

AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS’ EXPERIENCES IN DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS FOR BUSINESS STUDIES IN GRADE 10-12.

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in Grade 10 - 12 in 2006, 2007 and 2008 consecutively brought about drastic changes in assessment in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. School-based assessment (SBA) or continuous assessment (CASS) comprising formal and informal assessment has to be implemented by teachers, where formal assessment is exceptionally significant as it contributes 25% of the learner's promotion mark. As a result teachers have to develop assessment tasks that are pertinent to the learners and align with assessment policy. Therefore this study seeks to explore teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12.

This study is undertaken as a result of the researcher's observation during SBA moderation sessions and school support visits of how teachers struggle to develop assessment tasks that adhere to the requirements of the NCS assessment policy in Business Studies. Given the nature of the study, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. The research project is a single case study of a school in Umkomazi ward within Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal. Three teachers were selected based on their experience in teaching NCS Business Studies in Grades 10-12 and having been involved in designing assessment tasks since 2006. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews and analysis of these teachers' planning and assessment documents.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers use the NCS assessment policy as a guide when designing assessment tasks, but still have challenges with designing assessment tasks that cover all cognitive levels and designing a rubric. Hence the study recommends ongoing teacher development programmes and improving curriculum support in order to capacitate teachers on assessment practices.

DECLARATION

I, **MSOMI THOKOZANI MAUREEN** do hereby declare that this dissertation, which is submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the degree of Master of Education, has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete reference.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Doris K. Mthembu (MaSabela), who played an inspirational role in my continued engagement with further learning. A special dedication is also attributed to my husband, Musa and my three sons, Mfundo, Ntsikelelo and Andile for their understanding, support and encouragements.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	i
ABSTRACT	ii
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF ACRONYMS	x

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction	1
1.2. Nature of assessment	3
1.3. Focus and purpose of the study	6
1.4. Rationale for the study	8
1.5. Research Questions	11
1.6. Research Methodology	11
1.7. Conceptual Framework	12
1.8. Structure of the thesis	14
1.9. Conclusion	15

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction	16
2.2. Meaning of assessment	17
2.2.1. Purpose of assessment	19
2.2.2. Formative assessment	20
2.2.3. Teachers' experiences of authentic assessment	23
2.2.3.1. What is authentic assessment?	23
2.2.3.2. Importance of authentic assessment	25
2.3. Assessment in Business Studies	26
2.3.1. Old and new assessment approach	27
2.4. Teachers' experiences	29
2.4.1. Designing assessment task	31
2.4.2. Designing assessment tool	33
2.5. Conceptual framework	35
2.6. Conclusion	38

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction	39
3.2. Interpretivist paradigm	39
3.3. The qualitative approach	41
3.4. The case study methodology	42
3.5. Selection of context to study the phenomenon	45

3.6. Selection of participants	45
3.7. Research questions	46
3.8. Data production and collection	46
3.9. Data collection methods	48
3.9.1. Face-to-face semi structured interviews	48
3.9.2. Document analysis	49
3.10. Data analysis	49
3.11. Credibility and trustworthiness	50
3.12. Ethical issues	50
3.13. Limitations	51
3.14. Conclusion	51

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction	52
4.2. Analysis of data	53
4.2.1. Selection decisions	53
4.2.2. Recording experiences	54
4.2.3. Teachers' authentic tasks experiences	55
4.2.4. Teachers' diverse and contextual experiences	57
4.2.5. Subject knowledge related experience	62
4.2.6. Procedure in design	63
4.3. Conclusion	66

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction	68
5.2. Synthesis of the research study	69
5.2.1. Task preference	69
5.2.2. Making sound judgement	69
5.2.3. Contextualised task design	70
5.2.4. Diversity in task design	70
5.2.5. Assessment impact on subject knowledge	73
5.2.6. Assessment design process	73
5.3. Recommendations	75
5.3.1. Ongoing teacher development programme	75
5.3.2. Schools' subject restructuring	75
5.4. Possibilities for further research	76
5.5. Conclusion	76
References	78
Appendices	

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AS	Assessment Standard
ATD	Assessment Tasks Document
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DOE	Department of Education
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
IEB	Independent Examination Board
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LO	Learning Outcome
NATED 550	National Assembly Training and Education Department
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBA	Outcome Based Assessment
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PAT	Practical Assessment Tasks
POA	Programme of Assessment
QAPF	Qualifications and Assessment Policy Framework
SA	South Africa
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SBA	School Based Assessment
SKAV	Skills Knowledge Attitude and Values
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The first South African democratic elections of 1994 brought about many political, social, economic and educational changes. As it is the case with some countries that undergo broad social transformation, South Africa (SA)'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 (Ntuli, 2007). The South African Education Act (1996) promulgates the rights of all children to a quality education. A new curriculum called Curriculum 2005, well known as outcomes-based education (OBE), was introduced in SA and implemented in 1998. The OBE approach differs from past education systems in that the focus has shifted away from a factual-based syllabus to a skills, knowledge, attitudes and values (SKAV)-based curriculum (Russel, 2009). It shifted from teacher-centredness to a learner-centred curriculum, where learners become responsible for their own learning (Van der Merwe, 2011). Needless to say, the new education initiative was to replace the apartheid education system.

Given the poor and neglected state of South African education, transformation of the education system became an urgent priority facing the new democratic government. As education in the previous system was mainly fact-based, its assessment focused on the regurgitation of facts, and consequently learner progress reports were of little educational value. This thesis specifically deals with educational assessment, which became a central transformative function in Curriculum 2005. Educational outcomes became a characteristic feature of the new curriculum, and assessment practices were given new meaning. Despite the reforms that Curriculum 2005 subsequently underwent, outcomes-based assessment (OBA) remains a feature of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which was implemented in Grades 10-12 from 2006 to 2008.

Given a new approach to assessment in the curriculum, Grade 10-12 teachers had to change from the traditional assessment practices which were done at the end of learning activities. Cassim (2010) found that for seasoned teachers who had been implementing traditional methods of assessment it was challenging to discard such methods and to adopt new ones. Moreover, studies conducted by Vandeyar and Killen (2007) and Cele (2009) indicated that teachers were still excessively reliant on tests and examinations.

These findings are congruent with what I have identified during my interactions with teachers at school and at cluster meetings. As a Subject Education Specialist in Business Studies in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province since 2008, my core function is to guide, monitor and support teachers in curriculum implementation in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. During school visits I evaluate assessment tasks and tools designed by teachers, and also engage with learners' tasks for Grades 10-12. At cluster level I moderate a sample of 10% of formal assessment tasks done by teachers. I observed that teachers had challenges in developing assessment tasks that met the requirements of the new assessment policy. In my informal discussions with teachers they made it clear that they were not familiar with research type of assessments. Despite the fact that all of the requirements of school-based assessment (SBA) were fulfilled, for example having the required number of tasks per term, there was a great need for the improvement of their tasks, and some lacked the ability to design assessment tasks as required by the NCS.

According to Mothata (1998), OBA has good intentions of ensuring that learners are able to use their acquired knowledge in the real world and become competent citizens. However, Kanjee (2009) revealed that OBA had a number of challenges with regard to its implementation. Despite these challenges an OBE assessment approach had to be implemented throughout the schooling system; hence FET teachers had to design assessment tasks informed by the new assessment policies.

Since 2006 Grade 10-12 Business Studies teachers had to design assessment tasks that align with OBA, the good intentions of OBA are far from being achieved if assessment is not preparing learners to apply acquired knowledge in real-world situations. I have identified a gap in the literature with regard to designing assessment tasks that align with OBA. Therefore this study will investigate teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in the FET phase, with the intension of gaining some understanding of problems they experience.

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis. It discusses the nature of assessment so that the reader may obtain a clear conception and understanding of assessment as an educational practice. It also presents the focus, so that the purpose for undertaking this investigation may be clear and justified. The rationale, which describes the context in which the study was conceptualised, is also given. An appropriate methodological design together with the main critical research questions are presented, which engage the core issues that were attended to during fieldwork. I have developed a conceptual framework to guide the analysis of the data collected and answer the critical research questions. Finally, an overview of the chapters of the study ends this chapter.

1.2. NATURE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment plays a crucial role in relation to curriculum and learning. It is fundamentally a communication process informing educators, learners, parents and policymakers about what learners have learnt (Linchevski, Kutcher & Olivier, 1999, p.3, cited by Naidoo, 2007). According to Clarke (1996, p.327) assessment is at the heart of educational endeavour. Shepard (2000) shared the same sentiment, but continues to say that it provides the necessary conditions for judging the success or failure of teaching and learning. Therefore, assessment in education is imperative and cannot be separated from teaching and learning. However, there are different views and contestations around assessment literature, which I briefly outline below.

In a study by Deonarain (2004) on the views of continuous assessment (CASS), assessment has been viewed as constructivist as opposed to behaviourist. This was further echoed by Mdunana (2011), who said that assessment as a component of curriculum has changed over time all over the world, including in SA. She further states that the introduction of portfolio assessment, which is a new form of assessment, was an attempt to move away from the behaviourists' ideology of rote learning and memorisation, to the constructivists' perspective of knowledge construction. Portfolio assessment, according to Ngcobo (2009), is evidence of learners' achievements for CASS. The portfolio as a form of assessment is pertinent to this study, as assessment tasks designed by teachers are items of evidence of learners' performance in terms of the new assessment policy. These views relate to Business Studies assessment, which has been predominantly behaviourist. Assessment of the so-called

Business Economics in the old curriculum called for the reproduction of facts in the tests and examinations. This is unlike OBA, which requires teachers to assess the progression of learners in achieving the expected learning outcomes (LOs) (Department of Education (DoE), 2007).

Mokhaba (2005) asserts that assessment and teaching are intertwined. This means that in every pedagogical situation assessment is indispensable, as it assists teachers to differentiate between learners in terms of their levels of achievement of outcomes. However, an empirical study by Vandeyar (2005) revealed that new assessment practices in the NCS pose challenges to educators. The NCS demands high standards of assessment that educators do not understand, and a shift from behaviourist to constructivist assessment. This study aims to explore experiences of Business Studies teachers when they design assessment tasks for Grades 10-12. It will further investigate how teachers design these tasks.

Having provided a clear conception of the meaning and various foci of assessment, what follows is a brief discussion on the policies informing the design of assessment tasks.

According to the DoE (2003), in Grades 10-12 CASS comprises informal and formal assessment tasks. The policy further states that informal assessment tasks need not to be recorded, while it is compulsory to record formal assessment tasks. The Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG) for Business Studies guides how tasks are to be done for Grades 10-12 for each year. The formal tasks to be designed by Business Studies teachers according to SAG (DoE, 2008, pp.9-13) and Business Studies Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (National DoE, 2011, p.46) are formal tests, research assignments, research projects and research presentations, which constitute a year or 'CASS mark'. In terms of the National Protocol on Assessment Grades R-12 (National DoE, 2002), SBA, practical assessment tasks and end-of- year exams are designed to address the content competencies, skills, values and attitudes of the subject in order to provide learners, parents and teachers with results that are meaningful indications of what the learners know, understand and can do at the time of assessment.

Crucial to both forms of assessment is that assessment should provide feedback on what learners know relative to what they should know. It follows that the intended content,

concepts and skills to be taught in different subjects need to be clear, and need to be closely aligned to what is assessed. Furthermore, forms of assessment need to be appropriate to the subject being tested, as well as to the level of learning. In short, assessment requirements spell out for teachers what they should teach, at what level, and how they can ascertain whether the learning has been attained.

Recent research by Reyneke, Meyer and Nel (2010) reveals that teachers see SBA as preparing learners to progress (summative purposes), and that insufficient educator training is the cause of these misconceptions. Fullan (2001) points out that attempting to introduce curriculum reform without thinking through the implications for teachers and their classroom practice is likely to collide with very different understandings and result in insecurity and instability in the system. In light of the need to overcome these challenges posed by the initial Curriculum 2005 documents, NCS had to be reviewed for the first time in 2009 in the FET phase.

The NCS was repackaged so that it became more accessible to and understandable for teachers. Every subject in each grade has a single, comprehensive and concise CAPS, which provides details on what teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis. The Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, conveying her message in *Curriculum News* (National Department of Education, 2010, p.3) said:

I would like to reiterate that while there have been some amendments to the NCS, the aims and values of the curriculum remain the same. The curriculum is based on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. It aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner, who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled and compassionate, having respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

From the above-quoted statement it can be deduced that the curriculum has not undergone fundamental changes. It remained the NCS with the same aims and values, but certain amendments have been effected. As this thesis focuses on design of assessment tasks in Business Studies, only changes pertinent to Business Studies Grades 10-12 are explained below.

Changes highlighted in the CAPS for Business Studies Grades 10-12 was the removal of LOs and Assessment Standards (ASs) which did not affect the content. Business Studies previously had four LOs; these still exist, but are no longer called LOs and instead are referred to as Main Topics (National DoE, 2011, p.8). Changes in CAPS did not significantly affect assessment in Business Studies. The only changes made were in the structure of the examination paper. Section B, which used to have three compulsory questions, now provides learners with five questions from which they have to choose three to answer. Unlike in the FET phase, more changes were introduced in the CAPS in the General Education Phase.

From the above explanation of the nature of assessment it can be noted that assessment is an integral part of the curriculum. Empirical studies revealed various challenges regarding assessment practices. Nevertheless, assessment should play a powerful role in conveying information clearly and directly to learners about their learning (DoE, 2005). Assessment, being an integral part of education, is linked to all learning activities and is at the heart of educational endeavour (Clarke, 1996). Therefore it is significant to probe into how teachers design assessment tasks: how do they instruct learners about them and how do learners respond to these assessment tasks.

Teachers' experiences of designing assessment tasks for Grades 10-12 in Business Studies from 2006 to date as well as the influencing contextual realities will be investigated. This may contribute to the design of relevant intervention and remediation programmes at teacher education and departmental levels.

1.3. FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The NCS for Grades 10-12 and its new assessment policy was implemented in Grade 10 in 2006. With the transformation of the curriculum, which included a new approach to assessment, teachers needed to design assessment tasks according to assessment policy requirements. These will not only assess knowledge, but also the skills of applying knowledge acquired from familiar to unfamiliar situations. Maree and Fraser (2008) referred to these as 'authentic tasks', which are meaningful to the learner and represent applications to everyday life.

Given the nature of formal assessment tasks – research assignment, research project and research presentation (SAG - DoE, 2008) – a constructivist approach to learning, teaching and assessment is implied. Constructivism is an approach that entails authentic and meaningful learning which usually occurs through collaboration with others (Davydov & Kerr, 1995). It is further referred to as an active process where learners are involved in research activities to build knowledge for themselves (Mayer, 2004; Burnett, Pillay & Dart, 2003; Topping, 1998; Hein, 1991). Hence for many teachers who have been custodians of the traditional assessment approach, constructivism called for a total change of mindset from setting tests and exams requiring reproduction of facts to designing authentic tasks which require cognitive engagement.

According to the policy assessment in Business Studies should focus on the knowledge, skills and values necessary for informed, ethical, productive and responsible participation in economic sectors (DoE, 2003). This focus brought about new challenges for Business Studies teachers, since it influenced how assessment tasks should be designed. 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 implementation of the new assessment policy, challenges still exist. Teachers are still struggling to design assessment tasks that adhere to Business Studies assessment policy requirements.

A study conducted by Mdunana (2011, p. 97) asserts that there are gaps in the implementation and practice of SBA tasks. SBA moderation reports for 2009, 2010 and 2011 at Cluster, District and Provincial levels elicit similar challenges with regard to designing assessment tasks and tools, especially rubric. According to SBA formal tasks count for 25% of the final promotion mark of a learner; 25% (SBA) is added to 75% (exam), which makes up a final (promotion) mark of 100% (SAG – DoE, 2008).

It is imperative that the SBA component is of an acceptable standard and comparable to those of other schools and other learners at the same level. SBA impacts on the learners' futures, as their careers and further studies decisions are based on their promotion marks. The skills practiced by learners when they are engaged with formal assessment tasks designed by their teachers lay an essential groundwork for the final examinations, which counts for 75% of the promotion mark.

Emphasising the impact of SBA on exams, Van der Berg and Shephard (2008), in the survey conducted by Reyneke et al. (2008, p.288) on SBA, said:

Umalusi warns that with the 25% weighting given to CASS marks in matriculation, and the limit of a mean deviation of 10% either way between examination and CASS marks, differences in strategic behaviour between teachers or schools can have important consequences. Schools that set high standards in CASS in order to induce intensive examination preparation may place their candidates at a considerable disadvantage in the final matriculation mark (up to 5% points) relative to schools that are exceedingly lenient in assessment.

Therefore failure to assess learners appropriately may lead to poor performance and other negative consequences for learners, such as poor results in the subject and drop-outs at the end of the year.

This study focuses on designing formal assessment tasks in Business Studies for Grades 10-12. Its purpose is to explore teachers' experiences in the process of designing tasks. During data collection approaches to assessment, steps followed in designing tasks, teachers' interpretation of policy as well as their experiences in the process of designing tasks and tools will be explored.

1.4. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study is based on my professional practice as a Business Economics teacher from 1986 to 2008. With the introduction of the new curriculum after 1994, the name Business Economics was changed to Business Studies. This name change was due to the move away from pure business management theory in the old syllabus to the new Business Studies NCS that included such diverse aspects as creative thinking, problem solving, risk management and both contract and labour law (DoE, 2003). During this period I was also a Head of Department for Economic and Management Sciences, which included Business Studies.

One of my duties was to conduct school-based moderation (both pre- and post-assessment) of formal tasks designed by teachers. Pre-assessment moderation looks at the assessment task

and tool before implementation in practice. This is done to ensure quality of the assessment tasks and that they are compiled according to the required standards as stated in the assessment policies of the DoE. Post-assessment moderation focuses on the appropriateness of marking to ensure validity and reliability. My observation was that teachers had challenges with having to design the authentic type of assessment tasks. I found in their tasks objective type questions instead of investigative questions. Policies were available to guide them, but were not understood and interpreted correctly. Vandeyar and Killen (2007) found that the teacher's approaches to assessment were influenced by their background and their capacity to implement the curriculum. Teachers had been exposed to traditional assessment, which did not require investigative skills, as learners and again as teachers for many years.

I was a cluster coordinator in 2006 and 2007, the period during which NCS was implemented in Grades 10 and 11 respectively. I was engaged with the process of moderation at cluster level, which included ten schools. In 2008 I became Subject Advisor for Business Studies, responsible for monitoring curriculum implementation, conducting assessment workshops, providing curriculum support through school visits, monitoring the cluster moderation process and conducting district and provincial moderation. I was also a Provincial SBA moderator for Business Studies in 2009 and 2010, responsible for moderation of SBA formal assessment tasks for selected schools from 12 districts in KZN province.

My observation through my engagement with moderation processes of assessment tasks at different levels is that teachers are struggling to design assessment tasks that adhere to the requirements of the assessment policy. The possible outcome of such a situation is that learners will not be equipped with the skills needed in the business world; hence a dire need arose to investigate teachers' designing of assessment tasks.

In terms of the policy, assessment in Business Studies should focus on the knowledge, skills and values necessary for informed, ethical, productive and responsible participation in economic sectors. Hence assessment tasks to be designed have to be authentic in nature, as the SAG (DoE, 2008) stipulates. The three tasks prescribed in the assessment policy, besides tests and exams, are subjective in nature and are assessed using a rubric. A rubric is a scoring guide that describes the criteria that will be used in evaluating learners' tasks (Suskie, 2009). It consists of specific pre-established performance indicators used in judging the quality of learners' work on performance assessments.

Findings of my observations during moderation were that some teachers would present a very good assessment task, for example a research assignment, that meets all the required standards – but the marking tool (rubric) designed would be inappropriate for marking the assignment. If the marking tool is invalid and doesn't relate to the task, the assumption is that learners are incorrectly marked, and feedback provided will not assist in enhancing teaching and learning. Moreover assessment will not be a true reflection of learners' performance.

