ii) schools and teachers control the conditions that determine whether or not students are successful at school learning
- (iii) successful learning promotes even more successful learning (9).

Mammary's (1991) discussion of outcomes-based schooling reveals that all students have

talents and it is the responsibility of the educators to develop them, and their fundamental role is to find ways for learners to succeed rather than finding ways to fail them. Mutual trust drives all good outcomes-based schools in that excellence is for every child and not just a few. This is achieved by preparing learners everyday for success in the next day, and the need for correctives will be reduced. Learners should be encouraged to collaborate in learning rather than compete. Such values ensure that no child is excluded from any activity in the classroom. Success in this requires more than simply designing relevant activities, but, most crucially, a great deal of positive attitude from educators. If educators believe that they can get every learner to learn well, then nothing could frustrate such a vision.

## **2.5 Clarity of focus**

This study explores how educators understand, implement, and experience alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language, thus meeting the requirements of these three premises underpinning OBE. This study will also make recommendations concerning ways in which educators can move assessment towards more alternative assessment approaches by implementing formative assessment. This type of assessment is characterised by constructive feedback and use of alternative assessment activities, and thus realising the three premises of OBE. From the above discussion of the three premises, Spady (1994) developed four essential principles of OBE. Following is the discussion of these essential principles.

For Spady (1994), the principle of “clarity of focus” means that all curriculum design, all instruction delivery, all assessment design is aligned with what we endeavour the students to demonstrate successfully at the exit point of their school system. According to Spady (1994), “Outcomes-Based system exists to ensure that all students will emerge as successful on outcomes deemed essential to their future” (12). This means in Outcome-Based Education classroom everything is geared to what we want learners to demonstrate successfully at the ‘real’ end not, the end of the week, or the year, but the end of their lifetime with educators. Moodley (1993) is of the same idea that “when teachers plan, and teach, they should focus on helping learners to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will enable them, ultimately to achieve significant outcomes that have

been clearly articulated” (36). The principle of clarity of focus is significant to this study as the ‘real ends’ (as mentioned above) is the thrust of alternative assessment approaches. Wiggins (1993) clearly states that authentic (alternative) assessment focuses on engaged learning with end products, performances, or presentations centred on real-world problems, current events, or issues at the heart of the field of study or discipline.

## **2.6 Expanded opportunity:**

This principle is based on the notion that not all learners can learn the same thing at the same time (Spady, 1994). Gardner’s (1987) theory of multiple intelligences (one of the origins of outcomes-based assessment) is of great importance when considering the principle of expanded opportunity. He distinguishes between seven intelligences: linguistic, logical mathematical, spatial, musical, and bodily kinaesthetically, interpersonal, and interpersonal. Spady (1994) states that “For teachers using several methods and instructional modalities could expand opportunities for successful learning more than simple manipulating the various dimensions of time” (14). Moodley (1993) supports Gardner (1987) in saying that “An underlying notion is that learners have different characteristics and dispositions that influence what and how they learn. They are also capable of achieving complex outcomes if they are given appropriate opportunities and time” (65). Teachers should therefore explore a variety of assessment techniques to cater for multiple intelligences that their learners might have. Moodley (1993) supports this idea and further states that “teachers must also accommodate the different learning styles of learners and give them multiple opportunities to learn rather than label them as failures if they do not learn at the first opportunity” (65). This is all encapsulated in alternative assessment approaches in OBE. The principle of expanded opportunity also implies considering learners with special needs. This will demand the educators to give extra time to the learners who appear to be slow to grasp the concepts for the first time and also to cater for the exceptionally gifted children by giving them extra and more challenging work. In this way the principles of equity, inclusivity and accessibility will have been met. The principle of extended opportunity is relevant to this study because alternative assessment approaches offer learners a variety of assessment methods, tools and techniques to accommodate the different learning styles of learners. This study explores how English-First Additional Language educators understand,

implement and experience alternative assessment approaches in OBE to cater for multiple intelligences that their learners might have.

### **2.7 High expectations**

The third basic principle of outcomes-based education is that teachers should have high expectations for all learners. Teachers must establish high, challenging standards of performance in order to encourage learners to engage deeply with the issues, which they are learning. Helping learners to achieve high standards is linked very closely with the idea that successful learning promotes successful learning (Spady, 1994). When learners experience success, it reinforces their learning, builds their confidence and encourages them to accept further learning challenges. One of the most important notions of outcomes-based education is that it can assist all learners to do difficult things well. This principle is linked to the principle that teachers must strive to provide expanded opportunities for all learners.

### **2.8 Design down**

This principle is linked to the first principle that is, clarity of focus. Designing down principle means that the starting point of all school curriculum design must be a clear definition of significant learning that learners are to achieve when they exit formal school education. It means tracing back from these “desired end results” and identifying the “building blocks” on which those culminating outcomes make all instructional decisions. Spady (1994) claims that enabling outcomes are the building blocks on which culminating outcomes depend. Culminating outcomes are sometimes called programme outcomes or course outcomes whereas enabling outcomes enable the learner to arrive at the exit outcomes. Killen (2003: 3, 2002: 5-6, in: Moodley 2003: 66) says “ What this ultimately means, is that there should be direct and explicit links between all planning, teaching and assessment decisions and the significant outcomes that learners must achieve.” When applied to the South African system of education the significant outcomes that learners are to achieve at the end of their compulsory schooling (Grade 9) must be clearly defined (clarity of focus). Christensen (2002 in: Moodley 2003:67) sums up this principle by saying “Outcomes are important goals, not the curriculum. You must start with where you want to end up”. The relevance of this principle to this study is that

alternative assessment approaches are useful in achieving “design back” principle in the sense that in designing assessment educators must first decide, what are the actual performances they want their learners to achieve and they must decide how they can frame learning experiences in a meaningful context that provides the connection between the real world and experiences and school-based ideas (Lund 1997 & Wiggins 1993).

The introduction of outcomes-based curriculum in the South African system of education gives rise to the new notions of assessment known as outcomes-based assessment, this study is therefore based on the principles of Spady’s outcome-based curriculum concept, which give rise to these new notions of assessment hence outcomes-based assessment. This study explores educators understand, and implement alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language. At this stage it is important to highlight the comparisons between C2005 with the NCS. It must also be noted that C2005 and NCS are not phasing out OBE, but are curriculum developments within outcomes-based education methodology. For the detailed discussion of the comparisons between C2005 with NCS, please refer to table 2 in the appendixes.

Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt (2002:3) state that the NCS does not phase out the OBE methodology but it has only revised and strengthened the C2005 and simplified its language. It has also aligned the curriculum with assessment.

DOE (2002) states that:

Assessment in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) is a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the assessment standards of the learning outcomes. It requires clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies to enable teachers and to give constructive feedback to learners and to report to parents, and other interested people (24).

The next section discusses the origins of outcomes-based assessment in education.

## **2.9 Origins of outcomes-based assessment in education**

According to Lubisi (1999: 47-54) there are three origins of outcomes-based assessment in education, namely: criterion-referenced testing, competence-based assessment, and theory of multiple intelligences. I explore each of these in the next section.

### **2.9.1 Criterion-referenced testing**

Referencing involves choosing a framework for interpreting something, in this case assessment data. According to NCTE (1994) criterion-referenced testing involves tests that compare learners' performance against established benchmarks and these benchmarks or criteria are usually expressed as numerical ranges that define levels of achievement. Glaser, In: *American Psychologist* (1963: 519-521) cited by Lubisi (1999) claims that:

Criterion-reference measures indicate the content of the behavioral repertory, and the correspondence between what an individual does and the underlying continuum of achievement. Measures, which assess student's achievement in terms of a criterion standard, thus provide information as to the degree of competence attained by a particular student, which is independent of reference to the performance of others (126).

Criterion-reference testing has thus much relevance to this study as Glaser's conception of criterion reference testing is underpinned by some of the principles underlying alternative assessment namely, proficiencies or competences, which are acquired in a linear incremental order. The levels of proficiency can be expressed as observable behaviours since different learners have proficiencies in varying amounts representing the deferent levels. Further Spady's approach to OBE emphasises the importance of criterion-referenced assessment in which the intended outcomes provide benchmarks against learner's achievement can be judged "Good sense can be made of a learners' achievement without comparing it with that of another learner" (Lubisi, 1999; 49).

### **2.9.2 Competence-based assessment**

According to Lubisi (1999) "another area, from which the origins of outcomes-based assessment can be traced, is competence-based assessment in professional and industrial training" (50). Competence based assessment is a generic term used for ways of thinking about and doing assessment. Michel (1989 in: Lubisi 1999: 129) seems to be concerned with the need for the statements of explicit criteria which he calls 'standards'. Michel assumes that:

- (i) It is possible to set educational and training outcomes for a programme of learning;
- (ii) Competence can be broken down into a hierarchy of constituent units and elements'
- (iii) Each element of competence can be given meaning through the use of

behavioural criteria;  
(iv) Learners who meet criteria for each unit of performance are competent.

### **2.9.3 Multiple intelligences**

The theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) suggests that educators need to take a broader view of thinking processes and human achievement as according to Gardner these thinking processes are realised in different domains of accomplishment. They are: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily kinaesthetic intelligence, musical intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and naturalistic intelligence. Every person possesses all eight intelligences and most people can develop each area of intelligence to an adequate level of competency. One of the implications of multiple intelligences for the assessment of learners is that intelligence is best displayed and developed while learners are involved in meaningful activities. Assessment should also involve tasks that are familiar and valued within the culture. Such an approach can shift the focus from ranking the learners to assisting them build on their own intellectual capacities and take optimal advantage of the educational resources around them as confirmed by Hatch and Gardner (1990). Traditional tests only (e.g. multiple choice, short answers, essays...) demand learners to show their knowledge in a predetermined manner, whereas Gardner's theory implies that a better approach to assessment is to allow learners to explain the learning material in their own way using the different intelligences. Preferred assessment strategies include among many portfolios, projects, journals, Lazear (1992).

### **2.9.4 Assessment in OBE (NCS)**

Gallagher (1998) argues that until recently, the word *assessment* was usually reserved by educators for a group of services performed by school psychologist or other specialized personnel to assess the nature and cause of the learning problems students were having or to identify appropriate placement of students suspected of needing exceptional education services (like gifted students or individuals with learning disabilities). He continues to say that the term has now moved beyond its psycho- educational roots into the classroom.

The movement of the word assessment beyond its psycho-educational roots is facilitated

by the introduction of outcomes-based education which gives rise to the particular ways of thinking about assessment of learners. The generic of these new approaches to assessment is outcomes-based assessment (OBA). Accordingly the Department of Education (1998) states that outcomes-based assessment focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learner's achievements at every level, whatever pathway they may have followed, and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence.

Previously South Africa used norm-referenced assessment where the learners' performances were assessed by comparing it with that of other learners in a group. There has now been a paradigm shift towards formative, criterion referenced assessment where the individual learner's performance is measured against a set of predetermined criteria. Outcomes-based assessment implies assessment based on observation of authentic tasks. According to Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt (2002):

Outcome-based assessment is sometimes referred to as authentic assessment, which thus concerns the measurement of complex performance and higher order thinking skills in real life context. Proponents of authentic assessment argue that it provides a more direct measure of higher order learning outcomes than that of more traditional measures (168).

