

**THE USE OF OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES BY INTERMEDIATE
PHASE EDUCATORS: CHALLENGES AND
IMPLICATIONS:**

BY

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NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY



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BY INTERMEDIATE PHASE EDUCATORS: CHALLENGES AND
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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF EDUCATION – CURRICULUM DESIGN AND
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DECLARATION

I, Ceveline Mpho Lephogole, declare that this mini dissertation for the degree of Master in Education at the North-West University hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university. It is my own work in design, execution and that all material herein has been duly acknowledged.


.....

C. M. LEPHOGOLE

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I am very grateful to my supervisors Professor M.W. Mwenesongole and Dr K.N. Magwenzi for the love they have shown and their support, guidance, encouragement and assurance that led to the completion of this work.

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My very special thanks go to my family. First to my husband for typing some of my work. He was also my source of encouragement and provider for whatever was needed to see this work through. I also sincerely thank my children, Thake, Pako and Reagile for their patience during my absence from home when they needed me most.

Above all I thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength and perserverance.

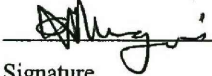
CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPTANCE FOR EXAMINATION

This dissertation: The use of Outcomes-Based Education assessment strategies by intermediate phase educators: Challenges and implications; Written by Ceveline Mpho Lephogole, Student Number 10234985 of the Department of Teaching and Curriculum in the Faculty of Education is hereby recommended for acceptance for examinations.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Monnakgotla Shadrack Lephogole, our little angels, Thake, Pako and Reagile, my parents Moilwa and Mmapula Moseneke, father-in-law Molatlhegi Lephogole and my brothers and sisters.

I also dedicate it to my mother-in-law who passed away during the research.

ABSTRACT

The study is about the use of Outcomes-Based Education Assessment strategies by Intermediate phase educators in the Atamelang Districts of the North West Province of Republic of South Africa: Challenges and implications.

The research study sought to investigate the following research questions:

- What are the requirements of Outcomes-Based Assessment?
- Who should be involved in learners' assessment in schools?
- What kind of assessment strategies do educators use?
- Do educators use OBE assessment strategies?
- What are the methods used for reporting performance of learners to parents and management of the school?

This research study drew its population from the Primary Intermediate Phase educators in the Atamelang District. The sample was made out of intermediate phase educators for purposes of data collection, the questionnaires and interviews were used.

The qualitative technique was used to analyse the research. The main findings of the research study were that the majority of educators are still having problems in OBE assessment strategies.

The following are recommendations:

- Inservice training programmes for educators.
- Development of learners concerning OBE assessment strategies especially self, peer and group assessment.
- Effective physical and human resources to be put in place.

In conclusion, the research hopes that the use of OBE assessment strategies will be emphasised in order to enhance the learning and teaching of intermediate phase educators throughout the North West Province of the Republic of South Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
CASS	-	Continuous Assessment
C 2005	-	Curriculum 2005
EAB	-	Education and Assessment Board
ESS	-	Education Support Services
FET	-	Further Education and Training
GDE	-	Gauteng Department of Education
GET	-	General Education and Training
L.SEN	-	Learners with Special Education Needs
NQF	-	National Qualification Framework
OBA	-	Outcomes-Based Assessment
OBE	-	Outcomes-Based Education
PTC	-	Primary Teachers Certificates
SA	-	Summative Assessment
SMT	-	School Management Team

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa embarked on a radical transformation of education and training. One of the most challenging aspects of this transformation was the adoption of an Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach that underpins the introduction of the new Curriculum 2005. Educators who will need to make the transformation successful, are understandably seeking to gain knowledge, skills and competence in OBE. The most important question that we need to answer is whether OBE will, indeed, help the country to overcome all or, at least some, of the many problems that face the schools. Two things are clear: OBE, by itself, will not solve all the problems of education. How it is used will determine whether there is progress or failure in education and training. One can liken OBE to a box of tools. Used properly, carefully and intelligently, it can help achieve much. Used ignorantly, naively and incorrectly, OBE could do tremendous amount of damage. As is the case with many tools, there is need to learn how, and when to use them.

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) is a learner-centred, result-oriented approach to education and training that builds on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but this may not happen within a short period of time.

Challenges faced in understanding OBE assessment implies the following:

- What learners are to learn is clearly defined;
- Each learner's progress is based on demonstration and achievement;
- Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools; and
- Each learner is provided the time and assistance to realize his or her potential (Kramer, 1999).

Assessment in OBE for example, focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, making it possible to credit learner's achievement at every level, whatever pathway they may have followed and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary completeness. This applies to adult and child learners with special education needs (LSEN), both in and outside ordinary school and ABET centres. This is of great importance for LSEN, as both curriculum and assessment for this sector have presented problems in the past.

Assessment in OBE requires the use of tools that appropriately assess learner achievement and encourage lifelong learning skills. Continuous assessment (CASS) is considered the best model to assess outcomes of learning throughout the education system and enable improvement to be made in the teaching-learning process. It must be used to support the learner developmentally and to feed into teaching and learning and should not be interpreted merely as the accumulation of a series of traditional test results. For CASS to be correctly and appropriately done, educators must have a thorough understanding of the strategies involved in assessment.

1.1.2 What is assessed?

Outcomes of learning serve as the basis for assessment. The focus of assessment should be on the progress learners make towards the achievement of the outcomes. This process must be transparent such that the various outcomes and their assessment criteria must be available to learners to inform them of what is to be assessed. In this case educators must be conversant with assessment strategies so that they can outline the criteria. Learners who do not meet the criteria must receive clear explanation with indication of areas that need further work and must be assisted to reach the required performance level. The transparency of the outcomes makes explicit of that which was formerly only implied or assumed. If the educators are knowledgeable about the assessment strategies they will realise if there is a need for intervention (Department of Education, 1998).

1.1.3 Who assesses?

Educators have the overall responsibility to assess the progress of achieving the expected specific outcomes. The educators face a challenge of incorporating all the relevant stakeholders in assessment. The assessment process involves a partnership between educators, learners, parents and education support services (ESS) such as occupation and speech therapists and educational psychologists. Given that the ESS is spread very thinly, it is expected that they will in future be provided at district, circuit and area level in order to maximize access effectively. They must be able to know when it is necessary to consult outside stakeholders, so that assessment can be thoroughly done (Department of Education, 1998).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study investigated the level of understanding educators have of OBE assessment strategies. These are intermediate phase educators at primary schools.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study project investigated whether educators have the knowledge, skills and competence to handle OBE assessment. The research problem was amplified by the following questions:

- What are the requirements of Outcomes-Based Assessment?
- Who should be involved in learners' assessment in schools?
- What kind of assessment strategies do educators use?
- Do educators use OBE assessment strategies?
- What are the methods used for reporting performance of learners to parents and management of the schools?

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether OBE assessment strategies were used by primary intermediate phase educators, and the challenges educators faced when using these OBE assessment strategies.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It was hoped that the study will be of benefit to policy makers, curriculum designers and developers, educators and learners. The study will be of importance because learners, educators and parents should be made aware of continuous assessment strategies and their importance.

1.6 DELIMITATION

The research focused on educators and learners in the intermediate phase in schools in the Atamelang District of the North West Province. The research study was confined to this area because the researcher was constrained by time and resources.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1.7.1 Assessment

The Department of Education (1998) defines assessment as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to assist the learner's development and improve upon the process of learning and teaching. Malan (1997) views assessment as a progress by which the quality of a candidate's achievement can be judged, recorded and reported.

Assessment is the way of gathering information to gauge or decide whether outcomes have been achieved (Kramer, 1999):

Assessment in OBE is a process of gathering information in a valid and reliable way about the performance of the learner, on an ongoing basis, against clearly defined criteria, using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and context (Department of Education, 1997).

1.7.2 Continuous Assessment

The Department of Education (1998) defines continuous assessment (CASS) as an ongoing process that measures a learner's achievement during the course of a grade or level providing information that is used to support a learner's development and enable improvement to be made in the teaching-learning process.

Le Grange and Reddy (1998) indicate that continuous assessment is an ongoing process that takes place throughout the whole learning process. The learner's development is periodically monitored and nurtured. Assessment as an ongoing everyday process exposes what a learner knows, understands, values and can do; provides information that is used to support learners development and enables improvements to be made in the teaching and learning process. It is also defined as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement as measured against nationally agreed outcomes (Department of Education, 1998).

1.7.3 Outcomes-Based Education

The Department of Education (1997) defines Outcomes-Based Education as learner-centred, result-oriented designed on the principle that all learners can learn and succeed.

The OBE strategy implies the following:

- What learners should learn is clearly identified;
- A learner's promotion and development is based on demonstrated performance;
- Accommodations of each learner's needs is done by means of a variety of teaching and learning strategies; and

- Every learner will get time and help to fulfill his/her potential.

The OBE approach is further described as a principle based on constructivist learning principles, active learner involvement and with emphasis on co-operative teaching and learning as well as group work.

1.7.4 Educator

The Department of Education (1998) defines an educator as any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at any public school, further education and training institution, department office or adult basic education centre and who is appointed to a post on any education establishment under the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998.

1.7.5 Learner

This term refers to all learners, ranging from early childhood education through to adult education. The term pupil or student at school and higher education levels are therefore replaced by the term 'learner' (Department of Education, 1997).

1.7.6 Profile

The *Gauteng Department of Education* (1999) defines profile as a panoramic representation of progress. It is an up-to-date database on all information that may assist the learning process, collected throughout the learner's path. It also includes records of a learner's progress collected over a period of time. It includes a wide range of activities that give a holistic view of the nature of the learner for example strengths, areas that need support and achievement.

1.7.7 Portfolio

The Department of Education (1997) defines a portfolio as a purposeful collection of learners' work such as project, journals and assignment. These exhibit to the learner, parent, educators and others the progress, growth and achievements of the learner in relation to expected outcomes. A portfolio is a showcase for students' work, a place where many types of assignments, projects, reports and writing can be collected. Progress, attitude toward and understanding of a subject area can be seen in a comprehensive way.

The Examination and Assessment Board; Gauteng (2000) defines portfolio as a collection of learner's work over a period of time. Learners and teachers select samples of a learner's work for a portfolio. It also includes written observation by the educators, as well as the learner's self-assessment.

1.7.8 Self-Assessment

Vermuelen (2000) explains self-assessment as when a learner assesses his/her own performance against desired outcomes and criteria and is able to decide what they need to do to improve upon such performance.

1.7.9 Peer-Assessment

Peer-assessment is the process of using learners to determine each other's achievement against clearly defined outcomes. Vermeulen (2000) defines peer-assessment as when learners assess on an individual and group basis performance of individuals or other group.

