A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN KWAZULU-NATAL

by

BRIAN ALFRED BLUMFIELD

submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

HISTORY OF EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR JJ BOOYSE

JUNE 2008

Student Number: 0 – 723 – 677 – 8

I declare that

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN KWAZULU-NATAL

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

_____

BA BLUMFIELD 15 JUNE 2008

SUMMARY

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) heralds the beginning of a new curriculum for Grades 10 to 12 in South Africa. Underpinned by the South African Constitution, and based on the tenets of Outcomes-based Education, the NCS seeks to provide contextually-relevant education for all South African learners, so that they are able to embrace inevitable change. Although the NCS highlights the importance of assessment, an analysis of the English Home Language (EHL) NCS reveals tensions between policy and practice. This study attempts to contextualise the role of relevant assessment for the 21st century. It then proceeds to engage in a historical evaluation of assessment within the NSC in terms of how assessment was conducted in the former Natal Education Department, a liberal education department within former apartheid South Africa. The conclusions drawn from the evaluation are used to provide recommendations to relieve the tensions identified within the EHL NSC.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following people / institution, without whose help I could not have completed this study:

- My supervisor, Professor Johan Booyse, for his valuable advice, guidance and unwavering support for the duration of this study. His dedication to education and his meticulous attention to detail is an inspiration to all.

- My parents and my brother who have always supported me throughout my studies.

- Professor Cheryl le Roux for her inspiration when lecturing me in History of Education. Her passion and love for what she does is an example to all. I thank her for always being willing to offer advice and for encouraging me to complete my studies.

- Ms Joan Ashworth, Ms Anne Oberholzer, Dr Manfred Schroenn and Mr Clive Talbot, who each provided valuable, and increasingly more-difficult-to-find, historical information relating to the Natal Education Department (NED).

- The University of South Africa (UNISA) for awarding me a Master's exhibition to study further.

Brian Alfred Blumfield
Durban: June 2008

DEDICATION

DEDICATED TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER,

LLEWELLYN AND PHYLLIS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 2
1.2 ASSESSMENT VIEWED WITHIN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT 2
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 4
1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY 5
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 5
1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW 6
1.7 METHODOLOGY 7
1.7.1 Nature of the research 7
1.7.2 Types of sources utilised 8
1.7.2.1 Primary sources 8
1.7.2.2 Secondary sources 8
1.7.3 Research Methodology 9
1.7.3.1 The historical-educational research method 9
1.7.3.2 Literature Study 10
1.7.3.3 Case Study 10
1.7.3.4 Oral History 10
1.7.3.5 Document Analysis 12
1.7.4 Constraints of the study 12
1.7.5 Delimitation of the study 13
1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION AND DEMARCATION 14
1.9 EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS 15
1.9.1 Explication of concepts used in the title 15
1.9.1.1 Assessment 15
1.9.1.2 English Home Language 16
1.9.1.3 Senior Secondary School 16
1.9.1.4 KwaZulu-Natal 16
1.9.2 Explication of concepts related to the topic 17
1.9.2.1 Senior Certificate examination 17
1.9.2.2 Learner 17
1.9.2.3 Christian National Education 17
1.9.2.4 Outcomes-based Education 17
1.9.2.5 Formative Assessment 18
1.9.2.6 Summative Assessment 18
1.9.2.7 Globalisation 18
1.9.2.8 Post-modernism 19

CHAPTER 2: ASSESSMENT: REALISTIC APPROACHES WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT 21

2.1 CONTEXTUALISATION 21
2.2 THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION MILIEU 22
2.3 ASSESSMENT DEFINED 25
2.4 THE NEED TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM 28
2.5 WHAT IS MEANT BY 'EFFECTIVE' ASSESSMENT? 30
2.6 THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT 32
2.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT 32
2.8 ASSESSMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY 33
2.9 THE SOUTH AFRICAN REALITY 34

CHAPTER 3: THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL (STANDARD 10) IN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED) 36

3.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED) WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION 36
3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF PAST 'EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE' 37
3.3 THE NED'S VISION OF ASSESSMENT 39
3.4 THE 'SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM' (SAS) 41

CHAPTER 4: THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE WITHIN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED) 48

4.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE WITHIN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED) 48
4.2 ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE SYLLABUS 52
4.2.1 Philosophical underpinnings 52
4.2.2 The type of syllabus envisaged 52
4.2.3 Planning of assessment 53
4.2.4 The purpose of assessment of English First Language 54
4.2.5 How assessment took place 55
4.2.6 The writing portfolio 57
4.2.7 The relationship between EFL and SAS 59
4.2.8 Criticism of NED assessment policy 59
4.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS 59

CHAPTER 5: THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AT FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) LEVEL (GRADE 12) IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS) 61

5.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS) WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION 61
5.2 PRECURSORS TO THE ADOPTION OF THE NCS 63
5.2.1 State-led initiatives 63
5.2.1.1 The 'Ten-year Plan' (1986) 63
5.2.1.2 The Education Renewal Strategy ERS (June 1991) 64
5.2.1.3 A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa (CUMSA) 65
5.2.2 Non-state led initiatives 65
5.2.2.1 National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (December 1990 to August 1992) 65
5.2.2.2 African National Congress (ANC) Policy 67
5.3 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NCS IN TERMS OF THE ANC'S "A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING" (USING NEPI'S "KEY DIMENSIONS IN CURRICULUM POLICY") 68
5.4 PERCEIVED TENSIONS BETWEEN POLITICS, POLICY AND PRACTICE 73
5.4.1 Decision-making structures and processes 73
5.4.2 Core curriculum and differentiation 73
5.4.3 Commonality and diversity 73
5.4.4 Teaching and learning in relation to the curriculum 74
5.4.5 Progression and assessment 74
5.4.6 Resourcing and redress 75
5.5 OTHER ISSUES AFFECTING POLITICS, POLICY AND PRACTICE (RELATING TO ASSESSMENT) 75
5.6 CONCLUDING COMMENTS 75

CHAPTER 6: THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE WITHIN THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE (KZNDEC) 77

6.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE (EHL) WITHIN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS) 77
6.2 ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE EHL NCS 77
6.2.1 Philosophical underpinnings 77
6.2.2 The type of curriculum envisaged 77
6.2.3 Planning of assessment 79
6.2.4 The purpose of assessment of English Home Language 80
6.2.5 How assessment will take place 81
6.2.6 The absence of the writing portfolio 81
6.2.7 The relationship between English Home Language and CASS 82
6.2.8 Criticism of NCS assessment 83
6.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS 84

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 86

7.1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS 86
7.2 CONCLUSIONS 87
7.2.1 Perceived problems in the NCS 88
7.2.1.1 Type of English curriculum 88
7.2.1.2 Type of assessment seen as important (as reflected in policy and practice) 88
7.2.1.3 Function of assessment 89
7.2.1.4 Role of continuous assessment (CASS) 89
7.2.1.5 Weighting of CASS in terms of the final examination 89
7.2.1.6 Role of the educator in shaping CASS 89
7.2.1.7 Final examinations 90
7.2.1.8 Nature of the final examination 90
7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS 91
7.3.1 Assessment and reporting in terms of learning outcomes 91
7.3.2 The relationship between CASS and the final examination 92
7.3.3 The reintroduction of a writing portfolio 93
7.3.4 The role of the final examination 93
7.4 FINAL COMMENTS 93

BIBLIOGRAPHY 95

APPENDICES 103

APPENDIX A: Diagram highlighting the role of assessment within the education process 103
APPENDIX B: The Programme of Assessment Guidelines for Grade 12 English Home Language 104

KEY WORDS

Christian National Education (CNE); Formative assessment; Further Education and Training (FET); Natal Education Department (NED); National Curriculum Statement (NCS); National Qualifications Framework (NQF); National Senior Certificate (NSC); Outcomes-based Education (OBE); Senior Certificate (SC); South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA); Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG); Programme of Assessment Guidelines (PAG); School Assessment System (SAS); Summative assessment

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

ANC	African National Congress
AS	Assessment Standard
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CHED	Committee of Heads of Education Departments
CNE	Christian National Education
CUMSA	A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa
DNE	Department of National Education
DoE	National Department of Education
EFL	English First Language
EHL	English Home Language
ERS	Education Renewal Strategy
FET	Further Education and Training
HEQC	Higher Education Qualifications Council
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
JMB	Joint Matriculation Board
LO	Learning Outcome
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NECC	National Education Co-ordination Committee
NED	Natal Education Department
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NSC	National Senior Certification
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PAG	Programme of Assessment Guidelines
SAFCERT	South African Certification Council
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAS	School Assessment System
SCE	Senior Certificate Examination
WPET	White Paper on Education and Training

INSPIRATION

This day was only the first of many similar ones for the emancipated Mole, each of them longer and fuller of interest as the ripening summer moved onward. He learnt to swim and to row, and he entered into the joy of running water; and with his ear to the reed-stems he caught, at intervals, something of what the wind went whispering so constantly among them.

FROM: ***THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS***

For us as human beings, the process of "lifelong" learning offers us the chance at "emancipation": emancipation from misguided beliefs and old ways of "seeing" and "doing". By proactively seeking to "[put our] … ear to the [reed-stem we too may catch] … at intervals, something of what the wind [whispers] … so constantly among [us]".

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

"I have spread my dreams under your feet;

Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams"

W. B. Yeats

(in Rowntree 1987:xiii)

CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

My intention in undertaking this research is to investigate differences in assessment between two systems of education – to see if, and how, assessment policies have changed, and the effects that these changes have had, and could have, on the learning population. In doing so, I soon became aware of the reality that the South African understanding of the term **educational assessment** is driven and informed by the final Grade 12 (Matriculation) Senior Certificate examinations that are written in October / November of each year. When one takes into account the nature of such examinations – high-stakes, once-off, summative assessments that rank and certify learners – it becomes clear that the manner in which learning in schools takes place has to be focused on them. Or does it? What is assessment? What are the various types of assessment? What are the aims of assessment? And, more importantly: what are the links between assessment and real learning?

The year 2006 heralded the official beginning of the Further Education and Training (FET) band of education at Grade 10 level, within the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS). This year (2008) will see the first cohort of learners who will write the 'new' National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations informed by the NCS. How will the NCS impact on learners, teachers, schools and the system of education as a whole? How is it different to past policy and does it represent an improvement on the past? More importantly, will the NCS encourage schools to approach assessment – and hence learning and teaching – in a different manner? These are some of the critical questions that this study will attempt to address.

In undertaking the research for this study, the following quotation, by Dylan Wiliam (2006:online), struck me as being critical to the whole concept of education, and hence assessment:

> [There is an] … old joke about schools being places where children go to watch teachers work. And it's becoming worse and worse because we're under more and more pressure to do more. The hard thing is to say you get more learning by getting the students to do more of the work. You can't do anybody else's learning for them. We believe that in our heads, but we don't believe it in our hearts because, when the pressure is on, we revert to telling. At the time, it seems the right thing to do but we know it isn't.

The implications of Wiliam's sentiments are vast. Teachers are made to feel that they alone are responsible for their learners' results. This, in turn, contributes to the manner in which teaching and learning take place: the end-result is what Wiliam refers to as "telling"[1]. The nature of the Senior Certificate examination, itself, is responsible for much of this "telling". It is critical that the manner in which assessment takes place within the NCS bring about changes to South African education. We need to develop critically-aware learners who have the necessary skills, knowledge and values to adapt to an ever-changing world.

1.2 ASSESSMENT VIEWED WITHIN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Strategies have always been used to measure the ability of learners in schools. Indeed, Siebörger (2004:5) states that "assessment has *always* been part of education" (my emphasis). Such strategies (often referred to as traditional types of assessment) have largely focused on 'pen and paper' methods, notably tests, examinations and written exercises (cf. Reddy 2004:37). 'Pen and paper' methods, however, constitute only *one* type of assessment.

Over time, as a result of changes within educational philosophy, as well as curriculum development, internationally, assessment strategies have become more diverse, and an attempt has been made to focus on the accurate reporting of learners' ability.

The manner in which assessment takes place within an education system, can give an accurate reflection of the education system as a whole. This is corroborated by Rowntree (1987:1) who states that if "we wish to discover the truth about an education system, we must look into its assessment procedures". What are the implications of such a statement? Like many other systems, the education system is dependent on the stakeholders involved in it; these include, *inter alia,* education officials, educators, parents and learners[2]. In view of the human element within the system and, as a result, the personal nature of the teaching process, it is often difficult to gauge just how effective the education process really is. However, when one broaches the notion of assessment procedures, one encounters something infinitely more tangible: the *how, why* and *by what means* of assessment can be studied, analysed and

[1] Throughout this dissertation, quotation marks have been used as follows: double quotation marks have been used for direct quotations and subsequent references to direct quotations; in all other instances, single quotation marks have been used.
[2] It is acknowledged that politics also plays an important role in the education process and that education often becomes a political tool in the hands of unscrupulous politicians.

reported on. In so doing the "truth" about an education system – i.e. the realities as they exist – can be brought to the fore.

On 24 March 1997, the then Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu, unveiled the new South African curriculum – Curriculum 2005[3] – underpinned by the philosophy of Outcomes-based Education (OBE). In theory, the new curriculum reflected a radical departure from the past which had, for the most part, been informed by the philosophy of Christian National Education (CNE) and had consisted of segregated education systems. The intended aims of the new curriculum were outlined as follows; to:

- integrate education and training;
- promote lifelong learning for all South Africans;
- be based on outcomes rather than content;
- equip all learners with knowledge, competencies and orientations needed to be successful after completing their studies;
- encompass a culture of human rights, multi-lingualism, multi-culturalism and a sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building; and
- aim at producing thinking, competent future citizens (DoE 1997:7).

Notwithstanding the need to eradicate the legacy of apartheid on South African education, such aims are also in keeping with the worldwide trends of increasing globalisation and internationalisation, rooted firmly within the philosophy of post-modernism (cf. Christie 1997:114ff). In addition, Du Toit and Du Toit (2004:3) contend that "it seems as though schooling has not been keeping up with the challenges of real-life situations". The aims of OBE appear to attempt to counteract this trend. Despite the fact that OBE has attracted significant attention – much of it negative in nature – the decision to implement the system had far-reaching effects for the education system as a whole. In view of the nature of OBE (i.e. being outcomes-driven), the process of assessment has, at least in theory, been significantly affected. Political expediency has also had a direct bearing on the assessment process. Reddy (2004:32) highlights a possible reason for this, by confirming that "changing patterns of educational assessment are underpinned by philosophical approaches to assessment and education, and are often linked to political interests".

[3] On 8 February 2000, Professor Linda Chisholm was asked by the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, to undertake a review of 'Curriculum 2005'. The review committee recommended the revision and streamlining of the existing curriculum framework in such a way that the curriculum could be implemented and understood by all teachers. This resulted in the adoption of 'Curriculum 21', a name which also elicited a lot of criticism. The differences between 'Curriculum 2005' and 'Curriculum 21' are not within the scope of this dissertation. For a concise comparison of the aforementioned curricula differences, consult Coetzer (2001:79-81).

In theory, the nature of OBE has dictated a complete paradigm shift away from the past in the way that learners are educated. Gipps in Reddy (2004:37) defines the term 'paradigm shift' as:

> … a set of interrelated concepts that provide the framework within which we see or understand a particular problem or activity. The paradigm we choose would then determine what we look for, the way in which we construe what we observe and solve emerging problems.

This paradigm shift therefore necessitates a *re-evaluation* of the methods of assessment by which a learner's progress is measured. But just how different or wholly 'new' are these assessment methods? Can one glean anything from past assessment methods? Are there *any* lessons that one could learn from past South African systems of education? Is the past *totally* without merit? Furthermore, are these 'new' assessment methods in line with current international research? And lastly, within the South African context, are such assessment methods feasible?

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Little research has been conducted on similarities and differences between current and past assessment practice, and on whether 'new' assessment practice indeed constitutes an improvement. Essentially, we do not know whether or not the Department's claims are true. Furthermore, little research has been conducted on the possible value of past assessment practice.

Consequently, the following research question may be posed:

To what extent do current assessment practices represent an improvement on former assessment practice, and are they feasible within the South African context?

The aim of the study is therefore **to compare current assessment methods with assessment methods used in the past (prior to 1996) and to assess their feasibility within the current South African context.**

In light of this aim, this study has the following **objectives**:

- To **investigate** the types of methods used prior to the implementation of the FET system;
- To **discuss** the nature of current assessment methods (specifically in English Home Language);

- To **compare** the findings of the investigation and discussion (bullets 1 and 2 above), highlighting similarities and / or differences;
- To **analyse** and **critique** the feasibility of such assessment methods (compared in bullets 1 and 2 above) within the current South African context, and in terms of current international assessment practice); and
- To **present** recommendations, based on the analysis and critique (bullet 4 above).

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Assessment plays a critical role in the teaching and learning process. It is ultimately what drives the education system. As such, it needs to be finely tuned so as to enhance the system of education. This is corroborated by a British Task Group on Assessment and Testing Report, which states that "promoting children's learning is the principal aim of schools. Assessment lies at the heart of this process" (in Weeden, Winter & Broadfoot 2002:12).

Although flawed in many respects, the South African system of education has a long history. Thus, to merely dismiss the past is naïve. Wood (in Murphy & Torrance 1988:3) places this in perspective when he states that

> Often when a call is made to replace X with Y it is conveniently forgotten that *X has usually been the subject of much discussion and reflection over the years*, whatever its shortcomings now appear to be, and that Y is untried and unexamined and, quite conceivably, is floated on a tide of euphoric expectation which is quite unrealistic. Sometimes it is better to patch up X and *spend more time developing* Y (my emphases).

Hence, a comparison of current and previous assessment (relating in this instance specifically to English First / Home Language) would attempt to show whether or not the complete dismissal of 'old' methods is indeed entirely fair, advisable and justifiable. Furthermore, it is equally important to critically analyse and critique current policy in terms of acceptable practice.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Assessment impacts on every teacher. Tanner and Jones (2008:2) state that "assessment is central to the processes of learning and teaching …". However, although theoretical information on assessment – in

the form of policy documents – abounds, teachers have little that is concrete and practical with which to grapple. In this regard Reddy (2004:31) maintains that "while policies and documents provide broad guidelines and general approaches to change, the actual getting to grips with it and implementation takes place in classrooms by educators". From personal experience, at in-service training courses relating to the implementation of the new curriculum, virtually no assistance is given to teachers with regard to assessment practice. In fact, educators are often told that assessment policy has 'not yet been finalised'. This study is therefore significant in that it could add to the existing body of knowledge on assessment within the South African context. It seeks to highlight for all stakeholders how assessment practice impacts upon the curriculum process, and could also allow for reflection on the assessment process, possibly leading to greater confidence that the system of education is seeking to make use of more fair, accurate, effective and contextually-relevant methods of assessment.

Hence, the Education Department will be provided with data that will allow for a more objective view of assessment. They may also possibly learn from the past to improve the present and future, and may gain further insight into developing assessment methods that will enhance the system of education. Teachers will be given the opportunity to better understand methods of assessment, and how assessment impacts on learning and teaching. They could possibly be given the means to adapt 'old' methods and enable them to use 'new' methods, thereby realising important differences. One of the most important lessons to which they may be exposed is that assessment is a *process* rather than a *product*. Learners will benefit from their teachers using the best, contextually-relevant assessment methods, leading to the potential for more accurate, fair and effective measuring and reporting of their ability, and to enhanced learning opportunities. Lastly, the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) on Assessment, South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and Higher Education Qualifications Council (HEQC) might also derive benefit from the study.

The study also offers the potential groundwork for further study into the assessment process and how assessment can be used positively to enhance curriculum development, learning and teaching.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Rowntree (1987:2) contends that many writers on assessment "appear to regard [it] as non-problematic … [and tend to] gloss over … fundamental questions about whether what we are doing is

the right thing …". Yet, in view of the central place that assessment should enjoy within the curriculum, this in itself is problematic.

Chapters 2 to 6 (inclusive) of this study constitute the literature review, which includes document analysis. In Chapter 2, a wide range of recent primary and secondary sources (including books, journals, newspaper articles and internet resources) will be consulted regarding the issue of what constitutes assessment within the South African context. In chapter 3, a range of historical documents will be consulted to determine the role that assessment played at secondary level (Standards 8 – 10) in the Natal Education Department (NED). Furthermore, books, journal articles, syllabi, departmental documentation, newspaper articles and internet resources (where possible) will be consulted. Chapter 4 will focus specifically on the assessment of English First Language (EFL), in terms of the NED's assessment policy (discussed in the previous chapter). This will be accomplished through reference to the syllabus then in use, as well as supporting documentation. In chapter 5, a range of current documents will be consulted to determine the role that assessment plays in the Further Education and Training (FET) level (Grades 10 – 12) of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in the South African Department of Education. Chapter 6 will focus specifically on the assessment of English Home Language, in terms of the NCS's assessment policy (discussed in the previous chapter).

With the adoption of a new curriculum that stresses the importance of new ways of 'seeing' and 'doing' (not least of which relates to assessment practice), it seems imperative that we evaluate whether or not 'what we are doing is the right thing'. This can only be accomplished by way of comparison with international practice.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Nature of the research

The research conducted here is an example of historical-educational research. It comprises of the historical-educational research method, a literature study, a case study, oral history and document analysis. As such, it may clearly be classified as a qualitative study. Fouché and Delport (2002:79) define a qualitative study broadly as

> research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It also produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. It thus involves identifying the participants beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena.

The following guidelines offered by Marshall and Rossman (in Fouché & Delport 2002:80) confirm why the qualitative approach in this instance is the preferred one; it is:

- research that delves into complexities and processes;
- research that seeks to explore where and why policy, folk wisdom and practice do not work; and
- research on unknown societies or innovative systems.

1.7.2 Types of sources utilised

In the search for (reliable) evidence with reference to the present theme, the researcher made use of primary and secondary sources. In accordance with the requirements of the historical-educational research method (cf. 1.7.3 below), every single source has been carefully and purposefully checked to ensure that information that has been included in this study, is correct, trustworthy and reliable.

1.7.2.1 Primary sources

A primary source may be defined as a source "which came into existence in the period under research" (Bell 1999:108). Such sources include education department syllabi, reports and bulletins, newspaper clippings, government reports, and documentation relating to assessment and outcome-based education. Such sources, relating to the Natal Education Department (NED), have been largely difficult to locate. In contrast, in view of the implementation of the new curriculum, primary sources relating to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) are easily accessible and available.