As part of alternative assessment approaches, authentic assessments do not only assess memory, skills, attitudes, and knowledge, but also involve the direct assessment of complex performances and generally consist of performance, portfolio, and products. Popham (1999) defines educational assessment as a formal attempt to determine a learner's status in respect of educational variables of interest. This implies that assessment begins with the purpose, and is a formal process that involves a deliberate effort to gain information about a learner's attitudes and skills (McDonald, 2005). According to DoE (2001:2) assessment is an ongoing planned process of gathering evidence about the performance of learners against assessment standards, using clearly defined criteria, with a variety of appropriate assessment strategies, providing constructive feedback, recording results, reflecting, and reporting to parents, teachers and other important people. Hence OBE, according to the DoE (1998) assessment must be outcomes based-assessment, learner-centered, result-oriented and builds on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but this may not happen in

the same way or within the same period hence OBE. It takes into consideration the following:

- (i) What learners are to learn is clearly defined;
- (ii) Each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement;
- (iii) Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and
- (vi) Each learner is provided the time and assistance to realize his or her potential.

It is also important to note that the learning experiences that the learners have are integral to their achievement of outcomes, which means that assessment must take place on an ongoing basis, throughout the whole learning process and the learners' development. As has been mentioned above, the introduction of outcomes-based education gives rise to the particular notions of assessing the learners known as outcomes-based assessment. The DoE (2002) states that to help learners to reach their full potential, assessment should be: transparent; integrated with teaching and learning; based on predetermined criteria or standards; varied in terms of methods and context; and valid, reliable, fair, learner-paced; and flexible enough to allow for expanded opportunities. DOE (2002) further states that:

Assessment in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) is a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of learners measured against the assessment standards of the learning outcomes. It requires clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies to enable teachers and to give constructive feedback to learners and to report to parents, and other interested people.

There are different types of assessment which serve important purposes within OBE, among them are; formative assessment, which monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching; diagnostic assessment, which helps the educators to find out about the nature and cause of barriers to learning experienced by the learner; baseline assessment which enables the educator to establish what the learner knows at the beginning of a phase or grade and thus assisting the educator to plan the learning programmes and learning activities; summative assessment which gives an overall of the learners' progress at a given time (DoE 1998: 5)

According to Airaslan (1994) educational assessment can be divided into formal and informal assessments. Formal assessments are procedures for gathering information about the learners that are created with special thoughtfulness and care, and should be closely

matched to the basic competences in the syllabus. They are usually graded and recorded. Informal assessments are procedures for gathering information about learning that can be frequently used on the spur of the moment or casually during classroom teaching and learning activities. Informal assessment is also used as part of formative assessment. There are different types of assessment which serve important purposes within OBE, among them are; formative assessment, which monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching; diagnostic assessment, which helps the educators to find out about the nature and cause of barriers to learning experienced by the learner; baseline assessment which enables the educator to establish what the learner knows at the beginning of a phase or grade and thus assisting the educator to plan the learning programmes and learning activities; summative assessment which gives an overall of the learners' progress at a given time (DoE 1998: 5)

Eisner In: *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (1993) 25(3): 219 – 233 summarises by saying that there are eight criteria that are appropriate for creating and appraising new assessment approaches and practices in education, they are:

- The tasks used to assess what students know and can do need to reflect the tasks they will encounter in the world outside schools, not merely those limited to the schools themselves
- The tasks used to assess students should reveal how students go about solving problems, not only the solutions they formulate
- Assessment tasks should reflect the values of the intellectual community from which the tasks are derived
- Assessment tasks need not be limited to solo performance
- New assessment tasks should make possible more than one acceptable solution to a problem and more than one acceptable answer to a question
- Assessment tasks should have curricular relevance, but not be limited to the curriculum as taught
- Assessment tasks should require students to display a sensitivity to configurations or wholes, not simply discrete elements
- Assessment tasks should permit the student to select a form of representation he or she chooses to use to display what has been learned.

This study explores how the educators understand and implement these new assessment approaches in their OBE classrooms.

### **2.9.5 Some important principles in educational assessment**

All educational assessment practices should be underpinned by the learning, teaching and

assessment principles. Whether formative or summative in nature, assessing practices should be valid, reliable and fair. According to Maree and Fraser (2004), these constructs are fundamental to all programmes of assessment, but there are various viewpoints on what these mean, based on differing perspectives.

#### *2.9.5.1 Validity*

To be valid, an assessment task should clearly relate to its purpose and generally test the particular knowledge, understanding or skills that are the focus of judgment. Historically, a common definition of a valid measure is that it measures what it purports to measure. If assessments of literate learning are to measure what they purport to measure, they will need to concern themselves with the nature of language (NCTE, 1994). Validity assessment must then respect and value student diversity and realise that there is generally no single “correct” response. In view of that, such assessments would allow for and encourage multiple interpretations of reading and writing selection and make provisions for allowing learners to demonstrate their ability to construct meaning through multiple response modes such as writing, drawing, speaking, or performing. According to Lloyd-Jones and Bray (1986): in Maree and Fraser (2004), validity has two aspects, and they frame validity around two questions: Firstly, is what you expect of your pupils to learn and do justifiable and reasonable? Secondly, do the methods of assessment achieve what they set out to do? Affirmative answers to the questions in their view would validate the form of assessment. Lubisi (1998:19) distinguished between different types of validity; namely face validity, which he refers to as the first impression, content validity which is related to the proportion of course content sampled by the assessment and construct validity which he points out that in considering it one has to ask the following question: To what extent does the assessment assess the construct it claims to assess?

In other words, it concerns itself whether claims to assess learners in specific knowledge, skills and values are justifiable or not. Mesick (1992, 1996) argues that,

An assessment that suffers from construct under representation variance fails to test construct adequately, because a major aspect of the construct extends beyond the measure “some assessments suffer from construct under-representation. Thus an assessment is considered representative when it is

broad enough to assess adequately the construct being tested and direct when it is narrow enough to not be confounded with irrelevant information” (Mesick 1996:16).

In the same view, Wiggins (1993) summarizes a similar point, by indicating that: “tests are simplified of contextual ‘noise’ and ‘surround’ to make scores more reliable. Yet we need to maximize the fidelity and comprehensiveness of the simulation for validity reasons” (230). Lubisi (1998:93) claims that there are two types of criterion-related validity, namely, concurrent and predictive validity. He further says that in considering concurrent validity; one has to able to answer the following question: To what extent does a learner’s performance on this assessment correlate with the learner’s performance on other assessment assessing the same construct. In considering predictive validity one should ask the following questions: How well does the assessment predict the further performance of those learners who are assessed? In considering consequential validity, Lubisi (1998) points out that one has to ask the question: What consequences does the assessment have on those being assessed? In considering context validity; one has to ask the question, to what extent are students assessed in the context of what is known about their learning environments?

#### *2.9.5.2 Reliability*

Reliability refers to the results obtained from a task. “It is an index of the extent to which a set of results or interpretation can be generalised across tasks, overtime, and among interpreters. In other words it is a particular kind of generalisability” (NCTE, 1994:6). Other authors believe that reliability is only important within the context of validity that is the extent to which the assessment leads to useful, meaningful conclusions and consequences (NCTE, 1994:7). A student performance should obtain consistent results across a range of circumstances. Lubisi (1998) distinguishes between three types of reliability. Stability reliability is concerned with the ability of assessment to generalize from one specific time to all times. According to Maree and Fraser (2004) reliability implies consistency in terms of how far the same test would give the same results if done by the same children under the same conditions. They further state that a reliable test makes it possible for one to make reliable conditions.

According to Lubisi (1998:94) “The question to ask in considering, stability reliability is: “Is the learner’s performance likely to remain the same if, the assessment is done at

different times". (Lubisi 1998) does acknowledge that there might be obviously temperamental factors and other constraints which would make learner's performance in the same activity different at different times. He further states that the assessment is more reliable on the stability axis if the differences in performances are minor. Interscorer reliability the main concern of interscorer reliability is 'to what extent would different assessors give the same value to a learner's performance in an assessment. In considering internal-consistency reliability, educators should ask themselves: 'to what extent would a different sample of similar assessment tasks yield the same level of student achievement?

#### *2.9.5.3 Fairness and Equity*

To be fair an assessment task should be designed to be accessible by all learners irrespective of their race or cultural background and should require only knowledge or skills that learners have been given the opportunity to learn. By equity it is meant that the assessment tasks should be sensitive to the linguistic and cultural diversity of the institution. Similarly, (NCTE, 1994) state that equity issues also include the kinds of educational experiences available to students who will face similar assessments, particularly in certification or gate keeping situations and as a result questions of access to sound instruction, appropriate materials, and enriching learning material are crucial.

Tests have traditionally been administered, their results published, and their impact on instruction instigated with little regards to issues such as cultural, economic, and gender equity, but many equity issues affect assessment, rendering comparisons difficult and often meaningless (NCTE, 1994). Issues of validity, reliability, fairness and equity in assessment have much relevance to this study as this study explores into educator's understandings and implementation of alternative assessment and through literature review this study will make the educators aware that with alternative assessments one needs to consider the abovementioned assessment principles.

#### **2.10 English-First Additional Language: its place in OBE (NCS).**

English-First Additional language is for learners whose mother tongue is not English. When the learners first arrive at school, English-first additional language assumes that they do not have any knowledge of the language. The curriculum starts by introducing

them to understanding, speaking, and writing the language. Reading and writing skills acquired in their home language helps the learners to speak and write the language. However, by grade 8 educators should be using mainly English in the classroom. With an outcomes-based education approach teaching and learning activities aim at enabling learners to succeed in the real life after exiting the school system. One of the main aims of teaching English-First Additional Language is the development of communicative competences in authentic situations in learners. English-First Additional Language also provides access to other learning areas. English-First Additional Language focuses on the communicative approach to language learning and teaching as required by the N C S policy (DoE, 2002). This means that in the English language, an integrated approach should be used. It is the method of teaching language based on the notion that language is a means of communication.

Thus English-First Additional Language educators are required to create opportunities for genuine interaction, in which the learners participate. They do not just sit and listen to the educator. Byrne (1988:10) cited by UNISA (2004) uses the following headings in her discussion of true-to-life teaching: “Bring the outside world to the classroom, simulate the outside world in the classroom, escape in imagination from the classroom to the real world, get out of the classroom into the outside world” (36). Byrne further explains the abovementioned concepts by saying that this is done through various role-play activities. In the classroom we are not actually tourists (patients, customers in a shop, etc) nor are we at the airport (or having a meal at the café) nor are we with luck) suffering from a cold or in trouble with the police, but we can involve the learners in all these- through pretence (UNISA, 2004:37).

In the light of the above discussion, it is clear that language plays a crucial and critical role in teaching and learning in our country and thus forms an integral component of any school curriculum. Since language plays such a pivotal role in our country, this study then focuses on English-First Additional Language educators’ understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in their classrooms as opposed to traditional assessment. Assessment of different skills in English-First Additional Language will now be discussed.

## **2.11 Assessment of different skills English-First Additional Language**

According to (DoE, 2003) the following skills in English-first Additional Language must be assessed: oral communication skills, creative writing skills, literature skills, language skills and performance skills. Assessment in English-First Additional Language therefore assesses the application of language in speaking, reading, writing and listening in authentic situations or in real-world context, integrating with other learning areas, using various resources and emphasising the achievement of demonstrated (visible and audible) outcomes. Assessment should take place on a continuous basis as it forms the integral part of the teaching and learning process. Assessment should also serve as an indication to educators and learners that outcomes have been achieved and that new learning content can be achieved. It is these outcomes, which are assessed against the assessment standards. Malan (2000:26) states that the ultimate purpose of assessment is to validate learning outcomes – be it for diagnostic, formative or summative purposes. The role of assessment in OBE is part and parcel of the aim of assessment in all its root models.

It is of vital importance to note that although the outcomes are presented as separate, in Table 1 of the appendices, they should be integrated when taught and assessed. Similarly, the DoE (2002) states that:

These outcomes have been written to give specific focus to particular kinds of knowledge and skills, and to make them clear and understandable. When we use language, however, we integrate knowledge, skills and values to express ourselves. A central principle of the Language learning Area Statement is therefore the integration of these aspects of language through the creation and interpretation of texts (6).