1.7.10 Group-Assessment

The Department of Education (1997) defines group assessment as when a group in a class assess an

individual learner's product.

Vermeulen (2001) defines group assessment as when members of a group assess their performance as a group and the contribution of individual members.

CHAPTER TWO

1.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education in Republic of South Africa introduced Outcomes-Based Education in 1997. It was a response to the inadequacies of the old system of education. The Department realised that the old system of education did not produce the independent learner they expected. The system was teacher-based not learner-based. This implies that the educator took the responsibility for the whole process of teaching and learning, including assessment. The learner's individual differences were not catered for thus the inception of OBE.

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) is a design for education which is learner-centred and orientated towards results or outcomes. It is based on the belief that all individuals can learn. In outcomes-based education, the curriculum is designed to promote attitudes, values and skills, which are needed by the learner and society. In this way, the learner is equipped with what he/she should know to be able to participate actively in the society. It also includes a realization that learners differ and that assistance may be needed to enable learners to reach their full potential (Department of Education, 1997).

OBE focuses on what learners do rather than the facts they will learn. There are three elements to OBE, knowledge of concepts or processes, skills, values and attitudes. These equip learners to become responsible and effective citizens. The end results of the learning process are called outcomes. Educators and learning programme designers decide before learning takes place and also determine what these products must be. These products are then written down as statements to guide the development of learning programmes. If this method is followed, we say that the system is outcomes-based.

Outcomes are developed to indicate what the learner needs to achieve and are reflected in a learning programme during the preparation of the learning experience. Based on the outcomes in the learning programmes, all activities are designed to demonstrate or show the outcomes. The learners are assessed to see if they can demonstrate or show whether the stated outcomes have been achieved or whether they still need assistance to be able to achieve experiences designed in the learning programme. These experiences address the learner's weakness. If the learner is competent, he or she can start working on a new section of the learning programme based on new outcomes.

2.2.1 Basic principles of OBE

The old system of education encouraged passive learners as compared to active learners in OBE. In the old system the educator did not actively involve learners and they were expected to absorb information from the educator. They were also expected to produce it in examinations and tests. Their inputs were not encouraged. Learners were not involved in this type of assessment. They were also not assessed on an on going basis only monthly, half yearly and at the end of the year. Different strategies of assessment like peer-assessment and groupwork were not catered for.

The system encouraged rote-learning not critical, reasoning, reflection and action. They did not relate information gained with their daily experiences. The syllabus was content-based and broken down into subjects without integration of knowledge and learning relevant and connected to real-life situations. The learners must be made aware that knowledge they have gained from home is important in their learning. They must be taught from simple to complex and from known to the unknown. The information acquired by learners must be related to their every day situation.

Textbooks/work sheets were the only source of information to the teacher during the old system. The new system encourages learners-centredness where the educator is only the facilitator. The educator constantly uses groupwork and teamwork to consolidate the new approach. The old system sees the syllabus as rigid and non-negotiable. In the new system learning programmes are seen as guides that allow educators to be innovative and creative in designing programmes.

The educators responsibility was to teach learners and motivation depended on the personality of the educator. The emphasis on teaching was also on what the educator hopes to achieve. In the new system the learners take responsibility for their learning and they are constantly motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth. The emphasis of the educator is on outcomes that the learner has to achieve.

OLD	NEW
1. Passive learners	1. Active learners
2. Exam-driven	2. Learners are assessed on an on-going basis
3. Rote-learning	3. Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action.
4. Syllabus is content-based and broken down into subjects	4. An intergration of knowledge; learning relevant and connected to real-life situations.
5. Textbook/work sheet-bound and teacher centred	5. Learners - centred; teacher is facilitator; teacher constantly uses groupwork and teamwork to consolidate the new approach
6. Sees syllabus as rigid and non-negotiable	Learning programmes seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes.
7. Teachers responsible for learning, motivation dependent on the personality of the teacher	7. Learners take responsibility for their learning, pupils motivated by constant feedback and affirmation of their worth.
8. Emphasis on what the teacher hopes to achieve	8. Emphasis on outcomes what the learner becomes and understands.
9. Content placed into rigid time-frames	9. Flexible time-frames allow learners to work at their own pace.
10. Curriculum development process not open to public comment	10. Comment and input from wider community is encouraged

From (Department of Education, 1997) **Basic principles of OBE**

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Jacobs, Gawe and Vilakazi (2000) have pointed out how outcomes-based education (OBE) has changed many aspects of curriculum practice, including assessment. These include a whole new approach to assessment being implemented with OBE, namely continuous assessment. According to them, OBE provides the framework for teachers to implement continuous assessment in their classrooms.

OBE is widely considered to have its roots in two educational approaches. These are the competency based education movement and mastery learning. Competency based learning came to prominence in the 1960's as a result of a changing workplace profile. It was seen as a possible way to improve career paths by developing transferable skills. This threw a great challenge to educators because they themselves needed those skills before they could pass them to others.

Clear statements of education and training outcomes, based on relevant and useful competencies, become the basis of flexible and integrated instruction strategies and assessment. Competency based learning aims to prepare learners for success in fulfilling various life roles. In this sense it already has all the elements that define OBE. The development of an OBE model that derives from competency-based learning has been led by Spady in Kramer (1999), who first presented his framework in 1988. Spady and his colleagues formed a group called High Success Network to promote their model of OBE.

Another model of OBE derives from mastery learning, the second 'parent' of modern OBE. This model of learning focuses on the need to create favourable learning conditions as regards time, teaching strategies and learning success. Mastery learning began its development as far as back as the 1950's. Tyler (1949) mentioned the need for clear educational objectives in 1945. He suggested that learning success is a function of time spent divided by time needed. He claimed that all learners

could achieve, given favourable learning conditions, such as flexibility, in the time provided and alternative ways of learning. The mastery-learning model tries to optimize the quality of teaching and time allowed for teaching and learning. This approach gained favour in the 1970's and the 1980's in the USA and other countries.

All these challenges now leave educators with a problem of time, learning and teaching strategies as well as assessment. Educators need to make sure that learners are given enough time to learn and are also assessed individually considering their uniqueness. Where will educators take this time? Outcomes-Based Education has some link with other educational philosophies like progressivism (Allan and Francis, 1993).

In his most comprehensive work, *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey in Allan and Francis (1993) claims that democracy and education go hand in hand, that a democratic society and democratic education are participatory and emergent, not preparatory and absolute. Dewey views the school as a miniature democratic society in which students could learn and practice the skills and tools necessary for democratic living. This was done by South Africa after gaining its democracy. This is shown by the inception of outcomes-based education.

According to progressive thought the skills and tools of learning include problem-solving methods and scientific enquiry. In addition, learning experiences include cooperative behaviour and self-discipline, both of which are important for democratic living. It is through these skills and experiences that the school can transmit the culture of society while it prepares the students for a changing world. The skills and tools of learning are the same as in OBE. The teacher and students usually plan activities together but the teacher is the one who helps students to locate, analyse, interpret and evaluate data to formulate principles and draw conclusions.

Nicholls and Nicholls (1983) have made a strong point regarding how teachers give considerable attention to the progress which their pupils are making. They consider progress as a matter with which parents are also vitally concerned. The first question a parent often asks a teacher is "How is

my child getting on at schools?”. Progress and attainment are thus related. Formal attention might be regarded as the tests and examinations which are given and informal attention as the general observation and judgments that are made. Frequently, the outcomes of both are recorded in a report, which is sent home to parents.

Kramer (1999) considers one of the basic premises of OBE as being the fact that most learners can achieve high quality outcomes given proper teaching, resources and time. There are three key questions that help to describe the rationale for how this happens in OBE.

The first question is “How do we want to define an educated person in our society in future?” The traditional curriculum does not adequately prepare learners for the present reality, let alone the future. Clearly, the education system needs to close the gap between the classroom and real life in all its complexity. As the world changes, so do learners need to understand what it will take to be successful constructive citizens of the global community in the 21st century. Educators need to understand what they want their learners to know, to be able to do and what values they want to instill.

Most importantly, educators need to state their outcomes clearly in a way that will allow them to measure whether they have been achieved. The set of knowledge, skills and values, once agreed generally by South Africans, become the guidelines for developing a curriculum that will help learners to achieve the outcomes.

The second question to be answered is “How do we know when the outcomes are achieved?”. There has been a long history of criticisms of the ways in which educators measure learning. The many criticisms all have the same bottom line which is the evidence presented by traditional assessment is often unreliable, temporary, incomplete and inequitable, concludes Kramer (1999). What is needed is a clear consensual evidence of achievement. OBE is based upon the premise that educators can help learners to create definite and reliable evidence of achievement.

Another key element of the focus on evidence of learning is that all individual learn in different ways

and at different paces. Traditional education treats all learners in the same way and so it stands to reason that the system cannot but be unfair to certain learners and incorrect about their achievement in ways that may not even be realised easily. OBE allows the system to focus on whether learning has happened. In so doing, learners have the possibility of learning in the manner that best suits each individual as long as the end achievement is the same for everyone.

Spady (1994) writes, what and whether we learn is more important than how and when we learn and that does not mean that the latter is unimportant. Educators and learners will always need to see the 'how' and 'when' of learning as important. In OBE these are more important than the 'what' and 'whether'. OBE requires that educators be clear about the evidence they present as a result of assessment. Similarly what is assessed must be enough for learners, parents and others to be able to be involved in the process. A common misperception about OBE is that tests and exams are no longer part of assessment. This is absolutely wrong. Some learners show their learning best in this way and banning tests would be just as unfair as making everyone depend on test results. OBE is concerned with achievement more than assessment methods. Tests remain a legitimate part of the assessment inventory.

Tests, however, are not the only part nor a more important part of the inventory of assessment methods because if a hammer is your tool, then everything begins to look like a nail. Traditionally, educators have treated tests and exams as their only tool.

The third question is about how educators teach and learn in the process of creating good evidence of achievement. Educators know what outcomes they want and what will look like when these have been achieved. What kind of teaching and learning opportunities will there be to learn everything necessary for the achievement of outcomes? Educators now understand enough about how people learn that they need to explore a range of different teaching and learning methods and techniques. Educators also need to find many ways of allowing different times for different learners, what Spady (1999) calls expanded opportunities.

The key to assessment is determines whether or not learning outcomes have been attained.

Assessment has developmental and monitory function, although its fundamental goal is to promote learning. Feedback from assessment informs teaching and learning and allows the critique of outcomes, methodology and materials. All assessment must be fair, valid, reliable and practical.