1.7.2.2 Secondary sources

A secondary source may be defined as an "[interpretation] of events of that period based on primary sources" (Bell 1999:108). A computer-based search for literature pertinent to the topic was conducted. A careful selection of relevant sources was made from the titles suggested. This selection was based, *inter alia*, on the authors' academic standing and the thoroughness with which the research was conducted.

1.7.3 Research Methodology

As reflected in Section 1.7.1, the following research methods were employed in conducting the research for this study:

1.7.3.1 The historical-educational research method

Hopkins (in Venter & Verster 1986:25) writes:

> The goal of historical research in education is to clarify present day practices and problems by providing a historical knowledge base … Knowledge gained through historical inquiry can provide the foundation for better understanding of questions under current consideration, and can contribute to a better understanding of education concerns.

In this study, current assessment practice will be compared to assessment practice conducted in the past. In so doing it is hoped that "through historical inquiry", a "foundation for [a] better understanding" of assessment in the South African context, can be provided (cf. Venter & Verster 1986:25). In the light of this explanation, the historical-educational research method has been selected. This method comprises the following steps which, dependent on the phenomenon which is being investigated, sometimes overlap or may also be carried out in a different order and therefore are continually interacting:

- the **identification, demarcation** and **formulation** of the problem or theme;
- an intensive investigation into and study of the **problem / theme** as it exists in the present;
- the **formulation** of the aims and objectives of the study;
- the **collection / compilation** of the 'raw material' (past information) with regard to the problem or theme;
- the **investigation / examination** of the collected information / facts in order to eliminate what is not of educational value today, and possibly in the future; to determine the authenticity of the (educational) information and to ascertain how accurate and reliable it is;
- the further **analysis, ordering, integration** and **interpretation** of the information which is found to be valid and reliable and which allows the researcher to answer the research question posed; and
- the descriptive and explanatory presentation of the information in the form of a **research report**.

During the last **four steps** or phases, use is made of a number of specialised **techniques**. These include the application of **external criticism** to determine the validity of a document and **internal criticism** to analyse the meaning of the statements in the document, which has already been proved to be genuine, and to determine their accuracy and credibility.

1.7.3.2 Literature Study

Strydom (2002:210) states that "the prospective researcher can only hope to undertake meaningful research if he is fully up to date with existing knowledge on his prospective subject". He continues that "all available literature that is broadly available and specifically relevant" should be traced. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:108) state that "literature for a review includes many types of sources: professional journals, reports, scholarly books and monographs, government documents, dissertations, and electronic sources". In addition to an initial literature search conducted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) library, the researcher further searched for relevant sources at the Edgewood Campus of the University of Natal (Durban), through inter-library loans from other universities, and electronically by way of the internet. The SA Media facility (hosted by Sabinet) was particularly useful in locating newspaper articles relating to the NED.

1.7.3.3 Case Study

In a qualitative study, a case refers to a "single entity or phenomenon examined in depth" (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:38). In this instance assessment within the province of KwaZulu-Natal at two time periods (i.e. 1982-1995 and 2006 onwards) is being studied. Bell (1999:10-11) highlights the importance of the case study as an approach to educational research by stating that

> The great strength of the case-study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work. These processes may remain hidden in a large scale survey but may be crucial to the success or failure of systems or organizations.

1.7.3.4 Oral History

Without the use of 'oral history', it would be impossible to piece together much of the history of the NED. Despite extensive searches, it would appear that no written source exists that makes substantial reference to the history of assessment (of English) in the NED. Although a book entitled *Taking Stock:*

The Natal Education Department Looks Back (Haw 1995a) initially appeared to hold some promise, it turned out to be merely a general history of the department. As such, the researcher attempted to contact subjects who had held prominent positions in the NED.

The first of these subjects was **Clive Talbot**, whose name the researcher first encountered in the NED publication *Bulletin 48: Assessment* (NED 1989). Initially, it seemed impossible to locate Talbot. The researcher was, however, able to locate a colleague, **Anne Oberholzer** (also in *Bulletin 48: Assessment* (NED 1989)), who stated that Talbot now lived in Canada. Using the Canadian telephone directory (available on the internet), it was possible to get in touch with Talbot, who was subsequently willing to correspond via email. Talbot was Chief Superintendent of Education within the NED, responsible for Curriculum affairs, including the Natal Senior Certificate examination. Upon retirement in 1991 from the NED, he was appointed as Director of Formal Assessment in the Independent Examination Board (IEB) in order to design, plan and implement the IEB Senior Certificate Examination. He was also a member of the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT) as well as its successor, UMALUSI. Making use of the 'snowballing' technique ("a strategy in which each successive participant or group is named by a preceding group or individual"; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:403), the researcher was able to locate further subjects within a short period of time.

Talbot suggested that the researcher also draw on the expertise of **Anne Oberholzer** (contacted earlier), who had joined the Curriculum Affairs unit at the NED in 1988, under his directorship, and who had a significant interest in assessment policy and procedure. She had dealt with curriculum research and development, her particular focus being examinations and assessment research. The researcher was able to ascertain that she now works for the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). She too, was willing to correspond via email.

In 1995, whilst completing his Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) at the University of Natal (Durban campus), the researcher had been lectured by **Joan Ashworth** – then Superintendent of Education within the NED (Subject Advisor for English First Language) – in English Method. When the NED was amalgamated into the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC), she became the most senior advisor for languages. The researcher contacted Ashworth, now teaching at Crawford College (La Lucia campus). She kindly granted an interview. At this stage, Ashworth was weeks away from emigrating to the United Kingdom.

Ashworth suggested that the researcher contact **Manfred Schroenn**, previously also a Superintendent of Education within the NED. Schroenn is now retired and resides in Pietermaritzburg. Schroenn was also kind enough to grant the researcher an interview. He also provided the researcher with documentation produced by the NED, much of which is now extremely difficult to locate.

The historian Gottschalk (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001:505) states that "the 'whole past' can be known to the researcher only 'through the surviving record of it …, and most of history-as-record is only the surviving part of the recorded part of the remembered part of the observed part of the whole'". Each of these subjects provided the researcher with critical information which, it would appear, is no longer available in other sources. Furthermore, owing to the fact that there were four individuals, the researcher was able to make use of 'triangulation' (i.e. the use of multiple perspectives to interpret data; cf. McMillan & Schumacher 2001:409), and thus verify the source material – either orally or against documentation provided.

1.7.3.5 Document Analysis

Another method of significant importance is 'document analysis'. Krippendorff (in Bell 1999:111) defines document analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context". In this study, document analysis was used to ascertain what documents (such as syllabi, departmental bulletins and departmental guides) revealed about attitudes towards assessment policy. The potential of an analysis of such documents can reveal, amongst other things, bias and contradictions between stated policy and practice. Documentation from a number of sources will be analysed, compared and critiqued.

1.7.4 Constraints of the study

The following problems were encountered when conducting the research:

- A lack of co-operation from government departments and agencies, when requesting information;
- The fact that educational documents from the apartheid era are – by virtue of their association – apparently not considered worthy of retention and have thus been discarded[4]; and

[4] One might almost ascribe the term 'document cleansing' to this process. It would seem that anything within education that stems from the past is considered worthless and hence unworthy of retention. For the researcher of History of Education history, this is extremely problematic.

- Political undertones associated with the research, in view of the research topic's political associations and the sensitive nature of the informing philosophies.

1.7.5 Delimitation of the study

The study will focus on the assessment process as it took place within the former Natal Education Department (NED), from 1982-1995, and as it is currently taking place in the FET phase, from 2006 onwards, focusing on, but not limited to, Standard 10 / Grade 12. Specific focus will relate to the assessment of English First / Home Language.

The reasons for the above delimitation are as follows:

- 1982 was the year in which assessment policy was changed in the NED;
- 1995 was the year in which the NED ceased to function; between 1996 and 2005 (inclusive), education in KwaZulu-Natal fell under the auspices of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. The policies of this 'new' department[5] are not within the scope of this study; and
- 2006 was the first year in which the new Further Education and Training (FET) curriculum was implemented.

Furthermore, research on 'assessment' encompasses a wide and complex field. Hence, it would be impossible and unrealistic to attempt a complete discussion of the whole phenomenon of 'assessment'. Furthermore, an in-depth discussion and evaluation of the philosophies of education within which the assessment process took and takes place, i.e. 'Christian National Education' (CNE) [in the previous system of education] and 'Outcomes-based Education' (OBE) [in the current system of education] is unfeasible within the confines of this study.

Hence, the study was further delimited in the following way; the study will include references to:

- Important terminology relating to the assessment process, and a brief contextualisation of the assessment process;

[5] The NED was only one of five departments which made up the new KZNDEC.

- Assessment methods in the past (relating to the NED between the years 1982 – 1995 (inclusive)), and how they impact on the curriculum;
- Assessment methods in the present (relating to the NCS from 2006 onwards), and how they seek to impact on the curriculum; and
- The English First / Home Language curriculum and how it was / is assessed.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION AND DEMARCATION

The progression of the study can be traced in the chapter demarcation that follows:

In *Chapter 1*, the research topic is introduced and demarcated. The choice of topic is motivated and the significance of the study is discussed. The methodology employed is outlined, and key concepts within the study are defined.

In *Chapter 2*, the need for an effective – yet realistic – system of assessment, within the South African context, is discussed. The term 'assessment' is defined in more detail, and the relationship between 'formative' and 'summative' assessment is highlighted.

Chapter 3 discusses the role of assessment at secondary level (Standards 8 – 10) in the Natal Education Department (NED). The NED's view of, and system of, assessment is contextualised within the South African system of education as a whole, at the time.

Chapter 4 proceeds to focus on the assessment of English First Language within the NED. Assessment methods are rooted within the prevailing philosophy of the department and significant features of assessment policy are brought to the fore and critiqued.

In *Chapter 5* the role of assessment at Further Education and Training (FET) level (Grades 10 – 12) in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is discussed. The adoption of the NCS is set against previous reform initiatives – state-led and otherwise. Tensions between politics, policy and practice are explored.

Chapter 6 proceeds to focus on the assessment of English Home Language within the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). Here too, assessment methods are rooted within the

prevailing philosophy of the department and significant features of assessment policy are brought to the fore and critiqued.

In the *final chapter*, conclusions relating to the previous chapters are presented. In particular, the relationship between continuous assessment and the final examination is highlighted. Finally, recommendations for the improvement of the current system of assessment are provided.

1.9 EXPLANATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following explanation of key concepts is provided to:

- ensure clarity of meaning; and
- avoid possible confusion on the part of the reader.

The 'key concepts' relate to those used in the title of the dissertation, as well as concepts directly related to it. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:506) highlight the importance of a conceptual analysis by stating that it "clarifies the meaning of a concept by describing the *essential or generic* meaning, the *different* meanings, and the *appropriate usage* of the concept" (my emphases).

1.9.1 Explication of concepts used in the title

1.9.1.1 Assessment

According to the University of Northern Iowa's Office of Academic Assessment (UNI 2008:online) *assessment* is a participatory, iterative process that:

- provides data/information you need on your students' learning;
- engages you and others in analyzing and using this data/information to confirm and improve teaching and learning;
- produces evidence that students are learning the outcomes you intended;
- guides you in making educational and institutional improvements; and
- evaluates whether changes made improve / impact student learning, and documents the learning and your efforts.

From this definition, one may deduce that assessment is more than merely according a learner a mark for a particular activity or piece of work. Assessment is a holistic process that informs teaching and learning on the part of all stakeholders (see also Section 2.3, and Appendix A). Tanner and Jones (2003:2) offer three critical, yet succinct, statements about what assessment is:

- Assessment is about information;
- Assessment is about communication; and
- Assessment is about teaching and learning.

1.9.1.2 English Home Language

The term *English Home Language* is the nomenclature in use in the current system of education. Technically it refers to the study of a language (in this case, English) if it is one's mother tongue. In the previous (apartheid) system of education, reference was made to *English First Language*. Both references are in fact misleading. Many learners study English as a main language for whom it is neither a 'home' nor a 'first' language.

1.9.1.3 Senior Secondary School

The term *Senior Secondary School* refers to the last three years of secondary school. In the current system of education, the last three classes are referred to as Grades 10, 11 and 12. In the previous system of education, the last three classes were referred to as Standards 8, 9 and 10, respectively. In this study, use is made of both systems of reference, as applicable to the respective systems of education.

1.9.1.4 KwaZulu-Natal

The term *KwaZulu-Natal* refers to one of the nine South African provinces. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC) serves all schools within the province. The Natal Education Department (NED) was restricted to white schools within the province of Natal, one of the four provinces in the former (apartheid) South Africa.

1.9.2 Explication of concepts related to the title

1.9.2.1 Senior Certificate examination

The term *Senior Certificate examination* refers to the Standard 10 / Grade 12 examinations taken by learners in their final year of schooling. The examinations were / are largely academic in nature.

1.9.2.2 Learner

In view of the notion of 'life-long learning', the term *learner* is, as far as possible, used throughout this dissertation as it encompasses all learners, irrespective of age. However, in quoted sources (particularly those relating to the previous system of education), the term *pupil* is substituted.

1.9.2.3 Christian National Education

The term *Christian National Education* (CNE) refers to the philosophy of education which, for the most part, informed the system of education during apartheid. The merits and demerits of CNE as a philosophy of education are not within the scope of this study and form the basis for an entire study on their own. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that CNE is often denigrated as a philosophy associated with the National Party and their policy of apartheid. Although CNE was used as a means to place white Afrikaners in a privileged position, it should be noted that CNE had undergone numerous other phases prior to this, each with an inherent purpose.

1.9.2.4 Outcomes-based Education

The term *Outcomes-based Education* (OBE) refers to the broad, overarching philosophy which informed the original 'Curriculum 2005' and which underpins the National Curriculum Statement. It should be noted that 'Curriculum 2005' and Outcomes-based Education (OBE) are not synonymous terms. 'Curriculum 2005' refers to the new South African curriculum, whereas OBE refers to the philosophical basis of the new curriculum. OBE originated from the work of educational scientists such as Ralph Tyler, John Carrol and Benjamin Bloom (cf. Du Toit & Du Toit 2004:9). The merits and demerits of OBE as a curriculum model are not within the scope of this study and form the basis for an entire study on their own.

1.9.2.5 Formative Assessment

Broadly speaking, "formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes" (CCSSO 2008:online). The British Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) refers to formative assessment as "assessment *for* learning" (their emphasis) and advise that it should:

- be embedded in the teaching and learning process of which it is an essential part;
- share learning goals with pupils;
- help pupils to know and to recognize the standards to aim for;
- provide feedback which leads pupils to identify what they should do next to improve;
- have a commitment that every pupil can improve;
- involve both teacher and pupils reviewing and reflecting on pupils' performance and progress; and
- involve pupils in self-assessment (QCA in Tanner & Jones 2003:43-44).

1.9.2.6 Summative Assessment

Broadly speaking, "summative assessment is not traditionally regarded as having any intrinsic learning value. It is usually undertaken at the end of a period of learning in order to generate a grade that reflects the student's performance" (HEA 2008:online). The QCA refers to summative assessment as "assessment *of* learning" (their emphasis). They further assert that "it is about making judgements about pupils' *performance* up to that point against National Standards and level descriptions. Such information is used for managerial purposes including communicating with parents and other stakeholders" (QCA in Tanner & Jones 2003:14).

1.9.2.7 Globalisation

Gibson-Graham (in Stromquist & Monkman 2000:4) offers the following definition of *globalisation*:

> a set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the internationalization of production and financial markers, the internationalization of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunications system.

The process of globalisation makes specific demands on education, which need to be borne in mind. Such demands include:

- The realisation that the learner will increasingly become part of a global village. As such his / her education will be not be restricted in terms of time and space;
- Preparation of the learner for involvement in a global economy as opposed to a more narrowly conceived community-based preparation;
- An understanding of, and commitment towards, finding solutions for the world's (especially Africa's) problems;
- An increased focus on Mathematic, Science and Technology – areas of study widely held to be critical for economic success; and
- An ability to think creatively and solve problems (as opposed to mere rote learning) so as to enable learners to be able to adapt to an ever-changing work environment (Claassen in Lemmer 1999:34,37-38).

1.9.2.8 Post-modernism

The term *post-modernism* is not one that is simple or easy to define. This is due to the fact that it is used in a number of disciplines, and the exact period to which it refers is extremely vague. Beck (1993:online) asserts that

> Postmodernists have helped us see that reality is more complex than we had imagined. It does not exist objectively, 'out there', simply to be mirrored by our thoughts. Rather, it is in part a human creation. We mould reality in accordance with our needs, interests, prejudices, and cultural traditions.

In terms of this explanation it can be inferred that the idea of *change* is one of the key tenets associated with *post-modernism.* With regard to education and schools, Beck (1993:online) states that "schools must encourage and assist students to engage in general theorizing about reality and life" and feels that "school studies are often too abstract and of little apparent relevance".

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to provide a background / rationale for the study. The topic has been introduced and demarcated, the choice of topic has been motivated and the significance of the study has been discussed. The methodology employed has been outlined, and key concepts within the study have been defined.

CHAPTER 2

ASSESSMENT: REALISTIC APPROACHES WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

"… [T]eachers cannot create learning — only learners can do that. What teachers can do is to create the situations in which students learn"

(Thompson & Wiliam 2007:online)

CHAPTER 2

2.1 CONTEXTUALISATION

Schools within the South African context remain sites of contest. That many schools are trying to discard the past is without question. Whether or not they are succeeding, however, is debatable. In a speech by the Premier of Gauteng, Mr Mbhazima Shilowa, on the occasion to mark the release of the 2007 matriculation results, he stated:

> In spite of all concerted efforts to provide equal, accessible and quality education for all, the reality is that the (sic) *many of our students continue to learn under difficult conditions*. There [is] still *inequality in education* influenced largely by historical factors, levels of poverty that exist in society as a whole, availability of classrooms, the quality of teaching, availability of learner-teachers support material as well as the level of parental involvement in education (Shilowa 2008:online) (my emphases).

It is noteworthy too, to remember that "education is driven by the philosophies of those in power" (Mda 1999:224). Furthermore, educators have the tendency to think that the manner in which they do things is the 'right' way. They are reluctant to embrace new ways. Murphy and Torrance (1988:15) place the impact of such a belief on assessment in perspective when they state that "if education and educators are resistant to change then the message is that assessment practices may be the hardest part of all to move".

With all of this in mind, it is poignant to reflect on the following extract from an on-line 'Simple Living' Newsletter:

> What kind of world do we want? What are we preparing our children to do and be when they grow up?
>
> Tell me, there is no truer statement than: *what we prepare for is what we get*. Look around at the world we live in. What you see is no accident. What you see is what you've prepared for. To change what we have, we must go back to what we do with children and *prepare them for something different*. This can seem scary and risky, but how else will we change our society if we don't change what we prepare for?
>
> *The truth is – if we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always got*
>
> (Folger 1999:online) (my emphases).

These words are haunting and are so true for most educators. Unless we critically reflect on what we do and why we do it, the modus operandi will remain the status quo. These words should be reason enough to examine what we do, and more importantly, how and why we do it.

2.2 THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION MILIEU

It would simply be a gross understatement to assert that politics has led, and in many ways continues to lead, to the severe problems experienced in South African education at the present time (cf. Mda 1999:224 [Section 2.1]). In an article entitled 'Educational Politics in the Transition Period', Badat (1997:15) maintains that "the tendency has been for educational politics to be propelled by *issues external* to the immediate educational sphere, and consistent and proactive engagement with issues and *dynamics internal to education has been relatively limited*" (my emphasis). A decade later, the statement could be similarly applied to the current state of education, albeit within a considerably different political framework.

The title of this chapter – 'Assessment: *Realistic approaches* within the South African Context' (my emphasis) – has therefore been carefully chosen. Education does not take place within a vacuum: it is inextricably linked to society; Delors state that "choices in education concern the whole of society" (1996:157) and even more pertinently that "long term planning [of education policies] should be based on in-depth analysis of *reality*[6]" (1996:161) (my emphasis). The formulation of 'Curriculum 2005' (and its subsequent revision) within the philosophical framework of OBE indeed shows an "awareness of world education trends". Wilmot (2003:313) states, for example, that "OBE assessment policy advocates a shift in assessment which *mirrors contemporary international trends*" (my emphasis). Indeed, Claassen (in Lemmer 1999:39) states that the new South African curriculum "has been influenced by experiences in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US". Of concern, however, is the fact that there is little evidence of "accurate diagnoses … [of] social and economic background information" (cf. Delors 1996:161). Nor has cognisance been taken of the effects of OBE in other countries. In this regard, Van Niekerk (in Lemmer 1999:22) highlights the fact that "valuable insights can be gained from others' experiences".

The problem with the restructuring of South African education is that it is not merely a matter of *implementing* a new curriculum. Rather, it is the task of implementing a new curriculum within a largely unfavourable context, educationally and socially. The following factors point to some of the problems that exist within this unfavourable context:

[6] Such a 'reality' includes such factors as "… accurate diagnoses, forward analysis, social and economic background information, awareness of world education trends and assessment of results" (Delors 1996:161).

- Education does not take place within a vacuum. It is *shaped* and *influenced* by the society which it serves[7]. A dysfunctional society thus will inevitably have dysfunctional influences on the education system. A catch-22 situation hence prevails: the education system is expected, in part, to 'shape' South African citizens (society) and uplift society; yet, the 'state' of society often undermines the education process. As a result, society remains static and does not change.

- Political aspirations are often paramount over the real needs of Education (cf. Mda 1999:224 and Badat 1997:15). As a result Education serves Politics, rather than Politics serving Education. It is thus critical that politicians, too, reflect on the "kind of world … [we] want … [and] what … [we are] preparing our children to do and be when they grow up" (cf. Folger 1999:online [Section 2.1]).

- In many instances, the very sites of the education process – schools – are inadequate in terms of resources (both material and physical)[8]. Such inadequacies are often the result of historical legacy but are often also as a result of current apathy and contextual factors. Without the necessary material resources and qualified, committed staff, the education process is largely stifled (cf. Shilowa 2008:online [Section 2.1]).

- Schools do not merely have to contend with the South African context, but have to function within a macro-level, globally. Issues such as globalisation and post-modernism are changing the world as we know it. If schools are to remain relevant, it is critical that they take heed of the effects of such issues.