It is apparent that there is a problem that has to be investigated. Van Laren and James (2008) found that teachers had a limited understanding of the new assessment policy. They further note that the assessment policies were perceived by some teachers as an externally mandated change in which the individual teacher does not feature. From my informal discussion with teachers, one of the challenges in fulfilling the aspirations of the new assessment policy is that there is increasing pressure on teachers to use a variety of assessment strategies. Observations from school visits reveal that teachers are experiencing problems with planning of different assessment activities.

Support programmes have been established and implemented at provincial and district levels. An assessment document was developed in 2009 by KZN Business Studies specialists for Grades 10-12, which has examples of different assessment tasks prescribed in the SAG for Business Studies. A rubric was also developed for each assessment task. The purpose was to provide teachers with exemplars that could assist them when designing assessment tasks, taking into consideration the environment in which they operate, which differs from one school to another. My observations revealed that most teachers use the assessment tasks provided in the document without even customising them.

The interventions provided seem to have little (and in some cases none at all) impact on the design of assessment tasks and tools. This therefore prompted me to investigate the experiences of teachers in the process of designing assessment tasks and marking tools.

I also contend that poorly designed assessment tasks and marking tools impact on learners' performance in the NSC exams, as it is stated in the NCS Assessment Policy that formal SBA contributes 25% while the final exam contributes 75% of the learners' promotion mark in Grades 10-12.

The Provincial and Umalusi Moderation Reports of 2010 are a clear indication that there is a challenge in the areas of assessment that I have already highlighted. Hence my study will explore the experiences of teachers when designing the assessment tasks. I hope that positive and negative experiences will be reflected, so that good practices can be sustained while areas that require improvement can be addressed.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this project is to explore teachers' experiences when designing Business Studies assessment tasks for Grades 10-12. To accomplish the purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are teachers' experiences in designing the assessment tasks?
2. How do teachers design these tasks?

1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' experiences when designing Business Studies assessment tasks for Grades 10-12. A qualitative research design was used in this research project, as I became immersed in gathering and interpreting qualitative data with interpretivism chosen as a guiding methodology. This approach was used to explore experiences from teachers on how they actually design assessment tasks for these different grades, guided by the same assessment policy. Knowledge constructed on the basis of teachers' experiences allowed me to understand the complexities from the point of view of participants (Mertens, 1998).

1.6.2 Sample of the research

For the purpose of this study I used purposive sampling of three teachers who had been teaching Business Studies in Grade 10, 11 and 12 since the introduction of the NCS in 2006. These educators have been involved with the design of assessment tasks according to the

new assessment policy. Purposive sampling therefore assisted me to acquire relevant opinions from the targeted population and to understand their experiences in the process of designing assessment tasks, because they were carefully chosen. These educators were chosen from one school in Umkomazi ward in KZN, because this is a ward that has never performed well in both internal and external assessment since implementation of the NCS in Grade 10 in 2006. Assessment records bear evidence to this; they are obtainable from the Exams and Assessment section and kept in my file as part of my duties, as stated in the rationale. Methodological challenges and ethical issues will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

1.6.3 Data generation method

Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were chosen as research instruments used to collect data. The first critical question was answered by using the semi-structured interviews. These took place on a one-to-one basis with the aim of obtaining a holistic and thick description of teachers' experiences in the process of designing assessment tasks. Tape-recorders were used to capture all data from respondents during interviews. Field notes were kept to record noteworthy observations of what was happening and relevant to my study. An interview schedule was used during the process, and use of non-verbal cues assisted in deepening the scope for probing during the interview. I also led the respondent where necessary, by extending the same question in order to probe deeper to ensure that all relevant information pertaining to design of assessment tasks was captured.

Document analysis was used to answer the second critical question referring to design of assessment tasks and tools. I collected each teacher's assessment files for previous and current years in order to analyse how they have been designing assessment tasks and marking tools. I made notes on the basis of my analysis of these documents.

The next section deals with the conceptual framework that guided the analysis of data.

1.7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study explores the experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. The NCS policy documents advocate an approach that sees

assessment as being integrated with teaching and learning. This approach, in which assessment is "inextricably linked" to teaching and learning (DoE, 2007, p.20), indicates that the teacher assesses SKAVs taught, while through assessment learners provide evidence of knowledge, skills and values learnt. An appropriate approach to this research is that of constructivism combined with Bloom's taxonomy: "Constructivism is the idea that we actively construct ongoing experience and understanding of the world based on previously acquired concepts and experience" (Jardin, 2006, p. 21). Richardson (2002) describes constructivism as meaning-making theory, meaning that individuals create their own new understandings based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe and the phenomena or ideas they come into contact with.

The essential core of constructivism, according to Fosnot (1996) and Steffe and Gale (1995) (cited by Ntuli, 2007), is that teachers should design tasks that will assess active construction of knowledge and meaning from experiences. The constructivist approach to learning and assessment provides an opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience (Fosnot, 2005).

In terms of Business Studies, economic growth and personal financial empowerment are largely dependent on the positive contribution of both business and individuals to the economy (DoE, 2003, p. 9). Teachers are informally engaged with business knowledge daily in their lives, and this will assist them in designing tasks based on their experience. Therefore teaching, learning and assessment in the new curriculum is an active process of building meaning. Teachers should design assessment tasks that require learners to fit new ideas into their already existing conceptual frameworks (Badders, 2000).

On the other hand, Schwarts, Lingren and Lewis (2006) believe that constructivist assessment should examine abilities and dispositions to construct new knowledge, not just to execute old knowledge. Davydov and Kerr (1995) label the constructivist approach as 'authentic', as meaningful learning usually occurs through collaboration with others in different contexts. This would be applied in designing tasks, because the mandated formal assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12 are authentic in nature. The study investigates teachers' experiences in designing of assessment tasks in Business Studies, a subject that is highly practical in nature, and therefore teaching, learning and assessment are constructivist-oriented.

The second concept chosen for this study is Bloom's taxonomy, which promotes higher-level thinking. Benjamin created a model called Bloom's taxonomy, which classifies thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity (Forehand, 2005). These are built in increasing order of difficulty, from basic rote memorisation to higher (more difficult and sophisticated) levels of critical thinking skills. This model is used in assessing Business Studies in the new assessment approach. When teachers design assessment tasks they have to incorporate all cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy to cater for the different intellectual abilities of learners (DoE, 2008).

Constructivism and Bloom's taxonomy are useful to guide analysis of the data on teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks. Constructivism applies in assessment tasks to be designed by teachers, as these assess application of knowledge in real-life situations.

1.8. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The first chapter introduces the study and briefly discusses the nature of assessment. The purpose and focus of the study are discussed, and the research questions that are central to the study are stated. The rationale for undertaking this study is explained, presenting the contextual and personal imperatives that motivated it, particularly my personal observations and other anecdotal evidence (such as experiences of my colleagues) as well as existing literature and reports that indicated that teachers were experiencing challenges with regard to designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. This is followed by a brief discussion on the research methodology and conceptual framework on which the study is based. Finally, it gives brief descriptions of the chapters contained in the research report.

The second chapter contains a review of the literature related to assessment, which includes the purpose of assessment, and formative and authentic assessment as the focus of teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks. A review of assessment in Business Studies is then provided, taking into consideration changes that emerged with the introduction of the new curriculum that affected design of assessment tasks. Literature on experiences of teachers in the design of assessment tasks and tools is also explored. Studies on constructivism and Bloom's taxonomy assisted me in developing an appropriate conceptual framework to guide my analysis and interpretation of data.

The third chapter constitutes the methodological design for investigating teachers' assessment experiences. The last section of this chapter is dedicated to the method of analysis of data, and the credibility, trustworthiness and limitations of the study. This chapter also reflects on the ethical issues of the study and ends with a summary.

The fourth chapter presents analysis of the relevant data produced from interviews with the three teachers on their experiences of designing assessment tasks. It includes analysis of their assessment files on how these tasks are designed. Data emerging from these sources are organised into themes, which form the basis of the main findings discussed in the next chapter.

The fifth chapter provides a synthesis of the findings of the study, and answers the critical questions that guided the study. Recommendations, suggestions and implications for future research are also presented.

1.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a discussion of the nature of assessment. It also presented the focus and purpose of the study, to justify its undertaking. It provided the rationale for the study as well as the methodological design and main critical research questions. A brief discussion on the conceptual framework was provided, and finally a preview of the chapters that will follow. The next chapter will present an overview of the literature related to the phenomenon under study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to explore experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in the FET phase, which is Grades 10-12. The phenomenon to be explored is therefore designing of assessment tasks, using teachers' experiences as lenses to understand this phenomenon. Teachers investigated in this project are those that had to implement the new assessment policy outlined in the new curriculum from 2006 to date. One has to address this issue from the perspective of changes in assessment procedures in SA that teachers had to confront.

This chapter presents a review of literature related to assessment in general, which includes the purpose of assessment, and formative and authentic assessment as the core in designing assessment tasks. This is followed by a review of assessment in Business Studies, taking into consideration changes that emerged with the introduction of the new curriculum that affected design of assessment tasks. Literature on experiences of teachers in the design of assessment tasks and tools is also explored in this chapter. From the literature review a conceptual framework emerged which I will employ to guide analysis of the data in this study. The main concepts relevant to interpret teachers' experiences of assessment are constructivism and Bloom's taxonomy.

According to Curriculum 2005, assessment has changed drastically since its introduction. The introduction of new assessment policies in education was vital to accommodate the change in pedagogical practice. The form of assessment used, namely summative assessment, incorporated tests and examinations where learners were expected to regurgitate knowledge based on the apartheid government's prescribed syllabi (Jansen, 1999). A number of changes with regard to assessment were experienced by FET teachers during introduction of the NCS in the FET phase in 2006. One of the greatest transformations has been from a purely examination-based exit point in Grade 12 to the inclusion of SBA (Independent Examination Board, 2008, p.2). The NCS assessment policy necessitated a rigorous approach to classroom-based assessments and the need for quality assurance of tasks. SBA and

classroom-based assessment are synonymous and sometimes used interchangeably by different authors. SBA will be used in this study; it is an assessment that requires teachers to collect, synthesise and interpret information to assist in decision making in the classroom (Russel & Airasian, 2008) that improves student learning (McMillan, 2011).

Russel (2009) argues that changes to assessment made it possible for a subject like Business Studies to move away from a totally theoretical premise to the inclusion of practical skills, simulation and case study-based assessments. These new developments in assessments are part of a move to design assessment that supports learning and provides more detailed information about the learner (Wolf, Bixby, Glenn & Gamer, 1991).

2.2. MEANING OF ASSESSMENT

In order to determine the success of any teaching and learning, the assessment of learners is a priority and plays a crucial role in relation to curriculum and learning. Assessment is central to the education process. Gillett and Hammond (2009) argue that if assessment is done correctly it will be essential to the development of academic and professional literacy. They extend their argument by stressing the importance of assessment in the context of lifelong learning. It is imperative for teachers to understand what assessment is before they engage in designing assessment tasks.

Assessment is a broad term, but authors have different perceptions of the concept. Assessment is defined by Ngcobo (2009) as a tool used by the teacher in order to determine the shortcomings as well as the successes of any teaching and learning situation. Teachers as assessors use this tool (assessment) to determine if learners are learning; at what level they are learning; if they understand what they are learning; and what they still need to know. Therefore, in terms of assessment policy assessment should play a powerful role in conveying information clearly and directly to learners about their learning (DoE, 2005).

According to Blaz (2008) assessment is a process, not a one-time event – a series of episodes in the learning process, part reflection and part understanding. This suggests that assessment is a reflection and understanding of teaching and learning that has taken place at a particular time. He further mentions the issue of documenting progress in achievement of learning outcomes (LOs), which means recording the progress of learners. Crooks (1988), and

Stiggins and Bridgeford (1998) cited in Thabethe (2009), argue that teachers spend a vastly greater amount of time preparing and designing SBA activities than standardised examinations. Jansen's (1999, pp. 2- 6) argument against OBE in SA was that it does not take cognizance of what happens inside schools, and that more time is required for managing this complex process. Teachers have to design tasks and spend more time documenting the progress of learners, as these records should be accumulated to build up the 25% CASS marks. Evident in Kabambwe (2010) is the concern raised by teachers about excessive time spent on remediation and enrichment in CASS, that could lead to incompleteness of syllabus.

Therefore teachers' clear understanding of new assessment policies and what is expected from them will enhance implementation and design of assessment activities. Thus teachers' basic understanding of assessment in terms of new policy is fundamental to the development of appropriate assessment. However, I do not ignore the diverse contexts within which teachers work.

McMillan (2007), Burke (2008), Cassim (2010), Meyer (2010) and Nitko and Brookhart (2011) perceive assessment as the process of collecting, analysing, interpreting and using information for decision making. Interesting to note is that once assessment has been conducted, decisions have to be made based on the results of assessment. Feedback informs decisions, and hence assessment tasks developed by teachers impact on the decisions made. These decisions include, among others, the degree to which LOs have been achieved. Assessment is fundamental to decisions made about learners' performance in terms of the Qualifications and Assessment Policy Framework (DoE, 2003). Hence accurate and appropriate student assessment provides the information to help teachers to make better decisions about what students have learned (Ramsaroop, 2003). However, if the assessment which is designed is inappropriate as a result of challenges faced by teachers in understanding assessment, the decisions made will be irrelevant and will not enhance teaching and learning.

Anthony's (2011) perception of assessment is similar to what has been discussed above. However, Sieborger (2004) contends that information about learners' progress is interpreted to determine what has been learnt, what can be remembered, what is understood and what can be applied in a different context. According to Kabambwe (2010), CASS is an on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure learner

performance. Nitko and Brookhart (2011) share the same sentiment with Kabambwe that CASS is a daily process by which information is gathered about students' progress in achieving the curriculum's learning targets. Hence the term assessment is understood as a process that teachers are engaged with throughout their teaching and learning.

Ramsaroop's (2003) empirical study found that in SA, CASS plays a major role in the learning process of learners. It reflects an integrated, ongoing process that cannot be separated from the teaching methods that educators employ in their daily practices. Contrary to this is Raboijane's (2005) study, which reveals that teachers in Botswana did not want to risk losing precious time for content coverage by trying out innovative assessments. They believed that this would compromise the performance of their students in the public examinations. Similarly, findings of a study conducted in SA revealed that CASS was not implemented in learning and teaching; rather, preparing learners for summative assessment is what was practised in class (Mdunana, 2011).

The literature reveals that assessment in the NCS is vital. Clarke (1996, p.327) stated that it is at the heart of the educational endeavour, and has to be incorporated in teaching and learning. In this study assessment is used to refer to the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment (DoE, 2007) to determine whether learners have achieved Business Studies outcomes stipulated in the new assessment policy. This is a new approach to assessment which poses challenges to Business Studies teachers when they assess learners.

Assessing acquired skills as well as knowledge which can be applied in various contexts is fundamental in Business Studies; hence this study focuses on the design of assessment tasks. The essential feature of assessment, according to literature, is that it is a process of determining what has been learnt and understood by learners during teaching and learning. Before a teacher designs assessment tasks to assess learners, it is crucial that the purposes of the assessment be clear and unambiguous.

2.2.1. Purpose of assessment

Since this study sought to explore teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks, literature relating to the purpose of assessment will be reviewed in this section. The reason for focusing on the purpose of assessment is that teachers have the responsibility to assess the

progress of learners in achieving the expected outcomes. They also have to report to parents and other role players on the levels of achievement acquired by learners during the learning process (DoE, 2007). As teachers engage with designing tasks, Mueller (2008) found that effective assessment begins with identifying the purpose of assessment. On the other hand, Malan (1997) asserts that both teachers and learners need to be very clear about the purpose of assessment to ensure validity and reliability. He continues to say that the purpose of assessment should directly prescribe the standards, which are more specific statements of what learners should know and be able to do in a specific subject. Hence it is critical that the standards align with the purpose of the assessment and that the assessment itself directly measures what is captured in the standards (Carr & Harris, 2001).

In the process of designing assessment tasks it is significant for teachers to understand the purposes of assessment to ensure that an appropriate match exists between the purposes and the methods of collecting assessment evidence. This in turn will help to ensure that decisions and conclusions based on the assessment are fair and appropriate for the particular purpose.

Malan's (1997) stance on the involvement of teachers and learners in understanding the purpose of assessment is supported by Gillet and Hammond (2009), who found that there is a demand for more clarity and transparency in assessment processes. This implies that assessment should be clear and learners should know how and why they are being assessed. One of the characteristics of OBE in the new curriculum is learner-centredness. An assessment strategy that promotes learner-centred assessment is formative assessment. Substantial learning gains are possible when teachers use formative assessment strategies (Natriello, 1996; Crooks, 1998; Black & William, 2009). Therefore the purpose of assessment is to ensure consistency and validity, and that correlation exists between purpose and the method of collecting evidence so that decisions made are fair and appropriate.

The next paragraph discusses formative assessment as a means to acquire information on the progress of learners.

2.2.2. Formative assessment

According to the NCS there are four types of assessment: baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative. Baseline assessment is done to determine learners' knowledge at the beginning of every learning experience, and diagnostic assessment is done to discover the cause or causes

of a learning barrier. Formative assessment, according to the DoE (1998), is assessment for learning, which implies that it takes place during teaching and learning and consists of formal and informal tasks. Summative assessment, on the other hand, is a summary of learners' achievement at a specific point in time (James, 1998, p. 27), which gives an overall picture of their progress, (Cele, 2009). According to Van der Merwe (2011) summative assessment is usually more formal and more structured than formative assessment. He further states that forms of assessment mostly associated with summative assessment are tests and examinations. Cele (2009) asserts that summative assessment normally occurs after learning has taken place through good formative assessment. In terms of assessment in Business Studies formative assessment comprises formal and informal assessment tasks. This study focuses on formative assessment as it investigates experiences of teachers in designing formal assessment tasks.

Formative assessment focuses on the outcomes which learners have to achieve during and after the teaching and learning process. These outcomes are encapsulated in each subject offered in the FET phase, of which Business Studies is one. Formative assessment refers to frequent, interactive assessment of learner progress and understanding to identify learning needs and adapt teaching appropriately (Cassim, 2010). Formative assessment, according to Cele (2009), is consistent with the theory of social constructivism as it involves an interaction between a teacher and a learner during a learning process, the theory on which this study is based. It is interactive because it involves learners, since OBE is learner-centred. This learner-centred approach focuses on factors that are under the control of the learner, while taking into account their interaction with the environment and context (Kaftan, Buck & Haack, 2006). Identifying learning needs and adapting teaching appropriately, as Cassim (2010) contends, requires provision of feedback.

Formative assessment refers to assessment that is specifically intended to generate feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning (Sadler, 1998). Marsh (2004) asserts that formative assessment provides data about instructional units in progress and students in action. They help to develop or form the final curriculum product, and help students adjust to their learning tasks through the feedback they receive (Marsh, 2004, p.51). The key issue is that formative assessment should provide feedback to learners.

Cele (2009) says that formative assessment gives constructive feedback that may have a combination of three purposes, namely diagnosing student difficulties, assessing improvement over time, and providing information about how to improve their learning. Constructive feedback is given to enable learners to grow, because they learn from their mistakes. It is characterised by ongoing feedback and gives information to both the learners and the educator as to whether the LOs are being achieved or not. The same sentiment is shared by Ntuli (2007), who believes that constructive feedback provides information about problems, errors, misunderstandings, understandings and progress during instruction.

Recording of learner performance assists in providing feedback about progress of learners (Blaz, 2008). However, Chapman (2005) asserts that only selected results from identified formative assessments are averaged and included in the formal grade. Assessment investigated in this study is formal assessment which should be recorded and be used to provide feedback to all stakeholders. It can be concluded that feedback which aligns to the purposes mentioned above is determined by appropriately designed assessment tasks that adhere to assessment policy requirements.