Malan (2000) states that if the educators and learners are uncertain about the desired learning outcomes and educators fail to assess outcomes properly, it could end in a situation where learners only attain pseudo-knowledge, pseudo-skills, pseudo-attitudes, and pseudo-values. On completion of their studies these learners are awarded certificates inherently implying that they have attained certain competences whereas in fact they have not. This study explores how English-First Additional Language educators assess the learning outcomes in their NCS classrooms using alternative assessment approaches. Outcomes are measured against assessment standards, which provide a clear, concise and sequential description of students' learning. Following is the discussion of assessment

standards in English-First Additional Language.

## **2.12 Assessment standards in English-First Additional Language**

Assessment standards describe the level at which learners should demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and the ways (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement (DoE, 2003:14). In other words standards provide a clear, concise and sequential description of student learning. Each standard describes what learners should know, understand and be able to do at different stages. For a detailed discussion of assessment standards in English- First Additional Language senior phase, please refer to Table 1 of the appendix A.

### **2.12.1 Alternative assessment approaches**

In the context of this study, umbrella terms are used to distinguish between important assessment concepts. Alternative assessment approaches are broad approaches to assessment, which are different from traditional assessment approaches which were judgemental rather than developmental. According to Maree & Fraser (2004: 51) alternative assessment is any strategy that differs from conventional or exclusively knowledge-driven assessment. This approach is often performed during instruction to assist educators in making moment-by-moment decisions. These writers further state that alternative assessments include authentic assessment, performance-based assessments, portfolios, journals, demonstrations and projects as assessment strategies.

The term alternative assessment approaches is used for diverse assessment approaches that differ from conventional or exclusively knowledge-driven assessment. These approaches are often performed prior, during and after instruction to assist educators in making pedagogically informed decisions. This study then refers to alternative assessment approaches as baseline assessment which determines the learner performance at the beginning of instruction to obtain an idea of the abilities and interests of the learners; diagnostic assessment which diagnoses learning difficulties during learning; formative assessments (assessment which informs, guides and improves teaching and learning for the development and growth of learners); performance-based; criterion-referenced; characterised by constructive continuous feedback to the learners which is

pillared by authentic tasks that demonstrate learner's ability to accomplish communication goals in English-First Additional Language in a learner-centred classroom. Traditional assessment approaches, viewed educational assessment as a separate process from the teaching and learning process as it was only summative and judgemental in nature, whereas alternative assessment approaches view assessment as part of the process of teaching and learning, in which the educator helps learners to learn and develop towards accomplishing the learning outcomes without judging them.

The term alternative assessment strategies describe the ways and means used to accomplish alternative assessment approaches, other than objective tests and examinations which are traditional assessment strategies. Alternative assessment strategies are methods, instruments or tools and techniques the educators have at their disposal to assess and assist the learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes. These assessment strategies reveal what learners can do with language, emphasising the learners' strengths instead of their weaknesses. By being performance based in their nature, alternative assessment strategies help the educators to emphasize that the point of language learning is communication for meaningful purpose. For the purposes of this study, assessment 'methods' refer to the person or persons who do assessment.

Examples of assessment methods include among many, the following: Teacher assessment, group assessment, self-assessment, peer-assessment, interviews, conferences, observation, performance assessment etc. 'Instruments or tools' refer to the "how" aspect of assessment. How will the required outcome be assessed? Assessment instruments or tools include among many the following: portfolios, observation forms, worksheets, journals, rubrics, exhibitions, checklists etc. Assessment 'techniques' refer to the "what" aspect of assessment. It refers to the learning opportunities that the learners will be exposed to in order to achieve the required outcomes. In this study examples of assessment techniques include among many the following: projects, assignments, surveys, debating, role-plays, drama, interviews, panel discussions etc. These assessment strategies provide learners with many different ways of uncovering and describing their understanding whereas mere traditional methods of testing may not give the learners appropriate opportunities to reveal their knowledge, skills and values or attitudes (Killen,

1996b). Thomas, Held & Saddler (2002) add that

Alternative assessment strategies provide a broad view of a student across time, rather than at a point in time, and use self-evaluation and continuous feedback as components of the assessments process. Through alternative assessment process, students should learn to evaluate their own ability and measure progress by participating in this process (34).

Similarly, Stiggins (2002) argues that traditional assessment practices cannot inform the moment to moment, day to day, week to week instructional decisions faced by learners and educators seeking to manage the learning process as it unfolds. They cannot diagnose learner's needs during learning, inform learners what study tactics are or are not working, or keep parents informed about how to support the work of their children.

Alternative assessments have been called by different names in different literature; some call it authentic assessments, some performance-based assessments. For the purposes of this study, alternative assessments and authentic assessments are complementary hence outcomes-based assessment. One of the basic principles underlying outcomes-based assessment is the notion of authenticity (DOE, 1998). All assessment techniques in outcomes-based assessment should include notions of "authenticity", if they do not, then they are not outcomes-based. The researcher is also aware of (Butts, 1997 In: Custer, n.d) who claims that: "However given the growth and refinement that have occurred over the past decade, the term (alternative assessment) suffers from a lack of precision" (3).

For the purposes of this study all outcomes-based assessment procedures, approaches, strategies and techniques should be authentic hence outcomes-based assessment. Lubisi, (1998) also agrees with the researcher in saying that: "One of the many holistic approaches to outcomes-based assessment has become known as authentic assessment" (56). Wiggins (1998) also suggests that all educational assessment must be anchored in and focussed on authentic tasks because they supply valid direction, intellectual coherence, and development. Similarly Combs (1997) states that alternative assessment should therefore try to achieve the following: "use learners' knowledge in real contexts, make use of tasks that are relevant to learners' experiences, emphasise the products of the outcomes, give attention to metacognition and cognitive skills, seek better ways of

recognising all forms of student learning by starting where the learner is at that stage and recognising prior learning” (5). This assertion implies that Combs’ (1997) view is that all alternative assessments should have notions of authenticity.

In the outcomes-based education paradigm the learner-centeredness of teaching concept is of the outmost importance. The learners themselves are the primary learning resources (Byers 2002:4). This study explores how the educators understand, implement and experience alternative assessment approaches in their NCS classes. In the light of the above discussion, I will now discuss different alternative assessment approaches, like pre-instructional assessment, diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, authentic assessment, criterion assessment and continuous assessment. This study considers the following forms of assessment as alternative assessment approaches by virtue of being formative and part being of the lesson process.

#### **2.12.2 Pre-instruction assessment/baseline assessment**

This assessment takes place before the instruction starts with an aim to find out about the abilities, interests and the previous achievements of the learner. Assessment that occurs prior to instruction is a valuable tool to facilitate instructional and planning activities, and also to direct subsequent assessment, Maree and Fraser (2004). DoE (2002) states that baseline assessment usually takes place at the beginning of a grade or phase to establish what learners already know. It assists teachers to plan learning programmes and learning activities.

#### **2.12.3 Diagnostic assessment**

According to DoE (2002) diagnostic assessment is used to find out about the nature and cause of barriers to learning experienced by specific learners. It is followed by guidance, appropriate support and intervention strategies.

#### **2.12.4 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is conducted during instruction; it forms part of teaching and learning and takes place throughout the learning process. It is supportive of learning and non-judgemental in nature. It is characterised by ongoing feedback and gives information to both the learners and the educator as to whether the learning outcomes are being

achieved or not. It also provides information about problems, errors, misunderstandings, understandings and progress during instruction. Formative assessment assists educators in adapting their teaching strategies and methods during lesson time in order to affect greater understanding and learning. Department of Education (2002) states that:

Formative assessment monitors and supports the process of learning and teaching, and is used to inform learners and teachers about learners' progress so as to improve learning. Constructive feedback is given to enable learners to grow.

Therefore the use of formative assessment has a teaching role in OBE.

### **2.12.5 Continuous assessment**

In the old assessment paradigm continuous assessment was perceived as a series of paper and pencil tests, which were added up to summative assessment at the end of a term or year. DoE (1998: 4) states that “continuous assessment must be used to support the learner developmentally and to feed into teaching and learning and should not be interpreted merely as the accumulation of a series of traditional tests” In the new assessment approaches, continuous assessment is viewed differently. At this point it is important to clarify that continuous assessment in can be viewed in two ways.

According to Drinkwater and Nieuwoudt (2002), there is continuous (on-going) formal formative assessment; and continuous (on-going) informal formative assessment. According to these writers, in continuous (on-going) formal formative assessment, a learner should be assessed in a variety of ways and contexts over a period of time, ‘a variety of ways and contexts’ should be noted. Learners should not be assessed using a series of only conventional tests, as it was the case with continuous assessment in the traditional assessment paradigm. There are underlying notions of alternative assessment in ‘a variety of ways and contexts’ even though assessment is formal. The results of these assessments should be included together with the summative assessment results in order to determine if a learner has attained a particular level. This assessment should be based on interesting and demanding tasks, which motivate and support learning and should be accompanied by constructive feedback to the learners as well as formal recording of results.

The second continuous assessment is (on-going) informal formative assessment. This is the most grossly unfair dealt with aspect of assessment. This assessment should be used in a developmental rather than a judgmental sense. Informal, formative assessment can be implemented through the use of assessment methods like; teacher-assessment where the teacher elicits a question and the learner responds, and the teacher recognises learner's response, and then uses the information collected to student learning. The educator has an opportunity to draw out and act on learner's evolving understanding; self-assessment, peer-assessment and group assessment. It provides feedback to the learners on areas of weakness, and provides insight to the educator on how the learner most needs are to be addressed to attain a particular outcome (Clark, 1997; 2000). In this way continuous assessment is used as part of the lesson instruction as the DoE (1998:4) also states, "assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process". It means assessing the learners at each critical step of their learning experience while the learning process is unfolding.

It is an ongoing cycle, an integrated approach to teaching and learning starting from: baseline – finding out what learners already know and can do about the topic at the beginning of an instruction so that instruction is geared to meet the learners' needs; formative – finding out how learners are getting along and progressing during the lesson instruction so as to give them feedback and modify the instructional strategies; diagnostic – ascertaining the nature and extent of learners' problems (why the learners are struggling) so that those problems can be remedied; summative – summing up what learners know and can do at the end of the lesson instruction so that their progress can be measured. At this stage assessment technique like projects; assignments and essays can be used to give the learners the opportunities to demonstrate their newly acquired skills. A variety of assessment tools and methods can also be utilised to assess how far the learners have achieved the learning outcomes against the assessment standards. According to Le Grange & Reddy (1998: 10) continuous assessment also does the following:

- It provides feedback on the learning outcomes that learners have achieved, and those that have not been achieved;
- It assists with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of learners;
- It encourages communication between teachers and learners;

- It works hand in hand with evaluation and therefore provides important information about curriculum issues like teaching methods and the relevance of learning outcomes and resources.

### **2.12.6 Summative assessment**

For the purposes of this study, there are two types of summative assessment. According to Maree & Fraser (2004), summative assessment assesses achievement at the end of instruction in order to document learner performance after instruction has been completed. They further state that it is used to establish whether the learner has met all the competency requirements. For the purposes of this study this summative assessment is part of lesson instruction and is formative because having established how the learners performed in a particular lesson the educator can decide to re do the lesson as part of the previous lesson. According to the DoE (2002: 114) summative assessment gives an overall picture of learner's progress at a given time, for example, at the end of a term or year, or on transfer to another school. This study is sceptical about regarding summative assessment as an alternative assessment approach because of its traditional role and misuse in educational assessment.