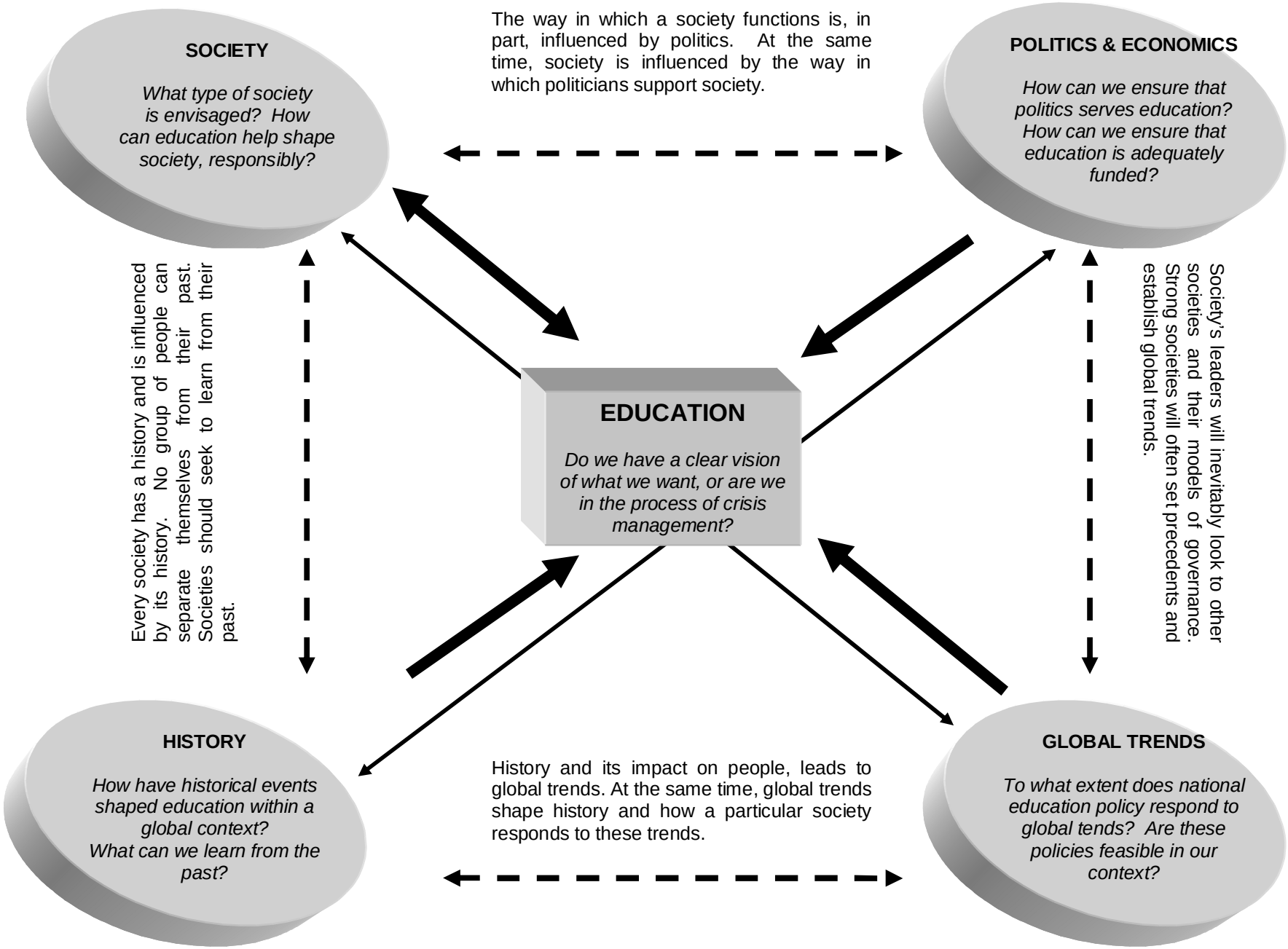
As a result, in terms of these factors, the following mind map emerges. It highlights the fact that education is at the centre of a complex set of factors which exert a considerable influence over it. As can be inferred from the diagram, society and education are inextricably linked. Furthermore, politics and economics, history and global trends all have a profound (negative or positive) impact on the education process.

---

[7] One should also bear in mind that a society itself is – like it or not – hierarchical in nature. Whilst South African society, as a whole, could be labelled 'dysfunctional', there are pockets which are functional. These functional pockets, as it were, are instances where the participants are favoured by, or have the means to work within and around, the factors alluded to above. Interestingly, Jonathan Jansen believes that "… the implementation of Curriculum 2005 is likely to *deepen inequalities* between white, privileged schools and black, under-resourced schools" (Greenstein in Jansen 1998:56) (my emphasis).

[8] South African schools are an excellent means by which to assess the 'state of the nation' (cf. Rowntree 1987:1 [Section 1.2]). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching maintains that "a report card on public education is a report card on the nation: schools can rise no higher than the communities that support them" (Noah 1984:553).

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND THE EDUCATION PROCESS



Earl (2003:1) places the situation in perspective when she states that

> [e]ducational reform in the past decade has felt like a roller coaster ride for most teachers and schools. Schools reflect the changes that are occurring more broadly in society, and there seems to be no end to the changes (economic, cultural, political, and socioeconomic) that schools are expected to keep up with, or even lead.

Closely linked to the issue of curriculum reform is that of assessment. Just as the curriculum has changed and has developed over time, so too has various people's notion of what constitutes (effective) assessment, and how *best* to assess. This is largely as a result of changes in perception of *how* people learn, *what* they learn and *when* they learn it. Appignanesi and Garratt (1999:107) state that there has been an "irreversible change from knower to consumer of knowledge". This change, they argue, is "the corner stone of postmodernity" (Appignanesi & Garratt 1999:107). In light of this shift of emphasis on *accumulation of knowledge* to a *consumer of knowledge*, clearly the manner in which assessment takes place had to change.

2.3 ASSESSMENT DEFINED

In order to define the concept 'assessment', one needs to understand clearly

- *what* the process involves;
- the *relationship* between participants; and
- *how* it relates to, impacts upon and interacts with the curriculum.

To accomplish this, one needs to understand past views of assessment within the curriculum (nationally as well as internationally), as well as the logic or reasoning supporting such views. One is then able to place current trends into context and understand the need for changes in assessment practice.

Traditionally, within the South African context, the assessment of learners has been equated with the stand-alone[9], high-stakes[10], formal process of writing tests and examinations. Furthermore, assessment

[9] Siebörger (2004:2) states that "in the past assessment was rarely integrated with the development process [of the curriculum]".
[10] Janisch (2006:1) states that 'high-stakes' examinations such as the Senior Certificate examinations "make teachers anxious and competitive".

has been seen as something that a "teacher does to learners" (Siebörger 2004:8). This is, however, a very narrow and limiting conception of the term 'assessment': in terms of this association, the function of assessment is to *report* on a learner's achievement (or lack thereof). Holt (in Murphy & Torrance 1988) states that "there are two main reasons why we test children: the first is to threaten them into doing what we want done, and the second is to give us a basis for handing out the rewards and penalties on which the educational system – like all coercive systems – must operate". Some might think that Holt is being awfully cynical, but when one reflects honestly, his comments do not seem far from the truth.

Kellaghan and Greaney (in Hassan 2005:online) highlight some other (less 'conscience-pricking') uses of formal examinations as a means of assessment. These include:

- By providing a specification of clear goals and standards for teachers, and students, they control the disparate elements of the education system by helping to ensure that all schools teach to the same standards;
- They are used in the selection of students for further education and are perceived to assist in the allocation of scarce education benefits in an objective and unbiased way;
- Public examinations have a certification function;
- National assessment can be used to underpin changes in curriculum and teaching methods, and to maintain national standards; and
- Examinations, especially when results are published, may serve an accountability function for teachers and schools.

Examination or assessment at the international level, and at the end of secondary schooling may put a seal of legitimacy of international membership on individuals in a global society, thus facilitating international mobility.

Yet, Hassan (2005:online) also highlights the following negative consequences of viewing assessment as a final 'product' as opposed to an ongoing 'process'[11]; assessment:

[11] Such a view is supported by Murphy and Torrance (1988:10) who state that "prominent assessment methods (as used in public examinations) have tended to distort concepts of education achievement".

- is usually restricted to only one (cognitive) of the several aspects (domains) of the learners' behaviour;
- is pushed to the very end of the teaching-learning process;
- often proves to be a threat to the learner and the teacher, and the curriculum innovators;
- does not encourage innovativeness and creativity in the teacher and the learner;
- often promotes poor study habits on the part of the learners as they may delay preparation for examination to the very end of the learning segment;
- may not permit the true performance of a learner to be determined, since results are easily influenced by fortuitous factors and chance occurrences like sudden illness or luck;
- tends to encourage a 'do-or-die' disposition from students with attendant behaviour such as examination malpractices in the form of examination leakage, impersonation during examination, vandalism and other forms of irregularities; and
- results of examinations are hardly communicated to the learner in any meaningful manner.

Freeman and Lewis (1998:10), however, state that "[m]any different purposes underlie assessment. In practice, they overlap, but they can be grouped under five headings:

- to select;
- to certificate;
- to describe;
- to aid learning; and
- to improve teaching".

Clearly, whereas the first two functions focus on 'product' (i.e. the reporting of results), the remaining three focus on 'process' (i.e. how learning and teaching take place). The assessment process therefore forms an integral part of the learning and teaching process – it is not a separate and discrete entity. Siebörger (2004:10) maintains that by using the word assessment, "one is not just thinking of tests, examinations and written exercises, but also of many other ways of gaining information and giving feedback about the progress of learners". Vandeyar and Killen (2003:123) place this in perspective when they state that in the previous system of education (i.e. pre-OBE), "the only form of meaningfulness and contribution to learning that was attached to most assessment tasks was the

production of marks and promotion to the next grade". Furthermore, the Senior Certificate examination functioned to certificate learners and, in some instances, to provide entry to universities or other institutions of higher learning.

2.4 THE NEED TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

In terms of the discussion thus far, the following facts come to the fore:

- We live in a world that is constantly changing and evolving. Consequently, human beings will need to acquire the skills, knowledge and values necessary to deal with, adapt to and manage these changes. In this regard Sir Christopher Ball (in SAQA 2008:online) refers to learners becoming 'flexible generalists';
- The ongoing, and seemingly unstoppable process of globalisation, has, however, reinforced the fact that nations are at disparate levels of development; yet by virtue of the very process, nations are required to compete globally;
- Education is the primary means by which the world's problems can be addressed at a micro- and a macro-level[12]. As such, it is critical that the education process be effective and relevant, in context. Yet, as has been highlighted (cf. footnote 8), the effectiveness of the education process, at grassroots level, is directly related to the community in which it takes place. Enslin & Pendlebury (1998:263) state that "even well-intentioned policy may undermine the will to change if it ignores teachers' perceptions or the context and conditions of their work". This is endorsed by De Clercq (1997:143) who maintains that

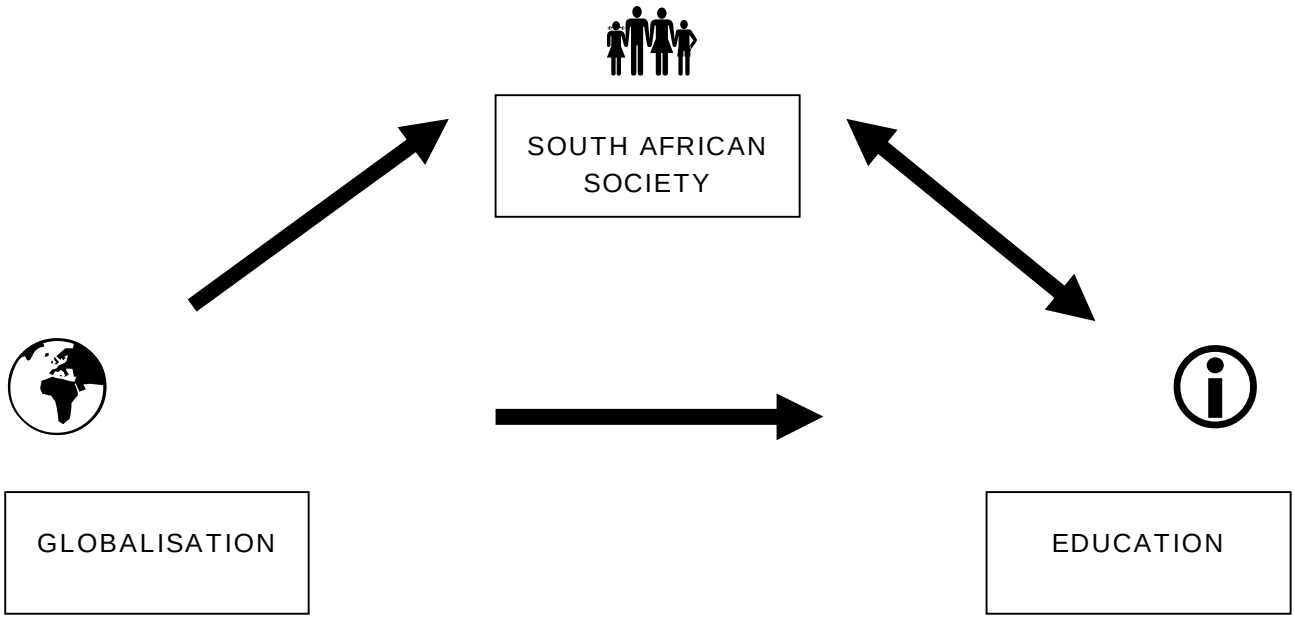
> [Policies] do not take into account the context and dynamics on the ground and are unable to develop strategies to influence the reform process and practices at the lower levels of policy making …; [in essence] … they have an incomplete understanding of the structures, processes, actions and interactions between intended policies and what happens in the process of implementation.

In a recent article entitled 'Curricula Clash Results in Failure', such views and concerns, outlined above, are highlighted. Razina Munshi (2006:28) states that "concern is mounting that the teaching environment in most [South African] schools is *preventing the results expected* from the new

[12] That is, within a local and a global context.

curriculum" (my emphasis). In response to such concerns Penny Vinjevold, the Deputy Director General responsible for the FET at the National Department of Education, stated that the Department is trying to isolate problems. She says that "though there are problems, the implementation of the curriculum must continue" (in Munshi 2006:28).

The relationship between globalisation and education, and the impact on South African society can be displayed diagrammatically, as follows:



It is thus critical when engaging in curriculum reform (and therefore the (re)-structuring of assessment), that these facts be borne in mind. Although education policy undoubtedly needs to be globally relevant, it is critical that:

- it be possible to implement such policy across all socio-economic sectors within South African society; or
- at the very least, that effective support structures be made available to assist educators who experience problems with the new curriculum (and hence assessment).

2.5 WHAT IS MEANT BY 'EFFECTIVE' ASSESSMENT?

Effective assessment is underscored by eleven principles. Vandeyar and Killen (2003:120) state that "when [the] principles are understood they provide a *clear framework* for all the major decisions that teachers need to make on assessment[13]" (my emphasis). Each of these principles will be stated and briefly explained:

Principle	**Explanation**
Fairness	Access to equal opportunities, the provision of equal treatment and the recognition of learners' individuality;
Validity	The ability of the assessment instrument to precisely and accurately measure what it is intended to measure;
Reliability	The ability of the assessment instrument to provide the same results consistently;
Transparency	Complete openness about the assessment procedure among all stakeholders;
Appropriateness	Assessment methods need to suit the assessment activity, assessment criteria and context;
Systematic recording	Recording needs to be carefully, systematically and logically controlled;
Cost effectiveness	Assessment needs to be cost effective, both in terms of time and financial resources;

[13] Murphy and Torrance (1988:9), however, clarify this belief by stating that "by themselves [these constituents of assessment] are totally worthless, unless the assessments that are carried out are *supporting and promoting a worthwhile educational process*" (my emphasis).

Integrated in learning environment	The most effective assessment takes place during the learning programme. It is integrated and it is gathered on an ongoing basis;
Manageability	Assessment methods should fit in with the learning environment – they should not be cumbersome, time consuming or overly intrusive;
Reasonable adjustment	This refers to measures that are adopted to ensure that all learners have equal opportunities. Likewise, they should not be unfairly advantaged; and
Consistency	Given similar circumstances, an assessor should make the same judgement regarding a learner's competence. Consistency also refers to the learner's performance: can it be demonstrated consistently?

(Esiqongweni 2006)

Clearly, therefore, assessment is not something that a teacher should 'do' without giving the process careful consideration. Indeed, Vandeyar and Killen (2003:120) go as far as to say that if these principles (and hence the assessment process) are misunderstood, the "resulting assessment practices are likely to result in the generation of worthless data". Wiliam (2000:105) places the state of school assessment in perspective when he declares that "… the use of educational assessments … have taken a wrong turn". The premise of his argument centres around the fact that summative assessment methods (cf. Sections 1.9.2.6 and 2.6) have been used to provide information on school accountability, i.e. the role of evaluative assessment methods (cf. Section 2.6). He further maintains that "educational assessment has … become divorced from learning, and the huge contribution the assessment can make to learning (i.e. formative assessment) (cf. Sections 1.9.2.5 and 2.6) has been largely lost".

2.6 THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

In contrast to the narrow, traditional view of assessment which has pervaded the education process (cf. Section 2.3), assessment is seen to have four main functions[14]:

- **diagnostic:** to identify learners' current performance
  Data indicates how current performance differs from expected performance. It can be used to identify specific problems that a learner may be experiencing.
- **formative:** to aid learning
  An assessment that helps learners learn; it results in actions that are successful in closing the gap between current and expected performance.
- **summative:** for review, transfer and certification
  An assessment that is used to certify or record end of course performance or predict potential future attainment; the final product of a unit or course; an examination grade.
- **evaluative:** to see how well educators or institutions are performing
  Assessment information that is used to judge the performance of schools or teachers; league tables (Weeden *et al*. 2002:19-20).

These four main functions of assessment highlight the fact that the assessment process is clearly embedded within the curriculum, and hence the learning process. It serves not only to report on learning but to actually enhance and improve learning. (In Appendix A, a diagram highlighting the role of assessment within the education process is shown.)

2.7 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

If one accepts the notion that children's learning is the principle aim of schools, then it also seems logical to accept that this should be the principle focus of schools, and, in view of the curriculum-

[14] Williams and Black (in Weeden *et al.* 2002:19) add, however, that "these terms are … not descriptions of kinds of assessment but rather of *the use to which information arising from the assessments is put*" (authors' emphasis). Such a view is confirmed by Brookhart (in Tanner and Jones (2003:44)) who asserts that "[it is preferable] to use [these] terms to describe the *functions* rather than the *types* of assessment" (author's emphasis).

assessment relationship (cf. Section 2.4), the *principle focus* of assessment procedures. It is through daily interaction with learners that teachers come to know them, not least of which is through the assessment process. In this regard, Rowntree (1987:4) refers to assessment as "human encounter". Hence, when assessment focuses exclusively, or at least predominantly, on the end-product (i.e. a summative assessment), one needs to question whether the *principle aim* of schooling is indeed being fulfilled. Race, Brown and Smith (2005:3) state that "assessment that is mainly summative in its function … gives students very little information, other than frequently confirming their own prejudices about themselves". Consequently, it would seem that the results of a summative assessment are valid only if teachers have taken the time to employ the other types of assessment responsibly and effectively.

2.8 ASSESSMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Weeden *et al*. (2002:16) proffer **five key features** in terms of which schools need to view assessment for the twenty-first century:

- Feature 1: a focus on assessment to empower pupils as learners;
- Feature 2: a recognition of the impact of classroom assessment on the pupil's sense of self, on expectations, on motivation, and on confidence;
- Feature 3: a realisation that assessment should provide guidance to both teacher and pupils about what needs to be learnt next;
- Feature 4: an awareness that assessment should embody an approach to teaching and learning in which the development of long-term dispositions is more important than short-term performance; and
- Feature 5: an approach to assessment that challenges the educational community to develop new approaches and techniques that support the educational ambitions of the twenty-first century.

Such features clearly highlight the need for formative assessment. It should be noted, however, that the embodiment of 'effective assessment', as characterised by these five key features, will depend on a stable learning environment as well as teachers who are able to reflect on the needs of their learners and 'educational community' as a whole (cf. Earl 2003:1 [Section 2.2]).

In light of the above discussion of the concept of 'assessment', the following (working) definition is provided of (educational) assessment: *(Educational) assessment is the process through which an educator (assessor) attempts, within a contextually relevant set of circumstances and suitable environment, to determine a learner's competence in a particular learning area at a particular stage of the learning process, i.e. before, during or immediately thereafter. The information gathered should be transparent and user-friendly so as to provide all stakeholders with a clearer understanding of how best to proceed in the learning process.*

2.9 THE SOUTH AFRICAN REALITY

In light of the realities of South African education, it would be very easy to dismiss the hope of one day realising an assessment system that embraces the features outlined in Section 2.8. Indeed, if the focus in assessment remains directed towards final, summative examinations, and formative assessment is ignored, it is unlikely that the state of education will improve.

Janisch (2006:2) refers to a statement by Peter Silcock in which he states that schools:

> … are places where learners should be learning more often than they are being selected, screened or tested in order to check up on their teachers. The latter are important; the former are why schools exist.

In many South African schools this is not the case: teachers are undervalued, and 'real' learning, rooted within a system that embraces the importance of formative assessment, is supplanted by the tedious mechanisation of stand-alone, summative processes that merely seek to rank and certify.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to highlight the relationship that exists between human needs within a changing global environment, the curriculum and the assessment process. It has also been attempted to show the critical need for policy makers to focus on context: to develop effective and relevant policy that is globally aware, but which is also sensitive to the needs of the South African context. The chapter concludes with five key features on which effective assessment for the 21st century hinge. In chapters 3 and 4, assessment methods and procedures within the former Natal Education Department (NED) will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL (STANDARD 10) IN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED)

"The NED's mission statement was 'decidedly liberal' and this was at odds with other House of Assembly departments"

(Anonymous, 4 May 1993:2)

CHAPTER 3

3.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED) WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Much has been written on Apartheid Education, prior to the advent of a non-racial democracy in South Africa in 1994. Current educational policy and documentation often labels education prior to 1994 as racist, unequal and exclusionary and, indeed, much of it was. In doing so, however, it is easy (and possibly understandable) to overlook, or even negate, some of the positive features within an overarching, negative system. One of these 'positive features' was the Natal Education Department [NED], a provincial education department within the province of (KwaZulu-)Natal. Indeed, Professor Colin Webb, Chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Advisory Board on Education in a letter to *The Natal Witness* stated that he had "on several occasions praised the NED for doing a *good job* in a *bad situation*" (Webb 1989:8) (my emphasis). Such a view is supported by an education reporter's contention that "The NED's mission statement was 'decidedly liberal' and this was at odds with other House of Assembly departments[15]" (Anonymous 1993:2).