Key issues on formative assessment relevant to this research project have been highlighted in the discussion above: for example, that formative assessment is consistent with constructivism and that it is intended to generate feedback. It is apparent that properly designed assessment tasks have to incorporate these aspects. However, some empirical studies revealed that some teachers were not implementing formative assessment due to various challenges. Cele (2009) revealed that teachers did not have programmes of implementing formative assessment in their daily operations. He argues that they have a limited understanding about the value of formative assessment. His findings were based on interviews, observation and document analysis of Grade 7 teachers in three purposively selected primary schools. Van der Merwe (2011) noted through the use of interviews and observations that teachers did not have the necessary knowledge and skills to use formative assessment in their Mathematics classrooms to assist with teaching and learning. Lack of knowledge and skills in the new assessment approach can have an adverse impact on teachers' ability to design assessment tasks. He further argues that teachers did not see formative assessment as integral to learning and teaching, and was doubtful that they realised that the act of assessment should be used to aid the teaching and learning process. This implies that they see no difference between formative and summative assessment.

It has also been found that teachers do not reject or resist change in practicing formative assessment, but they have not been properly assisted to replace the old practices with new ones (Ngwenya, 2009). Furthermore, they interpret formative assessment according to their own accumulated understanding, which differs from teacher to teacher. Similar findings were presented by Raibojane (2005) from an investigation on whether teachers were using formative assessment or not when teaching Mathematics. He discovered that Mathematics teachers rarely used formative assessment.

It is evident that teachers have challenges with implementing formative assessment, in which teaching, learning and assessment are integrated. It is also obvious that designing assessment activities is therefore highly impaired.

There is a gap in the literature on the implementation of formative assessment in Business Studies. It was indicated earlier that assessing acquired skills as well as knowledge which can be applied in various contexts is fundamental in Business Studies. Therefore the paragraphs that follow concentrate on performance-based or authentic assessment.

2.2.3. Teachers' experiences of authentic assessment

2.2.3.1. What is authentic assessment?

Henning-Stout (1994) defines authentic assessment as being reflective of performance on tasks that are meaningful to the learner. Suurtman (2004) views it as assessment that involves students in tasks that are worthwhile, significant and meaningful and that resemble learning activities. What could be gathered from their description is that they refer to authentic tasks as being meaningful to learners. On the other hand, Cole, Ryan and Kick) (1995) define authentic assessment as a principle which holds that students should demonstrate, rather than be required to tell or be questioned about, what they know and can do. They further state that authentic assessment is based on the actual learning experiences of students who participate in activities that have meaning and value for them. These descriptions suggest that teachers should design tasks that are meaningful to learners.

Wiggins (1998) asserts that when designing an authentic task, teachers must first decide what the actual performances are that they want students to be good at. They must design those performances first and worry about a fair and thorough method of grading them later. This suggests starting with instructions for the assessment task designed, describing what learners should do, followed by criteria for assessment. However, this is not always so, as Mueller (2008) asserts that meaningful assessment begins with identifying the purpose of assessment. He points out that the purposes of assessment should directly prescribe the standards, which are more specific statements of what learners should know and be able to do.

A study conducted by Munoz et al. (2006) on developing a coherent system for the assessment of writing abilities in Colombia found that it is crucial that teachers explicitly know what they want from the assessment. This is significant, because instructions can be more clearly communicated and task performance more easily assessed.

According to Sieborger (2004) authentic assessment is an assessment which is appropriate to the purpose for which it is used and to the nature of what is being assessed. This suggests starting with instructions for the assessment task designed, describing what learners should do, followed by criteria for assessment later. It includes more practical, realistic and challenging approaches to assessment. Maree (2007) concurs, stating that authentic assessment refers to activities that are meaningful to the learner and represent applications to everyday life; this is assessment done for real purpose. It involves an analysis of learners' skills, abilities and strengths through a variety of observable indicators, which includes skill performances, purposeful activities, portfolios, demonstrations, hands-on experience and projects. Important to note from these descriptions is that authentic assessment reflects performance on what learners can demonstrate and apply to everyday life.

What makes authentic assessment differ from other types of assessments is that it assesses application of knowledge and skills in real situations. A study conducted by Suurtman (2004) found that Mathematics knowledge and skills applied in realistic contexts deepens students' understanding. Tasks to be designed by teachers in Business Studies are authentic and call for teachers to be more conversant with the nature of these tasks. This research project will therefore explore their experiences in the process of designing these authentic tasks.

Assessment in the NCS in SA has more of an authentic nature as the focus is on the development of the learner, who is multi-skilled and able to apply the theory learnt in real-world conditions (Ngcobo, 2009). It is performance assessment because of its emphasis on realistic tasks which have to be practically done (Hogan, 2007). This research will investigate how teachers experience the design of authentic assessment tasks for Grade 10-12 Business Studies learners. It also hopes to determine their level of understanding of authentic assessment, since this will influence task design.

2.2.3.2. Importance of authentic tasks

Authentic assessment is a prerequisite in the South African education system, and is defined as “assessment that aims to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which knowledge and those skills, values and attitudes are used” (National DoE, 2002, p. 1).

Researchers have expounded the values of using authentic assessment which allows learners to take responsibility for their own learning and at the same time allows for autonomy in gathering information to increase their knowledge (Mueller, 2008; Suurtamm, 2004; Wiggins, 1998). Suurtamam (2004) argues that authentic assessment in Mathematics is important to teachers as it encourages application of knowledge in real contexts, creating connections between the subject and the learner’s world. This is confirmed by Russel (2009), who says that the aim of the new educational dispensation is to produce learners who are better prepared for both higher education and the realities of the working world. Suurtman’s study was on Mathematics, but I have used it because the same principles on authentic assessment apply to Business Studies. The focus of Business Studies in the new curriculum is on the application of knowledge and skills in a real-life context.

Research findings of the study by Suurtman (2004) on teachers’ experiences in developing authentic assessment confirm its importance. The findings indicated that, firstly, authentic assessment deepens understanding of the subject so that learners can recognise its value. Secondly, it encourages learners for their own learning, and lastly it develops problem-solving skills.

Teachers need to assess FET learners in a way that will prepare them to become successful, economically active citizens in their chosen careers, and in so doing contribute to growth of the South African and international economies (Russel, 2009). Russel further states that assessment specifically includes tasks which link with the requirements of tertiary education and the working world. Therefore, in order to build skills that will be more valuable to learners in their future careers than the amassing of knowledge which was emphasised in the old dispensation, authentic assessment is most significant. However, teachers have to be the custodians of the future, building a foundation with the next generation of learners who are going to have the power to make the decisions which will affect the way the world develops (Russel, 2009). What is evident is that authentic assessment plays a major role in linking classroom experience with the world. It therefore has a major bearing on tasks designed by teachers as mandated by the assessment policy (SAG – DoE, 2008). Hence the focus in this project is on the authentic formal tasks designed by teachers.

Before engaging with the literature on the experiences of teachers in the process of designing assessment, it is imperative to explore literature on assessment in Business Studies. This is discussed next, and incorporates literature that deals with assessment in the old and new curriculum. Available studies are reviewed to highlight the importance of assessment in Business Studies, with particular reference to teachers' experiences in the design of assessment tasks.

2.3. ASSESSMENT IN BUSINESS STUDIES

Business Studies as a subject deals with the SKAV critical for informed, productive, ethical and responsible participation in the formal and informal economic sectors (DoE, 2003, p. 9). This policy further states that this subject encompasses business principles, theory and practice that underpin the development of entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises and economic growth. These issues are fundamental in designing new programmes and assessments, both to comply with the National Education Act (South African Qualifications Authority, 1995) and to be relevant in the world in which we live.

There is no doubt that the FET plays a vital role in both education and the economy, with its primary goal of preparing learners for the working world (DoE, 2003). Seepe (2008) asserts

that FET (Grades 10-12) is a strategic level in the educational system preparing young adults either for the world of work or for higher education. This affects the social, economic and cultural life of society as a whole. Willis (2008) argues that the need for skills development and economy building is crucial in a developing economy and a young democracy such as SA. Similarly, Thaanyane (2010) contends that the introduction of Business Education in Lesotho would provide learners with life skills in the business world. He further argues that focusing on equipping learners with entrepreneurial skills is important for the socio-economic development of a country.

Therefore, assessing knowledge and skills ensures that the basic skills development required for entrepreneurial initiatives and economic growth are developed at school level. For example, one of the mandated projects in Business Studies is the development of a business plan. Knowledge and skills acquired by learners in their engagement with the project equips them for life after school should they be interested in engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

Russel's (2009) study revealed that major change in Business Studies Grade 10-12 assessment has been from a purely examination-based exit point in Grade 12 to the inclusion of SBA in the form of portfolios (Independent Examination Board, 2008). Madunana (2011) confirms this by saying that this change was from the traditional, behaviourist perspective (rote learning) to the constructivist perspective (which understands that learners construct their own knowing). This change has necessitated a far more rigorous approach to classroom-based assessments and the need for quality assurance of tasks. As a result, the NCS assessment policy in Grades 10-12 prescribes seven formal assessment tasks. Three of these tasks are authentic and require learners to conduct research, and the rest are formal tests and examinations. These are mandated tasks, and this project explores teachers' experiences in designing the three research tasks.

It is crucial that changes in subjects in the new curriculum are carefully studied before engaging in curriculum delivery. The next section briefly looks into the literature that deals with the old and new approaches to assessment in Business Studies.

2.3.1. Old and new assessment approaches

According to Mamwenda (2004), cited in Russel (2009), assessment in Business Studies was based on memorisation of facts to be reproduced during examinations, and hence setting a

test or exam was not a difficult task for teachers. Singaram (2007) confirms this by saying that learner assessment was just a simple process completed at the end of the unit of learning. Assessment was norm referenced; where students' performance in a particular test was compared with the performance of other students who wrote the same test Spady (1993). Norm-reference assessment only provided isolated marks and percentages that would indicate how learners' performance had changed, without any feedback that would enhance teaching and learning.

Spady (1993, p.18) harshly criticises traditional assessment methods: "Success is defined in a given way and creates, simultaneously, the conditions that produce failure." He motivates this by saying that in the past learners were judged on sets of criteria which were not well defined, and given only one opportunity to attain a mark with a norm-referenced system that ultimately created expectations (either good or bad) which accompanied a learner in any given subject. However, the introduction of the NCS shifted the ways of assessing learners from traditional methods to an outcomes-based approach.

According to the new assessment policy (DoE, 2007), CASS in Business Studies covers all the OBE assessment principles. These principles are covered to ensure that assessment is ongoing; supports the growth and development of learners; provides feedback for learning and teaching; allows for integrated assessment; uses strategies that cater for a variety of learners' needs; and allows for summative assessment (DoE, 2007, p.4). These principles need to be clearly understood by teachers so that they can design and implement their assessment strategies appropriately.

The National DoE produced assessment policy documents that focus "on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes" (DoE, 2007, p.5), which provides more information about a learner's competence in a particular area. Therefore assessment is criterion referenced, which maintains that there are certain criteria that learners are expected to achieve for each subject, like Business Studies, in a particular grade. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003) assert that criterion-referenced assessment refers to testing in which learners' scores (results) are compared to a set standard. They further clarify that the scores are not compared to those of other learners, but to a given or set criterion or standard of performance.

Assessment in Business Studies was discriminatory because examination papers were designed for Standard Grade and Higher Grade learners, where selection was based on marks obtained in tests. This is the approach that teachers have been engaged with for many years. This was evident from research by Kouba, Stowell, Champagne, Cezik Turk & Sherwood (2001) on alignment of assessment with instruction in the USA. It reveals that shifting from old to new ways of assessment is challenging, difficult and frustrating. Kouba et al. stressed that changing the usual way of doing anything is a difficult process, especially if one has years of experience with the 'usual' rather than the 'new' way. Despite the fact that old assessment methods proved to be ineffective with no value, as depicted by Singaram (2007), they are still used by some teachers. It is therefore evident from this that while new assessment approaches were introduced, elements of bureaucracy continued to prevail. This study hopes to find out whether the traditional approach of assessment in Business Studies impacts on the design of assessments tasks according to the new curriculum requirements.

The next section reviews literature on the experiences of teachers in application of a new assessment approach.

2.4. TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

This section of the literature is the core of this study, because the phenomenon to be explored is designing of assessment tasks using teachers' experiences as lenses to understand this phenomenon. It includes literature on teachers' experiences of assessment in different subjects as there is limited literature relating to Business Studies.

This study sought to explore teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks in the new curriculum in SA. Teachers involved have been teaching and assessing with the old method, but now have to assess using the new method. Research has shown that a change in the curriculum has an impact on the implementation process, because it requires a lot of restructuring and replacement (Mdunana, 2011). Teachers' experiences with regard to new assessment practices have a great impact on the design of assessment tasks.

This literature covered here discusses factors found to contribute to challenges of teachers in assessment in Mathematics, Natural Science, IsiZulu, Economic and Management Sciences

and Business Studies. Large class sizes made it difficult to operate and move freely between groups (Rabojane, 2005; Cele, 2009; Cassim, 2010). Assessment in NCS is an ongoing process which requires recording of the progress of learners Blaz (2008), and hence this becomes a major educational challenge in big classes. Time was also found to be a major limitation in the adoption of SBA practices in Mathematics in Botswana and Economic and Management Sciences in SA (Raibojane, 2005; Cassim, 2010). Teachers felt that more time should be allocated to the new assessment as it demands more work than traditional assessment. Hence time for adequate preparation is foundational to minimise negative emotions that can mar assessment (Noack, Mulholland & Warren, 2013). Alternative assessments have to be incorporated within the normal teaching process (Sheppard, 1995; Boud, 1995a, 1995b). The challenge for teachers is to develop appropriate assessment techniques and acquire skills to employ these new technologies in their classrooms without compromising the teaching and learning aspects of the lesson. Therefore limited time compromised the standard of assessment and led to teachers preferring to use the traditional approach which they are familiar with. According to Ramsaroop, (2003) and Cele (2009) teachers' work overload precludes proper assessment. One of the challenges they discover was difficulty of finding time to assess the many tasks, efforts and performances.

Rabojane (2005), Cele (2009) and Cassim (2010) found that inadequate resources were impacting negatively on the implementation of new assessment practices. Lack of resources has been identified as a major challenge in rural schools. This project is investigating teachers in a rural school, and hopes to find out whether this impacts on designing tasks or not.

Lack of skills in teachers expected to implement new assessment practices was found to be another limiting factor (Ngcobo, 2009; Ngwenya, 2009; Raibojane, 2005). Ngwenya (2009) argues that teachers were not properly assisted to replace old practices with new ones. This was confirmed by Ngcobo (2009), who found that teachers were unable to interact with assessment policy documents when planning. It has been determined by Thabethe (2009), Cassim (2010) and Mdunana (2011) that teachers were interpreting assessment policy documents differently, which led to non-uniformity in implementation of the same policy. Mdunana (2011) attributes this issue to the contradictions in policies. In her study she investigated assessment policies and related circulars, which she found to be contradictory. Teachers also felt that they were restricted by legal requirements. Her study further reveals that teachers have a problem with the SBA being prescribed and repeated every year by the

department, and would like to participate in the task design. It means that their professional expertise and creativity are undermined by these policies.

MacPhail and Halbert (2010) conducted a study in Ireland on teachers and students' experiences of assessment for learning in post-primary Physical Education. Findings of this study indicated that better planning results in better management and organisation of lessons and improvement of the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore the study by Noack, Mulholland & Warren, 2013 on teachers' experiences of assessment during the period of curriculum change in Australia revealed that links between planning and assessing were strong. Pertinent to this was the findings from the document analysis in the study conducted by Sithole (2009). It showed that teachers did not consider inclusion of assessment in their planning hence a variety of problems was experienced in their efforts to administer common tasks for assessment. Sharing the same sentiment was Ngcobo (2009) who further suggests that teachers should be assisted by education specialists to collaboratively plan assessment for the year in clusters.

In corroborating with these findings, Cele (2009) added lack of motivation of learners and non-cooperation of households as challenges experienced by teachers. These challenges affirm Jansen's (1999) argument that OBE in SA did not take cognizance of what happened inside schools.

From this synopsis it is evident that changing and implementing the new curriculum brings with it challenges and many new requirements (Kelly, 2004). One of the requirements from Kelly's point of view which is relevant to this study is human development. He believes that educating and changing the mindset of people participating in curriculum change is a prerequisite. Although this is not an easy process, he believes that it is imperative to develop people who will be involved in the planning and implementation before the actual change takes place. However, this study takes a further step in investigating experiences with regard to task design. In doing so it hopes to reveal areas that require development of teachers, after investigating their experiences in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. Next teachers' experiences with designing assessment tasks and tools are reviewed.

2.4.1. Designing assessment tasks

The main focus of this study is on designing of assessment tasks by Business Studies teachers for Grades 10-12. According to the Business Studies SAG (DoE, 2008), SBA comprises seven tasks, three of which are common and prescribed for all schools in SA. This section discusses literature on studies conducted on designing assessment tasks.

Tomanek, Talanquer and Novodvorsky (2006) conducted a study at a public university in the USA which aimed to identify factors influencing teachers' reasoning as they select tasks to formatively assess students' understanding of scientific concepts. The findings were interpreted in three different dimensions: influence of the task, students, and curriculum characteristics. This means that the type of task designed has a bearing on the level of learners' understanding and the AS which clarifies the degree of complexity of the content.

Expectations for success, which means that design of tasks, can be influenced by teachers' desire to produce best results at the expense of legitimate assessment. With particular reference to assessment in Business Studies, the policy document outlines that knowledge, skills and values acquired should "promote entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises and economic growth" (DoE, 2008, p.7). Educators are advised to prepare learners to excel in entrepreneurial activities. The argument in relation to the requirements of the policy is that some teachers do not have sufficient entrepreneurial knowledge. This issue and the desire to produce best results may influence tasks designed by teachers. It has been determined by Mdunana (2011) that assessment results are increasingly the tool used to hold teachers and schools accountable. This means that teachers find themselves caught in the middle of designing tasks to comply with policies and to ensure that learners pass.

Teaching experience also plays a role, which means that lack of experience leads to poorly designed tasks. Antzoulatos (2008) discovered that there is a lack of professional development devoted to assessment and reporting for novice teachers, and asserts that they need support and rely on advice from experienced colleagues. Brookhart (2006) suggests that assessment practices need to align with the goal of teaching, which is the LO in the context of SA curriculum. A well-designed assessment task incorporates the purpose of providing a clear indication about how well each LO is taught and learned, where learners must show evidence of progression towards achieving outcomes guided by assessment criteria. However, Radnor (1994) and Shepard (2000) argue that what is assessed must shift from knowledge

that is sequential and hierarchically learned to knowledge that is integrated, principled and useful in transfer of novel tasks. The latter will be discussed further under constructivist theory, which underpins this study.

The study by Munoz et al. (2006) on developing a coherent system for the assessment of writing abilities, tasks and tools suggests that when designing writing assessment, two main processes must be addressed, namely: (a) validation of the construct and writing tests prompts (tasks); and (b) designing and validation of scoring instruments (tools). These authors believe that one way of bringing agreement to teaching and assessment practices is by designing assessment tasks and scoring instruments that are valid and reliable. This is reaffirmed by Maree and Fraser (2008), that assessment criteria establish agreement among assessors, which improves reliability. This idea is supported by Race, Brown and Smith (2005), while Morgan, Dunn, Parry and O'Reilly (2005) emphasise that measurement of performance should be valid. This implies that validity and reliability are essential when designing assessment tasks and assessment tools.

Messick (1994) relates the conception of validity, with renewed emphasis on the appropriateness of interpretation of assessment tasks as indicators of intended LOs, and reliability on the appropriateness of interpretation of assessment outcomes as indicators of learning (Maree & Fraser, 2008). Gipps (1994) sees these conceptions as more compatible with the new paradigm of assessment discussed earlier in this chapter. However, the process of designing assessment tasks in Business Studies includes pre-moderation of tasks and tools to ensure reliability and validity. When designing assessment tasks, teachers also need to design assessment tools which are used to mark learners' work. An assessment tool is a guide used to mark the assessment task, and hence the process of designing tasks also includes a marking tool. The the next section discusses assessment tools designed for marking assessment tasks.

