OUTCOMES–BASED ASSESSMENT: TOWARDS PROGRESSION AND PROMOTION IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND (GRADES R (1) - 9)

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND EVALUATION IN THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES, NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS

PROMOTER : DR M.A. MOKOENA

DATE : MAY 2013

DECLARATION

I, Maubane Geoffrey Lekalakala, student number:16071662, declare herewith that the thesis entitled Outcomes-Based Assessment: Towards progression and promotion in the GET Band' which I herewith submit to the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, in compliance with the requirements set for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the field of Curriculum Development, Innovation and Evaluation of the Faculty of Education Sciences, is my own work in design and execution; has been text edited; has not already been submitted to any other university; and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

…… …….

M.G. Lekalakala Date

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment focusing mainly on progression and promotion of learners in the General Education and Training Band (Grades 1 to 9). The study was conducted in all the four Districts of the North West Department of Education, namely, Bojanala, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Ngaka-Modiri Molema.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Non-experimental descriptive and exploratory quantitative research methods as well as historical and concept non-interactive qualitative research methods were employed in the study. A stratified purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 354 participants from a total population of 1768.

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire as a quantitative data collection strategy; and both a semi-structured interview and official documents as qualitative data collection strategies. The study revealed that some schools were still using the old progression and promotion requirements that were not in line with the current national policy. The study revealed that the notion of progression with age cohort in Grades 1 to 8 was equated to automatic progression. Age cohort was interchangeably used and applied as chronological age. The study further revealed that the promotion requirements applied in Grade 9 are not aligned to both progression in Grades 1 to 8 and the promotion requirements in Grades 10 to 12.

Based on the major findings of the study, it is recommended that the entire progression policy applied in Grades 1 to 8, with special reference to the notion of progression with age cohort, be reviewed. It is further recommended that the promotion requirements in Grade 9 be aligned to both progression in Grades 1 to 8 and promotion in Grades 10 to 12. It is further recommended that a similar study be conducted countrywide.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABREVIATIONS

AFT	:	American Federation of Teachers
AO	:	Area Office
APL	:	Assessment of Prior Learning
APUS	:	American Public University System
C2005	:	Curriculum 2005
CASS	:	Continuous Assessment
CCEA	:	Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment
CEM	:	Council of Education Ministries
CTA	:	Common Tasks for Assessment
DoE	:	Department of Education
ERTD	:	Examination Research Testing Division
ESS	:	Education Support Services
GET	:	General Education and Training
HEADCOM	:	Heads of Department Committee
HOD	:	Head of Department
InCAS	:	Interactive Computerised Assessment
JCPS	:	Jefferson County Public Schools
LOA	:	Learning Outcomes Assessment
NCME	:	National Council of Measurement in Education
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statements
NDE	:	National Department of Education
NEA	:	National Education Association
NEPA	:	National Education Policy Act
NQF	:	National Qualifications Framework
OBA	:	Outcomes-Based Assessment
OBE	:	Outcomes-Based Education
PSLE	:	Primary School Leaving Examination
SAIDE	:	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	:	South African Qualifications Authority

SAQF	:	South African Qualification Framework
SASA	:	South African Schools Act
SGB	:	School Governing Body
USA	:	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1. Introduction and Background to the Study

This chapter provides background detail on the entire study. It begins by focusing on the introductory background to the problem investigated, followed by formulating the problem statement and outlining the purpose of the study. The focal point of the study is progression and promotion in the General Education and Training (GET) Grades R (1)-9. It proceeds by delineating its objectives based on the research questions including the delimitations and limitations identified in the study. The significance, key concepts and ethical considerations of the study are also highlighted. The study reserves the review of the related literature to Chapter Two; the research design and methodology to Chapter Three; and data analysis and interpretations to Chapter Four. The summary, conclusions and recommendations are highlighted in Chapter Five.

Generally, assessment may refer to Educational assessment, Health assessment, Nursing assessment, Psychiatric assessment, Psychological assessment, Risk assessment, or Tax assessment. In general, assessment is regarded as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving learning. It involves: making high expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for quality learning; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards, and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance (Shepard, 2001:24).

Educational assessment is defined as the process of obtaining information that is used to make educational decisions about learners or students; to give them feedback about their progress, strengths and weaknesses; to judge

instructional effectiveness and curricular adequacy; and to inform policy (American Federation of Teachers, National Council of Measurement in Education, and National Education Association, 2000:1). Some assessments are designed with several purposes and are being used to provide information, not only on education systems, but also on schools and even to perform functions that are associated with assessment at an individual level, e.g., grade progression, promotion, motivation and certification (Jalongo, 2004:20).

Educational assessment as the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, focuses on the individual learner, the learning community (class, workshop or other organized group of learner), the institution or the education system as a whole. The final purposes and assessment practices in education depend on the theoretical framework of the practitioners and researchers, their assumptions and beliefs about the nature of the human mind, the origin of knowledge and the process of learning (Huba, 2000:7). Most fundamentally, assessment seeks to support and improve student learning. It is the result of a movement toward accountability and involves a paradigm shift from the traditional view of what teachers provide, that is, inputs, to a concern for what students actually learn, do and achieve, i.e., outputs (Diamond, 2008:18).

According to the Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe and United Kingdom, primary education pupils progress to the next class at the end of the school year. There are no legal requirements stipulating this; it happens by custom and practice. There is an expectation that low attainment of individual pupils should be addressed through differentiated teaching and additional support rather than by the repetition of a year (Byrne, 2009:22).

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), a public school district in the United States operating 150 public schools with more than 97 500 students, provides every student, without exception, both the opportunity and the necessary

support to benefit from high-quality educational experience. A challenging and rigorous curriculum, articulated for preschool through Grade twelve, is implemented for all students in all content areas. "We (JCPS) believe that student retention is not an effective practice." Therefore, students who are struggling or who are at risk of failure should be identified early and provided with the necessary support to meet State standards and to prepare them for the next level" (JCPS, 2010:8).

The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) clearly sent out strong signals that the dawn of democracy in South Africa had ushered in a new educational order. The authoritarian values and top–down pedagogical approaches of apartheid–era education were replaced by new values and assessment methods that emphasized democratic participation in the progression and promotion of learners that enhanced the potential of every child to succeed. The power of these signals should not be underestimated, especially given the fact that the most enthusiastic support for OBE comes from African educators and others who were the most direct victims of the inequalities of the old order and who, as a group, faced the most difficulty in implementing it in the classrooms (Jansen, 2000:201).

Some of the practical problems of OBE had to do with its design, notably its complexity and overestimation of the capacity of teachers to develop their own curriculum materials. Others resulted from inadequate time and resources for training teachers in this new pedagogical approach. Such problems arose, in part, because curriculum reform was but one of the major issues competing for the attention of educational policymakers and the managers of the Department of Education as they sought to transform the structures they inherited from the apartheid era into a system appropriate to post–1994 South Africa (Fleisch, 2002a:130).

In an attempt to depart from this status quo, the South African government introduced Curriculum 2005 (C2005), which was a huge and ambitious enterprise to radically reform education. The underlying principle of this curriculum reform was that of Outcomes-Based Education. However, two years into its implementation, a major review was done under the Curriculum Review Committee, which identified a number of weaknesses in both the conceptualisation and implementation of C2005 (Howie, 2001:45).

A revised set of National Curriculum Statements (NCS) was published at the end of July 2001 for public discussion. The revision was to simplify the structure, redefine the outcomes and provide more guidance on progression and promotion content. As part of the National Statements, the assessment standards were prepared for each grade level, and in each outcome. The process and structures to support implementation were also developed. At the core of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) are eight learning area statements in the GET Band (Department of Education, 2001:13) that affirm that each pupil would:

- Be equipped with the linguistic skills and the aesthetic and cultural awareness to function effectively and sensitively in a multilingual and multicultural society;
- Display a spirit of curiosity to enable creative and scientific discovery and display an awareness of health promotion;
- Adapt to an ever changing environment, recognising that human understanding is consistently challenged and hence changes and grows;
- Use effectively a variety of ways to gather, analyse, organise, and evaluate numerical information and then communicate it effectively to a variety of audiences and models;
- Make informed decisions and accept accountability as a responsible citizen in an increasingly complex and technological society;

- Display the skills necessary to work effectively with others and organise and manage oneself, one's activities, and one's leisure time responsibly and effectively;
- Understand and show respect for the basic principles of human rights, recognising the interdependence of members of society; and
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and language skills.

As mentioned earlier by Howie (2001:46), C2005 moved away from discipline-based subjects as they existed in the old curriculum towards learning areas. The eight learning areas in the GET Band are the following:

- Arts and Culture;
- Economic and Management Sciences;
- Languages;
- Life Orientation;
- Mathematics;
- Natural Sciences; and
- Technology.

The GET Band is divided into the Foundation Phase (Grades R-3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6) and the Senior Phase (Grades 7-9). The first phase of C2005 is said to have been the basis for a "transformative curriculum", (DoE, 2001: 21), while this second phase "NCS" has added substance to C2005. The main features of the revision process were the following:

- Design features of C2005 were reduced;
- Learning outcomes were similar but were reduced to be fewer than 66 previously;
- Curriculum and qualification frameworks were developed simultaneously, and the assessment standards now allow for benchmarking pupils' performance at Grades 3, 6 and 9;

- Assessment was aligned with the curriculum;
- Better balance between emphasis on integration and conceptual progression;
- Integration varied, but now there is clearer progression in the learning areas between grades; and
- The languages learning area statement is developed in all eleven official languages and the remainder of the learning area statements will be developed in all eleven languages in the future (DoE, 2001:21-22).

The qualification documents dealing with learning outcomes and assessment standards, as argued by Howie (2001:46), were completed in November 2001. Feedback from the public had been received and, already, the provinces had indicated that the statements could be implemented more easily and are clearer to understand. The assessment guidelines gave educators clear guidance on what to teach at every grade and phase. Howie further stated that the National Curriculum Statement after being revised became a policy in November 2001 and it was implemented in 2004 in Grades (R-3) after being piloted in 2002. In 2005, it was implemented in Grades 4, 5 and 6, in 2006, 2007 and 2008 it was implemented in Grades 7, 8 and 9 respectively. The timelines imply that the first pupils to come out of the streamlined curriculum were the Grade 12 learners in 2008.

Assessment in the NCS focuses on achieving defined outcomes. According to the Department of Education in South Africa, this makes it possible to credit learners' achievements at every level, independent of the path that they have taken and the rate at which they acquired competence. Each of the learning area statements contains a section on learning outcomes and assessment standards. These are seen as the "minimum or essential knowledge, values and skills to be covered but should not be all that is taught. They indicate what is essential for progress through the system" (DoE, 2001), and are designed down from the Grade 9 requirements.

Continuous assessment was selected by the Department of Education as being the "best model to assess outcomes of learning throughout the system" (Bayat and Louw, 2001:1). This is to be taken with various assessment tools and techniques, those suggested were portfolio assessment, observation sheets, journals, tests, projects and assignments. According to the policy regulations, teachers are expected to have sound knowledge of each of these techniques. The incorporation of formative assessment in the GET Band was intended to promote continuous learning and to enable the assessment of competence and complex performances. Assessment of critical outcomes such as problem solving, teamwork, communication and critical use of information are measured in the real context of "real performance" (Bayat and Louw, 2001:1).

Continuous Assessment is the basis for judging the overall achievements and reporting to learners, parents and the system. In Lesotho, promotion of learners from one level to another is strictly based on examination performance. In the USA, all schools implement the uniform learner progression and promotion. Annual written reports are sent to parents or guardians after they have been notified of the procedures used to evaluate their children annually (Howie, 2001:48).

The study focuses on progression and promotion as the determinant of curriculum delivery after the first democratic elections in 1994. The study provides the background to the introduction of outcomes-based assessment towards progression and promotion in the GET Band schools in South Africa.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Implementation of OBE led to a whole world literature of positive and negative reaction from teachers, parents, employees and other stakeholders. After many years of complaints against some of the educational principles promoted by OBE, Ireton (2000:9) argued that the precise dates and sequence of events leading to the introduction of National Curriculum

Statement (NCS) in South Africa's education and training system are not clear. The study focuses on the implementation of NCS, especially progression and promotion of learners in the General Education and Training Band.

The problem encountered in the implementation of progression and promotion of learners seems to be occurring in other countries around the world. In Botswana, the 1994 Education Policy re-emphasised automatic promotion and called it a policy of assessed progression whereby only learners who passed the tests were allowed to progress to the next level. The public in Botswana is still questioning the automatic promotion policy, due to the fact that nothing has been shared between the policy makers, education planners, classroom practitioners and the public (Betangpelo, 2007:10). As already stated in the introduction and background to the study, in terms of Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe or United Kingdom, there are no legal requirements stipulating progression of pupils to the next class. According to student progression, promotion and grading in JCPS, retention is not an effective practice.

In South Africa, other problems were more deeply rooted in policy decisions related to resources. As the name implies, National Curriculum Statement focuses on educational results. In practice, the quality of outcomes in any educational system is heavily dependent on the financial, human, and other resources invested in the system, especially the quality of teachers. Not surprisingly, progression and promotion implementation turned to work best in privileged schools where teachers enjoyed relatively small classes, had plenty of access to textbooks and other resources, and were already accustomed to group work and the teaching of critical thinking. Such schools typically had built up libraries and supplies of textbooks and other teaching materials over a long period of time (Pretorius, 2001:80).

On the other hand, there are insurmountable challenges for Black schools in low–income communities that lack even the most rudimentary libraries and media centres and where teachers are unsophisticated in using resources such as textbooks even when they are available (Chisholm, 2001a:27). In the absence of substantial investment in the human and physical resources required to implement progression and promotion effectively, it is difficult to envision how the new curricula approach should succeed in furthering the cause of equity in schooling.

According to the study conducted by University of Pretoria's Centre for Evaluation and Assessment in 2006, 80% of South African pupils cannot read and write when they reach Grade five. The Progress in International Reading Literacy study was conducted in 40 countries. The study revealed that South African pupils achieved the lowest score compared with children in the other 39 countries. Only 2% of South African Grade five learners reached the highest international benchmark compared with 7% internationally. The Russian Federation, Hong Kong, Singapore and Italy were among the countries whose pupils obtained the highest scores. Almost 80% of South African pupils in Grades four and five did not reach the lowest international benchmark, compared to 6% in the rest of the countries tested. South Africa had the largest number of pupils taking part in the study, with 16 073 children in Grade four and 14 657 in Grade six being tested. The study showed that South Africa is behind in introducing more complex assessment strategies, whereas internationally such strategies are introduced earlier. Where more advanced assessment strategies are introduced in Grade one, achievement is higher (DoE, 2010:35).

Learners in South Africa enter school with widely varying experiences of "everyday life". Middle–class students typically arrive with fairly broad experiences and a foundation for making the leap from personal experiences to formal knowledge. Disadvantaged learners, however, arrive with far more limited experiences, and the last thing they need is to be "submerged within

their own landscapes and in the process denied access to formal knowledge required for power within society as a whole" (Fleisch, 2002a:137).

The demand for clear standards or benchmarks were made as teachers, learners, parents and education support services, in the form of subject specialists, indicated that the following progression requirements in Grades R–8, as depicted in the National Policy on Assessment and Qualification for Schools in the General Education and Training Band (Government Gazette No. 29467, 11 December 2006:22), are not clear:

- All learners in Grades R–8 should progress with their age cohort; any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of learners' performance against the recorded assessment tasks;
- Where a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievements, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant role-players: teachers, learners, parents and education support services (ESS) in the form of subject specialists;
- No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where Grade R is offered), unless the provincial Head of Department has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice; and
- If a learner needs more time to achieve the Learning Outcomes, then that learner need not be retained in a grade for the whole year. It is important that a learner support strategy be put in place to support such learners.

Principals of schools were confronted with the challenges of ensuring that learners are progressing and promoted. The researcher established if the same progression and promotion requirements, especially progression with age cohort, were applied the same way or differently in schools, under the auspices of the North West Department of Education. One of the basic premises of NCS is that most learners can achieve high quality outcomes given proper teaching, learning resources and time. As it is the case with all

educational innovations, NCS has recorded both successes and failures. There has also been as much criticism as praise for NCS.

As NCS was implemented for the first time in different schools, the researcher has learnt through practice what could and could not be achieved and where the theory did not translate into good practice. This has led to a rethink about how best to adapt the implementation of NCS, with special reference to assessment, student progression, promotion and grading plan so that the key results are achieved, with the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the research was to investigate the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9). The study was conducted in all the four Districts of the North West Department of Education, namely, Bojanala, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Ngaka Modiri Molema.

The following specific objectives were pursued:

1.3.1. To investigate the implementation of progression and promotion guidelines implemented in the General Education and Training Band (GET), Grades R (1) - 9 in the North West Province;

1.3.2. To determine the challenges faced by GET schools in the implementation of progression and promotion guidelines in the North West Province;

1.3.3. To explore the factors that are considered in the promotion and progression of learners with their age cohort; and

1.3.4. To develop guidelines or strategies that can be implemented in the progression of learners with their age cohort.

1.4. Research Questions

A research question, as articulated by Burns and Grove (2003:87) is a concise and interrogative statement worded in the present tense and mostly with one or more variables. In the light of the above statement, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1.4.1. To what extent were progression and promotion guidelines implemented in the General Education and Training Band (GET), Grades 1-9 in the North-West Province?

1.4.2. Which were the challenges faced by GET schools in the implementation of progression and promotion guidelines in the North West Province?

1.4.3. What factors were considered in determining progression with age cohort and promotion of learners in the GET Band?

1.4.4. What guidelines or strategies can be developed to address the progression of learners with their age cohort?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of a study, as observed by Polit and Beck (2004:70), relates to its potential for contributing substantially to the scientific knowledge base. The significance of the study tells how the study would be beneficial to specific people or part of the society and how they would use it.

This study was motivated by the fact that, even though there is a lot of research that has been conducted on assessment, there is no research conducted specifically on the progression and promotion of learners in South African schools. Secondly, the undertaking of this study has been motivated by the results of the verification process conducted during 2010 of the Promotion Schedules of Grades 10 and 11 on the 2009 promotions, and again conducted during the first school quarter of 2011 on the 2010 promotions by the Office of the Superintendent-General of the North West Department of Education. Based on the Senior Management meeting held at Mmabatho on 28 June 2011, it was decided that the results of the verification process be

brought to the attention of all relevant managers and officials within the North West Department of Education. The verification results indicated that irregular condonations were done by schools and circuits; promotion schedules at schools differed from those at Area Offices (AO); report cards differed from the signed off promotion schedules at Area Offices and learners who failed were promoted to the next grade because of "potential" (North West Department of Education, 2011).

It is envisaged that this study would inform the adaption of the assessment process, especially the policy on repetition of learners as different education authorities react to problems relating to progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. The study may contribute to the development of efficient and effective assessment practices, hence, critical evaluations in order to learn more about what makes education successful. The study may also create awareness in identifying effective ways of adapting and revising progression guidelines, especially progression with age cohort. The North West Department of Education has requested that they would be happy if the results of the study could be shared with them. The study may also contribute to the revision and strengthening of assessment strategies to be implemented by the North West Department of Education.

1.6. Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This section focuses on two items, namely, the identification of the delimitations and the limitations of the study (Mokwena, 2010:12). The sample size of the research is three groups of the GET Band being the foundation phase (Grades R-3), intermediate phase (Grades 4-6) and the senior phase (Grades 7-9). A total of 354 schools were randomly selected from the 1768 GET Band schools in the North West Province.

The researcher intended to focus on all GET Band public schools in the North West Provincial Department of Education, which includes primary schools that enrol learners from Grades R (1) to 6, Intermediate schools that enrol

learners from Grades R (1) to 9, Secondary schools that enrol learners from Grades 8 to 12 and combined schools that enrol learners from Grades R (1) to 12.

The study was conducted in the four districts of the North West Department of Education and, therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalised to all other provinces of South Africa. Quantitative research methods employed in the study mean that not all the schools in all the four districts of the North West Department of Education participated in the study. However, a representative sample was drawn from all the schools in the four districts of the North West Department of Education. Time and monetary constraints together contributed to the choice of sampling strategies employed in the study.

In some cases, the information given or provided on the questionnaire may not be a true reflection of how schools implement the progression and promotion guidelines. The reason may be that the provider of such information may have been afraid to provide accurate information fearing that the information may be used against them. However, the sample was enough to address that deficit. Furthermore, respondents were not requested to provide their identity. Other data collecting instruments like an interview were used to enhance the validity and reliability of the results.

1.7. Definition of Terms

The study proceeds by briefly presenting the key terms/concepts as a way of contextualising their usage. Contextualisation of the key concepts is put into perspective in order to guide the research process of this study. For the purpose of clarification, specific concepts used in this study are defined below.

1.7.1. Assessment

The Department of Education, National Education Policy Act (1996:9) defines assessment as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement, evaluating this evidence against the outcomes, recording the findings of this evaluation and using this information to assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching. For purposes of this study, the researcher aligned himself with the definition of Maree and Fraser (2004:32), "as 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 competence".

1.7.2. Outcome(s)

Kudlas (2001:32) defines an outcome as a demonstration of learning. It is what the student is to know or do. For this study, an outcome is defined as a visible, observable demonstration of learning that happens in a particular context which has a direct bearing on what has been carried out across the entire range of learning experiences and capabilities underlying it (Killen, 2000:67).

1.7.3. Portfolio

Stenmark (2001:77) defines portfolio as a showcase for student's work, a place where many types of assignments, projects, reports and writings can be collected. Progress in, attitudes towards and understanding of subject area can be seen in a comprehensive way. For this study, portfolio is defined as collected samples of learner's work that show how the learner developed over time that helps to follow that learner's developmental trail as he/she moves through the learning process (Potenza, 2000:39).

1.7.4. Progression

For the purpose of this study progression means a specification of more complex, deeper and broader knowledge, skills, values and understandings to be achieved by learners as they move from one grade to another (Government Gazette No. 29626, 2007:22).

1.7.5. Promotion

Promotion means the elevation of a learner from one grade to the next when that learner meets the minimum requirements for the achievement of outcomes in a particular grade (Singaram, 2007:14). However, these policies only provide clear promotion requirements in Grade 9 whereas no clear progression requirements in Grades (R) 1 to 8 are provided (Government Gazette No. 29626, 2007:22).

1.8. Access and ethical considerations

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Chapter two, provides rights for every citizen unconditionally. The researcher, as directed by the provisions of the Act, was compelled to observe the citizens' rights by strictly observing the Bill of Rights. The research ethical principles also give the necessary guidelines of how to protect the respondents' rights (Neuman, 2003:119). The principles that were followed are discussed below.

1.8.1. Permission

The principles of basic respect were implemented by first asking for permission to do this study from the authorities in charge of schools to be used. A written request for permission to conduct the study within the GET Band of the North West Province Department of Education was sent to the Office of the Superintendent. Permission was granted by Mr M.A. Seakamela, the Deputy Director General of North West Department of Education, who was the Acting Superintendent at the time (See Appendix A). The administrative procedures given below were adhered to.

1.8.2. Informed consent

Firstly, the Area Office Managers were sent the permission letter to be brought to the attention of Circuit Managers who would then brought it to the attention of principals. The population that finally constituted the sample for the study were shown the permission letter from the Office of the Superintendent and were further asked for verbal consent and the procedure of the study was explained to them. No participant was coerced to be part of this study (Neuman, 2003:302).

1.8.3. Respect and trust

Respect and trust were achieved largely through assuring all respondents of the confidentiality of the information they gave (Brink, 2002:52). In addition, neither school address nor residential address was used. During the interview sessions and the administration of the questionnaire, respect and trust were assured, and the information obtained was not given to any person who was not involved with education service provision.

1.8.4. Anonymity

The identity of respondents must remain anonymous and the information they provide must not be used against them (Neuman, 2003:126). This provision was respected. The questionnaire did not require any identification of region, school or person to be filled in. The biographic data did not involve any characteristic that may identify the respondents. The respondents were reassured that no names and residential addresses were needed. They were assured that the information gathered would not be used for personal gain, as that would amount to exploitation of the respondents' innocence. The interviewees were assured that their identity would never be disclosed and that the information provided would not be used for purposes other than the study.

1.8.5. Covering letter

A covering letter is an instrument that serves to introduce the questionnaire to the respondents and requests their consensual participation in the study. It also serves to motivate respondents to respond honestly. This tool also gives the respondents direction for the completion of the questionnaire, guarantees anonymity and also gives guidance as to what should happen to the completed questionnaire. To this end, a covering letter that explained the purpose of the study accompanied every questionnaire to the respondents. (See Appendix B). The respondents were also reassured, through the letter, of the confidentiality of the information they provided.

1.8.6. Privacy

Privacy and trust were maintained by holding closed door interviews and there was no disclosure of information to any other person except people involved in the study. No mention of other information except the area of study would be divulged to the public (Neuman, 2003:126). Before an interview was conducted, the interviewees were consulted telephonically to secure an appointment. The interviewer explained to the interviewee the condition under which the interview had to take place. The following were suggested: the room must be quiet. There must not be any disturbance and the interviewees were requested to identify such a place and time that would suit their privacy.

1.8.7. Voluntary participation

The respondents were not forced to be part of the sample. Participation was voluntary and participants were allowed to withdraw when they felt uncomfortable to continue with the study (Neuman, 2003:130). All the respondents participated fully in the study.

1.9. Organisation of the thesis

This section gives a preview of how this study's chapters are organised. The study is organised into five chapters demarcated as show below:

Chapter One: Orientation

This chapter outlines the overview of the study. The introduction provides detailed information that led to the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment towards progression and promotion in the GET Band schools in South Africa, followed by statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study and definition of terms. Included also in this chapter is the outline regarding the organisation of the chapters for the study.

Chapter Two: Review of literature

In this chapter, related literature to the study is discussed. This includes the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment as the guiding principle to curriculum delivery in the GET Band schools in South Africa. This chapter outlines two steps in the processes of curriculum revision undertaken since 1994. This includes curriculum revision in three main stages: first, the changing of the curriculum from the racist and sexist elements after the first democratic elections in 1994. The second involved the implementation of C2005. The third involved the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement. This chapter further outlines the progression and promotion requirements as applied to the change in curriculum, assessment methods and techniques, educational theories underpinning the study and current research related to this study.

Chapter Three: Research design and methodology

This chapter describes the research design and methodology, ethical considerations, population, the research sample, sampling procedures, research instruments used for data collection, data analysis and presentation procedures used in the study. Measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also highlighted.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and interpretation

This chapter provides detailed presentations, analysis and interpretation of the research findings as depicted by the research questions.

Chapter Five: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter outlines the summary and recommendations arising from the research findings. The summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study are based on the outcomes of the study.

1.10. Summary

This chapter laid the foundation for the study. It poses the research questions that define the scope of the study. The chapter states that this study seeks to understand the reality of how outcomes-based assessments toward progression and promotion in the GET Band have been implemented. It highlighted the purpose of the study and the research questions. The issues related to the literature review, research design and methodology, data analysis and interpretation, have been left for Chapters Two, Three and Four, respectively. The next chapter deals with literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Review of literature is important because, without it, the understanding of the topic will not be acquired. The review of literature is therefore a part of the researcher's academic development – of becoming an expert in the field (Singaram, 2007:1). This chapter focuses on what has already been done on assessment, how it has been done, and what are the key issues on assessment. This chapter starts by focusing on the conceptualisation of the key concepts for the study, followed by legislative frameworks, key policies and directives, theoretical perspectives and assessment practices in terms of policy requirements, related studies conducted worldwide and summary or conclusion.

Since the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in South African Schools, Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) has been one of the greatest challenges facing teachers in the classrooms (Singaram, 2007:2). The introduction of the National Curriculum Statement in the General Education and Training Band (GET), resulted in many teachers, school management teams and departmental officials at different levels experiencing problems with regard to OBA practices.

2.2. Conceptualisation of the key concepts for the study

Many teachers, School Management Teams and departmental officials still have difficulty in understanding the meaning of Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA), progression and promotion as applied in the General Education and Training Band (GET). In addition to 1.7 (definition of terms), it is therefore, important for the researcher to conceptualise the following concepts for the purpose of this study.

2.2.1. Outcomes - Based Assessment

Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) is primarily about providing information regarding learner progress against a stated outcome (Gillespie, 2004:106). The purpose of assessment is to assist educators in assessing learners' performance in order to find out exactly what they know, understand, can apply, and do, so that educators can provide learning experiences designed to lead all learners to a higher level of performance (Singaram, 2007:17). OBA or Learning Outcomes Assessment (LOA) as known within the American Public University System (APUS) refers to processes aimed at understanding and improving student learning (Jalongo, 2004:3).

OBA uses the principle of alignment (aligning learning outcomes, passing criteria and assessment). This means that assessment is not something to be tacked onto the learning programme, but is linked to the learning outcomes and teaching methods. The actual criteria are able to be observed and are not a guess at a mental process, "this is what I need to see in order to know that the student can do it" (Singaram, 2007:30). Choosing the assessment tasks answers the question, "How will I provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what I need to see?" Criteria are negotiable and form the basis of assessment. The criteria should be public, which makes educators accountable. OBA focuses on providing students with multiple opportunities to practise what they need to do, and the provision of feedback on that practice (formative). Eventually, students must demonstrate achievement (summative). For the purpose of this study, OBA refers to the data collected during the actual accomplishment or demonstration of a particular set of knowledge and skills (Huitt, 2001:online).

2.2.2. Assessment

In addition to the discussion of assessment under 1.7.1, Kramer (2000:56) sees assessment as an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves: making expectations explicit and public, setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality,

systematically gathering, analysing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance (Angelo, 2000:1). Singaram (2007:1) considers assessment as being the ability to see learners and to perceive what they can do in the hope of understanding how they can learn, with the aim of assisting their learning. He also sees assessment as the process of determining learner achievement.

The National Curriculum Statement suggests five main purposes for learner assessment by educators. There are assessments of the following kinds: baseline, diagnostic, formative, summative and systemic (Pinto & Dison, 2008:6). At the beginning of the grade or phase, or even the beginning of a new section of work, the educator may assess the learners' prior learning, in order to plan the learning programme. This is called baseline assessment and its purpose is to establish prior learning and takes it into account. The educator may further want to set up assessment activities to find out more about barriers in prior knowledge of learners, so that appropriate intervention, guidance and relevant support may be given to the learner, this is diagnostic assessment (Pinto & Dison, 2008:6).

