EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE PREMISES UNDERPINNING OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES.

By

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DECLARATION

I, M.A. Mothapo, have edited N.J. Ramoroka's document and I am satisfied that the language used is correct.

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PREFACE

This study is a determination of educators' understanding of OBE in South Africa. This took place in the Bochum district in the Limpopo Province.

Where other authors' ideas are used, such authors are acknowledged. Some authors' ideas are quoted verbatim and are indicated in italics.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVESTIGATION

This investigation focused on educators' understanding of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and the impact it has had on their classroom assessment practices. As assessment practices may not be separated from instructional practices, educators' opinions were probed on their classroom practices in general (i.e. instructional and assessment practices). Educators are the major role players towards successful implementation of OBE; as such their understanding of OBE is important. It has been about nine (9) years since OBE was phased in, in the South African Education system. Educators have undergone in-service training through workshops in order to implement OBE in their classroom practices. In the early stages of implementing OBE, many educators did not understand what was expected of them in an OBE classroom. Most of them continued to follow direct instruction as the only method in their instructional practices. They were resistant to changes. One of the reasons why they resisted changes is that they had little understanding of OBE. This investigation was meant to determine whether there has been development and improvement on educators' understanding of OBE.

The following qualitative research methods were followed in this investigation: semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis.

A general overview of OBE was given in order to help me to develop criteria on which I could judge educators' opinions regarding their understanding of OBE during interviews, observations and document analysis.

The results in this investigation show that educators still have little understanding of OBE premises and principles. They do not accommodate OBE premises and principles in their classroom practices. Educators' understanding of OBE must be improved so that they can implement OBE effectively in the classroom.

LIST OF KEY WORDS

- Educators
- Understanding
- Outcomes-based Education (OBE)
- Outcomes-based assessment (OBA)
- OBE premises
- OBE principles
- Critical outcomes
- Learning outcomes
- Instructional practices
- Assessment practices

CHAPTER 1: BACKROUND OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.1 Introduction

This investigation has focused on educators' understanding of the premises underpinning Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and the impact such understanding has had on their classroom assessment practices. The purpose of the first chapter is to provide the reader with a comprehensive outline of the foundational work undertaken prior to the actual start of the investigation. It addresses the problem statement, research questions, aim, objectives, relevance of the study, research methods, outline and time frame of the investigation and structure of the dissertation.

The problem statement comprises reasons why I was prompted to conduct this investigation. Studying literature to get a clear understanding of OBE and investigating in which way it was introduced in South Africa has formed the basis for this investigation.

The research questions, aims and objectives are also addressed in this chapter to provide the reader with the purpose of the investigation and to help the researcher to keep focused on the investigation. The reader is supplied with reasons why the study is worth doing and who can benefit from it, in a section about the relevance of the study.

The reader has been provided with an outline of the research methods so that he/she knows how the investigation was conducted. The different research methods as well as reasons for the choice of these methods in this investigation, are provided.

The section on outline and time frame of the investigation informs the reader on how the investigation was planned.
Structuring the dissertations indicates the development of the report. This section contains the contents of the report.

The conclusion at the end of this chapter supplies the reader with a summary of the main points dealt with in the chapter. Work to be done in the next chapter is also briefly discussed.

1.2 Problem statement

According to Leedy (1993:61) 'successful researchers keep asking themselves constantly, what am I doing and for what purpose?' This question is important to keep one focused throughout the research process. It has helped me to identify a problem in this investigation. I did ask myself, what do I want to investigate, and for what purpose was I conducting this investigation? I am conducting this investigation to determine educators' understanding of Outcomes-based Education, and how such understanding influences their classroom assessment practices. I therefore asked myself the following: Why should I conduct an investigation about educators' understanding of OBE and how would such understanding impact on their classroom assessment practices? The reason is that for a long time educators were used to a traditional way of teaching that was content-based. They followed direct instruction as a major teaching strategy and assessed learners' ability to memorise content. Assessment was done mostly at the end of learning activities and the most preferred assessment strategy was written work. When OBE was phased into the education system educators were expected to change their ways of teaching and assessment.

Olivier (2002: ii) writes:

> *"The success of outcomes-based learning system depends on how well it is understood, … it is essential that those involved in teaching, training and human resources development understand the ways in which traditional education and training approaches must be capitalized on and enriched to effect outcomes-based learning".*

For educators to implement OBE successfully they must understand the OBE system. Educators play a major role in teaching. The Department of Education policy document (2004:4) states that educators are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. What Olivier (2002) state is that

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traditional approaches should not be thrown away, but should be used as a means towards implementing OBE. To implement OBE successfully, educators should change or improve their ways of instructing and assessing learners' work.

According to Orsmond and Gildenhuys (2005:134), assessment is not based on content as it was in the past. Assessment should be broad enough to include attitudes, processes and skills as well as knowledge and concepts. Teaching should be outcomes-based and learners should play a major role in the teaching and learning process. Assessment should be linked to the outcomes that learners should achieve. The following question could be asked: Do educators know exactly what is required of them in an OBE classroom or not? Naicker (1999:97) argues that prior to discussing an implementation plan, it is important to understand the various mechanisms of OBE, namely: critical outcomes, specific outcomes, assessment criteria, range statement and performance criteria. The point that Naicker (1999) makes is that 'understanding' forms the basis for implementation. This shows that before we can talk about effective OBE implementation in the classroom, we must first think about educators' understanding of OBE. Educators play a major role in the implementation OBE. An understanding of OBE is therefore essential. The Department of Education policy document (2004:4) indicates educators as the mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials. They are not to mediate learning or interpret and design learning programmes without an understanding of OBE.

Some educators have indicated that they understand Outcomes-based Education, while others are still in quandary as far as Outcomes-based Education is concerned. I asked myself: Do educators really understand Outcomes-based Education and can they implement it effectively in their classrooms? There is a possibility that some educators understand Outcomes-based Education and implement it effectively in classrooms. Others may claim to understand it and yet experience some difficulties with implementation. There can also be educators who think that they do not understand it and cannot implement it. This

investigation then is about establishing to determine whether educators understand and are able to implement OBE effectively or not.

When facilitators trained educators during workshops, one of the outcomes they wished the educators to achieve was that they should demonstrate understanding of key features of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and how this understanding would impact on their planning, teaching, learning and assessment practices, (Department of Education, Facilitator's manual, 2005). Educators' understanding of the methods and strategies outlined in education policy documents influences their classroom practices. For educators to implement OBE effectively, they should have good understanding of OBE (premises, principles, outcomes of learning, teaching and assessment strategies).

It has been indicated that educators are not 100% prepared or competent in implementing OBE effectively. The level of educator understanding of C2005 is generally weak and there is a gap between what educators say they know and what they actually do. As it is clear that the level of educator understanding of C2005 is weak, this investigation is aimed at determining whether there has been a development and an improvement on educators' understanding of OBE. Some educators still have problems with the understanding of OBE and others claim to know what OBE entails, but experience problems with its implementation (Some even fail to explain what they think they understand).

Welch (2000) states that what 'we know is determined by how we came to know'. Educators have come to know more about OBE through in-service training workshops. Malcolm (2000:28) argues that some educators were left confused after attending such workshops. It seems as if the workshops were not adequate to equip educators with skills to facilitate OBE in classrooms. The possibility is that some educators understand OBE while others do not understand it. In an evaluation of OBE courses, Potenza (2002) has indicated that the workshops were badly structured and lacked coherence. Potenza (2002) points out that irrespective of the structure of the courses, educators have to

continue on with the implementation of OBE. Their understanding of OBE may be questioned.

According to Geyser in Mda and Mothata (2000:22):

"… educators and other stakeholders must not only familiarize themselves with the new curriculum concepts and terminology, but must look critically at OBE, the cornerstone of the new curriculum."

By carefully and critically studying OBE, educators could understand what is expected of them in the classroom. They will then know what to do in order to help learners achieve these outcomes. Besides, they will also become aware of the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum.

The language that was used in OBE initially, seemed to be difficult to understand; hence it was revised in the year 2000 by the Department of Education. A team of experts was appointed by the Minister of Education to review this system with the aim of simplifying the (Ministry of Education, 2000). The review committee focused on how educators' understanding of OBE would impact on the classroom. The committee found that educators had a superficial understanding of C2005 and OBE, and that there was a gap between what educators said they knew and what they actually did, (O'Brien; 2000). This investigation has assisted the researcher in determining whether there has been a development regarding to educators' understanding of OBE.

Educators play a major role towards the implementation of OBE. As such it is important that they know what is required of them in an OBE classroom. According to Killen (2003(b): 11):

'when we attempt to define what we want students to learn, we may decide that understanding is the capacity to use explanatory concepts creatively, or the capacity to think logically, or capacity to tackle new problems, or the ability to re-interpret objective knowledge.'

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This indicates that understanding influences practice. To say that educators understand OBE, they should be able to accommodate OBE concepts such as outcomes, premises and principles and assessment standards in their classroom practices. Their capacity to think logically can be realized when they are able to plan and present their classroom practices following these concepts in different situations.

The following questions could be asked: Do educators understand OBE? Have they changed their classroom practices to demonstrate that they understand OBE? Is there an indication of a change from direct instruction to a learner-centred approach? These will be addressed in section 1.3.

Wiersma (1991:30) argues that the variables and conditions of a study should be defined operationally. In this investigation the variables that were measured are educators' understanding of OBE and the influence this has had on their classroom assessment practices. Looking at these variables in terms of dependent and independent variables, it may be concluded that educators' practices depend on their understanding. Research has indicated that educators often only teach sections that are understandable to them. The sections that are difficult to them are not taught and learners cannot treat such sections until educators themselves understand them. Whether educators understand OBE or not has some implications towards implementing or not implementing OBE. If they understand OBE they will implement it in their classrooms. If they do not understand it they may not implement it. Thus educators' classroom practices depend on their understanding of OBE. How the variables are measured is discussed briefly in Research Methods in Section 1.8 (in more details in chapter 3.)

While analysing the educators' assessment practices I also investigated their teaching practices (assessment may not be separated from teaching and learning).

Olivier (2002:70) maintains that there is a close relationship between the method of assessment and the way learning takes place, hence the focus on teaching and assessment practices. Siebörger (2004:5) argues that whenever new ideas about

teaching or learning are mentioned nowadays, it seems that assessment is always part of them.

In her study, Smit (2001) has looked at primary school educators' experience of policy change in South Africa. Smit (2001:68) states that perhaps the time has come to involve educators, who are involved in implementing the policy, to fully participate in the policy change process. In South Africa many educators who operate at classroom level were not involved when the new education policy was developed. They were only called for workshops in which they were told that the policy had changed and that they had to effect the changes in their classrooms. It is doubtful whether the workshops were enough to equip educators with skills to facilitate OBE more efficiently.

According to Smit (2001:69) the legislation and communication of policies for educational change, depend on what educators think and do. If educators understand OBE, their classroom practices will be according to OBE policy and principles. Fullan (1982:120), in Smit (2001:69) argues that an understanding of the subjective world of those involved in a change process is a necessary precondition. In relation to this study this implies that for effective implementation of OBE and Outcomes-based Assessment (OBA), educators' understanding of OBE and OBA is a necessary precondition.

Potenza and Monyokolo in Jansen and Christie (1999:236), state argue that 'the success of the new curriculum depends on training and support that educators receive ….' The implication here is that if educators are well trained they will have a good understanding of the new curriculum. If educators have a good understanding of OBE it will be easier for them to implement it in the classroom. Potenza and Monyokolo in Jansen and Christie (1999:237) go on to say that 'educators have to be trained to understand the new curriculum and its challenges … and how to use a variety of methods to assess whether outcomes have been achieved.' Educators should be well equipped when they implement OBE in the classroom. Because educators were used to follow direct teaching in the

classroom, enough training is a necessary condition for them to change their classroom practices.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:5), educators have to take full responsibility for the careful planning and management of their learners' learning environment. It is evident that good planning in the teaching and learning situation leads to effective teaching. Good planning helps the educator to know what he/she is going to do in the teaching-learning situation. The learners' roles will also be specified. Educators' planning can be good if they understand what is required of them in the teaching and learning situation. The implication here is that educators should be more conversant with OBE premises and principles to plan for learning activities to help learners to achieve outcomes.

Educators can determine whether learners have achieved the desired outcomes by assessing them (learners). According to Lubisi, Wedenkind, Parker and Gultig (1998) assessment forms the integral part of teaching. This implies that, when planning for their daily activities educators should think about methods of assessing learners' activities during the learning process. Assessment should not be thought of at the end of the learning activity. Malcolm (2000:40) argues that assessment is used to guide teaching and is used as part of teaching. OBE calls for continuous assessment to ascertain whether outcomes have been achieved at appropriate levels of complexity or at the end of the learning facilitation process.

According to the Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:2), multiple strategies should be used to assess learner achievement and encourage life-long learning. For educators to be able to use different strategies they should understand Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and Outcomes-based Assessment (OBA). This investigation has indicated the ability of educators to follow OBE and OBA policies and principles in their classroom practices. OBE is based on the philosophy that 'all learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way,' (Spady and Schlebusch 1999:29). This implies that every learner is capable of learning and succeeding. As educators facilitate learning they should know that learners can learn and achieve outcomes, but not

at the same time and pace. People's capabilities differ. Some are more intelligent and can learn more quickly than others. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:18), learners do not have the same potential, nor do they work equally hard. OBE is a challenge to educators as all learners are expected to learn in an OBE classroom. Educators may have their own understanding of the theory that all learners can learn and succeed.

The OBE principle of expanded opportunity is about time. The only problem is that it becomes so difficult to manage time when having to take all learners' potential and capacity into consideration. Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4) argue that educators must provide more than one opportunity to learners if they (learners) are not successful in demonstrating important learning. They state that rigid time frames should not restrict learning although there must be limits to expanded opportunity (ibid: 4). This implies that educators should give learners expanded opportunities but with some limitations. What will happen if they do not achieve the desired outcomes after the chances they have been given are over? What do educators think about this, and what do they do to accommodate this idea in their classroom practices? In a way it may be difficult for educators to apply the principle of expanded opportunity in their classroom.

According to (Spady 1993:8), what and whether learners learn effectively is more important than when and how they learn. This means that educators should help learners to achieve the desired outcomes. The time at which they achieve them should not be a problem to educators. Spady (1993) does not mention any limitations when giving learners more chances to achieve desired outcomes. In practice learners are promoted at the end of every year. Educators are told to take care that learners are not held back for more than four years in a phase, (Northern Province Department of Education policy document, 2000). How do educators accommodate this (i.e. promoting learners making sure that learners do not spend more than four years in a phase)? Do they inflate marks of learners' work so that all learners pass, or do learners really achieve the outcomes? Promotion of learners brings the idea of assessment to the fore. How do educators assess learners? Do they employ different assessment strategies or are

they still following the paper and pen method? How they assess depends more on their understanding of OBE. If they follow only one method of paper and pen it means they have not changed their classroom assessment practices. The reason behind this might be that they do not have good understanding of OBE and Outcomes-based Assessment (OBA). One assessment strategy will always yield the same results. In Stoll and Fink's (1996:118) opinion, if one always does what one has always done, one will always get what one always got. This means that if educators still teach and assess the same way as they did before OBE was introduced, they will always get the results they used to get on learners' achievements. When teaching was said to be content based, learners who could reproduce facts, passed well. Those who were not able to reproduce facts, failed. In OBE it is maintained that 'all learners can learn and succeed,' (Spady, 1993 and Spady & Schlebusch, 1999). Stoll and Fink (1996:122) argue that given sufficient time and support, all pupils can learn. For educators to be able to differentiate between the traditional teaching approach and OBE, they should have a good understanding of OBE premises and principles. They should be able to incorporate these (premises and principles) in their teaching. Those who understand OBE and OBA should be able to apply multiple strategies when teaching and assessing learners.

It seems that some educators still dominate the teaching-learning process and that they assess learners at the end of learning activities or after completing some chapters. These are educators who do not understand OBE and OBA. Those who understand the OBE and OBA should be able to assess learners continuously. According to Olivier (1998:45), the assessment process should be regarded as part of learning. This means that educators should not assess learners at the end of a learning activity only, but they must assess them even during the learning process. Sutton (1991) concurs with this as he claims that assessment should form an integral part of the lesson. This means that assessment cannot be separated from teaching. This requires that educators follow different strategies when assessing learners so that they do not assess once but continuously. They should think about assessment when they plan for the learning activities. According to Orsmond and Gildenhuys (2005:120) assessment should not be the

last thing an educator should think of but should form an integral part of your planning, preparation and implementation. This means that assessment should be incorporated throughout the teaching and learning process.

Stoll and Fink (1996:124) argue that assessment must be seen in concert with shifts in curriculum design and teaching strategies. Thus, when a curriculum design changes, teaching and assessment strategies should also change. When OBE was phased in, it has called for change in the classroom practices. The question is asked whether educators have good understanding of OBE to integrate teaching with assessment. If they understand they can assess while teaching, but if they do not understand, it is doubtful whether they can assess continuously following multiple strategies.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 Main research question

The following research question has been drafted to give direction and focus to the investigation:

To what extent do educators understand OBE with specific reference to the premises and principles underpinning its philosophy and how does and understanding of these influence their classroom teaching/ instructional and their assessment practices?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

In addition to the main research question the following sub- questions apply to the topic:

1.3.2.1 What do educators understand as far as OBE and OBA are concerned?

1.3.2.2 What is reflected in OBE and OBA policies that should be understood by educators?

1.3.2.3 How do educators' understanding of OBE and OBA impact on their teaching and assessment practices?

1.3.2.4 What impact do educators' classroom practices (teaching and assessment) have on the performance of learners in different learning areas?

1.3.2.5 What do educators' and learners' records tell us of educators' understanding of OBE and OBA?

1.4 Aim of the investigation

The aim of this study is to explore educators' understanding of OBE and OBA, and to determine the impact it has on their teaching/ instructional and assessment practices.

1. 5 Objectives of the investigation

The following objectives add towards the main aim of the investigation:

1.5.1 The first objective in the investigation is to have a better understanding of OBE and OBA, the premises and the principles of OBE (to determine what educators understand, and what they do not understand as far as OBE and OBA are concerned, to establish what is required of educators in an OBE classroom and how they should go about assessing learners in OBE.) To achieve this objective a literature review of available sources in the field of study and interviews held with some educators were undertaken.

1.5.2 The second objective is to find out what is stated in OBE and OBA policies. This was determined by analysing policy documents regarding OBE and OBA.

1.5.3 The third objective is to determine what mechanisms educators put into practice to accommodate their understanding of OBE and OBA. Empirical observation was done to find out how educators teach and assess learners. The observations revealed educators' perceptions while looking at how they facilitate learning and how they assess

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learners' work. In addition, this indicated whether educators followed OBE premises and principles in their teaching and OBA principles in their assessment of learners' work.

1.5.4   The fourth objective is to determine how educators' classroom practices influence performance of learners in different learning areas. This was achieved through interviews and observations conducted with educators. Educators' responses during the interviews were helpful for the researcher to determine how they engaged themselves in teaching and assessment practices. During observations the researcher could determine whether the educators' responses could help to draw valid inferences about learners' performances or not.

1.5.5   The fifth objective is to find out how educators keep records of their work. This was achieved through document analysis of educators' records. (The way they keep records should reflect their understanding of OBE and OBA.)

1.6 Relevance of the study

This study can be helpful to educators, learners, parents and the community at large, curriculum planners and the Department of Education. It might serve as assessment of OBE and OBA. Educators can find out whether they are coping with change or need help. If they need help the department and curriculum planners can offer educators guidance to help them to have good understanding of OBE. In a way this might serve as a monitoring tool towards implementation of OBE and OBA.

This study can also be used to monitor whether high quality standards are achieved and maintained. Learners can find out whether they cope with the new approach and assessment procedures applied in OBE. Parents and the community can determine whether OBE benefit their learners and can help them to become responsible citizens. If parents realise that educators understand OBE and OBA they will be sure that their children really benefit in the learning

process. If it happens that educators do not understand OBE and OBA parents will know that their children may not cope well in the ever-changing world.

This study will also benefit parents as they interact with educators in the learning process of their children. Educators give learners some exercises to complete at home. Parents are expected to help learners in that regard. This makes me think that this study will also be beneficial to parents.

1.7 Clarification of terms and concepts

According to Leedy (1993), precise meaning of the terms should be given in relation to the research project. The terms should be defined operatively.

The following concepts are dealt with in this investigation:

1.7.1 Understanding as an intellectual activity

This refers to actualization of concepts. Understanding can be realised when educators plan their activities, facilitate learning and assess learners' performance. If educators understand OBE, they will know what is required of them in the teaching and learning process. Their understanding can also be revealed during their classroom practices. What they do in the classroom can reveal whether they understand OBE or not.

According to Olivier (1998:21), an 'outcomes-based approach necessitates a paradigm shift towards the curriculum process and then how learning should empower the learner through the achievement of outcomes.' Olivier (1998) states that to fully understand the outcomes-based curriculum development process, one should compare it with the traditional content-based curriculum development and learning process. This means that people can understand what they need to do if they compare the new approach with the old one. This study focuses only on the educators' understanding and their classroom assessment practices.

According to Van Rensburg, (2000:2), 'people get into a certain frame of mind when they gather knowledge about a particular subject and arrange that knowledge in such a way that it becomes their own conviction.' This implies that educators should have knowledge of OBE and make it their own. This calls for

change from one way of doing things to another or what people call a (paradigm shift). For educators to change their classroom practices they should have a better understanding of OBE. Understanding is determined by the reader's frame of reference. Educators' prior learning experiences can determine their understanding of OBE. This relates to what beliefs they hold about instruction, assessment and learning.

1.7.2 Outcomes-based Education (OBE)

According to van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7), OBE can be described as an approach that requires educators and learners to focus their attention on the desired end result, i.e. the outcomes of learning, and the instructive and learning process that will guide the learners to these end results. In OBE, learning is directed towards the outcomes learners should achieve. In Olivier's (1998) view, outcomes-based learning reflects the notion that the best way to get where you want to be, is to first determine what you want to achieve. The implication here is that when educators plan for the learning activities in OBE, they should first think about the outcomes they wish learners should achieve.

