# EXPERIENCES OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

**DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**
**(CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION AND EVALUATION)**

**BY**
**CEVELINE MPHO LEPHOGOLE**

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT INNOVATION AND EVALUATION) IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING, NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, MAFIKENG CAMPUS

PROMOTER: PROF. M.A. MOKOENA

DECEMBER 2016

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, **Ceveline Mpho Lephogole**, declare that this thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Curriculum Development Innovation and Evaluation) at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus hereby submitted, has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution. It is my own work in design, execution and that all material herein has been duly acknowledged.

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**C. M Lephogole**

**December 2016**

## ACCEPTANCE FOR EXAMINATION

This thesis: **Experiences of Intermediate Phase Teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics,** by Ceveline Mpho Lephogole (12123862) in the School for Educational Leadership and Development, Faculty of Education and Training, is hereby recommended for acceptance for examination.

Supervisor: Prof M.A Mokoena

Signature: .....

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Monnakgotla Shadrack Lephogole, our angels, Thake, Pako and Reagile, my parents, Moilwa Justice and Mmapula Suzan Moseneke, my brothers and sisters. I also dedicate this research to my late father-in-law, Festus Molatlhegi and mother-in-law, Rebeccah Lundu Lephogole.

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics in Rekopantswe Area in the North West Province. It investigated how teachers experienced the implementation of assessment rubrics and what impact these experiences had on the Intermediate Phase learners. It was usually only in practical implementation that distortions and obstacles to successful implementation became apparent. Teachers, being the principal end-users of the assessment rubrics, had the knowledge, skills and practical experience that could be used by curriculum developers to enhance successful implementation of assessment rubrics.

The study involved ninety seven (97) Intermediate Phase teachers, eight (8) Heads of Department (HoDs) and three (3) Senior Education Specialists (SESs) from the Rekopantswe Area Office of the North West Province. The teachers responded to a questionnaire, HoD's and SES's were interviewed. The participants were identified through stratified random sampling respectively and from rural, semi-rural and urban areas.

The study revealed that the implementation of assessment rubrics was a challenge to most teachers, as there were different interpretations of assessment rubrics among teachers. This had a direct implication on assessing learners by using assessment rubrics. This also affected learners' achievement, since the quality of assessment affected learners' performance. The educational policies, with special reference to assessment guidelines, should have been presented to the teachers to ensure that there was uniform understanding to enhance implementation. In addition, teachers indicated that trainers should have ensured that developmental programmes are contextualised to meet their needs. They also emphasised the need for them to be consulted when developmental programmes for teachers were prepared.

The study also highlighted factors that affect the implementations of assessment rubrics. Those factors were as follows:

- Learners de-motivation and attitude
- Minimal parental involvement and literacy level

- Lack or limited resources
- Insufficient or limited in-service training and support
- Inefficiency in Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)
- Content Gap regarding the implementations of the assessment rubrics
- Overcrowding of learners in classrooms
- Post Provisioning Model (PPM)
- Focus on development programmes

To ensure that assessment was successfully done, teachers suggested long-term training and guidance and continuous support from the Departmental officials especially SES's. They also indicated that they wanted to be consulted when developmental programmes are initiated. These findings clearly indicate that the implementation of assessment rubrics by the Intermediate Phase teachers is a challenge and some measures need to be taken.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| ACE | Advanced Certificate in Education |
| AET | Adult Education Training |
| AO | Area Office |
| CAPS | Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements |
| CASS | Continuous Assessment |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| ELRC | Education Labour Relations Council |
| FET | Further Education Training |
| GET | General Education and Training |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| ILP | Individual Learning Plans |
| INSET | In-service Training |
| IP | Intermediate Phase |
| IT | Information Technology |
| LA | Learning Area |
| LAIP | Learner Attainment Improvement Programme |
| LO | Learning Outcome |
| LoLT | Language of Learning and Teaching |
| LTSM | Learning Teaching and Support Material |
| NCS | National Curriculum Statement |
| NPA | National Protocol on Assessment |
| NPPPR | National Protocol pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements |
| PoA | Programme of Assessment |
| PPM | Post Provisioning Model |
| PSF | Professional Support Forum |
| PSMT | Primary School Management Team |
| QLTC | Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign |
| REQV | Relevant Equivalent Qualification Value |

| | |
|---|---|
| RNCS | Revised National Curriculum Statement |
| SAASTE | South African Association of Science and Technology Education |
| SACE | South African Council of Educators |
| SAIC | School Assessment Irregularity Committee |
| SBA | School-Based Assessment |
| SES | Senior Education Specialist |
| SGB | School Governing Body |
| SMT | School Management Team |

# CHAPTER ONE
# ORIENTATION

## 1.1 Introduction and background to the study

Department of Education (2000) says that the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12 represents a policy statement for teaching and learning in South African schools. It is the curriculum that underpins various programmes followed in each grade from Grade R-12. It enables a learner to obtain a National Senior Certificate (NSC) after the completion of the full programme of the NCS Grades R-12. It also forms the foundation for ongoing curriculum development, delivery and assessment in South African schools. NCS Grades R-12 states that the performance of learners should be measured against specific aims highlighted in different subjects in a grade (Department of Education, 2009). This measurement is done through different methods of implementation, that is, a learner-centred, result-oriented approach to education and training which is built on the notion that all learners need to and can achieve their full potential, but that this may not happen in the same way or within the same period (Department of Basic Education, 2010). This means that learners are unique and they learn and study at different paces and in different styles, therefore, they must be assessed using different tools within the same context.

NCS Grades R-12 requires the use of a variety of appropriate assessment strategies that adequately assess learner achievement and develop skills for lifelong learning (Department of Education, 2009). The strategies and forms of assessment used in such learning should be appropriate for the knowledge, skills or attitudes and the range of competencies being assessed, as well as for the age and developmental needs of learners.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning, and should be planned for when developing learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans. However, while teaching, learning and assessment are intertwined, it should be recognised that not everything that is taught should be assessed formally, and not everything that is assessed needs to be recorded.

Lombard (2010:34) describes assessment as a process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about a learner's responses to an educational task. He further states that assessment is something done with and for learners and not to learners. Consequently, the learner should be the beneficiary of assessment. It is through assessment that teachers gather information to gauge or decide whether outcomes have been achieved properly. Clearly, we need to ensure that the way we assess learning in NCS is accurate and effective as poor assessment strategies may render the entire NCS Grades R-12 approach to education fruitless. The key is to understand what assessment is for. It should assess what is important and valuable for both the learners and teachers because it informs the learner of his or her strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, it informs the department and teachers about the gaps in the system and shows what remedial interventions are needed for that reason, it is important that assessment be fair, accurate, and acceptable, in order to assist learners to grow and become empowered. This implies that teachers need to use a variety of assessment techniques when assessing learners and thus help them to achieve at different paces and levels. Implied here is that the outcome of a given method of assessment should be compared to that of another and if the findings are the same, a deduction regarding the problem can be made.

Department of Education (2009) emphasises the role of assessment in teaching as being a hot issue in education and this has led to an increasing interest in performance-based education. However, performance-based education poses a challenge for teachers to design instruction that is task-oriented. The trend is based on the premise that learning needs to be connected to the lives of the learners through relevant tasks that focus on learners' ability to use their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. Performance-based tasks require performance-based assessment if the actual learners' performance is assessed through a product, such as a completed task or work that demonstrates levels of task achievement. At times, performance-based assessment has been used interchangeably with authentic assessment and alternative assessment. In all cases, performance-based assessment has led to the use of a variety of alternative ways of evaluating learners' progress (for example., journals, checklists, portfolios, projects and rubrics) as compared to more traditional methods of measurement (viz., paper and pencil testing) (Department of Education, 2009).

The highlighted challenges identified in assessment by teachers prompted this researcher to study the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics. Orrell (2003) explains an assessment rubric as a grid or framework that outlines the criteria used for assessment, and the associated levels of performance or achievement used for interpreting and grading learners' performance and learning products. It is important for teachers to realize that a rubric is a scoring guide that seeks to evaluate learners' performance based on the sum of a full range of criteria rather than a single numerical score. This might include individuality of learners and their learning styles. Rubric is a working guide for the learners and teachers, so it is appropriate that it must be handed out before the assignment begins in order to get learners to think about the criteria on which their work will be assessed. It also enhances the quality of direct instruction.

Given (2008) highlights that authentic assessment is used to evaluate learners' activity by measuring the product according to real-life criteria. The same criteria used to judge published authors would be used to evaluate learners' writing or assignment. Although the same criteria are considered, expectations vary according to one's level of expertise. The performance level of a novice is expected to be lower than that of an expert and would be reflected in different standards. For example, in evaluating an assignment, a lower grade learner may not be expected to write a coherent assignment to earn high marks. A higher grade learner would need to write coherent assignment in order to earn high marks.

Rubrics differ in implementation from one subject to the other, but their key function is to promote thinking and learning. Andrade (2000) believes that instructional rubrics help teachers teach as well as evaluate learners' work. Furthermore, creating rubrics with ones learners as a teacher can be powerfully instructive. Andrade (2000) further explains that an instructional rubric is usually a one-page, or two-page document that describes varying levels of quality, from excellent to poor, for specific assignments. It is usually used with a relatively complex assignment, such as a long-term project, an essay, or a research paper. Its purposes are to give learners informative feedback about their works in progress and give detailed evaluation of their products.

Although the format of instructional rubrics may vary, all rubrics have two features in common, namely:

- A list of criteria, or of what counts in a project or assignment; and
- Gradations of quality, with descriptions of strong, middling, and problematic learner work (Andrade & Du, 2005).

Andrade and Du (2005) emphasise that rubrics are becoming a popular, recognizable trend in education. Experienced teachers, however, have seen numerous trends rise and fall over the years. They also backed this up by highlighting the advantages of the use of instructional rubrics as follows: Instructional rubrics are easy to use and explain. Rubrics make sense to people at a glance; they are concise and digestible. For these reasons, teachers may like to use them to assess learners' work, parents may appreciate them when helping their children with homework, and learners may often request them when given a new assignment. Instructional rubrics make teachers' expectations very clear (Andrade & Du, 2005). Traditionally, teachers kept their criteria and standards to themselves. The answers to the test were secret, and teachers tended not to articulate what counted when they gave grades. Teachers often expected learners to just know what made a good essay, a good drawing, or a good science project, without articulating their standards to learners. If teachers supplied the learners with their written expectations, may be in the form of a rubric, the learners would have known what counts and might have performed better. In addition, teachers would be able to assist learners in figuring out what exactly is expected in the assignment given. Learners are individuals, some might figure out on their own, but others need it written down or otherwise communicated to them. It is argued that instructional rubrics are one way to do that (Andrade & Du, 2005).

Instructional rubrics provide learners with more informative feedback about strengths and areas in need of improvement than traditional forms of assessment do. A well-written instructional rubric, one that describes the kinds of mistakes they tend to make, as well as the ways in which their work shines, gives learners valuable information. They also support learning, the development of skills, understanding and good thinking (Department of Education, 2009).

Howell (2011) suggests that, in the minds of many administrators, teachers are like learners who are to be graded on explicit outcomes of their products and then averaged in with an overall statistical curve. The environment and specific kinds of learners that a teacher may be given are not up to him or her. Regardless of the conformity of educational requirements and the conformity of testing that takes place, every teacher soon learns that every class is different, so different teaching methods and assessment strategies need to be used. No matter how administrators attempt to package their academic products, they should realise that learners are always first and foremost human beings, with all of the benefits and baggage that comes with that. Learners are individuals, not widgets, and overall, many have the tendency to catch on and then resist the notion of having their knowledge manufactured in terms of production. This speaks to the reality that learners do not learn at the same rate as they are each independently evolving. The change in their opinions, are affected by social conditions and, unlike widgets, they tend to reject being classified and being put into little boxes. Howell (2011) further emphasizes that teachers are fundamentally learners too, so this applies to them as well. This shows the importance of this study which highlights the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in implementing the assessment rubrics.

In 2009, the then Minister of Education ( Pandor N.) appointed a panel of experts to investigate the nature of challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) R-12, and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve the implementation of NCS. The review was in response to wide-ranging comments in writing and oral presentations from a variety of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, teacher unions, school management and academics, regarding the implementation of the NCS. While there has been positive support for the new curriculum, there has also been considerable criticism of various aspects of its implementation, manifesting in teacher overload, confusion and stress and widespread learner underperformance in international and local assessments. Whilst several minor interventions have been made overtime to address some of the challenges of implementing the curriculum, these changes have not yielded desired results (Department of Education, 2009).
Changes in the education system 1994, included the introduction of Curriculum 2005, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Grade R-9) and the National Curriculum Statement (Grade 10-12).

The panel of experts appointed identified the key areas for investigation based on the major complaints and challenges encountered since 2002 when the NCS was introduced for the first time. The key areas identified were:

- Curriculum policy and guideline documents
- Transition between grades and phases
- Assessment, particularly continuous assessment

Once the panel started the process of collecting information, including listening to teachers, it became apparent that the scope of the report and recommendations would have included:

- Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) (particularly, textbooks)
- Teacher support and training (Curriculum implementation)

It was realised that assessment had been the centre of most criticism since Curriculum 2005. The panel discussed what the problems were with the assessment policies, whether there was sufficient clarity and appropriate use of assessment policies and guidelines, and what stakeholders, particularly teachers, thought should be done to address the problems. From this it became clear that teachers are to be consulted in all educational issues.

From 2012, the two National Curriculum Statements (NCS) for Grades R-9 and Grades 10-12 respectively, were combined into a single document and known as National Curriculum Policy Statement Grades R-12. The National Curriculum Policy Statement for Grades R-12 was built on the previous curriculum but realligned and aimed to provide clearer specification of what was to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis. The NCS (Grades R-12) represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and comprises the following:

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for all approved subjects listed in the document;
- National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements for the National Curriculum Statement (NPPPR) Grades R-12; and
- National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) Grades R-12.

The implementation time for the NCS Grades R-12 was January 2012 in Grades R-3 and Grade 10, January 2013 in Grades 4-6 and Grade 11; and January 2014 Grades 7-9 and Grade 12.

Another motivation for doing this study is that not much research has been done on the implementations of assessment rubrics in South Africa. The research done by Eshun and Osei-Poku (2013) on assessment rubrics at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, noted how Rohrbach (2010:107) has discovered that many teachers now use rubrics in their assessment process, which is not the case in South Africa. Dornisch and McLoughlin (2006) suggest that a credible, effective and implementable rubric is capable of reducing two major concerns associated with assessing creative products or performance over subjective and or inconsistent assessment, leading to unfairness to learners and the unreasonable time involved in giving feedback to or grading learners. Ehmann (2005) advocates embedding the use of criteria and rubrics in design-studio practices to enhance learners' learning. Elizondo-Montemayor (2004:11) concurs by strongly believing that assessment standardization during work-in-progress is helpful because teachers and learners are enabled to know exactly the expected outcome from each.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

The study draws from the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers towards the implementation of assessment rubrics. The premise is that it is easy to plan teaching by first looking at the kind of examinations (assessment) that learners are to be prepared for, and then deciding how best to approach the task of preparing those learners to get the best results. The teacher must also know and understand the learners' individual strengths and weaknesses; this may help in choosing relevant assessment tools. Teachers must be able to use different assessment tools for different activities given, hence this study. In the last few years, it has been observed that some important trends in assessment are emerging internationally. This assertion forms the basis of the study and needs to be understood in collaboration with the new approach to education in the light of these emerging practices (Kramer, 1999). Teachers must be equipped with the relevant assessment techniques or methods of their subject of interest. Smit (2001)

stresses this by explaining that teachers are the key role players in the implementation phase and are more often than not, the salient voices in the process, ignored and often discounted.

The researcher, as an SES, works closely with the Intermediate Phase teachers. Some of the responsibilities of the SESs, as outlined in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) document of 2003, are to guide teachers with teaching methods; to conduct in-service training courses for teachers; and to monitor, administer and implement school-based assessment and the implementation of the Learner Attainment Improvement Programme (LAIP) as a departmental programme which monitors learner progress.

Observations by the researcher and interaction with teachers during school visits for support and monitoring showed that teachers are aware of the assessment rubrics; but do not know how to use them as assessment tools. Training workshops and Professional Support Forums (PSFs) have been used to change the situation, but the problem is that the duration of the sessions is inadequate, mostly 2 days to 2 hours. These are conducted mostly by presentations with limited interactions or discussions with teachers because of the inadequate time factor. Lack or minimal follow-up on training workshops conducted also poses a gap. Management support related to the conducted training in assessment rubrics is necessary so as to form continuity. If the School Management Team (SMT) is not trained, the training sessions become ineffective.

Classroom observations done by the researcher and Continuous Assessment (CASS) reports also indicate that teachers have a problem of consolidating information from assessment rubrics into the recording sheets. It has been observed that the Heads of Departments (HoDs) in schools are the ones who are supposed to assist teachers with curriculum issues. Responsibilities and duties of HoDs, as outlined in the ELRC document of 2003, are individual and varied, depending on the approaches and needs of a particular school. They include, but are not limited to the following; to be in charge of a subject, learning area or phase; to jointly develop the in-school policies for the monitoring of curriculum issues at school based on those issued by the department; to co-ordinate evaluation or assessment, homework, written assignments of all subjects in that department; to provide and co-ordinate guidance on the latest approaches to the subject, methods, techniques, evaluation and aid in the field; and effectively conveying these to the staff

members concerned. However, the information that HoDs have regarding curriculum issues may be limited as experiences differ from one school to the other. The researcher observed that some of the HoDs also had the challenge of interpretation and implementation of policies.