After both baseline and diagnostic assessments have been completed, the educator must give learners constructive feedback to enable them to grow. The educator devises activities that both enable learning to take place, and give information about how the process is going, and this is called formative assessment (Pinto & Dison, 2008:6). A variety of assignments and tests can be used throughout the teaching process to improve learning. At the end each term, year, grade or phase, assessment activities are set to give an overall picture of the learners' progress at that precise time. Information gathered through formative assessment can also be used in this regard. This is called summative assessment, because it is a summing up of various pieces of information about a learner at a particular time. This form of assessment

usually takes place at the end of the teaching process and it is called an examination (Pinto & Dison, 2008:6).

National and provincial departments of education can use the assessment of the learners as part of the evidence to determine performance of a particular school, district, province, or the whole education system. This is called systemic assessment (Pinto & Dison, 2008:7). It is done on a representative sample of schools or learners at the end of phases or Education and Training bands. These evaluative data can be used as evidence of the effectiveness of the education system or aspects of it (Pinto & Dison, 2008:7).

To give life to the outcomes-based approach to teaching and learning, assessment moves from the emphasis on summative assessment as a single event to developmental assessment which is an ongoing process (Pretorius, 2001:83). In this way, assessment becomes a tool that assists the learner and the educator in ascertaining learning progress. Furthermore, it helps the development of the learner by identifying learning problems and monitoring progress (Kramer, 2000:83). The best model to assess the outcomes of learning, is Continuous Assessment (CASS), because it ensures that assessment takes place over a period and is ongoing (Gillespie, 2002:18). Learners are assessed regularly and their records are updated throughout the year. CASS provides effective feedback methods. It allows for integrated assessment, which may include a number of related learning outcomes within a single activity, and may combine a number of different assessment methods. It uses strategies that cater for the language, physical, psychological and cultural needs of the learners (Gillespie, 2002:204).

CASS covers a wide range of different assessment techniques, which are applied to inform varying types of decisions made by a number of people. It is made up of a variety of assessment methods that can be formal and informal. These assessment methods inform the teaching-learning process. Assessment employs criterion referencing and information in a context as

feedback on how learners are performing (Singaram, 2007:19). For the purpose of this study, the researcher aligned himself with the definition of Maree and Fraser (2004:32), who acknowledged assessment as a driver of quality teaching and learning in that it puts more emphasis on educators using assessment as a tool to make appropriate decisions about learner achievement with the primary aim of enhancing learning.

2.2.3. Progression

Progression (as defined in 1.7.4), can be used to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase for a period exceeding four years as stipulated in the Admission policy for ordinary public schools according to Government Notice 2432 in the Government Gazette, Vol. 400, No. 19377 of 19 October 1998, provided that the underperformance of the learner in the previous grade be addressed in the grade to which the learner has been promoted. Progression is the step forward in a pupil's learning (Spady & Marshall, 2000:70). Progression is usually used to mean the systematic pursuit of progress for all learners, and the technique which schools and educators can use to secure it. Educators have the overall responsibility of assessing the progress of learners in achieving the learning outcomes. The assessment process involves a partnership between the educators, learners, parents and educational support services, such as occupational therapists, speech therapists and educational psychologists.

Educators assess their learners' work formally and informally, on a continuous basis, so that they can identify the needs of their learners, plan and implement their learning programmes effectively and track the progress their learners are making. Schools combine the achievement of these learners in all learning programmes and determine whether each learner can be allowed to progress to the next grade or not. The curriculum sets out progressively more complex, deeper and broader expectations of learners, and this is called conceptual progression (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:169). In the National Curriculum

Statement, the assessment standards in each learning area or subject provide the conceptual progression in each subject from grade to grade.

At the same time, learners are not supposed to deal with assessment standards in isolation. Links must be made within and across learning outcomes and learning areas. The achievement of an optimal relationship between integration across learning areas and conceptual progression from grade to grade is central in determining the overall progression of a learner. According to Government Gazette No. 19640 (1998:12), cumulative evidence of learner achievement was to be recorded and such records were to accompany all learners throughout their learning paths. Cumulative records were supposed to include information on the holistic development of a learner, such as development of values and attitudes and social development. Portfolios were also supposed to be built over a period of time and retained as visible proof of the development and improvement of learner achievement. It was expected that in the main, learners would progress with their age cohort. For the purpose of this study, progression means the movement of a learner from one grade to the next, excluding Grade R, in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements (Department of Basic Education, 2000:x). This study intended to establish criteria used to determine progression of learners in the GET Band.

2.2.4. Promotion

In addition to the definition provided in 1.7.5, promotion also implies the movement of a learner from one grade to the next when that learner meets the minimum required level of achievement per subject in a particular grade (Department of Basic Education, 2000:x). For the purpose of this study, promotion is defined as the elevation of a learner from the lower grade to a higher grade (Brandt, 2000:66). Promotion is applied at the end of Grade 9, which is the exit point of the GET Band. The aim of the study is to investigate how learners were promoted in line with policy directives since 1994.

2.3. Legislative Framework, Policies and Directives

All policies, laws and programmes introduced by the Ministry of Education since 1994 have aimed at transforming the national system of education and training (Taylor & Vinjevold, 2000:277). Laws and other basic regulations concerning education include, The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 58 of 1995, The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996,

2.3.1. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 58 of 1995

SAQA provides the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and for the establishment of the SAQA. The NQF establishes an integrated national framework for learning achievements, aiming at enhancing access and mobility as well as quality in education and training. In accordance with the Act, the NQF consists of ten levels grouped into three broad bands: (a) General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework; (b) Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework and (c) Trade and Occupations Qualifications Sub-framework. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act of 2008 has repealed the SAQA Act (Jansen & Christie, 2004:4). The ten levels of the National Qualifications Framework are: level 1 – General Certificate, Level 2 – Elementary Certificate, Level 3 – Intermediate Certificate, Level 4 – National Certificate, Level 5 – Higher Certificate, Level 6 – Diploma Advanced Certificate, Level 7 – Bachelor's Degree, Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Level 9 – Masters Degree and Level 10 – Doctoral Degree.

Qualifications and standards registered on the NQF are described in terms of learning outcomes that the qualifying learner is expected to have demonstrated to progress or to be promoted from one grade to another. Hence there is an underlying commitment to a system of education and training that is organised around the notion of learning outcomes. In the SAQA Act, standards mean registered statements of desired education and

training outcomes and their associated assessment criteria. Hence, in the registration of qualifications, whether based on unit standards or not based on unit standards, proposers of qualifications are required not only to describe the learning outcomes but also the associated assessment criteria. In that way, the expected standard of achievement is made clear. On the basis of standards described in this way, articulation and portability within the education and training system are possible in a way that looking at the content of learning programmes alone, i.e., inputs, does not allow (Jansen & Christie, 2004:8).

2.3.2. South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 replaced Education Acts based on the principle of separate provision of education for the different ethnic groups, and asserts that all learners have a right to access basic and quality education without discrimination of any sort (Department of Education, 2001:sec 3.2). The Act has paved the way for a single, non-racial school system. It provides for two types of schools – public and independent schools. A significant change introduced by the Act is that the previous differentiation of State-funded schools no longer exists, and now these schools are all referred to as public schools.

The Act also provides for conditions of admission for learners to public schools and for the governance of all public schools. The provision in the Act for democratic school governance, via School Governing Bodies (SGB), is now in place in public schools countrywide (Kraak, 2000:27). In terms of SASA, education is compulsory for children turning 7 until the age of 15 (or Grade 9). Although education is not compulsory for learners beyond Grade 9, no learner who wishes to continue to Grade 12 is denied access to schooling. Government has also targeted the enrollment of all 5 year olds in Grade R (the reception year) by 2014. This policy dictates that the Minister of Education must, by notice in the Government Gazette, determine – a National Curriculum Statement indicating the minimum outcomes or standards; and a

national process and procedure for the assessment of learner achievement that must be applicable to public and independent schools.

2.3.3. The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 was designed to inscribe in law the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education under the new democratic constitution, and to formalise the relations between national and provincial education authorities in the new system (Jansen, 2000:52). The Act spells out directive principles for policy, as well as the consultative process that the Minister must observe in determining policy or legislation. The Act establishes the Council of Education Ministries (CEM) and Heads of Education Department Committee (HEDCOM), and determines their functions in the national and provincial policy processes and the co-ordination of the new system. The Act makes the national department responsible for monitoring the extent to which provincial departments uphold their responsibilities under the constitution and the law, but creates a cooperative process to identify and remedy any default (Waghid, 2000:127).

According to NEPA, learners are to be admitted to public schools and placed in different grades in the school according to the age requirements. If a learner has been admitted to a public school at an age above the age norm for a grade, such learner must, as far as possible, be placed in a fast track facility, or with his or her peer group, unless it is not in the educational interest of the learner. In the latter case, the learner must be placed in a suitable lower grade, and an accelerated programme must be worked out for the learner to enable him or her to catch up with the peer group as soon as possible (National Education Policy Act, 1996: A11).

A learner who has repeated one or more years at school in terms of this policy is exempted from the age grade norm except that, if a learner is three years older than the norm age per grade, the Head of Department

(Superintendent General in the case of the North West Department of Education) must determine whether the learner will be admitted to that grade. In principle, learners should progress with their age cohort. Repetition of grades seldom results in significant increases in learning attainment and frequently has the opposite result. The norm for repetition is one year per school phase where necessary. Multiple repetitions in one grade is not permissible. The policy further states that the norm is not to be construed as promoting the practice of automatic promotion. A learner's needs must be attended to through the efforts of the learner, and his or her teachers, with support from the learner's family and peers (National Education Policy Act, 1996: A11).

2.3.4. National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band

This policy provides a framework for assessment and qualifications for all public and private schools and community-based sites with learners registered in the GET Band. It consolidates assessment provisions contained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-9 (Department of Education, 2000:6). The policy repeals the Assessment Policy in the GET Band, Grades R-9 and ABET of 1998 and the Framework for the Assessment and Promotion of Learners in Grade 9: Interim Policy, 2003. It integrates and consolidates recording and reporting provisions that are contained in the National Protocol on Assessment, 2005 (National Department of Education (National Department of Education), 2003:11).

In terms of the National Policy on Assessment, educators have the overall responsibility to assess the progress of learners in achieving the learning outcomes. The assessment process involves a partnership between teachers, learners, parents and educational support services, such as those of the occupational therapist, speech therapist, and educational psychologist. Educators need to assess their learner's work formally and informally, on a continuous basis, so that they can identify the needs of their learners, plan

and implement their learning programmes effectively and track the progress their learners are making (Gauteng Department of Education, 2000:4).

This policy prescribes the following, in terms of progression in Grades R-8: ideally, all learners in Grades R–8 should progress with their age cohort; any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks; where a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant role-players: teachers, learners, parents and education support services; no learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where Grade R is offered), unless the provincial Head of Department has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice. If a learner needs more time to achieve the Learning Outcomes, then that learner need not be retained in a grade for a whole year. It is important that a learner-support strategy be put in place to support such learners (National Policy on Assessment for Schools in GET Band, 2007:22).

The North West Province Department of Education Circular No. 56 of 1998, further stated that when a learner did not achieve the expected Specific Outcomes (SOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs) as decided by the school, the Progress/ Intervention Committee, composed of the parents/guardian of the learner, the teacher responsible for the learner, Head of Department (HOD) for the phase and the principal of the school should then decide the following:

- Whether the learner needs extra time to achieve the expected SOs and ASs;
- If extra time is needed, how much extra time is required; or
- Whether the learner should be retained for a further year in the same grade (serious intervention). Retention is limited to one year in a phase.

The recommendation made by the Intervention Committee must also be signed by the chairperson of the committee, parent/guardian, Circuit Manager and District Manager. Only after the District Manager has approved a recommendation, may a learner be retained. The implication is that no records of intervention, no retention.

According to Gazette No. 29626, promotion occurs only at Grade 9. A learner is promoted from Grade 9 on the basis of demonstrating competences that reflect a balanced spread over all eight Learning Areas, and which have been assessed through a continuous assessment programme and an external summative assessment component. A learner will be promoted to Grade 10 only if s/he has satisfied the following achievement requirements:

- At least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in one of the Official Languages offered and Mathematics;
- At least an "elementary achievement" or level 2 rating in other Official Language; and
- At least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in four other Learning Areas.

All eight Learning Areas are compulsory and the assessment of all eight is compulsory, but the awarding of the qualification will be based on Languages, Mathematics and four (4) other Learning Areas. The learner will be promoted only if s/he satisfies the requirements of both the Continuous Assessment (CASS 75%) and the External Assessment (Common Tasks for Assessment [CTA] 25%) components in all the Learning Areas. The minimum requirements in terms of offering eight Learning Areas, a minimum of two languages, and evidence of performance in CASS and CTA should be met before condonation may be considered. A learner's results will be condoned only once in one of the following cases:

- When s/he achieves elementary achievement or level 2 in Mathematics; or

- When s/he achieves elementary achievement or level 2 in Languages; or
- When s/he achieves elementary achievement or level 2 in only one of the four other Learning Areas required for promotion.

Grade 9 signifies an exit point in the General Education and Training Band. All accredited examining bodies for this level must meet assessment requirements in terms of the provisions of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council (Umalusi), (National Department of Education, 2007:25-26).

An Outcomes-based approach to curriculum design is strongly linked to assessment and therefore demands the implementation of valid and reliable assessment procedures. The paradigm shift demonstrates the need for these changes to be reflected in assessment practices. Unless assessment is properly aligned with curriculum reform, and teaching practices, the desired changes in education will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to implement (Pretorius, 2001:83).

A distinction between recording and reporting of results was made in this document. The results system used was based on progression of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The following tables indicate the four level descriptors that were used:

Table 1: Four level descriptors used for progression and promotion

Code	Explanation
1	Not Achieved (Less than 40%)
2	Partially Achieved (40% to 49%)
3	Achieved (50% to 69%)
4	Outstanding / Excellent Achievement (70% and above)

(National Department of Education, 2002:7)

Table 2: Four level descriptors' codes

Code	Explanation	Result
1	1% – 34%	Not Achieved
2	35% - 39%	Partially Achieved
3	40% - 69%	Achieved
4	70% - 100%	Outstanding/ Excellent Achievement

(National Department of Education, 2002:7)

Table 3: Codes and descriptors for Grades R-3

Rating code	Description of competence
4	Outstanding / Excellent Achievement
3	Satisfactory Achievement
2	Partial Achievement
1	Not Achieved

National Department Education, 2002:7)

Table 4: Codes and descriptors for Grades 4–6

Rating code	Description of competence	Percentages
4	Outstanding / Excellent Achievement	70 - 100
3	Satisfactory Achievement	50 – 69
2	Partial Achievement	35 – 49
1	Not Achieved	1 – 34

(National Department of Education, 2002

Table 5: Codes and descriptors for Grades 7–9

Rating code	Description of competence	Percentages
7	Outstanding Achievement	80 – 100
6	Meritorious Achievement	70 – 79
5	Substantial Achievement	60 – 69
4	Adequate Achievement	50 – 59
3	Moderate Achievement	40 – 49
2	Elementary Achievement	30 – 39
1	Not Achieved	0 - 29

(National Department of Education, 2007:16–18)

2.4. Theories underpinning the study

As the Bologna process (an initiative to harmonise a European qualifications framework) suggests, the investigation of teaching is an international issue (Roos, 2004:3). Yet, as the Bologna process also indicates, there is no consensus. Lorrie Shepard's presidential address to the American Research Education Association (2000), identified the learning paradigm that dominated the USA in the 20th century, one that included behaviourist learning theories, hereditarian theories of intelligence and individual differences, and the scientific measurement of ability and achievement (Roos, 2004:3). In turn, these various respective psychological theories were served by assessment theories based on scientific measurement of ability and achievement. This study is grounded in the constructivism and cognitive development theories of John Dewey and Jean Piaget.

According to Shepard (2001), the Bologna process shows the 20th century dominant paradigm on the left, present-day teaching practices with assessment separated from instruction in the middle, and an emergent, paradigm of learning and assessment, on the right. In the extended version of her presidential address, Shepard (2001) characterised U.S. practice as a mismatch of traditional testing, on the one hand, and instruction influenced by an emergent paradigm, on the other. Theories from the past, that learning is like building a brick wall, layer by layer, serve as the default framework for the assessment of learning. She highlighted the absence, therefore, of a valid connection between assessment and instruction (Roos, 2004:4).

2.4.1. Constructivism – an emergent paradigm

In review of learning theories, the American researchers, Duffy and Cunningham (2000), describe the brick wall theory as the objectivist model. Knowledge is transferred from the teacher to the learner, the reception of knowledge is passive, and such learning is unreflective. Learning, therefore, is about acquiring knowledge; and instruction is about delivering knowledge. Duffy and Cunningham (2000), like Shepard, go on to describe an alternative

model which they characterised as the constructivist view. They make a crucial distinction between the activities of learning and the activities of instruction or teaching: learning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge and instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge (Duffy & Cunningham, 2000:171).

Despite using 'communication' rather than 'delivering', Duffy and Cunningham, have nothing to say about a constructivist view of assessment. This separation of learning from assessment has been a recurrent problem in educational theory (Roos, 2004:5). What then is the relationship between teaching and assessment? One answer to this question has emerged alongside constructivist's views of learning that builds on the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and other cognitive scientists. This later post-behaviourist view holds that new knowledge is developed – or constructed – from old knowledge. Anna Sfard, an Israeli researcher, highlights this constructivist dimension of learning by referring to the 'learning paradox', also known from the writings of Plato as Menos' paradox: How can we want to acquire a knowledge of something that is not yet known to us? Sfard's assumption is that human beings reach new states of knowledge through building upon their current knowledge (Bruner, 2000:22).

Shepard (2001) declared that the old paradigm, with hereditarian theories of intelligence, social efficiency curriculum and scientific efficiency, has led to an atomistic view of both learning and the measurement of learning. The new paradigm, constructivism, stresses that all human knowledge is constructed (or reconstructed). Individuals organise information in their own way, transcending their own – and pre-existing – knowledge structures. Moreover, as in Sfard's case, the new paradigm entails cognitive development through social experience. Individuals are introduced to new ways of thinking, with the help of social experiences that serve as 'scaffolding' (Shepard,

2001:1075). Such scaffolding may be erected by themselves, or by others who are held responsible for their learning (e.g., parents, educators etc).

The diverse literature of alternative assessment is both a response to the past (e.g., the behaviourism described by Shepard) and a response to the future – to the claim that the human species is moving towards a 'knowledge society', a notion sketched out by Torsen Husen (Husen, 2000:239). Shepard made the same argument, that new times require new assessment practices: classroom assessment must change in two fundamentally important ways. "First, its form and content must be changed to better represent important thinking and problem solving skills in each of the disciplines. Second, the way that assessment is used in classrooms and how it is regarded by educators and learners must change. The content of assessment should match challenging subject matter standards and be connected to contexts of application." (Shepard, 2001:11).

Such a constructivist assessment paradigm will contain, according to Shepard, self-assessment and feedback from peers, as a central part of the social processes that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge, and information of learners' identities'. A constructivist assessment paradigm looks to assessment as a source of insight and help instead of it being the occasion for meting out rewards and punishments. Assessment has to be more useful and helpful in the learning process and therefore must be moved into the middle of the teaching-learning process becoming integral to Vygotsky's idea of a zone of proximal development (Shepard, 2004:16).

2.4.2. Cognitive development and constructivism: Implications from theory of instruction and assessment

This section provides an overview of the developmental theories of Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner that provide the basis for the educational

application, development of instruction and assessment built on constructivistic theories.

2.4.2.1. John Dewey

John Dewey was an American psychologist and philosopher who promoted the value of personal experience in learning. He placed relatively little emphasis on maturational factors and taught that human beings understand the world through interaction with their environment and, thus, knowledge is constructed by the individual. Dewey (Lutz & Huitt, 2001:1) proposed that the primary function of schooling was to prepare young people to live in a democratic society and that one's reflection on personal experiences would provide the foundation for the development of the necessary attributes for successful living. He believed the dualistic conceptualisation of thinking and doing to be false. Rather he proposed a reciprocal, continuous relationship between thinking and doing that is reflected in the work of the other researchers. As a leader in the progressive education movement in the early 20th century, his work set the stage for an acceptance of the work of later researchers.

Dewey's ideas focus on the development of a learner in relation to their social interactions. The key element of assessment for this school of thought is that it should be done in a socially context-rich environment (Suizzo, 2000:846). Suizzo (2000) says, "a child's performance level on a given cognitive task will vary according to the level of social support he or she is accorded". This possible variance suggests that, for assessments to be valid, they must be conducted in a socially supportive setting because, "with modelling or memory prompting by an adult, learners will be able to perform at their optimal level, but without that support, they may perform only at their functional level and show no evidence of competence at the higher level" (Suizzo, 2000:846). A significant advocacy of John Dewey's theory is that assessment and evaluations should be done in the context of practical, real-world applications of knowledge, dispositions and skills. If possible, learning

should result in products that would be recognised as useful by society. For Dewey, traditional assessments that rely on measuring a learner's knowledge or skills outside of the context within which they would be used, misrepresents what learners know as knowing is equated with doing, hence outcomes-based assessment.

2.4.2.2. Jean Piaget

Jean Piaget was a Swiss biologist, philosopher and behaviourist who developed one of the most significant theories in cognitive psychology (Lutz & Huitt, 2001:2). His work focused on developing a general theory of knowledge, how a child develops knowledge of his/her world, and the role that biology plays in that development. For Piaget, intelligence is represented by how an organism interacts with its environment through mental adaptation. This adaptation is controlled through mental organisations or structures that an individual uses to represent the world; it is driven by a biological impulse to obtain balance (homeostasis or equilibrium) between those mental organisations and the environment (Parent, Normandeau & Larivee, 2000:65).

In a nutshell, Piaget's theory can be understood in two ways: his theory of adaptation and the process of using cognitive schemes, and his theory of cognitive developmental stages (Huitt & Hummel, 2000:34). The process of coming to know the first aspect of Piaget's theory starts with the fact that individuals are born with reflexes that allow them to interact with the environment. These reflexes are quickly replaced by constructed mental schemes or structures that allow them to interact with, and adapt to the environment. This adaptation occurs in two different ways (through the process of assimilation and accommodation) and it is a critical element of modern constructivism (Piaget, 2001:45).

Adaptation is predicated on the belief that the building of knowledge is a continuous activity of self-construction; as a person interacts with the

environment, knowledge is invented and manipulated into cognitive structures. When discrepancies between the environment and mental structures occur, one of two things can happen. Either the perception of the environment can be changed in order for new information to be matched with existing structures through assimilation, or the cognitive structures themselves can change as a result of the interaction through accommodation. In either case, the individual adapts to his/her environment by way of interaction (Huitt & Hummel, 2000:34). It is clear Piaget believed that cognition is grounded in the interface between mind and environment. The result of this interplay is the achievement or working toward a balance between mental schemes and the requirements of the environment. It is a combination and actions to achieve equilibration that advances an individual into higher developmental stage (Huitt & Hummel, 2000:34).

There are a number of implications on how to assess cognitive development using the perspective of the stage-theory models of Piaget and Bruner. First, these models of development contend that growth occurs in serial, sequential manner and that developmental stages are biologically driven and correlate to a specific range of ages. Assessment should take into account what is developmentally appropriate to each stage. With the ever-increasing pressure to raise standards and expect higher-level processing, how learners are assessed is of critical importance, and stage-theories create conflict between what can and should be taught. However, many researchers believe that developmental stages must be considered in assessment (Lutz & Huitt, 2001:12).

In order to appropriately assess the pre-operational child, activities must be based on the physical environment and focus on hands-on interaction. The egocentric nature of the pre-operational child suggests that activities and assessment should be limited to the personal perspective of the individual, and the pre-operational child will probably be unable to take into account the opinion or perspective of others. Green and Gredler (2002) suggest that, in

accordance with Piagetian theory, "the material world should be the starting point for learning because it is both accessible and contains complexities of which children have never dreamed" (Green & Gredler, 2002:3).

Once a learner has reached Piaget's third stage, concrete operations, the assessment should be vastly different. At this point in development, learners can recognise and evaluate the views of others. This alone adds great dimension to the types of assessment that would be appropriate because learners can now be asked to evaluate and critique differing viewpoints and discuss perspectives other than their own. Another attribute of the concrete operational child is that the learner can participate in logical reasoning and use symbolic representations to solve problems using operations, applications, and generalisations (Lutz & Huitt, 2001:12). There are limitations to this stage as well. The major limitation of children in the concrete operational stage is the inability to think hypothetically (Driscoll, 2000:67), and they continue to have difficulty solving problems that are multi-faceted. Understanding and appropriately assessing this developmental stage is critical for educators because "the majority of learners in the GET Band are still in the concrete operational state".

When a learner reaches the formal operational stage, the range of assessment is almost endless. These young people can now employ the use of analogies and hypotheses in problem solving, and they can incorporate value judgements and problems of social and cultural scope as part of their processing (Orlich, 2000:3). While considering a learner's current developmental stage is important in creating appropriate assessment, it is important at all levels to continue to have learners use skills and information processing techniques from all previous developmental stages in the acquisition of new information. Assessment at every stage should also be concerned with all previous stages. This is crucial because "if learners maintain access to preceding stages of cognitive ability, a pattern of seemingly lower level responses may be an integral part of processing new

information and developing abilities beyond their current optimal level" (Stanton, 2000:3).

A second major group of developmental theories is associated with interactive theories of development, primarily those of Dewey and Vygotsky. These ideas focus on the development of a learner in relation to their social interactions. The key element of assessment for this school of thought is that it should be done in a socially context-rich environment. Suizzo (2000:846) said that "a learner's performance level on a given cognitive task will vary according to the level of social support he or she is accorded". This possible variance suggests that for assessments to be valid, they must be conducted in a socially supportive setting because "with modelling or memory prompting by an adult, children will be able to perform at their optional level, but without that support, they may perform only at their functional level and show no evidence of competence at the higher level" (Suizzo, 2000:846).

2.5. Purpose of Assessment

It is easy to become so immersed in the job of teaching that educators end up losing sight of the exact purpose of assessment (Rust, 2002:1). The purpose of assessment is to motivate learners, create learning opportunities, give feedback, to grade (progression and promotion), and as a quality assurance mechanism. This is done in pursuit of improving the quality of education as discussed below.

2.5.1. Using assessment to improve quality in education

In the type of assessment that everyone who has been to school will recognise, a teacher is always involved in an activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitudes, or skills of a learner or group of learners (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:19). Assessment could also be carried out by a learner him/herself, or by another party. Whatever the circumstances, assessment has been associated with appraisal of individuals. The word quality, especially in education, is rarely defined (Kellaghan &

Greaney, 2001:19). The problem in defining the quality of education arises when one chooses the aspect of education that will be the focus of attention. Education has many purposes and components. Questions regarding quality may reasonably be posed about any important aspect of an education system: learner achievements, teaching and learning, educational materials, teacher training, administration, infrastructure and school buildings. All these elements are interrelated, and a serious deficit in one is likely to have implications for quality in others (Benvenister, 2000b:23).

If the focus is on the outcomes of education (as it is in current reform proposals), a further problem arises since there is no general agreement on what the purposes of schooling should be (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:34). For some, the role of education is fostering learners' cognitive, moral and social development; for others, education is a means of promoting social cohesion and nation building; for others, it is a preparation for the world of work. It may be because of this divergence in views that many, though not all, system assessments focus on knowledge and skills that are universally accepted as important (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:23). This focus, however, should not lead to the neglect of the higher order cognitive skills that many reforms aspire to promote, or of many other valued outcomes of schooling relating to attitudes, values, aspirations, motivation, self-concept, and socialization (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:23).

2.6. Emerging assessment practices

Many educators will say that, any education system is only as good as its assessment strategy (Kramer, 2000:37). Most of these educators know how easy it is to plan teaching by first looking at what kind of examination we need to prepare learners for and then deciding how best to approach the task of preparing the learners to get best results. It is not surprising, therefore, that much research and debate has gone into the issue of assessing learning. During the last few years, educators and educationists have noticed some important trends in assessment emerging internationally (Kramer, 2000:37).

It is, therefore, important to take note of these trends and understand them so that new approaches to education can be looked at in the light of emerging practice.

One of the reasons for new practices is that South Africa has, for many years, recognised that the old approach, of using paper and pencil tests only, has many weaknesses. Paper and pencil tests, like all forms of assessment, are limited in what they can assess. Some educators have complained for many years that such tests are biased against learners with poor language skills, poor time management or other weaknesses that increase the chance of poor marks, even where these issues are not tested (Kramer, 2000:37). However, this is not to say that paper and pencil tests have no place in education–tests and exams are as important an element of assessment as other forms of assessment.

OBE is not seeking to ban tests as outdated and useless but recognises that tests and exams cannot give all the accurate information that is needed. In order to strengthen the value of assessment, there is a need to look at other ways of adding to the present stock of assessment techniques, not to replace techniques that still have a role to play (Kramer, 2000:37-38). Assessment must be both an instrument and an agent for reform: assessment as an agent for reform is influenced by the particular pressures and demands of real life, and by the contemporary volatile South African context. Assessment, as an instrument for reform, is influenced by the way in which we assess, by inferences from role players and by degrees of adequacy which determine standards.

Certain underlying factors influencing assessment were explored. Assessment practices that may address learners' abilities through emphasis on thinking and learning, as opposed to mere assimilation of content, are investigated. It is against this background to suggest ways to address these issues through the implementation of alternative assessment that can possibly develop

abilities in order to achieve outcomes. These ideas are the ones that lead to a revised thinking about assessment.

2.6.1. Factors related to adapting assessment practices to curriculum delivery instruction

The original objectives specified in the curricula are being reconstructed in the form of learning outcomes related to specific performances in various learning areas. The current interest in the specification and use of outcomes has increased with the setting of national standards. Almost every area in education and training is rephrased in terms of "competences" and "outcomes". These outcomes are divided into critical and specific outcomes which in turn are related to learning areas. Critical outcomes contribute to overall broad and long–term values, while specific outcomes focus on what learners will be able to do at specific levels.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) advocates a new approach to the organisation of education and training in South Africa, providing opportunities to learn regardless of age, circumstances and the level of education and training a learner may have (NDE, 2000b:12). Curricula representing programme and learning opportunities are introduced to provide for the educational needs of several target groups (NDE, 2000a:15).

Traditionally, products which were assessed formally were emphasised without much attention to the process. The notion of filling empty vessels with knowledge or the transmission of knowledge was often preferred to the construction of knowledge, thus focusing on teacher–centredness instead of learner–centredness. Recently, responsibility has been devolved to learners to develop and progress. The process now receives more attention and assessment has become more developmental than judgemental. Outcomes and results are assessed against standards and clearly defined criteria (Killen, 2000:45). This was followed by a revised curriculum (C2005, 2000:4) in which

four design features are proposed to replace the previous eight design features of C2005.