2.3 RESEARCH STUDIES IN ASSESSMENT

In traditional education and training, assessment often is the tail that wags the dog (Smith, Russel and McCormack, 1997 and Sutherland and Peckham, 1998). For many learners, the real curriculum has been what they have to study for test, examination and assignment (Madaus, 1997). Sutherland and Peckham (1998) formulate it as follows assessment tasks define the curriculum in the sense that students often focus on topics that are to be assessed in the hope of getting good marks.

The introduction of outcomes-based education and training (OBET) requires a different approach. One of the most important aims of an OBET curriculum, is to lay the foundations for the development of a learning society (Department of Education, 1997). Towards this goal, all learning facilitation and assessment methods and strategies should be oriented. The traditional power of assessment to influence the curriculum may be advantageous to effecting a change in approach and methodology. The implementation of a different approach to the use of a range of assessment methods will have a major impact on how learners conceive of their role in the teaching and learning context (Sutherland and Peckham, 1998).

It unpacks some of the essential concepts that relate to assessment in the OBET context. Its aim is to stimulate the general debate around implementing OBET and its assessment practices in particular. Curriculum design and development is an integrated process where outcomes, assessment criteria, level descriptors, modularisation and learning guides are all considered in terms of their interrelationships. The study forms part of the fundamental study to determine the implications of OBET for higher education. This document should, therefore, be interpreted as an attempt to:

- Facilitate alignment of assessment practices and procedures in technikons to those required

by an OBET approach.

- Suggest operational criteria and guidelines for assessment in an OBET context.

2.4 THE NEW ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The reasons for assessing learners' work can differ from situation to situation, from candidate to candidate and from assessor to assessor. However, some of the more common reasons why institutions of learning make use of assessment are:

- To determine whether learners acquired the required knowledge and or skills and have grasped the concepts or processes they were suppose to;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of a learning programme or process;
- To place learners in particular grades or courses;
- To compare one learner's (or one group of learners) result with those of other learners;
- To identify learning strengths and weaknesses; and
- To inform learners about individual progress and development.

How and when should assessment take place is a matter of professional judgment. Some teachers assess continuously, others assess only when it is absolutely necessary. What is important is that the manner in which assessment is conducted and the point at which assessment takes place should support the reasons for it taking place at all. Teachers are familiar with most of the types of assessment, namely norm-referred assessment, criterion-referred assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment and continuous assessment.

Given this new curriculum framework, Pahad (1997) reminds us that assessment should be outcomes-based. This means that learners must be able to show teachers what they know and what they can do. Consider the following introductory questions many teachers ask and the suggested responses given below:

- Who should be involved in assessment at school?

Learners, teachers, parents, school management and department officials should all be involved in assessment.

- **How do teachers assess?**
Teachers can assess in different ways. For example, by giving marks or symbols for activities, tests, and examinations, and with general comments.
- **How do teacher record assessments?**
Teachers can enter marks in record books. Portfolio can be used to record assessment comments. These portfolios are organised and managed by teachers and learners together.
- **How does a school report learner's progress to parents?**
Learners' progress can be reported to parents in writing or orally at meetings.
- **In what ways should school management monitor assessment?**
School management team (SMT) needs to conduct class visits to monitor record books and to moderate tests and examinations. The SMT should also organize or facilitate assessment workshops for teachers.

2.5 ASSESSMENT

The Department of Education (2005) defines assessment in OBE as a process of gathering valid and reliable information about the performance (evidence) of the learner, on an on-going basis (CASS) against clearly defined criteria, using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and context and recording the findings.

Assessment is universally conceptualized as a process by means of which the quality of a candidate's achievements can be judged, and reported. Judgments can be made through continuous observation or through summative evaluation. In the education context, assessors can be teachers, outside

examiners or the learners themselves. Results can be reported quantitatively or qualitatively and be used for promotion, screening or formative purposes (Malan, 1997).

Assessment consists of a task or series of tasks set in order to obtain information about a learner's competence. These tasks could be assessed in a variety of ways using different techniques throughout the learning process. In the past educators relied on tests that showed whether learners could recall the facts and repeat actions that they had been taught. There has been a shift towards assessment that shows whether learners really understand what they have learned and whether they can think about what they learned in ways that allows them to apply their learning in different ways. Increasingly, assessment tries to tell the extent to which learners think about what they have learned and about how they have learned. Assessment is the way that we gather information to decide whether the outcomes have been achieved properly.

Spady in Malan (1997) says that the key word in outcomes-based assessments is demonstration. In other words, it is up to learners to demonstrate their knowledge, ability, competence or proficiency and it is up to assessors to judge the quality of such a demonstration. On the basis of their judgments, assessors then decide whether candidates' performance during the demonstration was sufficient for them to be awarded the necessary credits or qualifications.

To ensure fair and equitable judgment assessors in an outcomes-based system of education need to identify, formulate and make known the criteria which they intend using during the assessment process. This means that criteria should be spelt out simply, clearly and should be known to all candidates and assessors before assessments takes place.

Accordingly to Spady (1994), there are at least four criteria, which are crucial in determining whether a candidate's demonstration performance was sufficient in terms of the criteria (learning outcomes).

These criteria areas are:

- Demonstration of competence must take place at the culminating/end point of the candidate's

learning experience;

- Demonstration must show evidence of significant learning; and
- Demonstration must be of high quality.

The implications of these criteria are that assessment must be summative, performance-based and criterion-referenced. Summative assessment would, obviously, include continual assessment (that is occasional assessment of completed tasks and exercises during the teaching-learning process) but does not include the kind of continuous observation discussed earlier on. Continuous assessment should provide feedback. While it may be used to collect evidence of the learning process (by means of portfolio, for example) it should not primarily be used for grading or scoring purposes, although it may have an influence on the final decision regarding credits or qualifications.

Gauteng Department of Education (1999) describes OBE assessment as a process of:

- Gathering valid and reliable information about the performance of the learners;
- On an on-going basis (CASS-Continuous assessment);
- Against clearly defined criteria;
- Using a variety of methods, tool, techniques and context;
- Reflecting and reporting by giving positive, supportive; and
- Motivational feedback to learners, other educators and parents.

Learners are assessed against criteria that indicate if an outcome has been attained rather than against other learner's performance or against a customary performance norm. If a learner does not meet the requirements, the learner does not attain the outcomes, re-assessment becomes an important element of assessment. According to the National Qualifications Framework, learners will now be assessed in terms of whether or not they are able to demonstrate an outcome. The implication of this is that assessment will be criterion-referenced and skills-based rather than norm-referenced and content-based.

Department of Education : North West Province (2002) uses the definition offered by the Council of Educators that CASS is the process of determining whether a candidate is competent, as measured against nationally agreed standards and may be seen involving: generating and collecting evidence of achievement. Evaluation of this evidence against standards and recording the findings of this evaluation.

2.6 ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

The function of assessment is integral in education because without it goals and objectives (and outcomes) cannot be evaluated. Assessment is not a separate part of a learning experience. Assessment, in particular formative assessment, is integrated throughout a learning experience (Kotze, 1999). For decades aspects like fictionalization for example, have formed an integrated part of every lesson structure in didactics.

The Department of Education (1998) recognises effective assessment as being underpinned by the following factors:

- The purpose of assessment should always be explicit;
- The criterion-referenced approach will be used;
- Assessment must be authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced;
- Assessment is an on-going integral part of the learning process;
- It must be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient;
- Assessment takes many forms, gathers information from several contexts and uses a variety of methods according to what is being assessed and the needs of the learner;
- It must be bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities;
- Assessment result must be communicated clearly, accurately, timeously and meaningfully;
- Progression should be linked to the achievement of the specific outcomes and should not be rigidly time bound; and
- Evidence of progress in achieving outcomes shall be used to identify area where learners

need support and remedial intervention.

The Department of Education also outlines the principles of outcomes-based assessment (OBA) as

- to assist learners to reach their full potential;
- OBA is participative, democratic and transparent,
- criterion-referenced and
- places less emphasis in norm-referencing;
- It makes use of self-referencing;
- involves a shift away from learning as memorisation; and
- involves learners actively using relevant knowledge in real-life context,
- integrated throughout the teaching and learning process.

2.7 PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

The purpose of assessment is to promote growth. It emphasises that educators must know the assessment strategies and be able to face the challenges they bring. The Department of Education (2005) says that the general aims of assessing learners in OBA is for growth, development and support. The purpose of assessment is to monitor a learner's progress through an area of learning so that a decision can be made about the best way to facilitate further learning in terms of expected knowledge, skills, attitudes and value. Assessment provides information about learning difficulties and remedial information action necessary to support learners who may be experiencing learning difficulties. The purpose of assessment is not about promoting (pass/fail/conditional transfer) but about progression.

The Department of Education (1998) again says that in keeping with the principles of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), assessment will serve to:

- Determine whether the learning required for the achievement of the specific outcomes is taking place and whether any difficulties are being encountered;
- Report to parents and other role-players and stakeholders about the levels of achievement

during the learning process and to build a profile of the learner's achievement across the curriculum;

- Provide information for the evaluation and review of learning programmes used in the classroom; and
- Maximise learner's access to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values defined in the national curriculum policy.

From the above-mentioned statements, educators must be able to understand the purpose of outcomes-based assessment.

2.8 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

2.8.1 Continuous assessment

Continuous assessment is an evaluation practice with a cumulative character through which a teacher builds up a profile of a learner's performance, skills and attitude by using a wide variety of assessment techniques such as classworks, tests, assignments, projects, practical and oral tests and observations throughout the learner's curriculum in a predetermined relation (Department of Education, 1998).

Le Grange and Reddy (1998) write that continuous assessment is an ongoing process that takes place throughout the whole learning process. In this way, the learners' development is periodically monitored and nurtured. Seiborger and Macintosh (1998) put it this way that continuous assessment, *simply means assessment which takes place on and off throughout a course or period of learning.* Continuous assessment is not something that is unique to South Africa, but rather a worldwide move towards more authentic assessment. Spady (1994) defines authentic assessment as the process of *gathering information directly pertinent to the quality of performance that perfectly embodies all the defined aspects of that performance hence the term authentic.* In other words, authentic strategies for assessment would consider not only a learner's memory, but also attitudes, values and knowledge (Torrance, 1995).

A first step to the implementation of continuous assessment is for teachers to work in assessment teams. This is because:

- Teachers can learn about the new approach together;
- Teamwork provides a useful support;
- The workload is shared; and
- Fair ways of assessing can be developed.

For all these, educators will be able to face challenges and implications as group. They will try to solve problems they encounter as a team and in this way it will be easy.

Malan (1997) says continuous assessment takes place while learners are busy with ordinary class work. It occurs while learners are reflecting on their own work, when a learner's peer suppliers feedback on what he/she is saying, writing or doing or when teachers are making mental or even physical notes of what they observe learners doing or saying. The purpose of continuous assessment, as it is practiced in most classrooms daily, is to monitor learning progress and to diagnose learning problems. As such, it is formative in nature.