Spady (1993:1), argues that outcomes-based education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experience. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens. Therefore educators should know what learners should do or achieve in every learning activity. They should then base their plan on the outcomes they wish learners to achieve. The content, strategies and processes will follow when educators know where to lead their learners.

Learners are given first priority in OBE. The Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:5) states that OBE is a learner-centred approach which focuses on what the learner wants to achieve and what the learner should be able to know, to understand, to do and to become. In relation to this Lorenzen (2002), states that outcomes-based education is a method of

teaching that focuses on what students can actually do after they have been taught. All curriculum and teaching decisions are made based on how best to facilitate the desired outcome. What these definitions maintain is that OBE aims at helping the learner to demonstrate learning. Though the educator plays a major role in facilitating learning, the educator is not the central figure in OBE. The learner should play a major role in the teaching- learning situation. While educators plan how they will facilitate learning, they should decide on the learner's activities so that learners do not become passive recipients of information.

According to Harden (2002a:117) OBE is characterized by the development of clearly defined outcomes; designing of strategies and learning opportunities to ensure the achievement of outcomes; an assessment process matched to the learning outcomes and assessment of individual students to ensure that they have achieved the outcomes; provision of remediation and enrichment for students as appropriate. The idea behind this definition is that learning activities should be guided by clearly defined outcomes. The learning strategies and opportunities should be organized around the outcomes to be achieved by learners. According to Botha (2002), OBE is primarily concerned with focusing on what the learners learn and how well they learn it, not on what learners are supposed to learn.

Looking at the definition of OBE too much emphasis is put on the outcomes learners should achieve. OBE is aimed at helping learners to achieve outcomes. To say that learners have achieved the outcomes, should be based on something observable that learners are able to do to prove that they have learned something. This is discussed in the second chapter.

1.7.3 Classroom assessment practice

According to the Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2001:26), "assessment is a process of gathering sufficient evidence of learners' progress towards achieving the stated outcomes on an ongoing basis, recording and reporting the level of performance of learning." This definition entails that the assessor gathers evidence of a learner's progress towards achieving stated outcomes. Educators should ensure that every learner achieves the desired

outcomes. Every learner should be taken as an individual who can learn and succeed.

According to Sutton (1991:2) assessment lies at the heart of promoting children, it is a human process, conducted by and with human beings. Through assessment educators can determine learners' progress and level of achievement in the learning process.

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997), argue that assessment should be an integral part of planning and preparation. It is important for assessment procedures to give a clear indication of what learners are learning. Educators should think about assessment when planning their classroom activities. Their assessment procedures should indicate clearly what learners will be doing or will be learning. Educators should plan thoroughly and show clearly what learners will be learning if they have an understanding of what learners have to do.

A common idea different OBE advocates have about assessment is that assessment should not be thought of at the end of the learning activity. It should form an integral part of the learning activity. It guides the learning process by telling whether learners achieve the outcomes or not. Assessment in the classroom can help educators to review their teaching and assessment strategies from time to time. This will be done so that teaching and assessment strategies help learners to achieve the outcomes educators wish they should achieve in the learning environment.

Badran (1995) views practice as the application of rules and knowledge that leads to action. This definition implies that educators should follow guidelines on how to teach and assess in OBE when engaging themselves in classroom practices. Educators should follow the education policy on OBE and OBA implementation. This requires good understanding of the policy by educators so that they can follow it.

In their classroom practices educators should help all learners to learn, as Stoll and Fink (1996:126) look at what they call three- part organizer in looking at how educators help children to learn. They think that educators should attend to pupils' self -concept, they should address the basics of classroom management and teaching skills, and they should employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies to engage multiple minds. Educators should take every learner as an individual who is capable of learning and can succeed. Because learners differ, educators should follow different teaching and assessment strategies to accommodate all the learners in the teaching and learning situation. Educators should incorporate OBE premises and principles in their classroom practices.

In his introduction Killen (1996:vi) argues that there are two basic approaches to teaching namely, teacher-centred and student-centred. In their classroom practices educators should not follow the teacher-centred approach or what is called direct instruction. They should equip learners with skills to search and discover information themselves. This means that educators should focus all their classroom practices on the outcomes that learners should achieve and not on how much content they cover. Classroom practices should further develop learners' existing knowledge. Killen (1996:vi) maintains that student learning should be facilitated through the use of a variety of teaching strategies. Educators should know when a strategy is likely to be effective. When planning for their day-to-day activities, educators should bear in mind that no strategies are better than others in all circumstances. Teaching strategies should be chosen bearing in mind the outcomes educators might wish learners to achieve. The principle of design down applies here. Before engaging in any learning activity, educators should first think about outcomes learners should achieve. Every activity should be directed towards achievement of the outcomes.

1.8 Research strategies and methods applied in the investigation

There are different ways in which data can be collected. In this investigation different qualitative strategies were followed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators to get their in-depth views on OBE and OBA. The

strategies chosen in this investigation, the research methods followed, and sampling procedures are discussed in details in Chapter 3.

1.9 Outline and time frame of the investigation

The investigation is aimed at determining educators' understanding of OBE and how this influences their classroom practices. This was done by conducting interviews with educators. Questions that were asked during interviews covered the following: the educators' understanding of OBE with specific reference to the premises and principles underpinning this philosophy and how they accommodate them in their classroom practices, how they teach and assess learners, and how they keep a record of their work. Interviews were arranged so that enough time could be given to allow educators to give their opinions freely. Some time for observations to observe what happens in the classroom and how learners are assessed was allowed. A document analysis to determine how educators keep record of their work was conducted. Data were collected in two weeks' time. Meetings were arranged with one participant per day. Observations and document analysis were done in three days. When the investigations were finished, data were analysed and a report was written.

Interviews began towards the end of September 2005 and finished at the beginning of October 2005. Observations and document analysis were conducted in October 2005 immediately after the interviews had been conducted. The job of analysing data was started towards the end of October 2005 and finished in January 2006.

1.10 Structure of the dissertation

This report comprises five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1, introduces the study to the reader and is divided into the following sections:

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Problem statement.

1.3 Main research question and supporting questions

1.4 Aim of the investigation

1.5 Objectives of the investigation

1.6 Relevance of the investigation

1.7 Clarification of concepts

1.8 Research design. This section is a brief introduction of the research methodologies, sample and population, and research strategies.

1.9 Outline and time frame of the investigation

1.10   Structure of the dissertation

1.11   Conclusion

Chapter 2 comprises a discussion of OBE based on reviewed literature relating to the topic under This covers the following sections:

2.1 Introduction

2.2 General overview of OBE. In this section theories underlying OBE, characteristics of OBE, beliefs, premises and principles are discussed. Educational outcomes are defined.

2.3 The introduction and implementation of OBE in South Africa. This section comprises the following subsections: i) Why OBE was introduced in South Africa; ii) Assessment in OBE; iii) The impact of teaching and assessment policies on classroom practices; iv) Educators' roles and the implications for OBE and OBA implementation; v) problems that may be encountered during OBE implementation; vi) Critique of OBE implementation

2.4 Teaching and assessment strategies followed in OBE and OBA.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter 3 comprises the following:

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Strategies chosen

3.3 Sampling

3.4 Data collection plan

3.4.1 Criteria to be used to assess educators' opinions on OBE and OBA

3.4.2 Codification and categorization

3.4.3 Validation of instruments

3.4.4 Implementation schedule

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter 4 refers to the following items:

4.1 Data collection procedures

4.2 Data analysis and results

4.2.1 Interviews

4.2.2 Observations

4.2.3 Document analysis

4.3 Conclusion

Chapter 5 comprises conclusion and recommendations. These are based on the
reviewed literature and collected data.

1.11 Conclusion

The first chapter has addressed the problem statement. Research questions regarding the topic are also addressed. The main research question and the sub-questions are discussed. Concepts used in the topic or problem statement are clarified. These include concepts such as understanding, OBE and classroom assessment practices. The concepts are clarified in relation to how they are used in this investigation. The aims and objectives of the study are also addressed.

The next chapter is a literature review that covers the following: OBE in general; classroom teaching and assessment practices; policy interpretations regarding OBE and OBA; and the criteria to be used to assess educators' opinions in OBE and OBA.

CHAPTER 2: DISCUSSION OF OBE BASED ON REVIEWED SOURCES RELEVANT TO THIS INVESTIGATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at clarifying the theory of OBE and OBA. Studying the theory of OBE and OBA has enabled the researcher to understand OBE premises and principles. Education has been based on theories from long ago. OBE, like other approaches to teaching, is also based on some theories. A study of a number of theories to determine what forms basis for OBE approach, was necessary.

The following sections are addressed in this chapter: OBE in general. In this section characteristics of OBE, (i.e. theories underlying OBE, OBE beliefs, premises underpinning OBE, and key principles in OBE) are discussed. These are addressed to acquaint the reader with what OBE entails. After reviewing the sources, the sources the researcher looked at how OBE was introduced in South Africa and how it is practised. The way in which OBE was introduced could have impact on educators' understanding. If educators are given enough training, the possibility is that they should understand OBE and OBA, and they should know what is expected of them in an OBE classroom. If they do not receive adequate training the possibility is that they should have difficulties with the implementation of OBE. Assessment policy and implications for educators were looked at in order to understand what OBE policy entails. In concluding this chapter I gave a summary of what is covered, and briefly wrote down what is covered in the next chapter.

2.2 General overview of OBE

2.2.1 Theories underpinning OBE

According to Wydeman (2002:54) the following theories form the basis for OBE: Behaviourism; Social reconstructivism; Critical theory and Pragmatic theory.

Wydeman (2002:54-55) discusses the link between OBE and the above-mentioned theories as follows:

Behaviourism focuses on external human behaviour, something which can be observed. OBE is linked to this theory as it (OBE) focuses on achievement of outcomes by learners. Learners should demonstrate achievement through their behaviour and actions. They should be able to apply knowledge and skills they gained in the classroom in their daily activities and even outside the classroom situation. Application of knowledge and skills will be reflected in behaviour.

Social reconstructivism is a philosophy that is aimed at social transformation. OBE has been introduced in South Africa as a tool for social reconstruction. Learners are encouraged to work together in an OBE classroom. One of the critical outcomes is that learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to work effectively as a member of a team, group, organization and community, (Department of Education policy document, 1997:13).

Critical theory encourages critical thinking. One of OBE outcomes is that learners should collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information (ibid: 13). The learner should pose questions about the learning content. They should not accept anything in the learning process without asking or analysing it.

Pragmatism is a philosophy that emphasizes usefulness while underplaying the value principle. In pragmatists' view whatever works in practice, as well as what is useful, is of the most importance. The emphasis in OBE is on achievement of outcomes by learners. Learners should be able to practically apply what they learn in the classroom.

In an analysis of Bruner's educational theory by Flores, (Berliner and Gage, 1998) a number of theories are discussed. A few of these are relevant for this investigation. Among them are the following:

- ◀ **Theory of value** focuses on the knowledge and skills in learning and educational goals. Flores in Berliner and Gage, (1998) argues that education should focus on basic skills that will be needed to manage the ever-increasing change in technology.

◀ **Theory of knowledge** where language is seen as the key to knowledge and being a primary way in which concepts can be taught and questioned.

◀ Theory of learning in which learning is seen as an active, social process in which students construct new ideas and concepts based on their current knowledge. Students select information, form hypotheses and then integrate the new material into their own existing knowledge and internal constructs. This theory concerns three stages of learning namely: enactive- where children need to experience the concrete in order to understand, ionic- where children graphically or mentally represent materials, and symbolic- where children use logic, higher order thinking skills and symbol systems.

◀ **Theory of opportunity**, which states that every one has a potential to acquire knowledge, and that the key lies in the instruction.

The above-mentioned theories effectively relate to OBE. The theory of opportunity is linked with the philosophy that all learners can learn and succeed but not at the same pace and time. This theory maintains that everyone has a potential of learning. How learning takes place depends on the instruction. In OBE learning depends on the strategies that educators apply in their classroom practices.

In OBE, the learner should be an active participant in the teaching and learning situation. This is linked to the theory of learning mentioned above. One of the outcomes in OBE is that learners should work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organization, community, (Department of Education policy document, 1997:13). This outcome links to the view of learning as a social process. Learners are encouraged to work together. No man can live alone and accomplish everything he/she wants in life. Learners are taught to belong to social groups.

Mastery theory also forms a basis for OBE. According to Davis and Sorrell (1995), mastery learning is an alternative method of teaching and learning that involves the student reaching a level of predetermined mastery of units of instruction before being allowed to proceed to the next level. This relates to one OBE principle that learners should be given expanded opportunity to achieve the desired outcomes, (Spady, 1993)). Learners have to reach certain standards to demonstrate that they have achieved the outcomes. There are two common things in the mastery theory and OBE namely: they are achievement of outcomes and expanded opportunity. In mastery theory learners should reach one level before they can proceed to the next. In OBE learners should be given expanded opportunity to reach the desired outcomes. A common idea in OBE and the mastery theory is the achievement in learning.

Davis and Sorrell (1995) argue that mastery learning is a process whereby students achieve the same level of content but at different time intervals. This confirms the premise that 'all learners can learn and succeed, but not all at the same time and in the same way', (Spady & Schlebusch, 1999). Mastery learning also confirms the principle of high expectations for all learners. In OBE the main focus is on learners achieving outcomes. Time should not be a determining factor for learners to achieve outcomes. High expectations and same standards should be set for all learners to reach. Every learner should be accommodated in the teaching and learning process. The focus should be on the learners' achievement of outcomes and not on the time in which they achieve them, and also not on the quantity of activities that they have done to achieve them.

2.2.2 Characteristics of OBE

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:13), OBE is characterised by the following: clear and unambiguous outcomes; the learner's progress is based on his or her demonstrated achievement; and each learner's needs are catered for by means of a variety of instructional strategies and assessment tools.

The characteristics of OBE, (i.e. the premises, principles and beliefs) guide educators to use the OBE approach knowing what they are doing. If these characteristics are followed closely, they can help educators to establish whether

they are implementing OBE effectively or not. For instance, when educators prepare for learning activities they should make the outcomes clear for learners. They should also ensure that they facilitate learning so that learners become active participants in the learning process. Educators should not see themselves as conveyors of knowledge and the learners as recipients. To say that learners have progressed in the learning process will mean that learners can demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they have learned in the school situation. Going through the process of learning should help learners to become responsible human beings. Educators should follow different teaching and assessment strategies to ensure that all learners' needs are catered for.

Naicker (1999:87) defines OBE in more detail mentioning important points that relate to the characteristics given by Van der Horst and McDonald (1997). Naicker (1999) argues that the future is the anchoring point. This implies that OBE is future-oriented. When planning for the learning activities, educators should think about the roles learners should play in future. The OBE principle 'design down' features very well here. According to Naicker (1999), the educator interacts with learners with the understanding that there are different learning styles and different learning rates. This adds to the OBE premise mentioned by Spady (1993) that all learners can learn but not at the same time and same pace. When educators facilitate learning they should follow different strategies to accommodate learners with different capabilities in the classroom. (Olivier 2002:83) believes that a further characteristic of outcomes-based learning is that the end product as well as the learning processes followed can be assessed. In OBE the end product is the most important matter to look at when classroom activities are planned. All the classroom activities should be geared towards reaching the end product.

2.2.3 Premises underpinning OBE

According to Spady (1993) and (1994), there are three premises underpinning OBE, and four basic principles underlying these premises. Spady (1994:10) argues that the three OBE premises serve as the rationale for OBE implementation. Those premises are: 'All learners can learn and succeed, but not

at the same time and pace; success breeds success and schools control the conditions for success.'

These premises are discussed below.

2.2.3.1 All learners can learn and succeed, but not at the same time and pace

Based on the premise above, the Department of Education policy document (1997:20) stipulates that OBE clearly defines what learners are to learn, i.e. knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This means that what learners are to learn should be made clear to them and that they should be given more opportunities to show their learning or achievement of the outcomes. The OBE principles are discussed in sub-section 2.2.4.

According to Spady (1994:9), the philosophy that 'all learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way', takes into account differences in learners' learning rates and learning style. There is an optimistic view of learning potential for all learners. They should be given more chance to learn until they achieve the desired outcomes.

2.2.3.2 Success breeds success

According to Spady (1994:10) successful learning rests on students having strong cognitive and psychological foundation of their prior learning success. This entails that when learners become successful in one learning activity, they become confident and gain courage for success in other activities. When they succeed, they will always be ready to take on challenges with the knowledge that they are capable of succeeding. When facilitating learning, educators should help learners to gain skills for learning successfully. The principle of design down as explained below might relate well to this premise. If learners achieve outcomes in one activity, when they start new learning activities they will be confident that they can achieve outcomes in those new learning activities.

2.2.3.3 Schools control conditions for success.

A curriculum is developed and then given to schools to implement. Schools should arrange their conditions to be conducive for learning for the learners to

learn and succeed. Schools are situated in different environments. Educators should arrange their school settings so that they can able all learners to learn. The standards to be reached by learners are set in schools. After setting standards educators should monitor progress in their schools so that educators' aims are attained. Standards set should be relevant in the context in which a school is situated and should be the same for all learners. This relates to the principle of high expectations. All learners in a school should be accommodated in a school setting. Educators should make sure that all learners learn and succeed. No learner should be thought of as an under achiever. Schools should set high standards of learning for all the learners.

2.2.4 Key principles in OBE

In addition to the premises Spady (1993 and 1994) mentioned the following four basic principles in OBE namely: design down, clarity of focus, high expectations and expanded opportunities. Spady (1994:10) regards these principles as the heart of OBE. Educators should apply these principles in their classroom practices if they are to implement OBE effectively. Spady (1994:11) argues that OBE practitioners can apply these principles in four ways, 'consistently, systematically, creatively and simultaneously'. Educators should creatively apply these principles in their teaching. Each principle is discussed below.

2.2.4.1 Clarity of focus

Killen (2003a: 4) states that clarity of focus means that everything educators do must be clearly focused on what they want learners to know, understand and be able to do successfully. According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999:31) outcomes should be clear before any learning experience can be set in motion. This implies that the outcomes should be clear for learners to be able to achieve. The chosen outcome should be clear and understandable to both the educator and learners. Learners should know what they should achieve in every learning activity. Spady and Schlebusch (1999:32) take this principle as the most fundamental of the four. They argue that curriculum planners and educators must have a clear focus of what they want their learners to do successfully.

According to du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4) this principle provides a clear picture to the educator of the type of learning the learner must demonstrate in executing performance. Spady (1994:11) argues that clarity of focus helps educators to establish a clear picture of the learning they want learners to exhibit in a performance demonstration. Clear outcomes are like a flag on a ship in the teaching and learning situation. Both learners and educators should have a clear picture of what should be demonstrated by learners to say that they have achieved outcomes. In addition Spady (1994:11) argues that the instructional process in the classroom begins with the educator clarifying, explaining and modelling the outcomes. Before learners engage in learning activities they should know the outcomes they should achieve.

2.2.4.2 Design down

According to Spady (1994:18) design down means that educators begin their curriculum and instructional planning where they want students to ultimately end up and build back from there. This means that the outcome of learning should first be known and then all the activities should be planned so that the chosen outcome can be achieved. The notion of backward mapping comes in when looking at this principle. 'This involves starting where you want to end up…' (Ibid: 32). This principle implies that the outcome should be chosen before the learning activities can be planned for. In short this principle guides the main focus of learning in OBE. The outcomes are the starting point for planning the learning activities in OBE. 'This principle is really what the term based means', (ibid: 33). Tavner (2005) states that design down refers to designing the curriculum from the point at which one wants students to end up.

Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:5) indicate that outcomes are culminating. Educators should design back towards the enabling outcomes and the discrete outcomes. All the activities in the classroom are directed towards achievement of the desired outcome(s).

Design down links to clarity of focus discussed above. As the outcomes are the starting point in the teaching-learning situation, they should be made clear for

participants to know what is required of them in a learning activity.

2.2.4.3 High expectations

According to Spady (1994:16) the principle of high expectations means increasing the level of challenge to which learners are exposed. Educators should have high expectations for all the learners. Tavner (2005) states that educators should get rid of the bell curve and that all learners should achieve the highest level.

Educators should show confidence in all the learners bearing in mind that all learners can learn and succeed. Standards of performance should be raised for all the learners. Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4) argue that learners should be exposed to challenges on a higher level that will raise the standard of performance for successful learning. The standards should be raised for all learners without exception though slow learners may need more time to achieve them. Learners should be motivated through the higher standards. Standards should not be raised for the sake of making them difficult, but to encourage learners to learn effectively.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999:33) argue that educators must establish high, challenging standards of performance for learners. The high standards should be achievable.

2.2.4.4 Expanded opportunity

In Spady's (1994:12) opinion expanded opportunity requires educators to give learners more than one chance to learn important things and to demonstrate that learning. Spady (1994:12) mentions five key dimensions of opportunity namely: time, methods and modalities, operational principles, performance standards, curriculum access and structuring. Learners should be given more opportunities to be able to achieve the outcomes. Tavner (2005:3) states that educators should expand the ways and number of times learners get a chance to learn and demonstrate a particular outcome. When opportunities are expanded, the methods of helping learners to achieve desired outcomes should be varied. Du Toit and du

Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:5) argue that educators should provide more than one opportunity to learners. Time should not be a determinant for the learners to learn or achieve outcomes. Though time may not be a determinant factor in the learning process, there must be limits to every expanded opportunity, (ibid: 5). Spady and Schlebusch (1999:34) argue that educators and school personnel must do everything possible to keep opportunities for continued learning and improvement open to learners. This means that all learners should be given enough time to make improvements in activities that may cause difficulties. Different methods should be applied to accommodate learners with different learning capabilities. There should be operational principles to be followed so that learners can reach required performance standards.