These four design features replaced the sixty–six specific outcomes, assessment criteria, phase and programme organisers, range statements, performance indicators and expected levels of performance. The assessment standards describe the level of knowledge and skills expected and the range for each of the learning outcomes for each grade level. These changes in terminology and simplification of concepts have developed into a controversial issue as a result of uncertainties and unclear guidelines.

Potenza (2000:1), in analysing the streamlining of OBE as current theory of education, emphasises that the principles of OBE will remain (the child remains the most important consideration and learning happens through activities). She also states that the principles of traditional education in South Africa and of fundamental pedagogies are rejected (contradictory as it may sound). Principles such as teacher–centred education, content–bound approaches and single attribute assessment are replaced by integrated multi–dimensional assessment and authentic contexts.

It should, however, be noted that OBE is not a totally new approach to teaching; it is the systematic application of a number of educational ideas that have been integrated in good educational practice in the past. Melton (2000:409) balances the emphasis on outcomes with the role of assessment in the teaching process when he states that learning outcomes are statements of desired outcomes of learning which are expressed in such a way that it is clear how measurement (assessment) can be achieved. Innovations and unaccustomed educational practices may lead to controversies and pressure. Growing problems are experienced by teachers and students alike. From these changes, various consequences emerged which may clearly be observed in educational assessment.

In education systems throughout the world, there have been changes in assessment theories and practices that have brought about because of a call for more authentic forms of learner assessment and for assessment to become integral to the teaching-learning process (Singaram, 2007:23). Singaram (2007) describes classrooms as complex environments where teachers must make some of their most important decisions about what and how learners have learned. He also describes the value and purpose of pre-instructional assessment, assessment during instruction and assessment at the end of instruction. All over the world, educationists are continuously calling for assessment reform (Le Grange & Beets, 2005:115).

Assessment-led reform is now one of the most widely favoured strategies to promote higher standards of teaching, more powerful learning, and more credible forms of public accountability (Singaram, 2007:24). Hargreaves, Earl and Schmidt (2002), confirm that many educational reforms have heralded new classroom assessment approaches that go beyond traditional paper-and-pencil techniques to include strategies such as performance-and portfolio-based assessment (Hargreaves et al., 2002:70). It becomes clear that changes in assessment around the world have been motivated by the need to enhance the quality of learning to enable learners to meet the challenge of the future.

2.6.2. Challenges in adapting assessment practices to enhance the teaching-learning process

Pressure such as demands for social reform, the provision of resources, differing approaches of role–players to educational reform, the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning and controversies around the meaning, management and measurement of classroom assessment resulted in the need for reform in education. New curricula are often intended to alleviate pressing social problems pertaining to issues such as equity, access, redress and accountability. Providing resources for education in South Africa is only a part of the solution.

Naude (2003:10) argues that problems leading to pressures in the South African education system are certain historical disadvantages; the application of a politically oriented education policy; the rejection of education by certain learners as part of political resistance; lack of discipline and lack of a culture of teaching and learning; as well as idealistic but unrealistic attempts by the government, after 1994, to address and solve problems that cannot be solved hastily and superficially. Education departments are concerned about the success rate of matriculation candidates and about methods and techniques to perfect various aspects of common examinations as well as the conditions under which learners must be allowed to write examinations (Tladi, 2000:1). The setting of papers, content, marking and implementation are mentioned.

Rakometsi (2000:1) regards assessment as the area that gives schools and teachers the most problems. The assessment issue is further complicated by the arguments for or against two possibilities for assessment of school-leaving exams: an input–based, summative form of assessment or an outcomes–based assessment of formative and continuous assessment (Chisholm, 2001:253). These problems emphasise the significance of assessment and the implications for sound formulation of assessment policy. It is obvious that a good practically manageable system of education is necessary to address the problems and meet the needs of the intended audience as diversified as it is presently in South Africa. The political significance in education is obvious as well as the direct implications of an assessment policy (Rakometsi, 2000:1).

A burning issue concerning assessment practices of this novel approach is the roles that politics play in the transformation of education in general and assessment in particular. As a result, stakeholders are concerned about assessment criteria and answers are urgently sought to the problem of determining criteria that should be employed in assessment to meet our particular needs in education today. Chisholm (2001:250; 253) argues that South Africa needs to have a public debate on this issue. She, however,

believes that there is a need for reliable national examinations as well as a need for diversified qualifications and assessment procedures.

Another issue is the way in which stakeholders experience assessment. The responses of learners concerning classroom assessment practices often reveal more than what is written in assessment theory. The beliefs of learners and teachers concerning assessment are indications that assessment has often become an end in itself without any link to particular needs in education. The community and institutions of learning may have other demands. Traditionally, assessment has been an unpleasant burden resented by learners while interrupting the main activity of teachers, that is, teaching or learning mediation or facilitation (Rakometsi, 2000:1).

Learners often see assessment as an instrument for identifying failure rather than for documenting development and success. To them, the scope of learning successfully is primarily seated in identifying and reproducing a correct answer to a well–defined problem that has an exact and predetermined solution. Learners often see assessment as a neutral isolated element in teaching. Knowledge is experienced as rigid and inflexible with the emphasis on facts, fixed procedures and finished products: learned procedures must be recalled and applied to solve problems, and the task of the learners is to discover such knowledge (Workshop A, Project 5, 2000; Workshop B, Project 6, 2000; Workshop C, Project 6, 2000).

These beliefs are directly in opposition to current learning theories such as radical and social constructivism. Von Glasersfeld (2000:382) believes that conceptual development is the key to learning that is worthwhile. He argues that reflection is an essential activity prior to understanding and that concept development is a process of fostering further reflective abstraction.

Wilson et al., (2000:66) summarise the essential arguments of constructivism as follows:

- Knowledge is constructed from experience;
- Learning is a result of a personal interpretation of knowledge;
- Learning is an active process where meaning is developed through experience;
- Learning is collaborative with meaning negotiated from multiple perspectives;
- Learning occurs in realistic settings; and
- Testing is integrated into the task, not a separate activity.

This epistemology offers many possibilities for teachers to assist learners in development and for growth to take place through the interactive processes between persons in varying contexts. However, Norris (2000:17) indicates the complicated mismatch between the theoretical precision of performance–based programmes and the imprecise and arbitrary issue of testing when applied to human capabilities. Consequently, value judgements or criteria for interpreting performances may further complicate the issue.

It follows that, if learners experience assessment as fixed predetermined procedures of recollection and reproduction, then the aim of education is defeated. Little development is possible in such an approach to assessment. Development itself is the aim of education. Taylor and Marienau (2000:234) define development in this context as a definite movement from simple to more complex cognitions, with each stage, level or position becoming more elastic but moving towards greater cognitive complexity. Higher order outcomes cannot be achieved if assessment does not allow for learners' capacity to develop and grow. If such outcomes are to be achieved, varying degrees of adequacy should be demonstrated, therefore assessment instruments must reflect the attainment of quality standards (Workshop A, Project 6, 2000).

In order to achieve certain standards, an analysis of criteria and assessment practices is necessary. The demands of society and the vision inherent in the curriculum reflect the goals of education which, in turn, are reflected in the performances that are valued. In other words, the identification of valued performances determines the curriculum and prescribes the criteria and means by which success will be judged. This aspect of valued performances inevitably leads to the question of the benchmarking of criteria. This may be possible in assessing knowledge and skills but how can standards be determined in the context of values, attitudes and behaviour? What standards should be identified for the assessment of values and who should identify them? Although Stiggings (2000:364) cautions against "misusing" the assessment of affective factors, he only addresses this issue superficially by advising that only school–related dispositions should be assessed and that assistance should be sought when needed.

Assessment identifies and emphasises the learning outcomes valued by the school system. The critical key outcomes designed by the South African Qualifications Framework (SAQF) often focus on higher order processes such as critical thinking hinting at ideals such as a shaping of the heart and mind and at transforming experience while the question should be asked whether higher order outcomes can be achieved if the capacity to develop and grow conceptually cannot be determined. Taylor and Marienau (2000:239) question outcomes formulated in high–minded rhetorical phrases and argue that if such overarching goals are not embodied in the curriculum, and hence in assessment, without a methodology for assessing the accomplishment of such statements, then they cannot be truly considered goals.

Taylor and Marienau (2000:239) advocate the concept of constructive developmental assessment or the encouragement of self–reflection and perceptual shifts in higher orders of consciousness. In assessment, a burning issue is whether more knowledge or whether we are assessing greater understanding is assessed. Complex thinking processes are reflected in higher

order outcomes, which may include, inter alia: synthesising, analysing, discovering, intuiting, visualising, checking, defining, proving, conjecturing, abstracting, modelling, generalising, comparing, classifying, induction, deduction, extending, problem-solving and inventing. Andrews (2004:235) refers to an integrating developmental experience, or, in other words, creating a dynamic, coherent system for using developmental constructs to assess and improve learning and individual learner development. What is important is not how much knowledge a learner has but what a learner does with that knowledge. This places a heavy responsibility on how assessment is done and how standards and quality in assessment are addressed.

Standards are necessary to give credibility to a new system of education. Makgoba (2000:54) defines standards as a benchmark against which something is assessed. As such, a standard is a dynamic entity because notions of quality performance change over time. The developing needs of various stakeholders lead to changes in assessment practices. It is obvious that as performances required in everyday life require greater sophistication, assessment criteria must reflect greater depth and breath, as well as the components of precision, quantification and compatibility (Le Roux, 2000:249).

The implementation of suitable assessment practices can further learners' understanding as well as assist them in realising the vision set forth in the ideals and outcomes of the new curriculum. The implementation of a viable assessment system may relieve prevailing pressures in education. It may also address shortcomings demonstrated by the inferences from stakeholders in education and identify criteria for the assessment of the achievement of higher order outcomes through complex thinking process. In other words, the capacity to develop and grow through interactive processes between persons and varying contexts must be explored through the implementation of a practical framework in which these issues are addressed.

Proposals to use assessment to improve standards in schools owe much to accountability movements which, in response to political, social, and economic pressures, are now a feature of government administrations in many countries (Kirst, 2000:43). If quality does not reach an acceptable standard, it seems reasonable to ask: who is accountable? When one examines how the concept of accountability has been applied in the field of education, and is used in contemporary debate, two issues are clear. First, accountability is focused for the most part on specified results or outcomes. This is so, despite the fact that it might be expected that account would be taken of all that goes on in schools, not just learner achievement, requiring, for example, schools to explain themselves in terms of their mission, organisation, activities and priorities for learners (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:27).

Secondly, accountability systems are often silent about the responsibilities of individuals or agencies other than teachers and schools. While it is obvious that teachers and learners should bear some responsibility for learning, it would seem reasonable that they should be held accountable only for matters over which they have control, and that the responsibility of other institutions, agencies and individuals that exercise control over the resources and activities of schools also be reflected in an accountability system. Thus, governments (central and local, depending on how the education system is organised), educational planners, and managers, would seem accountable for some aspects of education.

Others who are not directly involved in the administration of the system or in the operation of schools might also be regarded as accountable to some degree (e.g., teacher-training institutions or universities, parents, and even taxpayers). If, for example, an evaluation of the adequacy of existing resources pointed to deficiencies in the curriculum or in teacher preparation, the responsibility for dealing with these could hardly be laid at the door of individual teachers. Similarly, if inequalities in the distribution of resources or the need to target some categories of learners or certain schools for special

treatment are identified, the accountability of those responsible for the provision of resources would arise. Assessment systems differ in the extent to which teachers and others involved in the educational process, are held accountable for learner achievements (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:27).

2.6.3. Developmental Assessment

Developmental assessment is defined as the process of monitoring a student's progress through the area of learning so that decisions can be made about the best ways to facilitate further learning (Masters & Forster, 2000:1). It has a developmental and monitoring function to fulfil (South African Institute for Distance Education and the National Department of Education, 2000:14). The focus in assessment is shifted from notions of "passing" and "failing" to the concept of on-going growth (Masters & Forster, 2000:8). The emphasis is also on students developing skills, knowledge and understandings whereas previously the emphasis was on one individual compared with another.

In developmental assessment, learning progress is monitored in much the same way as the learner's physical growth, that is, from time to time an estimate is made of the learner's location on a developmental continuum and changes in location provide measures of growth over time (Masters & Forster, 2000:1). This is done by using progress maps which describe the nature of development or progress made in the area of learning. The progress maps provide a frame of reference for monitoring learner development and include a description of skills, understandings and knowledge in the sequence in which they typically develop. Thus, they represent a picture of what it means to improve in an area of learning and form the first step in implementing developmental assessment (Pretorius, 2001:84).

Developmental assessment implies the practice of Continuous Assessment (CASS). CASS represents a shift from promotion decisions based on the results of a single test or examination (focus on summative evaluation), to the ongoing formative assessment of the learner which is associated with

feedback to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of learner performance. The strength and success of a CASS based model rests on the professionalism and ability of skilled and committed teachers and trainers who understand, are able to apply sound educational assessment principles and to draw from the variety of different assessment techniques available to them (Pretorius, 2001:84).

The order of learning outcomes on a progress map reflects what can be seen as a natural or inevitable development order, for example, all children develop an understanding that spoken language can be represented using marks on paper before they understand the meanings of particular written words. The intention and first step in developmental assessment, therefore, is to obtain an estimate of a learner's current location on the progress map as a guide to the kinds of learning experiences likely to be most useful at that stage in the learner's learning, and as a basis for monitoring growth over a period of time (Pretorius, 2001:84). It is also possible to indicate the sequence of learner achievement of levels between the different ages (Department of Education and Science & the Welsh Office, 2000:9).

The second step in implementing developmental assessment is collecting evidence. The aim of collecting evidence is to estimate the learner's location on a progress map. In developmental assessment, records of observation provide the evidence needed to estimate students' levels of attainment on a map (Masters & Forster, 2000:3). The larger the number of relevant observations, the more dependable the conclusions regarding the learners' current level of attainment will be (Pretorius, 2001:85). A requirement of these observations is that they must be relevant with regard to:

- The evidence about the area of learning to be assessed; and
- The learning outcomes identified on a progress map.

Examples of evidence required for specific observations could include, for example:

- Skills in, for example, writing a report or collecting and analysing information, which may best be assessed in the context of an assigned project;
- The ability to write for a range of audiences and purposes, which could be assessed by observing a collection of learner's writings collected over time in the form of a portfolio;
- The ability to speak a second language or to co–operate with others as a member of a team, which may best be assessed by observing learner performances;
- Skills in making items of food, wood or textiles, which may best be assessed by observing the products of a learner's work; and
- The learner's mastery of a body of knowledge and the application of procedures, which may be most efficiently assessed through written exercises or tests (Pretorius, 2001:85).

Developmental assessment uses all these and other methods of observation. Each method can be used informally as part of the teaching-learning process in class, or where high levels of reliability and comparability are important as a basis for developing more structured assessment tasks and activities.

According to Pretorius (2001:85-86), the context within which learners are observed should, wherever possible, be meaningful to learners, interesting in their own right and provide for learners to be creative in solving problems. This underlines the principle of relevance to the life-world of the learner. The methods of assessment used by the educator should take into account the individual needs and abilities of all learners. Issues of culture, gender and home language need to be catered for through the method of assessment used. Developmental assessment supports methods of reporting which are more informative than raw test scores or scores that show only where individuals stand in relation to other students (Masters & Forster, 2000:8).

An important aspect of collecting evidence is the systematic recording of observations and judgements by educators. This can take many forms. Day–to–day observations must be recorded as they provide valuable information, which can be included in the learner's record sheet at the end of a term or year. Apart from these observations made by educators, information of learner progress is obtained through assignments, such as writing tasks, projects, presentations, portfolio entries, classroom exercises and tests. These records can simply indicate whether the learner has attained a set outcome, or can represent a more detailed analysis of the learner's level of understanding of certain work. Educators can also record ratings of learner's work by judging certain aspects (analytic rating) or by rating overall or holistically (Pretorius, 2001:86).

The third step in developmental assessment is to use the collected evidence to draw conclusions about the learner's current location on a progress map (Masters & Forster, 2000:5). This estimate of learner progress must reflect:

- Reliability

If a particular assessment were totally reliable, assessors acting independently using the same criteria and mark scheme would come to exactly the same judgement about a given piece of work. In the interests of quality assurance, standards and fairness, whilst recognising that complete objectivity is impossible to achieve, when it comes to summative assessment it is a goal worth aiming for. To this end, what has been described as the connoisseur approach to assessment is no longer acceptable (Rust, 2002:2). Explicitness, in terms of learning outcomes and assessment criteria, is vitally important in attempting to achieve reliability. They should be explicit to the learners when the task is set, and where there are multiple markers they should be discussed, and preferably used on some sample cases prior to be using used for real.

- Validity

Just as important as reliability is the question of validity. Does the assessed task actually assess what it wants to? Just because an exam question includes the instruction 'analyse and evaluate', it does not actually mean that the skills of analysis and evaluation are going to be assessed. They may be if the learner is presented with a case study scenario and data they have never seen before. But, if they can answer perfectly and adequately by regurgitating the notes they took from the presentation given on the subject, then nothing more is being assessed than the ability to memorise.

- Relevance and transferability

There is much evidence that human beings do not find it easy to transfer skills from one context to another, and there is, in fact, a debate as to whether transferability is in itself a separate skill that needs to be taught and learnt (Rust, 2002:2). Whatever the outcome of that, the transfer of skills is certainly more likely to be successful when the contexts in which they are developed and used are similar. It is also true to say that academic assessment has traditionally been based on a fairly narrow range of tasks, with arguably an emphasis on knowledge on knowing, rather than doing. It has therefore tended to develop a fairly narrow range of skills. For these two reasons, when devising an assessment task, it is important that it both addresses the skills you want the learner to develop and that, as much as possible, it puts them into a recognisable context with a sense of real purpose behind why the task would be undertaken and a sense of a real audience beyond the teacher, for whom the task would be done.

Whether observations are valid will depend on whether they provide evidence about the full range of outcomes in a particular learning area. Also, evidence must be an adequate and fair reflection of the learner's abilities, and not be dependent on factors such as the learner's proficiency in the language of instruction or on characteristics of the learner, such as cultural background or gender assessment should be free of bias. Reliable estimates can be obtained

by ensuring that a comprehensive amount of information is assessed (Pretorius, 2001:86).

2.6.4. Assessment methods

The purpose of assessment dictates the most appropriate assessment technique to be used. No single technique is suitable for all assessment purposes or does justice to the diversity of learners who must be accommodated (South African Institute for Distance Education and the National Department of Education, 2000:17). Different aspects of class work should be focused on, such as assessment of not only content, but also skills, concepts, language proficiency and attitudes.

Tests and examinations are still an important part of assessment. The other forms of assessment, such as performance assessment, add value to assessment. They too, are limited in what they can help educators to do, but when educators combine a range of approaches, they will have a stronger strategy all round. A variety of assessment methods can be used to estimate learning progress to be indicated on a progress map or to determine whether a learner can be promoted to the next grade or not. These may include portfolio assessment, performance assessment, projects, product assessment, paper and pen assessment, observation sheets, journals and assessment of prior learning.

2.6.4.1. Portfolio assessment

A portfolio is a deliberate, strategic and specific collection of learner work, or evidence of learner work, that demonstrates that learning has occurred. It is collected over a period of time. The work within the portfolio must have a clear intent and purpose that is linked to the learning programme outcomes. Kramer (2000:77-78) outlines two types of portfolios:

- Holistic, comprehensive or general portfolios create a broad profile of learner's progress by gathering samples of a learner's work in a number of different areas. These are normally cross-curricular and

multi - disciplinary. Such portfolios may include comments by the educator on such diverse issues as attendance and classroom discipline.

- Specific or limited focus portfolios limit the kind of work collected to one area or discipline. For example, a learner may create a language portfolio or a science portfolio. An even more specific portfolio is a project portfolio which shows the learners' progress in one project or task. Such a portfolio gives evidence of how the learners planned the project, how they progressed through each step of the project, their comments, queries, analysis and interpretations of the results of the project.

Kramer (2000:78) describes three kinds of portfolios in terms of their main purpose:

- A Celebration Portfolio is a collection of the learners' favourite or special work to show parents or friends or to keep as a moment when they finally leave school. It contains something that each learner believes is a special piece of work that he/she is especially proud of. Increasingly, learners are presenting such portfolios, particularly those that show competence in writing skills or creativity, as evidence of their ability when they attend their first post-school job interviews.
- A Growth Portfolio is one that collects samples of work over time to show how the learner's proficiency has developed. For example, a learner may collect different pieces of writing to show an increasing level of sophistication over different grades.
- A Status Report Portfolio shows evidence that certain levels of ability have been attained or that particular outcome has been achieved. In this case, there would be pre-determined standards that the contents of the portfolio must show the learner to have achieved. This kind of portfolio is most important in assessing and recognising prior learning. Students in higher education institutions in some countries, such as

Canada, are given credit for courses if they can produce a portfolio which shows mastery of the particular course.

Fogarty and Stoehr (2000:48) 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 so should be included in the portfolio.

Reflection : The learner reflects on what his/her portfolio shows. The educator and learner can also use the portfolio 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.

Whatever the kind of portfolio that is used, it is most important to know what the portfolio will be used to assess, how it will be assessed and what criteria will be used.

2.6.4.2. Performance assessment

Learner performances are assessed as the learner performs live for the assessor (Simosko, Susan & Associates, 2000:32) or are videotaped for assessment. A performance assessment is a direct and systematic observation of an actual learner performance or an examination of products created. According to Kramer (2000:47), performance assessment includes all assessment activities where the learner carries out a specific task or activity that is observed by the educator, who then makes judgement about the quality of the performance. Performance assessment may range from short tasks to extended projects. Performance assessment tasks may result in

learners creating products (such as a report, essay or artefact), performances (such as a dance or play) or events. The demonstrations can take place in a controlled environment (such as a laboratory or classroom) or in a real-life environment where complexities faced by the learners are much higher. In the latter case, the performance assessment is also called "authentic assessment". In both cases, the learner can demonstrate complex learning that integrates knowledge, skills and dispositions or attitudes in a single performance (Pretorius, 2001:86-87).

Kramer (2000:47) outlines three main kinds of Performance Tasks: written tasks, oral tasks and applied tasks which require learners to do or make something. In reality, most tasks combine different actions. One of the main benefits of Performance Tasks is that they allow learners to build other skills and knowledge, not usually considered, into the learning process. This includes things such as constructive work habits, time management, teamwork, honesty, safety consciousness, the desire for excellence and other attitudinal elements needed for success in life. The integration of these kinds of skills and attitudes is one of the main reasons for introducing OBE into education and so this form of assessment is an important element of OBE (Kramer, 2000:47).

2.6.4.3. Projects

A project is undertaken over a period of time and often involves the collection and analysis of data and the preparation of a written report. Posters are sometimes used by learners to report the findings and conclusions of their findings (Pretorius, 2001:87). Where either a project or assignment is undertaken collectively by groups of learners working collaboratively, this is called group project or assignment (Rust, 2002:3). This has the pragmatic advantage of potentially reducing the teacher's assessment workload and the educational advantage of helping to develop the learner's team working skills.

There are also some forms of product such as collaborative performance that can, by definition, only be achieved in a group. The major assessment problem is how to identify each individual's role and contribution and to reward it fairly. Solutions tend to include combinations of an individual component which can be individually assessed, teacher observation, and involving the learner's in some self and/or peer assessment as the ones in the best position to judge.

2.6.4.4. Product assessment

Learners are requested to make items. Examples may include pieces of artwork (drawings, paintings, sculptures), items of food, articles made of wood, metal, plastic or ceramics. The assessor receives the end product and uses it to make judgements about the learner's learning (Simosko, Susan & Associates, 2000:32). In each case, the product of a learner's work is available at the completion of the process for assessment.

2.6.4.5. Paper and pen assessment

This type of assessment takes place at a specific time and is usually completed in a limited period of time under specific conditions (Pretorius, 2001:87). Kramer (2000:47), called this Traditional Test assessment. According to Kramer (2000:47), this is also called Selected Response Assessment. This assessment includes all kinds of exams and other forms of traditional objectively scored or marked paper and pencil tests. Other examples include:

- class exercises;
- essay questions;
- homework problems;
- multiple choice items;
- oral exams;
- Short problem questions (e.g., Mathematics, science, etc.); and
- true/false questions.

These types of tests are usually used to show whether learners have mastered content. The main characteristic of tests is that the index of achievement is the number of right answers given by the learner or the number of marks earned for correct work (Kramer, 2000:47).

Educators may develop tests which can be an integral part of the teaching-learning process when they are clearly linked to the learning programme outcomes and flow from the lesson as a normal classroom activity. Tests may also be used at the end of a learning cycle, at defined periods of time, to assess progress. However, tests should not dominate assessment practice. They are just one of a number of strategies employed by educators and trainers to gauge learner achievement (Department of Education, 2000:47).

2.6.4.6. Observation sheets

Observation sheets can be used by educators and learners to record the achievement of specific skills, behaviours and evidence of achievement and progress over a learning period. These should be linked to the learning programme outcomes and be readily observable. The most common observation sheets are individual learner checklists and whole-class grids. Individual checklists and self-checklists facilitate peer and self assessment strategies which contribute significantly to the learning process (Department of Education, 2000:33).

2.6.4.7. Journals

Journals can reflect learner's learning and clarify meaning following a teaching episode. Journals are most effective when learners are engaged in the learning process and have a clear understanding of the intended learning outcomes and how they will be assessed (Department of Education, 2000:33).

2.6.4.8 Assessment of Prior Learning (APL)

It is fairly self-evident that performance levels and mastery of skills are not attained solely as a result of curricular activities within a formal education

system, but also as a result of extra-curricular contact and exposure to the world of work. Cognisance should be taken of the level of mastery that learners have achieved before placing them in programmes, in order to maximise their learning experience by building on prior knowledge and experience. Thus, the principle of progressive achievement along a continuum of advancement should be propagated in both formal and alternative education and training (Pretorius, 2001:87).

Assessment of prior learning should be done through the use of valid and reliable assessment procedures to determine the level of competence a learner has attained in any specific field prior to placement in further education. Assessment of prior learning is particularly relevant to the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and vocational education and training fields to facilitate the access and mobility of learners between the formal and informal sites of teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2000:33-34).

2.7. The Implementation of Progression and Promotion in Developed Countries

Most research on grade repetition and its relationships to educational outcomes has been done in developed countries (Brophy, 2004:6). Progression and promotion of learners in these countries are based on standards set by independent districts governed by an independent Board. Schools register with these District Boards and only implement what is prescribed by these boards in terms of progression and promotion of learners. Examples of such District Boards include, Brevard Public Schools (a school district serving Brevard County, Florida, and based in Viera, Florida). The others include Jefferson County Public Schools in North America and other parts of Europe. Most grade repetition in developed countries is imposed by schools on low-achieving learners who have made poor progress despite regular attendance (Thompson, 2000:16).

In recent years, educational policies in the United States have featured increased emphasis on mandated standards, sometimes including requirements that learners at certain grade levels pass tests to qualify for promotion. In States that implement these requirements, grade repetition rates increase noticeably, especially in grades preceding those in which the tests were administered. States and large school districts that established "promotional gates" in certain grades often found that 20 to 40 percent of the learners in these grades did not qualify for promotion. The researcher reviewed the implementation of progression and promotion criteria in developed countries such as United Kingdom - Northern Ireland, Europe, United States of America (USA), Canada and North America.

The Education (Northern Ireland and some parts of Europe) Order 2006 provided legislative framework for the introduction of revised assessment arrangements from September 2007. The former system of statutory tests has been replaced by annual teacher assessment in each of the areas of learning, and the cross-curricular and other skills. The results are reported to parents using standardised annual report containing a broad range of information on learner's achievements, progress, interests, aptitudes and participation in enrichment activities such as clubs, societies and sports opportunities (Byrne, 2009:22).

Schools are also required to report to The Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), teacher assessment results in Language and Literacy (English and/or Irish as appropriate in Irish-medium schools) and Mathematics and Numeracy at the end of key stage 1 (pupils aged 8), and at the end of key stage 2 (pupils aged 11). This involves formal teacher assessment of pupil's work in these subjects. To support this assessment, CCEA provides assessment unit tasks, but learners are not required to sit formal tests. Moderation of teacher assessment is undertaken as a three year rolling programme by CCEA (Byrne, 2009:22).

In addition, under the Education (Assessment Arrangements) Order (2007), pupils in the autumn term of years 4 to 7 (ages 7 to 11) must be assessed in reading and mathematics for diagnostic purposes. They are assessed using computer-based tests called InCAS (Interactive Computerised Assessment). The InCAS assessment outcomes must be reported to parents in writing during the autumn term. In primary education, pupils progress to the next class at the end of the school year. There are no legal requirements stipulating this; it happens by custom and practice. There is an expectation that low attainment of individual pupils should be addressed through differentiated teaching and additional support rather than by the repetition of a year.

Satisfactory progress through Brevard Public Schools depends on the combined efforts of students, parents and professional educators (Binggeli, 2010:ii). The Student Progression Plan for Brevard Public Schools has been developed and revised to provide an instructional programme in which each student can progress academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. This plan outlines provisions for promotion, retention, good cause exemptions from mandatory retention, acceleration, enrichment, or alternative assignments for all Brevard Public Schools (Binggeli, 2010, ii). In order to be promoted to the next higher grade within Grades K-3, a student must meet the following requirements for the grade in which he or she is enrolled:

Kindergarten to Grade 1

A learner must receive at least a "satisfactory" grade in language, reading, mathematics, and writing, and demonstrate progress in science, and social studies. Consideration should also be given to social growth, work habits, and school Readiness Uniform Screening.

Grade 1 to Grade 2 and Grade 2 to Grade 3

A learner must receive passing grades in the areas of reading, language, mathematics, and demonstrate progress in process of writing, science, and social studies.

Grade 3 to Grade 4

A student must receive passing grades in the areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and process writing. Florida Statute requires that a Grade 3 student must also score at or above Level 2 on FCAT Reading. Students may be promoted to Grade 4 if he or she scores at or above the 45th percentile on the Reading SAT 10, or score at above the 50th percentile on another alternative standardised reading assessment approved by the Department of Education. The earliest the alternative assessment may be administered for student promotion purposes is following administration of the Grade 3 FCAT Reading. An approved standardised reading assessment may be administered two times if there are at least 30 days between administrations and different test forms are administered.

A 3rd grade student who is deficient in reading at the end of the school year, as demonstrated by not scoring at level 2 or higher on the state assessment test (FCAT) must be retained unless exempted for "good cause". No student can be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion. Social promotion occurs when a student is promoted based on factors other than student achieving the district and State level of performance for student progression. A learner fails to meet the State levels of performance for student progression when the student fails to achieve the required levels in reading, writing, mathematics or science on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) (Benvenister, 2000b:57).