2.4.2. Designing assessment tools

Designing an assessment tool has been identified as one of the challenges facing teachers implementing NSC assessment policy in Grades 10-12. Moderation reports at all levels, including a report on the quality assurance of the National Senior Certificate Assessment and Examination (Umalusi, 2008), outline marking rubrics as one of the areas that requires improvement.

In traditional assessment teachers were only expected to set questions and memoranda, because assessment was straightforward in Business Studies (see 2.3.1.). In designing authentic assessment tasks like research assignments, research projects and research presentations (DoE, 2008), assessment tools should be designed for marking. These tasks are subjective and can be marked using a rubric.

According to Suskie (2004), a rubric is a scoring guide that describes the criteria that will be used in evaluating learners' tasks. Russel and Airasian (2008, p.223) describe it as "a set of clear expectations or criteria used to help teachers and students focus on what is valued in a subject, topic or activity". In this study the term rubric is used to refer to a scoring scale that consists of a set of achievement criteria and descriptions of the levels of achievement for a particular task.

The rubrics in the Business Studies Grades 10- 12 SBA tasks satisfy the aspect of assessment criteria which in terms of NCS (DoE, 2003) should be clear and unambiguous to the learner. The policy further states that learners should know what is expected of them. It is crucial that the educator share the rubrics for the tasks with the learners. This is further emphasised by Reyneke et al. (2010), who recommend that teachers should implement SBA as a process by which learners get to know what is expected of them. This implies that there must be correlation between instructions given to learners on the task and criteria for assessment in the rubric.

The 2008 Umalusi report found that marking rubrics were poorly developed and did not measure what was intended, while allocation of marks for practical assignments/projects was inconsistent (Umalusi, 2008, p.15). Similar to these are findings from the Moderator's Report (Umalusi, 2009, p.5), cited by Mdunana (2011), which reveal that although educators used the prescribed rubrics:

some educators need urgent training on the effective application of rubrics, some educators did not mark the rubric but allocated marks, some allocated marks that do not correspond with the mark allocation on the rubric and in some there is no evidence that the tasks were read and assessed, but the rubric was completed.

Inconsistency in marking means that reliability as one of the principles of assessment in NCS (captured in DoE, 1998) is not properly addressed and implemented by teachers. According

to Maree and Fraser (2008), reliability implies consistency in terms of how far the same task would give the same results if done by the same children under the same conditions. Therefore the question of validity and reliability of the tasks becomes a concern. In Mdunana's study (2011) the Chief Moderator recommended professional training of educators on the application of rubrics.

According to Barnhard, Dellett and Kevorkian (1998) clear and meaningful criteria provide an instructional map for teachers and students, and strengthen the reliability of the assessment. Moon, Brighton and Callahan (2005) concur, by stating that rubrics yield information about students' strengths and weaknesses relative to the content and processes being assessed. This implies that they enhance instruction by helping teachers to adjust their teaching to meet student learning requirements while on the other hand helping students to identify their weaknesses and thus improve on them. Moon et al. (2005) also believe that teachers should involve students in the process of developing rubrics, because students who help create rubrics have a better understanding of what is expected and are more invested in the task.

Dorman and Knightely (2006) argue that despite the growth in emancipation of classrooms that embrace a constructivist epistemology, little contemporary evidence exists to support the view that students are genuinely involved in decision making about their assessment tasks. In terms of assessment policy in the NCS, learners need to understand assessment criteria for each assessment task that will serve as guidelines for completion of the task. In this case a rubric has to be developed for each learner to assess the task given, which should be valid and reliable and able to be used by anyone who moderates the task. Investigating experiences of teachers when they design assessment tools will provide evidence on application of relevant procedures in adhering to assessment policy.

2.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study researches design of assessment tasks by Business Studies teachers, with a particular focus on authentic assessment tasks. Therefore this research draws on social constructivism: "Social Constructivism is the joint construction of knowledge through discourse and other interactivity" (Topping, 1998, p.254). The interaction between learners

and teachers during the design process and active construction of knowledge through application of theory in a real-world context falls within the realms of the social constructivism paradigm. In a constructivist approach to assessment teachers design tasks that require an active process, where learners are involved in research activities to build knowledge for themselves (Mayer, 2004; Burnett et al., 2003; Topping, 1998; Hein, 1991). Davydov and Kerr (1995) label the constructivist approach as authentic, as teachers set tasks that are meaningful to learners and that usually occur through collaboration with other people.

Furthermore, Biggs (1996) argues that in constructivism teachers ensure that meaning is created by the learner, not imposed or transmitted by direct instruction. Biggs' point of view is that the process of constructing meaning occurs through both individual and social activity, and that the nature and complexity of these cognitive activities determines the quality of the LO. The focus of constructivist teaching and assessment for the teacher is to get the learners' cognitive processes going in a way which is likely to achieve the teaching objectives. Two functions of assessment, according Ramsden (1992, p.187), are to see how well the objectives have been attained and reporting the result in an institutionally appropriate way; and to convey to students what is expected of them.

Constructivism has quite different implications for teaching and assessment than objectivism. In the latter, modes of assessment test the quantity and accuracy of the items of knowledge principally by posing closed questions to which the answers are predetermined. Objectivism was predominantly employed in the traditional method of assessment where memorisation and reproduction of facts (particularly in Business Studies) was the core. According to Biggs (1996), constructivism suggests that learners' cognitive activities are the core of teaching and assessment decisions, rather than teachers second-guessing learning with ill- or well-judged probes. This is made possible by involving learners firstly in discussing criteria for assessment and later in feedback on assessment in order to enhance teaching and improve their performance.

The essential core of constructivism, according to Fosnot (1996) and Steffe and Gale (1995), cited by Ntuli (2007, p.12), is that teachers' designed tasks focus on learners' active construction of their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences. In Business

Studies economic growth and personal financial empowerment are largely dependent on the positive contribution of both business and individuals to the economy (DoE, 2003, p.9). Learners are informally engaged with business knowledge daily in their lives, and will make meaning based on what they already know. Therefore teachers' assessment needs to focus on how learners apply knowledge acquired in the classroom in real-life situations.

Badders (2000) contends that assessment based on constructivist theory must link three related issues: student prior knowledge; student learning styles (and multiple abilities); and teaching for depth knowledge of understanding rather than for breadth of coverage. The conceptual framework which addresses these issues is Bloom's taxonomy. The next section reviews literature on Bloom's taxonomy, since this will also guide analysis of the data.

Bloom's taxonomy is a model of classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity (Forehand, 2005): knowledge/remembering; comprehension/understanding; application; analysis; evaluation; and synthesis. According to Bloom (1956) and Anderson (1990), knowledge means memorizing facts, figures and basic processes; comprehension is understanding and illustrating facts; application is generalizing the facts to other contexts and situations; analysis is understanding why the facts are the way they are breaking problems down; evaluation is critically using one's knowledge to ascertain the information; and synthesis is making connections between different elements of one's own and . These cognitive levels serve as a frame of reference whenever assessment tasks are designed for Business Studies. Kasteberg (2003) believes that an assessment framework is based on an underlying theory of learning that can be used to plan instructional activities and classroom assessment.

Cognitive verbs in ASs for Business Studies (DoE, 2008) relate to Bloom's taxonomy. Kasteberg (2003) stresses that a teacher can use processes from Bloom's taxonomy as an assessment framework to construct and revise assessments so that they are consistent with what has been taught. Any assessment task designed in Business Studies, whether formal or informal, has to incorporate all levels of Bloom's taxonomy to cater for different intellectual abilities of learners. Lee (1999) contends that Blooms' taxonomy offers a promising approach for designing assessments for students that promote critical thinking and constructivist approaches to learning.

Ahraj, Bissell and Lemons (2006) used the theory in the Biology class to promote higher-order thinking by first preparing questions with both content and critical thinking and developing scoring rubrics that allowed for independent assessment of both content and skills required for each question. The results of this assessment indicated that students became aware of the skills they need to develop in order to succeed in their course and of the quality of responses expected for the questions.

Veeravagul (2010) investigated the relationship between the level of thinking processes in comprehension questions and students' performance. The findings were that firstly, level of questions designed according to Bloom's taxonomy influence the students' performance in answering comprehension questions. Secondly, there is a relationship between level of thinking processes needed and ability to answer questions correctly.

It is therefore evident from the research conducted that Bloom's theory, applied in the design of assessment tasks and marking tools, will benefit the learner and the teacher and also enhance teaching and learning. Teachers need to be guided by Bloom's taxonomy in designing assessment tasks as informed by the assessment policy and assessment guidelines.

My study aims to gather information on how teachers engage in designing assessment tasks and rubrics by analysing their assessment documents. Therefore Bloom's taxonomy will assist me in understanding how teachers design assessment tasks that accommodate all learners' thinking abilities.

2.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature on assessment and discussed some of the viewpoints held by different researchers on this topic. Assessment was broadly outlined as encompassing various assessment strategies, which are formative and authentic assessments. The importance of authentic assessment in the new curriculum was discussed. Assessment in Business Studies in the old and new curriculum was discussed with a view to highlight some changes that impact on designing tasks. Literature on the experiences of teachers in designing

assessment tasks was explored under the two important headings: (i) design of assessment tasks; and (ii) design of assessment tools. This was followed by the conceptual frameworks relating to this study, which are constructivism and Bloom's taxonomy.

The literature review has shown that there is a gap in research about Business Studies, as a subject that contributes much to the knowledge and skills relevant to the economy of the country and the world (Russel, 2009). It also indicated a gap in the investigations relating to how teachers experience setting tasks to assess learners in the new curriculum. Therefore this study will contribute to the body of knowledge about experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in the FET phase (Grades 10-12).

Based on the review of the relevant literature on assessment, I developed a conceptual framework which will assist me in answering the research questions: what are teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks; and how do teachers design these tasks.

The next chapter describes the research design and methodology, its appropriateness and limitations. The sampling method used, research instruments selected and issues of credibility and trustworthiness of the data gathered, as well as data analysis, ethical issues and limitations are also discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is on the exploration of teachers' experiences when they design assessment tasks and tools for Business Studies in Grade 10-12. In terms of the NCS, assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning. I will investigate the processes followed by teachers when engaging in the assessment practices as well as their experiences and opinions in this regard.

This chapter will first focus on the interpretivist paradigm, and then will investigate the qualitative research approach which is applicable to this study. There will be a discussion of the case study methodology, followed by discussion of selection of the contexts in which the study is located. Sampling of the participants employed in this study is described and the research questions are outlined, which identifies the methods to be used. A data collection table that briefly outlines how the data were collected follows. After that there is an in-depth discussion of the methods (semi-structured interviews and document analysis), with a brief look at how the data will be analysed, followed by a discussion of how this study can ensure credibility and trustworthiness. Finally, ethical issues and limitations of the methodology are demonstrated.

3.2. INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' experiences when designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. The research is located in an interpretive paradigm, which is a paradigm that has been borne by a qualitative approach (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The term 'paradigm' refers to "the way of thinking, perceiving or approaching work". Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action and comprise ethics, epistemology, ontology and methodology. It allows an in-depth understanding of educators' experience. The interpretivist paradigm focuses on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied, and offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice

of education (Merriam, 1998). It focuses on how people make sense of their reality, with emphasis in this case on experience and interpretation of designing assessment tasks.

To understand how teachers design assessment tasks in Business Studies in Grades 10-12 requires the exploration of human interaction in context, since human action is inherently meaningful in interpretive research. It is important for me to grasp the meanings that constitute a particular action and to understand that social action. The meaning of an action can only be grasped in terms of the systems to which it belongs (Schwandt, 2003). However, one must take cognizance of the fact that meaning to human action is given by interpretive schemes or framework (Usher, 1996). Tsilo (2006), cited in Neuman (2006), asserts that in an interpretive paradigm, reality (ontology) is a socially defined or constructed idea (which is supported by Cresswell, Hanson, Clark Plano and Morales (2007)), which implies that there are many ways of seeing the world and hence multiple realities (Mertens, 1998; Robson, 2002). The basic assumption of this paradigm is that knowledge (epistemology) is socially constructed by those in the research process, and that it is the duty of the researcher to understand the complex experience from the point of view of the participants (Mertens, 1998). Knowledge is built from experiences and interpretations or meanings, which means that it is constructed in the mind of an individual (Cresswell et al., 2008). Since knowledge and meaning emanate from interpretation, Tsilo (2006) asserts that there is no objective knowledge independent of thinking and reasoning.

This paradigm is most suited in this study as it aims to explore experiences of teachers when designing assessment tasks and tools in Business Studies. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.181) maintain that the "interpretive research paradigm assumes that people's subjective experiences are real and that we understand them". This study is seeking reality on the ways in which teachers design assessment tasks and tools in a certain high school in the Ugu district of KZN province. Furthermore, the knowledge to be gained about designing of assessment tasks is subjective and has been developed from teachers' experiences and their interpretations, as well as the interpretations of the researcher.

The interpretive paradigm employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques, but favours qualitative methods of data collection and analysis more than those of quantitative methods; it also offers rich and thick description of a phenomenon, situation and activity in order for one to understand the subjective world of human experience (Neuman, 2006).

3.3. THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Various patterns of inquiry have been designed to suit the nature and kind of research undertaking. Depending on the purpose of the study, researchers may engage in a quantitative or qualitative research inquiry, or sometimes use both. Quantitative research is a systematic and objective process which uses numerical data from a selected population to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied (Maree, 2007). Qualitative research inquiry, on the other hand, is used in cases where a phenomenon has to be explained or explored in full detail by collecting and analysing rich and thick descriptive data (Henning, 2004). Some studies are of such a nature that they require a design that accommodates tenets of both qualitative and quantitative research in answering research questions involved. Since the purpose of this study is to explore experiences of Grade 10-12 Business Studies teachers when designing assessment tasks, the qualitative research method has been adopted.

The phenomenon, as has been previously stated, is exploring experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks in Business Studies. Using the qualitative approach enables me to get a deeper understanding of how teachers experience designing assessment tasks. Morrow (2007) agrees that the qualitative approach is the most useful approach to understand what meanings people give to the experiences they encounter. The focus of a qualitative study therefore is to be able to derive rich data from the meanings people attach to issues. Qualitative research is open and supple (Freeman, deMarrais, Preissle, Roulston & St Pierr, 2007). It allows for deep information on the realities that people experience. I can therefore probe for this information adequately using the qualitative approach. This approach will allow me to get an in-depth understanding of how designing of assessment tasks is experienced by the Grade 10-12 Business Studies teachers.

The qualitative approach is most appropriate for this study in an attempt to answer the core questions, because the researcher wants to find out not only what happens but also how and why it happens in the way that it does (Henning, 2004). According to Renning et al. (2005), the interpretive approach is qualitative in nature, and therefore the study is based on how individuals make meaning of their world through interaction. The qualitative approach is suitable because it enables me to explore and gain insight into what teachers know about assessment tasks and how they design them. Use of this approach is also informed by McMillan's (2007) definition of qualitative research as inquiry in which researchers collect

data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. It is an approach where researcher pays more attention to the context of data gathering in order to enhance the value of the data (Cassim, 2010).

The context to be used in this study is a school in a rural area. This will be dealt with later in this chapter. Creswell et al. (2007) believes that qualitative researchers collect data in the contexts in which participants experience the issue. Baxter and Jack (2008) agree that the phenomenon should be explored within its context while Maree (2007) also believes that qualitative research studies people by interacting with and observing them in their natural environment. I therefore attempt to understand and analyse a problem in the vicinity where it occurs. In this way context blends with the phenomenon so the relevant issues can be discussed in their natural setting. It therefore stands to reason that the in-depth information required from a qualitative approach will be sufficiently retrieved in the setting in which the issue evolved. The focus of my study is the exploration of teachers' experiences when they design assessment tasks and tools for Business Studies in Grades 10-12, and this setting was specifically chosen by me so that I could get the rich information needed to understand the phenomenon.

This approach to my study will allow me to obtain an idea of the inner experience of participants to determine how meanings are formed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and to interpret phenomena in terms of meanings assigned by people to them (McMillan, 2007). The study will draw data from teachers in an attempt to describe their understandings, interpretations, implementations and experiences of designing assessment tasks.

Seeing that this study aims to explore three Grade 10-12 teachers' experiences in designing Business Studies assessment tasks at the same school, a case study design was considered as most appropriate. The definition of a case study methodology and reasons for its choice are explored next.

3.4. CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

I will employ a case study to explore the experiences Grade 10-12 Business Studies teachers face when designing assessment tasks in their pedagogical practice. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.449) interpret a case study as a "complex entity located in a situation embedded in a number of contexts". The entity that Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe is the case that is to

be investigated, and the contexts are where the case is to be studied. Yin (2003) describes a case study as an in-depth contextual understanding of the case relying on multiple data sources. A case study would allow me, the researcher, to get an intense insight into the experiences of Business Studies teachers in designing assessment tasks. That is the case to be studied, and the contexts relevant to study the case are culturally rural schools, as stated in my justification of the study. The data sources in this study are semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

I chose the case study as the strategy for qualitative research due to the nature of this study. The reason for the use of a case study in this research is informed by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), who assert that case studies offer most to teachers because they can be used to test existing practice. The existing practice that the researcher wants to test is the implementation of Business Studies assessment policy by teachers when designing assessment tasks for Grades 10-12, which will be revealed by their experiences. Seeing that the study aims to explore the experiences of three Grade 10-12 teachers from the same school in designing assessment tasks, a case study was regarded as most appropriate. It provides an exceptional example of real people in real situations (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

The case study is also best suited for this study because I want to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and those involved (Henning, 2004), and to understand why things happen as they do requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies and the pattern that emerges. Cohen et al. (2007) agree that a case study is an in-depth study of a particular case, conducted in real-life contexts and which captures the reality of participants. A case study will allow me to obtain the rich data required for an in-depth understanding of the case. Noor (2008) recognises the process of investigating real-life processes in great depth. Merriam (1998) described case study research as deep, holistic description and analysis of a specific instance, social group or phenomenon that involves a contextualised interpretation of events. A case study will therefore allow me to get a holistic view of the phenomenon being studied (Noor, 2008). However, this case study intends to capture the reality of the participants' lived experiences and thoughts about a particular phenomenon.

The focus here is on the phenomenon to be studied rather than the participants. By interviewing the participants and analysing their assessment documents I can obtain in-depth information on the phenomenon. Creswell et al. (2007) argue that a case study focuses on the

phenomenon of the study rather than on the participant. The participants provide the rich data that will give information on the phenomenon.

The focus of this research is on the exploration of teachers' experiences when they design assessment tasks in Business Studies for Grades 10-12. The case study will be used to test the existing practice, as my intention is to investigate ways in which teachers design assessment tasks, use of policy documents and their interpretations. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.36), "the case study relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis." The nature of this study will allow me to use interviews and document analysis only as a means of obtaining data, because designing formal assessment tasks is neither a once-off nor a continuous exercise. The two methods to be used in gathering data are semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Cohen et al. (2007) refer to this method of data collection as 'triangulation', and define it as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that triangulation is a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. Therefore the two methods will assist in the triangulation of data received and enable me to identify consistencies and inconsistencies.

According to Cohen et al. (2007) the more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the researcher's confidence that it will be trustworthy. The triangulation strategy in this research will assist in validating the data collected, in the sense that the methods to be used – namely interviews and document analysis – will be contrasted with each other. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research (Ngcobo, 2009). These data collection methods will be discussed later, after selection of the context of the study is discussed.

My personal intention for this study is to establish the challenges that teachers experience when designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12, since it has been explained earlier that evidence from the moderation process reveals that there is a problem here. I wish to clarify that my personal views will not interfere with the meanings the participants attach to the phenomenon in the research findings.