The premises and principles given above are related. They are all centred on the achievement of outcomes. An example of the premise that 'all learners can learn and succeed', relates to all the four principles.

The principles given by Spady (1993) relate to the ideas given by Harden, Crosby and Davis (1999) that outcomes-based education is an approach to education in which decisions about the curriculum are driven by outcomes the students should display by the end of the course. Harden et al state that in OBE the product defines the process. In a way OBE is result oriented. This implies that when educators plan in OBE they should think about the outcomes they wish learners should achieve. A common idea given here is the end result of the learning process. The principle 'design down' says that educators should first choose or know the outcomes learners should achieve before engaging in the teaching and learning activities. Every activity in the teaching and learning situation should be organized around the outcome to be achieved.

Van der Horst and McDonald, (1997:4), *state:*

> *'OBE aims at developing a thinking problem-solving citizen who will be empowered to participate in the development of the country in an active and productive way.'*

This will depend on the knowledge, expertise and motivation of educators and willingness of learners to take responsibility to work hard. Learners should also take responsibility for their learning. Educators should guide and motivate learners to take responsibility for their learning. Educators will be able guide learners if they understand the roles they should play. OBE requires that educators should apply a variety of strategies and resources in the teaching-learning situation. They should be able to select and use resources and strategies if they have a clear understanding on how to apply the strategies in their teaching. Educators should also be motivated so that they can motivate learners.

Killen (2003a:5) argues that it is only when the above principles are used as the core of an educational system that it can legitimately be called a system of Outcomes-based Education. We cannot, for example, conveniently ignore the principle of designing back and still claim to have an OBE system. The point Killen (2003a) makes is that an education system can be outcomes-based only if the above-mentioned premises and principles are accommodated in the teaching-learning situation.

2.2.5 Beliefs underlying OBE.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999:29) provide key beliefs that define genuine OBE efforts as follows:

- ◀ 'What and whether learners learn successfully is more important than exactly when, how, and from whom they learn it;

- ◀ Schools exist to ensure that all their learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence and qualities needed to be successful after they exit education system;

- ◀ Schools should be organized, structured, operated so that all their learners can achieve these life performance outcomes;

- ◀ All learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way;

- ◀ Successful learning promotes more successful learning, just as poor learning fosters more poor learning;

◂   And schools control key conditions and opportunities that directly affect successful learning.'

These beliefs relate to the OBE premises and principles mentioned by Spady (1993). The beliefs emphasise a number of points for example: time should not be a determinant factor in the learning process, learners do not learn the same way and at the same time, learners' success encourages them to become successful in their endeavours. Successful learning depends on the conditions in a school. Schools are responsible for successful learning. These beliefs have implications for educators, and these will be discussed under subsection 2.3.4.

Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:7) endorse some of these beliefs. They indicate that OBE is based on the following: learners should be allowed to learn to their full potential; success breeds further success; learning environment is responsible for creating and controlling the conditions under which learners can succeed and community, educators, learners and parents share the responsibility for learning. These beliefs do not differ with those given by Spady and Schlebush (1999). The emphasis is on the learner. Learners should be allowed to learn to their full potential relates to giving them expanded opportunities until they achieve the outcomes. Both Spady and Schlebusch (1999) and Van der Horst and McDonald (1997) see the school situation as crucial for successful learning. The learning situation should be inviting, challenging and motivating to promote the culture of learning for learners.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997) it is important that stake-holders in education cooperate in curriculum development and implementation. Curriculum development and implementation should not be left to certain individuals, but teamwork is encouraged.

2.2.6 Definition of educational outcomes

Classroom practices in OBE should be organised around outcomes. According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999) *based* means *defined by*. Education in OBE is defined by *outcomes*. It is important that the outcomes should be understood very well for the success of OBE implementation. When OBE was phased in, (in the

South African education system,) different outcomes were implemented. There are critical and specific outcomes (Learning Outcomes). If the outcomes were to be compared with the aims and objectives that educators used for their preparations, critical outcomes would be linked to aims of the lesson. The specific outcomes would be linked to the objectives of the lesson. Outcomes differ from aims and objectives because in OBE the outcomes determine the learning process (i.e. the content to be chosen to help learners achieve the outcomes, teaching and assessment strategies), where as aims and objectives are determined by content.

According to Spady (1993:4) there are three kinds of outcomes namely: *culminating, enabling, and discrete*. Olivier (2002:32-33) mentions three types of outcomes: *critical outcomes, specific outcomes and end-product* outcomes.

Harden (2002b:151) defines outcomes as broad statements of what is achieved and assessed at the end of a course or study. Lubisi, Wedenkind, Parker and Gultig (1998) define outcomes as what students know and can do or an attitude they have learned after a learning experience. A common idea given by these authors is that outcomes are the results of learning. When engaged in the teaching and learning situation, both the educator and learners should know clearly what is to be achieved after learning. Learners should be able to demonstrate what they have learned. This can be reflected in their day-to-day practices or behaviour and actions. They cannot demonstrate their achievement by only reproducing the knowledge they gained in the learning process, but through application of that knowledge. What they have learned should help them to solve the problems they encounter in their lives. *Learning and application of knowledge, skills and attitudes* are not confined to the classroom situation.

In OBE *outcomes* should not be thought of at the end of the learning activity but should guide the learning process. Outcomes should be clear from the beginning of the learning process to help both the educator and learners to keep focused throughout the learning process.

Spady and Schlebush (1999) argue that *outcome* is a result, and that outcomes are what educators want learners to be able to do successfully once they have finished their studies. *Outcomes are performance abilities*. Spady and Schlebush (1999) maintain that *outcomes* really matter in the learning process. Both the educator and learners should focus their attention on the outcomes and how to accomplish them. The *outcomes* are priority number one on the list when planning for delivery in the teaching and learning situation. An outcome should be the starting point in the learning environment. In every learning activity the outcomes should be made clear for learners to achieve.

According to Spady (1998) in Jansen (2001:561) *outcomes* are clear, observable demonstrations of student learning that occur at or after the end of a significant set of learning experiences. These are not values, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, activities, assignments and goals. Spady (1993) emphasises that outcomes are observable things learners can do during or after a learning activity. Outcomes are not imaginary things that happen in the mind, but are observable. For us to say that learners have achieved certain outcomes evidence is needed to support that.

The Department of Education deals with critical and specific (learning) outcomes. These are explained in sub-section 2.2.6.1.

2.2.6.1 Critical outcomes

According to the Department of Education policy document (1997:13) *critical outcomes* are *broad, generic cross-curricular outcomes*, which underpin the Constitution and are adopted by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). There are seven critical outcomes adopted by SAQA. These outcomes are listed in the Department of Education policy document, (ibid: 13).

Olivier (2002:33) defines *critical outcomes* as personal, thinking and life skills, which are the abilities that people need to be active, responsible and successful members of society. Once the critical outcomes have been achieved a person can

execute a job effectively. Olivier (2002:33) argues that critical outcomes are a means to build a career.

2.2.6.2 Specific outcomes

Specific outcomes have been derived from certain learning areas (Department of Education policy document 1997:19). These refer to what students should achieve at the end of a learning experience specifically in different learning areas. There are about sixty-six specific outcomes shared in different learning areas. These have been reduced when OBE was revised.

Olivier (2002:36) defines *specific outcomes* as the knowledge, skills and values embedded in the areas of learning. These contribute to the achievement of critical outcomes and serve as the basis to plan learning programmes and experiences, (ibid: 94).

2.3 The introduction and application of OBE in South Africa

2.3.1 Why OBE has been introduced in South African schools

Different countries introduced OBE for different reasons. According to Acharya (2003), the increasing calls for accountability were a major reason for the rapid spread of various forms of OBE in countries such as USA, UK and Australia during 1980 and 1990s. The implication here is that OBE was introduced in these countries to improve the standard of education. The ever-increasing change in technology calls for highly skilled people, and OBE seems to be relevant to that. Acharya (2003) has mentioned a number of reasons that OBE tenets think are good for its introduction. Such reasons are that OBE is able to measure what the students are capable of doing. OBE goes beyond structured tasks such as memorization as it demands a demonstration of skills by students. Looking at these reasons it can be realized that if OBE is implemented effectively, it can be a tool for bringing about improvement in many societies. OBE focuses mainly on the achievement of outcomes by learners. If learners are taught, they should apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom in their daily activities. They should be able to bring about improvement in their lives and be able to solve their day-to-day problems. Critical outcomes emphasise creativity, working

together, solving problems, using technology responsibly and integration. (Department of education policy document, 1997).

In South Africa OBE was introduced as a way of transforming the education system and raising standards. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997) South Africa has introduced OBE for a number of reasons to provide equity in terms of educational provision and to promote a more balanced view, by developing learners' critical thinking powers and problem solving abilities. There were different educational systems for different races in South Africa. There was no equity in those systems as some were better than others.

The concept of lifelong learning is emphasised in OBE. Welch (2000) states that OBE was implemented in South Africa not only to keep abreast of international trends, but also to produce school leavers who are well-equipped to play a responsible and creative role in the workplace and in society.

According to Naicker (1999) OBE was introduced in South Africa as the Ministry of Education had to move from an apartheid education and introduce the new curriculum in the interest of all South Africans. As there have been rapid changes in the world, schools also had to change and not teach in the old style textbooks, as the information could be outdated. Lastly as South Africa is part of a larger world and has to compete with other countries, learners have to develop skills needed for involvement in competition. Malan (1997:8) argues that South Africa is part of the international community and as such, it is influenced by changes in paradigm shifts that take place in other parts of the world.

The introduction of OBE in South Africa applies to all schools, and not only to certain individuals. Looking at OBE characteristics, i.e. beliefs, premises and principles it is worthwhile for South Africans. OBE concentrates on the learner and the outcomes the learner should achieve. Every learner is respected as an individual. No learner is better than the other. Everyone is accommodated in the learning environment.

2.3.2 Outcomes-based assessment in South Africa

South Africa interacts with other countries in different activities, for example trade, tourism and agriculture. The interaction with other countries requires that South Africa has skilled people to compete internationally. Gilmore (2002) argues that internationally there is a marked growth in the need for high quality and dependable assessment information to fulfil a variety of purposes such as policy decision making and accountability, reporting students achievement, awarding qualifications and informing and optimizing children's learning within the classroom. Outcomes based assessment tries to emphasize high quality forms of assessment. The emphasis is on the achievement of outcomes by learners. Assessment in OBE focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learners' achievements at every level, (Government Gazette 2003).

Van der Horst and McDonald's (1997) state that assessment procedures should give a clear indication of what learners are learning. Thus when planning for learning activities, educators should think about assessment strategies to be followed in those activities. Assessment should form an integral part of planning and preparation. This will ensure the validity of the assessment. Killen (2003(b)) argues that validity is an important characteristic of good assessment. OBE requires that educators should focus on helping learners to apply their knowledge in the real world rather than accumulate knowledge or facts. In a way learners should relate what they learn in classroom with the real world. When assessing learners, educators should apply strategies that require more than a reproduction of content. To ensure validity when assessing learners, relevant strategies to measure specific outcomes should be followed. One strategy cannot be relevant all the times.

Assessment in OBE is done to determine whether learners have achieved the desired outcomes. According to Birenbaum (1996), the method of assessment goes along with what is needed to assess. Goals for instruction should be looked for. The ideas about validity given by Birenbaum (1996) concur with the ones given by Killen (2003b). These two emphasise that assessment should be

relevant. Killen (2003b:2) mentions a number of reasons why learners are assessed. Among others, he mentions that assessment could be done for: *selection, certification and classification, diagnosis, progression, programme evaluation and instructional improvement.* Looking at these purposes of assessment it is clear that assessment cannot be a once off activity. It should be continuous. Orsmond and Gildenhuys (2005:122) mention the following different types of assessment: *baseline assessment, formative assessment, diagnostic assessment and summative assessment.* The above types of assessment indicate that assessment can be done for learning on the one side, and we can have assessment of learning on the other side. For example if one carries out baseline assessment, this will be assessment for learning. Assessment is carried out to determine what learners already know, and that will form the basis for the learning activity to follow. Assessment of learning can be done to determine whether learners have achieved the outcomes of learning. This type of assessment includes diagnostic assessment, summative assessment, etc.

Pallapu (2004) thinks that assessment in OBE is more than memorization; the student should be able to demonstrate the skills acquired. As OBE focuses on the achievement of outcomes by learners, assessment should be used to measure whether learners have achieved outcomes or not. Pallapu (2004) states that skills should also be assessed. Different assessment strategies should be followed when assessing learners so that skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and the learning process can be assessed (Olivier, 2002:6).

According to Siebörger (2000), educators have no feeling of security during assessment. Educators are not sure of what they are doing as Malcolm (2000) argues that in South Africa it is not clear how assessment information should be collected and used. He maintains that in assessments, as in curriculum design, educators have to work back and forth between coarse and fine grains. By coarse and fine grains, he refers to the generality and specificity of outcomes.

This investigation has indicated how educators feel about assessment in OBE. Educators with a good understanding of assessment policy feel more confident and secure when assessing learners. Educators' ideologies and beliefs about

assessment should change. According to Killen and van Niekerk (2000), *attitudes*, *values* and *ideologies* should shift so that fundamental reforms in education can take place. This implies that educators' mindsets should change so that they can move with changes. McGinnis, Kramer and Watanabe (1998) argue that one way to change teaching practice is by changing the attitude and beliefs of educator candidates. If educators believed that it is only through written work that they can assess learners, they need to change this notion in order to follow different assessment strategies. The Department of Education requires educators to use different activities for promotion purposes for example: portfolios, class works, home works, assignments, tests and projects, (Department of Education policy document 1997). The Department of Education also requires assessment to be formative and summative. Learners should receive feedback from time to time.

Olivier (2002:68-69) argues that assessment should be valid, appropriate, reliable, flexible, fair and sufficient. Outcomes-based assessment is thus a continuous activity assessing knowledge, skills, values and achievement of critical cross-field outcomes… and should become part of learning process, as well as a method to gauge success.

2.3.3 The impact of teaching and assessment policies on educators' classroom practices

Educators are supplied with a policy document that attempts to offer direction to the macro-level curriculum design process and provides the framework around which provinces and schools may build their learning programmes, (Department of Education policy document, 1997:2). The policy document comprises the key principles guiding curriculum development. These principles are given (ibid: 3) to acquaint educators with the aims for curriculum development. I think this was necessary because educators as citizens of South Africa and implementers of the curriculum should be aware of the reasons for effecting changes in the classroom situation.

The policy document clarifies the structure of the South African education system; i.e. the phases into which the education system is divided. This study focuses on educators in the General Education and Training Band; the latter divided into the foundation phase, the intermediate phase and the senior phase. Classes are now called *grades* and are grouped into these phases. The subjects that are dealt with in different classes are grouped into learning areas per phase. Each phase has its policy document that stipulates the learning areas to be covered. The notional time or learning time is also given per learning area. The outcomes are the same for all the phases. These outcomes are to be achieved in different learning areas collectively, hence the principle of *integration*.

The various terms are explained in the policy documents to acquaint educators with meanings, for example: *assessment, critical outcomes and learning outcomes.* The policy document can be helpful when educators plan their learning activities. They need not go out to search for outcomes learners should achieve. The outcomes are supplied in the policy document. What educators need to do is to look for what (*content, teaching strategies, assessment strategies*) they can use to help learners to achieve those outcomes.

The Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000) contains the learning and assessment strategies educators may follow in their classrooms. This document together with the national policy document, can guide educators when planning and facilitating learning activities. Educators can choose suitable teaching and learning strategies from these documents based on the outcomes they wish learners to achieve.

The documents referred to above have supplied the necessary criteria for evaluating educators on their understanding of OBE and OBA. The criteria are given in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.

According to Lewin and Dunne (2000:395), an assessment policy should generate assessment instruments that reinforce valued learning outcomes. The OBE assessment policy gives guidelines on how educators should assess

learners. It lays down the learning standards learners should reach to indicate that they have achieved the outcomes. According to the Northern Province Department Of Education policy document (2000:2) assessment involves four steps namely: **generating and collecting evidence** of achievement, **evaluating** this evidence against the outcomes, **recording** the findings of this evaluation and **using** this information to assist the learner's development and **improving** the process of learning and teaching.

These steps are the general guidelines for what educators should do when assessing learners. When educators assess learners they also should show evidence that learners have achieved the outcomes, the findings should be recorded and should help these learner's development and improve the learning and teaching process. The idea behind these steps is that assessment evaluates the teaching and learning process. Assessment in OBE requires that appropriate tools be used to assess learner achievement and encourage lifelong learning skills.

The policy lays down the principles which guide educators when they are engaged in the assessment process. These principles as laid down in the Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:3) assessment policy, give directive to what assessment should cover. These also lead to the aims of assessment and how assessment activities should be done. In short, assessment in OBE should not be judgmental or norm-referenced.

2.3.4 Educators' roles and implications for OBE implementation

When OBE was phased in, educators' roles in the classroom had to change. According to Mason (1999), educators need to change their way of teaching, from transmission model to mediational and facilitative role.

Olivier (2002:70) states;

> *"Teachers/trainers should not teach or train, but rather facilitate learning by stimulating creativity, self-learning, critical thinking, etc. the role of the facilitator is to enable learners to master: critical cross-field outcomes, the required knowledge and values, and skills."*

The suggestions given by Olivier (2002) and Mason (1999) show that educators should not transmit knowledge to learners but rather equip learners with skills so that they can be creative and search knowledge for themselves. The teaching and assessment strategies educators follow in the classroom should be suitable to help learners in achieving the desired outcomes.

Educators should be involved when the policy is planned so that they are in a better position to understand the policy. Educators have experience of what happens in the classroom and as such, when they are involved in drawing the policy, they will plan it to suit the classroom situation. In Smit's (2001) opinion, the legislation and communication of policies for educational change depend on what educators think and do, their personal disposition and feelings concerning change or policies proposing change. For educators to implement the policy as expected, they need to have a good understanding of that policy. The policy should be good to suit the practical situation. Sometimes a policy can be good, but difficult to practice. Lewin and Dunne (2000) argue that a good policy does not always result in good practice. Pahad in Jansen and Christie (1999:284) also argues that South Africa has excellent policies but the educators know nothing about the implementation of these policies. This might be true looking at the level of educator participation when the education policy was planned. According to Potenza and Monyokolo in Jansen and Christie (1999:236), educators are the most important educational resource we have and will determine whether the new curriculum succeeds or not. Educators should have better understanding of OBE so that they can implement it effectively. They should be involved when the policy is planned and they should also receive enough training to equip them with better understanding of OBE.

Malcolm (2000) argues that neither educators in South Africa nor the Education Department officers have a tradition of curriculum development. Educators in South Africa see themselves as technicians or people who do the job they are given. This means that someone has to develop the curriculum for educators to implement. According to Malcolm (2000:31), there were no significant attempts

to explore educators' existing beliefs and practices, interests and hopes in South Africa, as bases for the reforms.

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997), OBE requires educators and learners to focus on the desired end results of each learning process, i.e. the outcomes of learning. In the teaching and learning situation educators should give learners more opportunities to enable learners to achieve the outcomes. Educators should not concentrate on the time learners spend to achieve the outcomes, but on whether learners achieve the outcomes. Educators should treat all the learners with respect bearing in mind that every learner can learn and succeed. Learners' performances should not be compared among themselves but on certain standards of achievement. This means that *norm reference* testing should be avoided, and educators should follow *criterion reference* testing.

2.3.5 Problems that may be encountered during OBE implementation

According to the Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000), overcrowding in classrooms and shortage of resources are some of the problems that can be encountered during assessment. Killen (2003a) also states some of the problems educators have raised. These educators complained about effectiveness of assessment in larger classes, lack of facilities and multicultural classrooms. Educators in South Africa find themselves in different situations. This influences the way they carry out their duties. For example some schools in South Africa are poor to an extent that they do not have water and electricity. Schools in rural areas are experiencing this problem more than those that are in urban areas. Malcolm (2000) argues that an educator in Melbourne wonders how to use five computers in a class of 25 learners, while one in Mhutlane worries about learners who do not have pencils. This expresses the different situations in which educators find themselves. Most schools in rural areas are overcrowded. When Malcolm (2000) compares the South African education context with Australian education context, he indicates that in Australia classes have about 25-28 learners. In South Africa class sizes stretch up to 60-100 learners.

2.3.6 Critique of OBE implementation in South Africa

Jansen in Jansen and Christie (1999) indicate that OBE could fail in South Africa for a number of reasons. Among these reasons are the following: the language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory (Jansen in Jansen and Christie 1999:147). Educators have been limited in their participation around this policy, (ibid: 150). If educators do not understand the language used in OBE, it will be difficult for them to effectively implement OBE in the classroom. As Smit (2001) states that educators should be involved when the policy is drawn, this might be helpful as they are implementers, they will know the implications the policy will have on classroom practices. Only two reasons from Jansen in Jansen and Christie (1999) have been selected as they are more relevant than others for this investigation.

Mason (1999:138) in his response to Jansen's concerns, argues that the language and terminology of OBE are far too difficult for under-resourced educators. He states that successful implementation depends on significant levels of in-service developments for South Africa's under-qualified educators. Through language, a message is passed on to others. If the language is difficult to understand, the message delivered will not be easy to understand. This investigation is concerned with a determination of the educators' experiences of language as used in OBE material and whether they are under-qualified or are engaged in professional development programmes. It is evident that through further studies educators empower themselves. According to Gilmore (2002) the heart of building the potential for increasing educators' assessment capacity is *planned professional development opportunities*. Educators who are engaged in professional development programmes have better knowledge of what they are doing. They become experts in their field of practice. Professional development programmes help them to gain confidence when carrying out their duties.

According to Venter (2000), in the real world some pass and some fail. This is a critique of the premise that all learners can learn and succeed, but not all at the same time and at the same pace. In practice people have different capabilities. The fact that everyone can learn is true, but people learn according to their

willingness. If someone is not willing to learn, that person cannot learn. This implies that learners should be **willing** to learn before educators are able to help them to achieve the outcomes these learners should achieve.