In England and some parts of USA, there is a uniform Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading Handbook, which summarises and clarifies related policies and practices established by the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act

(KERA) and the Jefferson County Board of Education (JCBE). The Jefferson County Public School (JCPS) District establishes uniform, standard procedures for grading, progression, and promotion for elementary (primary), middle, and high schools. These procedures are reviewed annually by the JCBE. The Student Progression, Promotion, and Grading Handbook support the implementation of Kentucky state laws and the philosophy and vision of JCPS (Roderick, 2004:23).

According to the Elementary School Student Progression, Promotion and Grading Plan, the Primary Programme is based on continuous progress. Continuous progress means that learners progress through the Primary Programme at their own rate without comparison to the rates of others or consideration of the number of years in school. Retention and promotion within the Primary Programme are not compatible with continuous progress. In other words, learners are not retained in Primary year 1(P1), Primary year 2 (P2), Primary year 3 (P3) or Primary year 4 (P4). Learners may require an additional year in the Primary Programme (P5) or learners may exit the Primary Programme early (Thompson & Cunningham, 2000:69).

All learners will have access to the curriculum mandated by the Kentucky Programme of Studies. Students struggling to meet standards in literacy will be provided interventions which may include Response to Intervention (R.T.I), extended learning opportunities, and grouping for reteaching skills. To be promoted to the fourth grade (P4), students are expected to meet the state-mandated exit criteria for the Primary Program. Students at all levels of the Primary Program are expected to complete a writing folder that includes the required writing pieces. Students not meeting the exit criteria may be required to complete a fifth year of the Primary Program (Pustjens, 2004:71).

In the main, a student will advance from the Primary Programme to the Intermediate Grades when he or she:

- Expresses himself or herself clearly and effectively in oral and written forms;
- Processes oral and written information as evidenced through listening and reading;
- Demonstrates a confidence in his or her ability to communicate;
- Applies mathematical procedures to problem solving;
- Applies mathematical concepts, including computation, measurement, estimation and geometry;

- Collects, displays, and interprets data;
- Demonstrates use of monetary values in an economic system;
- Demonstrates appropriate and relevant investigation skills to solve specific problems in real-life situations;
- Creatively expresses ideas and feelings;
- Applies democratic principles in relationships with peers;
- Identifies contributions of diverse individuals, groups and cultures;
- Demonstrates responsibility for personal belongings;
- Shows respect for property and rights of others;
- Displays self-control and self-discipline;
- Accesses appropriate resources for learning in school, at home, and in the community;
- Participates in group activities cooperatively;
- Chooses appropriate processes and strategies to solve given problems; and
- Applies previously learned knowledge and concepts to new situations.

To determine whether students can accomplish the above, teachers shall collect a variety of student work samples, complete observational checklists of academic, social, and developmental progress and maintain anecdotal records (Brophy, 2004:8).

2.8. The Implementation of Progression and Promotion in Developing Countries

Any conclusions about policies relating to grade repetition in developing countries must be tentative (because of the limited research base) and differentiated (because different forms of repetition have been reported) (Brophy, 2004:10). The implementation of progression and promotion in most of the developing countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Nigeria is still administered by their Department of Education as a bureaucracy of the National Government.

In Botswana, the Primary School Programme forms the lower level of the Ten-year Basic Education Programme. It comprises a seven-year primary course split into two levels of learning: the lower primary (Standard 1–4) and the upper primary (Standard 5–7). The programme is woven around the acquisition and application of foundation skills. It thus emphasises the acquisition of communication, numeracy and literacy skills, the development of an awareness of the interrelationship between Science, Technology and Society, and the acquisition of socially desirable skills and attributes (UNESCO, 2006).

Automatic progression system is applied in Grades 1 to 3 and 5 to 6. It is only in Grades 4 and 7 where learners are exposed to formal assessments. To date, the attainment tests have been used to retain learners who show a serious deficit in attainment of basic literacy and numeracy skills at Standard 4. "Actual learning achievement of many learners of those who reach Standard 7 under the automatic promotion system is very low. Many children are virtually illiterate at Standard 7. The number who cannot read the most simple sentence is as high as thirty or forty percent because there is no check on performance at each grade, both children and educators in the lower grades have no means of measuring learning attainment and how far this is above or below what is normal (Education for Kagisano, 2001:17).

Policy-mandated external assessment occurs at three stages in the basic education cycle in Botswana. The first assessment is the Standard 4 attainment test, developed by the Examination Research Testing Division (ERTD) – a unit within the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Department, but administered locally by teachers. It is a curriculum-based test consisting of a numeracy test, and two tests of basic literacy skills, one in Setswana and one in English. The results of these tests are used to make decisions on whether to promote learners to the next grade, or retain them to strengthen their basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to being mid-point in the primary cycle, administering the test at Standard 4 is important in that it is a point after which the medium of instruction switches from Setswana to English (World Data on Education, 2006/7).

The second policy-mandated assessment is the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). The PSLE was originally a selection test, but has since been developed into a criterion-referenced achievement test that is used primarily for selecting learners for the secondary phase. The third, Junior Certificate Examination (JCE), comes at the end of ten-year basic education programme. This test is a norm-referenced achievement test that is used primarily for selecting students for selecting learners for the senior secondary phase.

At the onset of formal education in Nigeria, a summative assessment was adopted. Learners were assessed through a single examination administered at the end of school year. Teachers gave tests and examinations to learners but scores obtained from these exercises were only used for purposes of promotion from one class to the other and were not part of the criteria for final certification. In a bid to find a lasting solution to the above problem and the high rate of failure that characterised public examination in Nigeria, a new system of education, the 6-3-3-4 was introduced and with it came a new form of assessing learning outcomes in all levels of Nigerian education, the Continuous Assessment.

As stated by the National Policy on Education in Nigeria, promotion and certification in the primary school is based in part or in whole on continuous assessment. In this Continuous Assessment, learners are assessed in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains, a number of times and at certain intervals using a variety of assessment techniques such as tests, projects, assignments, observations and portfolios as discussed in 2.6. As the Federal Ministry of Education reiterates, it is a method of ascertaining what a learner gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, skills, industry, and character development, taking account of all his/her performance in tests, assignments, projects and other school activities during a given school period and using her/her recorded performance to help improve his/her learning by identifying and remedying areas of difficulties in learning (Anikweze, 2005:16).

In Brazil, the term schooling is organised in cycles, the Basic Cycle of Literacy, the Cycles of Formation and Cycles of Learning. The Basic Cycle is a combination of the first two grades of primary education, eliminating retention at the end of the first year. In the Basic Cycle of Learning the discourse of continuous progression remained and new elements were added. First, the relevance of allocating more time for learning was reinforced. Second, the policy emphasised a child-centred approach in terms of style of teaching which is in line with the constructivist approaches of literacy, learner assessment and school report are based on learner competence rather than performance (Mainardes, 2007:3).

In the Cycles of formation, retention is eliminated in all age groups, and strategies for supporting learners with difficulties are created. In the Cycles of Learning, schooling is organised in cycles of 2, 3 or 4 years. Learners can be retained at the end of each cycle. According to the New Law of Education (1996), in Brazil, a more conservative version of the policy discourse refers to the emergence of the Continued Progression Regime (Mainardes, 2007:3). According to this law, schools that use conventional promotion by grade can

adopt the continued progression regime by eliminating retention at the end of each cycle. Usually, the 8 or 9 year of primary education is divided into two cycles and retention is possible only in the 4th and 8th grade (Primary School of 8 years) or in the 5th and 9th grades (Primary School of 9 years).

2.9. Challenges in the Implementation of Progression and Promotion Criteria

The implementation of progression, promotion, grade retention, Continued Progression regime, automatic progression or promotion and accelerated progression or promotion is faced with challenges both in developed and developing countries. Research on Continued Progression regime has considered this policy as conservative and neoliberal (Freitas, 2003:45). While the progressive discourse addresses more fundamental issues of curriculum and pedagogy and proposes a set of changes in the school context, the Continued Progression regime has been criticised as intending only to reduce retention rates to accelerate the passage of learners throughout the primary school (Mainardes, 2007:3).

Typical definitions of repetition are difficult to apply to special situations such as the multi-grade classes found in rural primary schools in many developing countries or in the "developmental" or "transitional" primary programmes in the United States. From a societal economic perspective, schooling is most efficient if every learner moves up a grade every year. Each learner who repeats has economic effect of adding a new learner (at that grade and subsequent grades). This translates into larger class sizes and the need for additional desks and supplies. If many learners repeat each year, the school system will need more teachers and classrooms, hence repetition represents wastage of resources (Brophy, 2004:3).

Teachers in developing countries ordinarily are not trained to make promotion/repetition decisions and do not have access to detailed achievement standards and aligned assessment instruments, so concerns

have been expressed that many decisions may be based on arbitrary observations or beliefs rather than justified criteria. However, studies done in rural Brazil and in rural Pakistan, found that promotion decisions were closely related to measured achievements. Even so, when these decisions are made locally by individual teachers, they are subject to the "fog pond" effect: Learners' achievement progress is judged relative to that of their immediate classmates rather than to national norms. As a result, many learners in generally high achieving schools are retained when they would be promoted if they attend generally low-achieving schools (Ikeda, 2005:78).

2.10. Related studies

Assessment and particularly the assessment of students' learning achievement has become the object of a good deal of attention and activities all over the world, in industrialised countries and developing countries alike (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:9). International surveys comparing the achievement of learners in literacy, mathematics and science in different countries are flourishing. The publication of the results of such surveys is a major event in most participating countries, often to the detriment of a more thorough analysis of the differences in achievement between schools and between groups, and the factors explaining such differences. Most counties are also embarking upon regular assessment of their learners. Such learners are not only intended to help national authorities to monitor the system, they are considered as a lever of change in itself, likely to bring about change in schools and classrooms. In view of the present emphasis on assessment, educational policy-makers are often faced with the question of what sort of assessment to introduce and for what purpose (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:9).

Over the last few years, research has been conducted in many prominent industrial countries of the world: USA, Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. All these countries have launched large–scale reformation of their education systems within the last fifteen years. The

research also contains descriptions of educational renewal in other countries, including Hawaii, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt and Malawi, as well as other countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim (Hollaway & Wheeler, 2000:13; National Institute for Educational Research, 2000;1, 58–59; and Pretorius & Lemmer, 2000: viii).

The result of research, as indicated above, revealed that, relying on evidence from national and international assessments, learners were not acquiring the knowledge and skills that they would need to compete economically and to sustain a vibrant democracy (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:23). Concern for standards was at the heart of the political debate in the United States of America that resulted in proposals for reform involving assessment. It has also emerged that little attention has been given to the degree of excellence in defining educational standards. Most efforts have been more limited in scope, and have focused on the knowledge and skills that are considered appropriate and adequate for learners to have acquired at a particular level in the education system.

The issue of standards in education is as prominent as it was in the nineteenth century. The United Kingdom has a School Standards and Framework Act (1998) and a Standard and Effectiveness Unit in its Department of Employment. In the United States, criticisms of the quality of education led to the proposals to adopt standards relating to the curriculum content or framework appropriate for grade levels (content standards) and to the achievements expected of learners at the grade levels (performance standards). Other aspects of American proposals, however, merit attention, even though they often seem to be disregarded when reforms based on the use of assessment are introduced in other countries. First, the standards specify challenging definitions of proficiencies, which have been variously described as comprising higher-order thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, investigative and reasoning skills, improved means of communication, and a commitment to lifelong learning (Kane, 2001:45).

Secondly, the standards are intended for all learners. Groups of learners are not written off, and offered less challenging curricula. Thirdly, standards constitute only one element of reform, and their adoption is unlikely to have much impact unless all major instructional guidance mechanisms in the education system are aligned with them: learner assessment, instructional materials, teacher preparation and later professional development, textbooks, school capacity building and improvement, supportive services to schools, and equity targeting devices (Kane, 2001:45). In particular, it is recognised that learners will not develop the required proficiencies unless there are changes in curricula and assessment. New approaches are required, involving greater learner engagement; learning that is heuristic and based on experience in concrete situations, rather than axiomatic and abstract; and the provision of opportunities for learners to develop strategies for problem-solving, thinking effectively, and learning for them (Kane, 2001:45). The particular role of standards will be to help make concrete for teachers the goals of a system, and to assist them and others in focusing on what learners at varying levels of achievement should know and be able to do.

The setting of standards for learner performance involves identifying one or more threshold scores on a total mark scale, which define levels or grades corresponding to the intervening range of scores. The process, however, is not without its problems (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001: 23). First, the achievements of a group of learners do not fall into neat discrete categories, but rather form a continuum in which there are very small differences between the scores of individual learners. There is no obvious basis for deciding on the point at which a standard can be said to be satisfied, or for saying that learners who score just above a dividing point differ substantially from learners who score just below it in their achievements. Second, a summary score or grade can be achieved through different patterns of responses. Thus, the knowledge and skills that merit an identical grade can differ from learner to learner. Third, there are no absolute criteria against

which the results of a standard-setting procedure can be judged. Although standards may be proposed on the basis that it is important to provide learners with the knowledge and skills that they will need for later in life, it is not possible to specify these precisely and, anyhow will differ from learner to learner depending on the kind of work a learner will eventually do (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:25).

Fourth, the actual setting of standards is usually based on the judgement of individuals. For this reason, they are regarded as arbitrary, not however in the sense that they are capricious or that they are not based on reason, but because they involve the exercise of choice and the application of values. While the individuals who make the judgements will be chosen because of their knowledge of the content of curricula and/or about the learners for whom an assessment is designed, and while various procedures are available to help achieve consensus between individuals, the judgements will always be subject to human error (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2001:25). Fifth, standard setting will be based, explicitly or implicitly, on policy decisions, when, for example, the emphasis is placed on minimum competency or on excellence. As with all social-political decisions, these decisions will be matters of judgement, will be subject to change, and will involve trade-offs between competing values and goals.

2.11. Summary

In this chapter, an extensive and a more rigorous literature was reviewed to make an efficient and effective representation of relevant information related to the statement of the problem and research questions for the study. The point of departure was conceptualisation of the key concepts for the study such as outcomes-based assessment, assessment, progression and promotion. Legislation, policies, and theories underpinning the study were also explored. This was followed by the exploration of different ways on how assessment could be used to improve quality in education. Emerging assessment practices in line with Millennium Development Goals, assessment,

progression and promotion beyond South Africa were also explored. Lastly, related studies conducted globally were also explored.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Firstly, this chapter outlines research design and methodology and justification for its choice; secondly, the methods of research used in the study, their suitability and limitations and some suggestions on how such limitations were overcome; thirdly the target population, the sample size and sampling techniques; lastly, the instruments for data collection and data analysis and interpretation employed in the study. The study investigated the implementation of outcomes-based assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9).

3.2. Research design

A research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques that was used and the data analysis done (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:70). The researcher used a mixed mode approach, i.e., both quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the empirical study due to the nature of the topic. The paradigm used is mainly positivistic in nature, though qualitative approach was also used to find answers to the main research questions. A paradigm is a theoretical model within which the research is conducted and organises the researcher's view of reality (Birley & Moreland, 1998).

The research paradigm employed in this study is based on a combination of qualitative and descriptive quantitative research inquiries. The choice of qualitative research inquiry is based on the researcher's aim of stressing the socially constructed nature of reality in terms of the implementation of OBA, especially progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band, the

intimate relationship between the researcher and what was studied, and the situational constraints that shaped the inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:8).
The relationship between the researcher and this study is that the researcher was a principal of a secondary school in the North West province at the time the study was conducted. The issue of the implementation of OBA, related policies, progression and promotion in the GET Band were always discussed in principals' meetings and workshops. The researcher was also one of the implementers of decisions taken at these meetings with regard to progression and promotion. The researcher had a direct role in the process under investigation. The researcher was therefore, reflecting on the experiences rather than presenting a study based on the usual accoutrements of research.

3.2.1. Qualitative approach

Nieuwenhuis, (2010:50) describes qualitative research as an approach that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. Qualitative approach was chosen to collect information with regard to OBA, policies and directives as a determinant of progression and promotion in the GET Band. Language provides a far more sensitive and meaningful medium for recording human experiences, views and opinions (Bless & Higson- Smith, 1998). Qualitative data is expressed in words, information about feelings, values and attitudes (David & Sutton, 2004).

The reason for using qualitative approach also in the study was to collect data from the respondents regarding their views, opinions and suggestions on matters pertaining to assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9. The views, opinions and suggestions of the respondents were vital in finding answers to the main research questions in the study. The intention was to develop an understanding of how schools dealt with the issue of progression with age cohort and an understanding of how promotion of learners was determined in comparison to progression of learners in the GET Band. The types of

qualitative approaches employed in this study were based on action research, mixed with conceptual studies.

Definitions of action research draw attention to its collaborative or participative dimension and to the focus on a practical problem experienced by participants for whom a practical solution is sought (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:74). To successfully undertake action research therefore requires an understanding of the context as well as possible solutions to the problem. What makes action research a qualitative research design type is the strong focus on understanding the problem and developing an intervention with the people involved – it deals with the "why" and the "how" questions. The study focused on OBA especially progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. Why and how progression was applied in Grades R-8 and why and how was promotion applied and implemented Grade 9, all of which fall under the same (GET) Band?

Conceptual studies should not be confused with the definition of terms found as part of chapter two of the study. The defining characteristics of a conceptual study are that it is largely based on secondary sources, that it critically engages with the understanding of concepts, and that it aims to add to our existing body of knowledge and understanding – it generates knowledge (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:74). The study relied on information provided by school principals or delegated persons as secondary sources who provided information with regard to the implementation of progression and promotion requirements in the GET Band. The study never relied on Progression and Promotion Schedules as primary sources to understand the context under which progression and promotion were implemented in the GET Band.

3.2.2. Quantitative approach

Quantitative research is a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied

(Maree & Pietersen, 2010:145). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:179), descriptive quantitative research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring correlations among two or more phenomena. Progression and promotion requirements in the GET Band were identified and investigated as implemented from one school to another within the North West Province.

Quantitative research relies upon measurement and uses various scales. Numbers form a coding system by which different cases and different variables maybe compared (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1998). Quantitative approach employs quantitative theoretical and methodological principles, techniques and statistics. Observations are recorded in numerical or some other standardized coding format and quantitative data can be expressed in numerical forms such as numbers, percentages and tables (David & Sutton, 2004). The numbers of responses to each question on the questionnaire were translated to percentages.

3.3. Research context

The study was conducted in the North West Province, which is one of the nine provinces in South Africa. It was conducted within the North West Department of Education which is one of the many other bureaucracies in the province and countrywide. The North West Department of Education is divided into four districts, namely Bojanala, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Ngaka–Modiri Molema, which were utilised in the study.

Bojanala District is divided into five Area Offices, namely, Moses Kotane, Letlhabile, Madibeng, Moretele and Rustenburg. Dr Kenneth Kaunda District is divided into three Area Offices, namely, Maquasi Hills, Matlosana and Potchefstroom. Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District is divided into four Area Offices, namely, Greater Delareyville, Greater Taung, Kagisano-molopo and Taledi. Ngaka–Modiri Molema District is divided into five Area Offices, namely,

Kgetleng, Lichtenburg, Mafikeng, Rekopantswe and Zeerust. Each Area Office is further divided into three to four Circuit Offices and every circuit is allocated between 14 to 29 schools. Both the Area Offices and Circuit Offices were utilised in the study.

The North West Province is a predominantly rural province, with some 60% of the population living in rural areas, while the more populous industrial centres include Rustenburg, Brits and Ga-Rankuwa in Bojanala district. Other major urban centres include Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp in Kenneth Kaunda district. As already indicated, the province is made up of four districts. Each district is divided into Area Offices. Area offices are made up of Circuit Offices. Circuit Offices are made up of schools. Schools within the context of where the study unfolded have different characteristics in relation to the province being predominantly rural. There are small (less than 100 learners), medium (between 100 and 699 learners and big or large (700 to 1200 learners) schools. The numbers of learners in a school determine the number of educators in a school.

Every school qualifies to have a principal. Some schools qualify to have a principal and one deputy principal whilst others qualify to have a principal and two deputy principals. The number of educators in a school varies from two to 45 depending on the number of learners. Where there are deputies, the principal may delegate all curriculum matters including the completion of a questionnaire (Annexure C). Where there is no deputy principal and there is one or more Head of Department, then such curriculum matters may be delegated to him/her. In a case where there is neither a deputy principal nor Head of Department, then such curriculum matters may be delegated to one senior educator within the school. It is upon this background that the principals or delegated persons are indicated on the questionnaire.

Within the North West Department of Education, there are different directorates or sections, e.g., Professional Support Services; Assessment, Certification and Accreditation etc. Assessment, Certification and Accreditation Directorate is responsible for all assessment matters in the GET and FET Bands. For the purpose of the study and in ensuring that the responsible people remain anonymous, they will be called Assessment Officials. There are Assessment Officials that are responsible for GET Band and those that are responsible for FET Band. There is one GET Assessment Official in each district and these are the people who were interviewed in this study Annexure D).

3.4. Research methods

The purpose of the study was to investigate the implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment focusing on progression and promotion in the GET Band (Grades R (1)–9). A non-experimental descriptive and exploratory quantitative research method as well as historical and concept non-interactive qualitative research methods were employed in the study.

3.4.1. Descriptive survey or normative survey

Some scholars use the term survey research to refer to almost any form of descriptive, quantitative research (Gay & Airasian, 2003:34). Descriptive survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or previous experience by asking them questions and tabulating their answers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:183). The ultimate goal is to learn about a large population by surveying a sample of that population; thus we might call this approach a descriptive survey or normative survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:185).

Information about the implementation of progression and promotion in the GET Band of the North West Department of Education was acquired through the administration of questionnaires to a sample of schools throughout the North West province, interviewed sampled assessment official and analysis of

official documents. The ultimate goal was to learn about outcomes-based assessment especially the implementation of progression and promotion of learners in the North West Province.

3.4.2. Exploratory research

Exploratory research strategy is a means of gaining more understanding of a situation or phenomenon where there is limited or lack of basic information in a new area of interest (Mokwena, 2010:78). As already indicated under 1.5. (Significance of the Study), that the study has been motivated by the fact that even though there is a lot of research that has been conducted on assessment, there is no research conducted specifically on the progression and promotion of learners in South Africa. The study aimed at gaining more understanding of outcomes-based assessment, especially the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band in the North West Province, which is one of the nine provinces in South Africa. In this study, principals or deputy principals, HODs and senior educators were asked to complete a questionnaire based on the policies and directives that informed progression and promotion, how learners were progressed and promoted within the GET Band. Assessment officials were interviewed and all official documents contemplated in response to the questions on both the questionnaire and the interview were explored to gain more understanding about the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band were analysed.

3.5. Research methodology

The research methodology utilised to address the population, sample, data gathering, data analysis and interpretation are discussed in detail, below.

3.5.1. Population

A population is a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying (White, 2003:113). Population is a term that sets boundaries on the study units. It refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics. The

study of a population may be said to be exhaustive in that it includes an investigation of every entity under consideration. In other words, the study of a population is a study of the whole. A population is also the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which a research problem is concerned (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:78).

The population for the study was drawn from the primary, intermediate, secondary and combined schools of the North West Province. Out of the 1768 primary, intermediate, secondary and combined schools in the province, 354 schools were randomly selected for the study. From each of the three hundred and fifty four randomly selected primary, secondary and combined schools in the North West Province: one principal or a delegated deputy principal or Head of Departments or a senior educator was requested to complete the questionnaire. The sample of (n=354) was composed of a total of 1 respondent from each of the 354 randomly selected primary, intermediate, secondary and combined schools in the North-West Province.

The North West Provincial Education Department is divided into four districts, namely, Bojanala, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, Ngaka Modiri Molema and Dr Kenneth Kaunda. The researcher requested the schools statistics from the IT section of the North West Department of Education. It is in this section where a database for all schools is kept. The data were kept in an EMIS, which stands for Education Management and Information System, of the North West Department of Education. The information was emailed to the researcher and indicated that there were 1768 schools on the system (Appendix C). It was, however, indicated that the department was in the process of closing some schools with less number of learners by merging them and building others, so this number was subject to change overtime. The population in this study comprised all the 1768 schools under the administration of the North West provincial Department of Education as indicated in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Population

District	Type of School	Population
Bojanala	Primary	340
	Intermediate	112
	Secondary	131
	Combined	25
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati	Primary	256
	Intermediate	67
	Secondary	72
	Combined	14
Ngaka Modiri Molema	Primary	272
	Intermediate	66
	Secondary	80
	Combined	27
Dr Kenneth Kaunda	Primary	184
	Intermediate	32
	Secondary	65
	Combined	25
TOTAL		**1768**

3.5.2. Sample size and Sampling techniques

A sample is a portion of the elements in a population. Sample is made up of those persons or objects from that group that are chosen to participate in the study (McMillan & James, 2001:283). The primary goal of any sampling procedure is to obtain a representative sample, a sample that represents the elements of the population within an acceptable margin of error. A sample is thus the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. It can also be viewed as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which researchers are interested. Researchers study the sample in an effort to understand the population from which it is drawn (McMillan & James, 2001:283).

Population parameters and sampling procedures are of paramount importance and become critical factors in the success of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:207). Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). A stratified purposive sampling technique was employed in this study. Purposive sampling simply means that participants are selected because of some characteristic that

makes them the holders of the data needed for the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). Stratified purposive sampling means selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). Only schools that offered Grades (R) 1 to 9, in part or in totality, were sampled.

Gay and Airasion (2003:113) offered the following guidelines for selecting a sample: For small populations that are fewer than 100, there is little point in sampling. Instead, the entire population should be surveyed. If the population is around 500, 50% should be sampled; if the population is around 1500, 20% should be sampled and if the population is 5000 and beyond, then 400 should constitute an adequate sample. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:207), the results of a survey are no more trustworthy than the representativeness of the sample.

Out of a population of 1768 schools in the North West Province, 354 schools were sampled through a stratified purposive sampling technique. This is 20% of the entire population. The sample has been identified by employing a proportional stratified random sampling design. The sample has been chosen in accordance with districts and types of schools as depicted in Table 6 below wherein the sample is represented as follows:

Table 7: Sampling

District	Type of school	Sample
Bojanala	Primary	68
	Intermediate	22
	Secondary	26
	Combined	06
Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati	Primary	51
	Intermediate	13
	Secondary	14
	Combined	04
Ngaka Modiri Molema	Primary	54
	Intermediate	13
	Secondary	16
	Combined	05
Dr Kenneth Kaunda	Primary	38
	Intermediate	06
	Secondary	13
	Combined	05
Total		**354**

Table 8: Total sample per district and school category

District	Primary	Intermediate	Secondary	Combined
Bojanala	68	22	26	6
Dr Kenneth Kaunda	51	13	14	4
Dr R. Segomotsi Mompati	54	13	16	5
Ngaka-Modiri Molema	38	6	13	5
TOTAL	**211**	**54**	**69**	**20**

3.6. Data gathering techniques

Data were collected by means of a questionnaire (Appendix C) as a quantitative data collection strategy, a semi-structured interview (Appendix D) and official documents as qualitative data collection strategies.

The researcher used quantitative approach because it is objective. The main research tool, the questionnaire, was intended to collect data from the respondents regarding the extent of the various challenges faced in their

schools with regard to assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9).

Since the foundation of the positivistic approach is scientific, the main research tool used was a questionnaire, which also included open-ended questions. The respondents were school principals, deputy principals, heads of departments and senior educators from GET schools in the North West Province of South Africa. The questionnaire was intended to collect data regarding the major challenges and issues pertaining to assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9). The researcher believed that the school managers and the educators are the right people who could provide accurate information needed for the study because they are the ones who are facing the challenge more directly than anyone else. The suggestions and observations of these respondents were vital in developing guidelines to improve assessment focussing on progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1)-9).

3.6.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire with both close-ended and open-ended questions was designed and written in English instructions, and the sequence of questions started with easy-to-answer questions or non- threatening questions like, Biographic detail of the school, i.e., District, Area Office and type of school, envisaged policies, e.g., Assessment policy etc, then went on to the topics relevant to the study like, progression criteria, promotion criteria and progression with age cohort. Questions that required almost similar answers were grouped together. Apart from the researcher, peer researchers such as Circuit Managers, Area Office managers, and Assessment managers were also used to administer the questionnaire to ensure that it was completed within one calendar month.

Principals were requested to respond by means of an (X) in which different options were given. A questionnaire was used because it was the only available instrument that would be completed within a given time, to ensure that the study did not interfere with normal running of schools as stated in the letter of request to undertake the study. A questionnaire was also used because it seemed to be the only available instrument that would encourage participants to respond to it objectively and confidentially. A questionnaire was used because it was the only instrument to elicit more candid and valid responses, especially in areas of progression and promotion in the GET Band.

3.6.1.2. Procedures

The Questionnaires were sent to the Area Offices for further distribution to Circuit Offices. The Circuit Offices distributed the questionnaires to schools. The same procedure was followed for the collection of the questionnaires. After retrieval of the completed questionnaires, a random representative sample was conducted. This was done according to the Circuit, Area Office and District Offices as per type of school to ensure that a representative sample was selected. As indicated earlier, some Area Office Managers were not cooperative and the researcher selected at random a representative sample as per that Area Office, Circuits and type of school and administered the questionnaires directly to the sampled schools.

Most critically, the questionnaire had to establish the progression requirements in the GET Band against the notion of progression with age cohort. The questionnaire also established the promotion requirements as implemented in schools against the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act no.27 of 1996) regarding the National Protocol for Assessment (Grades R–12) and Government Gazette 29626, 12 February, 2007.

3.6.2. Interview

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:87). Interview is a direct method of obtaining information in a face-to-face situation (Trochim, 2001:109). There are usually two main types of interview, viz., structured and unstructured.

The aim of qualitative interviews is always to obtain rich descriptive data that help to understand the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality. The semi-structured interview is commonly used in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. It is of utmost importance that interview schedules should be carefully planned and precisely worded. The advantage of precise wording and planning of questions is that such questions will yield the types of data the researcher needs to be able to answer his or her research questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:199). A semi-structured interview was conducted to corroborate data that emerged from the questionnaire. A semi-structured interview was used as it seldom spans a long time period and requires participants to answer a set of predetermined questions. It does allow for probing and clarification of answers.

One GET Assessment Official per district was interviewed. The said officials were telephonically informed about the intended interviews and the appointment was secured in time. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the participants. The researcher sent the predetermined interview questions to the respondents through an email or fax. Approximately twenty to thirty minutes of telephonic interviews were conducted in each case. The full interview schedule is provided as Appendix E.