The researcher also observed that there were factors that affect the implementation of the assessment rubrics. These factors included English as The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), content gap and, resources. Most of the learners in the rural villages do not use English as their home language, therefore communication using the language and understanding of the content through that medium posed a greater challenge. The situation is worsened by the fact that the illiteracy level of the parents is high. There are Adult Education Training (AET) centres but parents and some adults who are living with the children are not motivated to attend, therefore some learners are not assisted with home-work. Some teachers are not qualified for the subjects they are teaching, so there is content gap. Some schools are not sufficiently resourced; some schools that are given equipment are not trained to use them.

Learners are to be assessed according to the prescribed assessment criteria set out in the departmental assessment policy. However, from observation it is clear that teachers are not comfortable in implementing assessment rubrics, and the situation has posed a challenge. The other challenge that emerged is that some of the teachers were not able to unpack the specific aims. In unpacking the specific aims, the teachers are able to understand the prescribed standards in the policies of how learners are to be assessed. But the problem arises because when they are guided in creating the rubrics some show lack of interest. They even end up not recording the results obtained by learners from implementing the assessment rubrics as they at times lack the skills for interpreting the results.

Mertler (2001) highlights that the implementation of the assessment rubrics has also been found to be characterized by the challenge of converting rubric scores to grades to meet assessment needs. Mertler (2001) contends that simply mapping the scores to letter-grades is not appropriate; rather, the conversions should be by the process of logic.

The experiences of some teachers regarding their level of understanding of assessment rubrics have tended to affect some learners negatively because of their individuality in learning (Mertler, 2001). This means that learners need to be assessed using different methods, skills, tools and techniques because they have different learning styles.

The challenges of teachers regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics are a critical issue of major importance in the implementation of curriculum. The researcher has learned, through observation and interaction with teachers, that there is a gap regarding curriculum issues, especially assessment. These prompted the researcher to focus on the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics.

## 1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics in the North West Province with specific reference to the Rekopantswe Area Office (AO) of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District. For the purpose of this study, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers are explored in the implementation of assessment rubrics. The study focused on teachers who are presently teaching in the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6). IP is the start of the foundation of schooling subjects. Subjects are Home language of the learner, First Additional Language (any other language chosen by the school and parents), Natural Sciences and Technology, Mathematics and Life skills. The specific objectives were, namely to:

- Explore the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics;
- Identify factors that affect the implementation of assessment rubrics by Intermediate Phase teachers; and
- Recommend strategies that can be used to facilitate the implementation of assessment rubrics by Intermediate Phase teachers.

## 1.4 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. What are the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics?
ii. What factors affect the implementation of assessment rubrics?
iii. What strategies can be used to facilitate the implementation of assessment rubrics?

## 1.5 Rationale for the study

This study may be of significance to the different stakeholders in the Department of Education (DoE) in different ways. The stakeholders include teachers, learners, parents and practitioners of education. Some of the benefits include the fact that the findings may enable the practitioners of education, especially curriculum developers, to objectively give special priority to assessment in education because assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. The research results may help the curriculum developers to simplify their policies, such as National Policy for Assessment (NPA) and National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPR), and help teachers in interpreting them. This may enable the teachers to understand and use these policies. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) also stress that this section of the study spells out not only the immediate but also longer-term benefits that the results of the study may bring to various groups of beneficiaries; these may include curriculum developers and designers. If teachers can deal positively with the experiences they encounter during the implementation of these policies, there is likely to be improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. This may also contribute to high achievement by learners and their individual abilities and skills may be enhanced, also leading to improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Determining the Intermediate Phase teachers' experiences in implementing assessment rubrics may contribute towards the issue of quality teaching and learning. If this can be taken into cognizance when dealing with assessment issues, teachers may develop positive experiences in dealing with assessment rubrics. According to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS Grades

R-12), assessment in the General Education and Training (GET) Band (Department of Education, 2003), the following purposes should be achieved: development of learners' knowledge, skills and values; identifying the needs of the learners; enabling the teachers to reflect on their practice; identifying learners' strengths and weaknesses; providing additional support to learners; revisiting or revising certain sections where learners seem to have difficulties; motivating and encouraging learners; providing information or data to a variety of stakeholders and demonstrating the effectiveness of the curriculum or teaching strategies. By using the above stated information, teachers may identify learners' special needs in learning so that they can be included in their lesson planning and assessment activities. This might be achieved if the experiences of teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics, together with factors that affect the strategies involved can be used to identify and facilitate the assessment rubrics. Strategies that affect the teachers' effective implementation in the assessment rubrics might include insufficient knowledge in the development and implementation of the assessment rubrics.

In this regard, training workshops for teachers regarding the implementations of the assessment rubrics is of utmost importance. Egodawatte (2010:78) agrees with the researcher, contending that training and guidance on the implementation of the assessment rubrics will help reduce the discrepancies, and intrinsically motivate learners to use them for learning. In contrast, Gullo (2005) argues that assessment rubrics may lack reliability and validity, potentially being too general and difficult to implement effectively. He further acknowledges that when too much focus is put on the number of criteria, rather than on actual indicators of the quality of the learners' work, it fails to facilitate successful learning and performance.

South African education may indicate that the majority of teachers have not been sufficiently equipped to meet the educational needs of the growing democracy in the 21$^{st}$ century global environment. The reason may be that there is no proper link between the teachers' professional training in the different colleges of education or universities and the actual practice in schools. Teachers need to be equipped with the necessary content knowledge, teaching methodologies and assessment skills to be able to cope with the demands of the ever changing curriculum. Failure to build the capacity of teachers in terms of implementation can be detrimental to the

success of the implementation of educational policies, assessment in particular. The SESs with the help of curriculum designers and developers must assist the HoDs in schools with development programmes which are relevant to the teachers' needs in dealing with curriculum issues, especially in assessment. This is emphasised by Smit (2001:69) who argues that policy structures should be accompanied by supportive processes intended to strengthen the role of teachers in curriculum implementation. Consistency in moderation and monitoring of the creation and development of assessment rubrics should be maintained as it might ease the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers when using assessment rubrics. Sometimes, something that one has created or developed herself or himself can be easily used.

In investigating teachers' experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics, the researcher also explored the challenges that teachers faced when using assessment rubrics. This, in turn, might help identify factors that affect the implementations of assessment rubrics as well as coming up with strategies that might be used. This study may also benefit the educational policy designers and developers, policy implementers and bridge the gap between the policy implementers, developers and designers.

## 1.6 Delimitations and limitations of the study

Simon (2011) explains delimitations as those factors or characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of your study. The study was conducted only in the North West Province, which is one of the provinces in South Africa. The North West Province of South Africa is a land-locked province on the border with Botswana. The province is bordered by Gauteng and Limpopo Provinces in the East, the Northern Cape in the West, Free State in the South and shares an international border with Botswana in the North. The North West Province is made up of four district offices, namely, Ngaka Modiri Molema, Bojanala, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati and Dr Kenneth Kaunda. Ngaka Modiri Molema, the chosen district by the researcher for this study has five Area Offices. These are, namely, Rekopantswe, Mahikeng, Ditsobotla, Ramotshere Moiloa and Kgetleng. The study focused on selected Intermediate Phase teachers in the Rekopantswe Area Office. The participants were the Intermediate Phase teachers, HoDs and SESs. The Area Office (AO) was chosen because of its diversity in terms of geographical

situation, that is, rural, deep-rural, urban and semi-urban. Therefore, teachers in some other provinces might have different experiences as far as assessment rubrics are concerned but the environmental factors and geographic settings of the areas in other provinces are almost the same. The focus was also on public schools only because education in private schools is not under the direct governance of the Department of Education, and this might bring about some slight differences.

Some limiting factors were distance and time which were dealt with by private and personally arranged consultation using the respondents' spare time. Limitations, as explained by Leedy and Ormrod (2005), constitute potential weaknesses in the researchers' study which are out of his or her control. The study was also conducted on a part time basis and causing inconvenience in the case of teachers and the researcher. This was combated by arrangement of private and convenient time and place of the respondents. The schools were far apart with some roads in very bad condition but respondents were consulted in their various homes.

The questionnaire as a method of data collection was used; a lower response rate of the respondents had been encountered as opposed to the targeted number. This was caused by the teachers' redeployment to join other schools, AOs, districts, even provinces, due to the reduction in the number of learners in some schools. These were outside the researcher's demarcations of the study. Some of the questionnaires were not returned, some were returned without being completed. In this case, the researcher used the acquired data from 97 teachers as opposed to initially targeted group of 108 teachers. According to Neuman (2000), most questionnaires are returned within a short space of time, but others trickle in up to two months later. The researcher raised the response rates by sending reminders to non-respondents; those within reach were personally consulted.

Interviews were also a limiting factor. Some interviewees were intimidated by the presence of the researcher. The appearance, tone of voice, question wording, and so forth of the interviewer might affect the respondent (Neuman, 2006). This might make the respondents to answer according to what they thought the researcher wanted. This was avoided by allowing interviewees to choose the place and time where they felt comfortable to be interviewed. Some

interviewees felt comfortable to be interviewed alone by the researcher. The researcher made the interviewees feel easy by explaining the importance of the research, ethical considerations as well as the procedure to be followed when collecting data. In some cases, the interview was conducted using the voice recorder, depending on the choice made by the interviewee.

## 1.7 Definition of concepts

This section gives a preliminary definition of concepts used in this study as well as a clear understanding of the objectives and the purpose of the study.

### 1.7.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)

Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2011: viii) explains CAPS as the policy documents stipulating the aim, scope, content and assessment for each subject listed in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-12.

### 1.7.2 Formal Assessment Task

DBE (2011: viii) also refers to formal assessment tasks as assessment of learning and says it means a systemic way of assessment used by teachers to determine how well learners are progressing in a grade and in a particular subject.

### 1.7.3 Informal Assessment Task

Informal assessment task is also referred to as assessment for learning and means the building towards formal assessment (DBE, 2011: ix).

### 1.7.4 Continuous Assessment (CASS)

Castleberry (2006) says CASS is the educational policy in which learners are examined continuously over most of the duration of their education, the results of which are taken into

account after leaving school. Henning (2009) says that CASS is a formative, process-oriented, informal, internal, learner-involved, and or self-referenced in nature. It can take the form of daily work, for example, essays, quizzes, presentation and participation in class, projects, term papers and practical work.

The Department of Education (2007) says that CASS is an ongoing process that measures a learner's achievement during the course of a grade or level, providing information that is used to support a learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the teaching-learning process.

### 1.7.5 Outcomes

Malan (1997) says that outcomes are loosely used to refer to the result; product or output of some or other processes. The Department of Education (1998) refers to outcomes as the end products of a learning process. In outcomes-based education, learners work towards agreed, desired outcomes within a particular context. This states clearly what the learner should be able to demonstrate. Outcomes are what learners should know and be able to do, and or value at the completion of a unit of study (Biggs, 2003).

### 1.7.6 Authentic Assessment

Chapman and King (2012) say that authentic assessment presents activities that give learners opportunities to use information or skills in realistic situations. They further affirm that authentic assessment should be a direct examination of learners' performance on worthy intellectual tasks.

Henning (2009) also says Authentic Assessment is the measurement of intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant and meaningful, as compared to multiple choice standardized tests.

Authentic assessment refers to assessment that aims to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in contexts that closely resemble actual situations in which that knowledge and those skills, values and attitudes are used (The Department of Education, 2007).

### 1.7.7 Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)

LoLT is explained by the DoE (2000) as the language that is chosen by the school's governing body in consultation with parents. It is the language used for instruction and assessment of learners in the school. It is also the language of the textbooks provided in the school.

### 1.7.8 Intermediate Phase

The Intermediate Phase is the second phase of the General Education and Training (GET) band, (DoE 2004) in the South African Education System. These are the Grades 4 to 6 learners.

### 1.7.9 Assessment Tools

Henning (2009) explains Assessment Tools as printed sets of criteria for assessing knowledge, performance or product and for giving feedback. Van Rooyen (2003) explains assessment tools as instruments such as written assignment or portfolios of evidence used to assist an assessor in collecting evidence of competence.

## 1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis was planned and organised into five chapters as follows:

**Chapter One: Orientation**

This introductory chapter gives an overview of the study outlining in detail the context for the experiences faced by Intermediate Phase teachers when implementing the assessment rubrics as the focus of the study. Descriptions of the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study,

research questions, rationale for the study, delimitations and limitations of the study and definition of the terms are also provided.

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**

In this chapter, the literature relevant to the problem that was explored is reviewed and discussed. This section also defines concepts in the study to clarify any misunderstanding that may arise.

**Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research design and, methodology used in this research on teachers' experiences in the implementations of the assessment rubrics. It describes the targeted population, the instruments used for data collection, how sampling was done and data were analysed. The issue of validity and ethical considerations have also been taken into account.

**Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of research findings pertinent to each of the four research questions. The chapter is divided into four sections, each section representing data that are presented and analysed from a particular research question.

**Chapter Five: Summary of findings recommendations and conclusion**

A summary of findings, recommendations and the conclusion is presented in this chapter.

The chapter provides background detail on the entire study, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. It begins by focusing on introductory background on the challenges investigated, followed by the statement of the problem and outlining the purpose of the study. The research questions including the delimitations and limitations identified in the study are also highlighted. The researcher progresses to the significance, key concepts and ethical considerations of the study. Literature review is reserved to Chapter two, the research design and methodology to Chapter three; and data analysis and interpretations to Chapter four. The summary, recommendations and conclusions are highlighted in Chapter five.

# CHAPTER TWO
# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a review of relevant literature on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. At a basic level, a literature review is a critical analysis of the defined segment of a published body of knowledge that summarises, classifies, and compares prior research studies and reviews, as well as theoretical articles, books and manuscripts (UW-Madison Writing Center, 2010). While the literature review sometimes stands alone as a research contribution, for the purpose of this chapter, the literature review refers to the process of carefully examining the research literature in order to inform this research study. The review of the literature is aimed at contributing towards a clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that had been identified (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) further explain literature review as an assessment of a body or bodies of literature that pertain to a specific question. It may not only help researchers glean into the ideas of others interested in a particular research question through important research findings and theories, but it might also let them read about the results of similar or related studies. Literature review also gives researchers ideas about areas where more research needs to be done. Literature review was used as an effective evaluation of selected documents on a research topic. A review forms an essential part of the research process and also contributes to the research project in itself. This review also provides a background to the study being proposed, that is, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

Conrad and Serlin (2011) believe that literature review provides a solid foundation for educational research. It was through the literature review that the researcher identified what was known and how it was known, so that questions were appropriately framed around what was yet to be known. Literature review is an integral element in almost every research study. As a standard component of a research study, this literature review served multiple roles. Ridley

(2008) identifies the following purposes for the literature review in research. Specifically, it provides:

- Historical background and current context for the study;
- Relevant theories and concepts that underlie the research; and
- Terminology definition and used in the literature; and supporting literature that the study seeks to address.

Assessment has been the area where most criticism has been levelled at the national curriculum since C2005. The review panel of 2009 questioned what the problems were with the assessment policies, whether there was sufficient clarity and appropriate use of assessment policies and guidelines, and what stakeholders, particularly teachers, thought should be done to address the problems. These challenges and problems were addressed in NCS Grades R-12. Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) and teacher support were two critical areas that were brought into the panel's deliberations given that they were two of the most commonly raised issues which are critical to successful curriculum implementation (Department of Education, 2009). The researcher hereby stresses the importance of teachers being well equipped with the necessary information about the NCS Grades R-12 assessment strategies. Assessment is the core knowledge of every curriculum system as sometimes learners can fail an activity because of irrelevant assessment tools used by teachers.

Implementations of NCS Grades R-12 include the following:

- Five year plan

  A coherent, clear, simple five year plan to improve teaching and learning across the schooling system needs to be developed and adhered to; it has been clearly and widely communicated to the nation. Offering support to teachers and the improvement of learner performance must be its central themes. Mechanisms to monitor implementation of the plan, through regular external monitoring to assess whether it has the desired effect on learner and teacher performance, need to be built into the plan.

- Stream line and clarify policies

  Development of one CAPs document for every learning area and subject (by phase) that will be the definitive support for all teachers and help address the complexities and confusion created by curriculum and assessment policy vagueness and lack of specification, document proliferation and misinterpretation.

- Clarify the role of Senior Education Specialists (SESs)

  Clarity on the SESs' roles nationally and specify the exact nature of in-classroom and school support they should provide to teachers. SESs' roles differ from province to province and district; and yet are the main intermediary between the curriculum policy and classroom interpretation.

- Teacher workload and administrative burden

  Reduction of the teachers' workload particularly with regard to administrative requirements around planning and assessment, to allow more time for teaching the learners was also highlighted.

- Assessment

  Simplify and streamline assessment requirements and improve quality and status of assessment by making General Education and Training (GET), Grades R-9 and Further Education and Training (FET), Grades 10-12 phases consistent; conducting regular national systemic assessment at grade 3 and 6, and replacing the common task of assessment with annual National Testing for all grade 9 learners in Mathematics, Home Language and English. The analyses of these systemic and national tests are used to diagnose what to prioritise and target for teacher and learner improvement.