I expect the findings of each context to be different, as contexts and participants differ, and I wish to understand the phenomenon within its natural setting. The case study allows me to understand the case particular to its context. A case study illuminates and describes a case rather than generalises its findings (Noor, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Yin (2003) argues that during a case study the phenomenon should be studied within its real-life context and the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly visible. Therefore the phenomenon and the context are interlinked, and each context will define the phenomenon. The fact that findings from each context are different from the next will be recognised in the chapter on data analysis. A further discussion on the context follows.

3.5 SELECTION OF CONTEXT TO STUDY THE PHENOMENON

This study was conducted in the KZN province in the district called Ugu situated in Port Shepstone. This district is on the lower south coast of KZN and comprises two circuits, namely Sayidi and Scottburgh. Sayidi circuit has nine wards covering areas such as Harding, Izingolweni, Margate, Gamalakhe, Umzumbe, Port Shepstone and St Faiths. Scottburgh circuit has eight wards and covers areas like Mtwalume, Dumisa, Highflats, Umzinto, Umkomaas and part of Umbumbulu. One school was selected in Umkomazi ward because this is a ward that has never performed well in both internal and external assessments since implementation of the NCS in Grade 10 in 2006. This ward consists of 10 high schools which offer Business Studies from Grades 10-12, grouped into two clusters of five schools each. These clusters always hold their meetings in a common venue, where they share their experiences and ideas pertaining to subject-related matters, of which assessment is always a standing item. The research will be conducted in my own professional context, as already alluded to in the justification of the study.

3.6. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Maree (2007) describes purposive sampling as the manner in which participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of the data needed for the study, and it involves smaller sample sizes. For this study three Business Studies teachers were selected as participants. These were African

teachers teaching Grade 10, 11 and 12, i.e. one female Grade 10 teacher, one male Grade 11 teacher, and one male Grade 12 teacher). All are professionally qualified and have teaching experience of 6 years and above. Selection of these teachers was based on their experience in teaching the NCS and having been involved in designing assessment tasks since 2006. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) state that the decision about how many cases is enough is dependent on how much detail one is likely to gather in each case.

This one research site was representative of a bounded social setting where only Business Studies teachers in the FET phase were the participants. These teachers were chosen as a unit of analysis because it was believed that they would shed optimal light on the issues that were under investigation. Since the study sought to explore the personal experiences of Business Studies teachers when they design assessment tasks, the following were regarded as important, as alluded to by TerreBlanche et al. (2006, p.29), namely: personal experience of what is being researched; good communicative skills (ability to describe experience in detail); openness and undefensiveness; and interest in participating, as well as the perception that it may in some way be of value to do so.

3.7. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks?

Responses will reveal teachers experiences, positive and/or negative, that will shed light on the areas of good practices to be maintained and areas that need to be improved.

2. How do teachers design these tasks?

Responses to this question will provide clarity on the processes involved in designing tasks in terms of resources and time frames, learners' performance and feedback provided.

3.8. DATA PRODUCTION AND GENERATION

I demonstrate a strategy for my data collection by following the guidelines by Vithal and Jansen (1997).

DATA PRODUCTION AND GENERATION PLAN

Critical question	What are teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks?	How do teachers design these tasks?
Why are the data being collected?	To determine teachers' experiences in the process of designing assessment tasks and tools as per assessment policy.	To determine how teachers design assessment tasks and to also determine the cognitive level at which these tasks are designed.
What is the research strategy?	Interviews will be conducted to collect the required data.	All available assessment tasks with marking tools will be analysed (current and past years) to collect data.
Who will be sources of data?	Grades 10-12 Business Studies teachers.	
How many of the data sources will be accessed?	Three Business Studies teachers, one teaching Grade 10, one teaching Grade 11 and one teaching Grade 12.	
Where are the data to be collected?	Three Business Studies teachers will be interviewed at one high school in Umkomazi ward.	Each teacher's assessment file will be analysed.
How often will data be collected?	Teachers will be interviewed once at the end of third term, during holidays.	Documents will be analysed and interviews conducted once at the end of third term, during holidays.
How will data be collected?	Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews which will be tape-recorded.	Data will be collected from analysis of the documents and through semi-structured interviews which will be tape-recorded.
Justify this plan for data collection.	The interviews will provide the most direct evidence of the teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks and tools. They will be semi-structured to allow the researcher to probe initial responses. The three teachers from the same school represent all teachers who have agreed to participate in the research.	Analysis of these documents coupled with interviews will provide the most relevant evidence on the way in which assessment tasks and marking tools are designed, cognitive levels according to Bloom's taxonomy, and appropriate weighting of these levels.

3.9. DATA GENERATION METHODS

3.9.1. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Interviews are research instruments that are commonly used to obtain qualitative data. It is a data collection technique that involves oral questions of respondents, either individually or in groups. An interview situation makes possible exploration of important aspects of a study in greater detail that may not be covered by other instruments (Verma & Mallick, 1999).

According to Maree (2007), an interview is a two-way conversation in which an interviewer asks participants about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours, whereas Cohen et al. (2007) maintain that interviews allow the interviewer flexibility in discussing their interpretations of the world they live in and how they view situations from their own personal experiences. Kvale (1996) agrees with Cohen et al.'s idea when defining the semi-structured interview as one done with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee, with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. Conducting interviews is therefore important to explore teachers' experiences when designing assessment tasks. Tuckman (1994, p.366) argues that events cannot be understood unless one understands how these events are interpreted by people who participate in them. It is crucial to gather information on teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks and how this impacts on learners' performance.

Henning (2004) argues that the researchers who interview participants are co-constructors of meaning or data. The interviews were conducted using the interview schedule, in line with Seidman (1998), who contends that some forms of interviewing depend on an interview guide. According to Bell (1993) a major advantage of the interview is its 'adaptability', where the interviewer could follow-up ideas and probe responses, which is beyond the limitations of a questionnaire. This type of interview process enabled the researcher to probe for responses and to encourage the participants to elaborate further. Probing of the responses enabled the participants to clarify and develop them, whereas in a questionnaire the responses have to be taken at 'face value'. In fact the use of semi-structured interviews carries more weight than using questionnaires, because the latter is dead and silent with fixed, pre-determined answers.

Individual face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants at their school. The purpose of using this type of interview was to find out what was on the mind of

teachers as my participants - in other words, the perspectives of a person investigated. Rubin and Rubin (1995), cited in Arskey and Knight (1999, p.33) suggest that qualitative interviews are a way of uncovering and exploring the meanings that underpin people's lives, routines, behaviours, feelings, etc. One of the advantages of face-to-face interviews, as outlined by Robson (2002, p.272) is that it enables one to modify one's line of inquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating the underlying motives. Interviews give high-quality data if people have been properly approached for interview and have taken it seriously. Appointments were made to meet teachers during spring classes, preferably after classes.

3.9.2. Document analysis

Bertram (2004) points out that the researcher can use various documents as their source of data and analyse these documents using a method called content analysis. Document analysis is a data gathering technique where the researcher focuses on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon investigated (Maree, 2007). In this case I will collect teachers' assessment files or records, which should include the Programme of Assessment for each year, formal assessment tasks and assessment tools, lesson plans, a mark sheet (also called CASS grid) with diagnostic analysis, and learners' assessment books for the previous and current year, in order to analyse how teachers have been designing assessment tasks and marking tools.

3.10. DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected during interviews and documents analysis were recorded and analysis was done. Qualitative researchers integrate the operations of organising, analysing and interpreting data, and call the entire process 'data analysis' (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.486). I started by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, field notes and observation notes as a whole to get a sense of them. While doing thorough reading, I identified themes that were emerging. I used an interpretational approach which used thematic codes in order to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2006). Themes were coded and named on the basis of similarities. Thematic codes involve putting texts into themes (Cohen et al., 2007). In this way I was able to make sense of the in-depth information I received from the study.

3.11. CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Maree (2007) describes validity and reliability in qualitative research in terms of credibility and trustworthiness. He believes that using many data collection methods and involving other investigators in the study leads to trustworthiness (Maree, 2007). A noteworthy concept is that of triangulation, which is used by Cohen et al. (2007), Maree (2007), Chang (2006), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Buber, Gadner and Richards (2004), Golafsheni (2003) and Patton (1990). Triangulation is defined by Patton (1990) as the use of many sources and identification of consistency between sources in qualitative studies. I will employ the use of triangulation to lend credibility and trustworthiness to my study, by utilising multiple data collection methods. The first method I use is semi-structured interviews, followed by document analysis. I will start with the interviews and then document analysis will be done to validate the information collected during interviews. This allows for adding quality to the study through credibility and trustworthiness. Trustworthiness of the interviews is to be confirmed by comparing the data from interviews to the observation schedules; this is called convergent validity (Cohen et al., 2007).

To minimise my bias as a researcher I need to have no preconceived notions about the data I hope to collect, and need to try to be as neutral as possible (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007). Teachers will all answer the same questions to further reduce untrustworthiness of the study (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, the recordings of the interviews are to be played back to teachers for them to decide if what they said is accurately communicated in the transcript. This is to verify the meanings teachers construct and that they are not based on what the researcher assumes is meant by the teacher, thus decreasing the bias and increasing the credibility of the data. The transcripts are written verbatim as per the recordings, with no input from the researcher so as to decrease the subjectivity of the researcher. Furthermore, direct quotations from transcripts of interviews are used to ensure transparency and trustworthiness of the findings (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig, 2007).

3.12. ETHICAL ISSUES

I wrote letters to the ‘gatekeepers’ such as the DoE and principal of the school, requesting to be allowed to conduct research in the school. I also wrote letters to the participants informing them about the research and its purpose, and then requesting them to participate in the

research. The participants were promised anonymity and that their participation was voluntary. In the letters to the participants I made it clear that they have the right to withdraw from the research if they feel that they are no longer comfortable taking part in it.

3.13. LIMITATIONS

This is a small-scale study that took place in one school in a rural area, and data were collected from only three teachers. Since the school is in a rural area it might not reflect what is happening in urban area schools, and the findings cannot be generalised to other contexts.

As a subject advisor it was easy for me to gain access to the school, and permission to conduct research was granted by the school governing body and the principal of the school.

3.14. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I outlined the methodology to be used in this study and the interpretivist paradigm was discussed. Thereafter the qualitative approach was explained and its implications for this research were dealt with. The methodology to be employed in this research, which is a case study, as well as its relevance to this study were described. The context used and the sampling done were also described. The research questions were outlined, followed by a data collection plan in table form to show how data were collected. The data collection methods – observation and semi-structured interviews – were discussed. Sections on data analysis followed. The credibility and trustworthiness of the data were dealt with and finally a discussion of the ethical issues and limitations of the study was provided.

In the next chapter I analyse the data in response to the critical questions, and discuss these under specific themes that emerged from the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research methodology for this study, in which a case study approach was used as a naturalistic mode of inquiry. This research project explores the experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies and how they engage in this process. This chapter presents and analyses raw data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Three participants were used to obtain data needed to answer the following questions:

QUESTION 1: What are teachers' experiences in designing the assessment tasks?

QUESTION 2: How do teachers design these tasks?

Qualitative researchers integrate the operations of organising, analysing and interpreting data and call the entire process 'data analysis' (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.486). In the analysis process I started by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, field notes and observation notes as a whole to construct some meaning and understanding. Common expressions, words and ideas were coded and grouped together to organise the data in a systematic way. From there I could get some sense of themes emerging from the data. I used an interpretational approach, which used thematic codes in order to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon (Neuman, 2006). Themes were coded and named on the basis of the meanings they carried. Thematic codes involve putting texts into themes (Cohen et al., 2007). In this way I was able to make sense of the in-depth information I received from the study.

In the process of data analysis several themes emerged that were responding positively to the critical questions. The findings are divided into two different subsections which will answer the two critical questions. For the first critical question a semi-structured interview schedule was used to elicit the data. Document analysis and semi-structured interviews were used for the second critical question to determine how teachers design assessment tasks. Direct quotes from participants are utilised to support the themes. The quotations from the participants are presented in italics.

The three selected teachers were interviewed about their experiences of designing assessment tasks and their assessment documents were analysed to determine how these tasks were designed. A description of the participants is presented to provide the reader with a sense of the context in which these teachers are doing their work. Their teaching experience had a bearing on how they designed assessment tasks as well as what they experience during this process, which is the purpose of my research. The teachers' profiles are provided below.

TEACHERS' PROFILES

Name	Gender	Teaching experience		Qualifications in Business Studies
		NATED 550 (Old curriculum)	NCS	
Pat 10	Female	12 years	6 years	Business Studies 3
Pub 11	Male	9 years	5 years	Business Studies 3
Pec 12	Male	8 years	5 years	Business Studies 3

In keeping with the ethical requirement of ensuring anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms with the grade taught next to the name were adopted for each participant, namely Pat 10, Pub 11 and Pec 12. The data generated from these teachers were categorised into six themes, namely: Selection decisions; Recording experiences; Teachers' authentic task experiences; Teachers' diverse and contextual experiences; Subject knowledge-related experiences; Procedures in design.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.2.1. Selection decisions

The themes assisted me to answer the first critical question: What are teachers' experiences of designing assessment tasks? This theme emerged from teachers' responses when they were interviewed with regard to their experience of ways of assessing learners. All participants demonstrated that they used a variety of assessment tasks and various methods to assess learners and to monitor their progress. Pec 12 said:

I make use of class tests, homework, questionnaires, and demonstrations depending on the topic that you are dealing with at that point in time. I have a variety of means in which I assess learners.

He emphasised that type of assessment to use is also determined by the content being taught at that point in time, and he mentions demonstrations. However, Pat 10 indicated that although she uses various assessment tasks, she relies more on past exams and controlled test papers, saying that she mostly relies on previous question papers.

Pub 11 indicated the use of formative assessment as in self- and peer assessment. He stated that he allows the students to assess themselves and their peers and to give appropriate feedback. Therefore the assessment he uses depends on the topic under discussion; he encourages feedback from peer assessment, thereby developing learners by giving them autonomy to assess themselves. He also stated that he uses observation when learners do activities.

It is interesting to note that the participants do use a variety of methods to assess learners and are aware of the different forms of assessment.

4.2.2. Recording experiences

All participants showed an understanding that there are informal and formal assessment tasks. They all felt that formal tasks are more important and have to be recorded because they are used for progression and promotion of learners. Emphasising the importance of recording formal tasks, Pat 10 mentioned that formal tasks have to be moderated. In their responses all participants indicated that they don't record all assessment tasks, but that they only record formal ones.

Pat 10 said:

I only record the formal ones because the formal ones are for learners' progression and they give feedback of how the learner is doing, it has to be recorded, it has to be moderated.

Pub 11 said:

There are formal tasks like formal test, assignments, case studies, projects that I record because they form part of the promotion of the learner.

However, Pec 12 said:

I record assessment tasks that form part of CASS because we make use of those results when we compile the grid for CASS of which CASS marks are used for reporting to learners as well as parents and other stakeholders.

Documents analysis reports from all participants (refer to Appendix, G) had mark sheets (also called CASS grids), where all formal assessment task marks were recorded for each term. These responses and reports reveal that teachers understand the assessment policies in terms of which assessment tasks are to be recorded and the importance of recording learner performance.

According to the DoE (2003) and *Curriculum News* (National DoE, 2010), a formal assessment is recorded as it forms part of learners' progression and promotion marks, while informal assessment need not be recorded. The issue of feedback mentioned by Pat 10 and Pec 12 is crucial in assessment if assessment is to enhance teaching and learning. Sadler (1998), Marsh (2004) and Chapman (2005) assert that formative assessment is intended to generate feedback to improve learner performance and accelerate learning. Usually only selected results from identified formative assessments are averaged and included in a formal grade (Chapman, 2005). Hence selected results in this case are formal assessment task results that teachers have recorded and were evident in the documents analysed.

4.2.3. Teachers' authentic task experiences

Data emerging from participants' responses indicated knowledge and experience on their responsibility with regard to formal tasks. They confidently mentioned all formal assessment tasks that they have to design for their learners.

Pat 10 stated:

It is research assignment, the project, research presentation and then formal quarterly tests.

Pub 11 mentioned:

Quarterly/controlled tests; assignments; case studies; projects; written and oral presentation.

Pec 12 said:

We have controlled tests which are set by the Department in Grade 12, projects, questionnaire as well as presentation.

Pub 11 mentioned case studies and also stipulated that presentations are both written and oral, while Pec 12 added questionnaires and did not mention research assignments. I observed from Pec 12's assessment file that questionnaires were used for research assignments. Three of the assessment tasks mentioned by participants are authentic tasks (refer to 2.3), while the remaining tasks are formal or controlled quarterly tests which are summative and are conducted at the end of each term to assess the term's work.

Teachers' responses with regard to the design of these tasks indicated that in the seven formal tasks prescribed, some are designed by individual subject teachers, some by all cluster members collaboratively, and sometimes by the DoE. Pat 10 differs as she uses assessment tasks from the Assessment Tasks Document.

Pat 10 said:

No, I don't design all of them. I use the document that was given to us with exemplars called Assessment Tasks Document. I set quarterly controlled tests.

Pub 11 said:

In other grades, yes, some are designed by me and some come from the Department. Sometimes we use common tasks designed by the cluster members.

While Pec 12 said:

No controlled tests are set by the Department. Projects, questionnaires and presentations are designed by myself and possibly sometimes with my colleagues at cluster level.

It emerged from interaction with the participants that they were not yet confident to design their own assessment tasks as individuals, and hence rely on others and on the document that was developed as a guide.

It was significant to ascertain firstly teachers' experiences on how they assess learners in their grades, secondly to elucidate the most important tasks to design and record, and lastly to

establish whether teachers are actually involved in designing them. Hence their experiences with regard to designing these tasks were then further explored.

4.2.4. Teachers' diverse and contextual experiences

The following responses revealed diverse experiences of the teachers regarding the design of assessment tasks. While teachers do agree at some point, as reflected in their responses, that designing assessment tasks was not easy, it was also noted that they do have strong points to highlight. They mentioned that availability of a variety of textbooks which they use as references when designing tasks was of great value. This was evident in Pat 10's response: "*I have a number of resources; there is photocopying machine at school*", while Pec 12 reiterates that he has a number of textbooks for references.

Pub 11 and Pec 12 highlighted that workshops, cluster meetings and moderation sessions where aspects of assessment are discussed and their challenges are addressed were gradually building their capacity in designing tasks. Said Pub 11:

I attend workshops that develop me on assessment as well as comment and strategies received from subject specialists during their visits at schools.

Pec 12's response was that he has been struggling with designing assessment tasks and feels that he has improved:

I am able to design task on my own, because initially I was struggling but now when we meet during SBA moderation, subject advisor would check our task and advise us on how best we can design our task.

Pat 10 was pleased to highlight that she has learnt to do her own research before designing a task that she will give to learners. This was an exciting experience for her as she laughed and said:

I do my own research before giving tasks to the kids to see if my kids will be able to do it.

Participants demonstrated their positive experiences with regard to designing tasks which should be sustained. They further echoed their negative experiences, which they felt were impacting on designing assessment tasks. These were highlighted as lack of

time to do proper planning, application of cognitive levels, designing of a marking tool and allocating marks to a designed task. Some of these experiences were also evident from the participants' assessment documents. Pat 10 said *"Sometimes I do not have enough time to plan, I design tasks haphazardly."*

Pub 11 avers:

Another challenge is time because I am overloaded which then compromise quality because of workload, sometimes I do it recklessly but I am getting there.

This was further reflected in their documents which were analysed – plans on how assessment tasks will be communicated to the learners were not available. These are normally incorporated in the lesson plan. This was therefore found to be congruent to what participants referred to as haphazard design of tasks which compromised the quality.

Pub 11 and Pec 12 demonstrated in their responses that they were unable to design tasks that accommodate all learners in terms of their abilities. This was expressed in Pub 11 as follows:

Task that I develop sometimes are above learners' ability, I see that from feedback on the task; secondly, I am not able to cater for individual needs and differences of learners.