Apart from the district assessment officials the researcher also interviewed one GET assessment official from Directorate for Assessment, Certification and Accreditation within the North West Department of Education at provincial level (the directorate that oversees assessment, progression and promotion in all schools in the province). The same interview instrument and procedure applied when interviewing district official was followed.

3.6.3. Documents

The use of documents as part of data gathering technique is different from literature review of a study (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:82). The two do overlap in the sense that they both deal with data sources in some or other written format, but including document analysis as part of the data gathering technique is sometimes distinct from the literature review that all researchers involve themselves in during a research project (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:82). The focus was on all types of written communications that shed some light on assessment, especially progression and promotion in the GET Band within the North West Department of Education.

Document study, as data, collection is operative by using official documents. Official documents are explained by De Vos (2006:317) as those that are compiled and maintained on continuous basis by large organisations such as government institutions. Such documents are more formal and structured than personal documents and they include among others, minutes, agendas, reports and records of the organisation. De Vos (2006:317) mentioned that the accessibility of official documents is often a problem owing to legislation on the confidentiality of information hence the researcher treated such documents used as confidential as possible. The researcher should take care to evaluate the authenticity and accuracy of the records before using them.

The documents that were analysed are, namely: the Government Gazette No.29626 of 12 February, 2007, GET progression and promotion schedules for 2010 and North West Department of Education circulars on promotion and

progression. Government Gazette No.29626 of 12 February, 2007 is an amendment schedule to the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, which is entitled "National Policy on Assessment and Qualification for schools in the General Education and Training band". This policy provides a framework for assessment and qualifications for all public and private schools and community-based sites with learners registered in the General Education and Training (GET) Band.

Progression and promotion schedule is where all the learners are put together alphabetically and promoted or progressed based on the guideline. The circular is a way of correspondence in which the department cascades information from the province through the districts and to schools.

3.7. Data treatment

A statistical package for Social Science coupled with both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse and interpret data.

3.7.1. Quantitative data

Data were analysed quantitatively by making use of descriptive statistics based on tables and graphs such as the biographic particulars of respondents, the progression and promotion criteria used in the GET Band, to illustrate the findings.

Statistics are methods of organising and analysing quantitative data and are tools designed to help the researcher to organise and interpret numbers derived from measuring a trait or variable. While the contribution of some results depends on applying the correct statistical procedure, the quality of the research depends most on proper conceptualisation, design, subject selection, instruments, and procedures. Statistics is an international language that only manipulates numbers (McMillan & James, 2001:206).

3.7.2. Qualitative data

In qualitative data analysis, after transcriptions of the recordings are made, they are usually clarified and issues that belong together are grouped together (McMillan & James, 2001:206). The key themes in this research were identified before data were collected. These were transformed into categories into which subsequent responses were sorted. Categories or clusters included the policies that informed progression and promotion respectively. The other category includes the progression criteria and promotion requirements, challenges encountered in the implementation of progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band.

3.7.3. Established themes or categories

All data collected through the questionnaire, interview and document analysis were categorised as follows:

- Policies which inform progression and promotion in the GET Band;
- Progression criteria or requirements;
- Promotion criteria or requirements;
- Factors considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band;
- Factors considered in the promotion of learners in the GET Band;
- Challenges encountered in the implementation of progression criteria;
- Challenges encountered in the implementation of promotion criteria; and
- Strategies to deal with challenges.

3.8. Measures to ensure credibility and trustworthiness

3.8.1. Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity, specifically as far as the research instruments are concerned are crucial aspects in quantitative research (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:80). A questionnaire, interview and the use of departmental officials such as the Circuit Manager, the assessment manager and Area Office manager led to the credibility and trustworthiness.

3.8.2. Use of multiple methods

It is generally accepted that engaging multiple methods of data collection, such as a questionnaire, interviews and document analysis, leads to trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:80). The use of the questionnaire, interview and document analysis would increase the validity and reliability of the findings. In addition, involving several investigators or peer researchers to assist with the interpretation of the data could enhance trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:80). Data were interpreted by Department of Statistics at the North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus).

3.8.3. Triangulation

Triangulation is a traditional strategy for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:80). Triangulation is used extensively in quantitative studies for the confirmation and generalisation of research findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:80). Triangulation was used to confirm the research findings of the semi-structured interview and the questionnaire with regard to the implementation of progression and promotion criteria in the GET Band within the North West Department of Education. Triangulation was done through research methods, data collection techniques and participants.

3.8.3.1. Triangulation (quantitative and qualitative approach)

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Descriptive survey which is a quantitative method was triangulated with qualitative research method. All categories of data appeared on both quantitative and qualitative approaches in which conclusions based on qualitative sources were supported by a quantitative perspective and vice versa. This reduced the risk of chance associations and systematic bias. It relied on information collected from a diverse range of individuals, using a variety of methods (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:39).

3.8.3.2. Triangulation of data collection techniques

Data collected by means of a questionnaire correlated positively with data that were collected by means of an interview and document analysis, viz., 2011 Progression Schedules and Promotion Schedules. An example in this study is the information regarding the policy that informs progression and promotion in the GET Band. Government Gazette No. 29626 of 12 February, 2007 was mentioned in the data collected by means of the questionnaire and the interview, hence it was identified as an official document to be analysed to correlate the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band.

3.8.3.3. Triangulation of participants

There were three different participants in this study. The principals at schools or delegated individuals such as deputy principals, Heads of Departments or senior educators and assessment officials. Principals or delegates completed the questionnaire. The information gathered from the principals or deputy principals, Heads of Departments and senior educator was correlated with the information gathered by means of an interview of Assessment Officials. The information gathered from the principals and Assessment Officials were correlated with the information contained in the official documents that were analysed.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodological dimensions of the research study (research design), have been described in detail. The chapter concluded with a short description of measures undertaken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness. The next chapter presents and discusses the analysis and interpretation of data of the research study in depth.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of data collected through various instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and documents. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed in the study. Qualitative and Quantitative data analysis were employed to inductively form some reasoning with regards to identified concepts, insights and understanding from the patterns of data that were collected to derive meaning from subjects perspectives. The purpose of the study was to explore Outcomes–Based Assessment as determined by information that have been gathered at the sampled schools. The unit of analysis was holistic to assessment with more concentration on the relationships between progression criteria and promotion requirements in Grades (R) 1-9.

Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed descriptively using frequency tables, percentages and inferential analysis to help elicit the degree to which schools apply and implement progression and promotion requirements as directed by the North West Provincial Department of Education and available National Department of Education policies. A total of four hundred and fifty (450) questionnaires were distributed to the different types of school in the four districts of the North West Department of Education. The targeted number of questionnaires to be returned was three hundred and fifty-four (354). More questionnaires were distributed as a contingency plan to ensure that the targeted number is received. On the basis of that, a 100% return rate of questionnaires a required sample was achieved.

Qualitative data were analysed and interpreted by extracting some form of explanation and understanding from data collected through the interview and documents which informed outcomes-based assessment, especially the implementation of progression and promotion in the GET Band. Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data. Phrased differently, it tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:99).

Narrative analysis was used to interpret data collected through the interview. Narrative analysis refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting of the narratives generated in research (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:103). Content analysis was used to interpret data in written documents. Content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarises message content and further refer to the analysis of such things as books, brochures, written documents, transcripts, news reports and visual media (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:103).

4.2. Analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaires

Data collected through the questionnaire were captured and interpreted according to themes. A number of questions were asked to gather information about a particular theme. There were cases in which a certain number of respondents could respond to a particular set of questions under a particular theme and could not respond to the others. With the aid of a contingency plan as indicated in 4.1., a 100% return rate of the questionnaires was achieved. Only 231 respondents could respond to questions based on progression in Grades (R) 1 to 6, 143 responded to questions based on progression in Grades 7 and 8 and 143 responded to questions based on promotion in Grade 9. The reasons behind this trend was

brought about by the fact that only 143 respondents offered Grades (R) 1 to 6 (primary) and did not offer Grades 7 to 9. Others offered Grades 7 to 9 only (Intermediate), whilst others offered Grades 1 to 12 (combined) and the rest had Grades 8 and 9 only (secondary).

4.2.1. Biographical particulars

4.2.1.1. Districts

The study was conducted in the four districts of the North West Province. Out of a total of 354 questionnaires that were completed at schools, 122 (34.5%) questionnaires were administered in Bojanala District, 82 (23.2%) in Dr Kenneth Kaunda District, 88 (24.8%) in Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati District and 62 (17.5%) in Ngaka-Modiri Molema District.

Figure 1: Administration of questionnaire per district

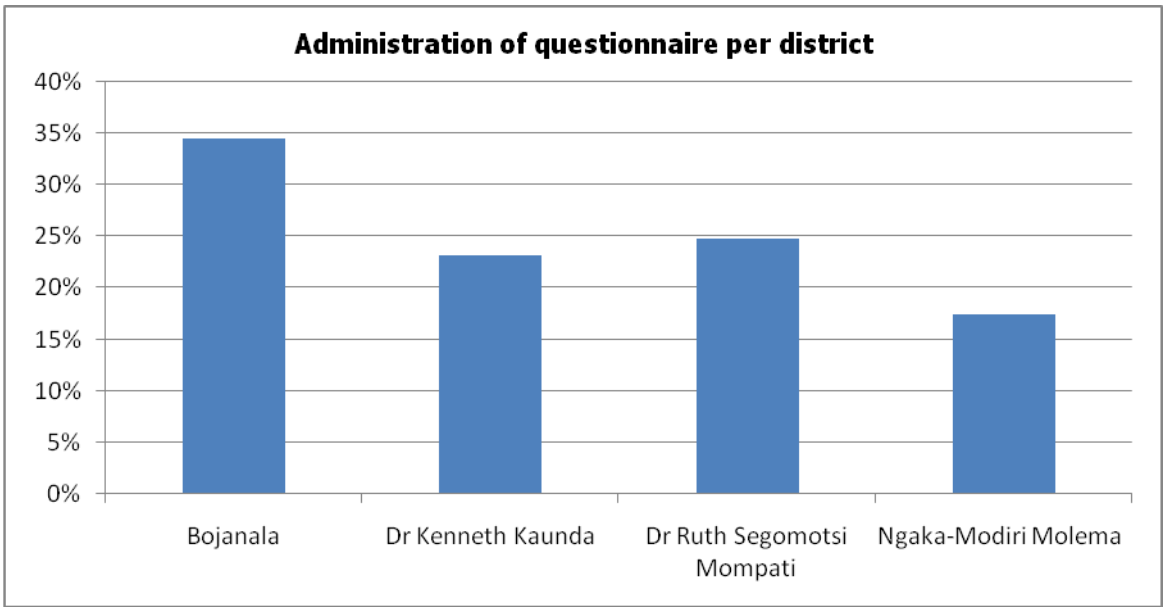
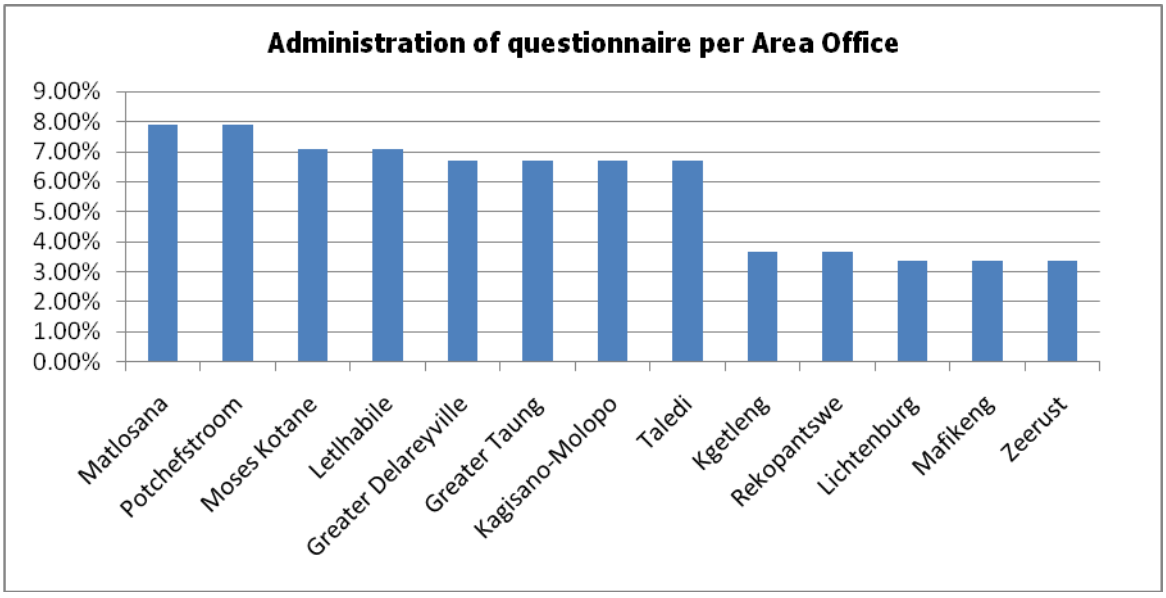


Figure 1 above shows that more questionnaires were administered in Bojanala district followed by Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka-Modiri Molema. This was the same with both the population and sample of the study. The population at Bojanala was 122 (34.46%), Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati, 88 (24.85%, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, 82 (23.16%) and Ngaka-Modiri Molema 62 (17.5%).

4.2.1.2. Area offices

As already indicated under the context of the study in chapter three, districts are made up of Area Offices. The study was conducted in all the 17 area offices that constituted the four districts. A total of 354 questionnaires were administered in the 17 area offices. Out of 354 questionnaires, 28 (7.9%) were administered in Matlosana area office and another 28 (7.9%) in Potchefstroom. A batch of 25 (7.1%) of the 354 questionnaires were administered in Moses Kotane and Letlhabile area offices, respectively, whilst 24 (6.7%) questionnaires were administered in Greater Delareyville, Greater Taung, Kagisano-Molopo and Taledi area offices, respectively. Furthermore, 13 (3.67%) questionnaires were administered in Kgetleng and Rekopantswe area offices, respectively. Lastly, 12 (3.38%) questionnaires were administered in Lichtenburg, Mafikeng and Zeerust area offices, respectively.

Figure 2: Administration of questionnaire per Area Office



According to Figure 2, above, more questionnaires were administered within Matlosa area offices, followed by Potchefstroom, Moses Kotane, Letlhabile, Greater Delareyville, Greater Taung, Kagisano-Molopo, Taledi, Kgetleng, Rekopantswe, Lichtenburg, Mafikeng and Zeerust.

4.2.1.3. Type of school

The study was conducted in four different types of schools in the North West Province, viz., primary, intermediate, secondary and combined with more concentration on the GET Band which was Grades 1–9. A total of 354 questionnaires were administered in all the 354 sampled schools. A total of 211 (59.6%) of the 354 questionnaires were administered in Primary schools, 54 (15.2%) in Intermediate schools, 69 (19.5%) in Secondary schools and 20 (5.7%) in Combined schools.

Figure 3: Administration of questionnaire per type of school

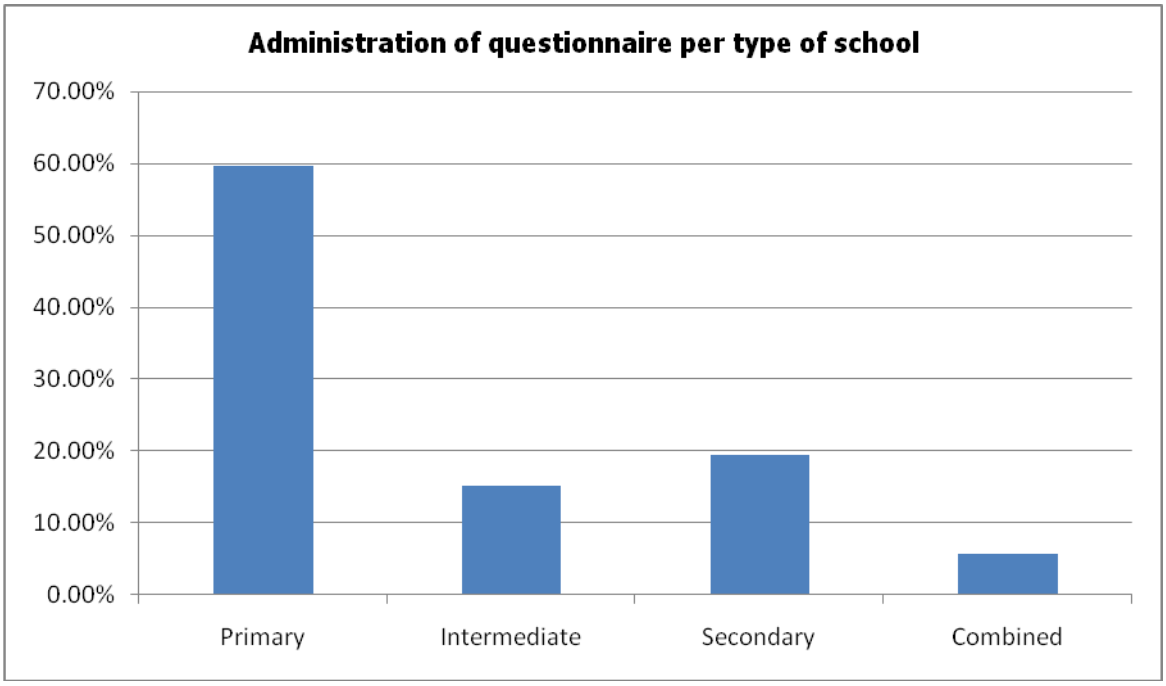
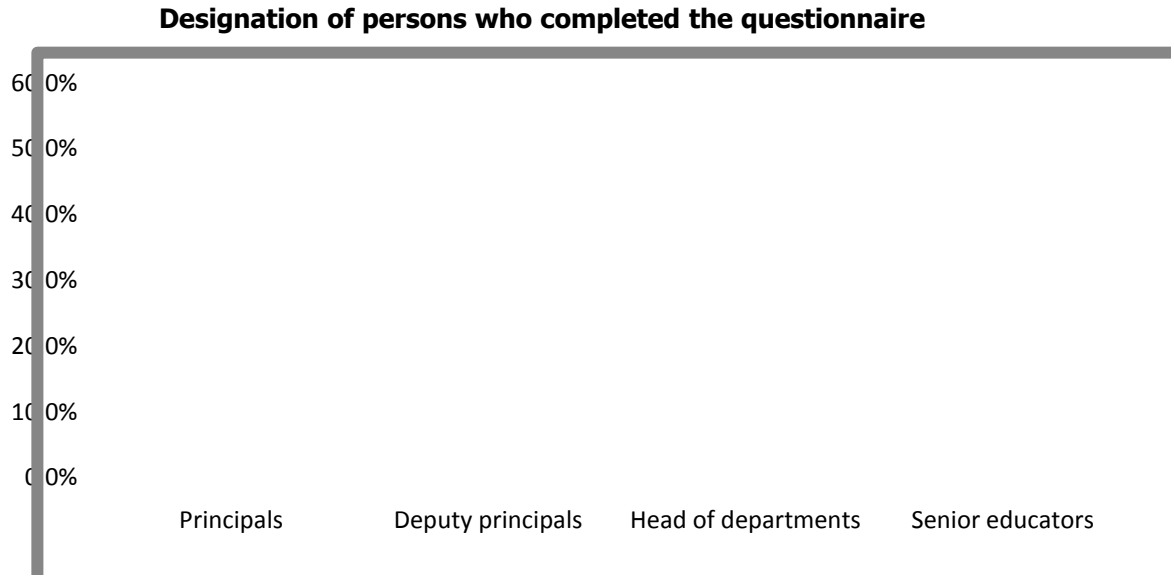


Figure 3 shows that more questionnaires were administered in primary schools followed by secondary, intermediate and combined schools, respectively. The trend can also be traced back to many primary schools in the population and samples in Chapter 3. There were 211 primary schools sampled from a total of 1053 primary schools compared to 69 secondary schools sampled from 345, 54 intermediates from 277 and 20 combined from 91 schools.

4.2.1.4. Designation

Designation refers to the position of the person who completed the questionnaire at the 354 sampled schools across the North West Province. Out of a total of 354 completed questionnaires, 194 (55.4%) of the questionnaires were completed by principals, 88 (24.8%) by deputy principals, 57 (16.1%) by Heads of Departments and 13 (3.7%) by senior educators.

Figure 4: Designation of persons who completed the questionnaire



According to Figure 4, above, more questionnaires were completed by the principals. Deputy Principals were the second largest number of designated group that completed the questionnaire, followed by Heads of Departments and senior educators. One of the reasons behind this practice could be that, for schools where there were both principals and deputies, the deputies were delegated the role of curriculum and assessment within the school.

4.3. Policies which inform progression and promotion in the GET Band

Data related to policies were collected through questions in section 2 of the questionnaire. These questions were asked in order to determine the availability of policies that were of major importance in Outcomes-Based

Assessment. This information is important because either the availability or non-availability (as illustrated in Figures 5a and 5b) of policies mentioned in this section could have an influence on issues related to progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. It is in these documents wherein reference must be made to determine progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band.

Figure 5a: Availability of policies which inform progression and promotion in the GET Band

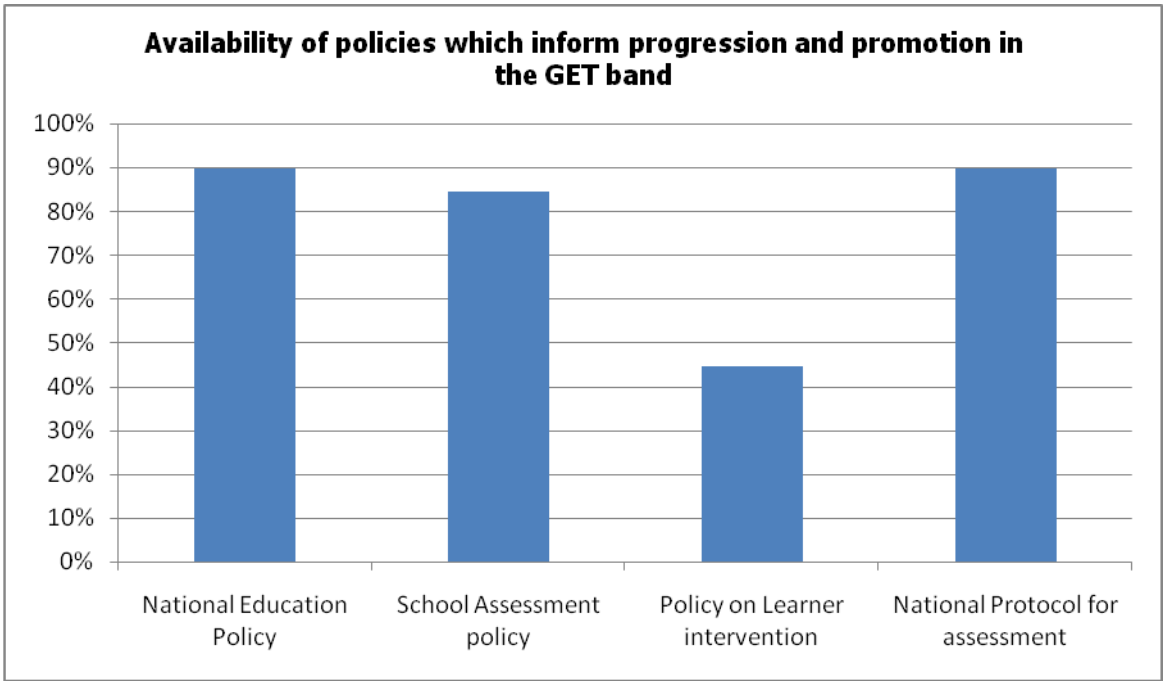


Figure 5a, above, shows that 318 (89.83%) of the respondents had the National Education Policy and National Protocol for Assessment, 299 (84.46%) had the School Assessment Policy and 158 (44.63%) had the Policy on Learner Intervention. This shows that majority of schools in the North West Province seem to have the most important policies that would have enabled them to implement the progression and promotion requirements in the GET Band in accordance with national requirements. More schools had basic policies of national importance that could enable them to implement outcomes-based assessment, especially progression and promotion in the GET Band.

Figure 5b: Non-availability of policies which inform progression and promotion in the GET Band

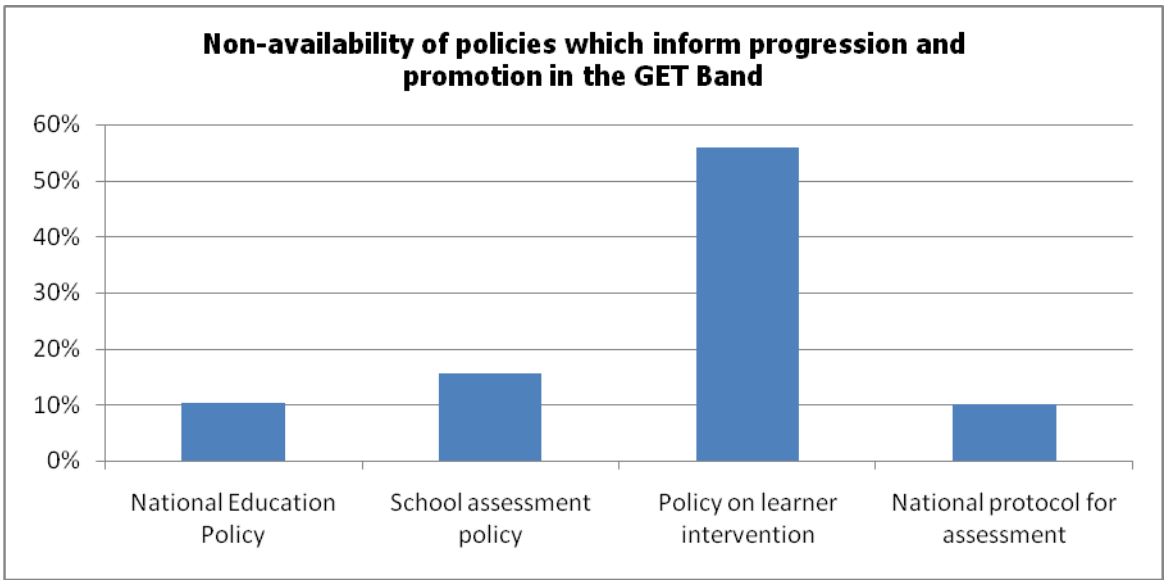
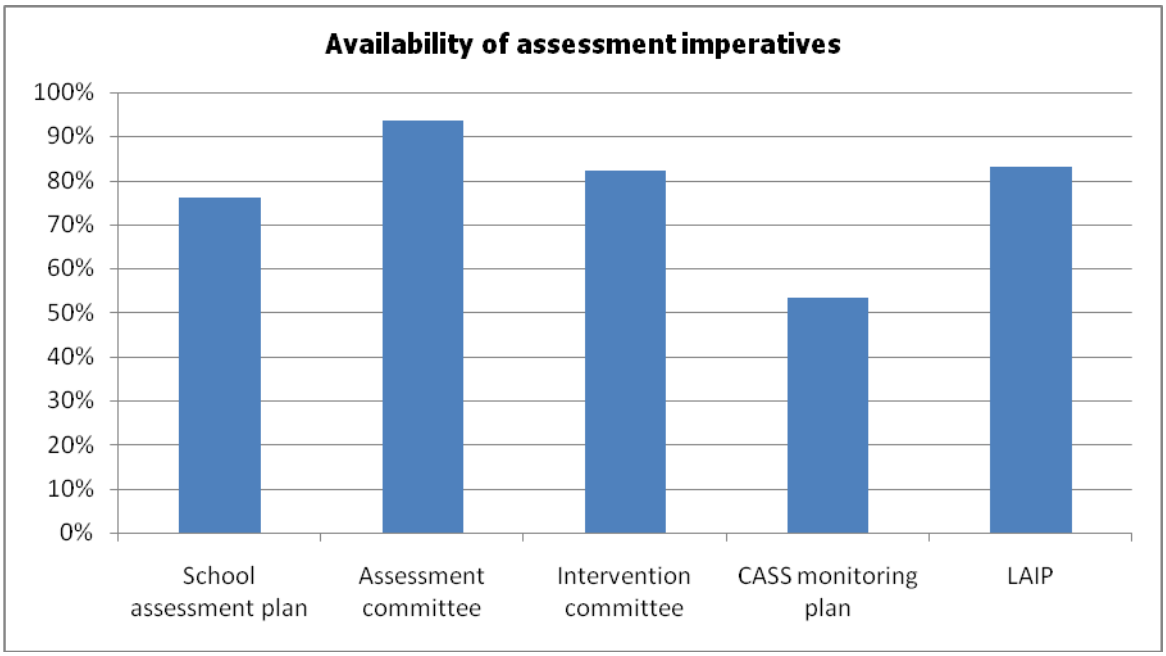


Figure 5b, shows that only 36 (10.17%) of the respondents did not have the National Education Policy and National Protocol for Assessment, 55 (15.54% did not have the School Assessment Policy and 198 (55.93%) did not have the Policy on Learner Intervention. It was, however, disturbing to observe that 198 (55.93%) of the respondents indicated that they did not have the Policy on Learner Intervention. The non-availability of this policy implied that majority of schools were not effectively dealing with the problem of non-achievement of learners as highlighted in the problem statement.

Apart from the major policies that inform progression and promotion in the GET Band, there were other assessments imperatives (Figures 6a and 6b) formulated or derived from assessment policies. These include school assessment plan, assessment committees, intervention committee, CASS monitoring plan and Learner Attainment Improvement Plan (LAIP). The school assessment plan is a plan that indicates when the school intends assessing the learners in different learning areas and/or subjects in different grades. It is a combination of all assessment programmes of all learning areas and/or subjects in all the grades within the school. It indicates when formal assessments tasks would be administered at school. A School

Assessment committee is made up of the principal, who is the chairperson, the deputy principal in schools that qualify to have one, heads of departments, senior educators and class managers.