The Department of Education (2000) also emphasises that continuous assessment is an ongoing process that finds out what a learner knows, understands, values and can do, providing information that is used to support the learner's development and enables improvements to be made in the teaching-learning process. All types of assessment must be continuous. The continuous assessment must be an integral part of the teaching-learning process.

The importance of continuous assessment

Continuous assessment has many advantages for both the teacher and the learner as long as they are both aware and familiar with the use of assessment strategies as in outcomes-based education.

The advantages are that:

- The awareness of learners' progress is not confined to one or two tests in a year;
- Learners get to know they are progressing in their learning;
- In the past, learners were disadvantaged when missing tests due to sickness and other causes. This is no longer a problem as learners are assessed continuously;
- Using only tests and examinations as assessment strategies was threatening to learners because that alone determined success or failure;
- Using continuous assessment strategies assists learners to correct their weakness as they learn. In other words, continuous assessment is both formative and summative; and
- Continuous assessment motivates learners (Department of Education, 2005).

All these help learners to be motivated and put more emphasis on their work throughout the year. They learn that every piece of work is important and assessment is continuous.

Features of continuous assessment (CASS) are that it:

- Enables the teacher to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievement and progress;
- It is an essential aspect of the total evaluation of every learner and
- Takes place over a long period, virtually continuously;
- It is diagnostic, enabling the teacher to monitor strength and to address the needs of the learner; and
- enables teachers to pace learners and provide enrichment for fast learners;
- It sets well defined targets (outcomes) for learners; and
- ensures that the learning programme is significant for the learner, by providing positive outcomes and prevents teaching for a test.
- Covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks.
- Is transparent as learners are aware of the criteria against which they are assessed;
- Requires the development of a sound assessment record to track the learning progress and

provide useful data for reporting and progression.

- It involves assessment of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, ensuring that content is not the only focus;
- It ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment techniques; and
- Ensure that summative assessment is only one component of the evaluation.

Educators must be aware of the fact that they are facing a challenge in which every learner must contribute towards his or her own achievement. All the assessment strategies must be interspersed and be recorded comprehensively.

2.8.2 Formative assessment

For the Department of Education (1998), the aim of formative assessment is to ensure that positive achievements of learners may be recognised and discussed and appropriate steps may be planned. Formative (from forming) assessment consists of evaluating a product while that product is in the process of being developed and to help shape it into its final form (Beyer in Kotze 1999).

Formative assessment allows teachers to inform the learner or to plan future learning experiences. Quality is determined by the evaluation, and feedback is generated while developing the new product.

To Melton in Kotze (1999), formative assessment is essential as an agent of feedback to students on *their performance*, as well as a means of *guiding* students on what they need to do to remedy apparent weakness. Formative assessment serves as feedback for improvement rather than for the purpose of grading. For Kotze' (1999), formative assessment comprises an integral part in the new shift to OBE, as against the traditional teacher-centred education in South Africa (SA) with its major emphasis on summative assessment.

The Department of Education (2005) says that formative assessment involves a developmental

approach which is designed to monitor and support the learning progress. It is built into learning activities on a continuous basis, guiding the learner and the educator through constructive feedback. It also informs the teacher's decisions with reference to selecting appropriate follow-up activities. It helps to determine what the learner's strengths and developmental needs are in relation to a particular outcome or criteria. Formative assessment indicates which situation helps or hides the learner's strengths. Formative assessment indicates which assessment tools, methods and techniques are appropriate for the learners.

Kramer (1999) on the other hand, regards formative assessment as something which happens during the learning process and gives information about progress so far. To him, formative assessment helps to make decisions about how to proceed with the learning process. It allows the educator to make adjustments and to take account of new issues, learning problems, changes or other factors that influence learning. He emphasises the need for both formative and summative assessment or assessment strategies that include both components. Increasingly, assessment relies on formative assessment to help learners and educators to check how learning is progressing.

Malan (1997) says that it is not really a specific form of assessment but a reason for assessing. The purpose of formative assessment is to give some kind of feedback to learners or teachers about learning progress, or lack thereof.

Feedback could be provided in a number of ways. Teacher assessors could

- Allocate a mark or a symbol to a piece of work;
- Respond to a learner's work by means of verbal comments; and
- Plot the profile of a learner's achievement based on the assessment of more than one piece of work.

On the other hand, Jacobs, Gawe and Vilakazi (2001) say that formative assessment takes place during the learning process. This type of assessment aims to inform the learning experience for each learner. In other words, formative assessment aims to help learners to progress.

Assessment may be formative, enabling a learner or the teacher to check the responses against certain criteria; it may be diagnostic, enabling at least an initial identification of strengths and potential areas of learning difficulty; it may be used to provide guidance and feedback; it may be the source of necessary external discipline without which a learner would fall too far behind in his or her studies. Assessment can also motivate learners through feedback from the teacher which can help learners to develop self-esteem and confidence in their development. The Department of Education summarises this by saying that formative assessment helps so that the positive achievement of the learner may be recognised and discussed and the appropriate next steps may be planned.

2.8.3 Norm-referenced assessment

Norm referencing implies that the teacher assesses a learner's competence by comparing it to the competence of other learners (the norm). Traditionally, this is done by means of class averages. Norm referencing does not indicate what the learner has learnt or what the learner has not yet learnt.

This does not refer to the way in which tests, examinations or other assignment tasks are conducted, but to the purposes for which the results of the assessment are used.

The Department of Education (2005) says norm referencing places candidates in rank order after assessing them (typically through an external examination) at a particular point in time (for example after ten years at school) and awards distinctions to a certain percentage at the top and other grades in descending rank order, until a certain percentage at the bottom that are labelled as failure.

The results could be used to determine whether:

- A learner's performance is average, below average or above average.
- Academic performance differs on genre, class or racial lines; and
- Two or more tests per examination papers are of the same standard.

Malan (1997) says norm-referenced assessment does not refer to the way in which tests, examinations or other assignment tasks are constructed, but for the purposes for which the results of the assessment are used. The results could, for example, be used to determine whether:

- A learner's performance is average, below average or above average;
- Academic performance differs on gender, class or radical lines; and
- Two or more test or examination papers are of the same standard.

Most teachers are familiar with norm-referenced assessment procedures. They regularly workout class averages and compare individual learner's achievement with those of other learners.

They also regularly use predetermined marks/norms to decide whether learners should pass or fail a test or examination or class. In most subjects, for example, 40% is the norm required for a pass and 80% the norm for gaining distinction. In addition to this, teachers are familiar with departmental requirements which specify that X% of learners (the norm) must pass or (fail) at the end of each school year. They know that, because of this norm, many learners who would otherwise not have passed do so and vice versa.

The first step in norm-referencing is the determination of a norm/standard which candidates are expected to achieve in a test or examination. Candidates marks are then measured against this norm to determine whether their performance can be regarded as good, average or poor. If the majority of candidates have performed better than the norm, the test or examination may be regarded as having been too easy. If, on the other hand, too many candidates have performed below the norm, the test/examination could be considered to have been too difficult, (Malan, 1997).

This kind of manipulation of marks has long been regarded as an advantage because it enables assessors to neutralise the external influence of test, examination or other assessment task on candidate's performance. Lately, however, these procedures have been severely criticised. Some of the more common criticisms are that norm-referenced assessment, being concerned with general

comparisons:

- Perpetuates class, racial and gender distinctions;
- Does not supply specific information about what an individual learner knows, understand or can do;
- Engineers results to suit various devious purposes;
- Is more concerned about statistics derived from assessment results than about the candidates/learners involved in the assessment.

It is criticisms like these that have given rise to the alternative ways of assessment. Kramer (1999) sees norm referenced assessment as describing a learner's progress by comparing it to the standards for example, she/he performed better than 50% of the class.

Clarke (2000) states that in the past, tests and examinations were used to determine how well a learner has done. A progress report would then indicate a symbol, percentage or mark to reflect how well the learner had fared in the tests or examinations. This kind of assessment will no longer be appropriate. With selection as the primary purpose, learners are measured against each other, with certain more or less fixed percentages of learners failing, passing or gaining distinctions. In essence this approach to assessment is competitive, selection for failure at school does not necessarily mean that a pupil is doomed to failure and that there will be no more tests, examinations, grades, marks or percentages (Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (2000). For the GDE (2000) examinations remain an important part of OBA.

A norm-referenced test is defined in terms of how a particular population responds to it and its standard is adjusted so that the scores of the population show a normal distribution.

2.8.4 Criterion-referenced assessment

Vermeulen (2000) says criterion-referenced means that learners should be assessed against criteria

that indicate if an outcome has been attained rather than against other learners' performances (Norm-referenced). Jacobs et al (2001) see criterion referencing as using criteria as reference points. Criteria constitute reference points against which other things can be assessed. But these criteria are specified beforehand and the learner is only assessed according to those criteria.

Malan (1997) says that as criticism of norm-referenced assessment increased, alternative ways of assessment started gaining popularity. One of this alternative is criterion-referenced assessment, a type of assessment which has an impact not only on how assessment results are interpreted and used, but also on how assessment tasks are commended. A brief look at some of its procedures will suggest the most obvious reasons for its increasing popularity.

In criterion-referenced assessment, the norm, which has been attained is not a predetermined mark but the demonstration of a particular ability or competence (specific knowledge, skills or understanding). The description of the abilities that the learners/candidates have to demonstrate are referred to as criteria and because learner performances have to be measured against the criteria, this form of assessment is called "criterion referenced assessment" which describes learner's progress in terms of set criteria or standards which are independent of other learner's achievements.

According to Kramer (1999), new approaches consider criterion referencing as being more fair and independent. It is also more attractive because the main question in criterion referencing is whether the individual has achieved the stated outcomes. Criterion referencing has been favoured as giving all learners an equal and fair opportunity to achieve outcomes, possibly in different ways.

If a learners meet the requirements, they attain the outcomes, if the learners not meet the criteria, they do not attain the outcome. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) indicates that reassessment will form part of assessment; a learner should not only have one chance to meet the criteria. In skill-based assessment it is possible that open-book exams, which test if learners are able to apply, understand, modify, re-organise information etc, will be introduced.

Instead of competitive system (which is norm-based), OBE advocates a criterion-based system, which means getting rid of the bell curve (normal distribution curve), phasing out grade point averages and comparative grading.

2.8.5 Summative Assessment (SA)

The Department of Education (1998) in South Africa refers to the recording of the overall achievement of a learner in a systematic way. The first function of assessment for Kotze (1999) is that a final summative evaluation judgment provide information on success and failure for selection and certification purposes. Summative (for summary) assessment is the traditional and familiar means of assessing and it measures what learners ultimately achieve on completion of a course or a programme of study.