The NED was established in June of 1894 under the directorship of Sir John Robinson, then Prime Minister of the Colony of Natal. Over the years of its existence, it came to be seen as a department that allowed "room for individual experimentation as is compatible with good order and sound educational principles" (Haw 1995b:13). And it is this allowance for "individual experimentation" that led to much innovation, not least of which occurred within the field of subject methodology and, as a result, assessment. The NED's involvement with the Senior Certificate examination extends back to 1953 when it instituted its own such examinations (Malherbe 1977:235). Within its 100 year existence[16] and 42 year period of examining, the NED made 'bold moves' within the area of assessment and "sustained its credibility and reputation over a … [long] period" (Olmesdahl 1994:12).

[15] Under the Apartheid Tricameral system, 'White' affairs were managed under 'The House of Assembly' [HOA]. Other HOA departments included the Cape Education Department, the Transvaal Education Department and the Orange Free State Education Department.
[16] The NED ceased to exist as an independent (examining) body on 31 March 1995 (Haw 1995b:13).

This chapter will focus on the work done by the NED within the broad field of assessment, relating specifically to the Natal Senior Certificate examinations as well as the implementation of the School Assessment System (SAS).

3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF PAST 'EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE'

The literature suggests that there should be a strong distinction between the (negative) 'past' and the (positive) 'present'. Mahomed (2001:15), for example, states that the new system of education is one "which *radically* breaks away from past *traditional* practice" (my emphasis). Such a statement - in particular the inclusion of the adverb "radically" and the adjective "traditional" - creates in the mind of the uncritical reader a set of 'absolutes', leaving no room for the slightest possibility of a hint of optimism[17]. Venter (1998:4) suggests that "the simpleminded 'traditional is bad and OBE is good' is reminiscent of the fatally simplistic chants of *Animal Farm*[18]". He contends further that "some of the positive aspects [of OBE] were there in the best of traditional education" (Venter 1998:5). Gamble (2003:6) asserts that there are two ways of dealing with curriculum change. She states: "A radical break with the past is one way of mapping out the future. Building on the past is another". She supports the latter. Rather than viewing the past simply as "bad practice", instead she sees it as "a complex interweaving of strengths and weaknesses" (Gamble 2003:7).

When one considers the following statements from the NED's "Curriculum Policy and Model"[19] publication (cf. Harley & Wedekind 2004:209), Venter's (1998) statements are given substance. Furthermore, one can also understand Gamble's (2003:6) support for "building on the past":

- [According to the policy], effective learning takes place when:
  - Pupils are *actively involved* in learning, either inside or outside the classroom;

[17] Such generalisations are shown to be a fallacy when one considers that Harley and Wedekind (2004:209) state that "there is significant documentary evidence of continuity between past practice and C2005 in some former white 'own affairs' departments".
[18] In *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell, a satire of Soviet totalitarianism, everything is seen in terms of binary opposites: the past was 'bad' and the present is 'good'.
[19] Despite numerous attempts to locate an original copy of this document, it remained elusive. The general consensus appeared to be that old documentation was being 'removed' (*read: discarded*) as there was 'no longer space for it' (*read: it was considered irrelevant*). The implications of such consensus point to the belief that one cannot learn from the past. For the researcher of History of Education, too, such practice appears to be extremely problematic and cause for concern within a fledgling democracy (cf. Section 4.1).

- Pupils *discover* things for themselves by asking questions, investigating and solving problems, experimenting, using references;
- Pupils are involved in differentiated learning experiences that are appropriate to their interests, experiences, needs and level of cognitive development; and
- The learning environment is stimulating and non-threatening …

- Learning how to learn and learning the processes of a subject are at least important as the acquisition of factual content. Pupils should be encouraged to be *independent, original and creative thinkers*.
- Pupils are individuals who have *different needs and learning styles*, and the *curriculum must make provision for this* (my emphases)[20].

Furthermore, when one takes into account the 'educational aims' of the NED, it may be labelled anything but 'traditional'.
[The NED aims to:]

- *actualise the potential of every pupil* entrusted to the teacher's care by promoting intellectual, emotional, social, moral, aesthetic, spiritual and physical development;
- *promote an interest in learning* by engaging the pupils' natural curiosity, interests and experiences so that they may become life-long learners and continue to build on their form schooling; to grow and to respond effectively and enthusiastically to adult life situations and responsibilities and to adapt to and cope with change;
- *help pupils to acquire life skills* which are essential to their becoming mature adults able and willing to shoulder the responsibility of parenthood and family life and to enable them to enjoy a meaningful existence;
- *equip pupils to become responsible members of a multi-cultural society* which is characterised by a broad cross-section of humanity and rich cultural diversity, by developing their inter-personal relationships, empathy for other human beings, and appreciation of their own particular culture as well as the cultures of others;

[20] Muller (2004:223) refers to this philosophy as "pedagogical progressivism" where the learner is at the centre of curriculum planning. He further states that this philosophy "survived apartheid in the faculties of education of the liberal universities and in the private and later Model C schools, to be given a new lease on life as the canonised alternative to apartheid education in People's Education ... *and finally Curriculum 2005 (C2005)"* (DoE in Muller 2004:223) (my emphasis).

- *prepare pupils for responsible citizenship* by developing an awareness of the values, principles and responsibilities of democracy (such as the rule of law, social justice, freedom of association, free enterprise, decision making power and its devolution) so that they may participate and play a meaningful role in this political system;
- *foster a reverence for the environment* and an awareness of the urgent need to combat the irresponsible exploitation and destruction of it; to conserve its resources and to solve problems which have arisen;
- *develop in pupils an awareness of the world of work and of the needs of the economy*, and to provide them with the basic skills, knowledge, values and attitudes which will enable them to play a meaningful role in the economy by actualising their potential in their chosen field of employment; and
- *develop in pupils the relevant skills, interests and attitudes* which will enable them to enjoy and make constructive use of their leisure time (NED 1990:2-3) (my emphases).

Such aims clearly point to the fact that the NED saw education in a holistic sense. Learning was seen as more than the mere accumulation of facts – rather it was seen as a process in which all stakeholders had a critical role to play.

According to Oberholzer (2007), the NED was fortunate in that it was a small department; was relatively contained in respect of distances; the department and schools were well-resourced, situated within areas with good infrastructure; teachers were well-trained; and in-service support was very good. It cannot, therefore, go unacknowledged that such factors play a pivotal role in the development of sound educational practice.

3.3 THE NED'S VISION OF ASSESSMENT

Talbot (1989:6) states that in regard to the assessment process, the NED was "… deeply concerned that teachers should be assessing *their own* candidates, using assessment techniques appropriate to *their* aims, *their* objectives and *their* teaching methods" (his emphasis)[21]. As a result of such concerns, in

[21] This view on assessment seems to espouse many of the features of 'effective assessment' referred to previously: fairness, validity, reliability, appropriateness, integration in the learning environment, manageability and consistency (cf. Section 2.5).

1982 the NED broke away from the traditional form of assessment, based entirely on an external examination at the end of the Standard 10 year, and introduced the 'School Assessment system' which, as its name implies, allows for the inclusion of a school-based assessment (i.e. continuous assessment), in the final Senior Certificate result of each pupil in each subject (Olmesdahl in NED 1989:foreword). In doing so, Olmesdahl (in NED 1989:foreword) further states that "… its implementation is based on the Natal Education Department's *faith in the professional judgement* of its teachers" (my emphasis). In regard to the school-based assessment it would appear that Jansen (in Muller 2004:223) is incorrect when he asserts that "ideas of continuous assessment (CASS) … entered policy discourse as *early as 1995*" (my emphasis). In the case of the NED, continuous assessment became part of policy itself from 1982 onward (see above). The writer concedes, however, that in the main, CASS was not a feature of assessment within apartheid education.

The aims of the 'School Assessment system' were two-fold:

- to reduce the amount of written work and formal testing of Std 10 pupils; and
- to reduce the pressure placed on both pupils and teachers (Talbot 1989:1).

The Department's approach was not confined to the Standard 10 (Matriculation) year. Indeed, Talbot (1989:9) highlights the fact that "there cannot be one system of assessment in … [Standard] 10 and a completely different system for the rest of the school". The Curriculum affairs section of the NED hence saw it as critical to "ensure that the principles of the School Assessment system have a profound impact on assessment at *all levels* in *each school* in Natal" (Talbot 1989:9) (my emphasis).

In light of the discussion above, it can be inferred that, within NED structures, assessment was seen as a process that:

- affected the (secondary) school *as a whole*;
- occurred *within* and *not apart from* the learning process;
- worked best when contextual factors were taken into consideration;
- depended largely on the *professional integrity* of its educators; and
- *did not focus exclusively* on the Senior Certificate Examination.

In 1990, in view of the changing South African milieu, a report entitled 'The Natal Education Department into the 1990s' was presented to the Executive Director of the NED, Mr Olmesdahl. The report dealt with challenges that the NED might face in the future. On the subject of assessment, the report states:

> The Natal Education Department recognises the vital importance of the professional judgement of the educator in assessing the progress and achievements of pupils. Consequently, a system of continuous assessment which involves teachers assessing the pupils whom they teach on an *on-going basis*, and *monitoring and gauging their pupils' educational progress against established criteria, complements* the system of formal end-of-year examinations (including the Senior Certificate Examinations) (NED 1990:16) (my emphasis).

It is to this complementary system that we now turn our attention.

3.4 THE 'SCHOOL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM' (SAS)

In 1989, the NED produced an extensive bulletin (Bulletin 84) dealing with the SAS, simply entitled *Assessment*. The bulletin appeared seven years after the system's initial implementation. Olmesdahl (1989:foreword) states that since its inception "… the School Assessment [had] been subject to constant review and modification in order to ensure its *validity* as a *flexible* and *equitable* instrument of evaluation" (my emphasis). It is interesting to note, however, that Talbot (1989:1) admits that the system "[had] been at the centre of much controversy in this province [i.e. Natal]". It would appear that the controversy surrounding the system stemmed largely from a "lack of understanding of the system by those whose task it [was] to implement it" (Talbot 1989:2) and even a belief that the assessments were simply "a huge confidence trick" (Talbot 1989:2) and not even used. In reality however, this was not the case.

For the purposes of this study, it would be futile and impossible to repeat the contents of the NED bulletin, which elaborates on the SAS in extensive detail. As such, it shall therefore be attempted to provide an *overview* of the system. In addition to the bulletin, the information presented below has been gleaned from e-mail based questionnaires (and subsequent follow-up emails) with two main sources: Clive Talbot and Anne Oberholzer (cf. Section 1.7.3.4), both of whom worked for the NED. The SAS was designed by Clive Talbot.

It should be stated from the outset, that, ultimately, the NED's system of assessment was norm-referenced as opposed to being criterion-referenced. (It is interesting to note that Weeden *et al.* (2002:141) consider "neither [to be] necessarily better – they are almost certainly assessing different aspects of a pupil's attainment and provide useful evidence that helps build a more complete picture".) However, the fact that the NED's system of assessment was norm-referenced should be seen in light of the *function* of the Senior Certificate Examination (SCE): a school-leaving examination which ultimately aimed at certification and a means by which to regulate university entrance. Although the ultimate aim of the SCE was to report on a learner's achievement (or lack thereof) in terms of the functions mentioned above, the process leading up to such reporting has been shown to be more holistically-considered (cf. bullets in Section 3.3). Furthermore, even if the examination were to have been criterion-referenced (in terms of the marking process), the reporting of the results thereof would have been norm-referenced (in terms of the exam's function).

In comparison to the NED's final examinations, the SAS attempted, in part, to encourage a different scenario. According to Talbot (2007), the NED had always asserted that formal examinations were a powerful instrument to affect the quality of teaching in Natal schools. This sentiment is shared by Ashworth (2007). At the same time, however, it was also acknowledged that written examinations had weaknesses as well, in terms of *how* and *what* could be examined. As such, the SAS could be seen to have been an attempt to *broaden* the assessment process from a single assessment in a single medium.

To understand the reasons behind the implementation of the SAS, it is first necessary to put into perspective the *role* of the Senior Certificate Examination (SCE): that of certification. One cannot escape the fact that "… South African education has been dominated by the Senior Certificate (matriculation) examination" (Lubisi & Murphy 2002:260). Each year numerous stakeholders – including schools, learners and parents – await the results of the SCE with trepidation. Furthermore, the state of South African education is (rightly or wrongly), invariably, interpreted in terms of these results.

In terms of the SCE's certificatory role, it is imperative therefore that equal standards be ensured. If one takes into account the features of 'effective assessment' (cf. Section 2.5), the SCE is – at best – *valid* and *reliable*. When one considers that, previously, learners who undertook the SCE were

differentiated in terms of race and when one further takes into account the reality of disparate funding within segregated departments, even these features are called into question. Even within the homogeneously composed NED (in terms of learner population), one could question the effectiveness of the SCE as a single-standing assessment. Consider the following, in terms of the features of 'effective assessment':

Fairness	'Fairness' is *always* problematic as it is dependent on context. It is fair to say that the issue of 'fairness' needs to be considered in external and internal assessment.
Validity	The issue of validity should be applied to external as well as internal assessment.
Reliability	Given the fact that the assessment instrument – in this case the SCE – changed with each sitting of the examination, reliability became questionable. Despite the fact that marks are 'adjusted' in terms of norms, this does not make the *actual exam* a reliable instrument.
Transparency	The manner in which the SCE is conducted has largely been veiled in secrecy.
Appropriateness	Although assessment methods need to suit the assessment activity, assessment criteria, and context, they may not suit the learner's needs.
Systematic recording	The results of the SCE are carefully, systematically and logically controlled.
Cost effectiveness	The cost of the SCE is exorbitant. It places a strain on schools in terms of time as well.

Integrated in learning environment	The SCE takes place at the end of a learning programme as opposed to during the learning programme. It is separate and integrated and data is gathered at a single testing period.
Manageability	The SCE is a significant undertaking. It is cumbersome, time consuming and overly intrusive.
Reasonable adjustment	It is highly unrealistic to assume that all learners writing the SCE have equal opportunities.
Consistency	Bearing in mind that the SCE is a once-off examination, it is impossible to determine consistency regarding a learner's competence.

It thus appears that the SCE as a single assessment is clearly ineffective. It is for this reason that the SAS was instituted. The SAS would allow teachers to play a role in the assessment of the learners that they taught – and the assessment would contribute towards the learners' final SCE results. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the assessments would take place during class time they would occur within and not apart from the learning process; the teacher could take into account contextual factors that might affect the assessment; and the assessment did not have to focus exclusively on the SCE. Of course, the process would be dependent on the professionalism of the teacher involved[22] (cf. Olmesdahl in NED 1989:foreward [Section 3.3]).

However, although the SAS could fulfil most of the requirements of 'effective assessment' (cf. Section 2.5), the results of assessments had to be confirmed as *valid*, *fair* and *reliable*. One possible way of accomplishing that was external standardisation. However, when one considers that a variety of assessment methods would be used to ensure effective assessment (cf. Siebörger 2004:10), this would prove problematic and prohibitive for the following reasons:

[22] In this regard, Talbot (2007) states that "the NED were confident of the professional skill and integrity of the teachers in their employ. [Furthermore] they had the resources to monitor and control the system (i.e. advisory and inspection staff)".

- the exorbitant costs involved;
- the logistics involved; and
- the subjectivity of external examiners.

Another option was to focus exclusively on pen and paper assessments that could easily be submitted to external examiners. This choice – by its very nature – would defeat the goal of 'effective assessment', namely *variety*. Thus, although aware of their limitations, the NED opted for statistical methods as the fairest, most objective and fiscally-sound method of standardisation.

What follows is a brief explanation of how the SAS functioned:

The written examination marks for the candidates of each teacher were used to standardise the school assessments – i.e. they were scaled to the same mean and standard deviation. Within this, the marks for individual candidates could differ considerably. If they were meant to be the same there would have been no point to the system. The system was introduced precisely because there were bound to be differences which could lead to more reliable assessments. However, before the two sets of marks could be combined it was necessary to ensure that they carried the same weight (i.e. the same standard deviation) and since the examination was the one written by all candidates, this was used as the anchor. The same mean was also used to ensure that all candidates were treated in the same way. Each candidate received as a final mark, the average between the raw examination mark and the scaled school assessment. A limit was placed on the extent to which a poor school assessment could reduce the final mark but there was no limit on the amount that the reverse could benefit a candidate. As a matter of principle it was decided that the School Assessment should work both ways so that it could not be regarded as a mechanism to help those who came 'unstuck' in the examination. It also had to work against those who did not take their schoolwork seriously (Talbot 2007). Talbot (2007) states that this was a controversial decision. However, were one not to do so, it would defeat the reasons for implementing the SAS. It would be tantamount to using the SAS merely to benefit learners.

Thus the SAS afforded teachers the opportunities to experiment and engage with assessment. It gave teachers the chance to assess pupils in a variety of (valid) ways and in a manner that was contextually relevant to their learners. These assessments had, however, to take cognisance of the required level of

the SCE. A failure to do so would make them inappropriate to their end-purpose and hence unreliable. It can thus be seen that the principles of fairness, transparency, appropriateness, integration and reasonable adjustment (cf. Section 2.5) – all factors that make assessment valid and reliable – *can* be more easily addressed within such a system. Furthermore continuous assessment also promotes better teaching, and consequently enhances the professionalism of teachers (Talbot 2007).

The SAS was not, however, merely a combination of a 'year mark' with an examination mark. Talbot (2007) makes it clear that – notwithstanding all its positive features – the SAS's most critical feature was its ability to provide a more reliable rank order[23]. Indeed, in addition to the weaknesses of the final examination alluded to above, another main weakness was the provision of a reliable rank order.

Talbot (2007) also highlights the fact that, for the most part, most learners scored as expected in the examinations. Hence, both rank orders would be reasonably accurate. However, in the interest of public accountability and acceptability, it was safer to use both.

[23] This is, of course, dependent on the proviso that assessments are done by suitably qualified teachers, under controlled conditions.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to contextualise the role played by the NED within the South African system of education during the apartheid era and up to and including 1995. Despite the fact that past practice is often castigated as traditional, and hence backward, documental evidence shows that the NED was forward-looking in its philosophy and views of education, and that it is thus unfair to proverbially 'tar everything with the same brush'. The NED's vision of assessment was discussed and the aims and purpose of the SAS were outlined. In the next chapter, the assessment of EFL will be discussed, in terms of the NED's vision of assessment.

CHAPTER 4

THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE WITHIN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED)

If teachers are not to be dominated by the test or examination, they need to think critically about *what* they are testing and *why* they are doing the testing. It is only then that they can consider *how better* they might devise methods for assessment and evaluation

(NED 1989:72)

CHAPTER 4

4.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE WITHIN THE NATAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NED)

A large part of the findings in this section have relied extensively on oral history – interviews with former Superintendents of Education (Subject Advisors for EFL) within the former NED. Attempts to locate previous syllabi and documents pertaining to the NED often proved fruitless and the researcher more-often-than-not encountered the prevailing view that such material is associated with the previous apartheid regime, and is hence of little value. Indeed, if it were not openly stated, sentiments such as 'We are making space for new (sic, read: worthwhile) material', were the order of the day. It was thus often necessary to approach individuals who may still have had copies of the required documentation. As such, the following sentiments ring very true: "Researchers can be frustrated by the official weeding policy of government departments which may have resulted in the destruction of sources later discovered to be significant" (Duffy in Bell 1999:108).

Joan Ashworth (2007) makes two critically relevant comments regarding the teaching of English as a first language within the former NED. Firstly, the NED was very much "a leader in experimenting with the teaching of English as a first language". This statement needs, however to be qualified. In terms of curriculum decision-making, only 'white departments' had any degree of autonomy in this regard. The following quotation from the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) on 'Curriculum' supports this view: "While … white departments experience[d] a measure of decentralization in curriculum (or syllabus) development, the same does not hold for other racially-based departments" (NECC 1992:14). Thus the term "leader", here, is seen to refer to the NED in comparison with fellow "white departments". Secondly, the examiners were very powerful. They were appointed by subject advisors in order to see a certain direction being formulated in the examination papers. This was founded on the belief that the papers shaped teaching, a sentiment to which Ashworth strongly subscribes.

The teaching of English within the former NED was actively influenced by the subject advisors at specific periods in its history. Dr Gerald Hosking was the first Inspector of English Education[24], appointed by the NED in the early 1960s. According to Schroenn (2008), Hosking was the first person to hold seminars for teachers of English on the teaching of English. He also promoted linguistics to encourage teachers to reflect more critically on the nature of language and communicative competence as well as oral communication (which was only later to be formally assessed). Keith Olivier succeeded Hosking in 1977. Ashworth (2007) states that Olivier (Inspector of Education for English First Language, and formerly headmaster of Maritzburg College), was the first person to shape the *direction* of EFL, and that he was a "powerful and formidable force". With the assistance of a colleague, Wendy Flanagan, (a remedial education specialist, seconded to the NED to promote the teaching of reading in primary schools), in the early 1970s, he was responsible for the introduction of the oral component. Prior to this, there were only the three written English papers:

- Paper 1: Essay and Letter
- Paper 2: Language
- Paper 3: Literature

Flanagan (with the support of Olivier) promoted the importance of the oral component. This included private reading, a prepared speech, and prepared and unprepared reading aloud. In 1977, Flanagan co-authored a publication with Richard Purkis (a senior teacher of English, and who served on the Natal English Committee), entitled 'Reading with Certainty' (NED 1977) on behalf of the NED. According to Schroenn (2007), both Flanagan and Purkis were instrumental in promoting reading in NED schools. The publication assisted teachers with comprehension skills, silent reading, oral questions and cloze procedure, amongst other things.