- Transition and overload in Intermediate Phase (IP)

  The concern about transition from grade 3 to 4 was addressed firstly by reducing overload in the IP through reducing the number of Learning Area (LA) to six subjects, including two languages. Learning Areas were nine (9) in the previous curriculum and now they are six (6) in the IP. Secondly, and the importance of learning English in the

curriculum from grade 1 must be underscored by introducing a fourth subject in the Foundation Phase- English as a First Additional Language from 2011 in all the schools.

- Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

  The quality assurance and catalogue development for textbooks and other LTSM are centralised at the National level; the useful role and benefits of textbooks were communicated at the highest level, and each learner from grade 4 to 12 should have a textbook for each subject.

- Teacher and training

  The training of teachers to support curriculum implementation should be subject specific and targeted only where needed; all support staff, including school management, subject advisors and district officers, must undergo training on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy. Teachers of the different phases, that is, grades R-3 and 10, Grades 4-6 and 11 and Grades 7-9 and 12, have undergone their respective trainings during 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. Implementations were done the following year after their orientations by the SESs.

It is likely that bringing greater specificity to the stipulation of the content, concepts and skills to be learnt, especially in the General Education and Training (GET), that is, Grades R-9, might help address a number of the problems with assessment recorded here. Here rubrics might play a greater deal because focus is mainly on concepts and skills to be assessed. Clearly, school-based, continuous assessment, is important for the reasons given earlier. However, it is also clear that a finer balance needs to be struck between internal and external measures of learners' learning. These are in line with what Donnelly (2005:8) says that the key criteria for considering curriculum are the extent to which they make available to teachers statements which are clear, succinct, unambiguous, measurable and based on essential learning as represented by subject disciplines.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework

In order to avoid misconceptions that may arise due to the use of certain terms, words or concepts in this study, it is imperative to define the following concepts:

### 2.2.1 Assessment

The Department of Education (1998) refers to assessment as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching. In this study, the concept refers to the learner's strength and weakness with reference to teaching and learning. Malan (1997) emphasises this by explaining assessment as being universally conceptualised as a process by means of which the quality of a candidate's achievements can be judged, recorded and reported. Judgments can be made through continuous observation or through summative evaluation. In the education context, assessors can be teachers, outside examiners or learners themselves. Results can be reported quantitatively or qualitatively and can be used for promotion, screening or formative purposes. The suitable definition of this in this study is that of the Department of Education which states that assessment is a process of teaching and learning.

### 2.2.2 School-Based Assessment (SBA)

School-Based Assessment is any activity, instrument or programme where the design, development, administration, marking, recording and reporting has been initiated, directed, planned, organised, controlled and managed by a school (Department of Education, 2005). This refers to assessment done at school level. One of the problems of giving a quantitative mark, such as a percentage, in assessment, is that such a mark gives no information to the learner about what, in particular, was good or bad about their work (Kramer, 1999). We all know that 80% is a good mark for a piece of work but we cannot say exactly what 80% is. Worse still, the same piece of work, marked by 10 different teachers, could conceivably be given 10 different scores, even if they all give almost the same marks. It would be far better to have assessment instruments that give clarity about the quality of performance.

### 2.2.3 Rubrics

Van Rooyen (2003) says that rubrics are rating scales not checklists that are used with assessments. They are formally defined as scoring guide consisting of specific pre-established performance criteria used in evaluating learners' work in performance assessments. Rubrics are typically a type of scoring instrument used when evaluating learner performance or products resulting from performance tasks. Rubrics are also defined by Andrade (2001), as scoring tools that list the criteria for piece of work or what counts. In this study they are referred to as the guidelines used in assessing of learners.

Kramer (1999) further says that rubrics are viewed as hierarchy or graded levels of standards with benchmarks that describe the minimum level or standard of acceptable performance for each criterion. They are further explained as assessment tools that describe a continuum of performance quality that ranges from poor to excellent. A rubric lists each of the elements needed to perform a task and then describes exactly what constitutes acceptable performance for each element. The rubric also describes excellent performance that exceeds the level of acceptable work and inadequate performance that does not yet meet the minimum level of performance. Usually, rubrics use a grid or table format, but there are many different ways of creating a rubric. As with all instruments, we can adapt them to our individual styles and needs.

Rubrics are therefore analytical rather than quantitative. They analyse the performance rather than giving it a mark. Clearly, rubrics are valuable in giving learners information about their work and are therefore useful for self and peer assessment. It is important to understand that work which falls short of expected or required level of achievement is not work for which the learner gets assessed as having failed. It means that the learner has to try again to improve those elements which are not yet acceptable. Where this is not or cannot be done, for whatever reason, the learner cannot be credited as having achieved the standards.

Another important point is that rubrics set out the required standard for each of the elements of the task. What happens if the learner achieves the standard in the case of 90% of the elements but is below standard in 10% of the elements? In other words, the task is almost properly done but

not completely. In traditional assessment, teachers would be happy to say that the learner has mastered the task at a level of 90%, a very good performance. In performance assessment, the required standard must be achieved in each of the elements of the task. The rubric helps us to underline this principle.

Picket and Dodge (2001) describe rubrics as authentic tools which are designed to stimulate real life activity where learners are engaged in solving real-life problems. It is a formative type of assessment because it becomes an ongoing part of the whole teaching and learning process. Learners themselves are involved in the assessment process through both peer and self-assessment. As learners become familiar with rubrics, they can assist in the rubric design process. This involvement becomes more focused and self-directed. Authentic assessment, therefore, blurs the lines between teaching, learning and assessment.

Heidi (2001), a rubric expert, defines rubrics as scoring tools that list the criteria for a piece of work or what counts. So, rubrics for a multimedia project will list the things that the learners must have included in receiving a certain score or rating. Rubrics help the learners to figure out how their project will be evaluated. Heidi also quoted a learner who said he didn't much care for rubrics because if you get something wrong, your teacher can prove you knew what you were supposed to do.

Generally, rubrics specify the level of performance expected for several levels of quality. These levels of quality may be written as different ratings (for example, Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement) or as numerical scores (for example, 4. 3, 2, 1) which are then added up to form a total score which is associated with a grade (for example, A, B, C, etc). Many rubrics specify the level of assistance (for example, independently, with minimal Adult help; with extensive Adult help) for each quality rating. Rubrics can help students and teachers define quality. They can also help learners judge and revise their own work before handing in assignments. For most teachers, rubrics are a printed set of scoring guidelines (criteria) for evaluating work (performance or a product) and for feedback. In this instance, teachers use rubrics for assessing learners' performance during teaching and learning.

Szpyrka and Smith (1995) emphasise that active learning situations challenge teachers to determine grades in a way that accurately reflects achievement and that is acceptable to students, parents and colleagues. Rubrics are guides for assigning scores to alternative assessment products. Rubrics are not a form of assessment, but are the criteria for making an assessment. Rubrics encourage clear assessment targets and clear expectations. When rubrics are well defined, learners know exactly what is expected of them and how they can achieve at a top grade. Most learners might excel and work hard if there is a clear explanation of what is expected from the given task. They might exert more effort and perform beyond expectations.

In this study, the definition by Heidi (2001) of rubrics as scoring tools that list the criteria for a piece of work was found suitable to understand, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. To sum up, rubrics are sets of criteria or scoring guides that describe levels of performance or understanding. They provide learners with expectations about what will be assessed, standards that need to be met and information about where learners are in relation to where they need to be. Rubrics must be handed to the learners before they start with their expected activity. Teachers must explain what is expected of the learners before performing the given assessment task.

## 2.3 Theory underpinning the study

Constructivism is a theory that clearly underpins this investigation. Von Glasersfeld (2007) explains Constructivism as a broad group of theories that explain knowledge acquisition and learning. It has links to other fields including social science, philosophy, politics and history, each of which recognises that learners interpret and make their own sense of experience and the information they receive. Von Glaserfeld (2007) cites that knowledge is a process and product of the human brain and that the extent to which knowledge reflects external reality cannot, therefore, be determined, "we are responsible for the world we are experiencing" (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). The researcher found Constructivism as the suitable theory in this study because it enabled the teachers to construct their meaningful understanding from teaching and learning through the implementations of rubrics. Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2003) also say that constructivism is a type of learning theory that explains human learning as an active attempt to

construct meaning in the world around us. Constructivists believe that learning is more active and self-directed than either behaviourism or cognitive theory would postulate. By using the assessment teachers might promote active involvement of learners in what they must do because the expectations are clearly stated and explained beforehand. Teachers might also be able to construct meaningful constructs that might come up with practical solutions to problems.

Fleith (2000) further explains constructivism as a theory based on observation and scientific study, about learners' learning. Fleith (2000) also says that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When something new is encountered, previous ideas and experience are reconciled, maybe changing what they believe, or discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, rubrics are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, teachers ask questions, explore, and assess what learners know; assessment rubrics might be the guide to what needs to be done.

In the classroom, the constructivist's view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching practices. In a more general sense, it usually means encouraging learners to use active techniques such as experiments and real-world problem solving to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. The teacher makes sure that learners' pre-existing conceptions are understood, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them. This might be done by using the assessment rubrics.

### 2.3.1 Educational implications of Constructivism

This theory was outlined relevantly in a study by Professor George Hein during International Committee of Museum Educators (CMEC) Conference, Jerusalem, Israel, 15-22 October, 1991, in Lesley College. It was said that the term constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves; each learner individually and socially constructs meaning as she or he learns. Constructing meaning is learning and there are other kinds. The dramatic consequences of this view are twofold: these are focusing on the learner in thinking about learning (not on the subject or lesson to be taught) and that there is no knowledge which is

independent of the meaning attributed to experience (constructed) by the learner or community of learners.

Constructivism is principally a theory about how people learn and many educational implications can be drawn from the work of the key constructivist theorists and those who have used constructivist principles (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). Some constructivist practices in education as outlined by Von Glasersfeld (2007) include the following:

- Diagnosis of learners' individual learning styles;
- Identification of learners' strengths or intelligence;
- Curricular practices such as Individual Learning Plans (ILP);
- Attention to cultural inclusivity;
- Innovative learning and teaching strategies such as problem-based learning;
- Links between community-based learning and formal education; and
- Authentic assessment practices which incorporate learners' views.

Some teachers take a greater interest in their pupils where they offer an incorrect answer to a question. In such a situation, these teachers proceed by asking pupils to explain how they arrived at the wrong answer (operating from a constructivist perspective). This practice is based on the premise that teachers are constructors of meaning. By investigating the origins of wrong answers, officials can uncover the teachers' thinking process, subsequently challenging and refining faulty mental constructs. These may also enlighten teachers to show the need for different assessment tools or techniques. Constructivism focuses on what teachers, with information, do to develop knowledge. In particular, constructivism holds that teachers actively build knowledge they already possess with new information regarding the assessment rubrics. In this case, teachers might already have knowledge of ready-made assessment rubrics, from these they might develop or design their own rubrics suitable for their special use. For constructivists, learning is an active process through which learners construct new meaning. So in this study, teachers are the ones who are actively involved in learning through constructing new meaning through the development and creation of the assessment rubrics.

Von Glasersfeld (2007) further emphasises that if constructivist theory is accepted (which means that the path of Dewey, Piaget & Vigotsky, among others, might be followed), Platonic and all subsequent realistic views of epistemology might be given. It has to recognise that there is no such thing as knowledge out there independent of the knower, but only knowledge that is constructed as it is learned. Learning does not understand the true nature of things; nor is it remembering dimly perceived perfect ideas', but rather it is a personal and social construction of the meaning out of the bewildering array of sensation which has no order or structure besides the explanation which is fabricated.

For a teacher to say that a learner understands what he or she has been taught, assessment must be done. Assessment, teaching and learning go hand-in-hand during the teaching-learning process of learners. Learning is a process not an event, hence the incorporation of Continuous Assessment (CASS). The learner might be assessed against the specified criteria outlined in the policy documents of the Department of Education (DoE). This can be done by creating assessment rubrics. The rubrics are essential because the learner knows the expectations of the assignment or task beforehand. If the learner has achieved, it is said that the learner has passed. This stresses the notion that knowledge is constructed as one learns.

Von Glasersfeld (2007) further explains that most teachers constantly vacillate between faith that the learners will indeed construct meaning which teachers might find acceptable (whatever is meant by that) and their need to construct meaning for them; that is, to structure situations that are not free for learners to carry out their mental actions, but learning situations which channel them into our ideas about the meaning of experience. Teachers must try to create a conducive learning and teaching environment for learners. In this way, learners will be able to perform at their utmost best. It is this tension between the teachers' desire to teach the truth, to present the world as it really is, and their desire to let learners construct their own world which requires thinking seriously about epistemology and pedagogy. Learning principles were also emphasised.

Joyce, Weil and Calhoun (2003) said that constructivist teachers encourage learners to constantly assess how an activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, learners in the constructivist classroom ideally become expert learners. This gives

them ever-broadening tools to keep learning, with a well-planned classroom environment, the learners learn how to learn. You might look at it as a spiral. When they continuously reflect on their experiences, learners find their ideas gaining in complexity and power, and they develop increasingly strong abilities to integrate new information. One of the teachers' main roles becomes to encourage this learning and reflection process.

Contrary to criticisms by some teachers, constructivism does not dismiss the active role of the teacher or the value of expert knowledge. Constructivism modifies that role, so that teachers help learners to construct knowledge rather than to reproduce a series of facts. The constructivist teacher provides tools such as problem-solving and enquiry-based learning activities with which learners formulate and test their ideas, draw conclusions and inferences, and pool and convey their knowledge in a collaborative learning environment. Constructivism transforms the learners from a passive recipient of information to an active participant in the learning process. Always guided by the teacher, learners construct their knowledge actively rather than just mechanically ingesting knowledge from the teacher or textbook (Joyce, Weil & Calhoun, 2003).

### 2.3.2 Learning Principles

Von Glasersfeld (2007) outlines some of the guiding principles of learning to keep in mind when teachers consider their role as teachers. These roles are based on the belief that learning consists of individuals' constructed meanings and then indicate how they influence learners' education. Here teachers are referred to as learners because they are the ones who are learning the technicalities of using assessment rubrics as tools for assessment.

Learning is regarded as an active process in which the teacher uses sensory input and constructs meaning out of it. The more traditional formulation of this idea involves the terminology of the active learner stressing that the teacher needs to do something; that learning is not the passive acceptance of knowledge which exists out there but that learning involves the teachers' engaging with the world that is active participation in learning. Learners must explore all their capabilities, knowledge and skills during teaching and learning and this will also allow teachers to use different types of assessment strategies or techniques, hence the need for understanding the

implementation of the assessment rubrics by teachers. The teachers might also be able to understand the implementation of the assessment rubrics in the Departmental Assessment Guidelines.

*Learners learn to learn as they learn* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). Learning consists both of constructing meaning and constructing systems of meaning. For example, if one learns the chronology of dates of a series of historical events, he or she is simultaneously learning the meaning of chronology. Each meaning constructed makes them better able to give meaning to other sensations which can fit a similar pattern. In this case, learning is referred to as a continuous process not an event. Learners must be taught that learning occurs everywhere. The crucial action of constructing meaning is mental, that is, it happens in the mind. Physical actions and hands-on experience may be necessary for learning, especially for children, but it is not sufficient, we need to provide activities which engage the mind as well as the hands. Physical actions, mental and hands-on activities are very important during teaching and learning. The learners must be physically and mentally healthy so that they can cope with the day-to-day activities. For every activity there must be assessment whether formally or informally. So, the implementation of rubrics by teachers in assessing learners is of great importance, making this study more necessary.

*Learning involves language, That is, language use influences learning* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). The learners must be fluent in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). On the empirical level, researchers have noted that people talk to themselves as they learn. On a more general level, there is a collection of arguments, that language and learning are inextricably intertwined. That is why it is important for learners to understand what they are learning and also be able to explain it by using words.

*Learning is also a social activity* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007) *:* it is intimately associated with the connection with human beings, teachers, peers, family as well as casual acquaintances, including the people before or next to, at the exhibit. They are more likely to be successful in their efforts to educate if they recognise this principle rather than try to avoid it. Much of traditional education is directed towards isolating the learner from all social interaction and towards seeing

education as a one-on-one relationship between the learner and the objective material to be learned.

*Learning is contextual* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). This means that learning does not happen in isolated facts and theories in some abstract ethereal land of the mind separate from the rest of the teachers' lives. Learn in relation to what you know, what you believe in, your prejudices and your fears. On reflection, it becomes clear that this point is actually a corollary of the idea that learning is active and social. It cannot be divorced, that is learning from real lives. One needs knowledge to learn, it is not possible to assimilate new knowledge without having some structure developed from previous knowledge to build on. The more one knows, the more one learns. Therefore, any effort to teach must be connected to the state of the learner and must provide a path into the subject for the learner based on the learner's previous knowledge. Learners must understand that learning takes place everywhere and in connection with every situation. It takes time to learn.

*Learning is not instantaneous* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). For significant learning, revisiting of ideas is needed, ponder them and try them out, play with them and use them. This cannot happen in the 5-10 minutes usually spent in a gallery. If one reflects on anything one has learned, one soon realises that it is the product of repeated exposure and thought. Even, or especially moments of profound insight can be traced back to longer periods of preparation.

*Motivation is also considered as a key component in learning* (Von Glasersfeld, 2007). Teachers must be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated and helped in this regard. Not only is it the case that motivation helps learning, it is essential for learning. It also activates the desire to learn. This idea of motivation as described here is broadly conceived to include an understanding of the ways in which knowledge can be used. Unless one knows the reasons why, one may not be very involved in using the knowledge that may be instilled in them even by the most severe and direct teaching. The use of rubrics can motivate learners and teachers. Learners will be motivated to meet or even work beyond the set standards because they are actively involved and contribute to their own motivation, this might not be a problem.