Pec 12 stated that his weaknesses were revolving around the issue of applying cognitive levels in an assessment task.

Pub 11 felt that in his assessment tasks some of the learners are disadvantaged because sometimes tasks are above their abilities. He observes this after marking when he gives feedback to learners. This was in contrast with findings from analysis of his documents, as assessment tasks designed did not include higher-order questions. Pub 11 was under the impression that his tasks were too difficult for his learners. According to SAG (DoE, 2008) assessment tasks have to accommodate different levels of learners' abilities. It further provides weighting of cognitive levels to be applied in the task

Both Pub 11 and Pec 12 found this very frustrating, and felt that it impacts on learners' performance in one way or the other. They felt that although SAG provides a guide on the application of cognitive levels in the form of weighting, it was difficult to apply. Document analysis findings corroborated what participants

alluded to, in that assessment tasks designed did not cover all levels of cognitive thinking. This refers to Bloom's taxonomy model defined by Forehand (2005) as classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity. Kasteberg (2003) stresses that a teacher can use processes from Bloom's taxonomy as an assessment framework to construct and revise assessments so that they are consistent with what has been taught. According to Lee (1999) Bloom's taxonomy offers a promising approach for designing assessments for students that promote critical thinking and constructivist approaches to learning.

I observed from the participants that Pat 10 had a different experience from the others which was worth noting. She explained that she concentrates on marks to be allocated to each task in terms of policy requirements. She further mentioned that while she concentrates on allocating marks accordingly she ignores the purpose of that assessment. Pat 10 was relying too much on case studies in the books and felt that she was not doing justice to the learners:

There are problems that I encounter; like for example when you design the task you concentrate on the marks to say I want to cover so many marks without considering the purpose of assessment.

An example cited was as follows:

If the task is 50 marks and 5 marks is still missing you end up concentrating on the mark allocation than doing justice on assessment.

Making further reference to the policy document she emphasised that if formal assessment tasks were not suggested in the policy documents she would not bother to design these complicated tasks. She said:

If the document is not specific to say do research, do this I rely too much on case studies because there are lots of case studies in books and it is easier to mark.

Pat 10 perceives SAG as an advantage as it gives direction, without which she would only rely on case studies which are easier to mark. It was noted in the findings earlier that Pat 10 is too dependent on textbooks. This indicates a lack of skill in designing her own assessment tasks. She also highlighted a disadvantage of the same assessment

guideline as promoting only certain types of assessment tasks. This was captured in her response as follows:

You find out that kids are only familiar with a certain type of assessment, they get used to one type of assessment.

Further responses from participants relating to their experiences when designing assessment tasks included the assessment tool. An assessment task is always designed with its marking tool; a rubric is a marking tool normally used to mark open-ended questions. Participants delineated that designing a rubric was a major challenge experienced when designing assessment tasks. While it has been noted from their responses that this was a challenge, they had mixed feelings. Pat 10 said:

It's never been easy because as teachers we are not trained for this assessment. Sometimes the grid would suggest a task to be done but the teacher doesn't know what it means and can't develop rubric.

She has never come into grips with designing a rubric as she states that it's never been easy, bearing in mind that the NCS was introduced in 2006 in Grade 10. Lack of training on assessment has been highlighted, which suggests that teachers still need training on assessment. Furthermore, she argues that the CASS grid, which is a guide for records of formal tasks and marks, suggests a task that teachers don't understand and can't even develop a rubric for it. This was supported by findings from document analysis, where all rubrics used were taken from the textbooks. She insisted that the issue of compliance was a priority. However, Mdunana (2011) revealed that there are bureaucracies involved in the implementation process of the new curriculum while professional knowledge is ignored

Pub 11 had a different experience with designing rubrics, and said:

It is not always easy but also it is not difficult, it's just that it needs thorough preparation and also timely preparation. In other words I cannot give learners a task and later design a rubric; both should be ready before the task is administered to the learners. It's not that difficult but needs time and consideration because I have to consider various factors.

Findings from Pub 11's assessment file indicate that rubrics designed are not up to standard and cannot justify marks awarded to learners, as performance descriptions in each level were

not clear. However, interesting to note in Pub 11's response is the fact that designing rubrics needs thorough preparedness and time, which then suggests that "it is not difficult", as he stated. His experience on this issue is that rubrics need to be designed before tasks are given to learners. According to Moon et al. (2005) teachers should involve students in the process of developing rubrics, because students who help create rubrics have a better understanding of what is expected and are more invested in the task. This does not happen in Pub 11's class as this is not given sufficient time and consideration.

It is apparent from Pub 11's response that he understands the requirements for designing a rubric but finds it difficult to do so. His document analysis report reveals that he was experiencing challenges. This was further supported by four moderation reports for 2011 and two for 2012 which have comments that marking was not done according to the marking tool (rubric).

On the other hand, Pec 12 claims that he is able to design rubrics with confidence. He feels that he has improved, as he states that he used to struggle:

*It is a little bit easy now but I use to struggle a lot, but as the time goes on
I became confident and I am able to design a rubric.*

Although Pec 12 has improved in designing rubrics, according to the evidence of tasks and tools designed from 2010 to 2012 in his file which I have analysed, there is still a gap on performance indicators, as they are too scanty.

From all of the above participants' responses it can be deduced that teachers experience major challenges with regard to designing rubrics. A task can be correctly designed, but if the marking tool is inappropriate it means that learners are not assessed correctly.

The three participants' responses showed diverse experiences in designing assessment tasks and tools, both positive and negative. Their experiences are contextual to the teacher as an individual and to the grade in which the subject is taught. Hence a number of challenges emerging from these responses are a clear indication that teachers still struggle to design assessment tasks as required. This has a bearing on learner performance, which leads to learner failure in the FET phase.

Vandeyar (2005) reported that new assessment practices of the NCS in SA provides high standards of assessment that teachers do not understand. As a result teachers face difficulty in adapting to the new assessment practices, which includes designing assessment tasks.

4.2.5. Subject knowledge-related experience

It emerged during interaction with the participants that they viewed the impact of assessment tasks on learners' understanding as positive. They have experienced that through research tasks learners are able to construct their own meaning and understanding. Suurtman (2004) found that authentic assessment deepens understanding of the subject, so that learners can recognise its value. The participants alluded to the fact that these assessment tasks put theory into practice, and hence learners obtain hands-on experience.

Pat 10 argues as follows:

They have a good impact because learners go out and look for information themselves and I think they have a better understanding because they use their own resources to find information and are then able to relate what they are taught in class in real-life situation.

Pub 11 felt as follows:

It impacts positively because the learners are able to obtain information on their own. These tasks improve practical implementation of the knowledge acquired in class in real-life context.

Pec 12 said “*They impact positively*”. He presented three examples of the three performance-based tasks prescribed by the assessment policy to illustrate how the formal assessment task impacts on learners' understanding of the subject:

In the first term I give learners task on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) where they have to research. When they write controlled test and exams they do very well in short questions on CSR and even in essay question on CSR because they have researched about it and were able to investigate it in real life thus relating theory into practice.

The other task, for example on qualities of an entrepreneur where learners do a project, also assist learners in understanding qualities of existing employees of different businesses that they have investigated and also are able to identify areas that need to be improved in each business they have investigated.

The other task normally done as presentation on career pathing gives them a broader understanding of various careers they investigate, and assist them on careers that they can pursue after Grade 12. Furthermore they gain much understanding as Business Studies learners on business careers and can be able to assist other learners when choosing careers.

The impact of assessment tasks was also revealed when Pub 11 expressed the issue of feedback as significant in enhancing learners' performance and learning:

It also enforces them to acquire knowledge and based on feedback they gain confidence which creates love of the subject and then they are able to enjoy the subject. The kind of feedback I provide to learners is constructive such that it helps them to gain more confidence.

4.3. PROCEDURES IN DESIGN

The second critical question asks how teachers design formal assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. To answer this question the three teachers' assessment documents were analysed and semi-structured interviews were used to establish the processes involved in designing tasks in Business Studies for Grades 10-12. The data generated from document analysis and semi-structured interviews gave an indication of how teachers were engaging with design of formal assessment tasks and tools. The aspect that had a bearing on how teachers design assessment tasks was the procedure that they follow. The procedure would include use of policy documents and guidelines as well as other factors taken into consideration during the design process.

The document analysis revealed that all participants had relevant policy documents and guidelines that they use when designing tasks. In Pub 11 and Pec 12's documents the work schedule indicates type of assessment activities including formal tasks for each term in the column designated for assessment. The plan of action in all participants' files had formal

tasks to be done for each term. To delve into how these documents were used, interviews provided follow-up on what was discovered from the documents.

In the process of designing assessment tasks and tools participants revealed that they first consider the policies. Pub 11 said:

I need some documents like SAG; work schedule sometimes called pace-setter to ensure that what I assess is relevant and is in line with assessment standards that are supposed to be assessed at that time.

Pec 12 reiterated this as follows:

Firstly I look at the Learning Outcome, assessment standard and SAG. I look at the assessment standard and try to understand it so that I design a task that is understandable to learners.

It was evident that teachers do use policy documents as their point of departure in designing assessment tasks, as they guide them on the nature of tasks to be designed and knowledge and skills to be assessed. All participants had indicated the LOs and ASs for each task designed. Participants also refer to the SAG when designing the marking tool (rubric), as it was stated that each task designed needed a tool to mark it, which is a rubric in this study. Pub 11 confirmed as follows:

I think in designing that, something that I consider in the process is what skills and abilities do I want to assess from learners and then I arrange that in terms of levels, and assume the responses that the learners might give me.

Pec 12's response was the following:

The most important thing that I do is to look at the AS so that I can be able to come up with the precise instructions that I will give to learners so that they know exactly what is expected from them.

The skills and abilities referred to in this case are infused in the AS for each LO. It was evident from the rubric in both participants' files that skills and knowledge assessed were used as criteria in the first column, and levels with descriptions in the next columns, ranging from level 1 to 5 depending on the task. It was noted that policy documents serve as a guide for assessment design. They guide teachers on the nature of

the task to be designed in each term, knowledge and skills encapsulated in ASs and criteria for rubric design.

It was not clear how Pat 10 uses policy documents and guidelines in her file as most of the tasks used to assess learners were extracted from textbooks. This was evident in her response:

In most cases I use books, like you will look for different resources, like different textbooks will have at the end questions and questionnaire on research assignment so I use those questions and I modify them if I see that the questions are a bit difficult for my kids I then modify them.

I observed in Pat 10's assessment tool that higher-order questions were cancelled from the tasks taken from the textbooks.

Some tasks in the documents include various resources required for each task and participants highlighted that they consider the availability of resources in the process of task design. Pub 11 said:

I need also to ensure that I have all the resources, e.g. computer, papers and pens and newspapers to furnish learners with because other learners can't afford to buy newspapers.

Pec 12 had suggested textbooks for other subjects to learners for references in one of the tasks. He clarified and said:

I use textbooks, extracts from newspapers, textbooks not only Business Studies textbooks but other textbooks that will be useful in designing that particular task.

I also observed from documents that teachers do consider the learners' environment when designing tasks. The three formal tasks required learners to research aspects that were within their easy reach; instructions referred them to local businessmen and local corporate social investment projects, but also included use of the Internet where possible. This was confirmed by their responses, as Pub 11 made clear:

I also consider the environment because schools are different and dynamic so that I make sure that what I require from learners is accessible to them.

Pec 12 said:

I also take into account the context in terms of the school and learners, the purpose of the task, the outcomes that I want to achieve.

Pec 12 expressed that he considers the time required to complete the task:

I also take into time to complete the task especially for tasks that need a long time to complete like projects.

Duration of the project was evident in his plan of action, while other participants did not indicate it. Noteworthy observations from document analysis was that tasks designed in each case were addressing a specific AS and were relevant to a specific grade. Each assessment task had an LO and AS that was addressed. It was evident that teachers consider LOs and ASs when designing assessment tasks. Mueller (2008) found that effective assessment begins with identifying the purpose of assessment. On the other hand, Malan (2007) asserts that both teachers and learners need to be very clear about the purpose of assessment to ensure validity and reliability. Hence it is critical that the standards align with the purpose of the assessment and that the assessment itself directly measures what is captured in the standards (Carr & Harris, 2001).

While participants may have generally expressed their experiences in designing assessment tasks, it was also significant to investigate their step-by-step experiences of the process. I observed that rubrics were designed simultaneously with the task, and hence the processes were similar.

4.4. CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies in Grades 10-12. The critical questions asked were: What are the teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks?; and How do teachers design these tasks? Data were collected from participants through semi-structured interviews to answer the first critical question. Teachers' assessment documents were analysed to collect data on the second critical question. Data were then analysed, interpreted and categorised into themes.

The answer to the first question revealed teachers' experiences with regard to the selection of assessment tasks to be designed and recorded. Further exploration of their experiences demonstrated that they had diverse experiences with regard to task design, both positive and

negative. Lack of time to do proper planning as a result of work overload, application of cognitive levels in assessment tasks and designing of rubrics were negative experiences emanating from the data. It was also discovered from participants that while they do experience challenges, there are positive experiences that can be sustained.

In answering the second critical question on how teachers design assessment tasks, data revealed the process of designing tasks that teachers follow. These processes were identification of LOs and content standards; observable or measurable indicators for each task (knowledge and skills); resources required in each task; context of learners (environment); and duration of the task.

In Chapter 5 a synthesis of the research study is presented, a summary of the findings is discussed, and recommendations as well as possibilities for further research are outlined.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of a new curriculum in SA after 1994 brought about changes in educational assessment. This new curriculum, called Curriculum 2005, well known as OBE was introduced in SA and implemented in 1998. In 2006-2008 it was implemented in the FET phase, in Grades 10-12. With the reform of the curriculum and new approaches to assessment teachers needed to design assessment tasks that would not only assess knowledge but also assess skills.

According to Mothata (1998) OBA has good intentions; however, Kanjee (2009) revealed that it has a number of challenges as regards implementation. The rationale for this study also shared some of the challenges observed during interactions with teachers. Therefore the aim of the study was to explore experiences of Business Studies teachers when they design assessments tasks for Grades 10-12 in the NCS.

With reference to Chapter 1 of this study the focus was on designing formal assessment tasks and the purpose was to explore teachers' experiences in designing these tasks. To accomplish the purpose of the study data were collected through interviewing teachers and analysing their assessment documents. The critical questions addressed were: (i) What are teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks?; and (ii) How do teachers design these assessment tasks? In the previous chapter raw data obtained from semi-structured interviews and document analysis to answer these critical research questions were analysed. Several themes emerged from the data analysis.

The findings discussed in this chapter relate to the two conceptual frameworks, constructivism and Bloom's taxonomy discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter provides a synthesis of the key findings of the research study, the recommendations as informed by the findings, as well as the possibilities for further research.

5.2. SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

In presenting the synthesis of the findings of the study, I use the themes that correspond to the two main questions. The first three themes that emerged relate to the basic understanding of new assessment approaches, the importance of designing and recording formal tasks and the nature of tasks to be designed. They relate to the first critical question as they are fundamental experiences which precede the designing of tasks.

5.2.1. Task preference

This theme reports on teachers' understanding of a variety of assessment tasks and assessment methods to be employed in assessment in the new curriculum. All participants demonstrated that they used a variety of assessment tasks and methods to assess learners and monitor their progress. Pec 12 pointed out that the type of assessment used depends on the content that is being taught. Participants' responses showed understanding of various approaches to assessment that they apply when assessing learners. They mentioned self- and peer assessment, observations and demonstrations which involve interaction between learners and teachers, during demonstrations and observations and among learners in peer assessment. According to Topping (1998) the interaction between learners and teachers in the assessment process falls within the realms of social constructivism. While teachers have reflected that they understand various approaches to the new assessment, this does not mean that they can design assessment tasks without challenges.

5.2.2. Making sound judgements

This theme emerged from participants' experiences on recording of assessment tasks. All participants keep a record of formal assessment tasks because they are used for reporting progression and for promotion of learners. Pat 10 emphasised that formal tasks need to be moderated to ensure validity and reliability. She also singled out that she records formal assessment to provide feedback. Blaz (2008) argued that recording of learner performance assists in providing feedback about progress of learners. Hence accurate and appropriate recording of formal tasks provides information relevant in making decisions about what students have learnt which is reported to all stakeholders (Ramsaroop, 2003).

It was evident that participants understand how important formal assessment tasks are in the new curriculum as it is stipulated in the assessment policy documents. Usually only selected

results from identified formative assessments are averaged and included in a formal grade (Chapman, 2005).

5.2.3. Contextualised task design

Teachers' experiences with regard to the nature of assessment tasks used to assess learners in Business Studies and their engagement with their design were explored. All three participants were very confident in explaining and sharing their understanding of these tasks. They mentioned seven mandated formal tasks, four of which are controlled tests and examinations. These controlled tests and examinations are common in the sense that they are either set by the DoE at provincial or district level or are set by certain clusters. They all agreed that the only tasks they have to design were the remaining three: research assignment,; research project and research presentation. These assessment tasks that teachers design require an active process where learners are involved in research activities to build knowledge for themselves (Mayer, 2004; Burnett et al., 2003; Topping, 1998; Hein, 1991).

It was apparent that participants were not yet confident in designing these authentic tasks individually. Pat 10 clearly expressed that although she knows that she has to design these tasks she was using the textbooks and exemplars provided. Pub 11 and Pec 12 indicated that these tasks were designed in collaboration with other colleagues at cluster level.

5.2.4. Diversity in task design

This theme relates to various experiences of teachers when designing assessment tasks. Participants revealed a positive experience as the availability of some resources which assist them when they design tasks. Pat 10 and Pec 12 felt that textbooks were significant as they provide a number of assessment tasks and tools which they refer to when they design tasks. These findings were contrary to those of Raboijane (2005), Cele (2009) and Cassim (2010), who reveal that inadequate resources were impacting negatively on the implementation of new assessment practices. In this study teachers did not experience resources as an impediment, but rather as promoting design of assessment tasks.

Pub 11 and Pec 12 mentioned that their capacity has been developed through workshops that have been conducted as well as cluster moderation sessions. Pec 12 identified some

improvement in designing tasks as a result of these intervention programmes aimed at capacitating teachers on new assessment approaches in Business Studies.

Lack of time to do proper planning was one of the challenges experienced by teachers, resulting in haphazard and reckless design of assessment tasks, stated in Pat 10 and Pub 11's responses. Pub 11 links this challenge to work overload, which leads to compromising the quality of the task designed. In a study of Grade 9 teacher attitudes towards CommonTasks for Assessment (CTA), it was found that teachers did not consider inclusion of assessment in their planning. Hence they experienced a variety of problems in their efforts to administer common tasks for assessment (Sithole, 2009). Time was also found to be a major limitation in the adoption of SBA practices in Mathematics in Botswana and Economic and Management Sciences in SA (Raibojane, 2005; Cassim, 2010). While McPhail & Halbert found that better planning results in better management and improvement of assessment.

Application of cognitive level was discovered to be another area where teachers struggle a great deal. There was no evidence of any task among those designed where cognitive levels were appropriately applied according to the weightings stipulated in the assessment policy. Pec 12 stated that application of cognitive levels in an assessment task was problematic, while Pub 11 felt that those tasks he designs were not catering for all learners' abilities and that they were above learners' abilities.

Findings from document analysis revealed that in all of the participants' formal tasks (except controlled tests and examinations), higher-order questions were not included. It was therefore clear that Pub 11 does not understand Bloom's cognitive levels, let alone applies them in a task. Pat 10 did not mention this as a challenge because she used exemplars provided and claimed that she modifies them. However, findings from her documents showed that she removed all higher-order questions from the assessment she used. Hence the issue of appropriate allocation of cognitive levels was also identified as a challenge.