Sunseri (2004) argues that the notion that all children can learn and succeed is a supposition. He states that it is true that all children can learn something, but not everything they are supposed to learn. Looking at this argument by Sunseri (2004) it is evident that when learners are assessed, certain standards are set for learners to reach so that educators can conclude that learners have achieved the outcomes. If learners do not reach those standards, this means that they have not achieved the outcomes. In simple terms learners who do not reach the required standards, fail. If those who have reached the standards are promoted to the next grade, those who have not reached these standards will repeat the same grade. This relates to Venter's (2000) assessment that in the real world some pass and others fail. In trying to explore educators' understanding of OBE, this study has been an attempt to determine their critical analysis of OBE. In order to understand something, one needs to critically analyse it. Educators should also analyse OBE (the policy and materials) critically to understand it.

2.4 Teaching and assessment strategies

According to O'Brien (2000), educators are allowed to use whatever materials and methods appropriate for specific learners. This statement acknowledges the fact that learners have different capabilities and there is no single strategy can be suitable for all learners at all the times. According to Killen (2003(a): 33) any strategy chosen should suit the purpose of teaching. Choice of teaching and assessment strategies should be based on the desired outcomes to be reached by learners.

The Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:18) summarizes different learning strategies that can be followed in an OBE classroom. These strategies include:

➢ Cooperative learning where learners work together

- ➢ Experiential learning, where learners are encouraged to learn on their own in constructive thinking
- ➢ Inquiry/investigation, where learners gather information and analyse and examine it
- ➢ Direct instruction, where instruction can be given before other strategies can be used
- ➢ Deductive learning which proceeds from some general law to a particular case
- ➢ Inductive learning used in lessons where learners can make discoveries for themselves
- ➢ Problem solving where existing knowledge is applied to a new or unfamiliar situation in order to gain new knowledge

Educators should be able to use these strategies interchangeably bearing in mind the outcomes they wish learners to achieve. No single strategy can be useful every time in the teaching and learning situation. When assessing learners' activities, educators should also follow different assessment strategies. Assessment in OBE should be continuous. The Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:24) supplies the principles of continuous assessment. These principles serve as guidelines for educators to follow when choosing assessment strategies. These should be integrated when learners are assessed. Educators should follow different assessment methods, tools and techniques in their classrooms. These are given in the policy document (ibid: 29). The methods include *educator assessment*, *self-assessment*, *peer assessment* and *group assessment*. The tools include observation sheets, journals and assessment grids. And the techniques include project work, panel discussions, tests and assignments.

2.5 Conclusion

The second chapter is a review of relevant sources in this investigation and has addressed the following: OBE premises, principles, beliefs, characteristics, definition of outcome, (which is the main focus in OBE). The views of different authors on these concepts have been stated. These concepts cannot be separated.

They revolve around the achievement of outcomes by learners. Somehow there seems to be a contradiction in the beliefs and principles. To give an example one OBE premise states that all learners can learn and succeed. This relates to the principle of high expectations. The premise maintains that no learner

should fail and the principle maintains that standards should be raised. How can standards be raised when all learners are capable of succeeding? This may be difficult. If standards are raised in reality, some learners may find it difficult to achieve outcomes. In real life, time is considered when activities should start and end. One OBE principle says that educators should give learners more opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of outcomes. This implies that no learner should fail and time should not be a determinant factor in learners' learning. Even though there are limitations in relation to time, there might be a contradiction here. If time is not a determinant factor in the teaching-learning situation but has limitations, then how should educators accommodate the principle of expanded opportunities in the classroom? What should be done if learners are given expanded opportunities but still not achieve outcomes? Does that imply that they are failing to learn? If this happens the OBE premise should read as follows, 'if some learners are given enough opportunities they can learn and succeed'. This happens in the real world.

The South African context has been discussed at in this chapter: OBE practices in South Africa (reasons for implementation; outcomes-based assessment in South Africa, the influence of assessment policy on classroom assessment practices and resources). In addition the educators' roles and the implications in OBE implementation have been examined as well as criticism of OBE.

The next chapter deals with research strategies and the methodology followed in this investigation. Data collection plan is also discussed.

CHAPTER 3: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH STRATEGIES, METHODOLOGY, AND DATA COLLECTION PLAN APPLIED IN THIS INVESTIGATION.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research strategies and research methodology followed in this investigation. These will be discussed to supply the reader with reasons why these strategies and methodology have been chosen. As research strategies and methodology vary, only those that have been followed in this investigation will be discussed. The data collection plan is also discussed to supply the reader with information about the themes covered in the interviews. Collected data have been categorized to make the job of data analysis easier.

3.2 Qualitative research design applied during the investigation

Different qualitative strategies or techniques have been followed during the data collection process. Participants in this study have been limited and the results and conclusions have not been based on numbers, but on educators' opinions about their understanding of OBE. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. When collecting data I have tried to determine educators' opinions about OBE and OBA. During observations it could be established how they taught and assessed learners. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:375) argue that researchers interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. After collecting data the analysis was based on educators' views of OBE and OBA. This implies that the interpretations about educators are based on the opinions these educators gave during the interviews.

3.2.1. Interviews as qualitative data gathering

Conducting interviews has been important in order to determine educators' in-depth views regarding their understanding of OBE and OBA. Tuckman (1994:366) argues that events cannot be understood unless one understands how these events are perceived and interpreted by people who participate in them. Educators are busy with OBE implementation, thus it is important to gather

information regarding their understanding of OBE and how this influences their classroom assessment practices. Tuckman (1994:372) states that one way to find out about a phenomenon is to ask questions of the people who are involved in it in some particular way. This has led to in-depth interviews as one of the data collection strategies to be followed during this investigation. Interviews were important because each educator's answers reflected his or her perceptions and interests about OBE and OBA.

Patton (1990:278) writes, 'the purpose of interview is to find out what is in or on someone's mind.' Patton (1990) argues that people are interviewed in order to determine from them those things which cannot be directly observed as everything cannot be observed. In this investigation educators' opinions have been probed during the interviews.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:267) maintain that interviews enable participants (interviewer and interviewee) to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and how they regard situations from their own point of view. Whatever teachers think about OBE and OBA, and would like to share could be carried out during interviews.

3.2.1.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information about educators' understanding of OBE and how this influenced their classroom assessment practices. The interviews were semi-structured as some of the questions were planned prior to the interviews. Some questions were drawn from educators' responses. Questions that were planned prior to the interviews guided the investigation, but they did not restrict educators' opinions. The educators were expected to give their opinions with regard to their understanding of OBE and OBA. They were expected to show whether they knew and understood the OBE premises and principles. Educators were also expected to show how their understanding influenced their classroom assessment practices, and how they incorporated the premises and principles in their teaching and assessment.

3.2.2 Observations

In addition to the interviews observations were conducted to determine whether the educators' opinions corresponded with their practices. Observations were an aid to determine whether educators incorporated OBE premises and principles in their teaching. Direct observation was helpful to determine how educators taught and assessed their learners in the classroom. According to Tuckman (1994:378), what should be observed, is the event or phenomenon in action. Tuckman (1994:378) further highlights that in qualitative educational research this often means sitting in the classroom in an unobtrusive a manner as possible and watching educators deliver a programme to students. Observations were planned in order to confirm or disprove the researcher's interpretations of their opinions. Observations have been useful to help the researcher to get some information educators might not have supplied during interviews.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) indicate that if interviews are combined with observation, they allow the researcher to understand the meanings people hold for their everyday activities. Through observations, it could be determined whether educators' classroom practices relate to the principles and practices of OBE.

3.2.3 Document analysis

Lastly some documents were reviewed to determine how educators record information. A review of documents helped the researcher to establish whether educators follow OBE premises and principles in their teaching. The way they record information could reveal whether they understand OBE and OBA or not.

Documents reviewed were classroom assessment evidence such as examination scripts, examination and test schedules (continuous assessment (CASS) schedules), mark sheets and portfolios. The purpose of this document analysis was to determine how understanding of the premises and principles, and policies in OBE and OBA has influenced the actual classroom practices. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995:85), researcher supplement participant observation,

interviewing and observation with gathering of documents produced in the course of everyday events.

3.3 Sampling procedures followed during the investigation

Convenient sampling was followed in this investigation. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:102) say that convenient sampling involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents. This sampling method was the most suitable in this investigation because for the researcher it was a way of reaching participants in this investigation.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:98) researchers need to ensure that not only access is permitted, but is, in fact, practicable. The sampling strategy followed is purposeful as participants are educators who are busy with OBE practices in their day-to-day activities. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) in purposeful sampling, the samples are chosen because these participants are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating. The participants have attended workshops which were aimed at informing and equipping them with knowledge and skills to implement OBE.

The study took place in the Bochum area in the Capricorn district in the Limpopo Province. Bochum area is divided into six circuits and each circuit was represented. This area was chosen as the researcher works and lives there. Ten primary school educators from six different schools took part in this study. Two educators per school in four schools and one educator per school in two schools were chosen. In schools where two educators were chosen network sampling was followed. One participant was asked to refer the researcher to another educator who could be willing to take part in the investigation. As educators work together they know each other better than the researcher does. To explore educators' understanding of OBE, those who were nearer to the researcher's village and school were involved. This was done to minimise costs and problems when arranging meetings with them. Educators' understanding of OBE in general was looked at. The researcher neither focused on the level at which they are teaching

nor at a specific grade or learning area. Six of the educators who participated in the study were observed in practice and the records they keep were analysed.

3.4 Data collection plan

3.4.1 Criteria to be used to assess teachers' opinions on OBE and OBA

In their responses educators should meet the following requirements to support their understanding of OBE and OBA. There should be evidence that they:

- ➢ Understand the essence of OBE
- ➢ Accommodate OBE premises and principles in their classroom practices
- ➢ Use outcomes as the starting point for planning their classroom practices
- ➢ Follow different teaching and assessment strategies to accommodate learners with different capabilities in their classrooms
- ➢ Assess learners' performance continuously with the purpose of helping learners to achieve the desired outcomes
- ➢ Record progress of learners
- ➢ Give feedback to learners from time to time
- ➢ Review their teaching and assessment strategies from time to time
- ➢ They help learners to achieve outcomes they wish them to achieve

3.4.2 Categorisation and codification of data

This sub-section focused on the way collected data were categorized and coded. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), when coding, data should be grouped into topics. Data are divided into parts through classification system. A number of themes were covered when planning questions to be asked during interviews. According to Patton (1990:291), the following themes can be covered during interviews:

- ➢ Experience/behaviour questions: - these are questions that deal with what the person does or has done
- ➢ Knowledge questions: - asked to find out what factual information the respondent has
- ➢ Sensory questions: - questions about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled

➢ Background knowledge: - these identify characteristics of the interviewee

The above-mentioned themes helped the researcher to come up with the criteria in 3.4.1 above. For the researcher to receive enough information during interviews, questions should cover a number of aspects. This was an aid when planning questions before the interviews were held.

Tuckman (1994:373) argues that in selecting questions, one should not ask only about intentions, but about what actually occurs. The variables to be measured are important towards the designing of good questions. In this investigation the following two variables were measured; educators' understanding of OBE and their classroom practices. An understanding of OBE deals more with knowledge and experience. Classroom practices relate to behaviour and somehow sensory questions. Some of the questions asked' covered educators' knowledge and opinions of OBE. These reflected their understanding. Other questions related to their behaviour and their feelings on OBE. This could be reflected in their classroom practices.

Data were divided into parts and grouped under the themes that were covered. These included the following: the essence of OBE, the difference between OBE and the traditional approach, educators' opinions on OBE premises and principles, the use of policy of documents, preparations, teaching strategies, assessment strategies, the impact of educators' understanding of OBE on classroom practices, and record-keeping.

3.4.3 Validation of the measuring instrument (interview schedule)

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407), 'validity addresses the following questions: Do the researchers actually observe what they think they observe? Do researchers actually hear the meanings that they think they hear?' They argue that validity of qualitative designs is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher, (ibid: 407). When designing the instrument for qualitative data collection, the researcher should ensure that what he/she wishes to observe is

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clearly understood. The researcher should also ensure that the questions prepared are clearly understood so that participants give him/her information that is relevant in the investigation.

To ensure common understanding of words used in the instrument content validity has to be addressed in this investigation. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) argue that to ensure content validity the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover. To make sure that this happened, questions that could reflect educators' understanding and how such understanding impact on their classroom assessment practices were asked. The instrument has been validated against a literature study. The reviewed articles have been helpful to ensure that content validity is addressed in this investigation. Multimethod strategies have been followed to enhance validity in this investigation. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:8) argue that most interactive researchers employ several data collection techniques in a study, but usually select one as the central method. In this investigation in-depth interviews have been the central technique used. Observations and document analysis have been followed to supplement the interviews.

Time and venues had to be convenient for the interviewer and interviewees in order to avoid disturbances during the interview process. The use of a tape recorder allowed the interview process to proceed without having to ask the respondents to repeat any information and to ensure that no information was lost.

Table 3.1: Validation of the instrument

Question to be asked	Sources of reference where the questions were taken from.
What is your opinion about the essence of OBE?	Spady (1994:1); Siebörger (2004:33); Van der Horst and McDonald (2003: 5); Butler (2003:3); Acharya (2003:1); Department of Education policy document (1997:20)
What is the difference between OBE and the traditional approach to teaching?	Spady (1994:6); Geyser in Mda and Mothata (2000:26); Malan (1997:8); Butler (2003:7)
What are educators' opinions regarding OBE premises and principles? (OBE premises and principles mentioned by Spady (1993 and 1994) were taken one by one).	Spady (1993 and 1994: 9-10); Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4-6); Spady and Schlebusch (1999:30-38); Acharya (2003:3)
Which teaching strategies do you follow when you facilitate learning?	Van der Horst and McDonald (2003: 121-138)
How do you assess learners in your classroom? (Which assessment strategies do you follow when assessing learners in your classroom?).	Kotze in Maree and Fraser (2004:47-62); Naicker (1999:89, 112); Acharya (2003:6); Blust (1995:50); Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:166-174); Malan (19997:65); Gronlund (1995:3-9); Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000:3)
To what extent do you follow OBE policy and assessment policy in your classroom practices?	Pahad in Jansen and Christie (1999: 248); Department of Education policy document, (1997:2); Dunne and Lewin (2000:395)
How do you prepare for your classroom practices?	Naicker (1999:90); Acharya (2003:4); Lorenzen (2002:7)
How do learners perform in your classroom? (How does your understanding of OBE impact on your classroom practices?).	Spady (1994:7); Bellis in Jansen and Christie (1999:226)
Which records do you keep?	Siebörger (2004:41); Scherman in Maree and Fraser(2004:145-157)

3.4.4 Implementation schedule

Before data were collected, a pilot study was conducted in August 2005 with one interviewee. This was done to validate the interview schedule to enable the researcher think about what to expect from educators' responses. The interviewee during the pilot study did not have a knowledge and an understanding of OBE premises and principles. To gather the interviewee's opinion about OBE premises and principles their meaning had to be explained first. Two interviews were conducted with one interviewee during the pilot study. Initially the information provided by the interviewee was not enough and more questions had to be probed to gather sufficient data from the interviewees in order to compile a report. Another interview was arranged in which more questions were asked to gather more information relevant in the investigation. The interviewee made it clear to the researcher that he never heard of the OBE premises and principles. This made the researcher aware that other participants may also not be aware of the OBE premises and principles. The instrument was reformatted in order to write the report.

During the second interview more questions were probed to get the interviewee's opinion about OBE premises and principles. The explanations were helpful to the interviewee as he had an idea of what the OBE premises and principles entailed.

It arranged to conduct interviews with other educators after the researcher was satisfied that the instrument was valid. Appointments were made after school hours and during weekends. Interviews were planned in such a way that they would not interfere with school activities. During interviews a tape recorder was used so that all the information educators supplied could be captured. After the interviews the tapes were transcribed into text so that it could be analysed with ease. Before using the tape recorder in the interviews permission was asked from participants. Permission was asked so that educators could know why a tape recorder was used. After the interviewee granted permission, a brief introduction was given to give interviewees the aims of the investigation. In the introduction the interviewees were told to be free to give their opinions as much

as they wanted. They were also told that the information collected was strictly confidential and private.

Interview questions were planned in such a way that the criteria given in 3.4.1 above were covered and valid inferences could be drawn from educators' responses.

The table on the next page summarises the plan for interviews:

Table 3.2: Summary of the questions planned prior to the interviews

What was to known	Main question to be asked	Possible probing questions	What was to be achieved with the answer
1. What educators know about OBE	In your opinion what is the essence of OBE?	How do you ensure a learner-centred approach in your teaching?	To determine what educators know about OBE.
2. Whether educators are conversant with OBE premises and principles	What is your opinion about the OBE premise that states that 'all learners can learn and succeed?' (The premises and principles will be taken one by one to determine educators' opinions about them.)	How do you incorporate OBE premises in your teaching? How do you incorporate OBE principles in your teaching?	To determine whether educators accommodate OBE premises and principles in the teaching and learning situation
3. Whether the educator can distinguish between the traditional teaching approach and OBE	What is the difference between OBE and the traditional teaching approach?	Have you changed you teaching and assessment practices to suit OBE?	To determine whether educators have changed their classroom practices to suit OBE
4. Whether educators follow different strategies when they facilitate learning	What strategies do you follow when you facilitate learning?	To what extent are those strategies helpful towards learners achieving outcomes?	To find out whether educators rely on one strategy or use them interchangeably looking at the outcomes of every learning activity
5. How educators assess learners	How do you assess learners in your classroom?	What assessment strategies do you follow when you assess learners?	To determine whether educators follow different assessment strategies
6. Whether educators follow OBE and assessment policies	To what extent do you follow the OBE policy and assessment policy in your classroom practices?	What are the key principles outlined in assessment policy?	To determine whether educators are conversant with assessment policy
7. How learners perform	How do learners perform in your classroom?	Do all the learners learn and succeed?	To determine how the educators ' classroom practices influence learners' performance
8. Types of records kept by educators	Which records do you keep?	How do you keep records?	To determine the records that educators keep and how such records are kept

In addition to the interviews observations were conducted in six schools. Before observing educators in practice, the aim of the observations was discussed with them. This was necessary to make educators feel free during the researcher's presence in their classrooms. After the observations were conducted, educators asked to provide the researcher with the documents they use to keep records of their classroom activities. These documents included books, files, portfolios and learners' books. (The records they provided were evaluated against criteria shown below). Those records were to be supplied after the observations.

The following criteria have been used during observations:

- ❖ Number of learners in a classroom
- ❖ Classroom setting
- ❖ The use of resources
- ❖ Teaching strategies followed
- ❖ Assessment strategies followed
- ❖ Learner participation
- ❖ Incorporation of OBE principles and practices

Table 3.3: Summary of criteria used during observations.

What should be known?	Questions asked?	What was to be achieved
1. Number of learners in class	How many learners are there in a classroom?	To determine the educator pupil ratio, the impact that has on OBE implementation by teachers
2. Classroom setting	How are learners seated?	To determine whether the way in which learners are seated allows learner participation and whether a conducive learning space is created
3. Teaching strategies followed	Which teaching strategies are followed?	To determine whether educators follow different teaching strategies and have changed from direct instruction to a facilitative role
4. Assessment strategies	Which assessment strategies do educators follow?	To determine how educators assess learners' work and whether they follow multiple strategies when they assess learners' work
5. Learner participation	What is the level of learner participation?	To determine whether educators still dominate in the teaching-learning situation
6. The use of resources	Which resources do educators use in the classroom?	To determine whether educators use relevant resources to help learners to achieve outcomes
7. Incorporation of OBE premises and principles in the lesson	Does the educator incorporate OBE premises and principles in the learning activities?	To determine whether there is evidence that the educator accommodates OBE premises and principles in classroom practices

The following criteria were followed when the documents were analysed:

- Which assessment records are kept by educators?
- How often are those records kept?
- Is the purpose of those records clear?
- Are those records helpful to both the educator and learners?
- Do the records reflect the educator's understanding of OBE and OBA policies?
- Can learners' performances be evaluated using the records that are kept?

Table 3.4: Summary of criteria followed when the documents were analysed.

What was looked for?	What was to be achieved?
1. Which records are kept by the educator?	To determine whether the educator keeps enough records to serve for assessment purposes
2. How often are those records kept?	To determine whether the records are updated
3. What is the purpose of records kept?	To determine whether the purposes of the records kept are clear
4. Who uses those records	To determine whether the records are helpful to both the educator and learners
5. Do the records reflect the educator's understanding of OBE and OBA policies?	To determine whether educators' records reflect his/her understanding of OBE and OBA
6. Can the records kept be used to evaluate learners' performance?	To determine whether the records have enough information to be used to evaluate learners' performance

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the research strategies followed in this investigation. Only the research strategies followed in this investigation have been discussed. The main research strategy followed in this investigation is interviews. In addition to the interviews, observations were conducted and documents have been analysed. The sampling procedures and data collection plan has been discussed. Validation of the instrument used during interviews and the implementation schedule has been dealt with in this chapter.

The next chapter deals with data collection procedures followed in this investigation. Data are also analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION, DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with the data collection procedures followed in this investigation. The reader will determine when and how data were collected. In addition data analysis and results are also discussed.

4.2 Data collection procedures

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten educators in six schools in Senwabarwana the former Bochum district in the Limpopo Province.

Appointments were arranged to conduct interviews with educators. After the interviews has been conducted. Observations were conducted with six out of ten educators who participated in this investigation. The records that the six educators kept were analysed. Specific dates, times and venues were agreed upon to suit participants, i.e. interviewees and the researcher, (Appendices D, F and G contain details of dates, time and venues. These Appendices are available on CD). Interviews, observations and document analysis took place from the 25 September 2005 until 19 October 2005. A tape recorder was used during interviews so that the flow of information would not be disturbed during the interview process. Permission to use the tape recorder was granted by all interviewees. Taped communications were transcribed into text after the interview process. The transcripts are given in Appendix D (available on CD).

Observations results appear in Appendix F and document analysis results appear in Appendix G. (These Appendices are also available on CD).