## 2.4 The use of rubrics

Rubrics are scoring guides that assess and articulate specific components and expectations for an assignment. They can be used for a variety of assignment, research papers, group projects, portfolios and presentations. Furthermore, rubrics are currently used by learners and teachers in classrooms from kindergarten to college across North America. They are popular because they can be created for or adapted to a variety of subjects and situations. Scoring rubrics are especially useful in the assessment of learning because they contain qualitative descriptions of performance criteria that work well within the process of formative evaluation. In recent years, many educational researchers, for example, Arter and McTighe (2001), and Goodrich (2006), have noticed the instructional benefits of scoring rubrics. During teaching and learning learners are supposed to be continually assessed. They may be assessed verbally through questions and answers, then the process of researching the given product. Rubrics are important because the teacher is able to assess the process and not only the final product. By using rubrics, learners know the requirements of the expected level of performance in assessing the product. The teachers are supposed to be active participants in drawing the rubrics that form the basis of this study.

Rubrics are regarded as "instructional illuminators" in a 1997 article entitled "What's Wrong – and What's Right" – with Rubrics. He also cautioned that many rubrics now available to teachers are not instructionally beneficial. Unfortunately, many rubrics are still not instructionally useful because of inconsistencies in the description of performance criteria across their scale levels. The most accessible rubrics, particularly those available in the internet, contain design flaws that not only affect their instructional usefulness, but also the validity of their results. For scoring rubrics to fulfil their educational ideal, they must first be designed or modified to reflect greater consistency in their performance criteria descriptors. Teachers must know exactly what they want to assess the learners about and beforehand discuss the expectation of the final product or how marking will be conducted with the learners.

It might help one to examine the guidelines and principles in current educational literature that relate to performance criteria in scoring rubrics. The focus in these guidelines is the consistency of the language that is used across the scale levels to describe the performance criteria for learning and assessment. The objective is based on quality levels of rubrics in devising sound performance criteria, not merely judge. What is valued in a classroom, in terms of performance or products, is communicated through descriptive language. As such, performance criteria descriptions are a critical components of a rubric design that merits thorough consideration.

Koshy (2008) says that assessment is of prime importance to education and learner learning. Assessment's cardinal function in the school system is to support teaching and learning. It is argued by many researchers that learners put on assessment, since it defines what they regard as important. In this instance it shows that assessment is an integral part to teaching and learning. From the researcher's point of view, it shows that it is crucial for teachers to understand the impact of assessment on rating of achievement of learners. Despite the potential benefits of the adoption of assessment rubrics, their implementation has not escaped strong criticism. Furthermore the exclusive implementation of assessment rubrics may not achieve effective learning outcomes, unless used correctly. Simple assessment rubric during assessment does not enhance learners' experience. Therefore there is the need to move beyond basic implementation to a more innovative approach that guarantees learners the experience of ownership. The learners must at the end be able to interpret the given rubric on their own.

Huba and Freed (2000) further emphasise the use of rubrics as excellent tools in assessing learners' work for several reasons. Teachers need rubrics if they find themselves, among others, in the following situations:

- Finding them re-writing the same comments on different learners' assignment.
- When their marking load is high and writing out comments takes up a lot of one's time.
- Learners repeatedly question about the assignment requirements, even after one handed back the marked assignment.
- When one wants to address the specific components of one marking scheme for learners and instructor both to and following the submission of the assignment (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Rubrics can be of great help to both teachers and learners. Furthermore, rubrics can help teachers by assessing assignments consistently from learner to learner, save time in grading, both short-term and long-term; give timely, effective feedback and promote learner learning in a sustainable way; clarify expectations and components of an assignment and refine teaching skills by evaluating rubrics results. Rubrics can also help learners understand expectations and components of an assignment, become more aware of their learning process and progress and also improve work through timely and detailed feedback. By using rubrics as assessment tools, learners might be well prepared for the given assignment.

It emerged that, experiences of teachers when using assessment rubrics differ from one environment to the other as some schools are less resourced, in physical and human resources than others. Despite this, policy makers and developers use one context for all the schools, that is, a one size fits all types of context. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) observe that policy makers regard schools as being the same, therefore, they think one policy will work the same in all the schools. However, schools that are well resourced may be less challenged than the ones that are less resourced. The teachers in the first category of schools may have the opportunity of using vast resources for rubrics development, but others may have fewer opportunities. Observations by the researcher have shown that assessment rubrics pose a great challenge to Intermediate Phase teachers.

When teachers have to use rubrics effectively, they must develop different rubrics for different assignments. Although this might take time in the beginning, teachers might find that rubrics can be re-used later. Learners must be given copies of assessment rubrics when the performance task is assessed. They must also be required to attach the rubric to the assignment when it is handed in. When the assignment is marked, the achievement level of performance for each criterion must be circled or marked. Any additional comments that do not fit within the rubrics' criteria must be included and a final grade for the assignment based on the rubrics must also be decided upon. The rubrics must be handed back with the assignments as proof that assessment was done. Teachers and administrators increasingly regard rubrics as important tools in supporting learners learning as well as in facilitating more accurate and efficient evaluation of learners' work

product. Assessment is part of instruction, the ways learners perceive and use rubrics in the process of learning are important. Exploring the impact of rubrics on learning, then, can enhance the ongoing discussion regarding the relationship between learners' learning and assessment. Some evidence exists considering how rubrics affect learners learning and assessment techniques, as well as relating to the impact of rubric use on the quality of learners' assignments and performance.

Teachers also need to use a variety of methods, tools and techniques appropriate to learners' individual needs and abilities when assessing. Learners need to be given opportunities to demonstrate their competence, knowledge and skills in various ways appropriate and relevant to their individuality. The teachers' experiences from implementing assessment rubrics, factors that affect the implementation of assessment rubrics, and the strategies that can be used to facilitate the implementation of assessment rubrics, may have to be identified.

The development and the creation of rubrics must be specific, measurable, achievable or attainable, relevant and time-bound. Stevens and Levi (2005) agree to this by referring to rubrics as scoring tools that lay out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics can also be used to divide an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts. In this case, learners are given assessment rubrics before the start of the assignment. Criteria for performance are clearly explained to the learners.

Teachers might need rubrics when checking more than three items in the same assignment or task. Sometimes they are getting carpal tunnel syndrome from writing the same comments on almost every learner's paper. Learners often complain that they cannot read the notes they laboured so long to produce. Teachers have graded all the papers, assignments and tasks and worry that the last ones were graded slightly differently from the first ones. Learners are expected to complete a complex assignment that integrates all the work over the term and is not sure how to communicate all the varied expectations easily and clearly.

Learners need to develop the ability to reflect on ill-structured problems, but not sure how to clearly communicate that. Carefully planned assignment may be included, that was never used before and to their surprise, it takes the whole class period to explain to learners or a long narrative description of the assignment in the syllabus is given to learners, but the learners continually ask two or three questions per class about teachers' expectations. Sometimes, long periods are spent on the phone with the writing centres or other tutorial services because the learners are unable to understand the assignment or the expectations clearly. This can be worked out with colleagues to consult in collaborating on designing the same assignments for programme courses, yet the grading scales maybe different. It is sometimes disappointing to realise that the whole assignment is not understood by all or most of the class. It often turns out that learners are unaware of academic expectations so basic that it is neglected to be mentioned.

It may take a teacher to work very hard to explain a complex end-of-term paper yet learners are starting to regard him or her as an enemy out there to trick them with incomprehensive assignments. Rubrics ensure that all learners are assessed in the same way and achievement of learners is graded the same way. Many experts believe that rubrics improve learners' end products and therefore improve learning. When teachers evaluate papers or projects, they know implicitly what makes a good final product and why. When learners receive rubrics before-hand, they understand how they will be evaluated and can prepare accordingly. Developing a grid or rubric and making it available as a tool for learners' use might provide the scaffolding necessary to improve the quality of their work and increase their knowledge (Stevens & Levi, 2005).

Goodrich (2006) further clarifies on the use of rubrics by stating that they can be used for both formative (to give general feedback) and summative (to assign marks) assessment. A multi-scale rubrics facilitate the identification of a specific level of learning that has been achieved and, if desired, the subsequent calculation of a mark. When using rubrics, each component criterion is scored independently for each learner. Adding up the points assigned for each component of the rubrics provides the total score for that learner. If desired, a percentage of 100 can be calculated from the total points. For advanced users, each component can be weighted within the rubric to emphasise its relative importance.

Rubrics have many uses; these include grading written assignments, oral presentations, great tool to evaluate teamwork and individual contribution to group tasks, facilitate peer-review by setting evaluation standards. Learners can use rubrics for self-assessment to improve personal performance and learning, for larger assignments, have learners use the rubrics to provide peer assessment on various drafts. Learners need to be encouraged to use rubrics to assess their own work and be motivated to improve their work by using rubric feedback to resubmit their work incorporating the feedback.

### 2.4.1 Advantages of Rubrics

Brookes and Lin (2010:6-7) explain rubrics as multidimensional sets of scoring guidelines that can be used to provide consistency in evaluating learners' work. Teachers spell out the same rubric for learners' assignment and arrive at the same score or grade. Rubrics can be used from the initiation to the measurement system for specific tasks and can be tailored to each project, so that as the project becomes more complex, so do the rubrics. Rubrics can be very helpful if used correctly by teachers, and learners must be made aware of their expectations or requirements. Grades must be demystified by clearly stating, in age-appropriate vocabulary, the expectations for a project. The learners must see that learning is about gaining specific skills (both in academic subjects and in problem-solving and skills). Learners must be given the opportunity to do self-assessment to reflect on the learning process. Rubrics must help teachers to authentically monitor learners' learning process and develop and revise lesson plans. They must also provide ways for learners and teachers to measure the quality of the body of works. When learners assess their work, they have to explain their understanding of the content and justify the method of presentation.

Rubrics help improve learners' performance by clearly showing the learners how their work will be evaluated and what is expected from them. The criteria are clearly stated and well-explained by the teachers. They even help learners to become better judges of their own work. They also allow assessment to be more objective and consistent. Rubrics force the teacher to clarify his or her own criteria in specific terms. They reduce the amount of time teachers spend evaluating the

learners' work. They also make learners' aware of the criteria to use in assessing peer performance.

CTM-Curriculum Work Group (2001) stresses that rubrics provide useful feedback to the teacher regarding the effectiveness of the instruction. They might be noticed or realised by learners who are able to follow the instructions easily. They also provide learners with more informative feedback about their strengths and areas in need of improvement because of their nature as qualitative assessment tools. Rubrics accommodate heterogeneous classes by offering a range of quality levels. They adhere to taking cognizance of the individuality of learners. They are also easy to use, follow and explain.

CTM-Curriculum Work Group (2001) further explains that no matter which way assessment rubrics are used, they have several inherent advantages. They are performance-based or outcomes-based, that is, the teacher must know how to use specific aims to design the rubrics. It gives the learners clear guidelines towards better quality work (process and product). There is the justification of the assessment as well as immediate feedback for the learners when using assessment rubrics. Assessment in this case becomes part of the teaching-learning process, which is formative assessment. The teacher also gets more detailed feedback of learner performance and is more easily become involved in the assessment process through ongoing self-assessment and peer-assessment. These result in more focused work and learners know what is expected from them. The advantages of implementing rubrics in teaching and learning as outlined by the Department of Education (2005) are that, teachers can increase the quality of their direct instruction by providing focus and attention to particular details as a model for learners. Rubrics set standards and clarify expectations and learners know in advance what they have to do to achieve certain levels. Rubrics help learners to take responsibility for their own learning and achievements. If learners use rubrics regularly to judge their own work, they might improve their own self-assessment skills. Learner-created rubrics emphasise decision-making and collaborative learning by learners.

Rubrics are powerful tools for supporting learning by guiding learners' activities and increasing understanding of their own learning and the assessment process. Rubrics also show how learners will be assessed and or graded. In other words, rubrics provide a clear guide as to how and what learners do if a course is assessed. Assessment in general is important for the teacher to know what the learners have learned and if they are ready to go to the next level. They also let learners know where they lack understanding. Rubrics are great instruments for the teachers and learners. Teachers and learners to know exactly what is expected in each step of the assignment and what each step is worth. They provide learners with visual guides for them to use when completing an assignment. This is a step by step instructional guide for the learner to earn the most possible points (Department of Education, 2005).

Rubrics force the teacher to clarify the assessment criteria in detail to learners and parents or other stakeholders. Useful feedback for the effectiveness of instruction is also enhanced with the use of rubrics. Learners may be motivated to reach the standards specified because they already know and understand the given standards. Rubrics may also narrow the gap between instruction and assessment and this may be done by active participation of learners in developing the rubrics. Rubrics are also flexible tools been used across many contexts, in many grade levels and a wide range of abilities and they also have a potential of being transferred into grades if necessary. Rubrics ease the burden of assessment in teachers by offering a method of consistency in scoring by clearly defining the performance criteria. The learners' independent learning may be enhanced by giving them more control of their own learning process. Open teacher-learner communication may be developed.

Goodrich (2006) further states that rubrics are being used increasingly by teachers at all levels of education as they provide clarity for both learners and teachers, especially for assessments that are complex and subjective but state the criteria for the components for a project, assignment, skill, or behaviour. In addition, rubrics facilitate learners' self-assessment by enabling them judge and revise their assignment in advance before submission. He also states advantages of using rubrics as follows: Clarify what is expected and how the learners work will be evaluated, help learners and teachers define quality, promote objectivity and consistency, help learners

judge and revise their own work before handling in their assignments and provide useful feedback regarding the effectiveness of the teaching (Goodrich, 2006).

Rubistar (2008) also emphasises that using rubrics has benefits for both learners and teachers by preparing rubrics that enable better and more explicit definition of assessment requirements and expectations of the range of learner achievement on particular assessment tasks; teachers' teams can develop more consistency in the way they interpret assessment tasks and learners' work through developing rubrics jointly; rubrics enable very clear and consistent communication with learners about assessment requirements and the way that grades are differentiated between different levels of performance; learners can benefit from more active engagement in and responsibility for their learning through creating and applying rubrics to self-assess and peer-assess, thereby increasing their understanding of assessment processes and particular tasks, and enhancing their meta-cognitiveness awareness, richer feedback to learners using rubrics provides them with a clearer idea of where they sit in a framework of orderly development towards increased expertise in a learning domain and using an assessment rubric increased efficiency in marking and grading processes for teachers (Rubistar, 2008).

Finally, assessment rubrics are regarded as a descriptive scoring tool, effective and versatile assessment tool for knowledge acquisition and the development of professional skills. They also form the foundation on which teachers make academic judgements about learners' performances, measure learners' achievements and progress. Emphasis on rubric usage is becoming a growing trend in education due to their positive impact on teaching and learning. Rubrics guide and make explicit to learners how well the learning outcomes have been achieved. They are therefore applied at different qualitative and quantitative levels of achievement. Clustered or simplified rubrics could ensure consistency without repetition of the same standards, and considerably reduce the administrative load of assessment, thereby ensuring its promotion and use in teaching and learning. That is the reason for this study.

Rubrics make assessment of learners' work quick and efficient, especially in large classes. They are usefulness in blurring the division between teaching and assessment, contributing significantly to both teaching and learning in classrooms. Rubrics can also help teachers to analyse and describe learners' responses to complex tasks and determine learners' levels of proficiency. In addition to that, rubrics give learners more specific criteria detailing what is expected and what constitutes a complete response. Cikis and Cila (2009:2107) opine that agreed assessment criteria or objectives can be helpful to overcome arbitrariness, inconsistency, or subjectivity during the assessment process. This becomes useful especially when applied in the studio critique. Well-constructed, criterion-based assessment approach allows assessment rubrics to play a lead role in the teaching and learning process. In summary, the importance of rubrics of a well-designed rubric can be used for the purpose of instruction, motivation and evaluating in constructivist teaching and learning environment.

### 2.4.2 Common Features of Rubrics

Rubrics can be created in a variety of forms and levels of complexity; however, they all contain three common features: focus on measuring a stated objective (performance, behaviour or quality), use a range to grade performance containing specific performance characteristics arranged in levels indicating the degree to which a standard has been met (Picket & Dodge, 2001). Allen (2004) emphasises features of rubrics by saying that the Programme of Assessment (PoA) is an ongoing, formative process that guides the teacher which tasks are formally assessed and their marks recorded for progression and promotion. The recorded marks are used to identify problems encountered by learners so that the teacher can develop the strategies for improving learners learning.

Rubrics are explicit schemes for classifying products or behaviours into categories that vary along a continuum. They can be used to classify virtual product or behaviour, such as essays, research reports, oral presentations and group activities. A wide variety of rubrics have been developed and it is often easier to adapt an already-existing rubric than to create one from scratch. Rubrics have much strength and their complex products or behaviours can be examined efficiently and effectively. Assessment activities should be structured to use that time effectively.

Rubrics focus raters on the learning objectives being assessed, allowing them to tune out extraneous variables. Well-trained reviewers apply the same, agreed-upon standards to the products being reviewed. This generates data that are likely to be reliable and valid (Allen, 2004).

Summaries of results reveal patterns of learners' strengths and areas of concern. These assessments allow us to identify learning objectives that require increased attention. Rubrics are criterion-referenced, rather than norm-referenced. This is important for programme assessment because one wants to learn how well learners have met one's standards. Sometimes peer ratings or self-rating can be done by learners to assess their work. Rubrics can be used for grading and assessment.