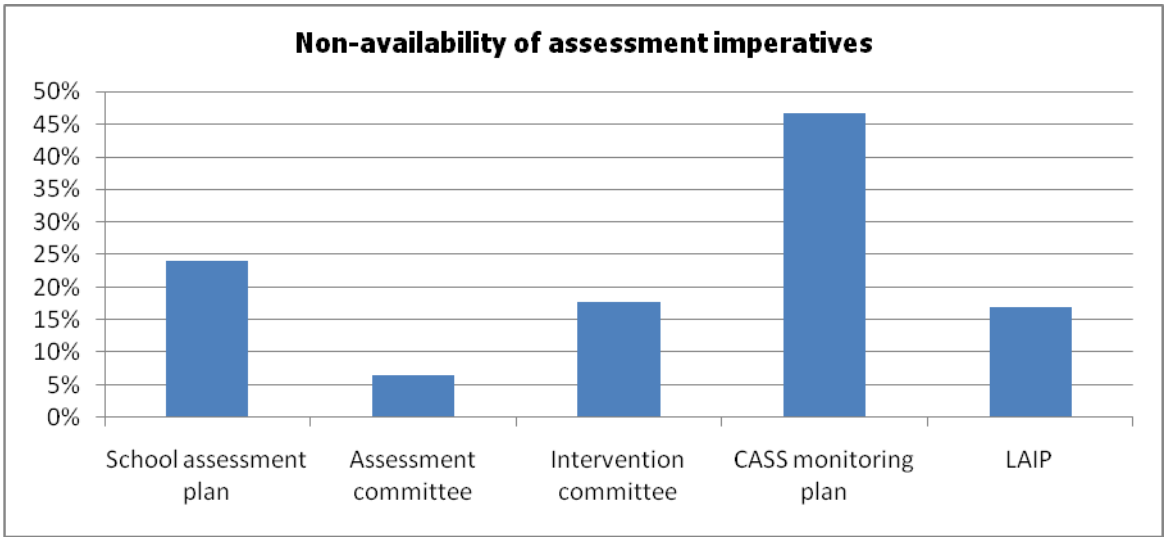
Figure 6a: Availability of assessment imperatives



According to Figure 6a, above, majority of schools indicated that they had other assessments imperatives that enabled them to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate progress made in the implementation of Outcomes-based assessment especially progression and promotion in the GET Band. According to Figure 6a, 93.5% (331) of the respondents indicated that they had a school assessment committee, 291 (82.2%) respondents indicated that they had Intervention Committees, and 189 (54.4%) of the respondents indicated that they had CASS monitoring plan. CASS monitoring plan is the plan that stipulates how, when and by who would the work of educators be checked. This would be to ensure that the number of tasks per learning area/ subject meet the CASS requirements indicated in the CASS policy. This would also assist in determining whether the learner must progress, promoted or not.

Learner Attainment Improvement Plan (LAIP) is a plan of action designed by the North West Department of Education. It is provided to all schools in the province on an annual basis. It is this plan that ensures that every school is focused on its core business, which is learner attainment hence, progression and promotion. According to Figure 6a, 294 (83.05%) of the respondents indicated that they had the Learner Attainment Improvement Plan. Out of 354 respondents, 269 (76%), indicated that they had the school assessment plan.

Figure 6b: Non-availability of assessment imperatives



According to Figure 6b, above, 45.6% (161) of the respondents indicated that they did not have a CASS monitoring plan. CASS plays a major role in Outcomes-based assessment. It is a major component used in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. Without a CASS monitoring plan, schools would not be able to track the progress made by learners in the achievement of learning outcomes. Figure 6b further indicates that 24% (85) of the respondents did not have a school assessment plan that would enable them to inform both learners and parents when learners would be assessed to ensure that parents encourage their children to prepare for the intended assessment. Figure 6b further shows that 16.95% (60) of the respondents indicated that they did not have LAIP. LAIP was a "MUST HAVE" document. That is why year in year out the National Department of

Education develops and issues out a Learner Attainment Improvement Plan for both GET and FET Bands to provinces for circulation to schools.

4.3.1. Progression in the GET Band

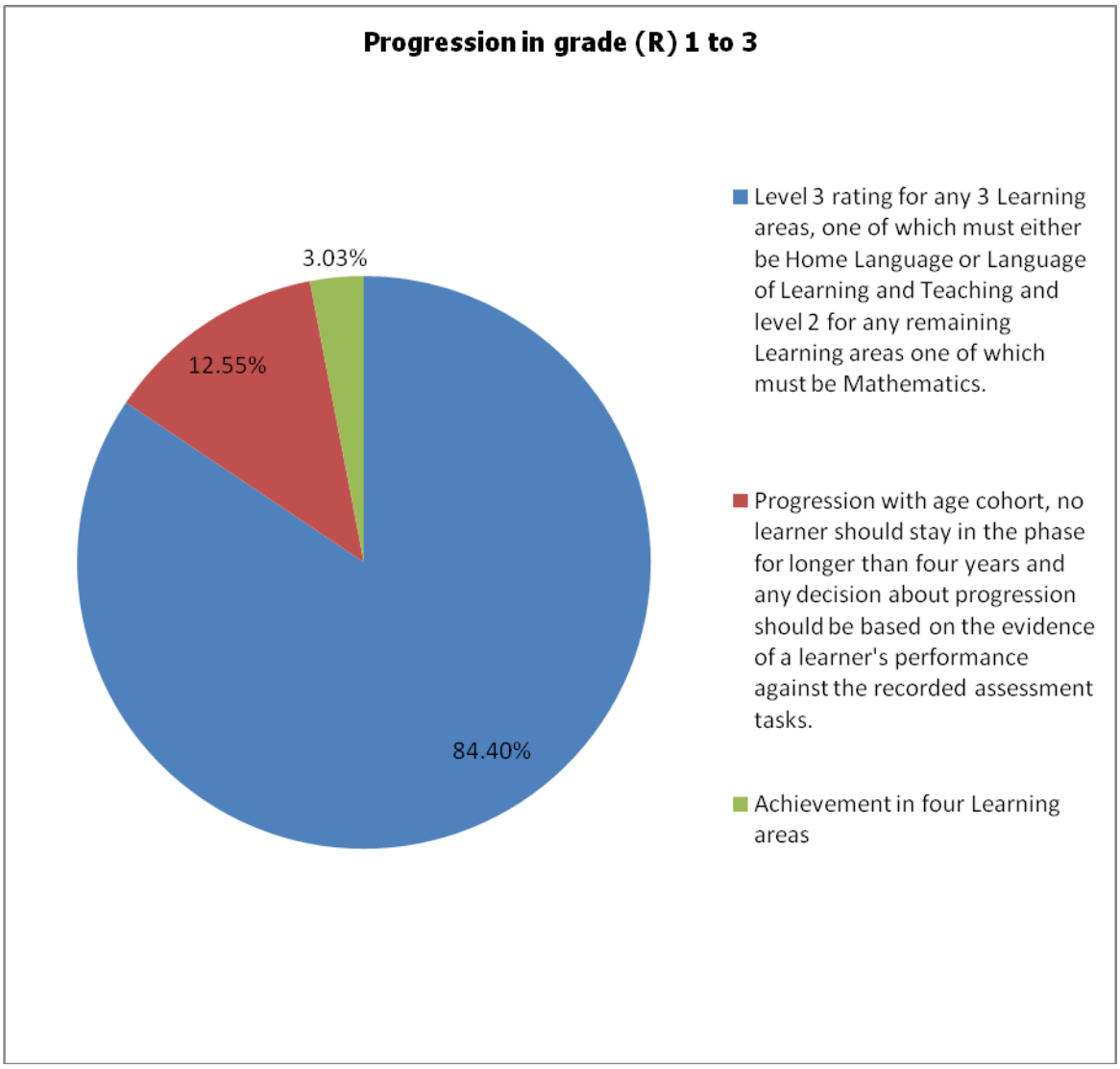
To gather information with regard to progression in the GET Band (Grades R (1) to 7), questions 3.1. to 3.3 (Annexure C) were asked. In each case, there were three options (A, B and C) from which the respondents had to indicate by means of a tick or X for what they implemented with regard to progression of learners in Grades R (1) to 7 of the GET Band.

4.3.1.1. Progression in Grades (R) 1 to 3

A total of 231 (65.2%) responded to this question. This was made up of 211 participants from primary schools and 20 from combined schools. Primary schools enrolled learners from Grades 1 (R) to 6, whilst combined schools enrolled learners from Grades 1 (R) to 12. These were the only two types of schools that could respond to this question because they had Grades (R) 1–3.

Out of 231 respondents, 195 (84.4%) indicated that they used progression with age cohort, and no learner should stay in the phase for longer than five years and any decision about progression was based on the evidence of the learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks (as illustrated in Figure 7). The same 195 (84.4%) of the respondents indicated that this option was chosen as it was a requirement outlined in Government Gazette No. 29626, 12 February 2007.

Figure 7: Progression in Grades (R) 1 to 3



In Figure 7 above, 29 (12.55%) of the respondents indicated that they used "Level 3 rating in both Literacy (Home Language) and Numeracy" as their progression criteria (Figure 7). The same 29 (12.55%) of the respondents indicated that this criteria was contained in circular no. 45 of 2002 of the North West Department of Education. Furthermore, 7 (3.03%) of the respondents used "Achievement in two learning programmes" as their progression criteria and they indicated that the reason for their response was that the criteria are contained in circular no. 68 of 2002 of the North West Department of Education. This implies that different progression criteria were implemented in Grades (R) 1 to 3. However, the majority of respondents,

(84.4%) indicated that they used the same progression criteria compared to only 12.55% and 3.03% which used different progression criteria all together.

4.3.1.2. Progression in Grades 4 to 6

A total of 231 (65.2%) responded to this question. Out of 231 respondents, 29 (12.55%) indicated that they used level 3 rating for any 3 learning areas, one of which must either be Home language or language of learning and teaching and level 2 rating for any remaining learning areas one of which must be Mathematics (Figure 9). The same 29 (12.55) respondents indicated that they used this criteria because it is contained in circular no. 45 of 2002 of ..the North West Department of Education.

Figure 8: Progression in Grades 4 to 6

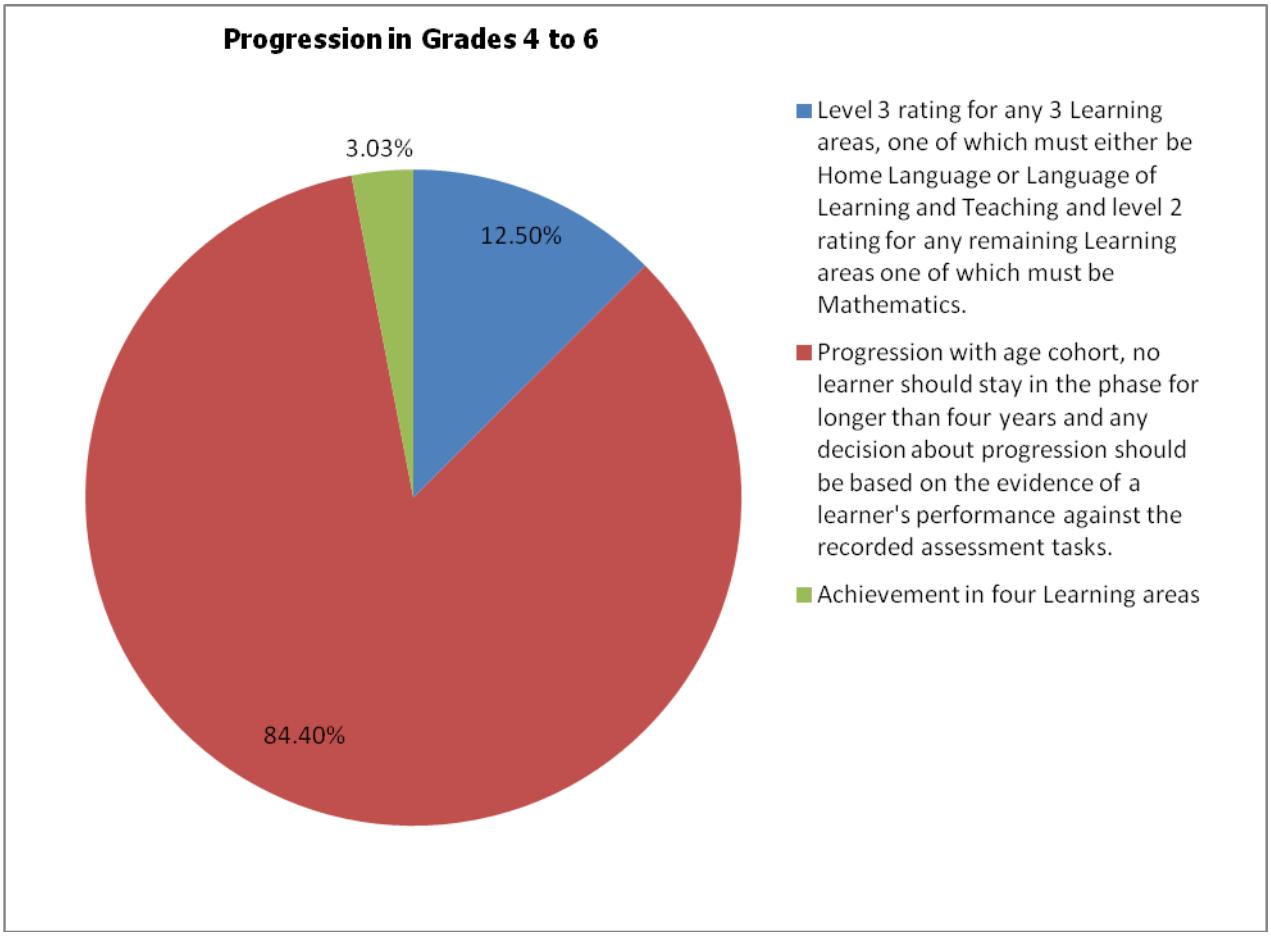


Figure 8 shows that 195 (84.4%) of the 231 respondents indicated that they used progression with age cohort, and no learner should stay in the phase for

longer than four years and any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of the learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks (Figure 8). The same 195 (84.4%) of the respondents indicated that this option was chosen as it was a requirement outlined in Government Gazette No. 29626, 12 February 2007.

The remaining 7 (3.03%) of the 231 respondents further used "Achievement in two learning programmes" as their progression criteria and they indicated that the reason for their response was that the criteria is contained in circular no. 68 of 2002 of the North West Department of Education. This implies that different progression criteria were applied in Grades 4 to 6. The same number of respondents (84.4%) who used the same progression criteria seemed to be the ones (84.4%) who used the same progression criteria in Grades 4 to 6. This further suggests that the 84.4% of the respondent were consistent in the application of progression criteria throughout the primary school level.

4.3.1.3. Progression in Grades 7 and 8

A total of 143 (40.4%) of the 354 participants responded to this question. The 143 (40.4%) of the participants who responded to this question, were constituted of 54 (15.2%) from Intermediate schools, 69 (19.5%) from Secondary schools and 20 (5.7%) from Combined schools.

Out of 143 (40.4%) of the 354 participants, 13 (9.1%) indicated that they used achievement in the five learning areas as it is contained in Circular no. 68 of 2002 of the North West Department of Education (Figure 9). Out of 143 (40.4%) respondents, 29 (20.3%) indicated that they used level 4 rating for any 3 learning areas, one of which must be a Home language or language of learning and teaching and level 3 rating for 3 learning areas one of which must be Mathematics (Figure 9). The same 29 (20.3%) indicated that they used that criteria as dictated by circular no. 45 of 2002, of the North West Department of Education.

Figure 9: Progression in Grades 7 and 8

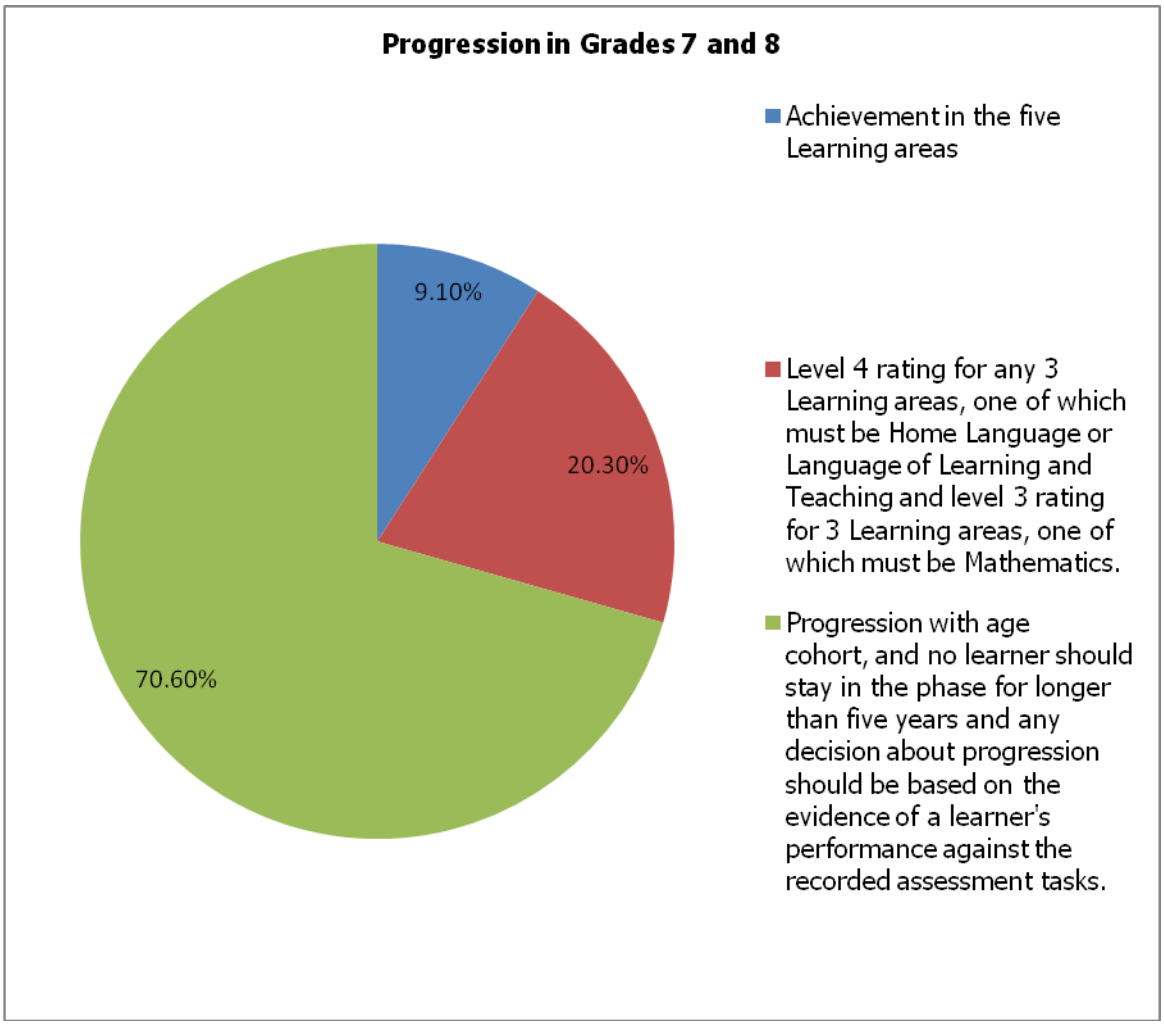


Figure 9 shows that 101 (70.6%) of the 143 participants indicated that they used progression with age cohort, and no learner should stay in the phase for longer than five years and any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of the learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks as their progression criteria in Grades 7 and 8 because it is a policy requirement outlined in Government Gazette No. 29626, 12 February 2007. This implies that different progression criteria were used in Grades 7 and 8. The majority of respondents (70.6%) used the same progression criteria compared to 20.3% and 9.10% who indicated that they used a different progression criteria altogether.

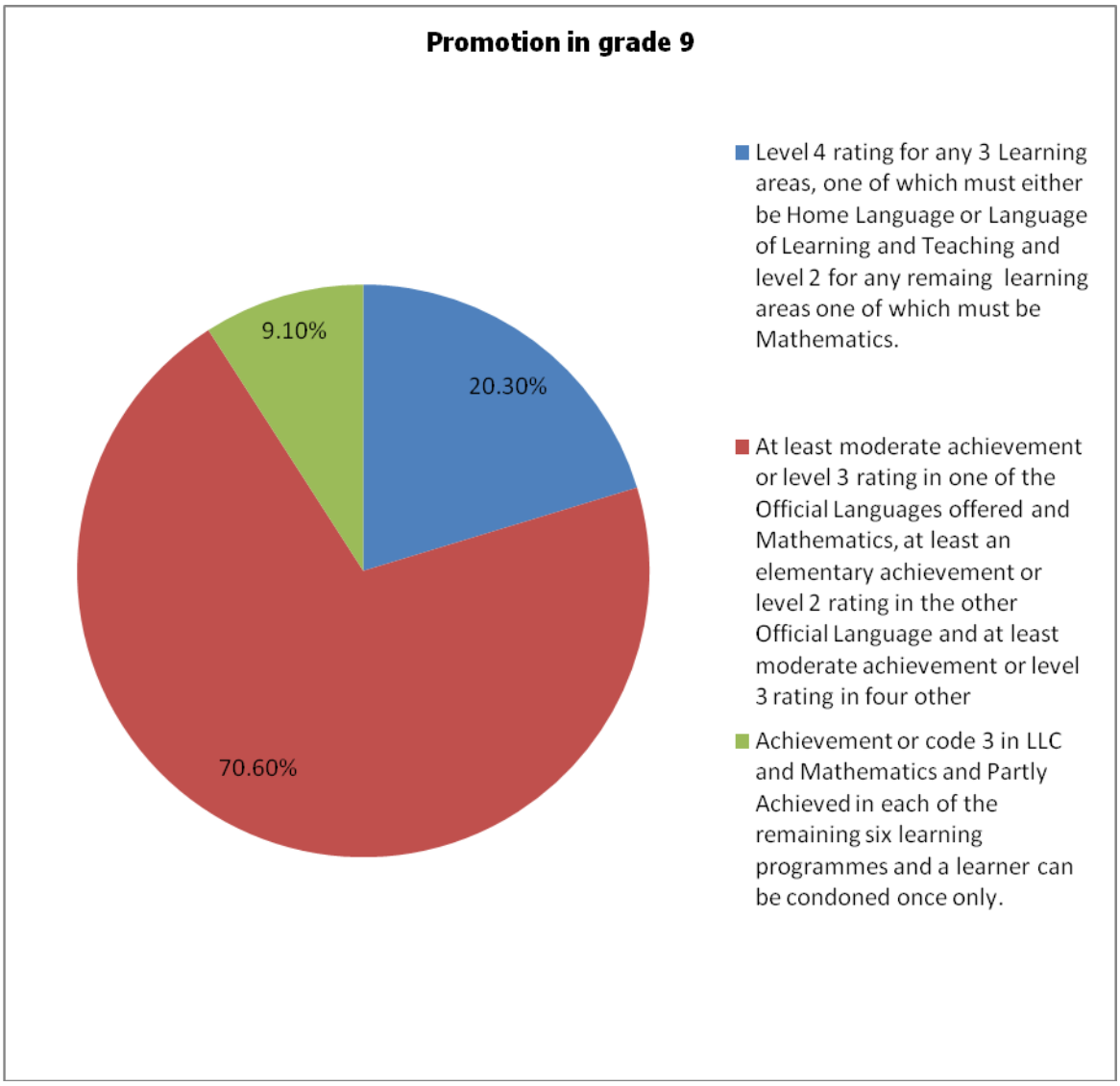
4.3.2. Promotion in Grade 9

A total of 143 (40.4%) responded to this question because they were the only schools with Grade 9. Out of 143 (40.4%) of the respondents, 29 (20.3%) indicated that they used level 4 rating for any 3 learning areas, one of which must be a Home language or language of learning and teaching and level 3 rating (40-49%) for 3 learning areas one of which must be Mathematics (Figure 10). The same 29 (20.3%) indicated that they used that criteria as dictated by circular no. 45 of 2002, of the North West Department of Education.

Figure 10 (page 17) shows that 101 (70.60%) of the 143 participants indicated that they used at least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in one of the official languages offered and Mathematics. The 101 (70.60%) of the participants further indicated that the other official language should be demonstrate an "elementary achievement" or level 2 (30-39%) rating and at least "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in any four other learning areas. Learners' results would be condoned only once. This means, if a learner obtained a "moderate achievement' or level 3 rating in five learning areas including one official language and obtained level 2 rating, such a learner would not be promoted. Rather, Mathematics would then be condoned from level 2 to level 3 rating to ensure that a learner was promoted from Grade 9 to Grade 10.

Out of 143 (40.4%) of the 354 respondents, 13 (9.1%) indicated that they used achievement or level 3 in LLC and Mathematics and Partly Achieved in each of the remaining six learning areas and a learner could be condoned once (Figure 10) because it was contained in circular no. 68 of 2002 of the North West Department of Education. This implies that different promotion requirements were applied in Grade 9. The other implication is that some respondents (20.3%) used progression criteria in Grade 9 instead of the promotion requirements.

Figure 10: Promotion in grade 9



4.3.3. Non-compliance with progression and promotion criteria and/or requirements in the GET Band

Two questions were asked to find out how schools dealt with learners who were unable to meet the progression criteria and promotion requirements in line with their chosen responses to items 4.3.1 and 4.3.2. Firstly, a question was asked to find out how respondents dealt with learners who could not satisfy the requirement to progress to the next grade. Secondly, a question was asked to find out how respondents dealt with learners who could not meet the promotion requirements. The data to these questions are illustrated as follows:

4.3.3.1. Noncompliance with progression criteria and/or requirements in Grades (R) 1 to 8

Figure 11: Non-compliance with progression criteria

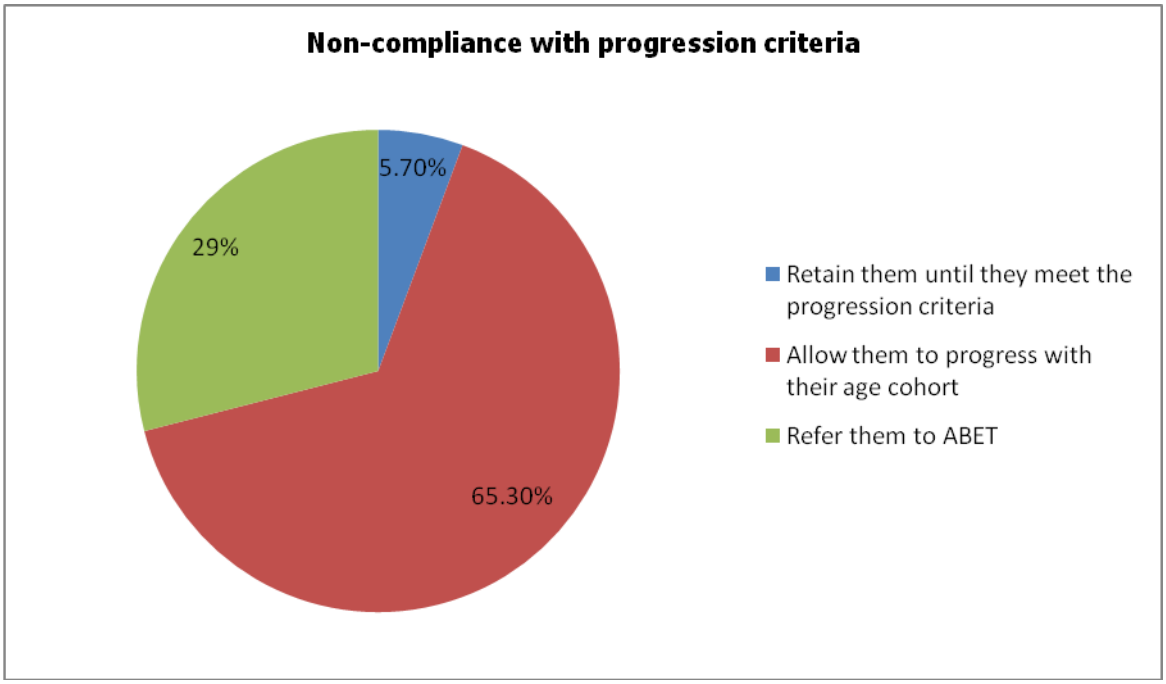


Figure 11 shows that out of 354 respondents, 231 (65.3%) indicated that they allowed learners to progress with their age cohort because it was policy. Furthermore, 103 (29%) of the 354 respondents indicated that they referred the learners to ABET centres so that they can register at a higher level to be on par with their age group. The other 20 (5.7%) of the respondents indicated that they retained the learners until they met the progression criteria because their failure to progress was an indication that they needed more time to progress. This implies that there were different ways of dealing with learners who did not comply or meet the progression criteria as required across Grades (R) 1 to 8.

4.3.3.2. Non-compliance with promotion requirements in Grade 9

Out of 354 participants, only 143 (40.4) responded to this question. Out of 143 respondents, 101 (70.6%) indicated that learners who did not meet the promotion criteria in Grade 9 more than once were retained until they met the promotion criteria. Furthermore, 29 (20.3%) of the 143 participants indicated

that learners who did not meet the promotion criteria in Grade 9 more than once were referred to Adult Basic Education centres so that they could advance to a higher level to be on par with their peers who were able to meet the promotion criteria. The last 20 (5.65%) of the 143 indicated that they allowed learners who did not meet the promotion criteria in Grade 9 more than once to progress to Grade 10 because the intended issuing of a GET certificate in Grade 9 failed. Hence, Grade 9 learners were supposed to progress to grade using the same criteria applied in Grades 7 and 8. This implies that there were different ways of dealing with learners who could not meet promotion criteria in Grade 9.

4.3.4. Factors considered in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band

This refers to aspects or situations that had an influence or effect on decisions that were made about progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. Two factors were considered in this theme. Firstly, factors that were considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band given as responses were captured, analysed and interpreted, followed by factors considered in the promotion of learners in the GET Band. The order in which these factors were mentioned was critical in determining how respondents valued the mentioned factors.

4.3.4.1: Factors considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band

Table 9: Factors considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band

Factors	Frequency	Percentages
Age cohort Number of tasks	230	65.25%
Number of assessment tasks Age cohort	101	28.53%
Number of tasks Achievement of outcomes in reading, writing and counting Age cohort	22	6.22%

Table 9 shows that 230 (65.25%) of the respondents considered age cohort the number of tasks, 101 (28.53%) considered the number of assessment first followed by age cohort when a decision about progression of learners in the GET Band was made. Table 9 further shows that 22 (6.22%) of the respondents indicated that, first, the learner was required to meet the required number of tasks followed achievement of outcomes in reading, writing and counting before age cohort was taken into consideration when the decision about progression of learners in the GET Band was made. The implication of the above data is that factors considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band were not equally considered and valued. However, quite a significant number of respondents (65.25%) indicated that they applied the same factors the same way.

4.3.4.2. Factors considered in the promotion of learners in the GET Band

A total of 143 (40.4%) respondents responded to this question. Promotion is only implemented in Grade 9, which is the exit point of the GET Band.