### **2.12.7 Criterion-referenced assessment**

There are different approaches to referencing. The traditional assessment paradigm used norm-referenced assessment; in that case learner's achievements were compared with those of other learners or with pass marks or benchmarks to determine how well the learner is doing. This type of reference is always associated with summative assessment (Maree & Fraser: 2004). Criterion referencing, hence OBE assessment paradigm pertains to the specific performance that was demonstrated. Criterion-reference assessment determines the level of performance obtained (Maree & Fraser, 2004). Criterion referencing is a comparison of an individual with pre-defined criteria. It can be used for both formative and summative purposes, both highlighting areas of weakness and determining whether candidates have achieved an acceptable level in the areas they are expected to master. Results can often be misinterpreted, particularly by those who are more familiar with the older, norm (related) referencing. It must be made clear to users of assessment data that the criteria for success are performance against learning objectives, rather than performance against other students.

### **2.12.8 Authentic assessment**

Authentic assessment is a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform world tasks that are kinds of problems and challenges faced by adult citizens in the real world. These tasks demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills. It is the direct assessment of the outcomes of which is the focus in outcomes based education. Authentic assessments reflect the kinds of evidence that will be required to demonstrate that a specific learning outcome has been achieved. Authentic assessments are assessment practices that look directly at learner's performance. Fraser (1999:15) describes authentic assessment as... assessment tasks that resemble skills, activities and functions in the real world and in school. Authentic assessment aims at determining competences in contexts that closely resemble situations in which these competences are required. Assessment then becomes a learning experience in which learners are prepared their knowledge, skills and values in an integrated manner. They are called authentic assessments because they engage learners in "real world" tasks rather than in multiple-choice exercises, and evaluate them according to criteria that are important for actual performance in that field (Wiggins, 1989).

According to (Wiggins, 1989) in: Eric, 1990, there is several reasons why authentic assessments are important ways of gauging progress of students:

- 1) "Authentic assessments require students to be effective performers with acquired knowledge." In other words traditional tests narrowly test students on their ability to "plug in" information that they recall.
- 2) "Authentic assessments present the students with the full array of tasks that mirror the priorities and challenges found in the best instructional activities: conducting research, oral analysis, or a debate, etc." These are not only limited to paper- pencil one-answer type questions.
- 3) "Authentic assessments attend to whether the student can craft polished, thorough and justifiable answers, performance or products." They don't just ask students for one written correct response, but understanding.
- 4) Authentic assessments involve "ill-structured" challenges and roles that help students rehearse for the complex ambiguities of the "game" of adult and professional life."

There is always a danger to think that authentic assessments and performance assessments are the same, but Meyer (1992) warns that performance and authentic assessments are not the same, and that performance is “authentic” to the extent it is based on challenging and engaging tasks which resemble the context in which the adults do their work. This means that an authentic task or assessment is one in which learners are allowed adequate time to plan, to complete the work, to self-assess, to revise, and consult with others.

Similarly, NCTE (1994) is of the opinion that these terms and the kinds of assessment to which they refer arise from the realization that widely employed assessment tools generally have been poor reflections of what literate people actually do when they read, write, and speak. The general issue of the “realness” of what is being measured (its construct validity) is eluded by the terms: authentic assessment, performance-based assessment, performance assessment, and demonstrations.

Traditional assessments in no ways prepare students for possibilities of experience that they will discover later in life. Authentic assessments also consider the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of previously disadvantaged students. This study explores how educators in English-First Additional Language understand, implement and experience authentic assessment as an alternative approach to assessment.

#### **2.12.9 Performance-based/ tasks/ assessments**

Maree & Fraser (2004: 53) are of the idea that this type of assessment requires the demonstration of skills or proficiency through creating, producing or doing something, often in a setting involving real-world applications. The aim of performance assessment is to assess learning or performance directly instead of using conventional methods of assessment like paper-and pencil tests. If curriculum, instruction, and assessment are integrated, the assessment itself becomes a valuable learning experience. Those who propose changes in assessment rest their argument on the premise that what we assess and how we assess it affects both what is taught and the way it is taught. This method can also be used to assess higher order cognitive process. To do this the teacher needs to establish a particular situation and then observe the learners solving problems, co-

operating with other learners and carrying out the tasks that the teacher wants to assess. The advantage of doing this is that it allows the teacher to observe the learners' behaviours that may not occur under testing conditions, either because they are not explicitly tested or because test anxiety prevents learner's from doing them. An example is rating the learners while they are conducting a conversation. Performance assessment can easily take place during a regular lesson (Brualdi, 1998) and (Moskal, 2000).

Developing a performance assessment is a deliberate and structured process that must go beyond the casual observation of learners. When preparing a performance assessment the teacher needs to start off by formulating the outcomes that he/she wants to assess, both in the cognitive and affective levels. Then a task needs to be designed that will allow the learners to utilise skills, behaviours, or performances the teacher wants to assess. These can include role-playing, presentations, interviews, panel discussions, drama, debates, and scenarios. These tasks should be complex, allowing the teacher to assess a variety of skills and should not necessarily lead to one particular 'right' outcome. The tasks should be sufficiently representative that it allows the teacher to make generalisations about the learners' skills that are assessed. For the successful implementation of performance assessment, the teacher needs to develop a scoring rubric that clearly lists those elements, which the teacher wants to assess, such as attitudes, skills and cognitive processes. There should also be a checklist to note whether the desired behaviour has or has not occurred. The fact that there is a clear list of descriptions of what is expected can be very useful in providing feedback to learners for formative purposes, Brualdi (1998), Moskal (2000), Roeber (1996), Elliott (1995), Borich (1996) as well as formally setting up a performance assessment situation. Some authors have suggested that it may be better to informally assess a student doing work in the classroom (Brualdi, 1998).

The criticism that is levelled against performance assessment is that it lacks the reliability and validity of pencil-and-paper tests and are by their nature somehow subjective which means that the teaches' bias can be a problem. On the other hand behaviors and processes in realistic contexts cannot be assessed through paper-and-pencil and that makes performance assessment very powerful. Sometimes performance tasks have been called authentic assessment because they are valuable activities in themselves and they involve tasks that are directly related to real-world problems. They involve tasks that focus on

learner's use of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of realistic situations and contexts.

Alternative assessment strategies can be used in the assessment of outcomes in English-First Additional Language in the senior phase. Writing and speaking, in particular, should be taught within a real-life context, that is, it should be based on simulated situations. Learners have to be exposed to simulated situations where they have to react orally or in writing. These situations should be similar to those they will encounter in their everyday or professional lives (Wiggins, 1998). The value of authentic assessment in outcomes-based assessment is that it helps learners to develop in real, life-oriented language situations and that it prepares them for successful communicative integration into society after leaving school. The following is an example of an authentic assessment task in English- First Additional Language:

Your school is situated along the main road called P284. Four other neighbouring schools use the same road. Learners cross this road when coming and leaving school. Members of the community also use the road for getting to the taxi rank, local clinic, shopping centre, social welfare offices and municipality offices. Many accidents have been reported involving learners from your school and neighbouring schools. As a class project identify the problems that cause the accidents and also suggest the solutions as road safety (Asiphephe) measures to the department of Transport. Develop a poster in which your ideas will be displayed.

This is an example of an authentic assessment task, which challenges learners to use their different thinking levels. It will also expose the learners to different opportunities to demonstrate their creative writing, language, performance and oral communication skills. This is an authentic task, a research project, which will expose them to real-life simulations like; interviewing the road users, department of transport officials and police station officials. This class project will also allow them an opportunity to present their findings and recommendations through their choice of media, which could be; written

work, practical work, oral form and behaviors. Traditional approaches to assessment do not give the learners opportunities to choose the media through which they want to present their findings. Lubisi, (1998) warns that writing and learning are traditionally linked, and assessment based on writing is more highly structured than any other forms of assessment. This study will also make the educators aware that writing is neither the only, nor necessary the best, medium.

Malan (2000): states, “OBE aims to assess the competences of learners in their totality. It takes a holistic approach in describing the competences of a learner in terms of knowledge, skills and values, and assessing competences by using a variety of assessment approaches”. This calls for performance-based and authentic assessment approaches based on the background of criterion-referenced assessment.

Within the above approaches a variety of assessment strategies can be applied.

#### **2.12.10 Assessment strategies**

For the purposes of this study alternative assessment strategies are those assessment ways and means of determining whether the learner has achieved the desired learning outcomes (methods, tools/instruments and techniques), which are different from the traditional strategies, which were judgemental rather than developmental. Next follows an outline of possible strategies (methods, tools and techniques) in assessment.

#### **2.12.11 Assessment tools/instruments**

This study regards alternative assessment methods as: self-assessments; group assessments; peer assessments and teacher assessments. Study guide (Unisa) (2004: 246) suggest the following assessment tools/instruments that may be used to conduct assessment in the English- First Additional Language classroom: portfolios; observation; worksheets; journals; questionnaires; cassettes; assessment tables; exhibitions; photographs; videos; profiles; tests, examinations and written assignments. According to Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt (2002: 85), Rubrics and matrixes are also assessment tools/instruments. For the detailed discussion of alternative assessment strategies please refer to Table 5 of the appendices. This study explores how the educators in the senior phase understand, implement and experience these alternative assessment

tools/instruments in English-First Additional Language to determine whether the learners have achieved the desired learning outcomes.

#### **2.12.12 Assessment forms/techniques (opportunities for learners to demonstrate the acquired skills)**

(UNISA) study guide (2004:246) suggest that the following assessment forms/techniques or opportunities for learners to demonstrate the acquired skills in the English-First Additional Language classroom: project work, collage, research projects, assignments, surveys, debates/arguments, role plays, interviews, drama, presentations, panel discussions, practical demonstrations, music, song, poetry/rhymes, story telling, oral presentations, Graphs, mind maps, charts, poster presentations, etc. This study explores how educators in the senior phase understand, implement and experience these alternative assessments strategies in alternative assessment approaches.

#### **2.13 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed ways in which constructivist theories have influenced the way in which this study has been conducted, and how this theory informed ways in which data was discussed. The constructivist theory's emphasis on extending the traditional focus on individual learning to address collaborative and social dimensions of learning seem to have had a huge impact on the way the study engaged with data. It was also clear in the chapter that social constructivism puts emphases on the construction of an agreed-upon, socially constructed reality, all of which need to impact, according to the chapter, on ways in which we assess our learners. Engagement with Piaget (1977) and Vygotsky (1978)'s theories, for instance, is presented in the chapter as inevitable if the purposes of the study are to be realised. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ways in which all the theoretical underpinnings drawn from these theorists could be said to have shaped this study. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology and ways in which the study was conducted.

## Chapter 3

### Research methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher focuses on the methodology used in this study in an attempt to find answers to the core questions as outlined in chapter one. Firstly the researcher discusses the approach he used in gathering data. He used the qualitative approach. Secondly, he presents the population and sampling of the study. Thirdly, he discusses the ethical related issues in school-based research. Fourthly, he discusses the various methods he used in gathering the data and lastly he presents an analysis of data gathered through a) interviews, b) classroom lesson observations and c) literature study.

#### 3.2 Qualitative research

In an attempt to answer the core questions, as outlined in chapter one, the researcher will use a qualitative research approach. According to Gorman and Clayton (1998)

Qualitative research is a process of inquiry that draws data from the context in which the events occur, in an attempt to describe these occurrences, as a means of determining the processes in which events are embedded (23).

This study will draw data from the classroom where the lessons take place in an attempt to describe the educators' understandings, interpretation, implementations, and experiences of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in English-First Additional Language as a means of determining the process in which educational assessment is embedded. The characteristics of qualitative research will now be discussed.