### 2.4.3 Critical Components of Rubrics

Performance elements are the major, critical attributes which focus upon best practice and scale as the possible points to be assigned (high to low). Learner performance can be graded in terms of scales, which are from low to high. All rubrics have levels, dimensions and descriptors. Levels indicate the range of performance measured, from least developed to most developed. Dimensions are the attributes used to judge a performance, process or product and descriptors refer to statements that describe each level of the performance and indicators as specific, concrete examples or tell-tale signs of what to look for at each level of the performance or the language used to define the dimensions in the different levels.

Criteria as the conditions of a performance that must be met, for it to be considered successful, and standards as descriptions of how well the criteria must be met for performance to be considered good or outstanding. These components must be considered when dealing with rubrics. Three types of rubrics are conventional-contains categories which define increasing-decreasing degrees of acceptability, that is homework and assignment. Checklists- list all criteria, steps and components necessary to complete task, usually used to teach learners skills in simple and clear manner and combination- provide categories of conventional rubrics with detailed list

format of checklists, allows teachers to rate learners in multiple categories while teaching skills in simple manner.

**Table 1: Critical components of rubrics**

| Rubric component | Definition |
|---|---|
| Performance Element | The major, critical attributes which focus upon best practice. |
| Scale | The possible points to be assigned (high to low). |
| Criteria | The conditions of a performance that must be met for it to be considered successful. |
| Standard | A description of how well the criteria must be met for the performance to be considered good. |
| Descriptors | Statements that describe each level of the performance. |
| Indicators | Specific, concrete examples or tell-tale signs of what to look for at each level of the performance. |

*Source: Howell (2011:35)*

Table 1 above shows the critical components of rubrics. The components are outlined using the components and definitions. Rubric components are Performance elements, which are regarded as the major critical attributes which focus primarily on best practice, scale referring to the point system of low to high points. The conditions on which performance of learners are based is regarded as criteria and the standards value criteria. Descriptors are highlighted as describing performance of learners and indicators as indicating the level of performance.

### 2.4.4 Types of Rubrics

Van Rooyen (2003) says that rubrics are scoring scales drawn up by the teacher. Rubrics consist of sets of criteria that describe the expectations of assessment and describe the level of quality used to evaluate learners' work. Learners can use rubrics as a guide to inform them of the desired performance levels. Picket and Dodge (2001) further emphasise rubrics as authentic assessment tools used to measure learners' work. They are a scoring guide that seeks to evaluate learners' performance based on the sum of full criteria rather than a single numerical score. Rubrics are working guide for learners and teachers, usually handed out before the assignment begins in

order to get learners to think about the criteria on which their work will be judged. Rubrics can be analytic or holistic, and they can be created for any content area.

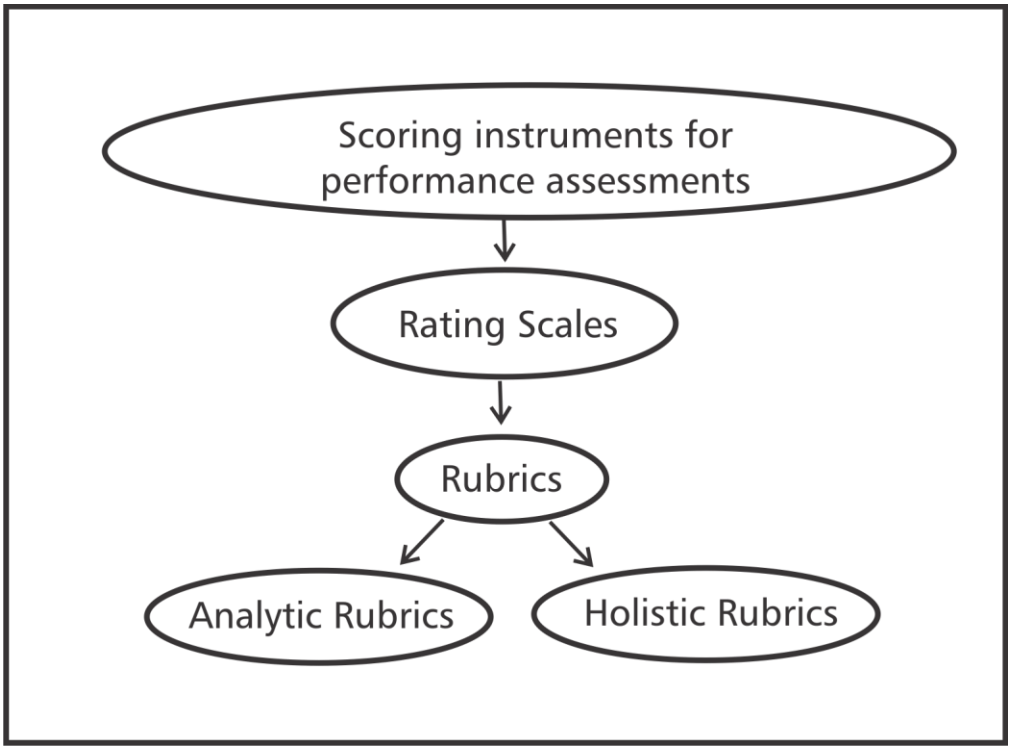
Rubrics are authentic assessment tools which are designed in solving real-life problems. They are formative type of assessment because they become an ongoing part of the whole teaching and learning process. Learners themselves are involved in the assessment process through both peer and self-assessment. As learners become familiar with rubrics, they can assist in the rubrics design process. Their involvement might empower them and as a result, their learning and performance might become more focused and self-directed. Authentic assessment, therefore, blurs the lines between teaching, learning and assessment (Pickette & Dodge, 2001).

Rubrics as performance-based assessment, evaluate learner performance on any given task or set of tasks that ultimately leads to a final product, or learning outcome. Rubrics use specific criteria as a basis for evaluating or assessing learner performance as indicated in narrative descriptions that are separated into levels of possible performance related to a given task. Starting with the highest level and progressing to the lowest, these levels of performance are used to assess the defined set of tasks as they relate to a final product or behaviour. Each level describes degrees of proficiency and each level is assigned a value that rates the degree of proficiency or learner performance. Rating scales used can be numerical, qualitative or a combination of numerical and qualitative.

They further explain that rating scales can be either holistic or analytical. Holistic scales offer several dimensions together while analytical scales offer a separate scale for various dimensions. Holistic scoring is more global and does little to separate the tasks in any given product, but rather views the final product as a set of interrelated tasks contributing to whole. Anchor points are used to assign value to descriptions of products or performances that contribute to the whole. Holistic scoring proves to be efficient and quick. One score provides an overall impression of ability on any given product or work. It is most commonly used with writing products, but can be used just as effectively with other subject areas. The disadvantage of holistic scoring is that it does not provide detailed information about learner performance in specific areas of content or skill.

Analytic scoring breaks down the objective or final product into component parts and each part is scored independently. In this case, the total score is the sum of the rating for all of the parts that are being evaluated. When using analytic scoring, it is necessary to treat each component or part as separate to avoid bias toward the whole product. There are occasions when there are two raters who score learners' work. This is to assure reliability in results. If there is a wide discrepancy among the scores, then raters are obliged to discuss why they gave certain ratings. In some cases, a third rater is called in to settle any discrepancy. This practice is mostly used with high stake testing such as state mandate testing. Whether holistic scales or analytical scales are used, the important factors in developing effective rubrics is the use of clear criteria that will be used to rate a learner's work and that the performance being evaluated is directly observable. More importantly, learners should be informed as to what criteria they are being held accountable.

**Figure1: The Process of Drawing up Rubrics**




*Source: Van Rooyen, 2003*

There are two types of rubrics; namely, holistic and analytic (Figure 1). Holistic rubrics require the teacher to score the overall process or product, without judging the parts separately. In contrast, with analytic rubrics the teacher scores separate individual parts of the product or performance first, and then sums up the individual scores to obtain a total score (Van Rooyen, 2003). The teacher needs to have a clear understanding of both types of rubrics so that he or she can choose correctly which type to use.

#### 2.4.4.1 Holistic Rubrics

Holistic rubrics are used when errors in some part of the process can be tolerated, provided the overall quality is high (Van Rooyen, 2003). The uses of holistic rubrics are more appropriate when assessment tasks require learners to create some sort of response and where there is no definite correct answer. The focus of a score report using holistic rubrics is the overall quality, proficiency or understanding of the specific content and skills. This is an assessment on a one-dimensional level. Holistic rubrics can result in a somewhat quicker scoring process than analytic rubrics. This is due to the fact that the educator is required to read through or otherwise examine the learner's product or performance only in order to get an overall sense of what the learner was able to accomplish. Since assessment of the overall performance is the key, holistic rubrics are also typically used when the purpose of the performance assessment is summative. At most, only limited feedback is provided to the learner as a result of scoring performance tasks in this manner.

Holistic scoring rubrics are more global and do little to separate the tasks or assignment in any given product and the final product are a set of interrelated tasks contributing to the whole. Anchor points are used to assign value to descriptions of products or performances that contribute to the whole. Holistic scoring proves to be efficient and quick. One score provides an overall impression of ability on any given product or work. It is most commonly used with writing products, but can be used just as effectively with other subject areas. The disadvantage of holistic scoring is that it does not provide detailed information about student performance in specific areas of content or skill.

Baron and Keller (2003) also say that an analytic scoring breaks down the objective or final product into component parts and each part is scored independently. In this case, the total score is the sum of the rating for all of the parts that are being evaluated. When using analytic scoring, it is necessary to treat each component or part as separate to avoid bias toward the whole product. Whether holistic scales or analytical scales are used, the important factors in developing effective rubrics is the use of clear criteria that will be used to rate a student's work and that the performance being evaluated is directly observable. More importantly, learners should be informed as to what criteria they are being held accountable.

**Table 2: A template for holistic rubrics**

| **Template for Holistic Rubrics** | |
|---|---|
| **Score** | **Description** |
| 4 | Demonstrates complete understanding of the problem. All requirements of task is included in the response. |
| 3 | Demonstrates considerable understanding of the problem. All requirements of the task are included in the response. |
| 2 | Demonstrates partial understanding of the problem. Most requirements of the task are included in the response. |
| 1 | Demonstrates little or no understanding of the problem. Many requirements of the task are included in the response. |

*Source: Van Rooyen, 2003*

Holistic rubrics are quick scoring guides and provide an overview of learner achievement. They can easily obtain a single dimension if that is adequate for teachers' purpose. Wright (2008:252) says that holistic rubric is an approach to evaluation that provides one ordinal score for whole performance. He also stresses that the great advantage of using a holistic or big picture assessment system is that it is time efficient and less labour intensive.

#### 2.4.4.2 Analytic Rubrics

Goodrich (2006:16) explains that rubrics are assessment tools that define quality expectations for a project, assignment, skills or behaviour. Rubrics are structured in the form of a matrix or table. Criteria for each component of rubrics to be assessed are listed vertically in the left-hand column

with corresponding definitions of the various levels of the quality for each component listed horizontally. Analytic rubrics are usually preferred when a fairly focused type of response is required, for example, if a task requires one or two acceptable responses and creativity is not an essential feature of the learner's responses. Analytic rubrics result initially in several scores, followed by a summed total score. This is assessment on a multidimensional level. As previously mentioned, the use of analytical rubrics can cause the scoring process to be slower, mainly because assessing several different skills or characteristics individually requires the educator to examine the product several times (Van Rooyen, 2003).

Both the construction and use of analytic rubrics can be quite time-consuming. Each individual's work should be examined separately for each of the specific performance tasks or scoring criteria. However, there are substantial advantages of the use of analytic rubrics. Feedback offered to learners and teachers is extensive. Learners receive specific feedback on their performance with respect to each of the individual scoring criteria, something that does not happen when using holistic rubrics. Analytic rubrics also make it possible to create a profile of specific learner strengths and weaknesses.

**Table 3: A template for analytical rubrics**

| **Template for analytical rubrics** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **No yet achieved(NA) Code:1** | **Partially achieved (PA) Code: 2** | **Achieved (A) Code: 3** | **Outstanding Achievement (A) Code: 4** | **Score** |
| 1 | Description reflecting beginning level of performance | Description reflecting movement towards mastery level of performance | Description reflecting achievement of performance | Description reflecting highest level of performance | |
| 2 | Description reflecting beginning level of performance | Description reflecting movement towards mastery level of performance | Description reflecting achievement of performance | Description reflecting highest level of performance | |
| 3 | Description reflecting | Description reflecting | Description reflecting | Description reflecting highest | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | beginning level of performance | movement towards mastery level of performance | achievement of performance | level of performance | |
| 4 | Description reflecting beginning level of performance | Description reflecting movement towards mastery level of performance | Description reflecting achievement of performance | Description reflecting highest level of performance | |

*Source: Van Rooyen, 2003*

Rating scales can either be holistic or analytical or both. Holistic scales offer several dimensions together while analytical scales offer a separate scale for various dimensions. Regardless of which type of rubric is selected, specific performance criteria and observable indicators must be identified as an initial step to development. Teachers must consider what they need the result for. For overall summative feedback, a holistic scoring approach would be better. On the other hand, if formative feedback is required, an analytic scoring rubric should be used. One type of rubric is not inherently better than the other. A format that works for the specific purpose of the assessment may be worth finding. Holistic rubrics group several different assessment criteria and classify them together under grade headings. Analytic rubrics, on the other hand, separate different assessment criteria and address them comprehensively. The values can be expressed either numerically or by letter grade. As demonstrated in the templates above, Van Rooyen (2003) stressed that various levels of the learner performance can be defined using quantitative (numerical) or qualitative (descriptive) labels. If a rubric contains four levels of proficiency or understanding on a continuum, quantitative labels would typically range from 1 to 4. When using qualitative labels, learners have much more flexibility and can be more creative.

Holistic scoring is more global and does little to separate the tasks in any given product, but rather views the final product as a set of interrelated tasks contributing to the whole. Anchor points are used to assign value to descriptions of products or performances that contribute to the whole. Holistic scoring proves to be efficient and quick. One score provides an overall impression of ability on any given product or work. It is most commonly used with writing products, but can be used just as effectively with other subject areas. The disadvantage of holistic

scoring is that it does not provide detailed information about learners' performance in specific areas of content or skill. Analytic scoring breaks down the objective or final product into component parts and each part are scored independently. In this case, the total score is the sum of the rating for all of the parts that are being evaluated. When using analytic scoring, it is necessary to treat each component or part as separate to avoid bias toward the whole product.

Whether holistic scales or analytical scales are used (Figure 1), the important factors in developing effective rubrics are the use of clear criteria that will be used to rate a learners' work and that performance being evaluated is directly observable. More importantly, learners should be informed as to what criteria they are being held accountable for. They must also be made aware that rubrics are performance-based assessments that evaluate performance on any given task or set of tasks that ultimately leads to a final product or learning outcome. Rubrics use specific criteria as a basis for evaluating or assessing learner performance related to a given task. Starting with the highest level and progressing to the lowest, these levels of performance are used to assess the defined set of tasks as they relate to a final product or behaviour. Each level describes degrees of proficiency and each level is assigned a value that rates the degree of proficiency or learner performance. Rating scales are used, they can be numerical, qualitative or a combination of the two.

Analytic rubrics may provide meaningful and specific feedback along multiple dimensions. Scoring tends to be more consistent across learners and grades. It can be easier for the teachers to share with learners and parents about certain strengths and weaknesses. Learners will be helped to better understand the nature of quality work.

### 2.4.5 Creation of Rubrics

The key to designing original rubrics is to determine the concept or skill that will be taught before creating rubrics. Creating rubrics is the hard part, using them is relatively easy. Once one has created a rubric, it can be outlined and given to learners to assess their own progress on a task or project. Self-assessments should not count towards a grade because it can compromise

learners' honesty. The point is for the rubric to help learners learn more and produce better final products.

Hickey (1998) highlights that to develop a scoring grid, the assessor needs to clearly identify qualities that demonstrate a highly proficient performance, as well as those that reflect a lower proficiency level. Graduated criteria descriptors should be constructive rather than being worded with negative connotations. For example, proficient and experts could be used as labels for the best performances, apprentice and rookie for the worst.

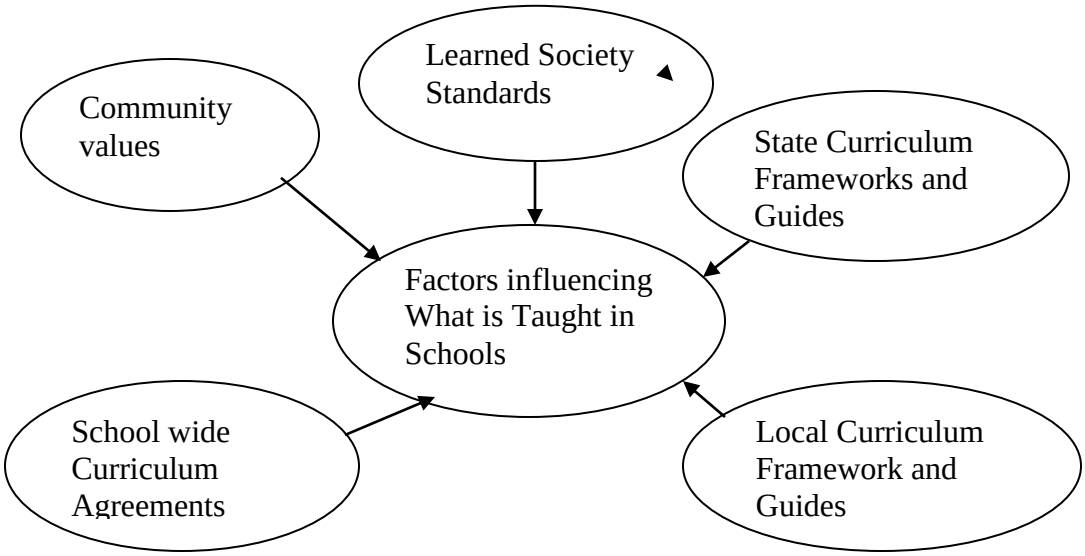
Hickey (1998) further identified the steps for creating an original rubric as follows:

- Determine concept or skill to be taught;
- Isolate 3-5 evaluation components;
- Determine assignment that would best help learners demonstrate the evaluation components;
- Locate materials for assessment and record keeping; and
- Share rubric with learners prior to final assessment.