Table 10: Factors considered in the promotion of learners in Grade 9

Factors	Frequency	Percentages
40% Home Language and Mathematics 30% Language of Learning and Teaching 40% in any four of the remaining learning areas	101	70.6%
CASS and Examination marks	29	20.3%%
Achievement in Home Language and Mathematics Correlation in CASS and Examination marks Age cohort	13	9.1%

Table 10 shows that 101 (70.6%) indicated that learners were required to obtain 40% in Home Language and Mathematics, 30% in the Language of Teaching and learning and 40% in any four of the remaining learning areas. Table 10 further shows that 29 (20.3%) indicated that learners were required to have both CASS and examination marks, whilst 13 (9.1%) indicated that learners must demonstrate achievement in Home Language and Mathematics,

correlation in CASS and examination marks and age cohort were considered in making a decision about the promotion of a learner in Grade 9. This implies that different promotion requirements were applied in Grade 9. The above data further imply that there was a sudden requirement for learners to demonstrate an achievement or obtain 40% in Home Language and Mathematics, a requirement or criteria was implemented for the first time in the assessment of learners in the GET Band. This implies that different factors were considered in the promotion of learners in Grade 9.

4.3.5. Challenges

This refers to aspects or situations that contributed to the difficulty, hindered or enhanced the implementation of progression and promotion criteria in the GET Band. The purpose of this theme was to collect data about the difference between an existing situation and the specific desired outcome(s) of a process of Outcomes-Based Assessment, especially progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band.

4.3.5.1. Challenges encountered in the implementation of the progression criteria and/or requirements in the GET Band

All the 354 participants responded to this question. The 354 (100%) of the respondents indicated that the major challenge in the implementation of the progression criteria was retention of non-achieving learners in the GET Band. They indicated that for a non-achieving learner to be retained, all stakeholders including the learner, parent, educator, Circuit Manager, Assessment Official and Curriculum Support Staff was supposed to take part about the decision to be made on the retention of non-achieving learners and this exercise was not feasible. The same 354 (100%) of the respondents further indicated that parents were not responding to the call to take part in the intervention of their children, and did not want to give consent towards retention of their children.

Out of 354 respondents, 231 (65.25%) indicated that progression with age cohort was a major challenge in the implementation and progression of learners in the GET Band. The same 231 (65.25%) of the respondents further indicated that learners were allowed to progress with their age cohort regardless of their achievement. The same 231 (65.25%) indicated that progression with age cohort was defeating all the good intentions and goals of the teaching-learning process which is learner achievement. All the 354 respondents indicated that the most difficult situation was to allow learners who could not read and write to progress with their age cohort. This implies that the current progression criteria implemented in Grades (R) 1 to 8 were a major challenge to the respondents. The other implication is that, the notion of progression with age was to be the biggest challenge that defeated the purpose of assessment in general.

4.3.5.2. Challenges encountered in the implementation of promotion requirements in the GET Band

Out of 354 participants, 143 (40.4%) responded to this question. The 143 (40.4%) of the respondents indicated that the disparity between progression criteria and promotion criteria was a major challenge in the GET Band. The same 143 (40.4%) of the respondents indicated that the sudden requirement for learners to demonstrate achievement or 40% in Mathematics and Home language in Grade 9, a criterion that was missing in Grades 1 to 8, seemed to be a difficult requirement to be achieved because not all learners could reach the 40% target in Mathematics. This implies that a sudden requirement for learners to demonstrate achievement or 40% only in Grade 9 Mathematics and Home Language was defeating all efforts of promoting numeracy and literacy in lower grades. It further implies that this would create a bottle neck effect in Grade 9 in that more learners were more likely not to meet the 40% requirement in Mathematics.

4.3.6. Strategies

A strategy refers to a plan to be developed in order to address the challenges in the implementation of progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. The purpose of this theme was to investigate how respondents intended addressing the challenges encountered in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band.

4.3.6.1. Strategies that can be developed to address the challenges in implementation of the progression criteria in the GET Band

All the 354 participants responded to this question. Out of the 354 respondents, 318 (89.8%) indicated that progression with age cohort as the first priority in making a decision about progression of learners in the GET Band should be discontinued. The same 318 (89.8%) of the respondents further indicated that the entire progression criteria of learners in the GET Band needed to be reviewed. The same 318 (89.8) of the respondents also indicated that the number of learning areas needed to be reduced and that a clear progression criteria aligned to promotion in Grade 9 and FET Band be introduced. Only 36 (10.2%) of the respondents indicated that the entire notion of progression of learners in the GET Band be discontinued. This implies that there is no correlation or alignment between progression and promotion in the GET Band let alone correlation between promotion in Grade 9 and promotion in the FET Band.

4.3.6.2. Strategies that can be developed to address the challenges in the implementation of promotion requirements in the GET Band

Out of 354 participants, 143 (40.4%) responded to this question. All the 143 (40.4%) of the respondents indicated that the number of learning areas in the senior phase of the GET Band, i.e., Grades 7 to 9 needed to be aligned with the number of subjects in the FET Band. All the 143 (40.4%) of the respondents further indicated that progression of learners in Grades 7 and 8 be discontinued. The same 143 (40.4%) of the respondents also indicated

that the promotion criteria set out for Grade 9 needed to be reviewed in line with promotion in the FET Band. Only 36 (10.2%) of the respondents suggested that, in the place of progression, clear promotion requirements, aligned to both Grade 9 and the FET Band, be introduced. This implies that the current progression and promotion criteria or requirements implemented in the GET Band need to be reviewed. The other implication is the number of learning areas in the GET Band need to be aligned with the subjects in the FET Band.

4.4. Qualitative data

4.4.1. Data collected through interviews

A set of questions were asked during the interview with district Assessment Officials. Part of the assessment official's job was to monitor and evaluate the implementation of OBA in GET schools within their respective districts. The Assessment Officials were also involved in the verification of progression and promotion schedules. The purpose of undertaking a verification of schedules was to ascertain that correct progression and promotion requirements and/or criteria had been applied by schools in the GET Band. An agreement with those assessment officials was reached that their identities would not be revealed. Upon this agreement, the interviewed participants would be called Assessment Officials 1, 2, 3 and 4. The responses from the Assessment Official are written in Italics. Data gathered through the interview were also captured and interpreted according to themes as described below.

4.4.1.1. Policies which inform progression and promotion in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

NCS policy or policy pertaining to the progression and promotion requirements of NCS.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that the National Curriculum Statement policy informed progression and promotion in the GET Band.

Assessment Official 2

National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band.

According to Assessment Official 2, the National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for schools in the GET Band as the only policy that informed progression and promotion in the GET Band.

Assessment Official 3

Circular S1 of 2010 stipulates that all previously distributed circulars dealing with progression and promotion in Grades 1–9 have been withdrawn. All schools will use the provisions of the current policy document, The National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the GET Band, Government Gazette No.29626 dated February 2007.

The information provided above means that numerous circulars were circulated about progression and promotion in the GET Band but such information was withdrawn by circular S1 of 2010. The Assessment Official 3 further indicated that it was stated that schools would use the same progression and promotion requirements as outlined in Government Gazette No. 29626. The same information was shared by Assessment Officials 2 and 4.

Assessment Official 4

Progression and promotion requirements for Grades R-9 as published in the Government Gazette of 12 February 2007, No: 29626.

Assessment Official 4 indicated the same policy highlighted by Assessment Officials 2 and 3. The general implication is that the majority of Assessment Officials (2, 3 and 4) provided the same policy as the one that informs progression and promotion in the GET Band. The only exception was with regard to Assessment Official 1 who indicated that a National Curriculum Statement policy informed progression and promotion in the GET Band. The disparity of information may be due to misinformation or lack of on-going developments in education.

4.4.1.2. Progression in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

For Grades 1 to 3: 2 level 3 ratings, one in Maths and another one in Home language. Age cohort. For Grades 4 to 8: 40% in any 4 learning areas.

According to Assessment Official 1, two different progression criteria were applied. In the foundation phase (Grades 1 to 3), learners were expected to demonstrate or obtain between 40 to 49% or moderate achievement or level 3 rating in Mathematics or Numeracy and Home Language to progress. This means that if a learner in Grades 1 to 3 fails to obtain 40 to 49% in Mathematics and Home Language, then progression with age cohort would be implemented. In the intermediate (Grades 4 to 6) and senior phases, learners were expected to demonstrate or obtain 40% to 49% or moderate achievement or level 3 rating in any four of the learning areas offered.

Assessment Official 2

Learners should have done all prescribed learning programmes or areas. They should have done all the LOs and ASs. They should have presented CASS as required. Learners were not to stay more than 4 years in the phase. If retained, there should be an indication of how intervention was to be done, but with the approval of the provincial Head of Department of Education.

Assessment Official 2 indicated that all learning areas were compulsory. A learner was compelled to do all prescribed learning areas content and all the prescribed Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs). A learner was compelled to have evidence of Continuous Assessment (CASS) recorded against the performance of achievement of LOs and ASs. Learners would be retained only once in a phase but with approval from the North West Provincial Head of the Department of Education.

Assessment Official 3

Ideally, all learners in Grades R-8 should progress with their age cohort. Any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks. Where a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant stakeholders. No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where Grade R is offered).

According to Assessment Official 3, in the main, learners would progress with their age cohort. Learners were expected to be taught and assessed. The evidence of how learners performed was supposed to be presented as evidence that learners were assessed. This means that learners were expected to keep their assessed tasks and educators were expected to record and keep the records of achievement of learners. This further means that any other decision about the learner was supposed to be taken by all role players such as the parent, educators and education support services against the records of achievements of learners.

Assessment official 4

Ideally, all learners should progress with their age cohort. Any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks. Whether a learner

needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of relevant role-players, teachers, learners, parents and education support services. No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where Grade R is offered) unless the provincial Head of Department of Education has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice. If a learner needs more time to achieve the Learning Outcomes, then that learner need not be retained in a grade for the whole year. It is important that a learner support strategy be put in place to support such learners.

Assessment Official 4 shared the same knowledge and experiences with Assessment Official 3. This means that in the main learners would progress with their age cohort. Learners were expected to be taught and assessed. The evidence of how learners performed was supposed to be presented as evidence that learners were assessed. This means that learners were expected to keep their assessed tasks and educators were expected to record and keep the records of achievement of learners. This further means that any other decision about the learner was supposed to be taken by all role players such as the parent, educators and education support services against the records of achievements of learners. Assessment Official 4 further emphasised that learners encountering problems and difficulties to demonstrate achievement of the LOs should be assisted to an extent that they can progress with their age cohort.

4.4.1.3 Progression with age cohort

Assessment official 1

Learners must be placed in the next grade and not allowed to fail more than once in a phase.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that a learner was expected to spend four years in Grades R to 3 and could only repeat once, four years in Grades 4 to 6 and could only repeat once and a maximum of three years in Grades 7 and 8.

Assessment Official 2

Learners are to move with learners of the same age. If the 4 years expire, then permission has to be sought. If all systems were functional, no learner would stay more than the prescribed number of years, as those would be placed at relevant institutions or more intervention done to help them cope.

According Assessment Official 2, learners were supposed to progress from grade to grade with learners of the same chronological age. This means that learners were expected to spend a maximum prescribed number of years in a phase, failing which they must be referred to ABET centres or special schools.

Assessment official 3

It basically means that a learner must move within the given age cohort, i.e., it is expected that a Grade 1 learner will be 7 years of age, Grade 2 learner 8 years and Grade 3 learner 9 years.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that learners should progress in terms of their chronological age rather than the number of years they spend in a phase.

Assessment Official 4

It means a learner cannot spend four years in a phase or five years in a case where the school offers Grade R. In most cases, age cohort is confused with chronological age of a learner. Age cohort is about the number of years in a phase and not the age of a learner.

According to Assessment Official 4, learners should progress from grade to grade based on the number of years they have spend in a phase rather that

their age. According to Assessment Official 4, age cohort is sometimes confused with chronological age which applied to both Assessment Officials 2 (same age) and 3 (it was expected that a Grade 1 learner will be seven years old, Grade 2 eight, 3 – nine, 4 – ten, 5 – eleven, 6 – twelve, 7 – thirteen, 8 – fourteen and 9 - fifteen).

4.4.1.4. Dealing with non-achievers

Assessment Official 1

Alternative curriculum choice to be given or skills training at FET level. Intervention or more support or remedial education.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that learners who were unable to demonstrate achievement or performance academically, should have an option of pursuing training within the trade fields at Further Education and Training colleges so that they can be absorbed into the world of work. This means that at lower grades (i.e., Grades 1 to 6), learners could only be given more support or remedial education. Only learners in the senior phase or Grades 7 to 9 could be given alternative career path.

Assessment Official 2

In the first place, such learners would have been discovered at least at foundation phase level that they may not cope with academic fields. If all the systems were functional, i.e., parents, teachers and Inclusive Education unit should play roles that will make it easier and simpler for these learners, to be placed correctly in institutions that will unearth their potential.

According to Assessment Official 2, there was no system in place to identify learners with barriers to learning. This means that different role-players like parents, teachers and Inclusive Education unit are not playing their roles in identifying learners with barriers to learning. The Inclusive Education unit is a section that determines learners with special educational needs and places

them in special educational institutions according to their needs. This means learners with barriers to learning end up being in the mainstream rather than being placed in special schools.

Assessment Official 3

Such learners are referred to ABET centres to do Level 4, which is equivalent to Grade 9, and from there they should enrol at FET colleges.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that learners who are unable to demonstrate achievement are referred to Adult Basic Education and Training centres where they can be accelerated to higher grades to be on par with their peers. This means that they would be afforded a chance to reduce the number of subjects in a year. At ABET centres, they can enrol for a minimum of two subjects and this would reduce the workload, thereby enhance the chances of achievement of the required outcomes. The other meaning is that such learners may be afforded the opportunity to undergo skills training at Further Education and Training colleges.

Assessment Official 4

Those learners will be subjected to diversion programmes and an example in this case would be FET Colleges.

According Assessment Official 4, and in line with Assessment Official 1, learners who are unable to demonstrate achievement or performance academically, should have an option of pursuing training within the trade fields at Further Education and Training colleges so that they can be absorbed into the world of work.

4.4.1.5. Adherence to policy

Assessment Official 1

Progression and promotion schedules must be approved after ensuring that procedure is followed by the Circuit Managers.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that progression and promotion of learners is done at school through the completion of the schedules. The schedules need to be moderated at school level to ensure that progression and promotion of learners was done in accordance with available and prescribed policies. The Circuit Manager who oversees the schools must also moderate the schedules by verifying that progression and promotion of learners were done according to the prescripts of available and prescribed policies. After the Circuit Manager has satisfied him/herself that progression and promotion of learners were done in line with policies, he/she must approve the schedules and the schools could proceed in completing and issuing report cards to either learners or parents.

Assessment Official 2

Principals and SMT at school level are to ensure that learners are progressed and promoted in line with policy, thereafter the circuit managers are to check as well.

The same issues highlighted by Assessment Official 1 are shared by Assessment Official 2. The progression and promotion of learners is done at school through the completion of the schedules. The schedules need to be moderated at school level to ensure that progression and promotion of learners was done in accordance with available and prescribed policies. The Circuit Manager who oversees the schools must also moderate the schedules by verifying that progression and promotion of learners were done according to the prescripts of available and prescribed policies. After the Circuit Manager has satisfied him/herself that progression and promotion of learners were done in line with policies, he/she must the approve the schedules and schools

could proceed in completing and issuing report cards to either learners or parents.

Assessment Official 3

None, to my knowledge and understanding.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that there was no system in place to ensure that progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band was done in line with policy. This is the only official who indicated that there is no system in place to ensure that progression and promotion was done in line with available policies. This may be attributed to the fact that the official was not well informed about what other officials has indicated or it may be to his/her lack of collaboration with other officials.

Assessment Official 4

Workshops on progression and promotion requirements are conducted annually. Progression and promotion schedules are moderated by circuit managers before reports are issued.

According to Assessment Official 4 the North West Department of Education has identified a need to capacitate the relevant personnel about policies that informed progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. The same issues highlighted by Assessment Officials 1 and 2 are shared by Assessment Official 4. The progression and promotion of learners is done at school through the completion of the schedules. The schedules need to be moderated at school level to ensure that progression and promotion of learners was done in accordance with available and prescribed policies. The Circuit Manager who oversees the schools must also moderate the schedules by verifying that progression and promotion of learners were done according to the prescripts of available and prescribed policies. After the Circuit Manager has satisfied him/herself that progression and promotion of learners were done in line with policies, he/she must the approve the schedules and the

schools could proceed in completing and issuing report cards to either learners or parents.

4.4.1.6 Promotion in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

A minimum of two languages must be offered and 40% must be obtained in one of the official languages, 30% in the second language, 40% in Mathematics and any 4 other subject at 40%.

This means that for a learner to be promoted from Grades 9 to 10, such a learner must obtain 40% or more in six learning areas. This must be constituted as follows:

40% Mathematics;

40% Language one;

30% in the second language; and

40% in four other learning areas.

Assessment Official 2

Learners should have done all prescribed learning programmes or areas. They should have done all the LOs and ASs. They should have presented CASS as required. If all requirements were not met, condonation could be an option. If the learner could not be condoned, then he/she would be retained.

Assessment Official 2 indicated that all learning areas were compulsory. Learners were expected to do all Learning Outcomes in all learning areas. A continuous assessment mark was mandatory and was supposed to be added to the examination mark in all learning areas to determine whether a learner could be promoted or not. This means that if a learner needs one more learning area to be promoted, one learning area could be condoned to ensure that a learner was promoted. If more than two learning areas were required for a learner to be promoted, such a learner would be retained.

Assessment Official 3

A learner is promoted from Grades 9 to 10 on the basis of demonstrating competences that reflect a balanced spread over all 8 Learning Areas. Moderate or level 3 rating in one of the official languages and Mathematics. Elementary or level 2 rating in the other language and at least moderate or level 3 rating in four other Learning Areas.

Just as Assessment Official 1 has highlighted, for a learner to be promoted from Grades 9 to 10, such a learner must obtain 40% or more in six learning areas. This must be constituted as follows:
40% Mathematics;
40% Language one;
30% in the second language; and
40% in four other learning areas.

Assessment Official 4

Promotion occurs only in Grade 9 in the GET Band. A learner is promoted to Grade 10 only if s/he satisfied the following achievement requirements: At least a moderate achievement or level 3 rating in one of the official languages offered and Mathematics; at least an elementary achievement or level 2 rating in the other official language and at least a moderate achievement or level 3 in four other Learning Areas. A learner can be condoned once.

Unlike Assessment Officials 1, 2 and 3, this Assessment Official indicated that promotion was applied for the first time within the GET Band at Grade 9. According to Assessment Official 4, learners were confronted with a different requirement to move from Grade 9 to 10, for the first time in their schooling life. With the same issues shared by Assessment Officials 1 and 3, for a learner to be promoted from Grades 9 to 10, such a learner must obtain 40% or more in six learning areas. This must be constituted as follows:

40% Mathematics;

40% Language one;

30% in the second language; and

40% in four other learning areas.

4.4.1.7. Factors considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

Performance, School-based assessment, Interventions, CASS and Exams.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that learners' performance was judged against the recorded assessment tasks. The second factor that was considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band was all assessment done at school level. This implies that for progression, learners would not be subjected to external assessment. The third factor was interventions. This means that if learners' performance as recorded against all assessments done at school and was not satisfactory, then other means would be implemented to ensure that the learner's performance is improved. This would then lead to the calculation of a CASS mark that will be added to the exam mark.

Assessment Official 2

Learners are to move with learners of the same age. If the 4 years expire, then permission has to be sought. If all systems were functional, no learner would stay more than the prescribed number of years, as those would be placed at relevant institutions or more intervention done to help them cope.

According to Assessment Official 2, in the main learners must progress with their age cohort. This means that learners could only be retained once in a phase, but could further be retained for more than once through permission from the Provincial Head of Department of Education. Assessment Official 2 further indicated that not all systems were efficient and effective as learners

with barriers to learning were not identified in the early years of their schooling.

Assessment Official 3

Factors considered for progression in the GET Band are age of learners, and also whether learners experience any barriers to leaning.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that learners would progress with learners of the same age and those experiencing barriers to learning would be left behind and progress together with learners of their age with barriers to learning.

Assessment Official 4

Age cohort. Eight Learning Areas. Two Languages. Number of completed tasks.

According to Assessment Official 4, and as already highlighted by Assessment Officials 1 and 2, in the main learners must progress with their age cohort. All eight learning areas were compulsory and a minimum of two Languages could be offered in the GET Band. The third priority to be considered in determining whether a learner could progress or not was the number of completed tasks in a learning area.

4.4.1.8. Factors considered in the promotion of learners in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

25% CASS and 75% Exams.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that Continuous Assessment mark would be calculated out of 25%. Examination mark would be calculated out of 75%. CASS out 25% would be added to the examination mark of 75% to give 100% in all learning areas.

Assessment official 2

Learners should have done all prescribed learning programmes or areas. They should have done all the LOs and ASs. They should have presented CASS as required. If all requirements were not met, condonation could be an option. If the learner could not be condoned, then he/she would be retained.

According to Assessment Official 2, all learning areas were compulsory. Learners were expected to do all Learning Outcomes in all learning areas. A continuous assessment mark was mandatory and was supposed to be added to the exam mark in all learning areas to determine whether a learner could be promoted or not. This means that if a learner need one more learning area to be promoted, one learning area could be condoned to ensure that a learner was promoted. If more than two learning areas were required for a learner to be promoted, such a learner would be retained.

Assessment Official 3

Factors considered for promotion in the GET Band are age of learners, and also whether learners experience any barriers to learning.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that age of a learner and when a learner was experiencing difficulties in achieving the learning outcomes were factors considered in the promotion of learners in Grade 9. This means that the same factors which were considered in the progression of learners were also considered in the promotion of learners in the GET Band.

Assessment Official 4

Mathematics and Languages

According to Assessment Official 4, priority was given to Mathematics followed by Languages were the only two factors considered to determine whether a learner could be promoted or not.

4.4.1.9. Challenges encountered in the implementation of progression criteria in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

Progression with age cohort causes performance to be poor in the ensuing grades. Schools and Area Offices do not have remedial educators.

Assessment Official 1 indicated that progression with age cohort defeat all the efforts of ensuring that learners demonstrate achievements in both Mathematics (Numeracy) and Languages (Literacy). This means that there was no actual effort to assist learners with barriers to learning to ensure that they progress in line with policy.

Assessment Official 2

The fact that not all the stakeholders play their roles is a challenge in making a decision about the future of learners.

According to Assessment Official 2, the lack of collaboration or working together between parents, learners, educators and education support services in ensuring that learners with learning barriers were identified and supported by all possible posed a major challenge in the implementation of progression criteria in the GET Band.

Assessment Official 3

Learners are mostly being progressed from phase to phase without achieving the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. Most schools just progress learners from grade to grade to avoid a bottle-neck situation, which mostly occurs in Grade 9.

Assessment Official 3 indicated that progression with age cohort was equated to automatic progression because learners progressed with their age cohort regardless of their performance in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

Assessment Official 4

Lack of intervention implying that the learner is given the benefit of the doubt. Progression with age cohort as confused with chronological age.

Assessment Official 4 indicated that instead of identifying and dealing with barriers to learning to enhance learner performance, learners were allowed to move from grade to grade and phase to phase without actually achieving the expected learning outcomes.

4.4.1.10. Challenges encountered in the implementation of promotion requirements in the GET Band

Assessment official 1

Sometimes learners perform better in CASS than final exams. Too much emphasis on exams.

According to Assessment Official 1, there were disparity between continuous assessment marks and final exam mark. Continuous Assessment mark would be calculated from assessment conducted at school level or from internal assessment whilst final exam would be external assessment. This means that learners performed better in internal assessment than in external assessment.

Assessment Official 2

Principals, SMT and Circuit managers as responsible and accountable people to ensure that the policy on progression and promotion are implemented correctly.

Assessment Official 2 indicated that if principals and School Management Teams do not promote learners in accordance with the prescripts of available and prescribed policies and Circuit Managers were also not able to detect the problems and correct them before report cards were issued, then learners would be promoted or retained using wrong promotion requirements.

Assessment Official 3

The major challenge is of course that if a learner cannot master the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards in Grade 9, those learners can only stay one extra year in the phase, and thereafter they have to be referred to ABET centres. Schools are struggling with over-crowded Grade 9 classrooms, because parents refuse their children being referred to ABET centres.

According to Assessment Official 3, the same conditions set out for non-achievers in the progression of learners in the GET Band, applied to Grade 9. This means that progression criteria were applied in Grade 9. The information provided by this assessment official differs from the information given by others. This may also be due to misinformation or lack of knowledge about developments in education.

Assessment Official 4

Condonation. Many principals, Head of Departments at school level, senior educators and educators involved in the compilation of promotion schedules cannot apply condonation correctly.

Assessment Official 4 indicated that the process of condoning of learners in Grade 9 was equated to the creation of another promotion requirement. Principals, deputy principals, senior educators or delegated educators involved in the compilation of progression and promotion schedules condoned learners who were not supposed to be condoned. This may be due to misinformation or lack of understanding of the conditions under which learners were supposed to be condoned.

4.4.1.11. Strategies to deal with challenges in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band

Assessment Official 1

Learners who do not deserve to pass should not be progressed to the next grade. Ratio between CASS and exam to be 50%:50%. Specialist must be appointed to deal with learners who have barriers to learning. All schools must have common standardised assessments per quarter. Teacher/learner ratios must be reduced to 1:25. Assistant teachers must be appointed. Supplementary exams to be introduced at exit points like Grades 3, 6 and 9.

According to Assessment Official 1, the current progression and promotion criteria or requirements in the GET Band need to be reviewed. This means that the current calculation of CASS and exam mark need to be revisited. The number of learners per educator needs to be reduced.

Assessment Official 2

Each school must have a teacher who can identify learners with serious learning barriers. If these barriers can be addressed by the school, then the principal and HODs should ensure remediation is implemented. If barriers cannot be resolved at school level, then the Department of Education should play its part through the Inclusive Education section, to place the learner at relevant institutions.

Assessment Official 2 indicated that the department of education should expedite the possibility of creating special posts for teachers who would be able to identify learners with learning barriers and be able to deal with such learners at school level before being referred to Inclusive Education section.

Assessment Official 3

It is more important that a learner support strategy be put in place to support non-achieving learners. Progression requirements should be

more specific, and not only based on age. Schools must have thorough and proper intervention strategies in place. The Inclusive Unit at the Area and District Offices must be more prominent, and not only limit their visits to special schools, but must spread it out to all schools. More specialized people should be appointed in the Inclusive Unit, to assist learners with barriers.

According to Assessment Official 3, the department of education must draw up a strategy to deal with learners with barriers to learning and that the current progression criteria are reviewed. This means that it was the responsibility of each school to ensure that learners with barriers to learning were supported to and that Inclusive Education Units support these learners in all the schools rather than focussing on special schools.

Assessment official 4

Adherence to policy on the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band regardless of its short falls.

Assessment Official 4 indicated that at school level, the principal must ensure that the progression and promotion policy were implemented to the latter regardless of how it was perceived.

4.4.2. Documents

Several documents were analysed to find out how they impacted on the implementation of progression and promotion requirements and/or criteria in the GET Band. These included, 2011 GET progression and promotion schedules as primary source of information with regard to how learners were progressed and promoted from grade to grade; Government Gazette No. 29626, (12 February 2007), with reference to the schedule on National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the General Education and Training Band and Directives (in the form of circulars) from both the National and North West Department of Education.

4.4.2.1. Progression and promotion schedules

A schedule is a quarterly record that provides a summary of the progress of all learners in a specific grade in a school (Government Gazette No. 29626, dated 12 February 2007). The school may store this information manually or electronically. The progression and promotion schedules were completed at the end of 2011 and were a compilation of learner performance across all four school terms. The progression and promotion schedules were submitted to the circuit managers for verification and approval. Circuit Managers were supposed to verify that learners progressed and were promoted in accordance with policies. Schedules were submitted in triplicate. The first was returned to school for compilation and issuing reports cards to parents, the second one was kept by the circuit manager and the third one was sent to the Area Office.

Educators had the overall responsibility to assess the progress of learners in achieving the expected outcomes, recorded and kept such records on mark sheets. Continuous assessment (CASS) was an assessment model that encouraged the integration of assessment into the teaching and development of learners through ongoing feedback. It was a model of assessment that was used to determine a learner's achievement during the course of a grade, provided information that was used to support the learner's development and enabled improvements that were made to the learning and teaching process. CASS in Grades R–8 comprised 100% of the assessment programme. CASS comprised 75% of the total assessment programme whilst external examination comprised 25% in Grade 9. In the main, these CASS results were collated from the recorded tasks.

The researcher was able to analyse some of these progression and promotion schedules and the following observation were deduced:

- Progression with age cohort

The majority of progression schedules (80%) revealed that most learners in Grades 1–8 were mainly progressed with their age cohort rather than their actual academic performance. Majority of learners were unable to achieve during their reception years in the different phases, e.g., Grade 1 which is a reception year for the foundation phase, Grade 4 which is a reception year for the intermediate phase and Grade 7 which is a reception year for the senior phase. As a result of this trend, learners progressed with their age cohort.

The other factor that contributed to learners progressing with their age cohort was that it proved difficult if not impossible for all stakeholders to be brought together at the same place and time for a consultation process to make a decision about the progression of non-achievers in the GET Band. As a result of this problem, non-achievers progressed on the principle of progression with age cohort.

Interestingly, there was a situation where learners progressed with their age cohort due to misinterpretation of "age cohort". In this particular case, learners progressed on the basis of their chronological ages rather than the number of years spent in a phase or progression with age cohort.

- Promotion in Grade 9

Promotion schedules (45%) revealed that learners were promoted even though they did not meet the promotion criteria. There was also a situation in which a learner was supposed to have been promoted but the learner was retained. There was another situation in which learners were supposed to have been condoned and they were retained. The last observation made in the promotion schedule was that some learners were wrongly condoned. The condoning criterion was used as another promotion criterion.

4.4.2.2. Directives from the North West Department of Education

Immediately after the 1994 democratic elections, different education systems from homelands and the former RSA were brought together under one education system. All the schools followed one curriculum that was implemented in phases. The other turning point was the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education; C2005 which was later revised and followed by National Curriculum Statement. During these periods ranging from 1995 to 2007, the National Department of Education together with provincial Departments of Education in the nine provinces, including the North West, had to ensure that learners moved from one grade to another.

Based on the above background, a series of progression criteria were developed by the National Department of Education to ensure that learners moved from grade to grade. Due to changes in the mode of curriculum delivery, progression and promotion criteria also changed from 1994. According to circular no. 68 of 2002 dated 11 November 2002, schools were reminded as follows:

> If the parent/guardian agree to the retention of a learner, the Circuit Manager should approve this recommendation made by the principal only after he/she has familiarised him/herself with the circumstances pertaining to a particular case. The District Manager, finally, should then endorse this recommendation.