MacKroby in Kotze (1999) regards summative assessment, as the summing up of the learner and indication of past learning experiences. To limit the use of selection and certification purposes, it represents a very narrow-minded perspective on summative assessment as an integral part of the “old” lesson structures was also used by teachers for diagnostic and remedial purposes at the end of a learning experience (like a lesson) to determine the quality of learning that has taken place. The Department of Education (1998) also explains that evaluative assessment compares an aggregate information about learner achievements so that it can be used to assist in curriculum development and evaluation of teaching and learning.

Jacobs et al (2001) say that summative assessment refers to the type of assessment which takes place at the end of the learning experience, and is almost always norm referenced. This usually means a major test or examination written at the end of a school term or school year. Summative assessment aims to find out how much content a learner can remember. Traditionally, promotion to the next grade depends on summative assessment.

The Department of Education (2005) also sees summative assessment as encompassing a series of

assessment activities, resulting in an overall report on the performance of the learner. It is used to determine how well a learner has progressed towards the achievement of selected outcomes. Summative assessment must be used to give formative feedback to the educator and to feed into the next planning session.

Malan (1997) says that summative assessment takes place when a piece of work, a module, a unit or a course has been completed. Summative assessment includes marking, grading and scoring of exercises, assignments and or examinations which are set with the specific purposes of determining how much or how little learners know about the work which has been completed. It could also include judgments of models, art works, needlework, dramatic presentations, presentations, among others. Since the results of normative assessment are often used for promotional purposes, summative assessment can be regarded as having a more judgmental nature.

Kramer (1999) says summative assessment is done at the end of a learning process, it summarises the progress made. It is the final statement of achievement used to make an evaluation of learning. The Department of Education (1998) concludes that summative assessment is used for recording the overall achievement of a learner in a systematic way.

The educators must know all these types of assessments so that they can be well equipped to face the challenges of assessment.

2.8.6 Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA)

The key in outcomes-based assessment, according to Spady (1994), is demonstration. In other words, it is up to learners to demonstrate their knowledge, ability, competence or proficiency and it is up to assessors to judge the quality of such a demonstration. On the basis of their judgments, assessors will then decide whether candidates' performance during the demonstration was sufficient for them to be awarded the necessary credits or qualifications.

To ensure fair and equitable judgments, assessors in an outcomes-based system of education will

have to identify, formulate and make known the criteria which they intend using during the assessment process. This means that criteria should be spelt out simply, clearly and understandably and should be known to all the candidates and assessors before assessment takes place.

According to Spady (1994), there are at least four criteria, which are crucial in determining whether a candidate's demonstration or performance was sufficient in terms of the criteria (learning outcomes).

These criteria are:

- Demonstrations of competence must take place at the culminating or end of the candidate's learning experience;
- Demonstrations must occur in some context or performance setting;
- Demonstrations must show evidence of significant learning; and
- Demonstrations must be of high quality.

The implications of these criteria are clear; assessment must be summative, performance-based and criterion-referenced. Summative assessment would obviously include continual assessment of completed tasks, exercises and others during the teaching-learning process but does not include the kind of continuous observation discussed earlier on. Continuous assessment should, by implication, be used only to monitor and to provide feedback.

2.9 ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The key to assessment is determining whether or not learning outcomes have been attained. Assessment has developmental and monitory function, although its fundamental goal is to promote learning. Feedback from assessment informs teaching and learning and allows the critique of outcomes, methodology and materials. All assessment must be fair, valid, reliable and practical.

2.9.1 The new assessment techniques:

- Formative with summative components;

- Criterion-referenced with a place for norm-referenced marking; and
- Continuous for formative diagnostic purposes.

The reasons for assessing learners' work can differ from situation to situation, from candidate to candidate and from assessor to assessor.

However, some of the more common reasons why institutions of learning make use of assessment are:

- To determine whether learners acquired the required knowledge and or skills and have grasped the concepts or processes they were supposed to;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of a learning programme or process;
- To place learners in particular grades or courses;
- To compare one learner's (or one group of learners) result with those of other learners;
- To identify learning strengths, weaknesses or problems; and
- To inform learners about individual progress and development (Jacobs et al 2001).

How and when assessment should take place is a matter of professional judgment. Some teachers assess continuously, others assess only when it is absolutely necessary. What is important is that the manner in which assessment is conducted and the point at which assessment takes place should support the reasons for its taking place at all.

Teachers are familiar with most of the norms of assessment, namely norm-referenced assessment, criterion-referenced assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment and continuous assessment.

A major element of OBE is that outcomes are clear to both the educators and the learners. A result of this clarity is that learners are fully aware of what they need to do to show that they have achieved set outcomes. In this case, it is positive for learners to monitor their own progress and the progress of other learners engaged in the same activity. It is not only possible but also necessary that learners

check to see what kind of progress they are making. When learners assess their own and other's learning they:

- Identify areas of weakness that need more attention;
- Monitor their pace of learning and can assess their time management and other skills;
- Have an opportunity to think of alternative approaches to the learning tasks;
- Learn about learning by reflecting on their own and other's work;
- Understand what assessment is and how assessment happens;
- Take ownership of learning by becoming involved in setting standard and criteria as well as in measuring according to criteria that they have been party to creating;
- Are encouraged to think analytically and to articulate their real thoughts about their own and other's progress;
- Can give constructive comment to each other to assist fellow learners; and
- Benefit from formative assessment in preparation for formal and summative assessment.

2.9.2 Self-assessment

Teachers should structure tasks-assignments in such a way that they will provide ample opportunities for learners to practice self-assessment and revisit past performances with a view to improving on them. Learners could, for example, be required to judge the quality of their work before handing it in. Through this simple technique learners will tend not to hand in anything but quality work. Apart from encouraging learners to accept responsibility for their own learning, self-assessment allows the teacher to share in learner's expectations and achievements in a friendly, co-operative way (Malan 1997).

Jacobs et al (2001) say that learners need to be taught how to assess their own work. This is called self-assessment. Self-assessment encourages learners to assume more responsibility for their own work. Teachers can involve learners in actually selecting the assessment criteria to be used. The assessment criteria chosen depend on what the teacher expects learners to achieve in his or her

lessons.

2.9.3 The importance of self-assessment

- It helps learners to think critically about their own work;
- If done properly, learners have a good idea about their progress;
- It encourages learners to take more responsibility for their own learning;
- Teachers find out what learners value as important in their own work;
- Teachers can give learners much more meaningful feedback; and
- Involving others in continuous assessment does not only mean self-assessment, peer can also assess one another (Jacobs et al 2001).

2.9.4 Peer-Assessment

Malan (1997) consider peer assessment as that which allows learners to share in and contribute towards the efforts of their classmates. Such practices often lead to self-reflection and more honest assessment of themselves and their own efforts. Criteria for peer and self-assessment should encourage them to compare their work to specified standards rather than to personal opinions. They should, for example, assess a piece of work as good because it is well-structured and informative, rather than because it is my favourite.

Jacobs et al (2001) say that learners may be asked to assess the work of their classmates as peer as well. This is called peer-assessment. A peer is someone who is either the same age as you or in a similar position as you.

Advantages of peer assessment

Peer assessment is a real attempt at involving learners in assessment. It is a more transparent form of assessment as it involves more than one person. Group or pair activities are especially suited to peer assessment. Learners are encouraged to help each other in peer activities.

Disadvantages of peer assessment

Peer assessment is very time-consuming at first, as teachers need to take great care in explaining assessment activities to learners and moderating their early efforts. It usually takes learners about a year to gain enough experience with peer assessment for it to be successful.

2.9.5 Group Assessment

When teachers implement the new curriculum they will use a lot of group activities in their classrooms. This has come about as a result of the Department of Education's policy on critical outcomes (1997).

The second critical outcome in OBE stresses the importance of group work. Learners should be able to work effectively with others in a team, group, organisation and community (Malan 1997). Group work activities were not assessed in the past. It is very difficult to assess collaborative activities if the task is not really a group task and only one learner does the work. Some activities are better done in pairs or groups of learners and some activities are better done individually.

Many teachers find group work very difficult to organise when they first begin to implement in their classrooms. If group work is well organised, it is easier to assess. Teachers should be encouraged to ask themselves assessment questions like:-

- Do some of the learners prefer to work alone?
- Why is this so?
- Are the tasks clear enough?
- Was the task really collaborative (Can only be resolved together)?
- How will I find which learners do not enjoy group work? and
- What reasons are there for this? (Vermeulen, 2000).

After learners have worked together in groups, the teacher will often ask them to present their findings to the rest of the class. These different group presentations need to be assessed. It is the teacher's responsibility to assess this type of work in an appropriate way.

2.9.6 Portfolio assessment

Not many teachers use portfolios yet as a way of recording assessment. Once teachers are comfortable with continuous assessment, portfolio assessment can be introduced to the school. Teachers need a great deal of encouragement and assistance from the principal and site management team when using portfolios. A gap exists between assessing theory and assessing practice and portfolio assessment can help teachers bridge the gap.

A learner must have access to his or her own portfolio at all times as it will be continuously added to. Portfolios should be kept in the learner's classrooms. Teachers need to allocate space for them. A box in the corner of the classroom could be a good place (Vermeulen 2000). The teacher teaches that learners should also have access to the file. This means that the portfolio should be stored in a place convenient for both the learner and the teacher. Someone in the site management team must see the portfolio at the end of each term and parents should see the portfolio at parent's meetings. In other words the portfolio is a document which the learner manages and which is also used to give parents important feedback on their children's progress.

Learners manage their portfolios themselves and hence are enabled to authentically participate in assessing their own work. However, teachers need to provide their learners with assistance in managing their portfolios as well as organizing it.

Forgartly and Stoehr in Vermeulen (2000) suggest that portfolio use consists of four actions:

Collection: Learner's work is collected into a portfolio to show evidence of learning.

Selection: The educator and the learner select which work gives the best evidence and should be included in the portfolio.

Reflection: The learner reflects on what his or her portfolio shows. The educator and learner can also use the portfolios as a basis for discussion about the evidence.

Inspection: The portfolio is used as a basis for assessing whether the outcomes have been achieved. It can also be used to decide what happens next.

The benefit of portfolios is that they show us the growth and development of learners over time. They also provide space for the learner to note their personal insights, comments and feelings as part of assessment.

2.10 ASSISTANCE IN ASSESSMENT THAT CAN BE GIVEN TO TEACHERS

Schools, as learning organisations (Davidoff and Lazarus 1997) are places where learners are helped to learn. Assessment is one-way teachers can help learners to learn and to achieve more. Teachers do not always assess learners' correctly as they do not always have all information necessary to make a valid assessment. At other times they just make poor judgments.