Olivier was succeeded by Manfred Schroenn in 1978. In 1986, Schroenn compiled an NED Bulletin entitled *Academic Leadership, Organisation and School-based Curriculum Development* (NED 1986a) – a comprehensive guideline to running an English Department. Clearly evident in the text was the influence of overseas education departments, especially that of Scotland. According to Ashworth (2007), Schroenn was the force behind the collapse of the Writing Paper (Paper 3): he was instrumental

[24] The title 'Inspector of English Education' was changed to 'Principal Subject Adviser' during Schroenn's time (Schroenn 2008).

in starting the process and encouraging debate regarding the efficacy of such a decision. According to Schroenn (2008), however, he did not *initiate* the decision to replace the writing examination with a portfolio of continuous writing. He states that discussion of the issue began as a result of a monetary matter: the marking of the NED Senior Certificate writing paper had involved each script being marked by two sub-examiners and it was decided that the NED should 'fall in line' with the other provincial departments, i.e. that it could not pay for the double marking of each script. The NED's English Committee felt that the double marking of the writing paper was important as many examples of large discrepancies in assessment, emerging on the second marking, did occur. As a result of the 'double-marking' process, a candidate's true achievement was often recognised. The English Committee thus felt that in view of the paper being marked by only one marker, the portfolio of writing would be fairer. In any event, however, the replacement of the Writing Paper (Paper 3) with continuous assessment only materialised in 1993. Schroenn, who holds a doctorate in the teaching of literature, also supported and promoted the importance of the oral component. He issued a guide on *Oral Communication* (NED s.a.) as well as a guide entitled *Close Reading of Literature* (NED 1987a), which focused on the study of literary concepts, using suitable examples.

In 1988, Mary Johnstone (deputy principal of Westville Girls' High) took up the position of Principal Subject Advisor. According to Ashworth (2007), Johnstone carried out informal research into the correlation between the three SCE English papers that were written. Evidently, whilst there was a correlation between the results of Paper 2 (Language) and Paper 3 (Literature), this was not the case with Paper 1 and the other two papers. Prompted by such evidence as well as previous research into the matter (see above), the NED received approval from the Joint Matriculation Board to run an experimental situation where the assessment of Paper 3 was replaced with an internal portfolio, i.e. the assessment of writing took place at school level during the year. Such a move relied heavily on the integrity and professionalism of the English teachers within the NED. It also signalled a desire to move away from an examination in which writing was 'tested' to a situation where writing was seen (and assessed) in a more holistic sense. The renewed focus was process- as opposed to product driven.

Clearly, however, such beliefs were not held by the last examiner for Writing, Bruce Piper (a senior lecturer in education at the University of Natal, Durban, who lectured in English method). In the 1988 edition of *Some of the Best Writing* (NED 1988) (a publication which was sent out annually after the

Senior Certificate examinations to all NED schools, and, as its title reflected, contained some of the best writing from the previous year's SCE), he states in his introduction that, "It is my belief that this paper is the *real test* of the candidates' command and control of the language and their creativity ability", and further that "In many respects the Original Writing paper holds *more challenge* for the candidates than do other aspects of the English syllabus, for in a sense they are on their own" (NED 1988) (my emphases). Such a disparate view could be seen to be evidence of the healthy discussion and debate that took place within the NED.

In support of teachers, in 1992, Ashworth and Johnstone compiled a document entitled *Guide to the Teaching of Writing* (NED 1992a). Based on a series of regional seminars conducted two years previously, the guide encouraged teachers in the compilers' introduction to "… find *effective* strategies to ensure that *our* pupils write as often as possible" (NED 1992a:introduction) (my emphasis). In 1992, Johnstone issued an NED Bulletin entitled *Mediating Media in the High School* (NED 1992b). This was to continue the theme of the Media begun with the issuing of *Television and the Language Teacher* (NED 1987b), based on the seminars held on the subject by Technikon Natal.

In 1993, Bernard Pfister (principal of Eshowe High School) succeeded Mary Johnstone as Principal Subject Adviser. Johnstone returned to Westville Girls' High, appointed as its principal. It was in this year that, for the first time, the Writing Paper (Paper 1) was abandoned in favour of a portfolio of continuous assessment. Schroenn (2008) recalls Pfister as being "deeply passionate about the teaching of English". He did not, however, remain long in the post as he and his family emigrated to New Zealand. In 1994, Joan Ashworth (a senior English teacher at Glenwood Boys' High School) succeeded Pfister as Principal Subject Advisor. Ashworth was to guide the teaching of English within NED schools until the NED ceased to exist in 1995.

This brief account of the work done by subject advisors within the NED is in no way complete. As stated previously, the apparent deliberate neglect of historical sources, means that, in the future, it will become increasingly more difficult to access valuable historical reference material. It does however give a small indication of the truth of Ashworth's sentiment that the NED was "a leader in experimenting with the teaching of English as a first language" (Ashworth 2007).

4.2 ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

In view of the fact that the SAS was implemented in 1982 and continued to be used until the NED ceased to function as an independent agency in 1995, it has been decided to use the 1986 syllabus as a starting point to analyse 'assessment within the syllabus'. The previous syllabus had been implemented in 1973 and the last syllabus issued by the NED was to be implemented in 1995.

4.2.1 Philosophical underpinnings

All syllabi are underpinned by a specific philosophy of education. The 1986 syllabus was based on the "personal growth model" (NED 1989:72). In terms of this model, the "development of the pupil and the development of his (sic) language [are seen] as inseparable" (NED 1989:72). Hence, if one assesses a learner's language competence, one is, at the same time, assessing his social competence and his maturity and sensitivity. Such was the general aim of the syllabus.

4.2.2 The type of syllabus envisaged

The NED's EFL syllabus was 'goals based', i.e. the syllabus set out what was expected of the learner. An analysis of these goals reveals that they related to significantly more than mere knowledge. Instead, they also related to the development of skills, attitudes and value judgements. As such they truly related to the general aim of the syllabus which stated:

> The general aim should be to promote the pupils' intellectual, emotional, social and cultural development through developing their competence in using the language and through enriching their experience and enjoyment of the language, as well as their understanding of more advanced concepts in literature and language study (NED 1986b:1).

The syllabus was divided into four sections: Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Study, Written Communication, and Language. However, the syllabus stressed the need for *integration*, the outcome of which should "form an organic whole" (NED 1986b:1). Furthermore, the syllabus stated that such an integrated whole included "the pupils' own experience, the rest of their school experience (language across the curriculum) as well as their experience and needs beyond the school" (NED 1986b:1).

The following global aims of the syllabus point to this need for integration of the four sections:

- To encourage the natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity and originality of pupils through their *active participation* in meaningful language activities;
- To enrich the pupils' ideas, to stimulate their thoughts and feelings and to develop their *understanding* of themselves and their own emotional and moral responses to life and the world around them, so that they may live more fully, more consciously and responsibly;
- To develop the pupils' ability to *express* their ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language;
- To develop the pupils' ability to *communicate* ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language; and
- To help the pupils develop the *language skills* which contribute to effective expression and communication (NED 1986b:2-3) (their emphases).

4.2.3 Planning of assessment

The NED acknowledged the immense power of the examination as a means to *shape* and *affect* [English] teaching (cf. Section 4.1). They further realised, however, that, as a result, the "teacher's judgement as to *how to assess* [was] being minimised" (NED 1989:72). Indeed, some teachers used the SAS merely to mimic and plan for the SCE. In this regard, Talbot (in NED 1989:1) states that "although the system was designed to reduce the amount of written work and formal testing of [Standard] 10 pupils and reduce the pressures placed upon pupils and teachers, in many schools the opposite had occurred". In light of this, the NED was at pains to emphasise that

> If [teachers] are not to be dominated by the test or examination, [they] need to think critically about *what* they are testing and *why* [they] are doing the testing. It is only then that [they] can consider *how better* [they] might devise methods for assessment and evaluation (NED 1989:72) (my emphases).

The professional judgement of teachers was acknowledged, and teachers were encouraged to explore methods of assessment that best reflected the spirit of the goals-based syllabus. They were also advised to bear in mind that it was the holistic assessment of a learner's language competence that was sought. Clearly, assessment was seen as intricately and closely linked to the syllabus.

4.2.4 The purpose of assessment of English First Language

Although the teacher was provided with a syllabus from which to work, the teacher was not 'left alone' as it were. The syllabus was accompanied by a document entitled *Academic Leadership, Organisation and School-based Curriculum Development* (NED 1986a) which provided clear guidance on many aspects ranging from the role of the English teacher, to advice on dealing with the new syllabus.

Regarding the purposes of assessment, the following was presented to teachers:

- Purpose 1[25]: to monitor each pupil's language development, gauging his / her progress against an appropriate norm and letting him / her know how he / she is doing;
- Purpose 2: to diagnose weaknesses in learning and teaching so that appropriate remedial action can be taken;
- Purpose 3: to enable pupils to apply skills, insights and knowledge so that their strengths can be identified for further development and motivation;
- Purpose 4: to serve teaching, not to dominate it or to pressurize teachers and pupils;
- Purpose 5: to determine to what extent the stated aims and goals of the English First Language Syllabus or curriculum have been achieved;
- Purpose 6: to determine to what extent the pupils' needs, abilities and interests have been met by the teaching programme;
- Purpose 7: to determine whether a pupil is ready to proceed to the next standard; and
- Purpose 8: to indicate in what ways the … curriculum needs to be developed to meet pupils' needs and foster more effective teaching (NED 1986a:15-16).

When one analyses these purposes in terms of the five key features of assessment for the 21st century (cf. Section 2.8), it is evident that assessment was on the right track; assessment of English First Language did:

- seek to empower pupils as learners (cf. Purposes 1 and 3 above);

[25] These 'purposes of assessment' have been numbered thus so as to facilitate cross-referencing below.

- recognise the impact of classroom assessment on the pupil's sense of self, on expectations, on motivation, and on confidence (cf. Purposes 3 and 6 above);
- provide guidance to both teachers and pupils about what needs to be learnt next (cf. Purposes 1 and 8 above);
- embody an approach to teaching and learning in which the development of long-term dispositions is more important than short-term performance (cf. Purposes 4 and 8 above); and
- challenge the educational community to develop new approaches and techniques that support the educational ambitions of the twenty-first century (cf. Purpose 8).

Teachers were advised to ensure that assessment "[took] cognizance of the pupils' progress and development during the course of the year" (NED 1986a:16). They were also encouraged to "try out new methods, strategies and resources" (NED 1986a:16). As such, assessment was not something that teachers merely 'did' to learners. Assessment was viewed as an essential, formative part of the curriculum in which teachers shaped the learning process and gave learners chances to show their potential, and in which learners were made responsible for their learning (cf. Section 2.5).

4.2.5 How assessment took place

As outlined in the section on the SAS (cf. Section 3.4), a learner's final marks were derived from two sources: the final examination (constituting 50%), and marks collected throughout the year that were scaled (constituting 50%). The marks were structured as follows[26]:

COMPONENT	FINAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (SCE)	CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT
Oral [80 marks] 20% of total marks	Not tested in the SCE	Internally assessed Components: ➢ Prepared Speech [30 marks] ➢ Reading (prepared and unprepared) [20 marks] ➢ Book conversations* [30 marks] Learners were required to read at least 8 books of merit. Educators were

[26] This mark structure refers to English First Language – Higher Grade. The information presented in this table could not be located in one source. It has been compiled based on information provided by Ashworth (2007) and Schroenn (2008).

		encouraged to provide learners with lists of suitable books to assist them in their choices. Emphasis was placed on the continuous assessment of oral to afford learners the opportunity to show improvement throughout the year (cf. NED 1986a:20) Assessment method: marking grids
Writing (Paper 1) [100 marks] 25% of total marks Duration: 2 hours	Tested externally in Paper 1 until 1993 when Paper 1 was replaced by an internal portfolio Components of external paper: ➢ Section A: Creative Essay [60 marks ➢ (choice of about 7 essays given that included picture stimuli) ➢ Section B: Transactional ('short') pieces [40 marks] (e.g. letter, report and review*) * The portfolio gave teachers the freedom to experiment with a greater variety of writing genres, as they were not restricted by an examination Assessment method: marking grids	Internally assessed Teachers were provided with 'minimum requirements'. As such, learners could submit more than these minimum requirements. Minimum requirements (per term): Three full creative essays of approximately 600 words in length Two short pieces (5 – 30 lines, depending on type) Of the twelve essays and eight short pieces, three essays and three 'short' pieces were to be *selected* for the school assessment.
Language (Paper 2) [100 marks] 25% of total marks Duration: 2½ hours	Tested externally in Paper 2 Components of external paper: ➢ Question 1: Comprehension, based on an contemporary, expository passage of 450 to 600 words [30 – 40 marks] ➢ Question 2: Summary of a text unrelated to Question 1 (various types could be selected) [15 – 20 marks] ➢ Other questions that test language competence and skills [40 – 55 marks]	Internally assessed Teachers were required to deal with a wide range of language issues. Teachers were instructed that "Language work must be set frequently and systematically" (NED 1986a:25). Teachers were encouraged to link the teaching of language with writing (i.e. highlighting important links within the curriculum) and to focus on the learners' individual needs. Remediation of language issues should, where appropriate, stem from the learners' actual work. In the event of a wide-range of ability, teachers were also encouraged to 'group' learners to avoid them having

		to go through unnecessary drills (cf. NED 1986a:26). Minimum requirements (for SAS): Two comprehension exercises
Literature (Paper 3) [120 marks] 30% of total marks Duration: 3 hours	Tested externally in Paper 3 Components of external paper: ➢ Section A: Poetry – unseen (12 marks) [choice between contextual questions or an appreciation] and seen poetry (2 × 9 = 18 marks) [a choice of 2 out of 5 poems, presented for examination out of a total of 25 poems] [Total: 30 marks] ➢ Section B: Shakespearean play [choice between a contextual and an essay question*] [30 marks] ➢ Section C: Novel [choice between a contextual and an essay question*] [30 marks] ➢ Section D: Other genre [choice between a contextual and an essay question*] [30 marks] * Learners were required to choose 2 essays and 1 contextual OR two contextual questions and 1 essay	Internally assessed The SAS provided teachers with opportunities to explore literature in other ways that were not possible within the externally set papers. Examples are role play, orally-based activities, comparisons of texts and the study of films related to texts. The NED stressed an integrated approach towards literature: reading, talking, listening and writing. Teachers were encouraged to extend more able learners and to help learners who encountered problems (cf. NED 1986a:21-22). Minimum requirements (for SAS): Two literature essays and two contextual questions
	Total (writing) = 320 **160 marks = 50%**	**Total (writing) = 320** **160 marks = 50%**

(Ashworth 2007; Schroenn 2008)

Within the NED's system of assessment, the requirements of the examination are clearly non-negotiable. Furthermore within the SAS, there are 'minimum requirements'. However, the teacher was given the room to establish a programme of assessment that suited his / her context. The only proviso was that he / she bore in mind the standard of the SCE (cf. Section 3.4).

4.2.6 The writing portfolio

As reflected in the table above, the replacement of the Paper 1 (the writing paper) with a writing portfolio was yet another example of how the NED continued to change its policy to embrace

international trends[27]. In this regard, Campbell (1994:41) states that teachers of English "argue that performance in their subject is better assessed by work prepared over a period that allow times for reading, reflection and the polishing of successive drafts". Creative and transaction writing is definitely *not* best assessed within the framework of a timed, written examination. Furthermore, Ashworth (2007) maintains that the portfolio system works because "teachers know their students best and are hence able to assess them best". This is supported by Janisch[28] (2006:3) who adds to this the following list of some of the strengths of using the portfolio system:

- It is a process of continuous assessment;
- It encourages reflection, self evaluation and ongoing improvement;
- It includes editing, a crucial component of writing;
- It expects continual growth and innovation from educators;
- It facilitates synergy and sharing through user groups, cluster groups and peer moderation;
- It covers a great deal more than can be assessed in any examination; and
- It is what writing is about in the real world: a whole range of registers and genres.

Supporting the use of the portfolio system and encapsulating the views expressed above, Dreyer and van der Walt (1999:109) assert that "the use of portfolios is one of the most evident indications … of language use as an integrated process of thinking, communicating, and enlarging our understanding of the world".

An analysis of these 'strengths' reveals that they tie in well with the five features required for assessment in the 21st century (cf. Section 2.8). It is important to add, however, that the writing portfolio system depends wholly on the professionalism and integrity of the teachers who implement it. It has been stated that the NED had complete faith in this regard (cf. Section 3.3).

[27] The NED was the *first* of all state departments to implement the portfolio system. Other education departments continued to write the external writing paper.

[28] Until recently, Janisch worked for the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) – an assessment agency that functions apart from the state. In 1993 the IEB took over as an examining body from the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB). After research and discussions with teachers, the IEB also adopted the portfolio system which it uses till this day.

4.2.7 The relationship between EFL and SAS

The nature of EFL made it possible to embrace the SAS. English is a dynamic subject that allows for 'alternative' ways of 'seeing and doing' (cf. Section 1.6). Although a summative examination allows for the testing of skills, knowledge, and (to some extent) attitudes, it is not the ideal means of assessment in that it is limiting in what can be assessed. The SAS afforded the (creative) English teacher the chance to do things differently, to draw on alternative resources and to expose the learner to a whole range of new ideas.

4.2.8 Criticism of NED assessment policy

One of the main criticisms that can be levelled against NED assessment policy was the secrecy in which the assessment process was shrouded. The following personal example highlights this point. In 1993, the researcher wrote to Joan Ashworth asking for 'marking tables' for writing. The response was that they were 'not available to the public'. To understand how one is being assessed, transparency is essential: one needs access to the criteria against which one is being accessed. This was not the case.

4.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The NEPI document on 'Curriculum' (NECC 1992:24), lamenting the poor process of curriculum development and assessment of learning in South Africa education during the apartheid era, states that:

> Visible indicators of success (or failure), such as examination results, offer little encouragement to teachers and their students. Other indicators of assessing effective learning and teaching have not developed under these circumstances.

It is felt that the NED was, in many ways, an exception. It is acknowledged that this department was in the fortunate position of being able to experiment with the curriculum and assessment. However, by the same token, it seems ill-considered to dismiss the positive features that could be built upon within a new system of education.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to contextualise the EFL syllabus within the NED. The relationship between the syllabus and assessment has been touched on, as well as the manner in which the NED endeavoured to implement policy that was sound, innovative and forward-looking. The chapter concludes by offering a few critical points on the assessment policy. In the next chapter, the role of assessment at Further Education and Training (FET) level (Grades 10 – 12) in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) will be considered.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AT FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) LEVEL (GRADE 12) IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS)

If we always do what we've always done,

we'll always get what we've always got

(Folger 1999:online)

CHAPTER 5

5.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS) WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is the embodiment of what the National Department of Education (DoE) considers to be the solution to the malaise of ills that currently plague the South African system of education. It forms part of the National Qualifications Framework[29] (NQF), which, in turn, falls under the auspices of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The adoption of the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provides a basis for this curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. The preamble states that the aims of the Constitution are to:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations (DoE 2003:1).

The NCS is thus structured so as to embrace these aims and to expose all learners to a system of education that affords them the opportunities to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and values and so experience 'quality of life' and fulfil their potential (cf. second bullet above). Firmly rooted within the philosophy of Outcome-based Education (OBE) (cf. Section 1.2), this philosophy hence "strives to enable all learners to reach their maximum potential by setting the Learning Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the education process" (DoE 2003:2). Furthermore, OBE "encourages a *learner-centred*

[29] The Further Education and Training (FET) band (i.e. Grades 10-12; NQF levels 2-4 respectively) forms part of the NQF structure.

and *activity-based approach* to education" (DoE 2003:2) (my emphasis). The NCS, supported and underpinned by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, is based on the following principles[30]:

- social transformation;
- outcomes-based education;
- high knowledge and high skills;
- integration and applied competence;
- progression;
- articulation and portability;
- human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice;
- valuing indigenous knowledge systems; and
- credibility, quality and efficiency (DoE 2003:1).

Theoretically, in terms of these principles, a specific kind of education is envisaged, one that (on the whole) is very different to that experienced in the past. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:27) present the following table as a means to differentiate between the 'old' and 'new' systems of education.

'OLD' SYSTEM OF EDUCATION	**'NEW' SYSTEM OF EDUCATION**
* passive learners	* active learners
* exam-driven	* learners are assessed on an ongoing-basis
* rote learning	* critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
* syllabus is content-based and broken down into subjects	* an integration of knowledge; learning is relevant and connected to real-life situations
* textbook / worksheet-bound and teacher-centred	* learner-centred; teacher is facilitator; teacher constantly uses group work and teamwork to consolidate the new approach
* sees syllabus as rigid and non-negotiable	* learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes
* teachers responsible for learning: motivation dependent on the personality of the teacher	* learners take responsibility for their learning; pupils motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth

[30] For a detailed explanation of each of these principles, the reader is referred to DoE (2003:2-4).

* emphasis on what the teacher hopes to Achieve	* emphasis on outcomes (what the learner becomes and understands)
* content placed into rigid time frames	* flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace

An analysis of this 'new' system of education reveals that a specific kind of learner, teacher, type of learning and type of assessment is envisaged. Furthermore, it clearly requires a commitment of *all* stakeholders to engage in a *change of mindset* for the new system of education to be effective. In this regard it is important to remember that teachers often exhibit a reluctance to embrace change (cf. Section 2.1).

5.2 PRECURSORS TO THE ADOPTION OF THE NCS[31]

The process of educational change predated the implementation of Outcomes-based Education by a number of years. Between 1986 and the implementation of OBE (1997), there were numerous initiatives which sought to review the state of education within the South African context. These initiatives were both state-led and non-state led. Each of these will be briefly discussed[32].

5.2.1 State-led initiatives

5.2.1.1 The 'Ten-year Plan' (1986)

In 1986, the Minister of National Education, F.W. de Klerk, announced the implementation of a ten-year plan which aimed at "significant progress towards the long-term objective of equal opportunities for all" (DNE 1992:1). As a result of a subsequent decline in the economy and the state's commitment to a reduction in public expenditure in the years that followed, the result was a decrease in the education budget in real terms, and so the plan was "temporarily shelved" in May 1989 (DNE 1992:1).

[31] Jansen (in Young & Kraak ca. 2001:14) refers to "several clear shifts of perspective and circumstance that have followed the apartheid era …". These he calls "positioning" (1990-1994): the period of democratic struggle and debate; "frameworks": the early work of the first ANC-led government when the proposals formed in opposition were converted into legislation; and "implementation" (1995-1996) and that continues until today.

[32] Each of these initiatives, whether state-led or not, were extensive. In most cases, the findings were reported in detailed reports. It is therefore not possible to give more than a brief account of each initiative.