It was further stated:

> Schools are reminded that the Grade 9 assessments for 2002 are part of a pilot project that will culminate in the issuing of a GET Certificate in 2004. Accordingly, teachers at schools were requested to use their professional judgement in the application of these requirements. Under no circumstances should any learner be disadvantaged.

The National Department of Education have since developed the Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Band, Grades R–9 and ABET of 1998 and the Framework for the Assessment and Promotion of Learners in Grade 9: Interim Policy, 2003, which integrated and consolidated recording and reporting provisions that were combined in the National Protocol on

Assessment, 2005. All of these policies have been repealed by Gazette No. 29626, 12 February 2007.

4.4.2.3. Government Gazette No. 29626, 12 February 2007

Government Gazette No. 29626, February 2007 prescribed the following in terms of progression of learners in the GET Band:

> Ideally, all learners in Grades R–8 should progress with their age cohort. Any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks. Where a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant role-players: teachers, learners, parents and education support services (ESS). No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation phase where Grade R is offered), unless the provincial Head of Department has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice. If a learner needs more time to achieve the Learning Outcomes, then that learner need not be retained in a grade for a whole year. It is important that a learner support strategy be put in place to support such learners.
>
> Promotion occurs only at Grade 9 level. A learner is promoted from Grade 9 on the basis of demonstrating competences that reflect a balanced spread over all eight Learning Areas, and which have been assessed through a continuous assessment programme and an external summative assessment component. A learner will be promoted to Grade 10 only if s/he has satisfied the following achievement requirements:
>
> - At least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in one of the Official Languages offered and Mathematics;
> - At least an "elementary achievement" or level 2 rating in the other Official Languages, and
> - At least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in four other Learning Areas.

All eight Learning Areas are compulsory and the assessment of all eight is compulsory, but the awarding of the qualification will be based on Languages, Mathematics and four (4) other Learning Areas. The learner will be promoted only if s/he satisfies the requirements of both the Continuous Assessment (75%) and the External Assessment (25%) components in all the Learning Areas".

Condoning at Grade 9 level can be applied under the following conditions:

The minimum requirements in terms of offering eight Learning Areas, a minimum of two languages, and evidence of performance in CASS and the External Assessment components should be met before condoning may be considered. A learner's results will be condoned only once in one of the following cases:

- When s/he achieves "elementary achievement" or level 2 in Mathematics or
- When s/he achieves "elementary achievement" or level 2 in Languages or
- When s/he achieves "elementary achievement" or level 2 in only one of the four other Learning Areas required for promotion.

Grade 9 signifies an exit point in the education system. All accredited examining bodies for this level must meet assessment requirements in terms of the provisions of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Council (Umalusi).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed and an important contribution of the study to the body of knowledge about OBA, especially the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. The chapter further outlines how the underpinning research questions, purpose and objectives of the study were addressed. This chapter starts by outlining a brief summary of the findings, followed by findings on the specific themes formulated in Chapter three, recommendations and conclusion. Presentation of findings on specific themes were drawn from interpreted and analysed data collected by means of a questionnaire, data collected from assessment officials through interviews and document analysis.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The summary of findings were drawn from the responses given by the 354 subjects who participated in this study with regard to progression and promotion in the GET Band within the North West Department of Education. Furthermore, findings were also drawn from interviews held with assessment officials and documents that were analysed.

Curriculum is central to educational policy. It provides a vision of what learning and teaching might be including what is to be learned, processes of learning, teaching and assessment, relationships, power and authority in the system and in schools. Curriculum, as learners experience it in classrooms, defines their education and hence the quality and achievements of the system. Through the curriculum and learning outcomes, schools and learners' communities know and judge the system. For these reasons, curriculum policies, curriculum development and curriculum support were given high

priority, especially the compulsory years of schooling which are Grades R to 9 or GET Band (Ministry of Education, 2001:13).

According to the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (2009), a nation's curriculum is at the heart of its education system. It is a primary source of support and direction for learning and teaching in the education system and plays the role of equaliser in terms of educational standards. There is, therefore, an imperative on educational authorities to develop curriculum policy that is of high quality and that communicates the curriculum message widely and with clarity. Ultimately, the target and beneficiary of any national curriculum is the pupil, learner or student and any curriculum policy should start with its primary beneficiary in mind. The energies of the Ministry of Education during the first period of democratic rule were applied to creating a sound legislative policy framework for educational transformation. Key policies and legislation in this phase included: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (1996), The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996), The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995) and National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the GET Band (National Department of Education, 2003:5).

The study revealed that the majority of schools (Figure 5a) had major departmental policies that would enable the school to focus on their core business and function which is learner attainment or achievement in the form of OBA, towards progression and promotion in the GET Band. The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995) provides for the creation of the National Qualifications Framework, which established the scaffolding of a national learning system that integrated education and training at all levels. Policy and legislation acted as levers for fundamental change since the dawn of democracy in 1994 (Department of Education, 2000:16).

The availability and the implementation of OBA policies would ensure that assessment was properly done and learners would be properly progressed and promoted in the GET Band. Findings showed that despite the availability of OBA policies, different progression and promotion criteria or requirements in the GET Band were applied in different schools (Figures 7, 8, 9 & 10). The Minister of Education (2000) acknowledged that South Africa had committed leaders and excellent policies and laws for the 21st century. On the other hand, large parts of the system were seriously dysfunctional, rampant inequality existed, teacher morale was low, governance and management were yet to strengthen, and quality and learning outcomes were poor (Ministry of Education, 2001:17). According to the study conducted by Bayat and Louw (2011), this was seen as a fundamental factor in the underperformance of learners (and for that matter, schools) because, as one teacher at a rural school put it:

> The school system is saturated with this problem. We are forced to promote mediocrity by the system. We pass the ball on to the next teacher. As the child grows older, the problem grows bigger. When only 28% of the matric pass, we get the blame and we are told to pull up our socks. I have told the district office the problem started 10 years ago. They say they know, but that we must 'make a plan'.
>
> (Bayat & Louw, 2011:27)

Despite the call for proper implementation of policies, some learners who were supposed to be promoted, were retained and some of those who were supposed to be retained were promoted. The office of the Superintendent-General within the North West Department of Education issued Circular 26 of 2011 in connection with the incorrect progression and promotions. According to Circular 26 of 2011, a verification process on the implementation of progression and promotion requirements was conducted during the 2010 on the progression and promotion schedules of 2009 and during the first quarter of 2011 on the 2010 promotion schedules. The following were discovered during the verification process: irregular promotions and condonations were done by schools and circuits and learners who failed were promoted to the next grade because of 'potential' (Circular 26 of 2011).

Findings also showed that the different progression and promotion requirements were applied in the GET Band. By 1999, systemic transformation in terms of policy was in place, but the challenges of implementation remained, as mandated policy by itself does not lead to institutional change. With new systems of educational administration and governance largely established, we turned to implementation and delivery (Department of Education, 2000:45). In a sober assessment in 1999, the Ministry reported that, while the systemic changes brought about in the first five years provided a progressive and durable basis for improvements in the quality of learning, transformed learning opportunities were not yet accessible to the majority of poor people. Inequality is still large in the education system, and too many families are receiving an unacceptable low standard of education (National Department of Education, 2007: 24).

The study further revealed that the notion of progression with age cohort was equated to automatic progression. In the United States, proponents of mandated grade repetition policies call progression "social promotion" to emphasise that low achievers were allowed to progress to higher grades not because their achievement merit it, but because they were kept together with their age peers to protect their self-esteem and social adjustment (Brophy, 2004:16). According to the National Education Policy Act (1996:A11), the norm for progression with age cohort must not be construed as promoting the practice of automatic promotion. According to a study conducted by Bayat and Louw in the Western Cape (Bayat and Louw, 2011:27), they stressed the view that primary schools were failing to lay a solid educational foundation, especially with regard to numeracy and literacy.

The consequence of this, according to Bayat and Louw, is that large numbers of Grade 8 learners were entering secondary schools unequipped to deal with the much more varied and demanding curriculum of secondary school. According to them, the most important issue affecting grade repletion is of a systemic and policy nature. Current policy dictates that a child may only be

"held back" once per educational phase. This imperative forces and causes schools to promote learners to the grade without them having mastered the necessary subject knowledge and educational competences demanded by the curriculum (Bayat and Louw, 2011:27).

Findings showed that different factors (Tables 9 & 10) were prioritised in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. In the main 100% of the respondents indicated that progression with age cohort was the main factor that was considered in the progression of learners in the GET Band. The National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for schools in the GET Band prescribes the following in terms of progression in Grades R to 8: "Ideally, all learners in Grades R–8 should progress with their age cohort; any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks; where a learner needs more time to demonstrate achievement, decisions shall be made based on the advice of the relevant role-players: teachers, learners, parents and education support services. No learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where Grade R is offered), unless the provincial Head of Department of Education has given approval based on specific circumstances and professional advice" (National Policy on Assessment for Schools in the GET Band, 2007:22).

A School Management Team member responsible for the Grade 8 learners at another rural school related her experience as follows:

> Last year (2010) we had 159 Grade 8s. I saw right in the beginning of the year we were going to struggle with these children because they come from a variety of rural farm schools that are very weak. Some could not read or write a sentence. I begged the district office to keep the 79 learners back because they would never make it in Grade 9. It seems they are too afraid to do so.

Bayat and Louw (2011) indicated that the high prevalence of learners leaving the formal school system in Grades 10 and 11 must be seen as a direct consequence of this enforced progression of educationally unfit learners by,

as one school management team member described it, " the indiscriminate and reckless application of mindless policy" (Bayat & Louw, 2011:27).

Findings showed that challenges still exist with regard to the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band. In 1999, systemic transformation in terms of policy was in place, but the challenges of implementation remained, as mandated policy by itself does not lead to institutional change. With new systems of educational administration and governance largely established, we turned to implementation and delivery (Department of Education, 2000:45).

Teachers in developing countries are not trained to make promotion or repetition decisions and do not have access to detailed achievement standards and aligned assessment instruments, so concerns have been expressed that many decisions may be based on arbitrary observations or beliefs rather than justified criteria. However, studies done in rural Brazil and rural Pakistan found that promotion decisions were closely related to measured achievement. Even so, when these decisions are made locally by individual teachers, they are subject to the "frog pond" effect. Students' achievement progress is judged relative to that of their immediate classmates rather than to national norms. As a result, many students in generally high achieving schools are retained when they would be promoted if they attended generally low-achieving schools (Ikeda, 2005:78).

Lastly, the study revealed that there was a high demand to review current progression and promotion strategies applied in the GET Band. According to the study conducted by Bayat and Louw (2011), one of the respondents described the current progression and promotion policy as perverse, a cynical chase after numbers designed to protect the education authorities and the school system while doing an enormous disservice to the children and their parents. According to Bayat and Louw, it was imminently clear that the schooling at many primary schools was not of a level that enabled Grade 7 learners to advance successfully to Grade 8 and beyond.

To address the problem related to progression with age cohort, the existing policies governing the promotion of learners per learning phase must be reconsidered as a matter of urgency. Bayat and Louw indicated that they were of the opinion that the current policy whereby learners are allowed to fail only a set number of grades during a 12 year cycle, is fundamentally flawed and has far-reaching implications for both the learner and school (Bayat and Louw, 2011:27).

5.3. Research Findings Based on Themes

Data collected through the questionnaire, interviews and document analysis were grouped into themes. Themes were grouped in accordance with the specific objectives that were pursued by the study. The following discussion, based on the themes, addresses or answers the research questions that guided this study:

5.3.1. Policies that enhanced progression and promotion

With regard to policies that informed progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band, the majority of schools seems to be highly functional. This is indicated (Figure 6a) by the availability of Assessment plan in 93.43% of the schools, Assessment Committees in 93.5% of the schools and Intervention Committees in 82.2% of the schools. Despite that, the functionality of these committees need to be investigated. This was because only 44.63% of the respondents indicated that it had a policy on learner intervention in their schools. Again, 54.4% of the respondents indicated that it had a CASS monitoring plan.

5.3.2. Progression with age cohort

The purpose of theme two was to explore the factors which were considered in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band within the North West Department of Education. As indicated by responses from participants, different factors (Figures 7, 8 & 9) were considered in the progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band within the North West

Department of Education. A total of 84.4% of the respondents used/ considered the same factors when decisions about progression of learners were made. The same 84.4% used the progression criteria as outlined in Government Gazette No.29626, 12 February 2007. A total of 15.58% of the respondents indicated that it used a different progression criteria from the one outlined in Government Gazette No.29626, 12 February 2007.

5.3.3. Factors considered in the progression and promotion of learners

The purpose of this theme was to determine empirically the challenges faced by the GET schools in the implementation of progression and promotion criteria in the North West Province. The implementation of progression requirements seem to be a major challenge in the North West Province. The progression criteria seem to be vague and open to subjective interpretation. Educators are used to working with marks in the form of percentages. The criterion used was not expressed in numbers. The notion of progression with age cohort and a stipulated number of years to be spend in a phase translated to automatic progression. The policy is silent about how non-achievers should be dealt with; hence learners progressed from grade to grade without achievement of expected learning outcomes like counting, reading and writing.

5.3.4. Challenges encountered in the progression and promotion of learners

Theme 4 explored the context under which progression with age cohort was applied. Progression with age cohort seems to be equated to "automatic progression" or "pass one pass all". A total of 65.3% of the respondents indicated (Figure 11) that it allowed learners to progress with their age cohort regardless of their non-achievements or failure for them to meet the minimum progression requirements. Findings also showed that age cohort was misconstrued and misunderstood as chronological age, hence learners

progressed based on their age rather than the number of years spent in a phase.

5.3.5. Strategies that can be developed to address the challenges encountered in the progression of learners with their age cohort

The purpose was to develop ways and means or strategies that can be implemented to deal with the challenges encountered in the implementation of progression and promotion requirements in the GET Band. All the 354 respondents indicated that the progression requirements needed to be reviewed and the notion of progression with age cohort be repealed. The same 354 respondents indicated that the only way of dealing with the challenges encountered in the promotion of learners in Grade 9 was to align the promotion requirement to both progression in Grades 1 to 8 and promotion in Grades 10 to 12. It was also suggested that well-defined systems be developed to deal with non-achievers because it was not possible to refer learners in lower grades to ABET centres as an alternative career path.

5.4. Recommendations

5.4.1. Recommendation 1 : Continuous monitoring of the implementation of policies

The availability and use of policies should be monitored on a continuous basis. Continuous workshops should be conducted to ensure that assessment officials, principals, deputy principals, senior educators, educators, learners and parents are reminded about the progression and promotion requirements to be implemented in each term.

Motivation

Policies are developed and approved at national level. These policies are then distributed to provinces to further distribute them to schools. The schools, through the principals, should ensure that the contents of these policies are

brought to the attention of educators, learners and parents. Sometimes, the policies are locked in cupboards and not applied and implemented where needed. Based on these facts, the availability, dissemination and use of these policies should be thoroughly monitored. Assessment, Certification and Accreditation Directorate should conduct continuous workshops to ensure the unilateral and equal implementation of progression and promotion requirements in the GET Band within the North West Province.

In terms of the country's constitution, the national Department of Education is responsible for matters that cannot be regulated effectively by provincial legislation, as well as for matters that need to be coordinated in terms of norms and standards at the national level. Relations with the nine provincial departments of education are guided by the national education policy, within which the provincial departments have set their own priorities and implementation (Department of Education, 2000:27).

5.4.2. Recommendation 2: Review of progression and promotion policies

The entire progression and promotion policy in the GET Band, especially progression with age cohort should be revisited to ensure that it is not equated to "automatic progression" or "pass one pass all" for non-achievers. The promotion requirements in Grade 9 should also be reviewed. The general consensus is that progression with age cohort should be reconsidered as a matter of urgency. According to Assessment Instruction 7 of 2009, teachers have indicated that they need clear standards or benchmarks to be set for making judgements on learner performance at the end of the year. Teachers also need some measure of comparability to ensure that judgements on learner performance from school to school are fair and reliable. Teachers further requested that the progression and promotion requirements should aim to strengthen assessment in the GET Band and support teachers in the classroom. The progression and promotion requirements should ensure that clear achievable targets of competence are spelt out in the assessment of

learners so that both teachers and learners aim to meet the same targets. The progression and promotion requirements should ensure that learner performance is standardised across the different learning contexts across all provinces. Teachers will use these requirements to make judgements on whether learners have met the curriculum requirements at the end of a grade (Assessment Instruction 7 of 2009).

Motivation

Progression requirements should be expressed quantitatively. The notion of progression with age cohort should be repealed because learners are aware that multiple repetitions in one grade are not permissible. There should be an alignment of progression requirements to promotion requirements. Failure to do so would create a bottle neck situation in Grade 9. Learners in Grade 9 would be faced with the sudden requirement to achieve in Mathematics which never appeared in Grades R (1) to 8.

Many learners who have already repeated the quota of grades allowed in every phase within the GET Band are promoted to the next grade although they have not remotely reached the required level of achievement. This leads to high levels of frustration and disillusionment with the educational system among both learners and teachers at underperforming schools. Learners feel lost and disengaged, and their behaviour becomes disruptive. Teachers in turn feel demoralised and experience a sense of failure when large numbers of their learners continuously fail (Bayat and Louw, 2011:27).

5.4.3. Recommendation 3: Compulsory national Grade 9 examination

It is recommended that the national Department of Education institute a compulsory national Grade 9 assessment or examination and issue a General Education and Training Certificate as planned before. It is also recommended that the teacher-pupil ratio be brought down to 1:25. According to Bayat and Louw (2011), a multipronged approach is needed that brings together public,

private and non-profit sectors in a comprehensive education initiative that aims to improve the overall learning environment in schools (Bayat and Louw, 2011:27).

Motivation

Compulsory national Grade 9 assessment or examination would ensure that learners are assessed in a standardised way and that only those learners with the requisite skills are allowed to advance to Grade 10. This gate-keeping will inevitably increase learner numbers at primary level and measures to assist schools in handling this development should be instituted simultaneously so as not to disrupt the educational programme. The lower teacher-pupil ratio would enable teachers to identify learning deficiencies and afford remedial intervention and individual assistance to learners.

5.4.4 Recommendation 4: Reduction of teacher-pupil ratio

It is important that education authorities significantly increase the human resource capacity of schools to bring down teacher-pupil ratio. The ideal ration would be 1:25. This ratio would enable teachers to identify learning deficiencies and afford remedial intervention and/or individual assistance to learners.

Motivation

Class sizes of most of the previously disadvantaged schools are bigger than the prescribed norm. This is supported by the study conducted by Bayat and Louw in underperforming schools. The study revealed that the majority of classes visited during the field work were so overcrowded that teachers could not move between desks. Learners were facing double challenge: They are not adequately prepared for the demands of school curriculum; and class sizes make individual tuition and regular support from teachers impossible.

5.4.5 Recommendation 5: Prescription of content for Foundation Phase

In order for learners to be able to count, read and write, they need to be taught the basics. This means that rather than prescribing the desired outcomes to be achieved in Grade 1-3, specific content must be prescribed. The following model is suggested:

- In Grade R, learners may be taught basics such as shapes, colours, different animals, etc.
- In Grade 1, learners may be taught basic numbers 0-9 and how to write them in words.
- In Grade 1 again, learners may be taught letters of alphabet A to Z, how to write and pronounce them.
- In Grade 2, learners may be taught how to combine numbers 0-9, e.g. 10, 20, 30 etc.
- In Grade 2 again, learners may be taught how to combine letters of alphabet and how to pronounce them, e.g. Aa, Ab, Ac, Ad etc.
- In Grade 3, Learners may be taught how to combine numbers in the form of addition, multiplication, division and subtraction.
- In Grade 3 again, learners may be taught how to combine letters of alphabet to produce rhymes e.g. Ts, Tl, Tlh, etc.
- In all the above cases, learners must be taught in a language that they understand, preferably their mother tongue.

Motivation

According to the study conducted by University of Pretoria's Centre for Evaluation and Assessment in 2006, 80% of South African learners cannot read and write when they reach Grade 5 (DoE, 2010: 35). There is a general view that if learners cannot count, read and write, the primary schools failed to lay a solid educational foundation, especially with regard to numeracy and literacy.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

The study revealed how learners moved from one grade to another despite an outcry that South African learners could not read and write as compared to their counterparts worldwide. The study further revealed that wrong progression and promotion requirements were used despite the availability of current progression and promotion policy. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

- It is recommended that a similar study be conducted in all other provinces or countrywide to address the limitation of the study;
- It is also recommended that a similar study be conducted in the FET band (Grades 10 to 12) to find out whether the promotion requirements are properly implemented; and
- It is recommended that further research be conducted to investigate whether the promotion requirements applied in Grade 9 have an effect on the pass rate in that grade.

5.6. Conclusion

Progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band has been a thorny issue in South Africa. Since the adoption and implementation of the current progression and promotion policy, a crisis in education was declared from different quarters. While the study revealed that there are challenges encountered in the current progression and promotion of learners in the GET Band, there are other various issues that affect the school environment. The overall conclusion drawn from the study stressed that the current progression and promotion policy in the GET Band was not working and was creating serious impediments to teaching and learning. The research revealed that addressing the matter of progression with age cohort is of critical importance, but doing so without confronting the other issues will not address the underperformance of South African learners in the GET Band as compared to their counterparts around the world.

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Appendix A

Ref : 90093593
Enq : Mr M.G. Lekalakala
Cell : 082 970 7342
Email : maugeofflek@mweb.co.za

P.O. Box 3234
Lichtenburg
2740
16 September 2009

To : Office of the Superintendent General
: North West Department of Basic Education
: Mmabatho

Re : Request for permission to conduct a Research Study

I, Maubane Geoffrey Lekalakala, a doctoral student at the North West University (Mafikeng Campus) hereby humbly request permission to undertake a Research Study within the schools in the North West Province with particular attention to the General Education and Training Band i.e. Grades 1 to 9.

The purpose of the research study is to establish the implementation of progression and promotion criteria in the General Education and Training Band with reference to policy directions that has been developed since 1994.

All data collected will be treated confidentially and will never be used for any other purpose except the one stipulated. I fully understand the principle of "protection of teaching and learning time", and promise that this research study will never ever affect teaching and learning in any school.

I hope and trust that my request would be met without qualms

Yours truly,
Mr Maubane Geoffrey Lekalakala

TOTAL P.001

Appendix B

education
Lefapha la Thuto
Onderwys Departement
Department of Education
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

First Floor,
Garona Building
Private Bag X2044,
Mmabatho 2735
Tel.: (018) 387-3429
Fax: (018) 387-3430
e-mail: ptyatya@nwpg.gov.za

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

Enquiries: Ms M.J. Mogotsi
Telephone: 018-3873411
E-mail: mphoentle@nwpg.gov.za

05 October 2009

To: Mr Maubane Geoffrey Lekalakala
Doctoral Student: North West University
Mafikeng Campus

From: Mr M.A. Seakamela
Acting Superintendent General

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH: TO ESTABLISH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRESSION AND PROMOTION CRITERIA IN THE GET BAND WITH REFERENCE TO POLICY DIRECTIVES FROM 1994

Please be informed that permission has been granted for you to conduct research in the North West Department of Education. Approval is therefore granted under the following conditions:

- That consultation with the schools identified is done
- That the necessary information related to the evaluation process is shared with the school
- That any publication of information pertaining to the department should be done with the permission from the department
- That learning and teaching process is not compromised
- That the department be furnished with the outcomes of the research

Your input in contributing to the betterment of education will be appreciated

Regards

P.P. 2009

Mr M.A. Seakamela
Acting Superintendent General

Appendic C

Annexure C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions to the Principal or delegated person (Deputy Principal, Head of Department or Senior Educator)

Please complete this Questionnaire in accordance with Progression and Promotion requirements as applied and implemented by your school. Respond only to questions that are applicable to your type of school and where it is not applicable indicate by N/A. Please respond to the questionnaire as honest as you possibly can.

1. Biographical details of the school

1.1. District : Bojanala ☐ Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati ☐

Dr Kenneth Kaunda ☐ Ngaka – Modiri Molema ☐

1.2. Area Office : ☐

1.3. Type of school: Primary ☐ Intermediate ☐ Secondary ☐ Combined ☐

1.4. Designation: Principal ☐ Deputy Principal ☐ HOD ☐ Senior Educator ☐

2. Policies (Please put a cross in the appropriate box)

2.1. Does the school have the National Education Policy?	Y	N
2.2. Does the school have the National Protocol for Assessment?	Y	N
2.3. Does the school have a School Assessment Policy?	Y	N
2.4. Does the school have Programme for Assessment / Assessment Plan?	Y	N
2.5. Does the school have an Assessment Committee?	Y	N
2.6. Does the school have an Intervention Committee?	Y	N
2.7. Does the school have a policy on learner intervention?	Y	N
2.8. Does the school have a CASS Monitoring Plan?	Y	N
2.9. Does the school have a Learner Attainment Improvement Plan?	Y	N

3. Please respond by means of a cross in the appropriate box

3.1. Which progression criteria do you use in Grades R and/ or (1) to 3?

A. Progression with age cohort, and no learner should stay in the phase for longer than five years and any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks.	
B. Level 3 rating in both Literacy (Home Language) and Numeracy.	
C. Achievement in any two Learning Programmes.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… …… ……	

3.2. Which progression criteria do you use in Grades 4 to 6?

A. Level 3 rating for any 3 Learning areas, one of which must either be Home Language or Language of Learning and Teaching and level 2 rating for any remaining Learning Areas one of which must be Mathematics.	
B. Progression with age cohort, no learner should stay in the phase for longer than four years and any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks.	
C. Achievement in four Learning Areas.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… …… ……	

3.3. Which progression criteria do you use in Grades 7 and 8?

A. Achievement in the five Learning Areas.	
B. Level 4 rating for any 3 Learning Areas, one must be Home Language or Language of Learning and Teaching and level 3 rating for 3 Learning Areas, one of which must be Mathematics.	
C. Progression with age cohort, and no learner should stay in the phase for longer than five years and any decision about progression should be based on the evidence of a learner's performance against the recorded assessment tasks.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… ……	

3.4. Which promotion criteria do you use in Grade 9?

A. Level 4 rating for any 3 Learning Areas, one must either be Home Language or Language of Learning and Teaching and Level 2 rating for any remaining Learning Areas one of which must be Mathematics.	
B. At least a "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in one of the Official Languages offered and Mathematics, at least an "elementary achievement" or level 2 rating in the other Official Language and at least "moderate achievement" or level 3 rating in four other Learning Areas and a learner's result will be condoned only once.	
C. Achievement or code 3 in LLC and Mathematics and Partly Achieved in each of the remaining six learning programmes and a learner can be condoned once only.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… ….....	

3.5. How do you deal with learners who do not meet the progression criteria in Grades R (1) to 8?

A. Retain them until they meet the progression criteria.	
B. Allow them to progress with their age cohort.	
C. Refer them to ABET etc.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… …… ……	

3.6. How do you deal with learners who do not meet the promotion criteria in Grade 9 more than once?

A. Refer them to ABET etc.	
B. Allow them to progress to Grade 10.	
C. Retain them until they meet the promotion criteria.	
D. Give a brief explanation for your response …… …… …… …… …… ……	

4. Factors

4.1. Which factors are considered in the implementation and progression of learners in the GET band?

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4.2. Which factors are considered in the implementation and promotion of learners in the GET band?

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5. Challenges

5.1. What are the challenges in the implementation of the progression criteria in the GET band?

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5.2. What are the challenges in the implementation of promotion requirements in the GET band?

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6. What strategies can be developed to address the challenges in 5.1. and 452. above?

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THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR DEDICATING YOUR TIME TO THIS STUDY

Appendix D

Annexure D

Interview Instrument

To : GET Assessment Officials

Bojanala; Dr Kenneth Kaunda; Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati; Ngaka Modiri Molema Districts

From : Mr M.G. Lekalakala

Purpose and instruction

In my telephonic conversation requesting this interview, I have indicated to you that I am busy with a research project on the implementation of progression and promotion in the General Education and Training Band. As per our telephonic agreement, I have also faxed or emailed you the interview questions, and you have acknowledged receipt thereof.

I would like to reiterate that the aim of this interview is to obtain your ideas and opinions regarding your work as GET assessment manager in relation to the implementation of progression and promotion criteria and/or requirements in the GET Band. The information obtained will be used only for research purposes and no names of participants will be made known in the report. During the interview, I will have to write down your responses, so please bear with me for the anticipated time delays. Do you have any questions before we can start the interview?

1. Which policy or policies inform progression and promotion of the learners in the GET band in the North West Province?

2. Which progression criteria have been or are used in grades 1 to 3 since 1994?

3. Which progression criteria have been or are used in grades 4 to 6 since 1994?

4. Which progression criteria have been or are used in grades 7 to 8 since 1994?

5. Which promotion criteria have been or are used in grade 9 since 1994?

6. What does "progression with age cohort" mean and how should schools deal with learners who do not meet the progression criteria more than once

in a phase or progression with age cohort? Grades 1 to 3, grades 4 to 6 and grades 7 to 8 respectively.

7. How should schools deal with learners who do not meet the promotion requirement in grade 9, more than once?

8. Has there been or is there a system in place to ensure that learners who required less than a year to achieve and progress to the next grade were truly assisted?

9. Has there been or is there a system in place to ensure that learners were progressed and promoted in line with policy?

10. Which factors are considered in the progression of learners in the GET band?

11. Which factors are considered in the promotion of learners in the GET band?

12. What are the challenges in the implementation of progression criteria in the GET band?

13. What are the challenges in the implementation of promotion requirements in the GET band?

14. Which strategies can be developed to address the challenges mentioned above?

We have come to the end of our interview schedule, and thank you very much for dedicating your time to this interview schedule.

Appendix E

MM Mohlake
Centre for Academic Excellence
University of Limpopo
Turfloop Campus
Private Bag x 1106
Sovenga
0727

24 October 2012

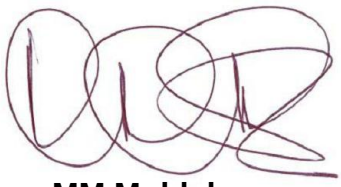
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is meant to acknowledge that I, MM Mohlake, as a professional editor, have meticulously edited the thesis of Mr MG Lekalakala entitled "Outcomes–Based Assessment: Towards Progression and Promotion in the General Education and Training Band (Grades R (1) - 9)".

Thus I confirm that the readability of this work in question is of a high standard.

For any queries please contact me.

Regards



MM Mohlake

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