The principal and school management team (SMT) are responsible for improving the methods of assessment-used by teachers. Linked to this is the development of new strategies to help teachers interpret and use the result of their assessment. The school management team also plays an important role in helping find suitable ways to report on the result of learners' assessment to parents.

The school management team can give teachers assistance in developing assessment for learners in the following ways, according to Jacobs, et al (2001).

- When educators have to plan assessment activities together in the new curriculum, the

school management team can help by making time available during the school day for curriculum meetings. This could give teachers the opportunity to meet and plan continuous assessment activities. One school management team member could be available to meet with the teacher of each grade.

- When educators share the use of the assessment activities in their classroom, the school management can help by providing support for classroom practices. This support could be in the form of lesson demonstration by school management team members and follow-up class visits.
- When educators have to evaluate the assessment activities in their classrooms, the school management team can help them to become reflective, this means that they are encouraged to think critically about their practices and to look for ways to improve it.
- When educators have to record the assessment they make about learners, the school management team can help by providing exercise and record books as well as models for teachers to follow. The school management team can also give them a safe place to keep their assessment records.
- When educators have to report assessment to parents, the school management can help by establishing deadlines. They can also form a link with the parents and organise follow-up meetings with educators, (Jacobs and others, 2001).

2.11 CONCLUSION

Educators must ensure that they understand these assessment strategies so that they can face challenges and implications of assessment. By understanding these strategies they will be able to know which strategies can work best and when.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design and methodology used for this research is the qualitative approach. In this case the qualitative design allowed the researcher to use questionnaire and interviews in collecting the necessary data for analysis (See Appendix A and B).

It is usually said that the research method must be valid and reliable. The validity of the measurement instrument influences the extent to which one can learn something about the phenomenon one is studying, the significance in the data analysis and the extent to which conclusions can be drawn from the data (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001)

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As previously mentioned, the researcher used a qualitative research. White (2003) explains that qualitative research employs an inductive research strategy. Researchers develop concepts, insights and understanding from patterns in data, rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses or theories. Often qualitative studies are taken because there is a lack of theory to adequately explain a phenomenon. There is thus no hypothesis to be deduced from theory to guide the investigation.

Qualitative researchers are flexible in how they go about conducting their studies. The qualitative social scientists are encouraged to use their own methodology in this type of research. There are guidelines to be followed but not rules. The methods serve the researcher, therefore the researcher is not a slave to procedures and techniques (White, 2003). These enable researchers to apply their skills in the research by using guidelines. Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must physically go to people, setting, sites, institution (the field) in order to observe behaviour in the natural

setting (Merriman, 1998). The field here is the learning institutions that are the primary schools in the Atamelang district. The researcher went physically to the educators to hand out questionnaires and conduct interviews.

Qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what a researcher has learned about a phenomenon. There is likely to be researcher descriptions of context, the player involved and the activities of interest. In addition, data in the form of participants' own words, direct citations from documents, excerpts of videotapes are likely to be included to support the findings of the study (Merriman, 1998).

Jack and Norman (2000) summarize the general characteristics of qualitative research as:

- The natural setting is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research.
- Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.
- Qualitative researchers are concerned with process as well as product.
- Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively.
- How people make sense out of their lives is a major concern to qualitative researchers.

In this study educators were used as role players in the research. They were asked about their daily work of assessment of learners using OBE assessment strategies.

Data was collected from educators by using questionnaires and interviews. These are in form of words which are valued in a qualitative research. The research was done in a natural setting. The educators were involved in the research in their schools. They were questioned about their learners.

3.3 POPULATION

Jack and Norman (2000) define population as the group that is of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalise the result of the study. In educational research, the population of interest is usually a group of persons (students, teachers or individuals) who possess certain characteristics. In some cases the population may be defined as a group of classrooms, schools or even facilities.

Mouton (2001) defines population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying.

Educators and learners in the intermediate phase of Atamelang district constituted the population of this study. This district was chosen because of its location. Atamelang district is mainly rural. Atamelang has 115 primary schools with 347 educators and 13 852 learners.

3.3.1 Sample

Jack and Norman (2000) define a sample in a research study as any group from which information is obtained. White (2000) says that a sample can be seen as a group of subjects or situation elected from a large population. If a selection procedure is responsible for unrepresentativeness in the sample, the sample is biased to the selection procedure.

Representativeness is always important when the researcher wants to generalise from the sample to the larger population. De Vos (2000) argues that representativeness means that the sample should have approximately the characteristics of the population relevant to the research in question.

Different designs may be more or less appropriate in different situations. In this case stratified random sampling design was used. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) say that in

stratified random sampling, the researcher samples equally from each one of the layers in the overall population.

Qualitative method was used. The sample was chosen from Atamelang district. It has 115 primary schools; 10 schools were used for this research. Learners and educators in intermediate phase were used. The intermediate phase has three grades and these are grades four, five and six. A total of thirty educators were involved in this study, ten grade four educators, ten grade five and ten grade six educators. A total of 300 learners were used. In each grade 100 learners were used. The ratio of educator to learners was 1 : 10.

Random sampling was used. Grades four, five and six in intermediate phase form the strata. It has three groups of distinctly different grades of individuals. Equal samples from each of the three grades were taken. Stratified sampling has the advantage of guaranteeing equal representation of each of the identified stratum. It is most appropriate when those strata are equal in size in the overall population as well.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The researcher used the questionnaire and interview questions for collecting data from the intermediate phase educators (See Appendices A and B). The questionnaire was used because it is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects, can ensure anonymity and contains questions written for specific purposes. A questionnaire include questions or statements, but in all cases the subject is responding to something written. Interview questions provide access to what is inside a person's mind, makes it possible to assess what a person knows (knowledge or information) what a person likes or dislikes (values and preferences) and what a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).

Validity

Seliger (1989) explains validity as the extent to which the data collection procedure measures what it intends to measure. From the research, the data collection procedures

were meant to measure the extent to which educators use Outcome Based Assessment strategies in a manner that reflects competence and full understanding of these strategies. The procedures successfully measured the understanding of OBE assessment for intermediate educators. Questionnaires and interviews were used (See Appendix A and B).

Reliability

Seliger (1989) states that the criterion of reliability provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate. The use of appropriate sampling procedures, data collection tools and appropriate statistical measures to ensure reliable results in this study were used. The data collection procedure was done in form of questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

White (2003) describes a questionnaire as an instrument with open or closed questions or statements to which a respondent must react. Different kinds of questionnaires can be designed, such as mailed or posted questionnaires, telephonic questionnaires or the group questionnaires. In this case the researcher handed out personally the questionnaires and these were individual questionnaires. The aim of this questionnaire was to draw information from the educators and learners and find out how they were coping with the OBE assessment strategies.

Babbie as cited by McMillian and Schumacher (1997) suggests the following guidelines for writing effective questions or statements:

- Make items clear. An item achieves clarity when all respondents interpret it in the same way.
- Avoid double-barrelled questions. A question should be limited to a single idea or concept.
- Respondents must be competent. It is important that the respondents provide

reliable information.

- Questions should be relevant. If respondents are asked questions that are unimportant to them or are about things they have not thought about or care about, it is likely that the subjects will respond carelessly. The results will be misleading.
- Simple items are best. Long and complicated items should be avoided because they are more difficult to understand and respondents may be unwilling to try to understand them.
- Avoid negative items. Negatively stated items should be avoided because they are easy to misinterpret.
- Avoid biased items and terms. The way in which items are worded or the inclusion of certain terms may encourage particular responses more than others.

The study was about the use of OBE assessment strategies by intermediate phase educators, their challenges and implications. The questions were centred around the OBE assessment strategies and educators and learners were the respondents. Questions designed are clear and easily understood.

3.4.1.1 Close-ended questions

Close-ended questions were used in this research (See Appendix A). The questions permit only certain responses. Qualification and analysis of results may be carried out easily and effectively. Close-ended questions should be used where the answer categories are discrete, distinct and relatively few in number.

The advantages of close-ended questions are that:

- The answers are standard and can be compared from person to person.
- The answers are much easier to code and analyse.
- The respondent is often very clear about the meaning of the questions.
- The chances for irrelevant answers are limited to the minimum because

appropriate answers categories are provided.

- It is easier for a respondent to answer because he or she only has to choose a category (White, 2003).

The study used the questions relevant to the information needed. All the questions were about assessment. The educators were only expected to choose the answer or answers they felt were correct. That ensured that they only answered what was expected from them.

3.4.1.2 Ways to ensure completion of the questionnaire

When the questionnaires are handed out directly to a group of people under the researcher's supervision, a high response rate is more likely. It is more difficult to find an acceptable response rate when questionnaires are sent by mail to respondents (White, 2003). In this case the questionnaires were handed personally. Some of the educators completed them immediately, some completed them later. Individual appointments for collecting the questionnaire were made by educators. It was checked whether all the questions were answered immediately in the presence of educators.

The targeted number of educators was thirty. Twenty five questionnaires were returned. Five educators were not found due to the "in addition or in excess system" which is done in ratio of educators to learners that is 1:35. If the ratio is small some of the educators will have to leave the school to another school with a bigger number of learners. The educators had already relocated to the schools of their own choice. Eighty three per cent of the questionnaires were returned.

3.4.1.3 The cover letter

Thomas and Nelson (1996) say that the success of the initial mailing depends on the effectiveness of the cover letter that accompanies the questionnaire. If it explains the purpose and importance of the survey in a professional manner and if the purposes are

worthy studying, the respondent still likely become interested in the problem and will be inclined to co-operate.

- An effective cover letter should always ensure respondents that their privacy and anonymity will be maintained.
- The appearance of the cover letter is just important as the appearance of the questionnaire.
- Identify the researcher himself/herself by name and position.

These guidelines were used and ensured that the anonymity and privacy of educators involved in the research was maintained.

3.4.1.4 Interview

A semi-structured interview guide was developed (See Appendix B). The aim of the interview was to draw information from educators and learners of intermediate phase. Chosen educators and learners were interviewed to determine their level of understanding of OBE assessment strategies. That also included what was needed to be done in improving their knowledge and performance.

The educators were allowed to choose a venue for interviews that allowed them to be free and give individual responses. They were individually interviewed privately. Arguments with the educators involved in the research were avoided by writing down their answers as they were given. The respondents were all given equal time. Thirty educators were targeted in this research. Twenty five educators, were interviewed. Five educators were not interviewed due to the reason given earlier.