A teacher must decide what criteria or essential elements must be present in the learners' work to ensure that it is high in quality. The teacher can even consider selecting samples of exemplary learners' work that can be shown to other learners when setting assignments. The teacher must also decide how many levels of achievement he or she will include in the rubric. For each criterion or essential element of quality, there is need to develop a clear description of performance at each achievement level but leave space for additional comments and final grade. The teacher can enhance learners' learning experience by involving them in the rubric development process. Either as a class or individually, learners can decide upon criteria for grading the assignment. It would be helpful to provide learners with samples of exemplary work. In such an activity, the teacher functions as facilitator, guiding learners towards the final goal used for the assignment. This activity not only results in a greater learning experience, it also enables students to feel a greater ownership and inclusion in the decision making process.

Choosing curriculum content for learners was identified by Arends (2008) as important to the learners. He said that deciding what to teach to learners was among the most difficult aspects of teacher planning because there was so much that could be learned and so little time.

**Figure 2: Factors influencing what is taught in schools**




*Source: Arends (2001:52)*

These factors were explained by Arends (2001:52) in Figure 2 as follows:

*Learned Society Standards:* Curriculum has traditionally been drawn from various academic disciples deemed central to learners' education. Content from the subject is sequenced over learners' twelve years of schooling, and specific accomplishments in each subject are required for high school graduation. Each subject has learned society or professional association that makes recommendations about what should be taught. Sometimes these recommendations are made in the form of performance standards of what learners should learn.

*State Curriculum Frameworks and Mastery Tests:* The National Department of Education has curriculum guides or frameworks, as they are often called, that define what learners should know and how the content is taught and assessed, be able to do as they proceed through the various levels of schooling.

*Community Values and Local Curriculum Frameworks:* community values and societal viewpoints have an important influence on what is taught in schools, particularly in subjects that contain topics that are controversial. Larger societal views influence the content and standards

that appear in the frameworks developed by professional associations, and local community values impact local curriculum frameworks.

There is a need to always give learners time to revise their work after self-assessment, and then having peer-assessment. The teacher might emphasise the fact that peer-assessment, like self-assessment, is intended to help learners to do better work. The teacher may also need to hold learners accountable for peer-assessments by having them sign off on the rubric. The learners can then see that it is important for their feedback to be fair and accurate. The peer then can ask for evidence that supports their opinions when their assessments do not match his or hers, but again, giving time for revision after peer-assessment in crucial. Parents might also use rubrics to help their children with their homework. Finally, when one assesses learners' work, one might use the same rubric that was used for self- and peer-assessment. When the marked rubrics are handed back with the learners' work, they will know what they did well and where they need to work on in the future. Learners' performance might also help the teacher to identify the learners learning challenges. From this, the teacher might be able to create some intervention strategies.

The researcher also identified factors that influenced the implementations of the assessment rubrics in the Intermediate Phase. Some of these factors were the physical and human resources, minimal support given to the teachers by the departmental officials and SMT, relevant in-service training of teachers, relevant qualifications to teach the relevant subjects and Post Provisioning Model (PPM) used by the Department of Education. Schools are supplied with equipment without proper training on how that equipment works and so, equipment at school is unused. Due to PPM some schools did not have sufficient posts, so some teachers teach subject they did not specialize in, some teach more than one grade in a class, that is multi-grade teaching. The SESs in the Intermediate Phase are also supporting teachers in the senior phase, so no proper attention is given to each phase. In-service training of teachers as well as Professional Support Forum (PSF) takes two to four hours which is too short. All this may pose a barrier to the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

Grading (if you must) is also relatively easy with rubrics. A piece of work that reflects the highest level of quality for each criterion obviously deserves an A, one that is consistently in the lowest level is a D or F, and so on. Rubrics can also be included in portfolios. In whatever way we see them, the idea is to support and to evaluate learners learning. Learners, as well as teachers, should respond to the use of rubrics by thinking, yes, this is what I need! Learning to create rubrics takes time and intellectual investment. Once the task becomes second nature, it actually saves time while creating a higher quality learner product. They become most effective when teachers provide learners with concrete examples of poor, mediocre and good work (CTM-Curriculum Work Group, 2001).

CTM-Curriculum Work Group (2001) views creating rubrics as determining learning outcomes that will be assessed. In creating rubrics, teachers should review the measurable criteria (performance indicators) that should be used to assess performance. Each should focus on a different skill and a teacher should do the following: Decide on how the range will be measured, that is a number scale or word scale. Describe three or four different levels of performance for each criterion. First describe the performance for the highest level. Then circle descriptive words which can vary according to level of performance. Then write the other performance descriptions for that criterion. Test the rubrics on learners to see if they understand the concepts and terms. By doing these teachers can overcome the challenges they encounter when using assessment rubrics.

Brewer (1996) also emphasises that rubrics are becoming increasingly popular with teachers moving toward more authentic, performance-based assessments. Recent publications contain some rubrics. Chances are, however, that the teacher will have to develop a few to reflect his or her own curriculum and teaching style. To boost the learning leverage of rubrics, the rubric design process should engage learners.

#### 2.4.5.1 Issues to Consider for Rubrics Creation

Washington State University (2008) states that the following questions can be used when creating rubrics: Are the characteristics of each performance level described clearly? Will

learners be able to self-assess with descriptors given? Will the descriptors give students enough information to know what they need to improve? Does the rubric adequately reflect the range of levels at which learners may actually perform given tasks? Are the criteria at each level defined clearly enough to ensure that scoring is accurate, unbiased and consistent? Could several teachers use the rubric and score a student's performance within the range? Does the rubric attend to process as well as product? Are all criteria equally important, or does it make sense to weight an element more than others? Are you attending carefully to the language used in the rubric (Washington State University, 2008)?

The following principles by Brewer (1996) must be observed when creating rubrics: Use demonstrative verbs, keep to observable behaviours, and avoid negatives (begins without preparation versus does not prepare), be specific and instead of many errors you may want to specify six or more errors. At the same time, be sure the rubric is generally qualitative in nature rather than quantitative. In this study, teachers must understand that rubrics need to be piloted and tested. They also need to be discussed with students to create an understanding of expectations; you cannot write a paragraph defining each word in the rubric. Fiderer (1999) once, asked the following question: Are the criteria at each level defined clearly enough to ensure that the scoring is accurate, unbiased and consistent? This gives the study a clear indication whether the teachers have a clear understanding of using rubrics as assessment tools or not.

There is a thin balance between modelling excellent work and creating a template that is replicated by the learners' *ad nauseum* to the detriment of creativity. If learners can achieve a high score on all the criteria and still not perform well at the task the teacher should know that he or she has the wrong criteria. He or she should then consider whether a rubric needs revision for a specific task and then make sure that the expectations in the rubric are directly aligned with the instruction of the lesson or unit. Learners should not be expected to do what they haven't been previously taught or shown. Creating rubrics is time consuming and the more often they can be applied, the better. It is also more informative for students if the same rubric is used again and again, because they can see themselves making progress over time.

#### 2.4.5.2 Creating an Original Rubric

Eppink (2002) states that, the key to designing original rubrics is to determine the concept or skill that will be taught, before creating the rubric. He further identifies the steps for creating an original rubric as follows:

- Determine concept or skill to be taught;
- Isolate 3-5 evaluation components;
- Design scoring grid with graduated levels of proficiency;
- Determine performance tasks that would best help learners;
- Locate materials for assessment and record keeping; and
- Share rubric with learners prior to final assessment.

The evaluation and creation of any rubrics must determine not only whether any materials are needed for the rubric assessment but also how records of the assessment can be kept. Finally, the teacher should share the rubrics with the learners and inform them of specific skills that will be assessed. By doing this, the teacher has identified the expectations set forth at the various skill levels of the rubric. This is often posted for learners to refer to frequently as they practise the skills set forth and focus their practice sessions. All learners have different ways of processing information. For one learner, the ability to explore various skill levels within the framework of practice sessions is helpful; these learners need to try it all before they settle on what is best for them. The very nature of rubrics as an authentic assessment tool gives both these learners the ability to learn in a way that is best for them. Both learners clearly know what the desired expectation is from the beginning, leading them to engage in directed self-evaluation through the learning process. Eppink (2002) further clarifies this by saying that when learner performance is assessed using rubrics, evaluation does not take learners by surprise. From the beginning, a clear outline shows the connection between the demonstrations of a skill.

### 2.4.6 Designing Rubrics

Koshy (2008) outlines the following when developing rubrics, firstly, teachers need to define the Learning Outcomes (LOs) or objectives that learners are expected to achieve. From that point, teachers may begin to work backwards defining possible criteria or performance levels that learners may possibly demonstrate. This level would range from possible highest performance to the lowest performance that can be expected from learners on any given task and would provide descriptions of performances for each level. Each level should be directly observable. To determine how to describe each level, use anchor products that represent various performances that can be evaluated as high quality, average and low. The teacher should have at least three samples of each level to make such judgements and he or she should use these samples to evaluate all of the learners' products. Scores (either quantitative or qualitative or a combination of both) can be assigned for each level from the highest to the lowest or vice versa.

Once each level is determined with rating scales assigned, the teacher can share the descriptions with the learners and ask for feedback so that each level is clearly understood by learners. It is imperative that learners clearly understand how they are being evaluated and what each level represents in relation to scores assigned. This really helps learners to understand the standards that they are being held accountable to achieve. It is also a great tool for helping learners' self-diagnose strengths and weaknesses so that they become part of the planning for instruction process. Learners are to be provided with examples of work (kept anonymous) that illustrates each performance level. Using a rubric, teachers explain to learners what performance level means in relation to the rubric and rating scales used to evaluate the performances. Learners must also be given the opportunity to rate some examples of work that would be scored using rubrics.

Hudson (2005) further states that the teachers must ensure that the scoring system is objective and consistent. It must be used to assess all learners. The tasks must be appropriate to the learners' abilities to avoid or minimise scoring errors. One must be practical when designing the scoring system. No more than six dimensions should be used for a single final product. For rubrics that define a set of tasks to be performed, there should be more than one dimension.

Descriptions within each dimension should also be clear enough for learners to focus on what is expected. Fewer dimensions are better than more in most cases when developing rubrics.

There are still many ways to design a rubric, some are very technically demanding. Some of the basic steps and factors to be considered when designing rubrics will be answered by using the following questions; what is the task and what kind of performance should be assessed? Decide on the elements of the task. What are the different parts of the performance that will be assessed? What knowledge must be mastered? What skills must be used or actions taken? About issues, should personal opinions, values or insight be expressed? What will make the task successful in respect of each of these issues (Kramer, 1999)?

The teacher alone could decide this but it would be better if the teacher works with learners to agree on the elements that might make a successful task. These elements are, namely: Condense the most important ideas into a shorter list of main parts of the task; assessment of a task must be carried out by learners, the teacher or both. A complex and cumbersome instrument for assessment is not needed to identify the most significant performance criteria that will be looked at in assessing a task and define each of the performance criteria. Each criterion needs certain actions to be taken by the learner in order to achieve success. What does each criterion mean in practice? The performance criterion needs to be stated as an action that can be assessed (Van Rooyen, 2003).

This means describing different levels of performance, excellent, acceptable and poor including expansion on what they would consider to exemplify the different levels of performance in each category. These involve, first, to describe the benchmark-that level of performance, that is, the minimum for the performance to be acceptable; after this, describe excellent performance and non-acceptable performance, add the detail for each level of performance; fill in all the details so that anyone can understand. Lastly, check and verify the final rubric. This means applying and testing the criteria to see if they work. Check with other teachers and against the original intentions of the task. By so doing both the learner and the teacher might be in the position to understand and implement the assessment rubric with ease.

Table 4 below shows the design process, that is, a step by step process for designing scoring rubrics for classroom use by the Department of Education (DoE) (Van Rooyen, 2003).

**Table 4: Steps in the design of scoring rubrics.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Step 1 | Re-examine the learning objectives to be addressed by the task. This allows you to match your scoring guide with your objectives and actual instruction. |
| Step 2 | Identify specific observable attitudes that you want to see, as well as those you do not want to see, your learners demonstrate in their product, process or performance. Specify the characteristics, skills or types of behaviour that you will be looking for, as well as common mistakes you want to note as learning points. |
| Step 3 | Brainstorm characteristics that describe each attribute. Identify ways to describe above average, average and below average performance for each observable attribute identified in step 2. |
| Step 4a | For Holistic Rubrics, write thorough narrative descriptions for excellent work and poor work incorporating each attribute into the description. Describe the highest and lowest levels of performance using the descriptors for each attribute separately. |
| Step 4b | For Analytic Rubrics, write thorough narrative descriptions for excellent work and poor work for each individual attribute. Describe the highest and lowest levels of performance using the descriptors for each attribute separately. |
| Step 5a | For Holistic Rubrics, complete the rubric by describing other levels on the continuum that range from excellent to poor work for the collective attributes. Write descriptions of all intermediate levels of performance. |
| Step 5b | For Analytic Rubrics, complete the rubric by describing other levels on the continuum that range from excellent to poor work for attribute. Write descriptions for all intermediate levels of performance for each attribute separately. |
| Step 6 | Collect samples of learners' work that exemplify each level. These will help you score in the future by serving as benchmarks. |
| Step 7 | Revise the rubrics as necessary. Be prepared to reflect on the effectiveness of the rubrics and revise them prior to their next implementation. |

*Source: Van Rooyen, 2003*

These guidelines from Table 4 might help teachers to design their own rubrics. Learners appreciate an effective and usable rubric that is explicit and built from well-defined assessment criteria. This ensure that assessment criteria be based on specific indicators associated with

intended learning outcomes, since the criteria become a referent for both the teacher and learners. This ensures that learners' participation in developing the criteria and rubrics would motivate them and acknowledge their actions. Moskal (2003) adds that the overall benefits to learners who are involved in developing a rubric include clarity about what skills they need to master, greater confidence in their abilities and more tenacity in solving problems themselves. Recommended can be made that a new partnership in the classroom is required, where both teacher and learners contribute actively towards aligning the outcomes, pedagogy and measurement methods.

Rohrbach (2010) notes that many teachers now use rubrics in their evaluation process and Dornisch and McLoughlin (2006) suggest that a credible, effective and implementable rubric is capable of reducing two major concerns associated with assessing creative product or performance: over-subjective and or inconsistent evaluation, leading to unfairness to learners; and the unreasonable time involved in giving feedback to or grading learners. Ehmann (2005) advocates embedding the use of criteria and rubrics in design-studio practices to enhance learners' learning. Elizondo-Montemayor (2004:11) concurs and strongly believes that assessment standardisation during wok-in-progress was helpful because teachers and learners would know exactly the expected outcome from each.

### 2.4.7 Development of Rubrics

Orrell (2003) says that rubrics provide descriptions at four levels of attainment across a range of generic learning attributes that might teach and assess. Developing a rubric is a dynamic process. As the components and goals of instruction become clearer to the teacher, the ability to define ranges and levels of execution within the active learning experience will make the development of a rubric easier. Some teachers may require a run through before they are ready to finalise a rubric. With unfamiliar content, it is okay to write a rubric after the fact and save it for future reference. Even after a rubric is used, it may need modification (Szpyrka & Smith, 1995). Readily developed or designed assessment rubrics contained in the policies that are Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statements (CAPS) documents for different subjects are not helpful because teachers need clarity before they can be implemented in the class.

Rubrics can be introduced to learners before they are used. There are of samples strategies for introducing rubrics to learners as stated by Tractenberg, Umans & McCarter (2010) below:

- Provide samples, or smaller sections of samples, of a complete assignment (consider asking previous learners for permission to use their assignments as samples, provided that you remove their names);
- Have learners evaluate the assignments individually using rubric;
- Have learners share their results with a partner and justify their evaluation by explaining how they used the rubric;
- Ask a few pairs to share their responses with the class. (Paying attention to learners' reactions or interpretations of the rubric is useful and may inform rubric adjustments); and
- Provide your own evaluation of the sample assignments and explain how you used the rubric to assess the work

*Steps in the development of rubrics*

Szpyrka and Smith (1995) have provided guidelines to determine which concepts, skills, or performance standards are assessed. The guidelines include the following steps: List the concepts and rewrite them into statements which reflect both cognitive and performance components, identify the most important concepts or skills being assessed in the task. On the basis of the purpose of the task, determine the number of points to be used for the rubric (example: 4-point scale or 6-point scale) and starting with the desired performance, determine the description for each score remembering to use the importance of each element of the task or performance to determine the score or level of the rubric. Compare learners' work to the rubric. Record the elements that caused you to assign a given rating to the work. Revise the rubric descriptions based on performance elements reflected by the learners work that you did not capture in your draft rubric. Rethink your scale: Does a 0-point scale differentiate enough between types of student work to satisfy you? Adjust the scale if necessary. Reassess learners work and score it against the developing of the assessment rubrics (Szpyrka & Smith, 1995).