##### 3.2.1 Characteristics of qualitative research

The researcher studies the phenomenon in its natural setting. The context in which human experiences are studied must be a natural one, not one that is contrived or artificial (Ary *et al.*, 1990). The researcher explored the educators' understandings, implementations,

and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language at school in the classroom situation, not in a contrived or artificial setting. The researcher is concerned with social process and with meaning. Most qualitative studies are conducted within a theoretical or conceptual framework that focuses on social processes and the meaning, which participants attribute to social interactions. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:44) define qualitative research methodology as “systematic attempt to generate and use non-quantitative techniques... which will facilitate understanding... of everyday socio-cultural contexts of educational processes and institutions”. Burgose (1985:8) also writes “the theoretical orientation is primarily derived from symbolic intersections whereby studies are conducted with a view to understanding the way in which participants perceive situations”. Thus, the research methods the researcher will use in gathering data for this study are in line with the views of Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) as well as those of Burgose (1985). Hence, this study will explore English-First Additional Language educators’ understanding implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in everyday educational socio-cultural contexts in schools in non-quantitative techniques.

Ary *et al.* (1990: 448) write that in qualitative research, the design emerges as the study unfolds. The researcher aligns his/her methods and way of proceeding to the subject at hand. According to Ary *et al.* (1990) “the rationale behind the emergent design depends on the nature and type of interactions between the inquirer, the people and the setting” (480). These interactions are not fully predictable because important features in need of investigation cannot be known until the investigator has actually witnessed them. In this study the researcher will not predict the English-First Additional Language educators’ understanding, implementation and experiences until the researcher is engaged with the empirical enquiry and the features in need of investigation will be perused.

### **3.3 Inductive Analysis**

Inductive analysis is built around the premise that the process of data analysis proceeds from data gathering to hypothesis to theory. Similarly Ary *et al.* (1990: 450) write that “as the inquirer reduces and reconstructs the data through the process of coding and categorisation, he aims to develop grounded theory”. This means that a researcher must

begin research with minimal assumptions to maximise his/her capacity for learning, Moodley (2003: 173). This means that qualitative research is explorative in nature rather than deductive. This qualitative research characteristic is relevant to this study as this study explores into the educator's understanding, interpretation, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language. The researcher approaches this research with minimal assumptions in order to maximise his capacity for learning from it.

A qualitative enquirer uses a variety of procedures to verify the credibility of the data being gathered and to confirm his or her developing hypothesis. Among these techniques is prolonged engagement at the site and persistent observation to lend sufficient scope and depth to observation (Ary et al, 1990). In this study the researcher uses data triangulation such as interviews, lessons observations and documents analysis.

### **3.4 Data Collection and Processes**

#### **3.4.1 Phenomenological approach**

The phenomenological approach will be used in an attempt to answer the critical questions as outlined in chapter one. Leedy and Ormrod (1998: 139) indicate that “a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand peoples’ perceptions, perspectives, and understandings in a particular situation. In its broadest sense, the term phenomenology refers to a person’s perception of the meaning of the event, as opposed to the event as it exists external to the person”. This methodology is therefore relevant to this study, since this study attempts to explore the educator’s understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in OBE in the real lesson proceedings in their respective schools.

The phenomenological approach is essentially qualitative rather than quantitative. Similarly, Marshal and Rossman (2006: 104) describe phenomenology as the study of lived experiences and the ways we understand those experiences to develop a worldview. As stated by Bogdan and Biklen (1982: 23), “what phenomenologist emphasizes, then, is the subjective aspect of people’s behaviour”. They attempt to gain entry into the

conceptual world of their subjects (Geertz, 1973) in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily lives. Phenomenologists believe that there is more than one way of interpreting experiences available to each of us through interacting with others, hence the meaning of our experiences that constitute reality. This study explores how the educators understand, interpret and experience the implementation of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in English-first Additional Language. The aim of the study is not to criticise how the educators understand, interpret, and implement, but rather to try and understand what meaning do they construct of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in NCS and how do they implement this in their class rooms. As a phenomenologist, the researcher believes that there is more than one way of interpreting reality or the phenomenon. Therefore the aim of this study is not to criticise what the educators are doing but to explore how they understand, implement and experience alternative assessment approaches in their daily classroom practise and also make them aware of other approaches in case ty are not aware.

For the purposes of this study the researcher will gather data using a variety of sources to ensure validity and reliability. The researcher intends using data triangulation such as interviews, lesson observation and documents analysis (learners' portfolios and educators' subject files). The researcher has also conducted a study on alternative assessment approaches and strategies in NCS. These methods will increase the researcher's confidence in the findings of this study and to test the credibility of the interpretations made in this study.

### **3.4.2 Literature review**

The researcher reviews the literature to find a link between his proposed study and the accumulated knowledge in educational assessment. Studies with no link to existing body of knowledge seldom make significant contributions to the field of research. Similarly, Ary *et al.* (1990:67) state that knowledge in any given area consists of accumulated outcomes of numerous studies conducted by generations of researchers and theories designed to integrate this knowledge and to explain the observed phenomena.

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

Cohen & Manion (1982:241) define an interview as a two- person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining relevant information. An interview involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. By interviewing the other person the researcher will be able to gauge the respondent's thinking, be able to measure what the person knows, what he likes or dislikes and finally, what the person's beliefs and attitudes are (Cohen & Manion, 1982:243). Similarly this study will try to achieve what these writers have suggested above through the interviews.

#### **3.4.3.1 Unstructured interviews**

Interview questions were prepared and conducted with Grade 8 English – First Additional Language educators. The questions were not slavishly followed but were used as guidelines and also depended on the response of the participants. To allow the interviewer to go into more depth on the subject and clear up any misunderstandings while conducting the interviews, the researcher will use open-ended unstructured interviews. Interviews will be conducted with the aim of exploring the respondents' understanding, interpretation, implementation and the respondents' experiences of alternative assessment approaches and strategies in English-First Additional Language in the senior phase. Thirty to forty minutes will be allocated for each interview. To give the researcher an opportunity and enough time to listen, and interpret the responses and interactions, the tape recording will be transcribed following each interview.

De Vos *et al* (2002: 298) warn that the purpose of an unstructured interview is not to get answers to questions, nor to test the hypotheses, nor to 'evaluate' in the usual sense of the term. They further state that at the root of unstructured interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and meaning they make of that experience. An unstructured interview is an open situation, accommodating flexibility and freedom (Cohen & Manion, 1982:243). An unstructured interview is always referred to as the in-depth or intensive interview. De Vos *et al* (2002: 298) state that the unstructured interview is often dismissed in the face of 'objective data', but it is nevertheless, a type of interview that the researcher uses to elicit information in order to achieve understanding

of the participant's point of view or situation. This is relevant to this study, as the researcher will be exploring the educators' understandings and their point of view of the alternative assessment approaches and strategies in English-First Additional Language in the senior phase. The interviewee is encouraged to talk freely and fully concerning a particular subject. Van Dalen (1979:160) is of the opinion that the interviewer should be a good listener and show interest during the process. He should also be able to follow unexpected clues and redirect the inquiry into fruitful channels on the basis of emerging data.

Gorman & Clayton (1998: 126) identify the following sub-types of interviews:

- **Standard open-ended interviews:** Researchers using this approach prepare a set of open-ended questions, which are carefully worded and arranged for the purpose of minimising variation in the questions posed to the participant (De Vos, 2002:297). The exact wording and sequence of questions are decided in advance. The topics are specified in advance, but the wording is spontaneous. Open-ended questions allow the interviewer to probe, so that he can go into more depth or clear up misunderstandings while allowing the interviewer to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge. In standardised open-ended interviews all issues are covered and responses can be compared. It is also easier for the interviewer to gather detailed and comprehensive data (Gorman & Clayton, 1998: 126).
  
- **Informal conversation interview:**  
In this type of interviews, the questions emerge from the discussion. The researcher is guided by the discussion to a much greater extent. The organisation and the synthesis of data from this interview are not straightforward. Gorman & Clayton, (1998: 126) regard the unstructured interview as an exploratory way of gathering information. De Vos et al (2002: 297) state that this type of interviews resembles a chat, during which the participants may forget that they are being interviewed.

Informal interviews are relevant to this study as the study explores the understandings, interpretations and implementation of alternative assessment approaches and strategies by

English-First Additional Language educators in the senior phase.

### **3.4.3.2 Conducting interviews**

Thomas & Nelson (1996: 328) and Vermeulen (1998: 68) suggest the following as the most important aspects to consider when conducting an interview:

- The interviewer should not stray from the main theme;
- The interviewer has to rehearse the interview tactics carefully;
- The interviewer has to ensure that the level of formality is appropriate and that questions will be equally meaningful to all respondents. A pilot study is very important;
- The interviewer must establish rapport to let the interviewee feel at ease;
- The interviewer has to obtain permission if a tape recorder or video tape is used;
- The interviewer has to keep the respondent from rambling;
- The interviewer should not inject his bias into the conversation;
- The interviewer should be a good listener and evaluate each response critically;
- The interviewer should not influence the respondent's responses through body language or gestures;
- The interviewer requires training in making contacts.

De Vos et al (2002: 301) suggest that during the interviews the interviewer should try to get the participants to:

- Open up and express ideas.
- Express ideas clearly.
- Explain and elaborate on ideas.
- Focus on issues at hand rather than wonder to unrelated topics.

### **3.4.3.3 Advantages of interviews**

(UKZN) study guide (2003: 88) cites the following as major advantages of interviewing:

- The researcher is present with the respondent, and so can make the questions clear (which cannot be done with a questionnaire).
- A researcher can ask other questions to find out more information if the respondent has not really given sufficient details.

- It is usually easier for respondent to talk to an interviewer than to write down very lengthy responses in the questionnaire.
- You can collect much more detailed and descriptive data than through using a questionnaire.
- Interviewing is a good method to use for gaining in depth data from a small number of people.

All interviews for this study are conducted after normal teaching hours i.e. between 14:00 and 15:00 to allow educators enough time to participate and to avoid interference in the smooth running of the school. Observations in the classroom will be conducted during the normal teaching or notional time allocated for English-first Additional Language in Grade 8 classes.

### **3.5 Observation**

For observation the researcher will go to the classes in the schools mentioned above and observe how the English-First Additional Language educators implement alternative assessment approaches and strategies. (UKZN) study guide (2003: 90) state that observation means that the researcher can see the context of the school and classroom, and may see things that may not be talked about in the interviews. Gorman & Clayton (1978: 44) explain that, by collecting data on behaviour in specific contexts, the researcher is able to uncover patterns of behaviour that reflect otherwise hidden attitudes or views that unconsciously affect participants. (UKZN) study guide (2003: 90) states that observation can be structured or unstructured. The researcher will also conduct documentary analysis that is the educators' and the learners' portfolios.

#### **3.5.1 Unstructured observation**

This study uses unstructured observation. An unstructured observation means that the researcher writes down a descriptive of what he sees happening in the classroom, rather than ticking off boxes or allocating numbers to a particular activity which he sees occurring in the classroom (UKZN) study guide (2003:93). Unstructured observation is much more open-ended with a qualitative approach. It is more suitable for exploratory research hence this study seeks to explore the educators' understandings, implementation

and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language in the senior phase.

### **3.6 Advantages of observation in a qualitative research**

Given the fact that the purpose of the study was to explore the educators' understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in their respective classes, the researcher requested the school management team to help him organise the interview programme for all the participants. It was decided that the interviews be conducted after normal teaching hours, that is between 14:30 and 15:30 in one of the classrooms. Lesson observations were conducted during teaching and learning time.

To create a relaxed interviewing atmosphere the following steps were taken:

- ❖ All the participants were cordially welcomed and thanked for being available for the participants.
  - ❖ Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality was confirmed to the participants.
  - ❖ Permission was sought for the use of the audiotape.
  - ❖ The purpose of the research was explained.
  - ❖ The interviewees were requested to respond to the questions.
- 
- Observation methods are powerful for gaining insight into situations. This method means that the researcher does not have to rely on the opinions or perceptions of others. It is well documented that teachers often teach in different ways contrary to how they say they teach. When using observation, the researcher can see what is actually happening in a classroom. (UKZN) study guide (2003:95).