4.3 Data analysis and results

Interview questions, observation and document analysis schedules were designed to answer research questions in Chapter 1 page 11 and 12. Research question number 1.3.2.1 was answered by interviewees responding to questions on the essence of OBE, the difference between OBE and the traditional teaching

approach, and educators' opinions about OBE premises and principles. When interviewees responded to these questions objective 1.5.1 was achieved.

Research question 1.3.2.3 was answered when respondents responded to questions regarding teaching and assessment strategies. Objective 1.5.4 was achieved.

Interviewees' responses to questions relating to the influence their understanding had on their classroom assessment practices. (Research question number 1.3.2.4), and this is where objective 1.5.5 was achieved.

Research question 1.3.2.5 was answered when interviewees responded to questions relating to record keeping.

Discussions of interview responses follow below in Sub-section 4.2.1 and observations and document analysis are discussed in Sub-section 4.2.2.

4.3.1 Interviews

Data were divided into categories and coded in order to be manageable. The coded text appears in Appendix E (available on CD). Tables were used to summarise the codes and categories.

Table 4.1: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the essence of Outcomes-based Education (OBE)

Category: Essence of Outcomes-based Education	
Code	Description
EF	Educators always focus their teaching on outcomes.
EP	Something that the child must produce.
EL	Learners participate actively in learning activities.
ET	Educators do not play a major role in the teaching-learning situation any longer.
EH	OBE calls for high expectations for all learners.
EA	Activities revolve around the learner.
EG	OBE encourages group work.
EU	OBE concentrates on learners' understanding.
EI	Learners are encouraged to go out and search information for themselves.

Table 4.2: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the essence of Outcomes-based Education (OBE)

Category: Essence of Outcomes-based Education	
Description	Frequency of responses
Educators always focus their teaching on outcomes.	(R1, R2, R5)
Something that the child must produce	(R2)
Learners participate actively in learning activities.	(R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10)
Educators do not play a major role in the teaching-learning situation any longer.	(R3)
OBE calls for high expectations for all learners.	(R4)
Activities revolves around the learner	(R4)
OBE encourages group work.	(R6)
OBE concentrates much on learners' understanding.	(R7)
Learners are encouraged to search information for themselves.	(R8, R9)

According to Killen (2003a: 6) the central point of OBE is an unambiguous statement of what students are to learn. Olivier (2002:4) states that outcomes-based learning is a standard-based way of learning. Standards to be achieved are set prior to the learning activities and they serve as the basis for and the driving force behind the learning. What Killen (2003a) and Olivier (2002) state is closely related. OBE focuses on outcomes learners should achieve. These outcomes can be unambiguous statements of what students are to learn. For learners to achieve the desired outcomes, standards on which learners' performance can be judged should be set. The outcomes and standards should be made clear to learners before they engage in learning activities.

Educators share different views on the essence of OBE. Table 4.1 shows the main ideas that educators have given regarding the essence of OBE. Table 4.2 shows that some educators (R1, R2, and R5) believe that the effective implementation of OBE requires educators to focus their teaching on outcomes learners have to achieve. Dalziell and Gourvenec (2003) view OBE as follows,

> '*At its most essential, outcomes based education is a teaching and learning strategy that makes explicit to every student the goals or objectives of their education*'.

Emphasis in the statement above is applicable to the principle of clarity of focus. Every classroom activity should be focused on clearly defined outcomes that learners should achieve. Education has goals and objectives that learners should reach. These goals and objectives should be made known to learners before they engage in learning activities. The idea of OBE focusing on outcomes relates to the one given by respondent (R2) who thought that OBE looks at what the child must produce. To say that a learner has achieved outcomes, the learner must be able to demonstrate his/her understanding, and be able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom in his/her daily life. This relates to Spady's (1993:2) that outcomes are clear learning results that learners need to demonstrate at the end of significant learning. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:5) support this idea because they state that OBE focuses on the desired end results of learning process. (The desired end results of learning refer to the outcomes that learners should achieve).

The knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom should help the child to solve his/her real life problems. In OBE there are critical and specific (learning) outcomes. Classroom activities should lead the children towards the achievement of these outcomes. OBE tries to guide the child towards life-long learning. According to Malan (1997:3), one of the aims why OBE was introduced in South Africa was to create opportunities for life-long learning to all South Africans. At the ultimate end of the learning process the child must be able to do something to demonstrate that he/she has learned something.

Some educators have indicated that learners participate actively in an OBE classroom. Indeed learners should participate actively in the learning process so that they achieve the desired outcomes. One educator (R3) has shown that the educator does not play a major role in an OBE classroom. Table 4.2 shows that most educators think that the essence of OBE is about learner participation. It is the learner who should play a major part while the educator guides him/her towards achieving the desired outcomes. Activities should revolve around the learner. It is the learner who should achieve the outcomes. The educator is there to guide and not spoon-feed learners. Among other aims of OBE mentioned by

Malan (1997:35) is to make teaching more learner-centred. In a learner-centred classroom the educator facilitates the learning process. Learners are encouraged to search for information and even perform activities on their own. According to Mothapo (2003), OBE will not succeed if educators still dominate lessons. The implication here is that learners should play a major role in the learning process. Learners should go out to search for sources of information. They can visit libraries, ask their elders who are more knowledgeable than they are, and so on. What learners gain on their own is not forgotten so easily as when they are told by someone. There is an indication that OBE encourages group work. This is true but group work is not the only method that is suitable in an OBE classroom. As learners differ, OBE requires that different teaching strategies be applied so that all learners can be accommodated. (This will further be discussed under the item on teaching strategies on page 93).

Table 4.3: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the difference between OBE and the traditional teaching approach

Category: The difference between OBE and traditional teaching approach	
Code	Description
OP	In OBE the focus is on learner participation.
OK	Learners must construct their own knowledge.
TI	In the traditional approach educators are imparting knowledge to learners.
DP	Learners are passive in the teaching- learning situation.
DO	Educators concentrate on outcomes in their teaching.
TP	Traditional approach was focused on what the educator can produce.
OC	With OBE the focus is on the career that a child is to follow
OT	OBE focuses on the learner in totality.
OS	OBE looks at skills.
OI	In OBE learners are helped to search for information.
OAV	OBE caters for learners' attitude and values.
TK	Traditional approach looks at knowledge only.
TW	Learners are tested mostly through writing.
OTW	OBE encourages teamwork.

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Table 4.4: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the difference between OBE and the traditional teaching approach

Category: The difference between OBE and traditional teaching approach	
Description	Frequency
In OBE the focus is on learner participation.	(R1)
Learners must construct their own knowledge.	(R1, R5, R8)
In the traditional approach educators impart knowledge to learners	(R1, R6,)
Learners are passive in the teaching-learning situation.	(R1, R6)
OBE concentrates on outcomes in our teaching	(R2)
The traditional approach is focused on what the educator can produce.	(R2, R3)
OBE focuses on the career that the child wants to follow.	(R2)
OBE focuses on the learner in totality.	(R2, R5)
OBE looks at skills.	(R5, R8)
In the traditional approach learners are given information.	(R6, 10)
OBE helps learners to search for information.	(R6)
OBE caters for learners' attitude and values.	(R8)
The traditional approach focused on knowledge only.	(R8)
Learners are tested mostly through writing.	(R8)
OBE encourages teamwork.	(10)

Olivier (2002:4, 6) argues that traditional-based learning is seen as a linear process which is directed by prescribed content captured in textbooks or manuals, and is *input* and *content* or *competency* driven; while outcomes-based learning is based on *achievements* of *end-results* and is *learner-driven*. The major difference Olivier (2002) indicates is that in the traditional teaching approach, content was looked at before aims and objectives could be chosen. In OBE the outcome is chosen first and content is chosen in relation to the desired outcomes. This difference relates to the idea given by respondent (R2) who thinks that in OBE the focus is on outcomes.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 indicate the educators' opinions of the difference between OBE and the traditional teaching approach. Most ideas educators have given on how OBE differs from the traditional teaching approach, relate to responses given about the essence of OBE. (R1 and R6) think that in the traditional approach the educator is the main source of information in the classroom and is also the main role player in the classroom. Mostly the child is in the classroom to listen to what the educator tells him/her. R1 and R6 believe that learners are passive listeners. Listening is among the good skills for learning. Good listeners may be good learners as long as listening is not the only skill used in learning.

In addition OBE differs from the traditional approach as OBE uses different methods of assessing. In the traditional approach writing is used as a way of testing. In OBE testing is replaced by assessing. Geyser in Mda and Mothata (2000:26) has tabulated some differences between the traditional teaching approach and OBE. Among those differences is that content covered has been prescribed in the traditional teaching approach. In OBE content is not prescribed but chosen according to outcomes. Mahomed in Jansen and Christie (1999:166) argues that in OBE content is not prescribed, as outcomes are the focal point of learning experience. When learners are tested in the traditional teaching approach, the tests are set on prescribed content. R8 shares the same opinion as Table 4.4 shows. R8 believes that only knowledge is assessed in the traditional teaching approach. In OBE learners are assessed on the outcomes they are to achieve. Standards are set on which they should demonstrate their level of achievement. According to Killen (1996), traditional methods (examinations and tests) may not give learners the appropriate opportunities to reveal their knowledge, skills, values or attitudes. OBE caters for knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as (R2, R5) have shown that OBE looks at the learner in totality.

Geyser in Mda and Mothata (2000:26) indicate that the traditional teaching approach encourages rote-learning with passive learners and that the focal point is on what the teacher should do. This opinion is shared by R2 and R3. They believe that in the traditional approach concentration is put on what the educator can do. In OBE learners are actively involved in critical thinking and the focal

point is on what learners should do. The point mentioned above seems to be the main differences between the traditional teaching approach and OBE. When OBE was introduced in South Africa, it was said to be learner-centred (Department of Education policy document, 1997).

A number of educators (R1, R5 and R8) have indicated that OBE differs from the traditional approach. In OBE the learners have to construct their own knowledge. When a child comes to the classroom, he/she will come there having knowledge of something and that is taken as the baseline in the learning process. The child does not come to the classroom with an empty mind to be filled. The knowledge that the child already has is developed further in the classroom.

Table 4.5: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the OBE premise: 'All learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way'

Category: All learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day in the same way	
Code	Description
AAT	It is true that all learners can learn and succeed.
AT	It is difficult to apply looking at the time-frame which operated.
AC	Each learner as an individual has his or her own capability of learning
AO	Not all the learners learn and succeed because classrooms are overcrowded.
AG	Group work is encouraged in OBE.
AS	There should be enough space for the educator to move around to facilitate learning.
AA	The educator looks at learners' abilities as they differ
AW	For all learners to learn and succeed the educator should work hard.
AD	The educator should diagnose learners' problems.
AR	Do remedial activities
AI	By giving such learners courage to do their work, they improve
AN	If there are normal learners, who are ready for school, yes, all learners can learn and succeed.
AB	Sometimes there are learners with learning barriers.
ALT	It depends on the learners and the educator.

Table 4.6: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding OBE premise: 'All learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day in the same way'

Category: All learners can learn and succeed but not on the same day in the same way	
Description	Frequency
It is true that all learners can learn and succeed.	(R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, R9)
It is difficult to apply looking at the time frame within which we operated.	(R1, R9)
Each learner as an individual has his or her own capability of learning.	(R2) R5, 10)
Not all the learners learn and succeed because classrooms are overcrowded	(R3)
Group work is encouraged in OBE.	(R3)
And there should be enough space for the educator to move around to facilitate learning.	(R3)
The educator looks at their abilities as they differ	(R4)
For all learners to learn and succeed, the educator should work hard.	(R4)
The educator should to diagnose learners' problems.	(R4)
Do remedial activities	(R4)
By giving such learners courage to do their work, they improve.	(R6)
If there are normal learners who are ready for school, yes, all learners can learn and succeed.	(R6, R9)
Sometimes there are learners with learning barriers.	(R8)
It depends on the learners and the educator	(10)

Most educators (R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R8, and R9) believe that all learners can learn and succeed often forgetting or neglecting the fact that this can only happen under certain conditions and times. Table 4.5 shows that more than half of the participants agree that all learners can learn and succeed. Some educators (R1 and R9) have shown that even though they believe that all learners can learn and succeed, it is difficult for them to apply this philosophy in practice. They have indicated that they work within time-limits, and that their classrooms are overcrowded to an extent that they are unable to offer individual attention to all

learners. Overcrowding is indeed a problem in most of the schools in our country. Educators can offer individual attention to only a few learners.

Educators who said that they work within some time-limits differ with Spady and Schlebusch (1999) as the latter indicate that time should not be a determinant factor in the learning process. Spady (1993) also argues that what learners learn is more important than when they learn it. By referring to time-limits educators have shown some confusion regarding their views on OBE. It seems it is not clear to them what it means by 'all learners can learn and succeed'. Educators are still rushing to cover content without matching the content to the outcomes. One educator (R4) has indicated that he has to cover some content within a prescribed time. He has shown little knowledge as far as OBE is concerned. He has been unable to explain and even differentiate between some concepts during the interview. Concepts such as summative and formative assessment have been difficult for him to explain.

OBE does not prescribe what should be done and when. What is emphasised is that learners should achieve outcomes. No learner should be regarded as a failure in OBE.

When writing about mastery learning Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:10) state that the onus is on the educator to provide the most suitable conditions for effective learning to occur. It is the responsibility of the educator to see to it that learning conditions are favorable for all learners to learn and succeed. Educators should provide resources that are helpful for learners to achieve the required outcomes. If learners do not achieve the desired outcomes, educators should try to diagnose the problems learners may have. They should provide more learning opportunities for learners who do not achieve the desired outcomes.

> *"The general aim of mastery learning is thus to ensure that learners are granted opportunities to be successful at most tasks, by providing an appropriate learning environment, materials and back-up guidance"*, (ibid: 10).

This shows that educators should seriously attempt to help all learners to succeed.

All the learners may not learn everything educators wish them to learn as Venter (2000) indicates that in the real world some fail and some succeed. When looking at a practical situation it is not always possible for all learners to learn and succeed in all the learning activities. When educators were asked whether all the learners in their classrooms learned and succeeded, they could not agree. They mentioned some problems that could prevent some learners from learning and succeeding. Among those problems are overcrowding, poor family background, etc.

It is a big challenge for educators to help all learners to learn and succeed unless they can just inflate marks on learners' work so that all learners learn and succeed. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:169) argue that if learners advance to the next grade automatically without having achieved outcomes; that would make mockery of all instructional endeavours. For all learners to learn and succeed is a difficult aim to achieve.

Some learners have learning barriers as one educator (R8) indicated that if all learners were ready for school, all of them would learn and succeed. It is true that in the real life situation some learners go to school without aims. It will take educators a long time to guide such learners until they learn on their own. The backgrounds of learners add towards learners' school readiness or not being ready for school, and towards achieving or not achieving outcomes. Learners whose parents are educated will be exposed to more things than those whose parents are not educated. Most of the parents or communities in whom the study took place are not educated. This makes educators' work more difficult because most of the learners come to school not knowing much. Educators have to spoon-feed the learners. It is difficult for such learners to learn and perform independently.

Some educators (R2 and R4) showed that through hard work all learners can learn and succeed. One educator R2 suggested that teachers should work extra hours to help learners to achieve outcomes. Educators who only work during the prescribed school hours may not accommodate this OBE premise in their classroom practices because the prescribed school time is too limited to help all individual learners. It may not be possible for all learners to learn and succeed in such a situation. For all learners to learn and succeed, educators should give them (learners) expanded opportunities. This can be given during extra hours as not all learners may require expanded opportunities. Some learners learn more quickly than others, as such they may not require extended classes.

Table 4.7: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinion regarding the OBE Premise: 'Success breeds success'

Category: Success breeds success	
Code	Description
SE	If a learner succeeds in one activity he/she will put more effort into other activities
SH	Learners are always hopeful that they can succeed in every activity
ST	Educators must reach certain targets within a given period.
SW	It does not mean that the learner will succeed throughout all the grades without working hard
STS	It is true that success breeds success
SC	When learners succeed they gain courage to get involved in more activities
SM	Success of learners depends on how educators monitor learners' performance.
SA	Success of a learner depends on the attention he/she receives from the educator.
SO	After giving learners more opportunities they become happy and wish to learn more and more

Table 4.8: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding OBE premise: 'Success breeds success'

Category: Success breeds success	
Description	Frequency
If a learner succeeds in one activity he/she will put more effort into other activities	(R1, R2)
Learners are always hopeful that they can succeed in every activity.	(R1, R9)
There are targets that we must reach within a given period.	(R1)
It does not mean that the learner will succeed throughout all the grades without working hard.	(R2, R3)
It is true that success breeds success	(R4, R5, R7, R8 R9, 10)
When learners succeed, they gain courage to get involved in more activities.	(R4, R6, R8)
Success of learners depends on how educators monitor learners' performance.	(R6)
Success of a learner depends on the attention he/she receives from the educator.	(R6, R7)
After giving learners more opportunities they become happy and wish to learn more and more.	(R9)

Most educators (R4, R5, R7, R8 R9, 10) agree that success breeds success as Table 4.8 indicate. These educators have raised an important point that success may not always breed success. Hard work is required and learners' performance should be monitored from time to time. This is important as one cannot succeed once and think that one can always succeed without putting in more effort.

Another important point raised is that if learners succeed in one activity they gain courage and wish to engage themselves in more activities with the hope that they will always succeed. One educator, R9 indicates that after giving learners more opportunities, they wish to learn more and more. During expanded opportunities learners put more efforts into their activities. This implies that during expanded classes learners try hard to succeed.

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One respondent, R1 has indicated that there are targets that educators must reach within a given period. This respondent states that learning should take place within a given time. This differs with one of OBE beliefs that that time should not be a determinant factor in the teaching learning process. According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999:29), what and whether learners learn successfully is more important than exactly when, how and from whom they learn it. This means that time should not be a determinant factor in the learning process though it is difficult to put into practice.

Table 4.9: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the OBE premise: 'Schools control the learning environment'

Category: Schools control the learning environment	
Code	Description
STE	It is true that schools control the learning environment.
SEA	Different schools will approach OBE in different ways due to different situations in which schools find themselves.
SER	Resources influence performance in the classroom.
SEH	The educator attempts to create a healthy environment for all learners.
SEP	Learners who are not disciplined get punished.
SEG	Learners should be grouped in such a way that they can encourage one another.
SES	A school should be a safe environment for learners and educators.
SEPP	We involve their parents if we may have problems with some of them.

Table 4.10: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding OBE premise: 'Schools control the learning environment'

Category: Schools control the learning environment	
Description	Frequency
It is true that schools control the learning environment.	(R2, R5, R6, R8, 10)
Different schools will approach OBE in different ways due to different situations in which schools find themselves.	(R2)
Resources influence performance in the classroom.	(R2, R7)
The educator attempts to create a healthy environment for all learners	(R5)
Learners who are not disciplined get punished	(R5)
Learners should be grouped in such a way that they can encourage one another.	(R6, 10)
School should be a safe environment for learners and educators.	(R8)
We involve their parents if we may have problems with some of them.	(R9)

Tables 4.9 and 4.10 indicate the different opinions educators have on the OBE premise, 'schools control the learning environment'. Some educators (R2, R5, R6, R8, and 10) agree that schools control the learning environment. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:6) argue that educators should create learning environments which are inviting, challenging and motivating. Educators are the major role players with regard to control in schools. Others (R2, R7 and R5) have indicated that factors such as resources and discipline influence the learning environment. The implication made is that for the success of learners, a school should make resources available and have ways of disciplining learners so that the environment becomes conducive for learning.

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Table 4.11: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinion regarding the OBE principle: 'Clarity of focus'

Category: Clarity of focus	
Code	Description
CK	It is good for learners to know what they are going to achieve
CF	Outcomes keep learners focused in activities.
CH	To the educator it is important to know how to help learners to achieve those outcomes.
CI	The educator needs to know the outcomes learners need to achieve.
CA	If learners know what they are going to achieve before they engage in any learning activity they become very much attentive.
CAS	The assessment standards we are going to assess learners on should also be clear.

Table 4.12: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding OBE principle: 'Clarity of focus'

Category: Clarity of focus	
Description	Frequency
It is good for learners to know what they are going to achieve.	(R1, R3, R6, R9, 10)
This keeps learners focused in activities.	(R4, R6, R9)
To the educator it is important to know how to help learners to achieve those outcomes.	(R7)
The educator needs to know the outcomes learners need to achieve.	(R7, R8, R9)
If learners know what they are going to achieve before they engage in any learning activity they become very much attentive.	(R9)
The assessment standards we are going to assess learners on should also be clear.	(R9)

Killen (2003b:68) states that by writing clear outcomes statements, performance indicators and assessment criteria, learners will know what learning they are required to demonstrate and how that learning will be judged. Towers, in Pallapu (2004) argues that what the students are to learn must be clearly identified. What learners should achieve in a learning activity should be made clear to them before they can engage in the activity. It is important for learners to know what they should do or demonstrate in order to show that they have achieved the desired outcomes.

Some respondents (R1, R3, R6, R9, and 10) have stated that it is good for

learners to know what they are going to achieve, and (R4, R6, and R9) have shown that this keeps learners focused in activities. In addition it is important for learners to know what they are going to achieve at the end of a learning experience. This helps them to know why they engage in learning activities, and what they are supposed to achieve. The attention of learners is gained if they know what they are going to achieve. Spady and Schlebusch (1999:31) state that clarity of focus is the most fundamental and important principle of the four. Curriculum planners and educators must have a clear focus on what learners should be able to do. When working with learners, that focus should be kept. These outcomes should be made clear to learners. Clear outcomes can direct the learning process to help learners to succeed. If outcomes are clear, the learning process will be organized towards achieving the outcomes. Dalziell and Gourvenec (2003:2) think that OBE strives to set clear outcomes for learners. Clear outcomes shape the curriculum, assessment styles and teaching strategies that enable learners to achieve the desired outcomes.