From an assessment workshop presented by Brookhart (2003) at the Honolulu Community College on August 31, 2004, it was outlined that it is often easier to adapt a rubric that someone

else has created, but if you are starting from scratch, here are some steps that might make the task easier: Identify what you are assessing, for example, critical thinking; Identify the characteristics of what you are assessing, for example, appropriate use of evidence, recognition of logical fallacies; and Describe the best work you could expect using these characteristics.

*The following steps; describe the top category:*

In developing rubrics, the teacher must follow the following steps: To describe the worst acceptable product using the above characteristics and this describes the lowest acceptable category. Describe an unacceptable product, describes the lowest category. Develop descriptions of intermediate-level products and assign them to intermediate categories. A scale that runs from 1 to 5 can be developed (unacceptable, marginal, acceptable, good, outstanding), 1 to 3 (novice, competent, exemplary), or any other set that is meaningful. Colleagues who were not involved in the rubric's development can be asked to apply to some products or behaviours and revise as needed to eliminate ambiguities.

The first step in developing a scoring rubric is to clearly identify the qualities that need to be displayed in a learner's work to demonstrate proficient performance (Brookhart, 2003). The identified qualities will form the top level or levels of scoring criteria for the scoring rubric. The decision can then be made as to whether the information that is desired from the evaluation can best be acquired through the use of an analytic or holistic scoring rubric. If an analytic scoring rubric is created, then each criterion is considered separately as the description of the different score level is developed. This process results in the separate descriptive scoring schemes for each evaluation factor. For holistic scoring rubrics, the collection of criteria is considered throughout the construction of each level of scoring rubric and the result is single descriptive scoring scheme. After defining the criteria for the top level of performance, the evaluator's attention may be turned to defining the criteria for the lowest level of performance. What type of performance would suggest a very limited understanding of the concepts that are being assessed? The contrast between the criteria for top level performance and bottom level performance is too likely to suggest appropriate criteria for the middle level of performance. This approach would result in three score levels.

If greater distinctions are desired, then comparisons can be made for the criteria for each existing scores levels. The contrast between levels is likely to suggest criteria that may be used to create score levels that may be used to create score level that falls between the existing score levels. This comparison process can be used until the desired number of score levels is reached or until no further distinctions can be made. If meaningful distinctions between the score categories can be made, then additional score categories should not be created (Brookhart, 2003:10). It is better to have a few meaningful score categories than to have many score categories that are difficult or impossible to distinguish.

Each score category should be defined using description of work rather than judgment about the work (Brookhart, 2003:21). For example, learners' mathematical calculations contain no errors, is preferable over, learners' calculations are good. The phrase, no errors, is quantifiable. In order to determine whether a rubric provides adequate descriptions, another teacher may be asked to use the scoring rubric to evaluate a sub-set of student responses. Differences between the scores assigned by the original rubric developer and the second scorer will suggest how the rubric may be further clarified. From an assessment workshop presented by Brookhart (2003) at the Honolulu Community College on August 31, 2004, it was also said that in general a rubric is a scoring guide used in subjective assessments. A rubric implies that a rule defining the criteria of an assessment system is followed in evaluation. A rubric can be an explicit description of performance characteristics corresponding to a point on a rating scale. A scoring rubric makes explicit expected qualities of a rating scale or the definition of a single scoring point on a scale.

Rubrics are explicit schemes for classifying products or behaviours into categories that vary along a continuum. They can be used to classify virtually any product or behaviour, such as essays, research reports, portfolios, and works of art, recitals, oral presentations, performances and group activities. Judgements can be self-assessments by learners or by others, such as faculty, other learners or fieldwork supervisors. Rubrics can be used to provide formative feedback to students, to grade students, and or to assess programmes.

Rubrics have much strength: Complex products or behaviours can be examined efficiently. Developing a rubric helps to precisely define faculty expectations. Well-trained reviewers apply

the same criteria and standards, so rubrics are useful for assessments involving multiple reviewers. Summaries of results can reveal patterns of learners' strengths and areas of concern. Rubrics are criterion-referenced, rather than norm-referenced. Raters ask whether the learner meets the criteria for level 5 of the rubric rather than how well did this learner do compared to other students. This is more competitive grading scheme and is essential when using rubrics for programme assessment because you want to learn how well learners have met your standards. Ratings can be done by learners to assess their own work or they can be done by others, such as peers, fieldwork supervisions or faculty. These will help teachers and learners to develop their own rubrics.

Mora and Ochoa (2010) also explain the development of rubrics by starting on a small scale creating rubric for on assignment in a semester, ask colleagues if they have developed rubrics for similar assignments, although it takes time to build a rubric, time will be saved in the long run as grading and providing feedback on learner work becomes more streamlined. If teachers can interpret and understand the educational policies, and assessment policies in particular, the creation and development of assessment rubrics out of the already created ones in the assessment documents may be easier. The researcher has also identified that recording of the scores obtained from implementing the assessment rubrics poses challenges.

In this, Moskal and Leyden (2000) recommend careful planning in the construction and implementation of assessment rubrics, given the challenges associated with their reliability and validity as a scoring scheme. Dornisch and McLoughlin (2006) argue that the continual updating and maintenance associated with the implementation of assessment rubrics is time consuming. Rohrbach (2010:101) further reports on the problem of some design as teachers' and learners' lack of enthusiasm for the implementation of the assessment rubrics. While the learners appreciate the clarity that rubrics offer, they prefer feedback that is personal and poses questions, even though this is less informative.

#### 2.4.7.1 Anatomy of Rubrics for Learning and Assessing

The role of assessment in teaching happens to become a hot issue in education today. This has led to an increasing interest in performance-based education which poses a challenge in teachers designing instruction that is task-oriented. The trend is based on the premise that teaching and learning needs to be connected to the lives of the learners through relevant tasks that focus on learners' ability to use their knowledge and skills in meaningful ways. In this case, performance-based tasks require performance-based assessments in which the actual learner performance is assessed through a product, such as a completed project, work that demonstrates levels of task achievement. At times, performance-based assessment has been used interchangeably with authentic assessment and alternative assessment. In all cases, performance-based assessment has led to the use of a variety of alternative ways of evaluating or assessing learner progress (e.g., journals, checklists, portfolios, projects, rubrics, etc.) as compared to more traditional methods of measurement (viz., paper and pen testing). For the purpose of this study, the use of rubrics will be explored as a viable means of evaluating learners' performance.

Reynolds-Keefer (2010) further clarifies that learner performance can be defined as targeted tasks that lead to a product or overall learning outcome. Products can include a wide range of learner works that target specific skills. Some examples include communication skills such as demonstrated in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, or psychomotor skills requiring physical abilities to perform a given task. Target tasks can include behaviour expectations targeting complex tasks that learners are expected to achieve. Using rubrics is one way through which those teachers can evaluate or assess learner performance or proficiency in any given task as it relates to a final product or learning outcome. Thus, rubrics can provide valuable information about the degree to which a learner has achieved a defined learning outcome based on specific criteria that defined the framework for evaluation.

Scoring rubrics can be developed, adapted or created for a variety of purposes, from single task or different assessment to self-assessment, and each has its own design features. The most useful rubrics for promoting teaching and learning in the classroom are instructional rubrics, analytic-trait rubrics, and skill-focused rubrics. This study is particularly concerned with the type of

classroom rubrics that can be described as descriptive graphic rating scales which use generic traits as analytic performance criteria. The performance criteria in a rubric identify the dimensions of the performance or product that is being taught and assessed. The rubric in Table 4 contains generic performance criteria to assess the mapping skills of elementary learners. This rubric does not attempt to dichotomously measure specific geographic knowledge as being present/absent or right/wrong. Instead, it emphasises the development of valuable skills on a continuum. This particular rubric evolved from the curriculum model used in Ontario, Canada, where state curriculum standards are generally referred to as expectations. Mertler and McTighe (2001) offer a template for the development of such rubrics.

*Mapping skills Rubric*

The importance for designing the mapping skills rubric is to be used in a formative context to assess basic mapping skills. The rubric can be used for each performance criterion by circling or highlighting the level that best describes the observed performance. To emphasis this, reference can be made to exemplars of learners' work or the task indicator list that is provided with assessment task. Table 5 below explains the process.

**Table 5: Generic scoring rubric for classroom assessment of basic mapping skills**

| **Performance Criteria** | **Attribute** | **Level 1** | **Level 2** | **Level 3** | **Level 4** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The map includes the expected conventions (for example, title, legend, cardinal directions) and geographic elements (for example, countries, cities, rivers) | Breadth | The map contains few of the expected map conventions and geographic elements | The map contains some of the expected map conventions and geographic elements. | The map contains most of the expected map conventions and geographic elements. | The map contains all of the expected map conventions and geographic elements. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The map conventions are used correctly and the geographic elements are placed accurately. | Accuracy | The Expected map conventions and the geographic elements are seldom accurate. | The expected map conventions and the geographic elements are sometimes accurate. | The Expected map conventions and the geographic elements are usually accurate. | The Expected map conventions and the geographic elements are always accurate. |
| The map conventions are used appropriately in relation to the purpose of the map (for example, red dashed line indicating exit routes on the map for school fire drills). | Relevance | Map conventions and geographic elements are slightly relevant. | Map conventions and geographic elements are moderately relevant. | Map conventions and geographic elements are mainly relevant. | Map conventions and geographic elements are extremely relevant. |
| The map clearly communicates the targeted geographic information (for example, symbols are easy to interpret, legend is easy to read). | Clarity | Information on the map is slightly clear. | Information on the map is moderately clear. | Information on the map is mainly clear. | Information on the map is extremely clear. |

*Source: Tierney & Marielle, 2004.*

Table 5 shows that the performance criteria in this type of rubric are designed to broaden learning and achievement targets, rather than features of a particular task and this increases the universality of the rubrics' application. The trade-off for this benefit is that the rubric does not contain concrete or task-specific descriptions to guide interpretation (Mertler, 2001). Generic rubrics should always be accompanied by exemplars of learners' work or task indicator lists. The variability of learners and rater interpretation can be reduced significantly when generic terms are clarified with task-specific exemplars or indicators. A descriptor such as, moderately clear, becomes more observable when it is accompanied by a list of possible indicators. Using the mapping skills example, the clarity of a student's product could be affected by the labels, the border style, the background colour, or the choice of font. However, these product-specific indicators should not be explicitly stated on the rubric itself, not only because they limit the application of the rubric, but also because they can be easily confused with the targeted criteria.

The attribute, or underlying characteristics of each performance criterion, on the other hand, should be explicitly stated within the rubric. Herein was illustrated in a rubric that put forth for scoring post-secondary academic skills. The attribute is highlighted in a separate column. Each criterion statement is clearly articulated in the left-side column, and then modified four times to describe each level of the performance's attribute(s). The choice of words that describe the changing values of the attribute is another dimension that must be dealt with in rubric design. Verbal qualifiers, such as few, some, most and all, indicate what type of scale is being used for each performance criterion. Three measurement scales are commonly used: amount, frequency, and intensity (Rohrmann, 2002). The attribute's breadth varies in terms of amount or quantity, accuracy varies in terms of frequency, and the last two, relevancy, in terms of intensity.

#### 2.4.7.2 Existing Principles for Performance Criteria Descriptors in Scoring Rubrics

Principles or guidelines for rubrics design abound in current educational literature. In this study, assessment documents analysed were directly related to rubric design. Most of the principles reported in these documents specifically addressed the issue of performance criteria while many focused on the descriptors, and the impact of clarity on the reliability of the interpretations made by both the Intermediate Phase teachers, HoDs and SESs. Performance levels (or score points)

were clearly and descriptors were differentiated. Furthermore balance between generalised wording, which increases usability, and detailed description, which ensures greater reliability, must be achieve. Less frequently mentioned, but none the less a desirable quality of central concern, is the need for consistent wording to describe performance criteria across the levels of achievement (Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2003).

## 2.5 Consistency of the Attributes in Performance Criteria Descriptors

Given the fact that consistency has not been discussed extensively in relation to rubric design and development, it is not widely understood by rubric developers as a technical requirement. The variety of terms that have been used to date in the literature on performance criteria may also have confused matters. Parallel language should be used in order to ensure consistency and is helpful when the attribute is clear, but this is regrettably not always the case. The performance criteria attributes in many of the rubrics that are found on the internet are implied rather than explicitly stated, and their nature shifts from level to level. In a list of technical requirements, problem were addressed and identifies as coherent rubrics those with consistent descriptor attributes.

Although the descriptor for each scale point is different from the ones before and after other descriptors, the changes concern the quality of the (fixed) criteria, not language that explicitly introduces new criteria or shifts the importance of the various criteria. Simmon and Forgette-Giroux (2001) also discuss consistency in performance criteria. They suggest that the descriptors for each level should deal with the same performance criteria and attires in order for the progressive scale to be continuous and consistent from one level to the other.

The language that has been used in educational literature to discuss the consistency of performance criteria varies somewhat, the idea is essentially the same. Consistency in performance criteria can basically be viewed as reference to the same attributes in the descriptors across the levels of achievement. The attribute, or underlying characteristic of each criterion is consistently present across the scale, and it is the degree of the attribute that changes (for example, level 4 reflects more accuracy than level 1). In another example, a rubric used in an

intermediate history class might contain a performance criterion such as: learner demonstrates an accurate and thorough understanding of the causes of the rebellion. The attributes of this criterion would be the accuracy and the depth of the learners' understanding. In this case, accuracy and depth should be explicitly stated in the criterion statement, and they should also be present in each of the qualitative descriptors for that criterion across the levels of achievement.

### 2.5.1 Improving the Consistency of Performance Criteria Descriptors

Describing performance criteria can be a challenging aspect of rubric construction, which is in itself a task that many teachers find time-consuming. As an alternative to developing or formulating rubrics from scratch, teachers may adapt ready-made versions for use in their classrooms. A quick investigation using any popular search engine reveals that there are numerous sources for an endless variety of rubrics. When adapting a scoring rubric, it is important to realize that the original purpose of the assessment may have resulted in design features that are not suitable for the adapted use. Many of the rubrics that are accessible online were created by teachers for specific purpose, and others were originally designed as holistic rubrics for number of assessment tasks, where the goal was to create an overall portrait of the performance. The latter are not necessarily intended to describe a continuum of learning as it is assessed in classrooms. The following examples were created to illustrate how some of the consistency problems found in accessible rubrics can be corrected for classroom use. In both examples, the problems are highlighted in the first row, and the modified versions are presented in the following rows (see Tables 5 and 6).

*Example One: Basic Consistency*

Many ready-made rubrics have basic consistency problems, meaning that the attribute or the performance criterion itself changes from level to level. Figure 6 presents a task-specific rubric for assessing a science journal. The rubric is not a one size fi all type of a rubric. The product, a science journal, is listed as if it is a performance criterion. This provides very little guidance for students who are learning to write a science journal. It needs specialised knowledge to interpret and intersperse the knowledge content. The attributes are implicit and they change from level to level. At the Master's level, only breadth remains of the original attributes, but clarity is added.

And, finally, at the Expert level, neatness is further added, along with clarity and a vague requirement for creativity. In the modified version, an effort was made to stay true to the implied intent of the original criteria.

The changes involve in stating the performance criteria and the attributes clearly, as well as describing the qualitative degrees of performance more consistently from level to level. The modifications make the task, criteria and attributes clearer for learners, and they broaden the possibilities for the rubric's use. Accompanied by exemplars of learners work or product-specific indicators, this rubric could be used by teachers and learners to assess journal writing in any content-area class. It could also be used to assess the same skills in either a formative or a summative context with respective instructions. The corrections for this example deal specifically with the performance criteria. To complete the rubric, title, a statement of purpose and instructions for using the rubric should also be added. (See Table 6 below).

**Table 6: Example of Inconsistent Performance Criteria and Correction for Science Journal:**

| Performance Criteria | Attribute | Novice | Apprentice | Master | Expert |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Problem Criterion** | | | | | |
| Science Journal | (not stated) | Writing is messy and entries contain spelling errors. Pages are out of order or missing. | Entries are incomplete. There may be some spelling or grammar errors. | Entries contain most of the required elements and are clearly written. | Entries are creatively written. Procedures and results are clearly explained. Journal is well organized presented in a duotang. |

**Suggested Correction**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The required elements are present for each journal entries (for example Lab Summary, Materials, Procedure, Results, Conclusion). | Breadth | Few of the required elements are in each journal entry. | Some of the required elements are present in each journal entry. | Most of the required elements are present in each journal entry. | All required elements are present in each journal entry. |
| The entries are clearly written (for example style, grammar enhance understanding) . | Clarity | Journal entries are slightly clear. | Journal entries are moderately clear. | Journal entries are mainly clear. | Journal entries are extremely clear. |
| The journal is organized (for example visible titles, ordered pages, and others). | Organisation | The journal is slightly organized. | The journal is moderately organized. | The journal is mainly organized. | The journal is extremely organized. |

*Source: Tierney and Marielle, 2004*

*Example Two: Negative/Positive Consistency*

Many rubrics, such as the problematic examples presented in Tables 7 and 8, describe the lower levels of performance criteria in purely negative terms, which create a dichotomous (negative/positive) tone in the rubric. For young learners who are progressing along a continuum, this format sends the wrong message. Learners who find themselves on the lower part of the scoring rubric may not be motivated to progress with this type of feedback. The performance criteria in a classroom rubric should reflect a positive learning continuum, and should not suggest that progression from Levels 2 and 3 is a leap from failure to success. This does not mean that words, such as none, not or seldom, should always be avoided in rubric design, but that their use should represent one end of a continuous and consistent scale without undue

negativity. However, when rubrics are not modified to reflect a positive continuum, they may perpetuate low expectations for certain students rather than problem learning.