It would seem that this plan was largely fiscal in nature and that it did not focus on curriculum affairs or assessment.

5.2.1.2 The Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) (June 1991)

The previous (apartheid) government recognised that change in education was inevitable. In 1990 the government announced its intention to develop a strategy for 'renewal' in the education system. Under the auspices of the Committee of Heads of Education Departments (CHED), the ERS was developed. From a positive perspective, for the first time the government acknowledged the need for a single system, not based on race. Furthermore, it represented progress as regards a commitment to compulsory schooling (cf. NECC 1993:157).

However, the report was widely criticised on the following grounds:

- the vagueness of its recommendations;
- a 'technical' and historical approach which results in a failure to deal adequately with the issues of redress;
- its failure to deal adequately with the issues of race and class; and
- the open admission by key members of the committee that the report still [provided] for 'autogenous'[33] education (NECC 1993:157).

These criticisms, notwithstanding, the ERS was doomed to failure for two important reasons: firstly, it was the result of the non-consultative and non-representative manner in which it was developed within the existing bureaucracy, and secondly, the desire by elements within the state to perpetuate existing inequalities (NECC 1993:157). Hence, in essence, the ERS aimed at 'renewing' education within the existing framework.

[33] Autogenous: without influence from external factors.

5.2.1.3 A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa (CUMSA)

In November 1991, the ERS was followed by *A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa* (CUMSA) which was characterised by three guiding principles, developed from the De Lange Report (HSRC 1981). These were the following:

- Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards of education, must be created for every inhabitant of South Africa irrespective of race, colour, creed, or sex;
- Recognition must be given to the religious and cultural ways of life of the inhabitants of South Africa, and to their languages; and
- The provision of education shall be directed in an educationally responsible manner at the needs of the individual and those of society, and the demands of economic development, and shall take into account the personpower needs of South Africa (DNE in NECC 1992:37).

Despite paying lip-service to the ideals highlighted above, CUMSA was criticised for being perceived as being "strikingly acontextual in its approach"; in other words, "there [was] very little vision of the society in which the proposed curriculum would operate" (NECC 1992:38). This had been one of the criticisms of the ERS (cf. 5.2.1.2 – fourth bullet).

5.2.2 Non-state led initiatives

5.2.2.1 National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (December 1990 to August 1992)

At the same time that the government was developing its ERS and the CUMSA, the National Education Co-ordinating Committee[34] (NECC) conducted its National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (December 1990 to August 1992). NEPI comprised twelve research reports and a broad framework report. The research reports dealt with the following topics:

[34] The NECC was a national body representing teachers, parents, and students, mainly from educationally disadvantaged black communities. The NECC was formed in December 1985 to co-ordinate and lead the struggles being waged within education institutions and in communities around the country against an inferior and racist education system, and against a government which was quite unwilling to change it (NECC 1993:1). Hence, a striking feature of the initiatives that were being formulated was the *polarization* of role players.

- Adult Basic Education;
- Adult Education;
- Curriculum;
- Early Childhood Educare;
- Education, Planning, Systems, and Structure;
- Governance and Administration;
- Human Resources Development;
- Language;
- Library and Information Services;
- Post-Secondary Education;
- Support Services; and
- Teacher Education.

As can be seen from the titles of these research reports, NEPI covered the main areas of contention within the South African education arena. The NECC saw NEPI's objective as "[the interrogation of] policy options in all areas of education within a value framework derived from the ideals of the broad democratic movement" (Gerwel in NECC 1992:vii). Unlike the government-initiated ERS and CUMSA, the NECC did not regard NEPI as "a model for a new education system" (Gerwel in NECC 1992:vii). It did, however, regard itself as broadly serving three functions:

- The provision of information and a lens to focus on the values which underpin specific policies;
- The stimulation of public debate on education policy in all spheres of society. From the foregoing, it is clear that the NEPI reports do not represent an NECC position in education; rather they made a starting-point for what would undoubtedly be a protracted debate; and
- The development of capacity for policy analysis (Gerwel in NECC 1992:vii).

As regards 'curriculum', the NECC (1992:3) stated that "a curriculum policy for South Africa needs to be *grounded in an analysis of existing circumstances*, and to be *meshed with goals for future social development*" (my emphases). It outlined six issues which it regarded as "key dimensions in curriculum policy". These are:

- Decision-making structures and processes;
- Core curriculum and differentiation;
- Commonality and diversity;
- Teaching and learning in relation to the curriculum;
- Progression and assessment; and
- Resourcing and redress (NECC 1992:4-8).

Jansen (in Young & Kraak ca. 2001:42) refers to this period as "projecting the symbolism of policy position – that is, contending actors seeking to establish broad symbolic positions in education policy ahead of South Africa's first democratic elections".

5.2.2.2 African National Congress (ANC) Policy

In January 1994, prior to the African National Congress (ANC) becoming the first democratically elected government within the 'new' South Africa, the party published a discussion document entitled *A policy framework for Education and Training* (1994). The document states that:

- The right to education and training should be enshrined in a Bill of Rights which should establish principles and mechanisms to ensure that there is an enforceable and expanding minimum floor of entitlements for all; and
- All individuals should have access to lifelong education and training irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age (ANC 1994:3).

It further reflects that these goals to which the ANC is committed are underpinned by the following values:

- The development of human potential, so that every person is able to contribute freely to society, advance common values, and increase socially useful wealth.
- The realisation of democracy, so that independent, responsible and productive citizens will be enabled to participate fully in all facets of the life of their communities and the nation at large.

- The reconciliation of liberty, equality and justice, so that citizens' freedom of choice is exercised within a social and national context of equality of opportunity and the redress of imbalances.
- The pursuit of national reconstruction and development, transforming the institutions of society in the interest of all, and enabling the social, cultural, economic and political empowerment of all citizens (ANC 1994:3).

In theory, such goals and values are clearly in keeping with the creation of an effective system of education to reconstruct South African society.

The ANC's *A Framework for Education and Training* would serve to inform documentation on education that was formulated once it had taken power. Such documentation included the White Paper on Education and Training (RSA 1995) and Further Education and Training Act (RSA 1998)[35].

5.3 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NCS IN TERMS OF THE ANC'S "A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING" (USING NEPI'S "KEY DIMENSIONS IN CURRICULUM POLICY")

As a discussion document, The ANC's *A Policy Framework for Education and Training* (1994) proposed "a line of action for the ANC in government in the education and training sector, at both the national and provincial levels" (ANC 1994:4). It clearly served to inform the new ANC-led government's White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) (RSA 1995) which outlined their views on education within a democratic South Africa. (It should be noted, however, that the WPET was informed by the 1993 South African constitution. It was the 1996 South Africa Constitution on which the NCS would ultimately be based.)

It is, nevertheless, interesting to examine the relationship between politics, policy and practice. As stated above, the NEPI did not constitute a model for education. It did, however, offer valuable advice on a variety of *possible* ways to construct a new curriculum. The ANC's *A Policy Framework for*

[35] Other important documents included the National Education Policy Act [NEPA] (Act 27 of 1996) (RSA 1996a), and The South African Schools Act [SASA] (Act 84 of 1996) (RSA 1996b). The contents of these acts refer to the provision of the National Minister of Education with significant functions and responsibilities in terms of the overall oversight function of the education system nationally; and the development of an organisation, funding and governance framework for all schools in South Africa, respectively (cf. RSA 1996a & RSA 1996b). These two acts do not, however, have specific relevance for this study.

Education and Training, however, sought to "… set out *proposals for ANC policy* on education and training" (ANC 1994:1) (my emphasis). Using the NEPI key dimensions in curriculum policy, what follows is an analysis of the NCS in terms of the ANC's *A Framework for Education and Training* (1994). An attempt will be made to reflect on the tensions between politics, policy and practice and assess whether in the South African milieu Education serves Politics or whether Politics serves Education (cf. Section 2.2).

NEPI "KEY DIMENSION IN CURRICULUM POLICY" (1992)	**NEPI SUGGESTIONS IN TERMS OF STATED KEY DIMENSION**	**ANC VIEWPOINT, AS REFLECTED IN "A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING" (1994)**	**STATUS QUO IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS)**
5.3.1 Decision-making structures and processes.	***The curriculum can be centralised or decentralised.*** The following options should be considered: ➢ Curricula may be centrally planned by national bodies ➢ Local authorities may have the autonomy to develop curricula relevant to their particular interests and local knowledge ➢ Individual schools and teachers may be given autonomy to develop curricula to meet the particular classroom situations they encounter. ***Who should the role players be?*** The following role players should be considered: students, parents, teachers, capital,	"Education is to be a concurrent function of central government and the provinces, which accordingly will *share responsibility* for ensuring that education policy formulation and the provision of education is fair, efficient and directed towards the promotion of human development in all its aspects" (ANC 1994:12) (my emphasis). "Within … national frameworks, the Provincial Education and Training Authorities will be responsible for all education and training … (including but not limited to) adaptation of national policy *in line with provincial needs*" (ANC 1994:13) (my emphasis). "In democratic systems of government, policies must be arrived at through open social and political processes, which involve all stakeholders and interest groups, and which citizens feel free to influence" (ANC 1994:4) "Coercion is a recipe for disaster. South Africans know this by bitter experience, and we ignore the lessons of our educational history at our peril. … The process of policy-making in education and training must therefore be as open and	The NCS is clearly a *nationally determined, centralised curriculum*. The 'national' in 'National Curriculum Statement' implies that that it is applicable to the entire South African school-going population. The Subject Assessment Guidelines for Home Languages (including English) (DoE 2008: 20) spell out the way in which assessments will be carried out.

	organised labour and political groups. ***What is the balance between democratic participation and expertise in curriculum decisions?*** ***How will decentralised policies affect 'equity' and 'redress'?*** ***What roles will non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play?*** ***How will the curriculum be evaluated and reviewed, leading to innovation in the curriculum?***	participatory as possible. Policy-makers need to practice the arts of consultation, listening, reasoning, and persuasion, as well as offering vision and leadership" (ANC 1994:5). "… [T]he process of curriculum development must be democratised through the participation of all stakeholders" (ANC 1994:32). "There will be redress of existing inequalities in provision. Goals will be set for the appropriate provision of human and material resources" (ANC 1994:47). "… [T]he process of curriculum development must be democratised through the participation of all stakeholders" (ANC 1994:32). "… [F]lexible and adaptable policies are likely to be the most successful. Rigid and dogmatic policies will be brittle and easily broken" (ANC 1994:5).	Assessment policies do not seem at all 'flexible' or 'adaptable'. They are extremely prescriptive.
5.3.2. Core curriculum and differentiation	***Are there basic learning experiences that all students should follow?*** ***Should everyone follow the same core curriculum, regardless of race, gender, ability, social class, or region?*** ***Should there be academic support, such as bridging classes, to assist underprepared students with the existing mainstream curriculum? Or should the mainstream curriculum itself change?*** ***How will the core curriculum be implemented?*** The following	"At the [Further Education Certificate] level, apart from the core modules …" (ANC 1994:39). "The education and training of learners with special educational needs *within the mainstream* will be a progressive, long term goal" (ANC 1994:49) (my emphasis). "There will be a national core curriculum based on the integration of academic and vocational skills at the pre-Higher Education levels of the education and training system" (ANC 1994:10). "The national curriculum will be modular and based on an outcomes based approach as this maximises flexibility for horizontal and vertical mobility. An outcomes approach defines the curriculum in terms of learning aims. The … curriculum will have three basic	Learners are required to take four compulsory subjects referred to as 'fundamental modules'. They include: ➢ Home Language ➢ Additional Language ➢ Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy ➢ Life Orientation In addition, learners are required to take three elective subjects

	possibilities should be considered: ➢ A definition in terms of traditional subjects or subjects such as integrated studies ➢ A definition in terms of competencies or core skills ➢ A definition involving a combination of content, skills, and processes	learning aims: ➢ application of a skill, both practical and intellectual ➢ understanding the principles underpinning an activity ➢ ability to transfer both the skill and the knowledge to another context" (ANC 1994:42).	
5.3.3 Commonality and diversity	The curriculum may be important in building a sense of common citizenship and common entitlements. But there are also real differences – of language, culture, religion and region. ***How, if at all, should these differences be addresses in the curriculum?*** The following options are possible: ➢ a model of 'multicultural education' could be adopted ➢ anti-racist curriculum strategies could be adopted ➢ a curriculum model for citizenship education could be developed, which emphasizes the equal rights of common citizenship rather than fostering different identities	"All individuals should have access to lifelong learning and training irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age" (ANC 1994:3). "We believe that the curriculum must promote unity and the common citizenship and destiny of all South Africans irrespective of race, class, gender to ethnic background. … The curriculum must promote independent and self-critical learning and respect the equality of all forms of knowledge" (ANC 1994:32).	"… [E]veryone has the right … to further education which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible" (DoE 2003:1). The National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (General) adopts an *inclusive approach* by specifying minimum requirements for all learners. It acknowledges that "*all learners should be able to develop to their full potential* provided they receive the necessary support. The intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of learners will be addressed through the design and development of appropriate Learning Programmes and through the use of appropriate assessment instruments" (DoE 2003:4) (my emphases).
5.3.4 Teaching and learning in relation to the curriculum	***What forms of teaching and learning does the curriculum assume and promote?*** Different approaches to the curriculum may result in different teaching and learning styles.	"Curriculum articulation and equivalence will not necessarily mean that the content of the curriculum, the time frame or the teaching methods used will be the same across different learning contexts" (ANC 1994:10). "… the curriculum has been exam-	In view of the 'national' system of assessment it is difficult to see how the ANC's response would be possible.

		driven with the resultant focus on rote-learning and the absorption of facts rather than on the development of critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and understanding. This has resulted in the development of a teacher-centred and authoritarian learning process" (ANC 1994:32).	When one considers that examinations still account for 75% of the learners' marks (DoE 2008:19), it seems reasonable to assume that the curriculum to intents and purposes will remain 'exam-driven'.
5.3.5 Progression and assessment	***How do students progress through the curriculum, moving from grade to grade until they leave school?*** ***How are standards and quality maintained within and across the curriculum?***	"Assessment and evaluation practices will be diagnostic[36] with the focus on identifying learning problems, monitoring learning progress and teacher effectiveness" (ANC 1994:34).	Progression is measured in terms of the subject statements. "Each Learning Outcome is followed by an explicit statement of what level of performance is expected for the outcome" (DoE 2003:3).
	Assessment may be directed towards different goals: ➢ the selection of students, for example at exit from schooling, or at entrance to further learning or work ➢ the establishment and maintenance of norms on a national basis ➢ the measurement of teacher performance ➢ the increased participation by students in schooling and the facilitation of student learning	"Assessment and evaluation practices will be based on a combination of continuous assessment (tests, essays, projects, practical and field studies) as well as national examinations. … The national examinations will seek to assess comprehension, analytical and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to communicate, design and plan investigations" (ANC 1994:34).	The NCS (2003:48) refers to four types of assessment: baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative. In view of the heavily weighted examinations, however, it is summative assessment that is ultimately favoured.
5.3.6 Resourcing and redress	***How will resources be distributed in terms of redress and equity (in terms of racial and gender profiles)?***	"There will be redress of existing inequalities in provision. Goals will be set for the appropriate provision of human and material resources" (ANC 1994:47).	"Social transformation in education is aimed at ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are addressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population" (DoE 2003:2).
NECC (1992:4-8)		ANC (1994:1-56)	DoE 2003

[36] The terminology used here is incorrect. *Diagnostic* assessment takes place at the beginning of a learning experience to determine the learners' ability at the time. What is actually meant is *formative* assessment.

5.4 PERCEIVED TENSIONS BETWEEN POLITICS, POLICY AND PRACTICE

5.4.1 Decision-making structures and processes

Although the ANC (1994:5) states that "coercion is a recipe for disaster" and therefore that "the process of policy-making in education and training must (sic) therefore be as open and participatory as possible", ironically, the manner in which the NCS has been developed has been decidedly dictatorial. The key-role decision-makers have been politicians and politically-aligned organisations (i.e. capital and organised labour). Students, parents and teachers have, however, in the main, not been consulted. Thus, although ordinary citizens may have wished to give input, they have not been given the opportunity to "feel free to influence" (cf. ANC 1994:4).

To be fair, in constructing a new South African curriculum, policy makers are confronted by two areas of contention: democratic participation versus knowledge expertise; and decentralisation (to ensure local relevance) versus centralisation (to ensure national redress) (cf. NECC 1992:5). The ANC document simultaneously promotes democratic participation (cf. ANC 1994:4-5) as well as equity and redress (cf. ANC 1994:47). By their very natures, there is clearly a tension between the concepts 'democracy' and 'redress' – one that has not been sufficiently realised. To ensure redress, by implication democratic ideals cannot be implemented.

5.4.2 Core curriculum and differentiation

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) seems to reflect the ANC's suggestions in *A Framework for Education and Training* (1994). All learners are afforded the same opportunities. In theory, learners with special needs should be accommodated (cf. DoE 2003:10).

5.4.3 Commonality and diversity

Here again, the NSC seems to reflect the ANC's suggestions in *A Framework for Education and Training* (1994). In light of the fact that the NSC is based on the South African constitution, it adopts an *inclusive approach* by specifying minimum requirements for all learners (cf. DoE 2003:4).

5.4.4 Teaching and learning in relation to the curriculum

The centralisation of the curriculum implies that all learners on the academic path within the NCS will work towards a National Senior Certificate. Teachers of these learners are thus obligated to work with the prescribed parameters within the curriculum, and hence assessment. Although the ANC (1994:10) states that "curriculum articulation and equivalence will not necessarily mean that the content of the curriculum, the time frame or the teaching methods used will be the same across different learning contexts", it is difficult to see how this will be possible. An analysis of the NSC reveals that it is largely prescriptive in terms of the Programme of Assessment that is outlined, i.e. what tasks will be done and how many marks they account for (cf. DoE 2008:20). Furthermore the final summative examination for each subject counts 75% of the learners' final mark. To all intents and purposes, the curriculum thus remains "exam driven" (cf. ANC 1994:32). Might this not mean, therefore, that the curriculum runs the risks of remaining "teacher-centred and an authoritarian learning process" (cf. ANC 1994:32) and that "the development of critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and understanding" will be impeded (cf. ANC 1994:32)?

5.4.5 Progression and assessment

The NSC makes reference to progression stating that "the Subject Statements show progression from one grade to another" and that "each Learning Outcome is followed by an explicit statement of what level of performance is expected for the outcome" (DoE 2003:3). The progression of Assessment Standards (AS's) within the EHL NCS is problematic in view of the fact that there appears to be little real progression. An analysis of the AS's for Grades 10, 11 and 12 reveals that the AS's are, for the most part, similar. It is thus up to the teacher to decide what is important for each grade. This could make horizontal progression (i.e. movement from one school to another) extremely problematic. It is also not clear as to how this progression will be reported on for assessment purposes. The ANC's *A Framework for Education and Training* (1994) stresses the importance of "formative assessment" (cf. ANC 1994:34). Furthermore, the NSC outlines different types of assessment (cf. DoE 2003:48). In practice, however, the *emphasis* is clearly on the final (summative) examinations (cf. DoE 2008:19). Does this point to a lack of faith in the ability of teachers as a whole? The NSC examinations are external examinations, whereas Continuous Assessment (CASS) is internally conducted. Although the intention is to moderate CASS, it is far easier to 'manage' a once-off, final examination in terms of

control. Hence, in theory the intention was to have assessment serve the new curriculum (as regards its formative influences). In reality, this laudable intention has been downplayed by the focus on the final examinations.

5.4.6 Resourcing and redress

The NSC takes up the ANC's reference to the need for "… redress of existing inequalities in provision" in *A Framework for Education and Training* (1994:47) by referring to the need for social transformation. In this regard it states "Social transformation in education aims at ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our populations" (DoE 2003:2). An example of such redress is the introduction of 'non-fee-paying schools'. In terms of national policy, a list of schools is issued each year which are not allowed to charge fees (cf. RSA 2006:3; and RSA 2007:3).

5.5 OTHER ISSUES AFFECTING POLITICS, POLICY AND PRACTICE (RELATING TO ASSESSMENT)

Alston (2006:11) states that South Africa needs "assessment that focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning, not on mindless marks and superficial statistics". One needs to consider whether the teaching and learning process in the FET phase really allows for this. Does the teacher really have time to focus on individual learners when one considers the issues of class size and the number of grades taught? Furthermore with the amount of work that *has* to be done, does it not amount to teaching to and for the task? Does this allow for formative assessment?

5.6 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The above analysis reveals that there are indeed tensions between political promises, theoretical policy and practical implementation. For the curriculum (and hence assessment) to work optimally, it would appear to make sense that politics needs to serve the educational process (cf. Section 2.2) and that policy be implemented that translates into sound practice, not merely (often unworkable) policy on paper (cf. Section 1.5).

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to contextualise the role played by the NCS within the South African system of education. Precursors to the implementation of the NCS have been highlighted so as to show the development of educational change (since 1986). The NCS has been critiqued against the ANC discussion document "A Framework for Education and Training" (1994) (prior to its coming to power) in terms of the NEPI "key dimensions in curriculum policy" (1992). The chapter concludes by highlighting tensions that exist between politics, policy and practice. In the next chapter, the assessment of English Home Language will be discussed, in terms of the NCS's vision of assessment.

CHAPTER 6

THE ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE WITHIN THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE (KZNDEC)

"Learning is something students do,

NOT something done to students."

Alfie Kohn

CHAPTER 6

6.1 A CONTEXTUALISATION OF ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE (EHL) WITHIN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT (NCS)

The first NSC examinations, within the FET framework, are due to be written in October / November of 2008. The NCS was first implemented at Grade 10 level in 2006 and subsequently at Grade 11 level in 2007. The EHL papers at Grade 12 level are to be set nationally and all provinces, including KwaZulu-Natal, will write them. Exemplar papers for each of Grades 10, 11 and 12 have been issued to schools to give them an idea of the required standard that is expected.