This refers to Bloom's taxonomy model defined by Forehand (2005) as classifying thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity: knowledge/remembering, comprehension/understanding, application, analysis, evaluation and synthesis. According to Bloom (1956) and Anderson (2000) knowledge means memorising facts, figures and basic processes; comprehension is understanding and illustrating facts; application is generalising

the facts to other contexts and situations; analysis is understanding why the facts are the way they are and breaking problems down; while synthesis is making connections between different elements of one's own and evaluating critically using one's knowledge to ascertain the information.

These findings correlate with my observations discussed in the rationale for the study in Chapter 1. Teachers struggle to apply cognitive levels appropriately according to the weightings stipulated in the assessment policy. It is evident from this study that despite the availability of policy documents to guide teachers on the application of cognitive levels, teachers still lack capacity. The implication of this impacts on learner performance, because controlled tests and examinations cover all cognitive levels while formal tasks designed by teachers do not. Evidence in the findings of documents analysis of CASS records showed high marks for these tasks but low marks for summative assessments which are quarterly controlled tests and examinations.

This study also found that teachers were experiencing difficulties with the designing of rubrics. Pat 10 declared that she has never come into grips with designing a rubric and states that it has never been easy (bearing in mind that the NCS was introduced in 2006 in Grade 10). Pub 11 was neutral on the issue of rubrics, but mentioned that designing rubrics needs time and consideration and thorough preparedness. His experience on this issue is that a rubric needs to be designed before the task is given to learners.

According to Moon et al. (2005) teachers should involve students in the process of developing rubrics, because students who help create rubrics have a better understanding of what is expected and are more invested in the task. This does not happen in Pub 11's class as it is not given sufficient time and consideration. Findings in his document showed that he was also struggling with this aspect. Pec 12 claimed that he was able to design rubrics - but findings from his documents were to the contrary. It is therefore evident that teachers are struggling to design rubrics to assess learners.

Concentration on ensuring that correct marks are allocated to the task was found in Pat 10's response on this theme. She mentioned that the CASS grid prescribes marks to be allocated for each formal task. In the process of designing the tasks she ends up focusing on ensuring that she allocates exact marks, and ignores the purpose of that assessment. Pat 10's challenge relates to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the policy as it does not prescribe marks to

be allocated but weighed marks of each task. Ignoring the purpose of assessment was a serious challenge, since purpose is crucial in assessment. Mueller (2008) asserts that meaningful assessment begins with identifying the purpose of assessment. He points out that the purposes of assessment should directly prescribe the standards, which are more specific statements of what learners should know and be able to do.

In summary, it prevailed from this theme that there are aspects which have been found to contribute positively to the experiences of teachers in designing tasks. Important to note are the various challenges impacting negatively on teachers' experiences. Therefore the study finds that there are numerous challenges experienced by teachers when designing assessment tasks.

5.2.5. Assessment impact on subject knowledge

This theme emerged from analysing participants' responses on their experiences with regard to impact of assessment tasks on the subject. All participants were of the view that these formal authentic tasks had a positive impact on the subject. They substantiated this by stating that through research tasks learners are able to obtain information themselves. Pat 10 argued that through these authentic tasks learners acquire a better understanding, as they utilise their own resources to find information. Suurtman (2004) found that authentic assessment deepens understanding of the subject so that learners can recognise its value. Pub 11 said that these tasks improve practical implementation of the knowledge acquired in class in real-life contexts. Pec 12 illustrated this by practical examples. Topping (1998) contends that these relate to constructivist assessment, which he refers to as interaction between learners and teachers during the design process and the active construction of knowledge through application of theory in the real world.

Pub 11 expressed the issue of feedback as significant in enhancing learners' performance and learning. He indicated that through feedback learners gain confidence and thus develop a love for the subject. He gives his learners constructive feedback, which motivates and enhances confidence in the subject. Constructive feedback is given to enable learners to grow, because they learn from their mistakes (Cele, 2009).

5.2.6. Assessment design process

This theme relates to the processes that teachers follow when they design assessment tasks for Business Studies, and emerged as a response to the second critical question. The findings revealed that teachers consider the assessment policy and guidelines as these guide them on the nature of tasks to be done in each term. Policies also provide direction to the relevant LO and AS to which the task relates. Furthermore, findings reveal that contextual factors are taken into consideration too, so that the task designed should not demand things that are beyond the reach of learners since the school investigated was in rural area where the community is poverty-stricken. This is in line with a learner-centred approach where the teacher has to take into account learners' interaction with the environment and context (Kaftan et al., 2006).

It appeared from the participants' documents that the environment was considered, as the three formal authentic tasks required learners to research aspects that were within their easy reach. Instructions referred them to local businessmen and local corporate social investment projects, but also included use of the Internet where possible. After the task has been completed teachers mentioned that they then design a marking rubric guided by the policy documents.

The findings on the above two challenges require immediate intervention. Policies are available to guide teachers on this aspect, but these findings reveal that teachers do not understand the policies and hence implementation of the curriculum is compromised. Therefore the availability of policy guidelines does not guarantee that teachers know how to design assessment tasks of the required standard. It also does not guarantee standardisation of assessment across the board.

This finding is similar to those of Ngcobo (2009) that teachers were unable to interact with assessment policy documents. This was further revealed by Thabethe (2009), Cassim (2010) and Mdunana (2011), where teachers were interpreting assessment policy documents differently, which led to non-uniformity in implementation of the same policy. It is evident that teachers lack the skills to implement the new assessment policies, as revealed by Ngcobo (2009), Ngwenya (2009) and Raibojane (2005). Ngwenya (2009) argues that teachers were not properly assisted to replace the old practices with the new ones.

On the basis of above findings, the following section presents recommendations.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated experiences of Business Studies teachers in designing assessment tasks for Grades 10-12. It was mentioned in the introduction chapter that the new curriculum with its new assessment policies was implemented in 2006 in the FET phase. The findings have revealed major challenges with regard to the design of formal assessment tasks by teachers; such tasks are crucial as they contribute 25% to the learners' promotion mark. While the findings have revealed some good practices that need further improvement and sustainability, challenges need to be addressed in order to improve learner performance.

5.3.1. Ongoing teacher development programme

Application of cognitive levels in tasks to be designed by the teacher and design of rubrics has been identified as a major challenge. Therefore the DoE must establish programmes that will empower teachers on this aspect. Such programmes should not be a once-off kind of training but should be ongoing. These programmes can initially be done quarterly (per term) to accommodate new teachers joining the system throughout the year. This can be effectively done through establishment of District Assessment teams, which may comprise Teaching and Learning Services and Examinations Officials. Teachers should be given an opportunity to share meanings and understanding of assessment practices, challenges encountered and strategies to overcome such challenges. The design of assessment tasks and assessment tools should be done extensively by teachers hands-on during these training programmes.

The DoE Curriculum Directorate should ensure that monitoring and support programmes are intensified through regular visits by curriculum specialists to provide on-site assistance to teachers found to be struggling with application of cognitive levels in tasks and designing rubrics. Clusters should be maintained and be in operation for Grades 10 and 11 as is done for Grade 12.

In-service training is crucial to prepare the mindset of teachers for change (Kelly, 2004), particularly in designing authentic assessment tasks. With the knowledge acquired in the training process, teachers will be able to apply all the requirements of authentic assessment in a constructivist approach by designing tasks that adequately cover all cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy. This is also recommended by Reynecke et al. (2010, p.279), who argue

that “the way forward is for the Department of Education to seriously invest in targeted, subject specific training and to continuously support in-service teachers.”

5.3.2. Schools’ subjects restructuring

Lack of time resulting in lack of planning as a result of work overload was another challenge which hinders proper implementation of new assessment approaches in designing assessment tasks. According to Sithole (2009), burdensome workloads and unfair curriculum expectations impact on assessment. Therefore restructuring of subjects in schools is significant. Structuring subject packages offered in schools in line with departmental directives will ensure that teachers are not overloaded.

5.4. POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies can be conducted to investigate the extent to which teacher development programmes contribute to teacher empowerment. Findings have revealed challenges brought with the new curriculum since 2006, and teacher training programmes have been conducted. Further investigations will assist in determining how effective these programmes are.

Another area for possible research would be investigating packaging of subjects versus teacher: learner ratios in rural schools. Findings in this study have revealed that teachers lack planning as a result of time constraints caused by work overload.

5.5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to explore experiences of Business Studies teachers when they design assessments tasks for Grades 10-12 in the NCS. Business Studies teachers have provided powerful insights regarding their experiences in designing assessment tasks. It has been discovered that there are major challenges impacting on the design of assessment tasks. The study revealed that although teachers do have all the relevant assessment documents and policies to guide them when designing assessment tasks and tools, they still experience some challenges.

Findings reveal that teachers are not yet confident in designing assessment tasks, particularly rubrics; hence the assessment of learners is not reliable. The crucial role of assessment in education is jeopardised by inability of teachers to conduct proper assessment, upon which judgement of the success or failure of teaching and learning is based. Therefore it becomes imperative that this issue is not ignored but rather receives attention. If programmes can be in place to address challenges encountered by teachers in the process, as revealed in this study, improvements can be achieved in Business Studies and in the field of assessment as a whole.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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8 August 2011

Mrs MT Msomi (210551380)
School of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Msomi

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0706/011M

PROJECT TITLE: An exploration of teachers' experiences in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies for Grades 10-12

In response to your application dated 5 August 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Professor Steven Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Dr M Combrink

cc: Ms T Mnisi, Faculty Research office, Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus

Taken 17/11/2011

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■ Medical School

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APPENDIX B

LETTER FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O. Box 621
SCOTTBURGH
4180
28 August 2011

Madam

I, Ms. M.T. Msomi, am currently completing my Masters of Education Degree at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (Edgewood Campus) and will be conducting my research at Vumandaba High School in the month of September 2011. The research topic is exploration of experiences of teachers in designing assessment tasks for Business Studies for Grades 10-12. The purpose of the study is to explore teachers' experiences when designing assessment tasks in Business Studies for Grades 10, 11 and 12.

This study will involve interview of Grade 10, 11 and 12 Business Studies teachers and analysis of documents which includes learners assessment books as well as teachers' assessment files. Interviews will be done when it is most convenient to the school and the participants, preferably in September. Consent forms will be issued to participants to be signed as permission to participate in the research study. I wish to reassure of the following:

- **No participant will be identifiable in any way from the research results.**
- **Participation will be voluntary.**
- **The institution will not be identifiable by name in the research results.**
- **A synopsis of the most important findings will be forwarded to your school.**

I trust that my request will be favourably considered

Thanking You,
M.T. Msomi



APPENDIX C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby grant Ms. MT Msomi permission to carry out the required research at Vumandaba High school.

L.E.C. Msweli
Ms L.E.C. Msweli
Principal

05-09-2011
Date



APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTERS

CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT

I VELEFINI C TEMBE (full names of participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I agree to participate in the research project.

I acknowledge that anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/disguised) names of participants and institution will be used. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should I so desire and that I will receive no benefits as a result of my participation in this research.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT



DATE 05.08.2011

CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT

I REINETE NEUSILE MHLONGO (full names of participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I agree to participate in the research project.

I acknowledge that anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/disguised) names of participants and institution will be used. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should I so desire and that I will receive no benefits as a result of my participation in this research.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT



DATE 14-08-12

CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT

I MBAMBO M.A (full names of participant), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I agree to participate in the research project.

I acknowledge that anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/disguised) names of participants and institution will be used. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time, should I so desire and that I will receive no benefits as a result of my participation in this research.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT



DATE 20-07-12

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. WHAT ARE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN DESIGNING THE ASSESSMENT TASKS?

1.1. WHAT TYPE OF ASSESSMENT TASKS DO TEACHERS DESIGN?

- (i) How do you assess learners in your class?
- (ii) Do you record all assessment tasks? Why?
- (iii) Which tasks form part of your formal assessment?
- (iv) Do you design all these tasks yourself?
- (v) Which assessment tasks do you have to design on your own?

1.2. WHAT ARE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES?

- (i) Do you encounter any problems when designing these assessment tasks?
- (ii) What would you say your strengths and weaknesses are in connection with developing the tasks?
- (iii) How would you like to be developed in your weak areas?
- (iv) What support have you obtained regarding this assessment since the implementation of the new curriculum? When & How?
- (v) How do these kinds of assessment tasks impact on learners' understanding of the subject?
- (iv) What are your suggestions about assessment in Business Studies?

HOW DO TEACHERS DESIGN THESE TASKS?

- (i) Which processes do you follow when designing research assignment, research project and presentation?

- (ii) What resources do you use?
- (iii) How do you develop the marking tool for the above tasks?
- (iv) Do you find it easy to develop a rubric for each task?
- (v) What guides you when designing assessment tasks and tools?
- (vi) Are you able to design tasks that cover all cognitive levels (Bloom's Taxonomy)?
- (vii) How do you allocate cognitive level in each designed assessment task?

APPENDIX F

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

Extract of document analysis report from Pat 10

- Lesson plans for previous years could not be found. In all lesson plans done for the current year I did not see any evidence on the discussion of formal assessment task to be given to learners on a specific day.
- SAG and Programme of assessment were found in the teacher's file for 2010; 2011 and 2012. It did not include dates on which tasks would be administered and/or given to learners.
- LO's and AS's were indicated in each assessment task.
- SAG, work schedule showed no evidence that they were used. There was nothing relating to any formal assessment tasks in the assessment strategies column of the work schedule.
- In the POA textbook, page number and activity was written next to formal task suggested in each term.
- All formal assessment tasks and tools in the file were copies from Assessment Tasks Document (2009) in 2010 and 2011 which was provided to teachers as a guide with examples of the three authentic tasks that teachers have to design. But for 2012 these tasks and rubrics were taken from textbooks. Higher order question were cancelled from the tasks taken from the textbooks. Tasks and tools were not moderated by Head of Department or any supervisor.
- Records of learner performance in the CASS grid showed that formal assessment tasks were recorded.

Extract of document analysis report from Pub 11

- In all lesson plans done for the current year there was no evidence of discussion on formal assessment tasks to be given to learners on a specific day.

- SAG and Programme of assessment work schedule were found in the teacher's file. There was evidence of work completed in the work schedule. Learning outcomes and assessment standards were highlighted in the work schedule.
- POA indicated the dates on which tasks would be given to learners as well as due dates for the three authentic tasks and controlled tests and exams were incorporated in the schools exam time table.
- Copies of assessment tasks and tools for 2010, 2011 and 2012 were found in the teacher's assessment documents. For 2010 assessment tasks and tools used were taken from the ATD and were not modified. In 2011 two tasks i.e research assignment and research project were from the ATD but were then modified whilst presentation was designed by the teacher. In 2012 all tasks were designed by the teacher and required learners to research aspects that were within their easy reach, instructions referred them to local businessmen but also included use of internet where possible.
- LO's and AS's were indicated in each task.
- Assessment tasks designed did not cover all cognitive levels adequately, higher order questions were not included.
- Rubrics were used for marking learners work, these tools were appropriately designed but level descriptors were ambiguous. There was no clarity on how levels differ from each other in terms of description of performance.
- Records of learner performance in the CASS grid showed that formal assessment tasks were recorded.

Extract of document analysis report from Pec12

This participant could not provide his assessment files for the previous years, 2012 file was presented and analysed. The following was observed:

- All lesson plans done for the current year did not indicate any discussion on formal assessment task to be given to learners on a specific day.
- SAG, work schedule and Programme of assessment were found in the teacher's file for 2012. There was evidence of work completed in the work schedule.

- POA indicated the dates on which tasks would be given to learners as well as due dates for the three authentic tasks and controlled tests and exams were incorporated in the schools exam time table.
- Copies of assessment tasks and tools were in the file and some were extracted from ATD but were modified.
- LO's and AS's were indicated in each task.
- Assessment tasks designed did not cover all cognitive levels adequately, higher order questions were not included.
- Tasks required learners to research aspects that were within their easy reach, instructions referred them to local businessmen and also local CSI projects but also included use of internet where possible.
- Rubrics were designed for the three assessment tasks. Descriptions of expected learner performance were scanty in each case and there was very thin line of demarcation between each level besides level one which was normally the worst case scenario and highest level representing the best case scenario.
- CASS grid was up to date, with records of formal assessment tasks

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS FOR BUSINESS STUDIES FOR GRADE 10-12.

WHAT TYPE OF ASSESSMENT TASKS DO TEACHERS DESIGN?

1. How do you assess learners in your class?

Pat 10

- I use a grid , what is on the grid like first term it was research assignment, so I assess through research assignment and giving them class activities like after each and every topic I give class activities either case studies or oral discussion in class or structured questions. Mostly I rely on previous question papers.

Pub 11

- I observe them when they do activities, I also give them written tasks to write, I allow them to assess themselves and give feedback and also assess their peers.

Pec 12

- I make use of class tests, homework, projects, questionnaires, demonstrations depending on the task that you are dealing with at that point in time. I have quite a variety of means in which I assess learners.

2. Do you record all these assessment tasks?

Pat 10

- I don't, I only record the formal ones. (Why?)
- Because there's too much work, you find that I don't have time to record the other tasks that are not formal. (Why necessarily do you record the formal ones?)
- Because the formal ones are for learners' progression and they give feedback of how the learner is doing, it has to be recorded, it has to be moderated.

Pub 11

- No, I don't record all of them because there are tasks that remain with them immediately like class work. I mark them and give it back immediately with feedback. Those are informal tasks that are not used for promotion purposes.
- There are formal tasks like formal test, assignments, case studies, projects that I record because they form part of the promotion of the learner.

Pec 12

- Yes I do, but I record assessment tasks that form part of CASS because we make use of those results when we compile the grid for CASS of which CASS marks are used for reporting to learners as well as parents and other stakeholders.

3. Which tasks form part of your formal assessment?

Pat 10

- Its research assignment, the project, research presentation and then formal quarterly tests. (How many formal tasks do you have for the whole year?) There are 7 and these 7 tasks include formal quarterly tests.

Pub 11

- Quarterly/controlled tests, assignments, case studies, projects, written and oral presentation.

Pec 12

- We have controlled tests which are set by the department in Grade 12, projects, questionnaire as well as presentation.

4. Do you design all these tasks yourself?

Pat 10

- No, I don't design all of them.
- I use the document that was given to us with exemplars called Assessment Tasks Document.
- I set quarterly controlled tests.

Pub 11

- In other grades, yes, some are designed by me and some come from the department.
- Sometimes we use common tasks designed by the cluster members.

Pec 12

- No controlled tests are set by the department.
- Projects, questionnaires and presentations are designed by myself and possibly sometimes with my colleagues at cluster level

5. Which assessment tasks do you have to design on your own?

Pat 10

- Its research assignment, research project and research presentation but I don't design them I use tasks in the Assessment Tasks Document which was given to us.

Pub 11

- I design all informal tasks, part of formal assessment tasks like assignment, project, presentation, and case studies and so on.

Pec 12

- Research assignment, research project and research presentation.

HOW DO TEACHERS DESIGN THESE TASKS?

1. Which process do you follow when designing research assignment, research project and presentation?

Pat 10

- In most cases I use books, like you will look for different resources, like different textbooks will have at the end questions and questionnaire on research assignment so I use those questions and I modify them if I see that the questions are a bit difficult for my kids I then modify them .
- I Use examples from the books and I modify them according to the learners' level of understanding.

Pub 11

- I need some documents like SAG; work schedule sometimes called pace-setter to ensure that what I assess is relevant and is in line with assessment standards that are supposed to be assessed at that time.
- I need also to ensure that I have all the resources e.g. computer, papers and pens and resources to furnish learners with etc.
- I also consider the environment because schools are different and dynamic so that I make sure that what I require from learners is accessible to them.
- Thereafter I consider I consider the cognitive levels that I have to cover to ensure that my assessment is balanced in order to accommodate all learners because learners perform at different levels.

Pec 12

- Firstly I look at the Learning Outcome (LO), assessment standard (AS), SAG. I look at the assessment standard and try to understand it so that I design a task that is understandable to learners.
- I also take into account the grade as well as the age of learners, time to complete the task especially for tasks that need long time to complete like projects.
- I also take into account the context in terms of the school and learners.
- the purpose of the task, the outcomes that I want to achieve.