Table 4.11 indicates that some respondents think that if they know the outcomes learners should achieve, they can lead learners in achieving those outcomes. These respondents think that it is not important for learners to know the outcomes they are going to achieve. This may keep learners in the dark, as they may not know what they should achieve. It is like taking a journey not knowing the destination. If a child is on the way with a parent and only a parent knows the destination, a child keeps asking: 'When are we arriving at our destination?' This question will be asked until they reach their destination. This shows that it is important for learners to know the outcomes they should achieve, so that they can assess themselves during the learning process. Learners will know if they are moving in the right direction or not towards achievement of outcomes.

Siebörger (2004:55) argues that outcomes should be used as the means of control over teaching and learning. If outcomes are made clear, educators and learners will know what to aim at when they engage themselves in the teaching and learning processes. If outcomes are not clear, the means towards achieving them may not be identified. Siebörger (2004) further argues that if outcomes are not

clear, they will become a surprise, and assessment will also be a surprise. Thus outcomes and the assessment standards should be made clear to learners before they engage in learning activities.

According to du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:5) this principle provides a clear picture to the educator of the type of learning a leaner must demonstrate in executing performance. The implication here is that if this principle is applied effectively, the educator will know what to expect from the child. The educator will know what the child should demonstrate to show that he/she has achieved the desired outcomes.

Table 4.13: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle: 'Expanded opportunity'

Category: Expanded opportunity	
Code	Description
EOT	Working within time limits
EOU	Sometimes the educator is forced to live behind learners who do not understand and continue with those that understand.
EOE	Educator should be enthusiastic, go an extra-mile and not work according to the stipulated time only.
EOP	Expanded opportunity is given to learners who may have problems and not the entire class.
EOR	If expanded opportunity is applied a percentage of learners who do not achieve outcomes is reduced.
AEO	Agrees that an expanded opportunity is useful.
EOB	If done during lessons learners, who have achieved feel bored.

Table 4.14: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle 'Expanded opportunity'

Category: Expanded opportunity	
Description	Frequency
Working within time limits	(R1)
Sometimes the educator is forced to live behind learners who do not understand and continue with those that understand.	(R1)
The educator should be enthusiastic, go an extra-mile and not work according to the stipulated time only.	(R2)
Expanded opportunity is given to learners who may have problems and not the entire class.	(R2, 10)
If expanded opportunity is applied a percentage of learners who do not achieve outcomes is reduced.	(R2)
Agrees that expanded opportunities is useful	(R3, R4, R6, R7, 10)
If done during lessons learners, who have achieved feel bored	(R7)

Towers in Pallapu (2004), states that adequate time and assistance need to be provided so that each student can reach the maximum potential. Learners differ according to their learning potential. Each learner should be allowed enough opportunity to show his/her potential.

Tables 4.13 and 4.14 show that some respondents (R3, R4, R6, R7, and 10) agree that learners who do not achieve outcomes should be given expanded opportunities as it is useful. A number of good points have been raised for example: expanded opportunity should be given after lessons, as those who have achieved may feel bored if it is practised during lessons. If expanded opportunity is applied during lessons other learners should be given further activities so that they do not feel bored.

Du Toit and Du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4) argue that rigid time frames should not restrict learning. They agree with Spady (1993) that what and whether learners learn is more important than when and how they learn. According to du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:5) educators should provide more than one opportunity to learners. Time should not be a determining factor in the

learning process. Expanded opportunities should be designed in a way that would be beneficial to learners who have not achieved the desired outcomes. The Department of Education policy document, (1997:7) states; 'time- frames will be flexible and learners will learn at their own pace….' Flexibility requires good time management.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999:34) argue that educators must do everything possible to keep opportunities for continued learning and improvement open to students. This means that room for improvement should be open to all learners. Educators should not rush to cover content when they teach but they should help all the learners to improve and achieve the desired outcomes.

Respondents have shown mixed opinions about when to accommodate the principle of expanded opportunities, whether during lessons or after lessons. As time should not be a determinant factor for learners to achieve outcomes, it does not matter whether this principle is accommodated during or after lessons. What matters is that educators should help learners to achieve outcomes. Expanded opportunities should be given to learners who have not achieved the outcomes and not the entire class. If expanded opportunity is applied lessons, learners who have achieved in one activity should be given other activities to develop further.

Table 4.15: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle: 'Design down'

Category: Design down	
Code	Description
DT	Educators do not have much time to concentrate on outcomes.
DF	Outcomes as the educator's starting point in the teaching-learning situation help learners and the educator to keep focused.
DK	Learners' prior knowledge forms the basis for new knowledge.
DA	What the educator does is to give learners assessment standards.
DE	When the educator teaches he/she tells learners the outcomes they are going to achieve by engaging in the learning activity.
DD	Sometimes it is helpful as the educator designs down and delivers up.
DTA	This helps the educator to try to follow suitable teaching and assessment strategies so that the educator does not disadvantage any learner in his/her classroom
DR	The educator looks for suitable resources to help learners to achieve the outcomes

Table 4.16: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle: 'Design down'

Category: Design down	
Description	Frequency
Educators do not have much time to concentrate on outcomes.	(R1)
Outcomes as the educator's starting point in the teaching-learning situation help learners and the educator to keep focused.	(R2, R4, 10)
Learners' prior knowledge forms the basis of new knowledge.	(R2, R3)
What I do is to give them assessment standards.	(R4)
When the educator teaches he/she tells learners the outcomes they are going to achieve by engaging in the learning activity.	(R6)
Sometimes it is helpful as the educator designs down and delivers up.	(R7)
This helps the educator to try to follow suitable teaching and assessment strategies so that he/she does not disadvantage any learner in his/her classroom	(R9)
The educator looks for suitable resources to help learners to achieve the outcomes.	(R9)

According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999:32), *design back* means that educators should first begin by deciding where they want learners to end and then to design their learning programmes and learning outcomes from that specific spot or point of departure. Dalziell and Gourvenec (2003:5) think that the *design back* principle is useful at micro-level for setting assessments and course curricula. The idea given here is that the *design back* (design down) principle is useful at the level which teachers operate. The micro-level is the level at which the actual practice takes place. Outcomes should be the starting point of all classroom practices. The content, assessment and teaching strategies can be chosen after the desired outcomes are identified. Killen (2003a: 4) argues that the starting point for all school curriculum design must be a clear definition of the significant learning that students are to achieve by the end of their formal education.

Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:6) state,

"*In South African context the design down process must start with the critical outcomes, which are broad, generic and cross-curricular, and*

refer to real-life roles. The next step will be to design down towards the key building blocks on which critical outcomes depend, namely specific/learning outcomes and the lesson outcomes. The last step in the design-down process is to determine which developmental (discrete) outcomes will enhance and support the performance of the critical outcomes, and to include them in the development of the learning experience/ or programmes."

This means that educators should start with what Spady (1993 and 1994) calls the culminating outcomes, i.e. the outcomes learners should achieve at the end of a learning experience. Once the critical outcomes are decided the supporting outcomes or building blocks towards achieving the critical outcomes can be chosen.

Tables 4.15 and 4.16 show the different opinions respondents have about the design down principle. Some (R2, R4, 10) think that design down is good as it keeps learners focused, whereas others for example (R1), think that because they work within time limits they are unable to accommodate this principle in their classroom practices. Outcomes are like a flag on a ship. Outcomes help learners to know what to aim at when they engage in the learning process as Olivier (1998) argues that the best way to know where one wants to be is to determine what one wants to achieve. R7 has indicated that it helps as one designs down and delivers up. This means that it is essential in OBE for a person to start learning activities with the knowledge of the outcomes to be achieved. If one knows the outcomes to be achieved after engaging in learning activities, it is like taking a trip not knowing the destination. According to Butler (20003:3), the best way to learn is to first determine what needs to be achieved. The design down principle can direct the teaching-learning process in OBE. According to Spady & Schlebusch (1999) *based* means *to be defined* by. OBE is education that is defined by outcomes. Educators should organize everything around outcomes. Butler (2003:8) further argues that once the outcomes are identified, the curriculum is constructed by backward mapping of knowledge and skills. This is what Spady (1993) defines as design down and deliver up. Du Toit and du Toit in

Maree and Fraser (2004:6) argue that the educator must start with culminating outcomes and design back towards enabling outcomes and discrete outcomes. the *design down* process starts with what learners should be able to do at the end of official learning experience. Starting with what learners should be able to do can be helpful when activities are organized. The educator will plan and direct every activity towards the achievement of the desired outcome by the learner.

To accommodate this principle in classrooms may not relate to time, but it may relate to knowing what to do. If educators plan for their classroom practices and follow their plans, they can accommodate this principle easily. They can divide classroom activities in relation to the time they engage with learners. Time should be managed effectively in whatever activity one engages in. Time itself cannot prevent educators from accommodating this principle in the classroom as Spady & Schlebusch (1999) argue that time should not be a determining factor towards learners achieving outcomes. The researcher states that some educators do not understand what is required of them in the classroom, as some have indicated that they do not know anything about the design down principle. As some educators have indicated that the design down principle helps to keep learners focused, it is true indeed. This principle helps educators to know where to start and which teaching and assessment strategies to follow so that learners can achieve outcomes. If the design down approach is practiced effectively it can work very well for educators to help learners to achieve the desired outcomes.

Table 4.17: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle: 'High expectations'

Category: High expectations	
Code	Description
HT	The educator cannot accommodate this principle due to time constraints.
HC	Every child should follow a certain career in future.
HW	The educator encourages learners to work harder by giving them more work.
HP	Educators expect every learner to perform well
HO	Learners who may not perform well will be given more opportunities until they improve.
HA	The educator may have high expectations for some learners, but not all of them
HU	Some learners understand whereas others have problems.
HI	The educator encourages learners to acknowledge their individual differences and live with that.

Table 4.18: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the OBE principle: 'High expectations'

Category: High expectations	
Description	Frequency
The educator cannot accommodate this principle due to time constraints	(R1, 10)
Every child should follow a certain career in future	(R2)
The educator encourages learners to work harder by giving them more work	(R3)
Educators expect every learner to perform well	(R5, R6, R8, R9)
Learners who may not perform well will be given more opportunities until they improve	(R6, R9)
The educator may have high expectation for some learners, but not all of them.	(R7, R8)
Some learners understand whereas others have problems.	(R8)
The educator encourages learners to acknowledge their individual differences and live with that.	(R9)

Tables 4.17 and 4.18 show that some educators (R5, R6, R8 and R9) have high expectations for their learners and others do not e.g. R7 and R8. Those who have high expectations for their learners believe that every learner can perform well. This may be true, if suitable teaching and assessment strategies and resources are used, all learners can perform very well. According to du Toit and du Toit in

Maree and Fraser (2004:5), learners must be exposed to challenges at a higher level that will raise the standard of performance for successful learning. Having high expectations for all learners discourages norm-referenced testing. Standards are raised for all the learners and their performances are not compared. Learners who may not achieve outcomes at one period should be given more chance until they achieve these OBE outcomes. OBE principles should be integrated so that learners can achieve the desired outcomes. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:5), all individual learners must be allowed to learn to their full potential. They argue that educators and learners should have high expectations for successful learning of all learners. This implies that educators should not discriminate between learners. Higher standards of learning should be set for all the learners. Every learner is able to do something. Learners are expected to become something in their lives as OBE focuses on the ultimate end results.

Some educators still think that because of time constraints they cannot accommodate the high expectations principle in their classrooms. It is not clear where time fits in, in accommodating this principle. To have high expectations for learners simply means to believe that all learners can perform well. One respondent (R2) has indicated that he believes that every child should become something in future. This is a good point. Every child should follow a specific career in future. Learners have different talents; as such all of them can perform in their own way. They cannot be expected to perform in the same way. Again, educators who think that time prevents them from accommodating high expectations principle; do not understand what this principle implies.

One respondent (R8) pointed out that one may have high expectations for some learners and not all of them. She indicated that when teaching some learners understand whereas others do not. This educator does not realize that it is her responsibility to help all learners to understand. It shows that this educator still follows the traditional approach to teaching. She talked of poor performance by learners and that some pass tests whereas others fail.

According to Killen (2003a:18),

"*If the principle of high expectations is followed, then the assessment tasks must be challenging, not simply routine; the assessment must provide scope for students to demonstrate deep levels of understanding and high levels of achievement; it must be possible to discriminate between low and high levels of achievement; and excellence in student achievement must be recognised and rewarded.*"

Integration of OBE principles is helpful for educators in order to help learners to achieve outcomes. Educators should not rush to cover content in their teaching. In OBE what is more important is what learners learn and not when they learn that. An inference made here is that educators still teach to cover content, and not to help learners to achieve outcomes. The researcher does not imply that content is not important in an OBE classroom. In OBE content should be used to help learners to achieve the desired outcomes. Content should not be taught without matching it with the outcomes that will be achieved by teaching that.

Table 4.19: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the use of policy documents

Category: The use of policy documents	
Code	Description
PO	The educator extracts learning outcomes and
PA	assessment standards from the policy documents.
PP	The policy documents help the educator when preparing for learning activities.
PL	Policy documents indicate that OBE education must be learner-Centered.
PD	Sometimes it is difficult to follow the policy documents.
PG	Policy documents guide the educator.
PN	The educator uses a textbook only.
PW	The educator refers from a work schedule.

Table 4.20: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the use of policy documents

Category: The use of policy documents	
Description	Frequency
The educator extracts learning outcomes and assessment standards from the policy documents.	(R1) (R1, R5, 10)
The policy documents help the educator when preparing for learning activities.	(R1, R6, 10)
Policy documents indicate that OBE education must be learner-centered.	(R2) (R4, R5)
Policy documents guide the educator.	
Sometimes it is difficult to follow the policy documents.	(R5)
The educator uses a textbook only.	(R8)
The educator refers from a work schedule.	(R6)

R1, R2, R4, R6 and R10 indicated that they use policy documents whereas R8 indicated that she does not use them. Tables 4.19 and 4.20 show ideas on how educators use policy documents. Those who use them have indicated that they do so to extract learning outcomes and to get assessment standards from the policy documents. The respondents have indicated that policy documents are helpful to them. Policy documents contain guidelines on how educators should teach and assess learners. Educators who follow policy documents with understanding, will implement OBE effectively.

Some educators have difficulties when using policy documents. They only use the textbook as R8 has indicted. Even though educators are heading towards a decade since OBE has been phased in, some educators are still resistant to changes. If an educator decides to use a textbook and not to follow a policy document, it means that this educator teaches to cover content in the textbook. Siebörger (2004:55) argues that it could never be a case of starting at the beginning of a textbook and just working through it. A textbook may only contain content to be covered and not the guidelines as to how educators should teach and assess learners' work. Policy documents contain important information about teaching and assessment. If a teacher does not use them, it is doubtful that he/she will implement OBE effectively.

Table 4.21: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding preparation for classroom practices

Category: Preparation for classroom practices	
Code	Description
PW	The educator refers from the work schedule and takes the information needed for the lesson plan.
PU	The educator should understand what he/she wishes learners should understand.
PE	The educator looks at the environment in which the school is situated

Table 4.22: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding preparations for classroom practices

Category: Preparations classroom practices	
Description	Frequency
The educator refers from the work schedule and takes the information needed for the lesson plan.	(R1, R4)
The educator should understand what he/she wishes learners should understand.	(R1)
The educator looks at the environment in which the school is situated.	(R7)

According to Killen (2003a: 7),

> *"In an OBE system, there are three major steps in instructional planning: deciding on the outcomes that students are to achieve, deciding how to assist students to achieve those outcomes (i.e., deciding on content and teaching strategies), and deciding how to determine when students have achieved the outcomes (i.e., deciding on assessment and reporting procedures)."*

Olivier (2003:130) regards preparation as essential to define the real challenge/problem/outcome. Planning and preparations for classroom activities influence the manner in which classroom practices will be carried out. Killen (2003a) indicates that the first step is to choose the outcomes learners should achieve. If the outcomes are known, then the educator can decide on what to do, how to do that and what to use in order to help learners to achieve the desired outcomes. Lastly, there should be a way to determine whether learners have achieved outcomes. That is where assessment comes in.

Some educators first draw work schedule before they plan for their day-to-day classroom activities. Work schedules help them to write lesson plans. Some have indicated that it is important for them to understand what learners should understand. This is important because they should guide learners in the learning process. If they do not understand what learners have to achieve, they cannot guide them.

Tables 4.21 and 4.22 show that environment should be considered when planning for classroom activities as R7 has indicated. Schools are situated in different environments. When planning and preparing for learning activities, educators should consider the environment in which the school is situated. Teachers in different environments will approach teaching differently depending on the resources that can be found.

Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:6) argue that educators should create learning environments that are inviting, challenging and motivating to all learners. It is through good planning that this can be achieved. Educators should have better understanding of OBE premises and principles so that they can create inviting and motivating learning environments for all learners. The main thing educators should bear in mind when planning, is the outcomes learners should achieve at the ultimate end.

Table 4.23: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding teaching strategies

Category: Teaching strategies	
Code	Description
TSG	The educator groups the learners.
TSM	Teaching methods.
TSK	The educator gives them knowledge.
TSB	Learners brainstorm.
TSI	The educator follows inductive approach.
TSP	The educator poses problems to learners.

Table 4.24: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding teaching strategies.

Category: Teaching strategies	
Description	Frequency
The educator groups the learners.	(R1, R2, R4, R5, R7)
Teaching methods.	(R1, R3, R4, R9, 10)
The educator gives them knowledge.	(R5, R9)
Learners brainstorm.	(R5)
The educator follows inductive approach.	(R8)
The educator poses problems to learners.	(R9)

R1, R3, R4, R9 and 10 think that teaching strategies are teaching methods as Tables 4.23 and 4.24 show. When asked about teaching strategies they mentioned different methods. Teaching strategies are broader than teaching methods. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:121), a teaching strategy can be defined as a broad plan of action for teaching activities with a view to achieving an outcome. Strategies refer to approaches that one follows, for example grouping. When learners are grouped different teaching methods can be followed. In addition Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:121) argue that a strategy outlines the approach one intents to take in order to achieve one's learning outcomes. This means that a strategy informs the educators about the teaching methods they should follow to help learners to achieve outcomes. Table 4.24 shows that most respondents (R1, R2, R4, R5 and R7) follow group work in their instructional practices. Group work may be good depending on how the groups are managed and whether the activities are suitable for group activities.

The Department of Education educator guide, (2002:16) maintains that educators need to use various teaching methods to cater for different learning styles and to avoid boring lessons. The implication made is that educators should follow different teaching methods. One teaching method cannot be reliable in all the situations. If one teaching method is followed, some learners can be bored and the results may not improve. Different teaching strategies should be employed to cater for different teaching methods. The teaching methods chosen should be activity based as the Department of Education (2002:17) educator guide stipulates that OBE sees activity- based learning, (learning by doing tasks of different kinds) as one of the methods of learning. It is the learner who should

achieve the desired outcomes. As such the learner should play a major role in learning activities. The teaching strategies and methods should allow the learner to learn by doing.

Table 4.25: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding assessment strategies

Category: Assessment strategies	
Code	Description
ASW	Written work
ASO	Oral work
ASK	The educator determines learners' knowledge of content.
ASA	Learners get assignments.
ASG	Assessing learners in groups
ASP	The educator gives learners projects.
ASE	Experiments
ASA	The educator looks at behaviour of learners.

Table 4.26: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding assessment strategies

Category: Assessment strategies	
Description	Frequency
Written work	(R1, R2, R4, R5, R7, R9, 10)
Oral work	(R1, R2, R5)
The educator determines learners' knowledge of content.	(R1, R7, 10)
Learners get assignments.	(R2)
Assessing learners in groups	(R3)
The educator gives learners projects.	(R4, R5, R9)
Experiments	(R4)
The educator looks at behaviour of learners.	(R8, R9)

Most educators e.g. R1, R2, R4, R5, R7, R9 and 10 use written work to assess learners (this is shown in table 4.26). When using written work to assess learners' work, educators should ensure that the questions that learners answer are aimed at helping learners to achieve the desired outcomes. Fraser and Dreeckmeier in Maree and Fraser (2004:90) argue that the way in which an item or test question will be written or operationalised will be determined by the objective or outcome to be achieved by the learner. Written work should be designed in such a way that it will lead learners to achieve the desired outcomes. Even though written

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work dominates, some educators follow other strategies as well e.g. R1, R2, R5 also use oral work and R4, R5 and R9 also use projects. Learners are assessed in groups and they also perform experiments.

It is good that educators follow different strategies when they assess learners' work. Pallapu (2004) indicates that students' performance cannot be judged based on examinations and quizzes alone. One assessment strategy cannot be enough to judge learners' performance. Reddy in Maree and Fraser (2004:42) also believes that 'a variety of assessment strategies and techniques need to be used so that educators can provide broad learning opportunities for learners that provide opportunities for educators to gather evidence from various sources when making judgments about learners' progress.' The Department of Education educator guide (2002:7) suggests that educators should make clear what will be assessed by the end of the learning process and plan how assessment will happen.

Reddy in Maree and Fraser (2004) states that different assessment strategies provide broad learning opportunities for learners. Learners differ according to their capabilities and as such they learn in different ways. If more learning opportunities are provided in the learning process, all learners can be accommodated. The use of different assessment strategies also helps educators to gather evidence from various sources about learners' performances. Battistini [s.a] believes that any educator involved in OBE must be able to evaluate the effectiveness of his/her classroom experience implementing OBE. This indicates that through assessment educators can also judge their performance.

Respondents R1, R7 and R10 indicated that they assess knowledge while R8 and R9 assess behaviour of learners. When educators assess learners' work they should assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Olivier (2002:49) argues that knowledge, skills and values are bonded together into an end product by means of learning steps. Educators should use different assessment strategies because one strategy cannot be used to assess the above-mentioned constructs. When asked how attitude and values are assessed most of the educators did not know the answer. It was R2 and R6 only who stated that they assess attitudes and

values by looking at learners' behaviour. Other educators know that attitudes and values should be assessed but they do not know how to assess them.