Gorman & Clayton (1998: 105) states the following advantages of observation:

- It has a 'reality-verifying' character, what people say they do can be compared with what they in fact do.
- It permits the study of people who may be unwilling to give report on their activities.

- It has a present orientation, recording what occurs as it occurs.
- It allows behaviour to be observed in its natural setting. There is no obvious problem with the ‘simulation’ type of research, where behaviour is unlikely to be typical.
- It permits a variety of researcher perspectives of or degree of involvement in the situation or activity being observed.
- It enables data to be analysed in stages or phases as understanding of the meaning is gained.

### 3.7 Data analysis

In an attempt to answer the key research questions, which were stated previously in chapter one, data has been collected and analysed. Data was collected and recording procedures during interviews and classroom observations and transcription from tape recorder and content analysis was done (Gorman & Clayton, 1998). McMillan & Schumacher (2001:461) define qualitative data analysis as an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories. Qualitative researchers integrate the operations of organising, analysing, and interpreting data and call the entire process “data analysis” (McMillan and Schumacher 1993, 486). Miles & Huberman (1994: 10-11) cited by (UKZN) study guide (2003: 145) define data analysis as consisting of three flows of activity that take place at the same time: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. To analyse data in this study the researcher uses the same activities as suggested by Miles and Huberman.

- **Data reduction**

According to these writers, data reduction is the process of selecting; focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions. Data must be organised and this can be done by looking at the topics or categories in the data and coding them. McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 486 in: (UKZN) study guide 2003: 146) list the following steps for developing and organising data:

- **Step 1:** The researcher starts by reading the data set (the interview transcripts,

the field notes, the observation notes) as a whole to get a sense of it. The researcher writes down the ideas that come to mind as he/she reads.

- **Step 2:** The researcher identifies the topics, which emerge from the data. A topic is a descriptive name for the subject matter or piece of text. The researcher will write down the topic on the margin.
- **Step 3:** The researcher writes down a list of topics that have emerged from the different data sets and will see if there is any duplication. He/she will then classify or categorise the data. Classification means that you put similar things together in the same group.
- **Step 4:** The researcher then applies the provisional classification system on the data sets. He/she may abbreviate the topic to a code and then write this code next to the appropriate piece of data.

The researcher follows the same steps in developing and organising data as part of data analysis in exploring the English-First Additional Language educators' understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the methodological choices adopted by the researcher. The discussion of the approach used to collect data and gather necessary evidence reveals that there was careful thought that went into providing answers to the research questions. The use of qualitative methods offered the study opportunities to engage with research participants' worlds in ways that other methodologies could not. Chapter four engages with data collected through the research instruments discussed in this chapter.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses data gathered through unstructured tape-recorded interviews of between 30 to 40 minutes, lesson observations and documentary analysis that were made with three educators and three HODs' in three schools. The purpose of the chapter is to engage critically with the study's findings and to present recommendations for further research. It consists of different themes and I am going to discuss each in detail. While this section discusses an overview of what emerged from the educators' understanding, implementation and experiences and condensing their accounts into themes and summary statements, it is important to stress the notion of range. There were differences in understanding, implementation and experiences between the HODs and the educators themselves, and sometimes educators expressed contradictory views within the same interview. Although the educators admit that they received training in OBA, one of the persistent themes in the interviews was that the educators were not sure of the assessment approaches in NCS and do not have confidence in what they are doing and as a result they resort to the traditional assessment approaches. This is evident in the following statements made by the respondents:

#### Participant A

*"I don't have confidence of using these new assessment approaches and I have fear of implementing something new as a result I stick to the old paradigm".*

#### Participant B

*"Sometimes it works, so that is why one will just make the ways of doing things the traditional approach, you mix it with the new approach, and the educators out there do what is right for them..."*

#### Participant C

*“I did attend some of the NCS workshops that were organised by the Department but I did not gain much because most of them are so theoretical and when you try to practise them in a real situation, they don’t....”*

#### Participant D, who is an HOD

*“ Okay, so what happens is that they use these forms of assessments but I can tell you that our educators are not familiar with other different types of assessment but what I have noticed is that, what they have mastered is that portfolio thing, they have mastered that and the written work like conducting tests and everything. They just assess the learners in a form of like a traditional style of assessment but using this new method. I will say in short they are not in this new method of assessment because sometimes you find that when you make a follow up on the educator, you will find that there are some loopholes it seems as if he/she did not even use the correct grid for assessing orals or the correct grid for assessing creative writing”.*

Sometimes assessment was conceptualised as assessment of learning and not as part of the lesson instruction. It was only understood as a collection of learners’ assessment data for the purposes of accountability and reporting to the department and the parents, rather than as an interactive process, which affect the learner during lesson instruction or as formative assessment. Assessment in the NCS must inform the teaching programme, encourage learners’ active participation in assessing processes and serve the purposes of reporting and accountability. Sound assessment approaches are sensitive of assessing for learning, assessing as learning and assessing of learning as it has been discussed in the literature review. Almost all the participants were mainly concerned with issues of policy and planning rather than assessment as part of teaching in the classroom. Elements of formative assessment practices were described or alluded to, but the emphasis was on educator controlled monitoring of progress rather than reflection on the impact of assessment on teaching and learning.

Participant D said that she sits down with the educators at the end of the year and plan for the following year. In that planning meeting they draft the subject policy, which is in line with the school policy. Participant D ensures that the learners are assessed according to a certain programme for instance that there must be so many tests during this term and orals must be assessed in that term and creative writing in that term. “I make sure that by the end of the term educators have done what they are supposed to have covered according to the policy”. What emerged here is that educators are concerned with the formal assessment of learners that is recording and retaining evidence and reporting.

**❖ Confusion caused by the introduction of many curriculum changes within short period of time**

One of the themes that emerged from the data gathered was that of the introduction of many changes within short time. There is not enough time to implement all the curriculum changes.

Participant E said

*“Educators are confused because of the introduction of many changes and they are uncomfortable about the implementation of OBA as a result they end up doing what they know best, that is traditional assessment approaches”*

In the problem statement it was stated that many changes occurred in the curriculum within a short period of time, for example; an introduction of C2005 in 1998; an introduction of the National Curriculum Statement, together with assessment policies such as; The Assessment Policy for the General Band, grades R-9 and ABET (December 1998) and The National Protocol on Assessment for Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Band (Grade R-12) have created confusion in implementation particularly in the classroom level.

Participant A said

*“ On our side, one must be able to concentrate on one approach at a time, so we are supposed to move from there and go upwards, I think it is better*

*if the Department sticks to one approach may be for five years, then they change after that”.*

❖ **Limited and inadequate knowledge of alternative assessment approaches/OBA**

Another theme that emerged from the interviews was limited and inadequate knowledge of OBA or alternative assessment approaches. Most of the participants were unable to describe to the researcher how they go about assessing the learners during the lesson instruction (formative assessment) as DoE (1998: 4) explains that “continuous assessment must be used to support the learner developmentally and to feed into teaching and learning and should not be interpreted merely as the accumulation of a series of traditional tests” In an OBA assessment paradigm continuous assessment is viewed differently. At this point it is important to clarify that continuous assessment in OBA can be viewed in two ways. According to Drinkwater & Nieuwoudt (2002), there is as discussed in chapter 2 continuous (on-going) formal formative assessment; and continuous (on-going) informal formative assessment. According to these writers, in continuous (on-going) formal formative assessment, a learner should be assessed in a variety of ways and contexts over a period of time, ‘a variety of ways and contexts’ should be noted. Learners should not be assessed using a series of only conventional tests, as it was the case with continuous assessment in the traditional assessment paradigm. There are underlying notions of alternative assessment in ‘a variety of ways and contexts’ even though assessment is formal. The results of these assessments should be included in the summative assessment results in order to determine if a learner has attained a particular level. This assessment should be based on interesting and demanding tasks, which motivate and support learning and should be accompanied by constructive feedback to the learners as well as formal recording of results.

The second continuous assessment is (on-going) informal formative assessment. This is the most unfairly dealt aspect of assessment. This assessment should be used in a developmental rather than a judgmental sense. Informal, formative assessment can be

implemented through the use of assessment methods like teacher-assessment where the teacher elicits a question and the learner responds, and the teacher recognises learner's response, and then uses the information collected to student learning. The educator has an opportunity to draw out and act on learner's evolving understanding; self-assessment, peer-assessment and group assessment. It provides feedback to the learners on areas of weakness, and provides insight to the educator on how the learner most needs are to be addressed to attain a particular outcome (Clark, 1997; 2000). In this way continuous assessment is used as part of the lesson instruction as the DoE (1998:4) also states, "assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process". It means assessing the learners at each critical step of their learning experience while the learning process is unfolding. It is an ongoing cycle, an integrated approach to teaching and learning starting from: baseline – finding out what learners already know and can do about the topic at the beginning of an instruction so that instruction is geared to meet the learners' needs; formative – finding out how learners are getting and progressing along during the lesson instruction so as to give them feedback and modify the instructional strategies; diagnostic – ascertaining the nature and extent of learners' problems (why the learners are struggling) so that those problems can be remedied; summative – summing up what learners know and can do at the end of the lesson instruction so that their progress can be measured. At this stage assessment technique like projects; assignments and essays can be used to give the learners the opportunities to demonstrate their newly acquired skills. A variety of assessment tools and methods can also be utilised to assess how far the learners have achieved the learning outcomes against the assessment standards. According to Le Grange & Reddy (1998: 10) continuous assessment also does the following:

- It provides feedback on the learning outcomes that learners have achieved, and those that have not been achieved;
- It assists with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of learners;
- It encourages communication between teachers and learners;

It works hand in hand with evaluation and therefore provides important information about curriculum issues like teaching methods and the relevance of learning outcomes and

resources. All the respondents displayed excellent understanding of summative assessment, but the understanding of formative assessment was limited. One participant's explanation displayed a fair understanding of OBA because the participant did mention that it is about the assessment of outcomes, student's involvement, learners assess themselves, assessment takes place during the learning in class, supports learning, there must be feed back and follow up. Although the participants had an understanding of what OBA is, and were probed to say something about the forms of assessment in OBA, like formative assessment, formal assessment, informal assessment, continuous assessment, the participants never said anything about that.

#### ❖ **Good understanding of summative assessment**

All the respondents showed good understanding of tests and examination writing. One participant went as far as describing how invigilation is done when learners are assessed. None of the participants displayed an understanding of informal formative assessment, which is interwoven in the lesson instruction so as to support the learning process. They kept on referring to the number of tests and assignments they are expected to administer per term for moderation purposes. The researcher used follow-up questions to give clues to the type of assessment under discussion, but the participants find it difficult to respond. The participants kept on referring to summative assessment approaches. None of the respondents had a notion of formative assessment in their description of their implementation of OBA. There were no mention of assessment activities like; portfolios, rubrics, peer assessment, self assessment, group assessment, as it was stated in the literature review, to indicate that the participants know what is going on in OBA. One respondent actually stated that he does not use other methods of assessment like peer assessment, self-assessment and group assessment because he does not have confidence to use them and as a result he uses only teacher assessment.

#### ❖ **Problem of learner participation**

Another theme that emerged persistently was the problem of learner participation. One of the participants complained about the learners being not ready for the new assessment approaches thus making it difficult to implement OBA. "Learners in the groups do not participate effectively, active learners dominate and the shy ones end up

not participating at all”. Another participant complained that the learners are too used to the old methods of teaching and learning and they don’t change easily. The learners expect the educators to do everything for them. The participant also complained that learners can’t speak English, can’t debate and do not want to participate in any class activity. From this discussion one concluded that some of the educators lack knowledge of learner involvement in the lesson, which is all encapsulated in alternative assessment methods, tools and techniques.