2. What resources do you use?

Pat 10

- I use textbooks like VIVA, extracts from newspapers.

- I have about 5 textbooks. May be from one book I take one question and from the other I take another question. Publishers come and give us textbooks, free ones, samples.

Pub 11

- Computer, papers, pens, newspapers so that I can be able to supply learners with them because other learners can't afford to buy newspapers, textbooks, previous question papers so that I will be able to channel my learners towards the relevant information that will assist them when writing the final examination.

Pec 12

- SAG: Subject Assessment Guidelines
- work schedule because it shows what is contained in the particular assessment standard
- textbooks not only Business Studies textbooks but other textbooks that will be useful in designing that particular task.

3. How do you develop the marking tool for the above tasks?

Pat 10

- I use the teachers guide because learner's book will have a task and teachers guide will have a rubric, so I use those rubrics and I also modify the rubric.
- But making a rubric is always a challenge, its time consuming sometimes you don't know what to do even designing a task itself you will sit down try designing a task write it off, try designing it again until you get it right.
- Sometimes you find that a task that you have chosen in the book is difficult for your learners, you go to class you give it to kids and you see that they don't understand when they submit the work and you start marking you realise that they are not doing well. Then you have to design another one. (What do you think is the problem?)
- I think we don't guide the learners up to the end because until the task is finished you have to be there monitoring them. You don't have to wait for them to give to you on the due date but you have to monitor them throughout to check what they have done and give a go ahead where necessary.
- What happens with us teachers we only give the learners questions without explaining to them what is required, what are the expectations.
- I said it is a challenge and time consuming because I teach many grades and have to develop rubric for all these grades including Grade 8 & 9 for other subjects as well.

Pub 11

- I use to prefer the rubric in this regard because it accommodates all the learners, its fast, it can assess a number of abilities and skills at once.
- I think in designing that, something that I consider in the process is what skills and abilities do I want to assess from learners and then I arrange that in terms of levels, and assume the responses that the learners might give me.
- I think it can also be accompanied by memorandum in some cases depending on the nature of the task and the purpose of assessment.

Pec 12

- The most important thing that I do is to look at the AS so that I can be able to come up with the precise instructions that I will give to learners so that they know exactly what is expected from them.
- I also make use of Exam Guidelines so that I familiarise my learners with the type of questions they may expect from exams.
- I also make use of examiner's report as they indicate areas in which our learners struggle.
- I normally make use of the rubric.

4. Do you find it easy to develop a rubric for each task?

Pat 10

- No it's never been easy because as teachers we are not trained for this assessment.
- Sometimes the grid would suggest a task to be done but the teacher doesn't know what it means and can't develop rubric.

Pub11

- It is not always easy but also it is not difficult, it's just that it needs thorough preparation and also timely preparation. In other words I cannot give learners a task and later design a rubric; both should be ready before the task is administered to the learners. It's not that difficult but needs time and consideration because I have to consider various factors.

Pec 12

- It is a little bit easy now but I use to struggle a lot, but as the time goes on I became confident and I am able to design a rubric. It is user friendly; it gives clear instructions and is in line with assessment standard as well as instructions given to learners.

What cognitive levels do teachers consider when designing tasks?

5. What guides you when designing assessment tasks and tools?

Pat 10

- I am guided by NCS policy and SAG

Pub 11

- I consider my learners, those who are high flyers, moderate and those below average.
- I consider the Bloom's taxonomy because it guides me very well on what levels should I consider and how. The tool will be influenced by these levels of the Bloom's taxonomy.
- I use SAG as reference and also a handout supplied by subject advisor.

Pec 12

- SAG prescribes what level 1 & 2 should be 30% of the total mark, level 3 & 4 should be 50% and level 5 & 6 should be 20% of the total mark. I always try by all means to design the task along those lines, but you find out that there is always overlap of marks in terms of percentages per levels.

6. Are you able to design tasks that cover all cognitive levels?

Pat 10

- I think so but I am not sure.

Pub 11

- Yes I am able. Each time I design a task I ensure that all cognitive levels are covered in each task and the SAG guides me in terms of percentages per levels of Bloom's taxonomy.

Pec 12

- I try to cover all cognitive levels as per policy requirement but there will be no balance as there will always be an overlap.

7. How do you allocate cognitive levels in each designed assessment tasks?

Pat 10

- Yes I do analyse the task according to cognitive levels whether it does accommodate all learners like you will find that some questions are not challenging for other learners, you also need to consider your group, and you consider everyone. You should not disadvantage others.

Pub 11

- SAG provide guide in terms of percentages per level.

Pec 12

- I am guided by the SAG in terms of allocating cognitive levels.

8. How would you explain your learners' performance in these tasks?

Pat 10

- They perform very well especially with the project, research assignment.
- With common exams they still have a problem with the interpretation of questions especially cartoons and data response questions, it's more of a language barrier for them more so if the question is indirect.

Pub 11

- The learners perform well after being given a second chance in most cases.
- It also depends on the clarity of instructions, if the instructions are clear and well explained, learners perform well.
- It also depends on the time given to learners to accomplish that particular task e.g. project if enough time is allowed to learners they perform well because they come to me for pre-check and I guide them on what they are supposed to be doing.
- In a nutshell they do well but the problem in our area is lack of technology because they cannot access information available in the internet.

Pec 12

- Most of the learners perform very well in level one which is basic thinking skills, not bad on middle order thinking level but struggle with higher order thinking skills but that depends on the type of learners you have each year. They always struggle when it comes to higher order thinking questions but there are some few who will do well at that level.

WHAT ARE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS?

1. Do you encounter any problems when designing these assessment tasks?

Pat 10

- There are problems that I encounter; like for example when you design the task you concentrate on the marks to say I want to cover so many marks without considering the purpose of assessment. So if the task is 50 marks and 5 marks is still missing you end up concentrating on the mark allocation then doing justice on assessment?

- If the document is not specific to say do research, do this I rely too much on case studies because there are lots of case studies in books and it is easier to mark. You find out that kids are only familiar with a certain type of assessment, they get used to one type of assessment.

Pub 11

- The very first problem is assurance, sometimes you are not sure as whether what I want to assess will be achievable.
- Another challenge is time because I am overloaded which then compromise quality because of workload, sometimes I do it recklessly but I am getting there.
- The problem is that I only get assurance after being visited by subject specialist and after the approval, I then gain confidence, but in most cases I am not sure.

Pec 12

- Yes I do, sometimes you find that you want to set the task according to guidelines in the SAG and according to LOs and ASs covered already but you realise that your learners won't be able to do what you want to assess them on. Even if you know very well that you have taught that particular content but you can tell from feedback on other informal assessment activities that they have done that they will not be able to do it. Even though you as a teacher have observed through informal activities given on aspects covered that your learners are not capable of doing the task but then in terms of policy you are forced to design that task.

2. What would you say your strengths and weaknesses are in developing the tasks?

Pat 10

- Strengths: I do my own research before giving tasks to the kids to see if my kids will be able to do it.
- I can design rubric on my own.
- I use different kinds of assessment.
- I assess now and then although I don't keep record of because it's informal assessment, but I assess them before giving them formal assessment.
- I have a number of resources; there is photocopying machine at school.
- Weaknesses: sometimes I do not have enough time to plan, I design tasks haphazardly.

Pub 11

- Weaknesses: task that I develop sometimes are above learners ability, I see that from feedback on the task.
- Secondly, I am not able to cater for individual needs and differences of learners; I am unable to apply principle of individualisation.
- Strengths: attend workshops that develop me on assessment as well as comment and strategies received from subject specialists during their visits at schools.

Pec 12

- Strengths: able to design task on my own, because initially I was struggling but now when we meet at during CASS moderation ,Subject advisor would check our task and advise us on how best can we design our task. So I have improved on that and I know I can design a task that is user friendly and in line with the instructions that I have given to learners.
- Availability of a variety of textbooks for references.
- Weaknesses: My weakness revolves around the issue of Bloom's taxonomy.

3. How would you like to be developed in your weak areas?

Pat 10

- Since there are a number of challenges that we are faced with at our schools because they are small schools we don't have enough time therefore if there can be an assessment team at the level of a cluster which will meet before beginning of the quarter and develop assessment task for the term. Developing a common assessment task for the clustered schools.
- Providing us with exemplars because other teachers don't know the difference between assignment and a project, they will give kids project thinking that it's an assignment.

Pub 11

- The process is on as our advisor organises cluster meetings whereby we discuss our weaknesses and are able to share ideas.
- I also need workshop specifically on how to cater for individual needs of learners when designing a task.

Pec 12

- Assessment workshops should be organised and should address and unpack Bloom's taxonomy and its application when designing tasks in order to develop teachers.

- Cluster meetings

4. What support have you obtained regarding this assessment since the implementation of the new curriculum? When & How?

Pat 10

- Workshop at the beginning of the year but it is not enough.

Pub 11

- Through support visits by advisors, through cluster moderation, one on one discussion with subject specialist.
- This support is ongoing.

Pec 12

- Support I obtain at cluster moderation where I get advice from subject adviser.
- Sharing ideas and supporting each other as cluster members in our cluster meetings.
- Support from workshops conducted i.e orientation workshop beginning of each year

5. How do these kind of assessment impact on learners understanding of the subject?

Pat10

- Have a good impact because learners go out and look for information themselves and I think they have a better understanding because they use their own resources to find information and are then able to relate what they are taught in class in real life situation.

Pub11

- It impacts positively because the learners are able to obtain information on their own.
- It also enforces them to acquire knowledge and based on feedback they gain confidence which creates love of the subject and then they are able to enjoy the subject.
- The kind of feedback I provide to learners is constructive such that it helps them to gain more confidence.
- These tasks improve practical implementation of the knowledge acquired in class in real life context.

Pec 12

- They impact positively in that for example in the first term I give learners task on CSR where they have to research. When they write controlled test and exams they do very well in short questions on CSR and even in essay question on CSR because they have researched about it and were able to investigate it in real life thus relating theory into practice.
- They help the learners to get into grips with the subject matter.
- The other task for example on qualities of an entrepreneur where learners do a project also assist learners in understanding qualities of existing employees of different businesses that they have investigated and also are able to identify areas that need to be improved in each business they have investigated .
- The other task normally done as presentation on career pathing gives them a broader understanding of various careers they investigate and assist them on careers that they can pursue after grade 12. Furthermore they gain much understanding as Business Studies learners on business careers and can be able to assist other learners when choosing careers.

6. What are your suggestions about assessment in Business Studies?

Pat 10

- To be provided with a variety of exemplars with rubrics.
- To work as clusters when designing assessment tasks.
- More assessment workshops to assist new teachers.
- The Dept together with Exam Section must have an assessment team that will focus on developing teachers with assessment because when officials come to schools they only check what has been done.
- Support should be given instead of checking what has been done. Teachers should be provided with training first then support and monitoring.
- Dept has to provide support in the form of training teachers every year on assessment.

Pub 11

- There should be more than one formal task per term to cater for different learners ability for example if in term one there is assignment there should be another two tasks before the controlled test because other learners are not good in writing but are good in talking. If then there could be other tasks like demonstrations or simulation or role playing to be done and considered for CASS mark in each term in order to cater for learner's differences.

- Projects and assignments should be monitored because sometimes their parents assist them by doing the task instead of guiding and supporting them. Learners sometimes bring very good presentation done by their brothers and sisters; therefore I suggest monitoring of tasks in progress by teachers.
- In terms of formal assessment tasks teachers are guided by work schedule as they need to design task related to work covered in that term. Teachers should also be allowed to design tasks based on the work they have covered taking into account issue of teachers who would assume duties late in February or March but will be expected to develop assignment and controlled test as normal.
- More workshops on assessment and on how to give feedback to learners and parents.

Pec 12

- My suggestion is that whenever teachers design a task in Business Studies they should ensure that the instructions in the task are clear enough to learners and the assessment tool should be in line with what learners are expected to do, assessment criteria should be clear, tool be appropriate and assess what was intended to assess.
- Teachers should also be developed on how to mark using a rubric.
- So the Department should assist teachers in this regard and monitor this process.

APPENDIX H: CASS GRIDS/ MARK SHEETS


BUSINESS STUDIES GRADE 10 F

HIGH SCHOOL

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (CASS) w.e.f 1 January 2012																
NAMES OF LEARNERS		FIRST TERM			SECOND TERM			THIRD TERM			FINAL TERM				PROMOTION	
		Assignment	Controlled Test 01	TERM 1 MARK	Presentation	Mid-year Exam	TERM 2 MARK	Project	Controlled Test 02	TERM 3 MARK	SBA = 1+2+3	CASS (25 %)	Year end examination			
		50	100	150	50	200	250	50	100	150	550	100	300	EXAM (75 %)	100	
1	BHENGU NTANDO WILSON	38	60	98	18	23	41	24	16	40				08		
2	BHENGU RICHARD	38	49	87	32	39	71	41	33	74				11		
3	CELE BHEKA	30	53	83	31	42	73	26	18	44				09		
4	CELE PERCIVAL THOBANI	20	65	95	26	68	94	26	47	73				12		
5	CELE PRECIOUS	32	67	99	36	73	109	29	46	75				13		
6	CELE SIPHAMANDLA	1	18	18	24	29	53	32	49	81				07		
7	CELE STHABISO	41	69	110	18	106	124	29	41	70				14		
8	CELE WENDY THEMBEKILE	46	42	88	24	39	63	46	25	71				10		
9	CELE ZIYAVELA PETRONELLA	27	47	74	28	47	75	46	25	71				10		
10	DLAMINI NONKULULEKO	27	63	90	28	42	70	35	35	70				10		
11	GUMEDE ZAMANI	37	57	94	28	41	69	37	49	86				11		
12	KHANYILE NONDUMISO PRIDE	38	81	119	26	58	84	41	84	125				15		
13	KHATHI SNEGUGU	28	63	91	28	49	77	35	42	77				11		
14	KHUZWAYO GLORIA	46	18	64	26	70	96	46	26	72				11		
15	KHUZWAYO HLANGANANI	46	34	80	40	36	76	32	36	68				10		
16	KUMALO NHLAKANIPHO	44	45	91	26	34	60	32	22	54				09		
17	MBHELE MXOLISI	32	49	81	31	56	87	26	45	71				11		
18	MBHELE ZAMANTULI LINDIWE	33	42	75	24	43	67	2	2	4				06		
19	MBUTHO WENDY PRIDE	34	44	78	26	55	81	20	20	40				09		
20	MDLETSHE KHETHUKUTHULA	38	65	103	30	47	77	24	15	39				10		
21	MDLETSHE LINDANI	38	69	107	24	52	76	24	29	53				11		
22	MEMELA S'YANDA	46	66	112	28	44	72	20	20	40				10		

		H SCHOOL										2012										
		KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION : BUSINESS STUDIES										GRADE 11 C										
		FIRST TERM				SECOND TERM				THIRD TERM												
		Research Assignment	Controlled Test	SUB TOTAL	Project	June Examination	SUB TOTAL	Research Assignment	Controlled Test	SUB TOTAL	Project	June Examination	SUB TOTAL	ADJUSTMENT	CONVERTED	EXAMINATION	FINAL MARK	MODERATION				
NAMES OF LEARNERS		50	100	150	50	200	250	50	100	150	550	550	100	300	400	25%						
1	BHENGU MELODY STHABILE	44	67	111	2	2	2	20	24	44	135		45			12						
2	CELE EUNICE	36	36	72	2	2	2	2	2	72												
3	CELE HAPPY	44	91	135	40	125	165	30	43	61	361		66			17						
4	CELE KHAYELIHE CHARLES	30	38	68	33	42	75	20	15	35	178		33			09						
5	CELE NDALANE NDUDUZO SIMPHIWE	22	2	2	2	2	2	40	73	113	113		76			19						
6	CELE SIZWE	30	34	64	38	39	77	20	123	43	184		34			09						
7	DLAMINI SNEHLANHLA	49	77	126	34	131	165	40	58	98	389		71			18						
8	DONCABE PEACEFUL NOXOLO	33	69	102	27	54	82	20	10	30	214		39			10						
9	GUMEDE MDUMSENI	42	70	112	30	61	91	20	19	39	242		44			11						
10	GUMEDE SIPHO	30	42	72	33	34	87	20	08	28	187		34			09						
11	GUMEDE ZINHLE	25	15	40	29	52	81	30	29	59	180		33			09						
12	HLONGWA HLENGIWE CECILIA	40	65	105	30	62	92	30	33	63	260		48			12						
13	KHOMO HAPPY BONGEKA	33	12	45	38	97	135	20	26	46	226		41			11						
14	LATHA NOMPUMELELO	35	50	85	33	87	120	20	21	41	246		45			12						
15	LATHA NTOMBENHLE	35	45	80	27	33	60	30	48	78	218		40			10						
16	MADLALA NHLAKANIPHO	30	15	45	20	28	48	20	06	26	119		22			06						
17	MAPHUMULO NOMZAMO LELETI	42	86	128	47	148	195	45	77	122	425		87			20.21						
18	MBAMBO SPHAMANDLA	30	48	78	20	47	67	20	11	31	176		32			08						
19	MBESA NOKWANDA	36	81	117	41	83	124	40	84	124	365		67			17						
20	MBHELE MZAMO CREATOR	42	76	118	36	141	177	40	73	113	408		75			19						
21	MBHELE NONTUTHUKO	36	71	107	43	109	152	40	70	110	369		67			17						
22	MBHELE SPHELELE XOLANI	35	63	98	20	83	103	20	11	31	232		43			11						
23	MBUTHO LUNGISILE	25	59	84	42	73	125	35	56	91	300		55			14						

SCHOOL : HIGH SCHOOL
SUBJECT : BUSINESS STUDIES
GRADE : 12

		CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (CASS) w.e.f 1 January 2012														
		NAMES OF LEARNERS	FIRST TERM			SECOND TERM			THIRD TERM							
			Research Assignment	Control test	SUB- TOTAL	Project	Mid-year exam	SUB- TOTAL	Other Project/Assignment	Control test	Trial exam	SUB- TOTAL	TOTAL	CONVERTED	FINAL MARK	
			50	100	150	50	200	250	50	100	300	450	850	100		
1		BHENGU BONGIWE PRECIOUS	35	41	76	30	80	110	20	40	81	141	327	38		
2		CELE NZOKHONA (MUZOKHONA)	48	63	113	46	96	142	50	42	159	251	506	60		
3		CELE KHETHIWE	42	40	82	38	140	178	40	52	180	272	532	63		
4		CELE NONTOKOZO	38	38	76	30	61	91	30	13	65	108	275	32		
5		CELE SIBUSISO BLESSING	48	53	101	47	83	130	20	40	122	182	413	49		
6		CELE THEMBELANI JEROME	38	34	72	40	54	94	36	50	81	167	333	37		
7		CELE ZAMANI S'FISO	38	34	72	40	31	71	36	42	50	128	271	32		
8		DLAMINI THEMINKOSI	48	28	76	47	31	78	18	13	97	128	282	33		
9		GABA STHEMBISO MBUSO	50	45	95	40	25	65	40	27	68	135	295	35		
10		GAMBUSHE SIFISO	31	44	75	40	72	112	47	34	74	155	342	40		
11		GCWENSA BLESSING	45	71	116	40	115	155	40	66	222	328	599	70		
12		GCWENSA PHAKAMANI	50	42	92	40	107	147	20	53	150	223	462	54		
13		GELA NOKUKHANYA	48	40	88	30	68	98	47	20	72	139	335	39		
14		GUMEDE NOSIPHIWE	43	26	69	30	64	94	30	17	82	129	292	34		
15		HLONGWA SYLVIA PHILILE	48	37	85	46	65	111	36	33	152	140	336	40		
16		KHOMO NELISIWE ANGEL	42	41	83	38	50	88	40	23	71	134	305	36		
17		KHOMO SKHUMBUZO	48	42	90	31	67	98	20	42	183	245	433	51		