CHAPTER FOUR

1.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on the results of the empirical investigation conducted to examine challenges and implications in the use of Outcomes-Based Education assessment strategies by intermediate phase educators in the Atamelang district of the North West Province of Republic of South Africa.

4.2 REVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

Two instruments for data collection were used which were questionnaires and interviews. Each of the instrument it was managed to collect information, which is analysed here after.

Questionnaires were developed and administered on the educators. The reason is already explained. This happened during the collection of data. Thirty questionnaires were distributed and only twenty-five were returned.

The total number of educators targeted in the research was thirty, twenty-five were used for the research. These are all primary schools educators in Atamelang District.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 1: School location

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	Rural	21	84%
2.	Urban	-	-
3.	Semi-Urban	4	16%
	Total	25	100%

The location of schools used in the study is mostly rural. Table 1 shows that 84% percent of the schools are in the rural area while 16% are in a semi-urban area. The location has an impact on the teaching and assessment strategies of educators because they are far from the urban areas and it is quite possible that information disseminated reaches them late. The official communication reaches them late due to lack of timeous collection of official circulars from Area project offices.

Table 2: Gender distribution

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	Male	8	32%
2.	Female	17	68%
Total		25	100%

Table 2 shows that there are more female educators in rural schools than male educators. This is due to the fact that more male educators prefer teaching in secondary schools than in primary schools. The stereotype of motherhood is also a contributing factor. It is believed that mothers are good at nurturing the younger children than their fathers, therefore female educators teach in primary schools.

Table 3: Age distribution

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	20 - 29	3	12%
2.	30 - 39	13	52%
3.	Above 40 years	9	36%
Total		25	100%

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents in the study are middle aged. This is because government has suspended employing educators. They believe that there is a need for more Science educators at the present moment. Teachers in the system are those that have long experience and are elderly.

Table 4: Professional qualifications

		Number		Percentages %
1.	Primary Teacher Certificate	M	F	44%
		11	3 8	
2.	Secondary Teacher Certificate	-	-	-
3.	Diploma in Education	9	2 7	36%
4.	University Degree	4	2 2	16%
5.	Post graduate Degree	1	1 0	4%
	Total	25	8 17	100%

Table 4 shows that 44% of educators have primary teacher certificate. They live far and accessibility of newspaper is a problem. Distance learning is also a problem. This is because of financial constraints. Distance learning includes contact lessons, typing and posting which all involve money. There are also no libraries around them.

Table 5: Academic qualification

		Number (N)		Percentages %
1.	Below grade 12	M	F	24%
		6	2 4	
2.	Grade 12	11	1 10	44%
3.	Junior Degree	5	4 1	20%
4.	Honours Degree	2	- 2	8%
5.	Masters Degree	1	1 -	4%
6.	Others	-	-	-
	Total	25	8 17	100%

Table 5 outlines the academic qualifications of educators. Only 8% and 4% of educators have honours degrees and masters degree respectively.

Table 6: Positions

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	Principal	2	8%
2.	Deputy Principal	3	12%
3.	Head of Department	5	20%
4.	Educator	15	60%
	Total	25	100%

The study involved mostly educators who are at post level one because they are the ones who are involved in continuous assessment, 60% of them were involved while 20% are the departmental heads who supervise and ensure that assessment is done correctly and correct measures are used. The principals supervise departmental heads, to ensure that correct measures of assessment strategies are used.

Table 7: Terms of Service

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	Permanent	16	64%
2.	Temporary	07	28%
3.	Contract	-	-
4.	Relief	02	8%
	Total	25	100%

Table 7 shows that 64% of educators are permanently employed, 28% are temporarily employed and 8% are relief educators who are employed permanently but have no permanent places to teach. They assist where there is a need for an educator. Temporary educators are employed on contract.

Table 8: Teaching experience

		Number (N)	Percentages %
1.	0 - 5 years	2	8%
2.	6 - 10 years	2	8%
3.	11 - 15 years	9	36%
4.	More than 15 years	12	48%
Total		25	100%

Table 8 shows that 48% of educators have a longer increasing experience. This variable plays an important role in the study because it shows that the lesser experience the educator has, the more she or he will be able to follow the new assessment strategies than those with more experience. This is because they do not resist any changes but educators with more experience are resistant to change. They are the ones who resist the new assessment strategies and teaching methods as outlined in the government policy.

4.4 ASSESSMENT

Table 9: Knowledge of Learners by Education

		Agree Completely		Agree to some extent		Undecided		Disagrees to some extent		Disagree completely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	I know all learners in my classroom by names	25	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

2.	I know all learners in my classroom by their performance	7	28%	11	44%	5	20%	2	8%	-	-
3.	I know them by their strengths and weaknesses	8	32%	9	36%	4	16%	3	12%	1	4%
4.	I use those whose performance is outstanding to help others	5	20%	8	32%	7	28%	4	16%	1	4%
5.	I cater for their individual differences	6	24%	9	36%	6	24%	2	8%	2	8%

The data reveal that educators know their learners by names and their performance. They also know them by their strengths and weaknesses. This helps educators in using the relevant assessment technique for the different learners. The technique will depend on the learner's ability. They do not use learners with outstanding performance to help others.

Table 10: What is Assessed?

		Agree Completely		Agree to some extent		Undecided		Disagrees to some extent		Disagree completely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Learners' performance in relation to stated outcomes	5	20%	7	28%	10	40%	2	8%	1	4%
2.	The educators' quality of teaching	3	12%	2	8%	2	8%	8	32%	10	40%
3.	Educators' assessment strategies	3	12%	8	32%	8	32%	4	16%	2	8%
4.	Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners to learning	6	24%	7	28%	6	24%	2	8%	4	16%
5.	Outcomes a learner has to achieved	4	16%	5	20%	8	32%	3	12%	5	20%

Table 10 shows that the educators assess learner's performance in relation to stated outcomes. The educators' qualities of teaching and assessment strategies are not assessed. Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners to learning are ignored. The educators concentrate on the subject matter they have taught learners.

Assessment of learners' performance in relation to stated outcomes was acknowledged by 20% of educators. While 12% agree on assessment of educators' quality of learning and 40% disagree completely. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners to learning is acknowledged by only 24% of educators.

Table 11: Reasons for Assessing or Assessment

		Agree Completely		Agree to some extent		Undecided		Disagrees to some extent		Disagree completely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Planning the learning programme	10	40%	8	32%	5	20%	2	8%	1	4%
2.	Tracking learners' progress	12	48%	4	16%	3	12%	6	24%	-	-
3.	Diagnosing problems and helping learners to improve their work	9	36%	7	28%	5	20%	3	12%	2	8%
4.	Adjusting the pace of teaching and learning	13	52%	5	20%	6	24%	1	4%	-	-
5.	Judging the effectiveness of the learning programme	8	32%	6	24%	7	28%	4	16%	1	4%
6.	Assess your own teaching	5	20%	6	24%	8	32%	4	16%	2	8%

Table 11 shows that educators assess mainly for tracking learner's progress, and adjusting the pace of teaching and 48% of educators agree completely. Learners' problems are not taken care of. This is shown by 52% of educators who believe in adjusting the teaching and learning pace. The planning of the learning programme is not done in accordance with the assessment standards, 40% of educators agree completely.

Table 12: The importance of Continuous assessment

		Agree Completely		Agree to some extent		Undecided		Disagrees to some extent		Disagree completely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Continuous assessment is used to help the learner and the learning process	11	44%	3	12%	4	16%	5	20%	2	8%
2.	Enables the teacher to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievements, and progress	2	8%	4	16%	5	20%	3	12%	11	44%

3.	It makes more use of criterion referencing than norm-referencing	4	16%	5	20%	8%	32%	6	24%	2	8%
4.	It is diagnostic, enabling the teacher to monitor strengths and address the needs of the learner	9	36%	7	28%	7	28%	2	8%	-	-
5.	It enables teachers to pace learners and to provide enrichment for fast learners	12	48%	3	12%	4	16%	4	16%	2	8%
6.	It covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks	7	28%	4	16%	8	32%	5	20%	1	4%
7.	It ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment methods, both formal and informal	12	48%	3	12%	6	24%	3	12%	2	8%

8.	It encourages teachers to appraise their own work	15	60%	4	16%	3	12%	3	12%	-	-
9.	It requires the development of a sound assessment record to track learner progress and to provide useful data for reporting and progression	16	64%	2	8%	5	20%	2	8%	-	-
10.	It ensures that the tests and examinations are only one component of evaluation	17	68%	4	16%	2	8%	2	8%	-	-

Table 12: The importance of assessment

The findings reveal that 44% of educators believe that continuous assessment is used to help the learner and the learning process. It is also agreed/indicated that the tests and examinations are component of evaluation. The educators are not certain about continuous assessment. They make use of more criterion referencing than norm referencing technique. The differences between norm referencing and criterion referencing is not known by 32% of educators.

They do not believe that any planned learning experience can be used to assess learner's achievement and progress. Educators are still hooked to using their prescribed books. They plan learning experiences using their prescribed books as well as assessment activities that are contained in the books. The educators' believe that assessment is diagnostic, which is enabling the teacher to monitor the strengths of learners and less emphasis on addressing the needs of learners.

The results ensure that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessments methods, both formal and informal. They cover a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks. It also requires the development of a sound assessment record to track learner progress and provides useful data for reporting and for progression.

Table 13: Frequency use of indicated assessment strategies

		Consistently		Occasionally		Rarely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Self-assessment	15	60%	7	28%	2	8%
2.	Peer-assessment	6	24%	11	44%	8	32%
3.	Group-assessment	5	20%	13	52%	7	28%
4.	Profile	4	16%	4	16%	17	68%
5.	Portfolio	16	64%	7	28%	2	8%

The data revealed that portfolio and self-assessment are consistently used, peer and group-assessment are occasionally used while the profile is rarely used.

Table 14: Frequency in Assessment

		Consistently		Occasionally		Rarely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Daily	7	28%	9	36%	9	36%
2.	Weekly	10	40%	8	32%	7	28%
3.	Monthly	15	60%	6	24%	4	16%
4.	Quarterly	13	52%	7	28%	5	20%
5.	Half-yearly	19	76%	4	16%	1	4%
6.	End-of-year	20	80%	3	12%	2	8%

The educators are still used to monthly, half-yearly and end-of-yearly assessment (80%) for frequency in assessment. These are done consistently. Weekly and quarterly assessment are occasionally used. The department officials who must be constantly consulted for help are rarely consulted. The educators are still not aware of the importance of continuous assessment. They just assess and record assessment marks. At the end they do not use these marks for the progression of learners.