Some educators still have problems with assessment forms. One respondent (R4) mentioned that he follows summative, formative and continuous assessment. When asked to explain the meaning of these assessment forms he was confused. This has indicated that he does not know how to accommodate these assessment forms in the classroom. Another educator (R3) stated that she follows systematic assessment but has also failed to explain what that means. This shows that some educators are still confused as far as assessment is concerned.

According to Kotze in Maree and Fraser (2004:51) assessment strategies refer to different methods, types and tools. These include objective tests, essay tests, personal communication and performance-based assessment, (ibid: 51, 52 & 53). Educators need to understand the meaning of different assessment strategies so that they can use them in their classroom practices. It will not be easy for educators to use different assessment strategies without understanding.

Table 4.27: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding the impact of their understanding of OBE on their classroom practices

Category: The impact of understanding of OBE on classroom practices	
Code	Description
UP	The educator notices a lot of progress.
UI	The educator's teaching has improved.
UF	No learner is a fool.
UU	The educator considers learners' uniqueness.
UT	OBE requires too much time.
UDT	The traditional teaching approach still dominates classroom practices.

Table 4.28: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding the impact of their understanding of OBE on their classroom practices

Category: The impact of understanding of OBE on classroom practices	
Description	Frequency
The educator notices a lot of progress.	(R1)
The educator's teaching has improved.	(R3, R4, R5, R7, R8)
No learner is a fool.	(R9)
The educator considers learners' uniqueness.	(R9)
OBE requires too much time.	(R9)
The traditional teaching approach still dominates classroom practices.	(10)

Understanding influences practice as most educators (R3, R4, R5, R7 and R8) have indicated that their teaching has improved since OBE was introduced. It can be seen in table 4.28 that the little understanding of OBE that some educators have, helps them to improve their classroom practices. Educators' understanding also influences attitude towards teaching and how educators see their learners. One respondent (R9) has indicated that no learner can be regarded as a fool. As learners are unique, their uniqueness should be considered when they are taught. Some educators (R4, R5, R6 and R8) have shown that overcrowding is a problem that prevents them from implementing OBE effectively. This is seen to be a major problem in most schools. Effective implementation of OBE requires that teachers be faced with few learners.

During one of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) workshops in the Limpopo Province one of the facilitators has hinted that they realised that overcrowding is still a problem in many schools in South Africa. That facilitator said that to implement OBE effectively educators should be faced with 25 learners in classrooms. If learners are overcrowded, individual attention cannot be offered to all the learners. OBE premises and principles can be integrated if learners are few in a classroom. Some educators are faced with more than eighty-(80) learners in one classroom. Such a situation can be disturbing. It might be difficult for an educator to manage a classroom with such a large number of children.

Table 4.29: Coding and categorization of respondents' opinions regarding record keeping as assessment practice

Category: Record keeping as assessment practice	
Code	Description
RP	Preparations
RM	Mark sheets
RT	Tests, memoranda and examinations
RF	Open files
RLP	Keep learner portfolios
RB	Record of baseline assessment

Table 4.30: Frequency of specific responses to respondents' opinions regarding record keeping as assessment practice

Category: Record keeping as assessment practice	
Description	Frequency
Preparations	(R1, R7)
Mark sheets	(R1, R4, R5, 10)
Tests, memoranda and examinations	(R1, R4, R7, R8)
Open files	(R2)
Keep learner portfolios	(R6)
Record of baseline assessment	(R6)

Educators keep different records as Tables 4.29 and 4.30 show. Table 15.2 shows that records that are kept by most educators are mark sheets, test and examination papers and memoranda. Very few educators keep learner portfolios, files and record of baseline assessment.

Record-keeping is important in the classroom situation because it is informative as far as progress of classroom activities is concerned. Different types of records should be kept to serve for different purposes. In terms of progress in the classroom well-kept records can serve for formative purposes. Table 15.2 shows that very few educators keep more records. According to Siebörger (2004:40), recording may serve as evidence for assessment. Well-kept records can serve as evidence for what was assessed. A report can be drawn from well-kept records. According to Le Grange & Reddy (1998) in Maree and Fraser (2004:145) recording and reporting are essential elements to ensure the successful implementation of continuous assessment.

Tables 4.29 and 4.30, show that many educators still experience difficulties with recording. If educators struggle to keep records, it may not be easy for them to

assess learners continuously. It will also be difficult for them to keep comprehensive reports about learners' performance. Scherman in Maree and Fraser (2004:147) mentions important points to consider when keeping records. Among others she indicates that records should be uncomplicated and easy to read, be flexible, be genuine and indicate learners' strengths and area in which support is needed. Well-kept records can be a useful tool for assessment during classroom practices. Scherman in Maree and Fraser (2004:145) indicates that the Department of Education views recording and reporting of information as an integral part of the assessment process. Recording helps to gather data about learners' performance. Educators can also assess their instructional practices by looking at the records. Feedback can be given through reporting of gathered information.

4.3.2 Observations

Observations were conducted in six different schools with six educators who participated in the interview. The results are shown in Appendix F**.** The aim of conducting observations was to confirm or contradict the opinions educators gave during interviews. It has been evident that many teachers have theory of OBE and OBA. The ideas they shared during interviews did not relate to their practices. If theory is not applied in practice, that theory is useless. Tiley (1997:2) argues that theory without practice is sterile and practice without theory is blind. This means that if one person knows how something should be done, that knowledge should be applied in practice. Theory helps one to change a way of thinking and a way of thinking, will affect a way of doing.

What I have realized during observations is that many educators do not accommodate OBE premises and principles in their instructional and assessment practices. Spady and Schlebusch (1999) take clarity of focus as the most fundamental principle in the classroom. Educators do not accommodate this principle in their instructional and assessment practices. Learners are engaged in learning activities without knowing the outcomes they should achieve. The assessment standards that are to be used when the learners are assessed were not made clear. Butler (2003) thinks that long and short learning intentions should be

clear and that assessment should focus on significant outcomes. If the outcomes and assessment standards are not made clear to learners before they engage in learning activities, learners may not know what is expected of them at the end of a learning activity.

Very few educators apply expanded opportunities in their classrooms. Out of the six educators who were observed, only two have applied this principle in their instructional and assessment practices. One applied expanded opportunities during school hours and the other applied it after school hours. The educator who applied it during the lesson gave other learners work to do while she helped learners who did not achieve the desired outcomes. The two educators who apply expanded opportunities in their classrooms, have a reasonable number of learners (Appendix C) has the details. One educator has 28 learners and the other has 33 learners.

Educators who are faced with overcrowded classrooms have shown no evidence of accommodating any OBE premise or principle. This shows that overcrowding has a negative effect towards the effective implementation of OBE in classrooms. More learners in an overcrowded classroom are left without achieving the desired outcomes.

If learners who have not achieved the desired outcomes are more than those who have achieved, it may be difficult for the teacher to apply expanded opportunities. Learners, who are offered expanded opportunities, should be given more support. They may be given individual attention to ensure that they achieve the desired outcomes. If they are many, educators may not attend to their problems individually. If learners in expanded classes are not given more support, the extended classes may not be useful.

According to Killen (2003a: 4), the system can legitimately be called outcomes-based education only when OBE principles are used as the core. It seems that educators in many schools do not implement OBE effectively. Direct instruction still dominates in the classroom, though some educators also use group work.

Tiley (1997:2) argues that learners need to sit so that they can talk to and work with each other in groups. Many learners in the classrooms (especially overcrowded classrooms), as observed, sit in a row and face the educator. In such a classroom setting, direct instruction dominates as an instructional offering. There is no evidence that learners interact in different learning activities.

4.3.3 Document analysis

In addition to interviews and observations document analysis was also conducted. Appendix D shows the records that educators keep. Many educators keep the following records: lesson plans, test and memoranda books and mark sheets. Lesson plans are not kept up to date. It is doubtful whether educators follow their plans or not. The way their records look shows that they do not follow their plans. Most of the educators record learners' test marks on a monthly basis. Educators do not assess learners continuously, or if they do they are unable to keep records. Educators keep record of learners' marks and they do not rate learners according to their performance. On looking at test questions it is clear that most of the questions test knowledge. It is not clear which outcomes are assessed in written tests. The records that teachers keep are not enough to can inform the educator and other users about progress of learners. Scherman in Maree and Fraser (2004:145) argues that records are used to monitor the progress made by learners and to inform decisions on strategies to be used to improve the learners' development. This implies that learners' performances should be recorded continuously not once a month. Clear records can inform the educator about learners' performances and about the effectiveness of instructional and assessment strategies followed in the classroom. These can be used in formative assessment when learners are given feedback and for summative purposes where their level of performance is judged.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter data were analysed. Qualitative data collection strategies were followed in this investigation. The chosen data collection strategies are

interviews, observations and document analysis. To simplify the job of analyzing data, interview transcripts were coded.

Educators have a knowledge of theory of OBE, but they do not put that theory into practice. What most of them say they know about OBE does not concur with what they practise in the classroom. During interviews educators have given important points to show their understanding of OBE. They have talked about OBE being a learner-centred education and that OBE focuses on outcomes that should be achieved by learners. Table 4.2 shows the frequency of educators' responses about their opinions regarding the essence of OBE. When they were asked on OBE premises and principles, most of them could not give their opinions before the researcher had not explained what the OBE premises and principles mean.

Most of the educators do not accommodate OBE principles in their instructional and assessment practices. Few of them apply expanded opportunities. All the educators who were observed did not apply clarity of focus. They engaged learners in activities without making outcomes and assessment standards known to them (learners). It was not clear whether educators knew the outcomes learners should achieve or not. Most educators still follow direct instruction more than other teaching strategies. They engage learners in the learning activities without accommodating OBE principles. Killen (2003a) argues that it cannot be said that education is outcomes-based if the OBE principles are not applied in the classroom practices. Based on educators' opinions and the observations conducted, it can be said that most educators have little understanding of OBE because they do not accommodate OBE principles in their instructional practices. Du Toit and du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004:4) argue that OBE purposes will be achieved if teachers apply the principles consistently, systematically, creatively and simultaneously. If educators do not apply OBE principles in their instructional practices, they do not implement it effectively.

Learners should be assessed continuously in an OBE classroom, and when assessing learners' work, records of learners' performance should be kept. According to Tiley (1997:26), the basic elements of continuous assessment are observation, recording and reporting. Many educators still have a problem with continuous assessment. Most of the records educators keep, show performance of learners on monthly basis. Only one educator in the experiment kept records from time to time even though these records were not up to date. She had a record of baseline assessment, learners' portfolios, and mark sheets, test and memoranda books. If educators have a problem of recording when they assess learners' work, there will be no evidence of learners' performance. Without keeping records of learners' performance, it will be difficult to report on how learners perform.

Only one educator in this project kept learners' portfolios. Du Toit and Vandeyar in Maree and Fraser (2004:126) argue that portfolio assessment is suitable for measuring performance at all levels. The implication here is that if learner portfolio is used as a means of assessment, educators can track learners' progress. Portfolio assessment and other assessment strategies can be used to determine the outcomes that learners have achieved. Educators should accommodate OBE principles in their instructional and assessment practices. If they accommodate the OBE principles interchangeably they can raise standards for all the learners. The OBE principles are interrelated like a chain. The outcomes are first chosen, (design down), the chosen outcomes should be made clear to learners before they engage in learning activities, (clarity of focus), standards should be set for learners to reach so that they can achieve the desired outcomes, (high expectations), if learners do not reach the set standards to achieve outcomes, they are given more chance until they reach the standards (expanded opportunities). If educators do not accommodate these principles in their instructional practices, it is doubtful whether they understand OBE. Pretorius (1998:27) says that the development of outcomes-based curriculum has as its starting point the intended results of the learning experience. The educator and learners should know the outcomes to be achieved before they engage in learning activities.

In the next chapter conclusions of the investigations are drawn and recommendations are made based on the results of the interviews, observations, data analysis and the reviewed sources.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with a summary of the investigation. The reader will be supplied with information regarding the main findings of the investigation according to the literature and empirical data. The main findings are discussed basing on the answers to the main research questions and supporting questions. The results of the investigation may be relevant to the Bochum district.

5.2   Research problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study

5.2.1 Research problem

The main purpose of this investigation was to determine educators' understanding of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and the impact such understanding has on their classroom (assessment) practices. Educators have followed direct instruction for a long time in their instructional practices, and in most cases they assessed learners' performances through written work. This was done at the end of the lesson, or at the end of a month, a quarter or a year. In short they followed summative assessment and assessment done, was norm-referenced.

In OBE educators are expected to follow an outcomes-based approach in their classroom practices. They have to follow different teaching strategies in their instructional practices and they must also assess learners continuously following different assessment strategies. Mokhaba (2005:376- 377) believes that because assessment serves different purposes, different methods should be used to assess learners' progress. One learner's performance is assessed against expected performance standards and not compared with others. Educators' understanding of OBE plays a major role towards successful implementation of OBE. Before OBE was phased in, teaching was said to be content-based and teacher-centered. In OBE teaching should be outcomes-based and learner-centered. Content is not discarded, but it is used as a means towards achieving the outcomes. What was done in the

traditional approach is not thrown away as Olivier (2002) says that it should be used as a means towards implementing OBE.

Teaching and assessment strategies that were followed in the traditional approach to teaching can also be used in OBE. Teaching and assessment strategies in OBE are not prescribed and as such any teaching or assessment strategies can be applied in a suitable situation. It does not matter whether a teaching or an assessment strategy was followed in the traditional approach or not, what matters is whether that teaching or assessment strategy is helpful towards learners' achievement of outcomes or not. A teaching or assessment strategy should be used in a suitable teaching-learning situation.

A number of premises and principles underpin OBE and if educators understand OBE, they should accommodate them (premises and principles) in their instructional and assessment practices. Spady's (1993 and 1994) premises and principles dominate many discussions on OBE. This investigation focused mainly on educators' understanding of these premises and principles. Understanding of these premises and principles is vital towards effective implementation of OBE. Spady (1993:18 & 32) has came up with three key OBE premises and what he calls OBE's power principles. They are discussed below.

5.2.2 Aim of the investigation

The aim of this investigation was to explore educators' understanding of OBE and OBA, and to determine how their understanding influences on their teaching or instructional and assessment practices. This was achieved by conducting interviews with educators. Classroom observations were conducted to confirm or contradict educators' opinions obtained during interviews. Document analyses of educators' records were conducted to determine what they reflect in connection with educators' understanding of OBE. It is clear that educators do not have a good understanding of OBE.

Most educators who took part in the investigation do not know about the OBE premises and principles. During interviews the researcher had to explain the OBE premises and principles before obtaining educators' opinions. Some of them (participant in the pilot study, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7 and R8) could admit that they had never heard of those OBE premises and principles. This confirms that educators have little understanding as far as OBE is concerned. They cannot understand OBE without understanding the OBE premises and principles. The researcher supports Killen (2003b: 11) when he states that understanding is the capacity to use explanatory concepts creatively. Educators should accommodate OBE premises and principles in their teaching practices to prove their understanding of OBE. During the investigation it was clear that educators do not accommodate OBE premises and principles in their instructional and assessment practices.

Schlafly (1993) maintains that OBE calls for a complete change in the way children are taught, graded and graduated, from kindergarten through to the 12th grade. During this investigation it became obvious that many educators still cling to the traditional approach of teaching. There are no changes in the way they teach and assess learners.

Jacobs in Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2004:89) claims that not all educators have the necessary experience and creative abilities to generate a large number of innovative ideas. This means that some educators do not have the experience to formulate outcomes that can make it possible for them to discuss and plan lessons. Educators do not teach the outcomes-based way. They do not choose the outcomes learners should achieve and then organise everything around them. This happens because they do not have a good understanding of OBE. If they had understanding of OBE they would be equipped with the necessary knowledge and experience to formulate the outcomes learners should achieve in different learning activities.

5.2.3 Objectives of the investigation

5.2.3.1 The **first objective** of the investigation was to have a better understanding of OBE and OBA, the premises and the principles of OBE, and to determine what educators understand. This helped the researcher to be acquainted with what is required of educators in an OBE classroom and how they should assess learners in OBE. To achieve this objective a literature review of available sources to the field of study was conducted. In addition, interviews with educators were conducted and documents in which educators kept their records were analysed.

OBE is a learner-centered approach to education, based on the outcomes that learners should achieve at the end of a learning experience. These outcomes should be clear to both the educators and learners before they engage in classroom activities. During the investigation it was clear that educators have little understanding of what OBE entails and it is difficult for them to put that into practice. Educators know that an OBE classroom should be learner-centered and that learners should play a major role in learning activities while educators play a facilitative role. During interviews educators have shown that they are aware that they should facilitate learning and not spoon feed learners. When observations were conducted, it was obvious that most educators still rely on direct instruction. If educators understand OBE clearly they should apply different teaching or learning strategies so that different learners can achieve the desired outcomes.

5.2.3.2 The **second objective** was to find out what is reflected in OBE and OBA policies. This was determined by analysing policy documents regarding OBE and OBA. The policy documents contain information regarding teaching and assessment strategies that can be followed in an OBE classroom. The Northern Province department of Education policy document (2000:18) supplies learning strategies that can be followed in an OBE classroom. The principles of continuous assessment are also given, (ibid: 24). These are the guidelines that educators should follow in their classroom practices. If

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educators can use the education policy documents with understanding, they can help them to implement OBE effectively.

5.2.3.3 The **third objective** was to determine what mechanisms educators put into practice to accommodate their understanding of OBE and OBA. Empirical observation has been conducted to determine how educators teach and assess learners. The observations helped the researcher to determine educators' perceptions looking at how they facilitate learning and how they assess learners. The researcher could determine whether educators accommodate OBE premises and principles in their teaching and OBA principles in their assessment of learners' work. Most educators do not accommodate OBE principles in their classroom practices. They still give information to learners, and learners are mostly listeners in the classroom. Educators do not make outcomes known to learners. During interviews some of them (R5 and R8) have indicated that it is not important for learners to know about outcomes. They have the opinion that if they know the outcomes learners should achieve, they can help them to achieve those outcomes. It may be true that if educators know the outcomes learners should achieve, they can help them (learners) to achieve those outcomes. If learners do not know about the outcomes they should achieve, those outcomes may be a surprise to them. It essential that the outcomes should be known to both the educators and learners.

5.2.3.4 The **fourth objective** was to determine how educators' classroom practices influence performance of learners in different learning areas. This was achieved through interviews and observations. Educators' responses during the interviews were helpful for the researcher to determine how they are engaged in their teaching and assessment practices. During observations the researcher could determine whether the educators' responses could help to draw valid inferences about learners' performances or not.

5.2.3.5 The **fifth objective** was to determine how educators keep records of their work. This was achieved through a document analysis of educators' records.

The way in which educators keep records should reflect their understanding of OBE and OBA.

Educators' understanding plays a major role towards improvement of learners' performance. R3 has shown that her learners' performance has improved. This shows that through her understanding she is helping learners to learn successfully.

5.3   Main findings of the literature review

5.3.1   OBE premises

5.3.1.1 All learners can learn and succeed

The Department of Education Educator guide (2002:16) states that learners learn at various paces. When educators plan for their classroom practices they should make provision for the needs of both slower and faster learners. It is true that all learners can learn and succeed even though they cannot learn in the same way and at the same time. What this OBE premise entails is success for all. This may not always be possible as learners differ in their learning abilities. Learners should work hard so that they can learn and succeed. To work hard sometimes requires that one take an initiative role. In the real world not all people can work hard. When looking at a practical classroom situation most learners in disadvantaged areas (especially rural areas) cannot learn on their own. They always wait for the educator to tell them what to do. In such a situation very few learners can learn and succeed. This implies that the situations in which learners find themselves has an influence towards their success. Resources are very important in the teaching-learning situation. In OBE learners are encouraged to search for   information on their own. This means that they should visit libraries, ask knowledgeable people about subjects in which they wish to gain knowledge and watch television or listen to the radio. Learners should go out to search for information and discuss that in the classroom. If there are no resources such as libraries; and parents with whom learners live are illiterate, it will be difficult for learners to learn and succeed because sources of information will be limited in this case. To believe that all learners can learn and succeed is easier said than it can be practised.

In addition Van der Horst and McDonald (1997, 2003) argue that learners have different potential, this means that not all of them can learn and succeed.

Sunseri (2004) states that it is true that all learners can learn and succeed, but not all learners can learn what they are expected to learn. The researcher agrees that learners differ in their capabilities and that they learn differently. As expected standards of performance are set, not all the learners can attain them. Many factors may prohibit some learners to attain expected standards of performance. If some learners fail to attain the expected performance standards, it cannot be said that such learners can learn and succeed. As stated earlier the context in which learners find themselves adds towards their success or failure. Another factor that may influence the teaching and learning environment is family background. If parents and elders with whom a learner lives are illiterate, that learner may not get any assistance at home. Overcrowding is still a major problem in many schools. Educators cannot offer individual attention in an overcrowded classroom; as such not all learners in an overcrowded classroom can learn and succeed.

5.3.1.2 Success breeds success

Mothapo (2003:126) agrees that learners who experience success are motivated to work harder to achieve success. If learners succeed in one activity, they gain courage, become confident and hope to succeed in other activities. Success requires hard work and hard work also leads to success. If one learner works hard and succeeds, that learner will work harder to gain further success. This means that if a learner succeeds in one activity, he/she should not relax and think that he/she has succeeded once automatically he/she will always succeed. Mothapo (2003) maintains that bigger responsibility lies on learners whether they are willing to learn and do more than what is expected of them. Success requires hard work from the learner while the educators provide opportunities for success.

5.3.1.3 Schools control the conditions of success

Schools are situated in different environments, and as such learning conditions in different environments cannot be the same. Educators in different schools should see to it that situations in which they find themselves are conducive for learning. Educators should provide learners with conditions for success. The school situation should be conducive for effective teaching and learning. Educators should be disciplined and also ensure that learners are disciplined for the smooth running of classroom activities. School management teams in different schools should monitor educators' and learners' performances.