6.2 ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE EHL NCS

6.2.1 Philosophical underpinnings

The NCS (cf. Chapter 5) is firmly rooted within the philosophy of Outcome-based Education (OBE) (cf. Section 1.2). This philosophy "strives to enable all learners to reach their maximum potential by setting the Learning Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the education process" (DoE 2003:2). Furthermore OBE "encourages a *learner-centred* and *activity-based approach* to education" (DoE 2003:2) (my emphasis). The NCS supports and is underpinned by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

6.2.2 The type of curriculum statement envisaged

The EHL NCS is 'outcomes-based', as are all the others. It is classified within the learning field[37] 'Human and Social Sciences and Languages'. EHL is one of the subjects[38] within this learning field and is further broken down into Learning Outcomes (LO's) and Assessment Standards (AS's). In view

[37] The NCS defines the term *learning field* as "… a category that serves as a home for cognate subjects, and that facilitates the formulation of rules of combination for the Further Education and Training Certificate" (General) (DoE 2003:6).

[38] The NCS states that "historically, a subject has been defined as a specific body of academic knowledge. This understanding of a subject laid emphasis on knowledge at the expense of skills, values and attitudes. Subjects were viewed by some as static and unchanging with rigid boundaries" (DoE 2003:6). In light of the information presented in Section 4.2, the writer disputes this broad generalisation.

of the fact that LO's and AS's form the basis of assessment within the NCS, it is critical that they be understood.

A **learning outcome (LO)** may be defined as "a statement of an intended result of learning and teaching. It describes knowledge, skills and values that learners should acquire by the end of the Further Education and Training band" (DoE 2003:7).

An **assessment standard (AS)** may be defined as a criterion "that collectively describes what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade. [Collectively] they embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the LO's. Assessment standards within each LO collectively show how conceptual progression[39] occurs from grade to grade" (DoE 2003:7).

EHL consists of four LO's:

- LO 1: Listening and Speaking
  The learner is able to listen and speak for a variety of purposes, audiences and contexts;
- LO 2: Reading and Viewing
  The learner is able to read and view for understanding and to evaluate critically and to respond to a wide range of text;
- LO 3: Writing and Presenting
  The learner is able to write and present for a wide range of purposes and audiences using conventions and format appropriate to diverse contexts; and
- LO 4: Language
  The learner is able to use language structures and conventions appropriately and effectively.

The NCS points out, however, that "although these outcomes are listed separately, they should be *integrated* when taught and assessed" (DoE 2003:12) (my emphasis).

[39] Progression refers to "the process of developing more advance and complex knowledge and skills" (DoE 2003:3). Ironically, when one analyses the assessment standards for each Learning Outcome at Grade 10, 11 and 12 levels, they appear to be almost identical. There appears to be little visible progression. Is the implication thus that the teacher should decide what to introduce in specific grades with the proviso that they all be attained by Grade 12?

In addition to the four subject-specific outcomes, the EHL NCS curriculum is also based on seven critical outcomes and five developmental outcomes, which are inspired by the Constitution. The critical outcomes require learners to be able to:

- identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community;
- organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
- use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
- demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (DoE 2003:2).

The developmental outcomes require learners to be able to:

- reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- explore education and career opportunities; and
- develop entrepreneurial opportunities (DoE 2003:2).

6.2.3 Planning of assessment

The EHL NCS document (cf. DoE 2003:49-54) clearly lays out how assessment is to be carried out. The different methods of assessment (i.e. self-, peer-, and group assessment) are discussed as are methods of collecting assessment evidence (i.e. observation, tests and tasks). The importance of rubrics is highlighted so that all stakeholders are aware of *how* learners will be assessed.

6.2.4 The purpose of assessment of English Home Language

The EHL NCS acknowledges that "assessment is a critical element" within the new curriculum (DoE 2003:47). The documentation reasserts the importance of formative assessment and identifies the close link between curriculum, learning and assessment (cf. DoE 2003:47). The EHL NCS identifies the following characteristics of the assessment process; assessment should:

- Characteristic 1[40]: be understood by the learner and by the broader public;
- Characteristic 2: be clearly focused;
- Characteristic 3: be integrated with teaching and learning;
- Characteristic 4: be based on pre-set criteria of the AS's;
- Characteristic 5: allow for expanded opportunities for learners;
- Characteristic 6: be learner-paced and fair;
- Characteristic 7: be flexible;
- Characteristic 8: use a variety of instruments; and
- Characteristic 9: use a variety of methods (DoE 2003:49).

When one analyses these characteristics in terms of the five key features of assessment for the 21st century (cf. Section 2.8), it is evident that assessment is, theoretically, on the right track:
Assessment of English Home Language:

- seek to empower pupils as learners (cf. Characteristics 4 – 7 above);
- recognises the impact of classroom assessment on the pupil's sense of self, on expectations, on motivation, and on confidence (cf. Characteristic 7 above);
- provide guidance to both teachers and pupils about what needs to be learnt next (cf. Characteristic 2 above);
- embody an approach to teaching and learning in which the development of long-term dispositions is more important than short-term performance (cf. Characteristic 3 above); and
- challenge the educational community to develop new approaches and techniques that support the educational ambitions of the twenty-first century (cf. Characteristics 8 and 9 above).

[40] These 'characteristics of assessment' have been numbered thus so as to facilitate cross-referencing below.

6.2.5 How assessment will take place

The manner in which assessment will take place is outlined in the Subject Assessment Guidelines: Language (SAG) (DoE 2008). The assessment process is divided into three areas:

- Daily Assessment;
- The Programme of Assessment Guidelines (PAG); and
- Nationally set examinations.

Collectively, daily assessment and the PAG constitute CASS. Daily assessment is formative in nature and only the PAG tasks are used to determine the final CASS mark. CASS counts 25% of the final mark; the CASS tasks are internally set and externally moderated. The final examinations are externally set, moderated and marked; these final examinations count for 75% of the final mark. The PAG (contained in the SAG) consists of 14 tasks, two of which must be tests / examinations written during terms 2 and 3 (see Appendix B). These tasks will be moderated at school level (twice per year), cluster/district/region (twice per year), and provincial/national level (once per year) (cf. DoE 2008:2-6).

The Grade 12 learner will write three external papers:

- Paper 1: Language (70 marks; 2 hours)
- Paper 2: Literature (80 marks; 2½ hours)
- Paper 3: Writing (100 marks; 2½ hours)

6.2.6 The absence of the writing portfolio

One of the most remarkable features of the EHL NCS is the reintroduction of the writing paper[41]. One can only speculate as to the reasons for this reintroduction. Campbell (1994:41) may be correct in his assertion that "the government does not trust the professional judgement of teachers, and now feels obliged to think on their behalf". If so, this is a serious indictment on English teachers. Indeed, this view is confirmed by Pampallis (in Sukhraj 2006:6) who states that questions remain "about how

[41] In 2002 the Language Standardisation Policy had, as the name suggests, standardised the manner in which the nine new departments of education approached the teaching and assessment of language. The portfolio had thus been adopted nation-wide.

qualified teachers were to actually perform continuous assessments, as well as whether these assessments were conducted honestly". Similar sentiments are expressed by Peliwe Lolwana, Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi, when she claims that "teachers have not come to grips with assessment yet …" (in Pretorius 2006:4).

The strengths of the portfolio system, as outlined by Janisch (cf. Section 4.2.6), clearly support the notion of assessment contained in the NCS, particularly the fact that assessment "enables [learners] to take control of and to make decisions about their learning" (DoE 2003:47). This is precisely what the writing portfolio enables learners to do. In this instance, it would seem that assessment has "become a political rather than a professional issue" (Campbell 1994:41) (cf. Section 5.4).

It is interesting to note that the IEB has continued with the writing portfolio[42]. Candidates who will write the IEB NSC will not be expected to write Paper 3. Instead, writing will form part of the portfolio. To allay any fears of plagiarism on the part of the learner, or unprofessional conduct on the part of teachers, a Common Assessment Task (CAT) will be set by the IEB and written at schools under controlled conditions (IEB 2007:3). This would be moderated along with the remaining tasks of the portfolio by the IEB to ensure standardisation across schools (IEB 2007:10).

6.2.7 The relationship between English Home Language and CASS

The NCS's theoretical pronouncements on assessment are laudable. However, it is when one sees how assessment theory is transformed into policy that one begins to question the NCS's true intentions. There is clearly a contradiction between policy and practice, and it is in terms of this contradiction that the following criticisms can be levelled at the EHL NCS.

[42] In fact, a comparison between the State NSC for EHL and the IEB NSC for EHL reveals huge differences. In addition to the retention of the writing portfolio, the weighting between external and internal assessments is 50%:50% (cf. IEB 2007:1). This is in stark contrast to the 75%:25% weighting of the State NSC for EHL.

6.2.8 Criticism of NCS assessment policy

The first aspect of NCS assessment policy that is of concern is the skewed focus in favour of examinations[43]. The final examination (which accounts for 75% of the learners' final mark) is a summative assessment. Furthermore, to all intents and purposes, it will act as a means to rank learners and ultimately certify them. A focus on a final, summative assessment in no way "helps learners to gauge the value of their learning" (DoE 2003:47). One may thus question how the NCS is radically different to the previous Senior Certificate examinations system in this regard[44]. Furthermore, in view of the acknowledged fact that examinations are limited in what they are able to assess, is it fair to accord such a high weighting in favour of the final examination?

The most striking feature of the PAG is the fact that teachers do not have the freedom to plan their own PAG – it is planned for them. It may thus not be an oversight on the part of the planners of the NCS when they fail to mention educators, stating that assessment should "be understood by the *learner* and by the *broader public*" (cf. Section 6.2.4 – Purpose 1). Furthermore, two of the roles of educators are defined as "*interpreters* and *designers* of Learning Programmes" and "subject specialists" (cf. DoE 2003:5) (my emphasis). The imposition of the PAG may well force the educator to be an interpreter but this certainly does not allow for designing of a learning programme or a need to be a subject specialist. Alston (2006:11) states that

> The purpose of assessment is not about mindless marks. It has a clear double purpose: to assist teachers in their planning of whether to move on to new work or to go back and deal with work not understood, and to assist learners in what needs to be done to improve their performance.

One can thus ask the question: if assessment is supposed to be formative, how does one cope with the compulsory tasks? These tasks take up an enormous amount of time and, from experience thus far, leave little time for teaching. Does one not therefore run the risk of 'teaching to the task', much as one 'taught to the exam'?

---

[43] It is interesting to note that in the General Education and Training (GET) Phase, in contrast, CASS accounts for 75% and the final summative assessment (the so-called Continuous Tasks for Assessment [CTA]) accounts for 25%. Furthermore, of this 25% only 10% constitutes a formal examination. The remaining 15% is done as class-based tasks. The sudden reversal in the FET has a significant impact on learners who have not been trained (under the GET curriculum) to handle the emphasis on exams.

[44] However, when one takes views such as that of Pampallis (in Sukhraj 2006:6, cf. Section 6.2.6) into account, one could possibly understand why. Nevertheless, it is the assessment process that is ultimately hindered.

Lastly, when one considers that the NCS is intended to be criterion-referenced as opposed to being norm-referenced, how will it be possible to report on the learners' achievement (or lack of achievement) of the assessment standards for each LO? EHL is, for example, divided into four Learning Outcomes (Listening and Speaking; Reading and Viewing; Writing and Presenting; and Language). Each of these LO's is broken down into AS's. Thus to ensure that the LO has been achieved, the AS's have to be met. When the learner receives his / her final results however, s/he will merely be rated on a rating scale from 1 (0% - 29%) to 7 (80% - 100%). In view of the time constraints imposed on markers at the external marking process, it seems highly unlikely that it would be possible to report on the LO's being assessed for each learner. And if it is indeed impossible to do so accurately, would it not be fair to assume that the NCS would fail to have achieved its intended outcomes? A review of the 2008 Grade 12 exemplar papers (and their associated memoranda), prepared by the National Department of Education, shows that no reference is made to the respective LO's and AS's. Furthermore these external papers do not take into account the oral component which is internally conducted and externally moderated.

6.3 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

An analysis of the assessment within EHL in the NSC reveals that there is a tension between policy and practice. Although the NCS advocates the importance of the assessment process (identifying the close link between curriculum, learning and assessment – cf. Section 6.2.4), in practice the process is undermined by the choices that have been made as regards the assessment process in terms of the freedom of teachers to make decisions, and the heavy weighting of examinations.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to contextualise the English Home Language syllabus within the NSC. The relationship between the curriculum statement and assessment has been touched on, as well as the manner in which the NCS endeavours to implement policy. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the tensions that exist between policy and practice. In the final chapter, conclusions will be given based on the evidence presented in previous chapters. In light of these conclusions, recommendations will also be presented.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"It is today we must create the world of the future".

Eleanor Roosevelt

CHAPTER 7

7.1 INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

In Chapters 3 and 4, and 5 and 6, thus far, the role of the curriculum and associated assessment practice has been shown in the former NED and current NCS, respectively. An analysis of both systems reveals the following broad picture:

Descriptor		Natal Education Department		National Curriculum Statement
7.1.1 Type of English curriculum		English First Language curriculum referred to as 'goals based' (cf. Section 4.2.2)		English Home Language curriculum statement referred to as 'outcome-based' (cf. Section 6.2.2)
7.1.2 Type of assessment seen as important (as reflected in policy <u>and</u> practice)		Formative assessment and continuous assessment. Summative assessment is used for standardisation purposes (cf. Section 4.2.5).		In view of the high weighting of the final examination, it would appear that summative assessment is considered more important (cf. Section 6.2.5).
7.1.3 Function of assessment		➢ Formative (internally) ➢ Norm-referencing (externally)		➢ Formative (internally) ➢ Criterion-referencing (in terms of policy) ➢ Norm-referencing (in reality)
7.1.4 Role of continuous assessment (CASS)		Considered extremely important in terms of its formative role (cf. Section 4.2.3), and in terms of the fact that a teacher was able to best assess his / her learner in terms of the fact that he / she knew him / her well (cf. Ashworth (2007) – Section 4.2.6).		Considered important (cf. Section 6.2.5) but its low weighting undermines this pronouncement.
7.1.5 Weighting of CASS in relation to the final examination		50% : 50%		25% : 75%
7.1.6 Role of the educator		Considered extremely important. The educator was given scope to shape his / her		The CASS programme (outlined in the PAG) is pre-determined. Teachers are obliged to

in shaping CASS.		CASS to suit the needs of the learners (cf. Section 4.2.4).		fulfil the requirements of the PAG (i.e. the 14 tasks) (cf. Section 6.2.8).
7.1.7 Final examinations		Three* Paper 1 – Writing Paper 2 – Literature Paper 3 – Language * Writing Paper substituted by a Writing Portfolio in 1993.		Three* Paper 1 – Language Paper 2 – Literature Paper 3 – Writing * Writing Paper reintroduced.
7.1.8 Nature of final examination		Standardisation instrument – used to statistically moderate CASS.		Final summative examination. Added to moderated CASS.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

Although there are similarities between the NED and the NSC curricula and attitudes towards the role of assessment, there are also huge differences.

It has been shown that, in the creation of a new curriculum, it is naïve to merely discard the past as totally without merit. Venter contends that "some of the positive aspects [of OBE] were there in the best of traditional education" (Venter 1998:5). In view of the evidence above, it could be stated that the NED offered more than mere "traditional education". Its view of education, the curriculum, assessment and the relationship between all stakeholders shows that this Department saw education in a holistic sense. It was forward-looking and sought to embrace new ways of 'seeing' and 'doing'. This is not to say that the NED was the epitome of perfection. It had its short-comings – possibly the worst being its perceived association with the House of Assembly political structure and the apartheid regime.

It is precisely because of this association that the National Department of Education (DoE) currently appears to discard the NED's work as irrelevant and unworthy of consideration. A more objective view, however, reveals that it had much to offer and contribute as regards curriculum policy and assessment. Gamble's (2003:6) support of the notion of "building on the past" seems to support such a view. In so doing, one is not justifying apartheid: one is merely taking what works and capitalising on it.

At the same time, one also has to take into account problems with the education system as a whole. Disparities both in terms of physical and human resources also need to be borne in mind. However, this simply confirms the belief that "sometimes it is better to patch up X and spend more time developing Y" (Wood in Murphy & Torrance 1988:3) (cf. Section 1.4).

7.2.1 Perceived problems in the NCS

7.2.1.1 Type of English curriculum (cf. 7.1.1)

The new NCS is based on the principles of Outcomes-based Education. As well as the four learning outcomes, there are critical and developmental outcomes (cf. Section 6.2.2) which underpin the curriculum statement (being rooted in the Constitution). In view of the fact that these outcomes are central to the curriculum, it is thus difficult to ascertain how some of them will be assessed and reported on. For example, if we consider the second critical outcome:

"Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community."

In view of the manner in which the NSC is conducted and reported on, it is difficult to see how one would decide if this outcome has been achieved.

7.2.1.2 Type of assessment seen as important (as reflected in policy and practice) (cf. 7.1.2)

The previous Senior Certificate was heavily criticised for being a summative, once-off, high-stakes examination. The new NSC does not appear to be very different. Although it contains a CASS component constituting 25% of the mark, the final examination still constitutes 75% of the mark. One can only speculate as to the reasons: a lack of faith in the ability / integrity of educators to assess, a desire to retain control over the examination process, or perhaps the realisation that, at the current time, it is not feasible to implement policy. Whatever the reason/s for the 25%:75% weighting, the fact remains that there is a distinct tension between policy and practice. Within the former NED the equal weighting of CASS and the final examination appears to have made more sense – especially in terms of how the examination was used for standardisation purposes (cf. Section 3.4).

7.2.1.3 Function of assessment (cf. 7.1.3)

The NCS purports to be outcomes-based. As such, learners should be assessed and reported on in terms of the LO's and their associated AS's. In contrast, the former Senior Certificate (SC) was clearly norm-referenced. It remains to be seen, however, exactly *how* the outcomes will be reported on. EHL, for example, has four outcomes (cf. Section 6.2.2). A learner's assessment should thus reveal if these outcomes have been achieved and how well. A final mark (and rating of between 1 and 7) would clearly be insufficient. If, however, this is to be case, how will it be any different from the former SC? In addition, the final marks will still be used to rank learners for certification purposes – i.e. they will be norm-referenced.

7.2.1.4 Role of continuous assessment (CASS) (cf. 7.1.4)

Within the NCS, CASS constitutes 25% of the final mark. CASS will be moderated (cf. Section 6.2.5) and will then be added to the moderated examination mark (that constitutes 75%). The CASS will be derived from the 14 tasks that make up the PAG and not from daily assessment that is formative in nature. A distinct possibility exists that educators could focus on the 14 tasks to the detriment of daily assessment (and, by implication, formative assessment). In contrast, within the former NED, teachers were given more freedom to develop their own CASS programme. Although they had to fulfil minimum tasks and ensure that the standard of the tasks were commensurate with the standard of the SC, they were able to take their school's context into account (cf. Section 3.4).

7.2.1.5 Weighting of CASS in relation to the final examination (cf. 7.1.5)

This aspect of the NCS has been dealt with above in Sections 7.2.1.2 and 7.2.1.4. Various possible reasons have also been given for the weighting.

7.2.1.6 Role of the educator in shaping CASS (cf. 7.1.6)

Although new policy recognises the importance of the educator as "*interpreters* and *designers* of Learning Programmes" and "subject specialists" (cf. DoE 2003:5) (my emphasis), it would appear that

this is in theoretical terms only. The PAG is predetermined by the National Department of Education and all fourteen tasks are laid out in the PAG. As regard assessments, it is thus unclear how the educator is viewed as an "interpreter", a "designer of learning programmes" or a "subject specialist" in the light of such heavy-handed prescription. In contrast, the NED allowed teachers to experiment with assessment methods (cf. Sections 3.1 and 4.1) precisely because of the faith they had in their teachers (cf. Section 3.3). It was this faith and freedom that allowed them to become the very "interpreters", "designers of learning programmes" and "subject specialists" which the current Department of Education desires its teachers to be.

7.2.1.7 Final examinations (cf. 7.1.7)

The reintroduction of the writing paper is cause for concern, particularly in view of the evidence that exists for the retention of the writing portfolio (cf. Section 4.2.6). Again, one can only speculate as to the reasons for the reintroduction. One of the main possible reasons could be the abuse of the system by some learners and schools. Rather than abandoning the writing portfolio, however, possibilities could have been explored to address the problems that existed, as opposed to merely discarding a method that supports holistic assessment, and which is in keeping with the aims of the NCS.

7.2.1.8 The nature of the final examination (cf. 7.1.8)

The final examination in the NCS is merely that: a final (summative) examination. It is added to the CASS mark but in no way relates to the CASS component. In contrast, in the NED, the final examination was more than an examination. It served as a standardisation instrument to moderate the CASS done throughout the year (cf. Section 3.4). As a result, the learner's CASS became as important as the final examination: the final examination did not overshadow work completed throughout the year. In the NCS, the weighting of the final examination means that it counts more, with CASS not being regarded as as important. It would seem that the final examination should bear some sort of relationship with CASS completed throughout the year. The addition of a CASS mark and a final examination mark does not bring about such a relationship. The system used by the NED (a 50%:50% weighting) makes more sense. In a perfect world and hence system of assessment, it would make sense

to simply use the CASS mark. We do not, and in the interests of accountability and acceptability the CASS marks thus need to be statistically compared to the final examination mark.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The NCS attempts to address the imbalances of South African education as a whole. It attempts to take South African education into the 21st century, to deal with local contexts as well as the impact of international trends such as globalisation and internationalisation. It attempts to make all stakeholders responsible for the education process and to be as participative as possible within the given context. It is perhaps the 'given context' that makes this task so difficult. The education system is confronted by so many challenges that make implementing the new curriculum extremely problematic: fiscal constraints, unfavourable social contexts, political agendas, and wide(ning) gulfs between rich and poor, to name but a few. In this regard Wood's comment (in Murphy & Torrance 1988:3) makes a lot of sense: "Sometimes it is better to patch up X and spend more time developing Y".

However, to abandon the new system does not seem practical or feasible. Bearing this in mind, the following recommendations are made in terms of the conclusions drawn in Section 7.2.

7.3.1 Assessment and reporting in terms of the four learning outcomes (cf. 7.2.1.1 and 7.2.1.3)

For the NCS to be truly outcomes-based, it is essential that learners are assessed and reported on in terms of the four LO's. This does not seem feasible in terms of how the EHL NCS is currently structured: the AS's are simply too vast in number and it would thus be unwieldy to determine whether the LO's have been attained or not. A solution would be to reassess the progression of the AS's and to allocate them specifically to grades 10, 11 and 12. At the end of grades 10, 11 and 12, the relevant LO would be assessed in terms of the AS's relevant to that grade. This would serve two functions: making progression from grades 10 – 12 more clear (cf. Section 5.3.5) as well as allowing for the more successful reporting of results.