Most of the participants blamed the parents for the problem of learner participation because parents do not supervise their children when they do homework. “Some of the projects demand that their parents give them information but most of the parents do not have time with their children and they end up not doing their work”. The participants also expressed the concern that parents are not used to intervene in the education of their children, as it was not expected of them in the past. It also transpired from these interviews that most of the learners do not stay with their parents due to the increased rate of parents’ mortality resulting from HIV/AIDS pandemic. Lack of parental support was identified by two of the participants as one of the causes of problem of learner participation. Participant C said, “Due to HIV/AIDS pandemic most of our learners stay with their grand parents who are illiterate and cannot support their grand children academically”.

#### ❖ **Shortage of resources**

One of the respondents complained about the resources. Almost three of them complained about overcrowding in classes which makes it impossible to divide the learners into groups. One of the experiences, which were common to all the respondents, is that there is insufficient time allocated for assessing the required learning outcomes. The assessment activities or methods used in OBA take much time and one ends up not finishing the lesson on time. In most schools the NCS timetable is not used, the old timetable is still in use and this has serious implications for implementation.

The respondents also identified the shortage of physical resources like classrooms, which resulted to overcrowding which have serious implications for implementation of OBA.

One participant who had an idea of alternative assessment approaches complained about

the lack of resources like the libraries in the communities where most of the learners come from. “Sometimes you give the learners a research project and expect them to submit it on the due date, but they will not submit it the reason being that they did not get information”.

#### **4.2 Lesson Observations**

Lesson observations were conducted and each educator was observed ten times. Thirty lessons observations were done. In (UKZN) study guide (2003: 90) it is stated that observation means that the researcher can see the context of the school and classroom, and may see things that may not be mentioned in the interviews. Gorman & Clayton (1978: 44) explain that, by collecting data on behaviour in specific contexts, the researcher is able to uncover patterns of behaviour that reflect otherwise hidden attitudes or views that unconsciously affect participants. During lessons observations the following was noted:

##### **❖ Limited and inadequate knowledge of implementing OBA/alternative assessment approaches**

Almost three of the educators observed displayed limited, shallow and inadequate knowledge of implementing outcome-based assessment or alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language in the sense that assessment was not tied in with what the learners were doing on their own, what their interests were, how they could go forward and what their needs were. Learners were constantly reminded of a test and the end of the year examination they were going to write and were to be careful in answering questions. Their notion of assessment was not everyday assessment interaction with learners. Sometimes learners were seated in groups but the groups were never utilised when the opportunity arose. Educators knew that OBE methodology demands that learners must sit in groups, but educators did not know how to use the groups. Eighty percent of the lessons observed the educators used lecture method only, from the beginning until the end of the lesson. In most cases the opportunities for implementing alternative assessment approaches presented themselves but educators never took an advantage of them. Learners were never given opportunities to discuss the concepts in groups and make presentations. Two participants in the interviews indicated

that they are aware of the different methods of assessment (teacher, learners, and group assessment), but during the lesson observation none of these assessment methods were used. Learners can learn a lot from their peers as Fischer and King (1995:24) state “Most students have great interest in their peers and can learn a tremendous amount from each other by working together on projects or sharing their work”. None of the participants used these assessment methods.

Sometimes when the learners gave the wrong answers according to the educator, the learners were simply told that they were wrong without explaining why the answers were wrong. When integrating problem solving and communication skills in the lesson instruction, the thrust needs to go beyond just getting the right and the wrong answers, but it encompasses communicating how the learners solved the problems, why decisions were made along the way, and what connections were made with other learning during the problem solving process (Fischer and King, 1995). Educators observed displayed no understanding of these concepts of OBE.

It was stated in the literature review that one of the alternative assessment approaches in OBA is informal formative assessment. This is the most grossly unfair dealt with aspect of assessment. Assessment should be used in a developmental rather than a judgmental sense. Informal, formative assessment can be implemented through the use of assessment methods like; educator-assessment where the educator elicits a question and the learner responds, and the educator recognises learner’s response, and then uses the information collected to student learning. The educator has an opportunity to draw out and act on learner’s evolving understanding; self-assessment, peer-assessment; group assessment etc. It provides feedback to the learners on areas of weakness, and provides insight to the educator on how the learner most needs are to be addressed to attain a particular outcome (Clark, 1997; 2000). In this way continuous assessment is used as part of the lesson instruction as the DoE (1998:4) also states, “assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process”. It means assessing the learners at each critical step of their learning experience while the learning process is unfolding. It is an ongoing cycle, an integrated approach to teaching and learning starting from: baseline – finding out what learners already know and can do about the topic at the beginning of an instruction so that

instruction is geared to meet the learners' needs; formative – finding out how learners are getting, progressing along during the lesson instruction so as to give them feedback and modify the instructional strategies; diagnostic – ascertaining the nature and extent of learners' problems (why the learners are struggling) so that those problems can be remedied; summative–summing up what learners know and can do at the end of the lesson instruction so that their progress can be measured. Assessment techniques like projects, role-plays, assignments and essays were used to give the learners the opportunities to demonstrate their newly acquired skills. A variety of assessment tools like portfolios, worksheets, journals etc and methods like teacher assessment, self assessment, peer assessment and group assessment can also be utilised to assess how far the learners have achieved the learning outcomes against the assessment standards. Only tests and examinations seem to be the order of the day. According to Le Grange & Reddy (1998: 10) continuous assessment also does the following:

- It provides feedback on the learning outcomes that learners have achieved, and those that have not been achieved;
- It assists with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of learners;
- It encourages communication between teachers and learners;
- It works hand in hand with evaluation and therefore provides important information about curriculum issues like teaching methods and the relevance of learning outcomes and resources.

The educators observed did not use any of the abovementioned assessment strategies; their lessons were dominated by traditional assessment approaches.

### **4.3 Documentary Analysis**

Documents like the educators and learner portfolios were analysed. What emerged from the documentary analysis was either that educators' and learners' portfolios did not reflect the work or activities the educators claimed were done in class or as methods, instruments or opportunities for learners to demonstrate skills they have achieved. Learners' portfolios if there were any, were made up of a collection of a series of short class exercises only. The educators' portfolios consisted of records of marks gathered

from learners' tests and examinations performances only. There were no reflections of alternative assessment approaches like; performance-based/tasks/assessments, criterion-referenced assessments, authentic assessments, and assessment strategies like assessment methods; assessment tools and assessment techniques that were conducted during assessment. Educators were concerned with keeping formal records of continuous assessment from a Department point of view that is for moderation purposes but not for assessment of learning. The records did not reflect the actual performance-based, authentic activities that were done by the learners. This type of record keeping is conceptualised in terms of educator controlled data gathering about the learner, rather than as an interactive process, which affects the learner. From the documents analysed one can infer that these educators lacked knowledge of portfolios compilation from the point of view of alternative assessment/OBE.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Limited and/or inappropriate knowledge of alternative assessment approaches seem to be the main feature in the data. Often the research participants attempted to observe specific OBE principles, but the challenges of real classroom experiences caused a degree of confusion and pessimism. It has to be pointed out, however, that such findings need not necessarily cause educators and the government to give up on the dream of making available quality education. Furthermore, there has to be persistent efforts to implement alternative assessment approaches for the improvement of our outcomes. The next chapter explores ways in which data collected in this study engages with different ways to achieve this.

## Chapter 5

### Findings and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Introduction

Data gathered from the interviews, lessons observations and documentary analysis revealed that some Grade 8 English- First Additional Language educators are not ready for the implementation of alternative assessment strategies and OBA. The findings from this study confirm that these educators experience problems in the implementation of alternative assessment approaches and OBA and as a result are still using traditional assessment approaches. The problem is highlighted by the fact that some of these educators do not seem to have thorough knowledge of relevant teaching methods and strategies to facilitate for alternative assessment approaches. This raises some concerns as Malan (2000) states that if the educators and learners are uncertain about the desired learning outcomes and educators fail to assess outcomes properly; it could end in a situation where learners only attain pseudo-knowledge, pseudo-skills, pseudo-attitudes, and pseudo-values. On completion of their studies these learners are awarded certificates inherently implying that they have attained certain competences whereas in fact they have not.

This study reveals that this phenomenon cannot be attributed to one factor but factors like inadequate training of educators, major curriculum changes being introduced within a short space of time, the content of alternative assessment approaches/OBA workshops programmes being theoretical and not adaptable to classroom implementation and lack of follow up and feedback workshops, learners being not psychologically ready for the new assessment approaches and shortage of resources have all contributed to the problem. From the data gathered in this study the implementation of alternative assessment approaches/OBA by educators can be categorised into three models. There are educators who resist change, either on the grounds of OBA being a theory of assessment, which is not practical as a result it is not easily implemented. This category of educators chooses to stick with the traditional forms of assessment, tests and examinations only using the

old teaching methods. They view continuous assessment as a series of class test and examinations, which is added up for later analysis and evaluation for summative assessment purposes.

The second category are educators who try to cope with the demands of alternative assessment approaches and OBA by collecting evidence of learner attainment for later analysis and evaluation in the summative assessment and for reporting to the Department in such a way that it does not interfere with their teaching. This is viewed as a separate activity, which is done for official moderation purposes. The third category, are educators who are willing to do anything in order to implement alternative assessment approaches/OBA but have limited and inadequate knowledge as a result they lack confidence of implementation. Apparently there are no clear cuts between these categories as there is a tendency for the categories to overlap with what would be conflicting understanding and implementation of alternative assessment approaches and OBA occurring within the same group of participants. Most of the participants had limited and inadequate knowledge of both OBA knowledge and implementation strategies. To mention a few examples, almost all participants knew that in OBE learners have to sit in groups, but they did not know how to use the groups. They seem to lack the notion that sitting in groups is not group work. Some educators knew about role play but did not know how to use it as a technique or an opportunity for the learners to demonstrate the acquired skills. One participant dictated to the learners what to role play instead of challenging the learners' creativity. This displayed the lack of implementation skills.

This study has revealed that due to the lack of knowledge and implementation skills of alternative assessment approaches/OBA the educators' experiences of alternative assessment approaches/OBA are characterised by fear, doubt, stress, anxiety and frustration, which result to lack of self confidence.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.2.1 Recommendations for the Department of Education

- When organising the curriculum development workshops, both the HOD and the educator from each school should be invited. This will enable both the educator and the HOD to have the same knowledge and understanding of the workshop contents. The HODs complained that at times different educators attend the same workshop but come back with different information.
- The HOD's should be trained as master trainers so that they can continue with the training and follow up workshops at the school level. This will facilitate for the principle of continuity.
- The principals of schools should also be made aware of any curriculum developments so that they are abreast with the developments to enable them to manage the curriculum effectively in their institutions.
- Major curriculum changes should be introduced gradually thus allowing educators enough time to implement new curriculum.
- Educators should be given adequate training for the implementation of major curriculum changes like OBA and NCS.
- The content of alternative assessment approaches and OBA workshops programmes should be practical and adaptable to classroom implementation with less emphasis placed on theoretical aspects hence the participants' concern that training is too theoretical and difficult to implement.
- The Department should improve basic infrastructure and resources in schools so that teaching and learning can take place effectively chance the participants' concern of overcrowding.
- Department facilitators must have adequate knowledge and experience of alternative assessment approaches/OBA.
- There must be continuous in-service training in alternative assessment approaches/OBA for all educators in order for efficient teaching and learning to take place. Grange & Reddy (1998) are of the opinion that to implement alternative assessment approaches/OBA successfully in schools, there must be in-service education and training programmes to support educators.