Table 15: Involvement of learners, educators, parents and departmental officials in assessment of learner's progress

		Consistently		Occasionally		Rarely	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Learners	6	24%	12	48%	7	28%
2.	Educators	15	60%	4	16%	6	24%
3.	Parent	3	12%	19	76%	3	12%
4.	School Management	10	40%	12	48%	3	12%
5.	Department officials	4	16%	17	68%	4	16%

Table 15 shows that educators still consider themselves as the only stakeholders who are responsible for the assessment of learners. The parents are mostly neglected in assessment and are only given report of their children's performance. School Management and departmental officials are occasionally involved in assessment.

4.5 EDUCATORS INTERVIEWS (APPENDIX B)

The interview questions revealed that educators believe that they are the only stakeholders responsible for assessment of learners. The parents and learners are given the performance results half-yearly and at the end of the year by using report forms. Explanation of symbols used in the report are given to parents. The learners get their performance from their parents.

The educators assess the contents or subject matter they are teaching the learners. The learners also do some projects. These are compiled in the learners' portfolios. The educators give learners explanation symbols for their projects. They also assess using

tests and examinations. They consider tests and examinations' marks as the most important and clear indicators of the performance of learners.

Educators record the learners' performance in their booklets. These booklets are used to record all the learners' work including projects. The School Management Team (SMT) monitors assessment by looking at educators' booklets, checking the reports and schedules. The reports are given out twice in a year to the learners. These are half-yearly reports and end of year reports. The schedules are done once at the end of the year.

Outcomes-Based Assessment requires that all stake-holders must be involved in the assessment of learners. The stake-holders include learners, educators, parents, school management teams and department officials. The educators are facing greatest challenges by not involving all the stake-holders. They consider themselves as the only people responsible for assessment. They only give other stakeholders progress of learners in form of reports.

Educators are still using tests and examinations in reporting the learners' progress. The learners do projects but these are not included in the final report or their performance. The educators use these reports to inform parents about learners' performance. OBE assessment strategies are not fully used because educators are having a problem of recording assessment.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the finding of the study conducted to establish challenges and implications in the use of Outcomes-Based Education assessment strategies by intermediate phase educators in the Atamelang District of North West Province of the Republic of South Africa. Results of the study from table 1 to 15 show that the educators are not conversant with the use of Outcomes-Based Assessment strategies.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief summary of the study. Furthermore, a reflection on the major findings of the study is provided as well as recommendation of the use of Outcomes Based Assessment strategies and how educators can be helped.

5.2 SUMMARY

In chapter one the purpose for the study and rationale for the study are outlined. Intermediate educators express the common about the use of Outcomes Based assessment strategies. The educators are faced with the changing curriculum and must also equip themselves with the necessary skills to go along and assessment is one of them.

Chapter two outlines the nature of scope of Outcomes-Based assessment strategies. From the literature consulted on assessment in emerges that learners are assessed to acquire the required knowledge and skills, evaluate the effectiveness of a learning programme or process, place learners in particular grades or courses, identify learning strengths, weaknesses or problems and to inform learners about individual progress and development. All these must be done on a continuous basis thus continuous assessment.

Chapter three of this study explains the methodology of the empirical research. The empirical methods use were a questionnaire, interview and observation. The method of data collection was presented. Literature was also consulted to obtain a better understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods used in the research. It also presented and analysed the data collected to determine the use of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) assessment strategies by intermediate phase educators.

Chapter four provides the reflection on data presentation and analysis. This included review of respondents, demographical data as well as the views of respondents on assessment.

5.3 FINDINGS

The literature revealed that outcomes assessment is rooted on continuous assessment. The learners must be assessed on a continuous basis using all the relevant strategies. These strategies include peer-assessment, profile and portfolio. The learners, school management, parents and departmental officials should be considered (or involved) in assessment.

- Data collected revealed that there is still a lot to be done concerning assessment. Educators are not conversant with the use of OBE assessment strategies. They are still glued to tests and examinations. Some assess the OBE easy but when compiling the reports they considered tests and examinations. These challenges need an urgent attention.
- Not much data have been presented. The tables are on issues not relevant to the process of assessment.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings of research study have shown that educators lack enough knowledge on the use of Outcomes-Based Assessment strategies.

Based on these research findings I recommend the following:

- The Education Department of North West Province must set up lengthy and well-structured in-service training programmes regarding OBE Assessment strategies. These in-service training programmes can take the form of workshops, school

based training, seminars and conferences. These must include follow up support from departmental officials. The main aim of these programmes will be mainly employed for promoting and enhancing professional development to help educators to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies that will make them effective educators.

- Learners to be developed in self-evaluation, peer evaluation and group evaluation. The main aim for development in these types of evaluation is to learn and appreciate others and their way of learning.
- Effective physical resource centres must be made accessible within the working environments of educators. These can be made centrally located venues that serve as a resource centre for a cluster of schools. These centres should be multi purpose entities to provide models of good practice and scarce resources for schools in poor socio-economic environments. They could provide consultation services from experts on effective OBE assessment strategies.
- Human support services must be put in place to promote the level of literacy in rural and semi-rural areas. These can be in form of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres in collaboration with the Department of Education. These will help parents to be actively involved in their learners learning.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The proposed research areas for further research are the following:

- The effectiveness of in-service training programmes based on educators.
- The level of understanding of peer assessment, self assessment and group assessment by learners.
- The extent of knowledge of OBE assessment strategies by learners' parents.
- what are the problems encountered by the professional support services in training and workshopping educators in OBE assessment strategies?

- The challenges faced by professional support staff in the training of the implementation of OBE assessment strategies by educators.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Educators need knowledge and skills in order to face challenges encountered in OBE assessment strategies. These can be enhanced by structured and effective in-service training programme, human and physical resources.

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APPENDICES

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

THE PROJECT IS IN PURSUIT OF POST GRADUATE DEGREE

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

Dear Participants

2. You are kindly requested to complete this questionnaire by ticking (✓) in the appropriate box and giving the necessary information where required.
3. Please note that you are required to write down your name.
4. Any information given will be treated with confidentiality.

1. Your school

1.1 Location of the school:

1.	Rural	
2.	Urban	
3.	Semi-urban	

1.2 Type of school:

1.	Primary school	
2.	Middle school	
3.	High school	

1.3 School circuit

2. Personal details

2.1 Genders:

1.	Male	
2.	Female	

2.2 Your age category

1.	20 - 29 years	
2.	30 - 39 years	
3.	40 years and above	

3. **Qualifications**

3.1 Professional:

		No	Yes	
1.	Primary teachers certificate			
2.	Secondary teachers certificate			
3.	Diploma in education			Specify:
4.	University degree			Specify:
5.	Other			Specify:

3.2 Academic

		No	Yes
1.	Below grade 12		
2.	Grade 12		
3.	Junior degree		
4.	Honours degree		
5.	Masters degree		
6.	Others please specify		

4. **In Service**

4.1 Positions held

1.	Principal	
2.	Deputy Principal	
3.	Head of Department	

4.	Educator	
5.	Other (Please specify)	

4.2 Terms of service

1.	Permanent	
2.	Temporary	
3.	Contact	
4.	Relief	

4.3 Teaching experience

1.	0 - 5 years	
2.	6 - 10 years	
3.	11 - 15 years	
4.	More than 15 years	

5. **Assessment**

In answering the following questions from 5.1 to 5.4 please indicate your answer to the statements by using the following scale:

- 1 = Agree completely
- 2 = Agree to some extent
- 3 = Undecided
- 4 = Disagree to some extent
- 5 = Disagree completely

5.1 How do you know your learners?

		Agree completely 1	Agree to some extent 2	Undecided 3	Disagree to some extent 4	Disagree completely
5.1.1	I know all learners in my classroom by names					
5.1.2	I know all learners in my classroom by their performance					
5.1.3	I know them by their strength and weakness					
5.1.4	I use those whose performance is outstanding to help others					
5.1.5	I cater for their individual differences					

5.2 What do you assess?

		Agree completely 1	Agree to some extent 2	Undecided 3	Disagree to some extent 4	Disagree completely
5.2.1	Learners' performance in relation to stated outcomes					
5.2.2	The educators' quality of teaching					
5.2.3	Educators' assessment strategies					
5.2.4	Knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of learners to learning					
5.2.5	Outcomes a learner has achieved					

5.3 Why do you assess?

		Agree completely 1	Agree to some extent 2	Undecided 3	Disagree to some extent 4	Disagree completely
5.3.1	I assess for					
5.3.2	Planning the learning programme					
5.3.3	Tracking learners' progress					
5.3.4	Diagnosing problems and helping learners to improve their work					
5.3.5	Adjusting the pace of teaching and learning					
5.3.6	Judging the effectiveness of the learning programme					
5.3.7	Assessing your own teaching					

5.4 Importance of continuous assessment

		Agree completely 1	Agree to some extent 2	Undecided 3	Disagree to some extent 4	Disagree completely
5.4.1	Continuous assessment is used to help the learner and the learning process					
5.4.2	Enables the teachers to use any planned learning experience to assess learner achievements and progress					
5.4.3	It makes more use of criterion referencing than norm referencing					
5.4.4	It is diagnostic, enabling the teacher to					

	monitor strengths and address the needs of the learner					
5.4.5	It enables teachers to pace learners and provide enrichment for fast learners					
5.4.6	It covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks					
5.4.7	It ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment methods, both formal and informal					
5.4.8	It encourages teachers to appraise their own work					
5.4.9	It requires the development of a sound assessment record to track learner progress and to provide useful data for reporting and progression					
5.4.10	It ensures that the tests and examinations are only one component of evaluation					

Please indicate your answer to the questions or statements from 5.5 to 5.7 by using the following scale

- 1 = consistently
- 2 = occasionally
- 3 = rarely

5.5 How often do you use the following assessment strategies?

		Consistently 1	Occasionally 2	Rarely 3
5.5.1	Self-assessment			
5.5.2	Peer-assessment			
5.5.3	Group assessment			
5.5.4	Profile			
5.5.5	Portfolio			

5.6 How often do you assess?

		Consistently 1	Occasionally 2	Rarely 3
5.6.1	Daily			
5.6.2	Weekly			
5.6.3	Monthly			
5.6.4	Quarterly			
5.6.5	Half-yearly			
5.6.6	End-of-year			

5.7 How often do you involve the following stakeholders in assessment of learners' progress.

		Consistently 1	Occasionally 2	Rarely 3
5.7.1	Learners			
5.7.2	Teachers			
5.7.3	Parents			
5.7.4	School Management			
5.7.5	Department Officials			

Appendix B

Questions for educator interview

1. Who should be involved in assessment at schools?

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2. What do teachers assess?

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3. How do teachers assess?

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4. How do teachers record assessment?

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5. How does a school report learner's progress to parents?

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6. In what way should the school management team monitor assessment?

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