The issue of the critical outcomes and developmental outcomes also needs to be taken into account. How will these outcomes be assessed and reported on? A solution might be to report on these

outcomes in the first three terms of Grade 12, possibly culminating in the learners' 'trial' reports. It is acknowledged, however, that this is also problematic in terms of standardisation issues. This is an area that clearly needs further research.

7.3.2 The relationship between CASS and the final examination (cf. 7.2.1.2, 7.2.1.4 - 7.2.1.6)

The weighting between CASS (25%) and the final examination (75%) is unacceptable given the evidence that has been presented in Sections 2.3 – 2.7. At the same time, however, the possible reasons for this weighting need to be borne in mind (cf. Section 7.2.1.2). The process of moderation is expensive, logistically difficult and by its nature subjective (cf. Section 3.4). One also needs to bear in mind that, in view of the national character of the system, moderation will take place in all nine provinces. Consequently, unless the same teams are used for cluster/district/regional moderation (cf. Section 6.2.5), the issue of subjectivity is raised even further. A possible solution would be to implement the SAS system used by the former NED (cf. Section 3.4). This would have the following benefits:

- An equal weighting between CASS and the final examination;
- Limiting the expense, logistics and subjectivity of physical moderation;
- Re-introducing and developing the concepts of teacher professionalism and integrity;
- Allowing teachers to truly become 'interpreters', 'designers of materials' and 'subject specialists'; and
- Ensuring greater fairness, validity and reliability, and hence increased public accountability and acceptability.

The prescriptive manner in which the PAG is presented also needs to be re-evaluated, particularly in view of the manner in which it negates the professionalism of teachers. The prescription of minimum tasks is advisable, but the teacher should also be given opportunities to experiment with alternative forms of assessment, bearing in mind of course that they should maintain the standard of the NSC. Critics of such a suggestion may cite possible prohibitive factors such as abuse by teachers, teacher apathy and the use of unrealistic assessments. Such criticism is not without merit or validity. A possible way of counteracting such negative factors is an increase in the subject advisory service of the

department, offset by the costs saved, for example, by statistical moderation. Another suggestion might be further investigation of the efficacy of the CAT tasks, as used by the IEB (cf. Section 6.2.6).

7.3.3 The reintroduction of a writing portfolio (cf. 7.2.1.7)

In view of the nature of writing – i.e. a process as opposed to a product – the reintroduction of the writing portfolio is essential. Janisch gives numerous reasons for such a belief (cf. Section 4.2.6). Again, plausible reasons can be given for its removal, the most serious of which is the abuse thereof. However, should the dishonesty of a minority preclude the majority from what constitutes valid assessment and common sense? From a more cynical point of view, such dishonesty would be 'found out' in the statistical moderation process and the offenders would prejudice themselves.

7.3.4 The role of the final examination

The final examination should not merely be a summative examination. A further reason to implement the SAS to those given in Section 7.3.2 above, is that the final examination thus becomes a standardisation instrument. It is used to validate the assessments supplied by educators and so ensure that the final ranking of students is as accurate as possible.

7.4 FINAL COMMENTS

South Africa needs a system of education that will serve the needs of her population. The NSC – based on the Constitution of South Africa – attempts to afford every citizen a basic education. Founded on OBE, the curriculum attempts to take into account local contexts and to prepare learners for an ever-changing world. The system has its critics and some of their criticisms are well-founded and need to be addressed if the NCS is to be effective. One of the areas within the NCS that needs attention is the system of assessment. The shortcomings of this assessment have been revealed – shortcomings that reveal a tension between proposed policy and theory in practice.

In embracing a new curriculum, the past has been negated. In view of the history of apartheid, the reasons for such negation are understandable. However, in doing so, it is possible to ignore and hence

lose the good that did exist. It has been shown that the NED attempted to do a "good job in a bad situation" (cf. Section 4.1). Much of the NED's work appears to have been forward-looking and, in many respects, innovative and could, if given the chance, be used to shape current educational policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

African National Congress (ANC). 1994. *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. Accessed online: http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/educate.htm (20 November 2007).

Alston, K. 2006. It's time to assess the assessment. *The Daily Dispatch*, 24 May:11.

Anonymous. 1993. Natal 'being excluded' from schools plans. *The Natal Mercury*, 4 May:2.

Appignanesi, R. & Garratt, C. 1999. *Introducing Postmodernism*. New York: Totem Books.

Ashworth, J. 2007. Personal Communication: interview conducted at the KwaZulu-Natal Art Gallery. 13 July. Durban.

Badat, S. 1997. Educational Politics in the Transition Period. In: *Education after Apartheid*, edited by P. Kallaway, G. Kruss, A. Fataar and G. Donn. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press:9-33.

Beck, C. 1993. Postmodernism, Pedagogy, and Philosophy of Education. Accessed online: http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eps/PES-Yearbook/93_docs/BECK.HTM (25 March 2008).

Bell, J. 1999. *Doing Your Research Project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Campbell, G. 1994. Exams or Coursework? In: *Crux* 28(1), edited by M.M. Hacksley. Grahamstown: Foundation for Education, Science and Technology (FEST):40-41.

Christie, P. 1997. Globalisation and the Curriculum: Proposals for the Integration of Education and Training. In: *Education after Apartheid*, edited by P. Kallaway, G. Kruss, A. Fataar and G. Donn. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press:111-126.

Claassen, C. 1999. The State, Globalisation and education. In: *Contemporary Education: Global Issues and Trends*, edited by E. Lemmer. Sandton: Heinemann:26-45.

Coetzer, I. 2001. A survey and appraisal of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) in South Africa with reference to progressive education in America. In: *Educare* 30(1):73-93.

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). 2008. *Effective Formative Assessment: Definition and Attributes.*
Accessed online:
http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/B3-Anderegg-Key.doc (25 March 2008).

De Clercq, F. 1997. Education Policies and the Reform Process: An Evaluation of South Africa's New Development and Education Macros Policies. In: *Education after Apartheid*, edited by P. Kallaway, G. Kruss, A. Fataar and G. Donn. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press:143-168.

Delors, J. (ed.) 1996. *Learning: the Treasure Within*. Paris: UNESCO.

Department of Education (DoE). 1997. *Curriculum 2005: Implementing OBE 4 Philosophy*. Pretoria: CTP Books.

Department of Education (DoE). 2003. *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Languages: English Home Language*. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of Education (DoE). 2008. *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General): Subject Assessment Guidelines: Languages*. Pretoria: DoE.

Department of National Education (DNE). 1992. *Education Renewal Strategy*. Pretoria: DNE.

Dreyer, C. & van der Walt, I. An introduction to portfolio assessment in the English class. In: *Journal for Language Teaching* 33(2):108-116.

Du Toit, G.F. & Du Toit, E.R. 2004. Understanding outcomes-based education (OBE). In: *Outcomes-Based Assessment*, edited by J.G. Maree and W.J. Fraser. Sandown: Heinemann.

Earl, L.M. 2003. *Assessment as Learning*. California: Corwin Press.

Enslin, P. & Pendlebury, S. 1998. Transforming Education in South Africa? *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28(3):261-268.

Esiqongweni. 2006. Assessor's Course (SAQA US ID 115753). Durban.

Folger, M. 1999. What are we preparing for?
Accessed online:
http://www.simpleliving.net/news/archives_article.asp?id=228 (20 November 2007).

Fouché, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. 2002. Introduction to the research process. In: *Research at Grass Roots*, edited by A.S. de Vos. Pretoria: Van Schaik:77-92.

Freeman, R. & Lewis, R. 1998. *Planning and implementing assessment*. London: Kogan Page.

Gamble, J. 2003. *Curriculum Responsiveness in FET Colleges*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

Harley, K. & Wedekind, V. 2004. Political change, curriculum change and social formation, 1900 to 2002. In: *Changing Class*: *education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*, edited by Linda Chisholm. London: Zed.

Hassan, T. 2005. *Educational Assessment in Nigeria: A Paradox of a victim of its own failures*. Accessed online: http://www.iaea.info/abstract_files/paper_051218103810.doc (25 July 2007).

Haw, S. 1995a. *Taking Stock: The Natal Education Department Looks Back*. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Education Department (NED).

Haw, S. 1995b. 'The Rise of the Red Brick Schools'. *The Natal Witness*, 31 March:13.

Higher Education Academy (HEA). 2008. *Formative vs summative assessment*. Accessed online: http://www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/assessment/formative.html (25 March 2008).

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). 1981. *The provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa* (The De Lange Report). Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Independent Examinations Board (IEB). 2007. *National Senior Certificate (NSC): Generic Home Language: Assessment Guidelines*. Houghton: IEB.

Janisch, R. 2006. *Getting it right, keeping it right*. Paper presented at the 4th Sub-regional Conference on Assessment in Education, hosted by Umalusi from the 26th to the 30th June 2006. Accessed online: http://www.umalusi.org.za/ur/Conferences/apple/2006.06.21.janisch%20%20r.PDF (2 February 2008).

Jansen, J.D. 1998. Why education policies fail? In: *Indicator South Africa*, 15(1):56-58.

Jansen. J.D. ca. 2001. Rethinking Education Policy Making in South Africa: Symbols of Change, Signals of Conflict. In: *Education in Retrospect*, edited by A. Kraak & M. Young. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC):41-58.

Lubisi, C.R. & Murphy R.J. 2002. Assessment in South African Schools. In: *Assessment in Education* 9(2):255-268.

Mahomed, A.M. 2001. Outcomes-based Education: An Overview. In: *Educational Practice* (6):15-24.

Malherbe, E.G. 1977. *Education in South Africa*. *Volume II: 1923-1975*. Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. 2001. *Research in Education: a Conceptual Introduction*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Mda, T. 1999. Education for diversity. In: *Contemporary Education: Global Issues and Trends*, edited by E. Lemmer. Sandton: Heinemann:218-238.

Muller, J. 2004. Assessment, qualifications and the NQF in South African schooling. In: *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Linda Chisholm. London: Zed.

Munshi, R. 2006. Curricula Clash Results in Failure. *The Financial Mail*, 4 August:28.

Murphy, R. & Torrance, H. 1988. *The Changing Face of Educational Assessment*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Natal Education Department (NED). s.a. *English First Language Guide to the Syllabus: Oral Communication 4*. Pietermartizburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1977. *Reading with Certainty*. Pietermartizburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1986a. *Academic Leadership, Organisation and School-based Curriculum Development*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1986b. *Syllabus for English First Language (Higher Grade): Standards 8, 9 and 10*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1987a. *Close Reading of Literature*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1987b. *Television and the Language Teacher*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1988. *Some of the Best Writing from the 1988 NSC*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1989. *Bulletin 48: Assessment*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1990. *The Natal Education Department into the 1990s*. (Unpublished report). Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1992a. *Guide to the Teaching of Writing*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

Natal Education Department (NED). 1992b. *Mediating Media in the High School*. Pietermaritzburg: NED.

National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). 1992. *National Education Policy Investigation: Curriculum*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). 1993. *National Education Policy Investigation: The Framework Report*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Noah, H. 1984. The Use and Abuse of Comparative Education. In: *Comparative Education*. Volume 1. Pretoria: University of South Africa (UNISA).

Oberholzer, A. 2007. Personal Communication via e-mail over the period 10 April to 15 August.

Olmesdahl, A.B. 1994. NED 'deserves a mention as well'. *The Natal Witness*, 2 May:12.

Pretorious, C. 2006. Language of Assessment. *The Teacher*, 31 July:4.

Race, P, Brown, S & Smith B. 2005. *500 tips on Assessment*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Reddy, C. 2004. Assessment principles and approaches. In: *Outcomes-Based Assessment*, edited by J.G. Maree and W.J. Fraser. Sandown: Heinemann.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1995. White Paper on Education and Training. *Government Gazette*, Vol. 357, No. 16312, 15 March 1995. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996a. National Education Policy Act. *Government Gazette*, Act 27 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996b. South African Schools Act. *Government Gazette*, Act 84 of 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1998. Further Education and Training Act. *Government Gazette*, Act 98 of 1998. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2006. South African Schools Act: Publication of list of no fee schools per province. *Government Gazette*, Vol. 498, No. 29438, 1 December 2006. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 2007. South African Schools Act: Publication of list of no fee schools per province. *Government Gazette*, Vol. 510, No. 30524, 5 December 2007. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Rowntree, D. 1987. *Assessing Students: How shall we know them?* London: Kogan Page.

Schroenn, M. 2007. Personal Communication. Interview conducted at Schroenn's residence. 10 August. Pietermaritzburg.

Schroenn, M. 2008. Personal Communication via e-mail over the period 13 April to 24 April.

Siebörger, R. 2004. *Transforming Assessment: A Guide for South African Teachers*. Cape Town: Juta & Co. Ltd.

Shilowa, M. 2008. Speech by Premier of Gauteng, Mr Mbhazima Shilowa, on the occasion to mark the release of matric results of 2007.
Accessed online:
http://www.polity.org.za/article.php?a_id=124508 (6 February 2008).

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). 2008. *NQF History*.
Accessed online:
http://www.saqa.org.za/about/nqhistory.htm (9 February 2008).

Stromquist, N.P. & Monkman, P. 2000. Defining Globalization and Assessing its implications on knowledge and education. In: *Globalization and Education: Integration and contestation across cultures*, edited by N.P. Stromquist and P. Monkman. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield:3-26.

Strydom, H. 2002. The Pilot Study. In: *Research at Grass Roots*, edited by A.S. de Vos. Pretoria: Van Schaik:210-22.

Sukhraj, P. 2005. Assessment System 'is weak'. *The Daily News*, 23 December:6.

Talbot, C.J. 1989. The School Assessment in Perspective. In: *Bulletin 48: Assessment*, edited by members of the Language and Publications service of the Natal Education Department. Pietermaritzburg: Natal Education Department (NED):1-9.

Talbot, C.J. 2007. Personal Communication via e-mail over the period 12 April to 21 April.

Tanner, H. & Jones, S. 2003. *Marking and Assessment*. London: Continuum.

Thompson, M. & Wiliam, D. 2007. *Tight but Loose: A Conceptual Framework for Scaling Up School Reforms*.
Accessed online:
http://www.dylanwiliam.net/ (2 February 2008).

University of Northern Iowa (UNI). 2008. A Definition of Assessment from the Higher Learning Commission.
Accessed online:
http://www.uni.edu/assessment/definitionofassessment.shtml (24 March 2008).

Van der Horst, H. & McDonald, R. 1997. *Outcomes-based Education: A Teacher's Manual*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.

Vandeyar, S. & Killen, R. 2003. Has curriculum reform in South Africa really changed assessment practices, and what promise does the revised National Curriculum Statement hold? In: *Perspectives in Education* 21(1):119-134.

Van Niekerk, P. 1999. *Values and Ideologies*. In: *Contemporary Education: Global Issues and Trends*, edited by E. Lemmer. Sandton: Heinemann.

Venter, I.S.J. & Verster T.L. 1986. *Educational Themes in Time Perspective (Part 3)*. Pretoria: University of South Africa (UNISA).

Venter, M. 1998. Assessing OBE Assessment. *NUE Comment*, 1(2):4-5.

Webb, C. 1989. Shortcomings in education. *The Natal Witness*, 4 December:8.

Weeden, P, Winter, J & Broadfoot, P. 2002. *Assessment: What's in it for schools?* London: Routledge Falmer.

Wiliam, D. 2000. The meanings and consequences of educational assessments. In: *Critical Quarterly* 42(1):105-127.

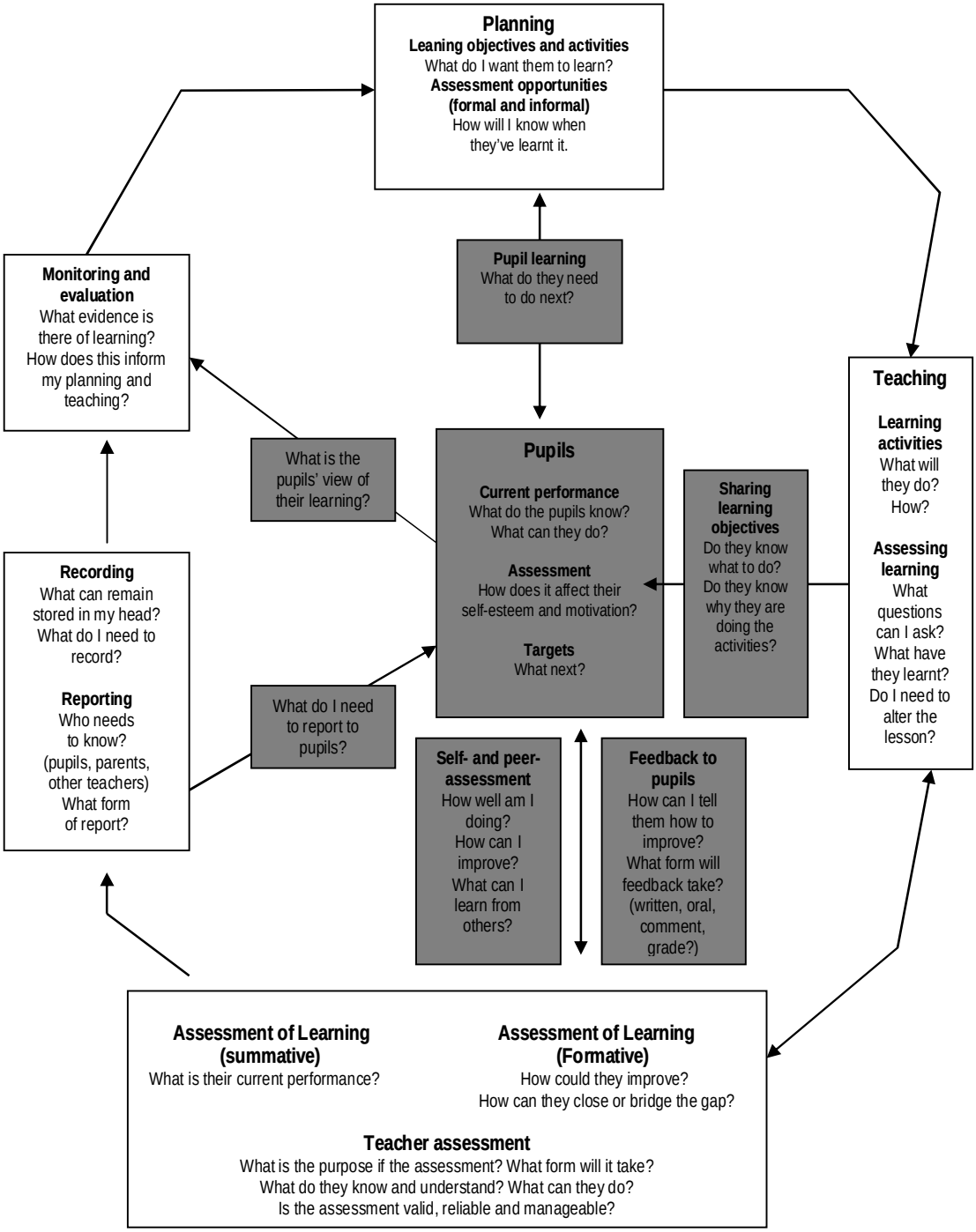
Wiliam, D. 2006. Assessment of learning: why, what and how? Accessed online: http://www.dylanwiliam.net/ (2 February 2008).

Wilmot, D. 2003. The inception phase of a case study of outcomes-based education policy in the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area of C2005. In: *South African Journal of Education*, 23(4):313-318.

Young, M. & Kraak, A. ca. 2001. Introduction. In: *Education in Retrospect*, edited by A. Kraak & M. Young. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC):1-16.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Diagram highlighting the role of assessment within the education process



Weeden *et al.* (2002:23)

Appendix B: The Programme of Assessment Guidelines for Grade 12 English Home Language

Term 1	**Task 1 – 50 marks**	**Task 2 – 10 marks**	**Task 3 – 10 marks**	**Task 4 – 10 marks**	**Task 5 – 40 marks**
150 marks converted to 100	**Writing: Essay** Narrative / descriptive / reflective / argumentative / discursive / expository Assessment tool: Rubric	**Literature: Novel / Drama** * Essay / contextual questions Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	** **Oral**: Reading / listening / speaking Interview / debate / prepared speech / unprepared speech / conversation Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	** **Oral**: Reading / listening / speaking Interview / debate / prepared speech / unprepared speech / conversation Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	**Test 1** Comprehension / language / summary Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum
--Term 2	**Task 6 – 50 marks**	**Task 7 – 50 marks**	**Task 8 – 20 marks**	**Task 9 – 30 marks**	**Task 10 – 250 marks**
400 marks converted to 100	**Literature: Novel / Drama** * Essay / contextual Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	**Writing: Essay** Narrative / descriptive / reflective / argumentative / discursive / expository **OR** **Longer Transactional text (30) <u>and</u> Shorter text (20)** Assessment tool: Rubric	**Oral Response to literature** Film Study / television drama / short story / folklore / short essay / autobiography / biography Assessment tool: Rubric / Memorandum	**Literature: Poetry** Seen (20) and Unseen (10) Essay / Contextual questions Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	*** **Midyear examinations** ➢ Paper 1 (70) – 2 hours ➢ Paper 2 (80) – 2½ hours ➢ Paper 3 (100) – 2½ hours (if necessary to be completed in May) Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum
Term 3	**Task 11 – 50 marks**	**Task 12 – 10 marks**	**Task 13 – 40 marks**	**Task 14 – 250 marks**	
350 marks converted to 100	**Writing: Essay** Narrative / descriptive / reflective / argumentative / discursive / expository Assessment tool: Rubric	** **Oral**: Reading / listening / speaking interview / debate / prepared speech / unprepared speech / conversation Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	**Test 2** Comprehension / language / summary / shorter texts – reference / informational Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	***** **Preparatory examinations** ➢ Paper 1 (70) – 2 hours ➢ Paper 2 (80) – 2½ hours ➢ Paper 3 (100) – 2½ hours (if necessary to be completed in August) Assessment tool: Rubric / memorandum	

* One essay and one set of contextual questions should be attempted of different genres in Task 2 and 6.

** Oral: Learners should do at least one reading, speaking and listening task during the year.

*** In Grade 12, one of the tasks in Term 2 and / or Term 3 must be an internal examination. In instances where only one of the two internal examinations is written in Grade 12, the other examination should be replaced by a test at the end of the term (Tasks 10 and 14).

DoE (2008:20)