### **5.2.2 Recommendations for schools**

- Schools should organise the school-based-workshops on regular bases to support the educators to implement alternative assessment approaches/OBA.
- School based assessment policy should be developed that will guide all assessment activities at school.
- The HOD's should concentrate on the curriculum management as curriculum specialists at school so as to give them adequate time to manage the curriculum rather than being too much involved in executive management functions and issues.
- Some of the schools are still using traditional curriculum subject's time allocation instead of NCS time allocation. School should use the NCS time allocation as indicated in the NCS Grades R-9 (Schools) Policy.

### **5.2.3 Recommendations for educators**

- Educators should work together as teams or network within the institution in order to support one another.
- Assessment issues should also be discussed at the subject committee meetings.
- Educators need to prepare learners for the use of alternative assessment/OBA and allow time for the learners to adapt to these new approaches to assessment so that alternative assessment will make an effective contribution to the learning process.
- Educators need to be tolerant with the learners hence learners who are used to traditional teacher-centred classrooms have not been expected to take responsibility for assessment before and may need time to adjust to this new role.

### **5.2.4 Recommendations for further research**

This research was conducted in three schools of Sayidi cluster in Ugu District of Pietermaritzburg Region in the Coastal Cluster of KwaZulu Natal Province. The schools were selected conveniently. Thus the findings of the research can neither be generalised

to the other Clusters of the Region of the province, nor to the entire population of South African educators. Therefore it is recommended that a full scale research is undertaken in this topic.

### **5.3. Concluding remarks**

Attempts in this dissertation to contextualise the study reveal that many decisions pertaining to the country's education drew largely, and were influenced by; the election of a democratic government in 1994. This reveals that this historical event brought with itself huge challenges regarding teaching, learning and assessment. The study indicates, by means of extensive analysis of data, that alternative assessment approaches such as peer evaluation, assessment classroom activities, to name a few, should be used when assessing learners. The literature review points out that the DoE's attempts to devise strategies to train educators as part of the processes to prepare them for the implementation of OBE-specific assessment policies are under huge strain because of the lack of uniformity in attempts directed towards implementation. It is clear from the findings in the study that traditional assessment strategies and practices which are grossly inadequate, unfair, and discriminatory are still in operation in some schools. The exploration of the educators' understanding, implementation and experiences of alternative assessment approaches in English-First Additional Language classrooms carried out in this study, however, enable the researcher to offer ways through which to overcome these limitations.

One strategy used in the study is the use of constructivist theories to influence the way to think and conceptualise the subject matter. The constructivist theory's emphasis on extending the traditional focus on individual learning to address collaborative and social dimensions of learning seem to have had a huge impact on the way the study collected, collated, analysed, conceptualised, and recorded data in this dissertation. Social constructivism enabled the researcher to put emphasis on the construction of an agreed-upon, socially constructed reality in order to propose better strategies through which to assess learners. Engagement with Piaget (1977) and Vygostky's (1978) theories, for instance, is rendered by the researcher as inevitable if the purposes of the study were to be realised.

Given the nature of the study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. The use of unstructured interview schedule as a research instrument facilitated access to data in ways that freed the participants to elaborate on their responses with little level of intimidation. This may be ascribed to the nature of questions the researcher used to explore teachers' attitudes towards their day to day assessment approaches, practices, and choices. While it is true that some of the educators are not ready to implement the alternative assessment approaches in English-First Language classrooms, the study presents useful strategies to overcome these challenges in the final chapter.

## APPENDIX (A)

Table 1

Aspects	Traditional approach	Outcomes-based approach
<b>The teacher:</b>	Takes responsibility for the learners. Learners motivated by the constant feedback and affirmation of their worth. Motivation depends on the personality of the teacher.	The teacher acts as the facilitator. The learners take responsibility for their own learning.
<b>Content:</b>	Syllabus is content based and broken down into subjects; rigid and nonnegotiable; curriculum-as blue print; content paced in rigid time frame.	More relevant, integrated and connected to real situations. Curriculum-in-use. Learning programmes are seen as guides that allow educators to be innovative and flexible within flexible time frames.
<b>The learner:</b>	Passive	The learner actively participates in the learning process.
<b>Ways of knowing and learning:</b>	Emphasis on knowledge and rote learning.	The learners think more critically, they reason reflect and act.
<b>Methods of assessment</b>	Exams and tests driven; summative; input based and norm referenced.	Outcomes-based, more formative, criterion referenced and continuous
<b>Organisation of classroom:</b>	Desks neatly in rows; teacher stands in front of the class and teaches; strict time table to abide by.	The teacher often employs group work and collaborative learning. Therefore the class is organised to meet the specific needs of the time.

Adapted from Ferreira, C. 2006: 59 UKZN (study guide)

Table 2. Comparison of C2005 with NCS

Curriculum 2005	Revised National Curriculum Statements Grades R-9
Critical Outcomes	Critical and Developmental outcomes
Specific Outcomes 66	Learning Outcomes 36
Range Statements Assessment Criteria Performance indicators	Assessment Standards
Notional Time and Flexi Time	Time allocation/ Contact Time
Continuous Assessment, Recording and Reporting	Continuous Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Phase Organisers Programme Organisers Expected Levels of Performance	Learning programmes Work Schedules Lesson Plan
Learning programmes	Learning programmes
Change of Learning Areas e.g. HSS, LLC MLMMS	Social Sciences, Languages, Mathematics

Adapted from DoE (2002: 4-6)

**Table 3**

**LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH- FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE IN THE SENIOR PHASE.**

<b>1. Listening</b>	The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations
<b>2. Speaking</b>	The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.
<b>3. Reading and Viewing</b>	The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment, and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.
<b>4. Writing</b>	The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes
<b>5. Thinking and Reasoning</b>	The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning
<b>6. Language structure and Use</b>	The learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of language to create and interpret texts

Adapted from DoE (2002:6-7)

**Table 4**

**OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT STANDARDS, CONTEXT, INTEGRATION AND RESOURCES IN LLCE 2 IN THE SENIOR PHASE**

The learning outcomes, assessment standards, integration with other learning areas and teaching learning and assessment context(s) and resources should be identified and selected by the educator for each and every activity. The following table is an example of how each and every activity should be made.

<b>Language learning outcome</b>	<b>Assessment Standards</b>	<b>Context/Content</b>	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Resources</b>
LO1: The learner will be able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range and situations.	The learner: Understands and appreciates stories, including those told by other learners; Understands oral text; Listens for specific information; Listens actively in a discussion	Novels, short stories, debates, surveys, radio and TV programmes and adverts, poems, radio plays, speakers, dialogues, recordings (film or music), family and cultural stories	Mathematics: LO5 A&C: LO1 SS Geography: LO1 Life Orientation: LO1, LO2, LO3 EMIS: LO4 SS History: LO2	Books, people to interview, radio, TV, video or CD recordings newspaper and magazine adverts, family members
LO2: The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.	The learner: social and ethical issues; Interviews Someone; Demonstrate critical awareness of own language use	Novels, short stories, signs and logos, weather forecasts, interviews, family stories, games, song, discussions, newspaper articles, dialogues, role-plays	Mathematics: LO5 SS Geography: LO1 Life Orientation: LO1, LO3 A&C: LO1, LO4 SS Geography: LO1 EMS: LO4	Books, people to interview, newspaper and magazine adverts, flyers, TV, family members, cards, entrepreneurs, role models
LO4: The learner will be able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative text for a wide range of purposes	The learner: Writes to communicate information; Writes for social purpose; Writes for personal reflection; Writes creatively; Designs media texts; Treats writing as a process; Uses developing knowledge of language structure and use	Instruments, note, summaries, book reviews, letters, stories, poems, song, diary extracts, e-mails, SMS, media adverts, questionnaires dialogues, interviews, role plays, newspaper and magazine articles and pictures, classified adverts, mind maps profiles	NS: LO2 SS History: LO1, LO2 Mathematics: LO5 Life Orientation: LO1, LO3 A&C: LO1 EMS: LO4	Information texts, textbooks from other Learning Areas, Library books, newspapers, magazines, photographs, TV programme guides, radio plays, personal role models

<b>Language Learning outcome</b>	<b>Assessment Standard</b>	<b>Context/ Content</b>	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Resources</b>
LO5: The learner will be able to use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.	The learner: Uses language and literacy across the curriculum; Uses language for thinking; Collects and records information in deferent ways.	Instructions, questionnaires, symbols, discussions, media adverts, poems, stories, projects, hazards, emergency procedures, safety campaigns (e.g. Arrive Alive), photographs, mind maps, study skills, holiday jobs, entrepreneurial ventures	SS History LO1, LO2, LO3 Mathematics: LO5 SS Geography: LO1, LO3 Life Orientation: LO1, LO3 NS: LO2 Technology: LO1 EMS: LO4	Information texts, house hold plugs, people to interview, weather forecasts, symbols and logos, adverts, reference material, older members of the community to interview, newspapers, magazines, information posters, library books, reference material, photographs, text books from other learning areas.
<b>Language learning outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Standards</b>	<b>Context/ Content</b>	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Resources</b>
LO6: The learner will know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret the text	The learner: Distinguishes between verbs that can and cannot take the progressive; Uses the future tense with 'when' clauses; Uses the past perfect; Extends use of nouns; Extends use of determiners; Uses modals to express politeness; Understands and uses the second conditional; Uses some language to talk about language; Expands vocabulary; Demonstrate an understanding of between 5000 and 7500 common spoken words in context by the end of grade 8. Learners who will do some of their learning area through additional language should aim for 7500 words.	Language exercises, parts of speech, figures of speech, vocabulary building, idioms, definition, poems, books, articles discussions, debates, dialogues, oral presentations.	SS History: LO1 Life Orientation: LO1' LO3 A&C; LO1, LO2	Dictionaries, thesauri, reference material to research topics for presentations.

Adapted from (Viva English, 2006: 26)

**Table 5.**

**Methods, instruments and techniques of outcomes-based assessment in language teaching**

<b>Method</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Forms/technique (opportunity for learners to demonstrate skill)</b>
Self-assessment Assessment by classmates Group assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group assesses the individual</li> <li>• Group assesses the group</li> <li>• Individuals assess the group</li> <li>• Class assesses the individual</li> </ul> Teacher assessment	Portfolios Observations Worksheets Journals Questionnaires Cassettes Exhibitions Photographs Videos Profiles Tests Examinations Written assignments	Project work Collage Research projects Assignments Surveys Debate/argument Role play Interview Drama Presentation Panel discussion Practical demonstration Scenario Music/songs Poetry/rhyme Storytelling Oral presentation Graph Mind-map Chart Poster Table Descriptions Written presentations (Essays, letters, advertisement, CV, etc)

Adapted from (University of South Africa, 2004: 246)

## APPENDIX (B)

**Table 6.**

Table 6 contains interview and observation dates that will assist in the proper administration of these data collection techniques.

### SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATION

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND LESSON OBSERVATIONS	DATES
INGWEMABALA: EDUCATOR	16 / 04 /2007- 19/04/2007
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	20 / 04 /2007
THOBIGUNYA: EDUCATOR	23 /04/ 2007- 26/04/2007
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	27 / 04/ 2007
IZINQOLENI: EDUCATOR	02 / 05/2007- 07/05/2007
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	08 / 05/ 2007

### **Interview questions for Post level 1**

1. What do you understand by outcome-based assessment? /new assessment approaches and strategies in education?
2. Explain to me how you go about assessing your learners in English-First Additional Language classroom?
3. What are your experiences in implementing outcome-based assessment /new assessment approaches and strategies in your English-First Additional Language classroom?
4. What are your views on the implementation of OBA in English-First Additional Language?

### **Interview question questions for HOD's**

1. What do you understand by outcome based assessment?
2. How do you expect your educators to implement OBA in your English-First Additional Language classroom?
3. What are your educators' experiences in implementing outcome-based assessment?
4. What are your views on the implementation of OBA in English-First Additional language?

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