5.3.2   OBE principles

5.3.2.1 Clarity of focus

Bouslama, Lansari, Al-Rawi, & Abonamah (2003) state that learning outcomes are to be clear, observable demonstrations of student learning that occur after a significant set of learning experiences. This means that the outcomes should be spelled out clearly to give direction in the teaching-learning situation. Killen (2003a:3) maintains that educators should be clear on what they want their learners to know, understand and be able to do successfully. When educators clearly define the outcomes that learners should achieve, they will choose suitable teaching strategies, and learning resources to help learners to achieve those outcomes. Educators will create a learning space to allow learner participation in different activities. This OBE principle requires that educators choose outcomes learners should achieve before they choose content. The content they choose should help learners to achieve the desired outcomes.

Shelly, Nurss and Aithison (1997), point out that, clear statements of outcomes help the learner to engage in effective self-assessment of learning. If the outcomes are clarified before learners engage in learning activities, learners will know what is expected of them in the learning activities and what progress they are making toward the outcomes. Clear outcomes can help learners to improve their performance because they know what output is expected from them.

The Department of Education educator guide (2002:7) stipulates that teaching should be planned by first clarifying the outcomes. When the outcomes are clarified, the measurable evidence that educators want learners to demonstrate will be planned for in advance. The standards to be achieved are fully described at the beginning of the process so that the results to be achieved are clear.

5.3.2.2 Expanded opportunities

Educators acknowledge that learners differ in their capabilities and as such they learn in different ways and at different paces. Van der Horst and McDonald (1997) claim that learners cannot learn the same things at the same time. People differ in thinking and this influences their learning capabilities. Some people learn faster than others. Killen (2003a: 3) argues that all learners should be given appropriate opportunities to learn successfully. Learners should be given enough opportunity to learn at their different paces; but this may not be easy to apply in a practical situation. A number of factors may prevent educators from applying this principle effectively. Among other factors is overcrowding in classrooms. Educators may not know all learners' performance in their classrooms. If educators do not know how all the learners perform, it implies that they may not help all the learners to learn and succeed.

Educators work within a prescribed time. Learners should be promoted at the end of every year. If educators give learners expanded opportunities and those learners still fail to achieve the desired outcomes such learners may not progress to the next grade. This expanded opportunity may be good to apply sometimes. For it to be helpful learners should be willing to learn successfully. Sometimes learners do not know why they are at school. Educators will try to help them to realise their goals but learners may not realise them. In this case learners may be given more time to learn successfully but they may not use the given time fruitfully.

5.3.2.3 High expectations

This principle means that standards of achievement should be high to challenge learners to do their best. Killen (2003a: 3) claims that high standards can encourage students to engage deeply in their learning. This may be true in some instances as mentioned above that sometimes learners may not be willing to learn. If standards are high for such learners, they will be discouraged to engage in learning activities because these are difficult. To learners who are willing to learn. High standards can encourage learners to engage deeply in their learning. Learners who are willing to learn are determined and they may not see any learning activities as difficulties but as challenges. Mothapo (2003:133) claims that there is contradiction between this principle and expanded opportunity. He cannot reconcile these two principles with the OBE premise 'All learners can learn and succeed'.. If learners are given expanded opportunities, it means that they should be offered more assistance. If they are offered more assistance it means that they cannot attain higher standards on their own. If they attain higher standards through educators' assistance it means that those standards may no longer be high or challenging to learners. If learners attain high standards with little assistance from their educators, this principle can work very well in the classroom. This implies that educators may not have high expectations for all the learners because not all the learners may reach higher standards on their own.

5.3.2.4 Design down

According to Spady and Schlebusch (1999) *based* means *defined* by, so OBE is education that is defined by outcomes. This principle may be taken to be the main focus in OBE. All the educational activities should be organised around outcomes. The outcomes should be identified first and all the teaching and learning activities are planned and organised in line with the desired outcomes. Du Toit and Du Toit in Maree and Fraser (2004) argue that the educator should begin with what learners should demonstrate at the end of a learning experience. After the outcomes have been identified, the educator should go back to choose the appropriate learning content, teaching

strategies and resources to help learners to achieve those outcomes. This is what Spady and Schlebusch (1999:32) refer to as *backward mapping*. Thus, starting from the end and systematically tracing back the steps to help learners to achieve the outcomes. Educators should plan from critical outcomes, to learning outcomes and then to the level of performance that they wish learners should demonstrate at the end of a learning experience.

5.4.   Main findings of the empirical investigation

5.4.1   Research question 1

What do educators understand as far as OBE and OBA are concerned?

This research question was answered during interviews when participants responded to the questions regarding the essence of OBE, the difference between OBE and the traditional approach to teaching, OBE premises and principles. During this investigation it became clear that educators know very little of the theory of OBE. Educators gave good opinions regarding the essence of OBE as well as the difference between OBE and the traditional approach to teaching. They highlighted important points such as that in OBE educators focus their attention on outcomes. These educators added that they do not play a major role in the teaching-learning situation, and that OBE is learner centered. These statements are satisfactory and relate to OBE practices.

When educators were asked about OBE premises and principle, they had problems. Some of them have indicated that they had never heard of OBE premises and principles. Their opinions could only be obtained after explaining to them the meaning of each premise and principle.

During this investigation it became obvious that educators do not apply these principles in the classroom. Some educators apply expanded opportunities.

5.4.2 Research question 2

What is reflected in OBE and OBA policies that should be understood by educators?

OBE and OBA are explained in the education policy documents. OBE policy documents contain the learning areas that should be offered in each phase. Before OBE was revised all the learning areas had been contained in one policy document. After OBE was revised each learning area now has its policy document. Each learning area policy document contains important information regarding the development of learning programmes, definitions of key words, outcomes and assessment standards to be achieved in the learning area. When educators plan for their classroom practices they should first draw learning programmes, then draw work schedule and lastly a lesson plan. Policy documents guide educators on how they should plan for their instructional and assessment practices. OBA policy documents guide educators on how they should assess learners' work. Assessment is also explained, and the principles of assessment are given.

When educators engage in their classroom practices, they should follow OBE and OBA policy documents. For example OBA policy contains important information regarding promotion of learners at the end of each year. The Northern Province Department of Education policy document (2000) says that learners should progress according to their age cohort and that learners should not spend more than four years in a phase. These two points raise confusion in schools because educators do not know how they should promote learners. Some learners do not reach the expected level of performance and such learners may be over aged. The implication here is that a policy can be good but difficult to implement.

Some of the educators interviewed did not follow policy documents during their classroom practices. During interviews one respondent (R8) indicated that she follows the textbook only and not the policy document.

5.4.3   Research question 3

How do educators' understanding of OBE and OBA impact on their teaching and assessment practices?

This question was posed to educators during interviews. Most educators have indicated that their understanding of OBE has helped them to change or improve their classroom practices. According to Killen (2003b) understanding refers to the capacity to use explanatory concepts creatively. This means that if educators understand OBE they should use OBE concepts in their classroom practices. Most educators had not improved their performance in the classroom. They still rely on direct instruction. Educators do not accommodate OBE principles in their practices because they have little understanding of OBE.

5.4.4   Research question 4

What impact do educators' classroom practices (teaching and assessment) have on the performance of learners in different learning areas?

Most educators have a little knowledge of OBE but they do not put that knowledge into practice. This implies that educators' classroom practices may have little impact on learners' classroom performance. Some educators, for example Respondent 2, have shown that they have high expectations for all their learners. Another Respondent (R8) has shown that she does not have high expectations for her learners, although she seems to have high expectations for learners who perform better. R8 stated that high expectations depend on the performance of learners. However high expectations depend on how the educator views his/her learners. If the educator believes that all his/her learners can learn and succeed, he/she should have high expectations for all of them.

Some learners' performance has improved while others have not improved. During interviews one respondent (R8) has shown that if all the learners were ready to learn all of them could learn and succeed. This is an important point R8 has highlighted. Learning depends on one's willingness to learn. If learners are willing to learn they can search for information on their own. They will

pose questions to educators to try to learn more. Learners should be able to work on their own. It has been determined during this observations that very few learners can learn on their own. Most learners wait for the educator to supply them with information. Some of the learners do not concentrate even when the educator is busy with them.

5.4.5   Research question 5

What do educators' and learners' records tell us about educators' understanding of OBE and OBA?

Many educators do not keep enough records to provide satisfactory information concerning learners' performance in the classroom. Educators keep records of preparations, mark sheets, tests and memoranda. Among educators who participated in this investigation only one (i.e. R6) keeps learners' portfolios and baseline assessment.

Siebörger (2004:40) argues that recording may serve as evidence for assessment. This means that well-kept records can help educators to see whether there is improvement in learners' performance or not.

Most educators experience difficulties when it comes to using recording as part of assessment. Tiley (1997:26) takes observation, recording and reporting as basic elements of continuous assessment. Educators' records can help them to report on learners' performances. Educators are required to record learners' progress in three ways namely: educators' own record book or mark book, portfolios of learners' work and learner profiles, Gauteng Department of Education workshop notes (2000:17). Very few educators keep these records. According to Bopape, Taylor and Mogashoa (2005:28) educators should keep the following assessment records: record book in which they keep learners' names, dates of assessment, description of assessment activities, the results of assessment activities according to learning areas, and comments for support purposes; learner portfolios; progression schedule and learner profile. Most educators' records are not

up to date. They do not describe the assessment activities that were given to learners. They only record learners' marks after giving them tests. There is no evidence that educators give support to learners who fail to achieve the desired outcomes.

Assessment in the classroom is still done mainly through written work. The style of asking questions is still the same as the one educators followed in the traditional approach to teaching. Educators still test learners' ability to memorise facts.

5.5   Recommendations and implications

5.5.1 Recommendations and implications for educators

Educators should put emphasis on outcomes learners should achieve before they engage learners in learning activities. Linn and Gonlund (1995:6) argue that what is to be assessed should be specified before the assessment process takes place. This will help learners to know what they will be assessed on and they will be prepared for assessment tasks. Educators who were observed in practice did not clarify outcomes learners should achieve. If the outcomes were selected, they were only known by educators. Stoffels [s.a.] states that the new emphasis on "*outcomes*" instead of *input,* on *learner-centeredness* instead of *educator centeredness*, and on *activity learning* instead of *passive learning*, has signaled a revolutionary new way of teaching and learning in South African classrooms. For teaching to be learner centred learners should know the outcomes they should achieve.

Educators should play a more facilitative role than they are doing now. Direct instruction still dominates most of the classrooms in which the investigation was conducted. According to Shelly, Nurss and Aithison (1997) through   the pilot interviews they have conducted it became clear that teaching styles and aspects of classroom practice have not necessarily changed. This was also observed when this investigation was conducted. Educators still play a major role in the classroom. They are teaching to cover content. It may be good if they teach to cover certain content in a given time, but the content they intent

to cover should serve as a vehicle towards achievement of the desired outcomes. Educators should apply different teaching and assessment strategies and they should have high expectations for all the learners.

They should read the education policy with understanding and follow it in their classroom practices.

Educators should update their planning and preparations for learning activities. All the educators whose records were analysed were not up to date. This implies that they do not follow their planning and preparations. They should plan and follow their preparations in their classroom practices. Mokhaba (2005:221) argues that

> "*Educators who are the main role players involved in the implementation of outcomes-based education policy are responsible for planning and preparation.*"

Records should be kept regularly to ensure continuous assessment. Learners should receive feedback from time to time. It is through well-kept records that educators can give learners feedback. Educators can determine whether they need to change their instructional practices or not.

Educators should also engage in professional development activities in which they improve their qualifications. Tertiary institutions equip educators with necessary skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum. If the education system changes, tertiary institutions also change their curricula to move in line with changes. If educators engage themselves in further studies they will acquaint themselves with the changes that take place. Gilmore (2002) argues that planned professional development opportunities increase educators' assessment capacity. Educators who engage in further studies are updated with changes taking place in the education system. Knowledge keeps developing and as such this influence change in curriculum development. As curriculum keeps on changing, qualifications that were achieved in one year may not be

useful in ten years to come. It is essential for educators to improve their qualifications so that they can be up to date with changes in the curriculum.

5.5.2 Recommendations and implications for policy and practice

There should be enough resources and adequate supply of quality learning support materials. According to the Department of Education Educator guide (2002:4), 'the implementation of Curriculum 2005 took place in an environment characterised by enormous infrastructural backlogs, resource limitations, inadequate supply of quality learning support materials and absence of common national standards for learning and assessment.' There are still infrastructural backlogs because some classrooms are overcrowded. In some schools more than ninety (90) learners are congested in one classroom. Many educators still rely on the textbook, chalk and chalkboard as learning support materials only. These resources are not enough for the successful implementation of OBE as there are other alternative options they can add to the resources mentioned above.

Smit (2001) argues that educators should be involved when the education policy is planned. Educators are implementers of the policy and they know what takes place in the classroom. Efficient changes can be made with regard to policy development if educators' opinions are taken into consideration. If the policy is developed without engaging educators who are going to put the policy into practice, they may have problems. This is happening in South Africa. Many educators do not understand policy documents that have been developed. This is not satisfactory because they have to implement the policy that is developed by other people who may not be involved when it is put into practice. Some educators find it difficult to follow the policy

When the policy is drawn the implementation part of it should be given thought carefully. For example if the policy specifies that learners should not spend more than four years in a phase (Northern Province Department of Education policy document, 2000); this has some implications. The idea supplied by the Department of Education relates to the OBE premise: 'All

learners can learn and succeed though not all at the same time and in the same way.' Some learners may not achieve the desired outcomes. If it happens that one learner does not achieve the desired outcomes for four successive years, what should educators do? Should they promote such a learner even if he/she has not achieved the desired outcomes? This may raise confusion for educators who are engaged in classroom practices. If they were involved when the policy was drawn I think they could have raised this point.

Black and William [2001] argue that

> '*what teachers need is a variety of living examples of implementation by other teachers with whom they can both derive conviction and confidence that they can do better, and see concrete examples of what doing better means in practice.*'

Educators should observe other educators or curriculum advisors accommodating OBE premises and principles in the classroom. If they could have observed someone in practice helping all learners to learn and succeed, they will believe that all learners can learn and succeed. They can help all learners to learn and succeed following the example they have seen. Observations are important to help one to have a better understanding of what happens in a practical situation. In the past student educators could take a week or two in schools conducting observations in schools. After conducting those observations they would take another time for practical teaching. When OBE was phased in, most of the educators were expected to implement OBE without having observed an OBE lesson. If they were allowed to conduct observations for OBE lessons they would have better understanding of OBE and they would implement it effectively in their classrooms. A good policy does not always result in good practice as (Gilmore 2002) has indicated. OBE policies are good, but they are not easy to implement. The Department of Education have stated a good point that learners should not spend more than four years in a phase, is good but not in terms of practice. Some learners may not achieve the desired outcomes after four years.

Du Toit and du Toit, in Maree and Fraser, (2004) claim that time should be a flexible resource in OBE. This is easier said than done because learners should be promoted every year and it is not easy to use time as a flexible resource as learners learn at different paces. It is good that learners should be given expanded opportunities, but it is possible that learners are given expanded opportunities and still not achieve the desired outcomes. If they are given expanded opportunities time will be moving on. The year will be approach its end and learners are still supposed to be promoted at the end of every year.

Class sizes should be reduced to 25 or less so that they can be manageable and individual attention can be given to all the learners. Most educators in South African schools are faced with more than 80 learners. It is not easy for an educator to give individual attention to such a larger number of learners.

5.5.3 Recommendations and implications for curriculum advisors

Curriculum advisors should give support to educators. They should monitor progress in schools. Curriculum advisors meet educators when they call them for workshops. When OBE was introduced in South African schools, educators were called for workshops. After the workshops were conducted no support was given to educators. Educators struggle on their own after attending workshops.

Curriculum advisors should learn more to have a better understanding of the new curriculum. While attending OBE workshops it was realised that curriculum advisors have little knowledge regarding OBE. This may be because they were sent to their own workshops that lasted about a week or two and they came back to workshop educators. Some of the curriculum advisors would not allow educators to asked questions. They thought that educators were testing their knowledge whereas educators wanted to have better understanding of how they should implement OBE. These advisors became angry when educators asked questions.

5.6 Limitations of the study

This investigation was limited to the determination of educators' understanding of OBE and how that understanding influences their classroom assessment practices. It was designed in order to determine whether there has been some development and improvement of educators' understanding of OBE since its inception in the South African education system. The investigation was not limited to any learning area or grade. It was focused on a few educators' understanding of OBE specifically on premises and principles and whether the premises and principles have been incorporated in educators' classroom practices.

5.7 Recommended research

Further research is needed to focus specifically on how educators accommodate the OBE premises and principles in their classroom practices. In this investigation, educators' opinions regarding the OBE premises and principles were established. It is still not clear how educators accommodate OBE premises and principles in their instructional practices. It has been difficult to determine how these educators accommodate the OBE premises and principles in their classroom practices as many educators who participated in the study have little knowledge concerning OBE premises and principles. They first needed some information concerning OBE premises and principles.

5.8 Conclusion

The level of educators' understanding of OBE is still very low. This may be true for the area in which this investigation was conducted because schools are found in different situations. Some schools may have enough resources and knowledgeable educators who can implement OBE effectively. Most of the educators who participated in this investigation have little understanding of OBE because they do not know anything about the OBE premises and principles. Most of the educators do not accommodate OBE principles in their classroom practices and they still rely on direct instruction. A number of factors may lead educators to rely on direct instruction and not accommodate

OBE principles in their classroom practices namely: lack of understanding of OBE, lack of teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms.

Educators still need to undergo intensive training in order to understand OBE better and implement it effectively in their classrooms.

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APPENDIX A: IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULES

1. Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW No.	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pilot study	10 August 2005	17h00	Interviewee's house
1st	25 September 2005	16h00	Interviewee's house
2nd	26 September 2005	16h00	Interviewee's house
3rd	27 September 2005	17h00	Interviewee's house
4th	29 September 2005	17h00	Interviewee's house
5th	30 September 2005	15h00	Interviewee's quarters
6th	04 October 2005	15h00	Interviewee's quarters
7th	05 October 2005	15h00	Interviewee's quarters
8th	06 October 2005	17h00	Interviewee's quarters
9th	07 October 2005	15h00	Interviewee's quarters
10th	10 October 2005	16h00	Interviewee's house

The following questions were prepared for interviews:

1. In your opinion what is the essence of OBE?

2. How does OBE differ with the traditional approach to teaching?

3. What is your opinion about the following OBE premises?

> ➢ All learners can learn and succeed, but not all at the same time in the same way
> ➢ Schools control conditions success
> ➢ Success breeds success

4. What is your opinion about the following OBE principles?

> ➢ Clarity of focus
> ➢ Design down
> ➢ High expectations

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> ➢ Expanded opportunities

5. Which teaching strategies do you follow in your instructional practices?

6. Which assessment strategies do you follow when assessing learners' work?

7. Which assessment records do you keep?

2. Observation and Document Analysis Schedule

(Document analysis was conducted each day after the observations were conducted)

Observation No.	Date	Grade	Learning Area	Topic	Duration
1st	11 October 2005	3	English	Prepositions	30 minutes
2nd	12 October 2005	6	Mathematics	Area	30 minutes
3rd	14 October 2005	4	Economics and management sciences	Entrepreneur	30 minutes
4th	17 October 2005	7	Afrikaans	Toekommende tyd	30 minutes
5th	18 October 2005	2	Life skills	My body	30 minutes
6th	19 October 2005	5	Technology	Electricity	30 minutes

APPENDIX B: LETTERS OF REQUEST TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS

1. Letter of request to the district office

Enquiries: Ramoroka NJ

Cell: 0824143322

Box 31052

SUPERBIA

0752

21 May 2005

The Area manager

Bochum district

Private Bag X5003

BOCHUM

0790

Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO GATHER DATA IN SCHOOLS IN BOCHUM DISTRICT

I am humbly requesting to gather data in schools in Bochum district to fulfill the requirements for a Master's degree with the University of Pretoria. I wish to conduct interviews with educators, observe them in practice and conduct document analysis.

I will make sure that I do not disturb the smooth running of day-to-day school activities. I will arrange for interviews after school hours. Observations and document analysis will be conducted during school hours, but they will not interfere with the smooth running of school activities.

Hoping for a positive response

Yours truly

Ramoroka NJ

2. LETTERS OF REQUEST TO SCHOOLS. (A number of letters with the same content were written to different schools).

Enquiries: Ramoroka NJ   Box 31052

Cell: 0824143322   SUPERBIA

                                                                        0752

                                                                        31 May 2005

The Principal

Name of school: _____

Address: _____

          _____

          _____

Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO GATHER DATA IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am humbly requesting to gather data in your school in partial fulfilment of my Master's degree with the University of Pretoria. I wish to conduct interviews with educators. I also wish to observe educators in practice and conduct document analysis.

I will not disturb the smooth running of the day-to-day school activities.

Hoping for a positive response

Yours truly,

Ramoroka NJ

APPENDIX C: LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM CIRCUIT OFFICE AND SCHOOLS

The Area manager

Bochum district

Private Bag X5003

BOCHUM

0790

31 May 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Kindly be informed that Mr. Ramoroka NJ is granted permission to gather data in schools n Bochum. Please cooperate with him.

He should however not disturb the smooth running of school activities.

Thanking you

Yours truly,
Lekoloane NZ

Enq: Chipu MH   Mampote P. School
Cell No. 0724544626   Box 518
                                                 BOCHUM
                                                 0790
                                                 06 July 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Be informed that Mr Ramoroka NJ is granted permission to gather data in our school.

Please assist him in any way he may ask.

Thanking you,

Yours truly

Chipu MH - Principal

Signature: _____

Enq: Phalane   MA   Mamoshia Primary School
Cell: 0723068082   Box 190
                                                     GA-KOBE
                                                     0793
                                                     29 May 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Note that Mr Ramoroka NJ is granted permission to gather data in schools in Bochum

area. Please cooperate with him.

Thanking you,

Yours truly

Phalane MA- Principal

Signature: _____