In Table 7, autonomy, attention and enthusiasm are implicitly used as indications of silent reading ability. Essentially, such a complex and high-referenced skill is not one that can be adequately assessed with abstract attributes and a single criterion. The suggested corrections may highlight the limitations of the rubric as a tool for assessing performance criteria that rely highly on inference rather than direct observation. It is possible to measure these attributes with frequency and amount scales, but it is questionable whether the rubric would provide an accurate assessment of a student's reading ability. The process of articulation helps ensure that rubric designers are aware of the attributes that are actually involved, and forces them to question the validity of the performance being assessed in relation to the targeted construct. This example also illustrates that it is possible to include more than one attribute for each performance criterion without compromising the statement's clarity.

**Table 7: The Table below shows an example of Inconsistent Performance Criteria for the Assessment of Silent Reading Skills:**

| Performance Criteria | Attribute | Emerging | Developing | Achieving | Extending |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Problem Criterion** | | | | | |
| Silent Reading | (not stated) | Off task and disruptive during sustained silent reading period. | Has difficulty choosing books for sustained silent reading. | Reads independently during sustained silent reading. | Chooses books with enthusiasm and reads Independently during sustained silent reading. |

**Suggested Corrections**

1. If reading ability is the target, one may rethink the criterion to ensure that the attribute is meaningful.
2. If learning behaviours are being measured and autonomy and attentions are desired attributes, one may reword the descriptors as shown below.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learner reads independently and stays on task during a silent reading period. | Autonomy and Attention | Learner seldom reads independently and stays on task for little of the time during a period of silent reading. | Learner sometimes reads independently and stays on task some of the time during a period of silent reading. | Learner usually reads independently and stays on task most of the time during a silent period. | Learner always reads independently and stays on task all of the time during a silent reading period. |

*Source: Tierney & Marielle, 2004*

### 2.5.2 Guiding Questions in the Rubrics Construction Process

The following questions are provided to further guide the process of creating consistent criteria descriptors while constructing or adapting scoring rubrics, particularly in an assessment for learning context:

- Are all the performance criteria explicitly stated? Are the performance criteria present in the rubrics those that are expected? Is there anything that is implicitly expected in the learners' products or performance that are not stated in the rubric?
- Are the attributes explicitly stated for each performance criterion? Are the underlying characteristics of the performance criteria known? Are these attributes clearly articulated within the rubric?
- Are the attributes consistently addressed from one level to the next on the progression scale? Is the rubric addressing the same attributes for each student's product or performance across the levels? Does the value of the attribute vary in each level

descriptor, while the attribute itself remains consistent across the scale levels (Tierney & Murielle, 2004)?

## 2.6 Conclusion

Rubrics which are used for classroom assessment must present clear and consistent performance criteria in order to live up to their educational ideal. When the attributes of each performance criterion shift from level to level across the scale, through variations either in presence or in tone, rubrics are less effective as learning tools. Learners do learn from rubrics with inconsistent performance criteria, but what they learn may not be the intended learning goal. Rubric development can be challenging, and a rubric's design must be thoughtfully matched to its purpose. Consistency is an important technical requirement that should be considered carefully for all scoring rubrics designed or adapted for classroom use.

The most challenging aspect of designing rubrics for the classroom is in the language of learning and teaching. Although indicators and exemplars can help operationalise the attributes and performance criteria in rubrics, the choice or wording is still critical. The verbal qualifiers of the attributes used in rubrics, and their underlying scales, have not been standardised to the degree that they are universally understood, and fuzziness is associated with the interpretation. The precision of language in rubrics and the development of common scales are areas that would benefit from further research.

In this study, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics and principles were examined and suggestions were provided for improving the consistency of performance criteria across rubric scale levels. By making a contribution to the educational literature on advancing the design of rubrics, this study may strive to improve current classroom assessment practices. To enhance constructive classroom assessment defining the achievement targets should be involved. Learners and teachers should be provided with a clear and common understanding of the targets and rubrics to be accompanied by exemplars or clear indicators. They should contain consistent descriptions of performance criteria as well as explicitly stated attributes. Within a formative context, learners who use these rubrics then have

an opportunity to build on their initial performance and adjust their learning accordingly. Rubrics do benefit instruction and they do become ideal tools in the assessment for learning process when they are designed with consistency in mind.

Stevens and Levi (2005) stress that rubrics save time, provide timely and meaningful feedback for learners and have the potential to become an effective part of the teaching-learning process. In fact, the main reason why rubrics were not used more often is simply because teachers have been unaware of them. Rubrics were not part of the teachers' experience as learners and, mostly, they teach as they were taught. However, there are many reasons to use rubrics - reasons having to do not only with efficient use of time and sound pedagogy but, moreover, with basic principles of equity and fairness.

Anderson and Mohrwesi (2008) assert that discussing the rubric with learners before the commencement of any design project provides the ground rules that support, and remind learners of, the expectations for the particular dimensions of their creative product. The over-reliance on the criteria is likely to be a setback in the assessment process, because of the inherent intolerance to anything outside the criteria. Cronje (2009:81) warns against the implementations and abuse of structure and standardization when implementing rubrics in assessment, especially when there are indications that assessment may be reduced to an almost mechanical checking of items on the list.

Rubrics provide timely feedback. The timing of feedback can be a vexed point between teachers and learners. Teachers struggle to grade each assignment fairly and individually. Learners then complain that work is not handed back. Sometimes it seems as if learners do not care as much about the quality of feedback (detailed feedback they can act on) as they do about getting their work back speedily. Teachers interpret this to mean that all learners care about is their final grade. Eshun and de Graft-Johnson (2011) sum-up by saying that the role of assessment in teaching happens to be a hot issue in education.

In this chapter, the literature review was discussed, as well as conceptual framework and theory underpinning the study, the use of rubrics and consistency of the attributes in performance criteria descriptors. In the next Chapter, the research design and methods are presented

# CHAPTER THREE
# RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

## 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, literature review, extensively dealt with concepts which shed light on IP assessment rubrics and their application. Challenges of designing and developing rubrics as well as advantages were critically argued by different authors. This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in conducting the research on Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers' experiences in implementing assessment rubrics in the North West Province. The chapter discusses the population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection techniques and ensuring that validity and reliability of the study are achieved and ethical considerations are also taken into account.

## 3.2 Research Design

Schumacher and McMillan (2010) explain a research design as the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. It indicates the general plan: how the research is set up, what happens to the participants, and what methods of data collection are used. In this study, the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers' in implementing assessment rubrics were investigated. Research design is also explained as a plan or strategy that will be used to investigate the research question (s), (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Robson (2011) also explained research design as being concerned with turning research questions into projects. It also deals primarily with aims, purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of location, time, money and availability of staff.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research with the goal of exploring and describing the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics.

### 3.2.1 The Qualitative Research Approach

Suter (2012) defines qualitative research as research aimed at explaining social phenomena in their natural context through verbal description and analysis of complex data such as interviews, documents, field notes, or images. It is largely inductive, with reasoning moving from descriptions of specific, detailed observations to general principles. The explanation of qualitative research as outlined by Suter (2012) is relevant to this study in the sense that questionnaires, interviews and document analysis have been used as data collection methods. HoDs and SESs were interviewed in their natural context through verbal descriptions.

Qualitative research also focuses on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of targeted participants in this study and qualitative research explores meaning, purposes, or reality. Qualitative research is also regarded as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that constitute the study. They turn the study into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, questionnaires, recording and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the study. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. The teachers' experiences regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics were investigated through the teachers' questionnaires and HoDs and SESs interview questions. The data collection methods (questionnaires and interviews), explore the thoughts of the respondents. The researcher used these as interpretative and practical ways to explore and investigate the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of assessment rubrics.

Furthermore, Neuman (2006) says that qualitative data are empirical. They involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures and tone), observing specific behaviours, studying written documents or examining visual images. The researcher recorded the HoDS and SES's interviews and studied the assessment documents. Jack and Norman (2000) further explain qualitative research as research study that investigates the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials. There is a great emphasis on holistic description in qualitative

research, which is, describing in detail all of what goes on in a particular activity or particular treatment or on describing the attitudes or behaviours of people. Based on what Jack and Norman (2000) explained about qualitative research, the researcher explored the relationship of HoDs and SESs. The investigation was about whether there was professional support given to the teachers or not. It also explored whether the assessment materials at school were relevant and sufficient.

According to Lichtman (2006), qualitative research is an umbrella term, a way of knowing that assumes that the researcher gathers, organises and interprets information (usually in words or in pictures) with his or her eyes and ears as filters, hence the use of questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. It is a way of data collection that often involves in-depth interviews or observation of humans in a natural setting. In this study, the respondents' chose the place to be interviewed or where they wanted to conduct the questionnaire. The natural settings were the interviewees' workplaces and some their homes, depending on their choices.

### 3.2.2 The Quantitative Research Approach

A quantitative research approach relies on numbers in reporting results, sampling and in providing estimates of instruments, reliability and validity. The numbers are also accompanied by strange words and even stranger symbols and are manipulated by statistics (Schumacher & McMillan, 2010). Quantitative researchers apply numerical data collection processes, research designs and statistical procedures that enable research and measurement. The aim of this approach was to gain the quantitative data from the questionnaire responses of the teachers. Data collected were from the demographic information of the respondents. The target group was sampled in a numerical form from 109 respondents identified, but only 91 responded. The primary focus was to gain the interviewees' perspective on content and context on the issues relating to the teachers' experiences on implementing assessment rubrics.

## 3.3 Research Method

Research method is the coherent of methods that complement one another and that have the goodness of fit to deliver data findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose. Babbie and Mouton (2005) further emphasise that research method focuses on the process and kid of tools and procedures used. In this study, the descriptive survey method was used.

Wierma (2005) says that a survey research is probably the single most widely used research type in educational research. It encompasses a wide variety of research studies: all the way from *ex post facto* studies that focus on the relationships of sociological variables as they occur in the natural setting. He further emphasises that a variety of research studies can come under the heading of survey research and generally, survey research deals with the incidence, distribution and relationships of educational, psychological and sociological variables (Wierma, 2005). No experimental variables are manipulated. Variables are studied as they exist in the situation, usually in a natural setting. Survey was used to measure attitudes, opinions or achievements. The researcher found this relevant to this study because the teachers' opinions on the implementation of the assessment rubrics were investigated. Learners' levels of achievement were also checked after the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Teachers chose where they wanted to respond to the questionnaires. HoDs and SESs also had a choice on their preferred place where the interviews were conducted.

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Borg and Gall (2005) explain survey research as a form of descriptive research that involves collecting information about research participants' beliefs, attitudes, interest or behaviour through questionnaires, interviews or paper-and-pencil tests. The researcher uses the survey research to explore the teachers' experiences in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Leedy and Ormond (2005) hold the same view that survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people, perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experiences, by asking questions and tabulating their answers. They maintain that the ultimate is to learn about a larger population by surveying a sample population.

The survey design enables the researcher to gather data from the population for the purpose of examining the characteristics, views and opinions of the teachers, HoDs and SESs.

Document analysis was done by checking documents bearing assessment information, which included school-based assessment guidelines and national policies on assessment which were also scrutinised in order to establish if they were implemented correctly. The descriptors were examined whether they were in line with what has to be assessed of importance was to determine and ultimately make decision on which descriptors to use.

In this study, the experience of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics was explored.

## 3.4 Population

Jack and Norman (2000) explain population as the group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalise the results of the study. A population can be any size and that it will have at least one and sometimes several characteristic(s) that set it off from any other population. In educational research, the population of interest is usually a group of persons (learners, teachers or other individuals) who possess certain characteristics. Frankel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) clarify that population as the larger group to which one hopes to apply the results of the study.

The population for this study was the Intermediate Phase teachers (Grades 4-6) who use the assessment rubrics as one tool for assessment, Heads of Departments (HoDs) in Intermediate Phase and Subject Education Specialists (SESs) responsible for Intermediate Phase Learning Areas (LAs) or subjects in Rekopantswe Area Office (AO) in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District, North West Province.

### 3.4.1 Population Distribution

The Table below (Table 8) gives the distribution of the population for the study. The target sample comprised teachers, HoDs from schools and SESs from the AO. The information on population distribution was obtained from the North West Department of Education (2008).

**Table 8: Population distribution of teachers in Rekopantswe Area Office in the North West Province**

| **Cluster** | **Number of schools** | **Number of teachers** |
|---|---|---|
| Kopano | 17 | 121 |
| Lotlhakane | 13 | 178 |
| Montshioa-Stadt | 14 | 201 |
| Makgobistadt | 18 | 143 |
| **Total** | **62** | **643** |

The Area Office (AO) has sixty-two (62) primary schools. An AO is similar to a Didtrict and is made up of circuits, which are made up of schools. It is comprised of four cluster areas. Circuit is similar to a circuit, it comprises a certain number of schools. These are Kopano, Lotlhakane, Montshioa-Stadt and Makgobistadt clusters. Montshioa-Stadt cluster has urban and semi-rural schools. The Rekopantswe AO has seventeen (17) schools in Kopano cluster, thirteen (13) in Lotlhakane cluster, fourteen (14) in Montshioa-Stadt cluster and eighteen (18) in Makgobistadt cluster. The researcher chose this AO because of its diversity regarding environmental or geographical location. Kopano cluster is rural, Lotlhakane cluster, semi-urban. Montshioa-Stadt, urban and Makgobistadt cluster is rural. From the 643 teachers (Table 8), 370 are Foundation Phase teachers; and the population of the Intermediate Phase teachers is 273. The total number of HoDs in the Intermediate Phase is 45 and SESs responsible for Rekopantswe AO in the IP is 6. This may ensure equal representatives of teachers in other provinces in this study because of their geographic or environmental location.

### 3.4.2 The Sample

Johnson and Christensen (2008) explain a sample as a set of elements taken from a larger population according to certain rules. Sample is further stressed as consisting of those individuals who actually participate in the study (Robson, 2011:100). It is a subset of a population. The sample for this study is the Intermediate Phase teachers in the Rekopantswe AO.

### 3.4.3 Sampling Procedures

Johnson and Christen (2008) say that sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population. Neuman (2000) further clarifies sampling as a process of systematically selecting cases for inclusion in a research project. When a researcher randomly selects persons to participate in research, he or she sorts a collection of cases into two or more groups using a random process. By contrast, in random sampling, he or she selects a smaller subset of cases from a larger pool of cases. Sampling helps the researcher to have a set of more manageable and cost effective sample to work with. Even if the researcher has used a small group, the information gathered must generalise the entire group.

In this study, the researcher was guided by Johnson and Christensen (2008) procedures in sampling the population. Cohen et al (2011) further verified this by explaining random stratified sampling as involving dividing the population into homogenous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics. A stratified random sampling method was used in this study. This method was used for feasibility, as it was not possible to study the entire population of teachers in the North West Province. The researcher drew a representative sample from the ordinary public schools that have Intermediate Phase teachers, that is, Grades 4-6.

Different sampling techniques may be more or less appropriate in different situations. In this study, the researcher used the stratified random sampling technique to sample the teachers, HoDs and SESs. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) explain that in stratified random sampling, the researcher samples equally from each one of the layers in the overall population. In this case, the researcher sampled the teachers and HoDs according to the clusters they are teaching in. Layers referred to

here are Kopano, Lotlhakane, Montshioa-Stadt and Makgobistadt as well as the grades in the Intermediate Phase that are Grades 4, 5 and 6.

Robson (2011:272) also says that the procedures in stratified random sampling involve dividing the population into a number of groups or strata, where members of a group share particular characteristics. There is then random sampling within the strata. It is usual to have proportionate sampling, that is, where the numbers of the groups selected for sample reflect the relative numbers in the population as a whole. Neuman (2006) further outlines it as follows; first the researcher divides the population into sub-populations (strata) on the basis of supplementary information. The researcher then draws a random sample from each subpopulation. In this study, the Intermediate Phase teachers and HoDs were divided into clusters and further into grades 4-6. Then the researcher drew random samples of teachers as well as HoDs in these clusters. In stratified sampling, the researcher controls the relative size of each stratum, rather than letting random processes control it. This guarantees representatively or fixes the proportion of different strata within a sample.

Homogenous groups in this case are teachers in the Intermediate Phase, HoDs and SESs. The researcher took equal samples from each category of the three grades of teachers. Stratified random sampling has the advantage of guaranteeing equal representation of each of the identified strata hence the use of this technique by the researcher. It was most appropriate because those strata were almost equal in size in the overall population. The sample was chosen from the four cluster areas in the Rekopantswe AO, 108 teachers, that is 27 from each cluster, 3 SESs and 8 HoDs, that is 2 from each cluster. The total population targeted was hundred and eight (108) teachers, eight (8) HoDs and three (3) SESs making a total of 119 respondents.

### 3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were strategies used for data collection in this study. The use of different methods gave the researcher an opportunity to strengthen the responses and data collected.

Data were collected from the Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers, HoDs in the Intermediate Phase schools and the SESs from Rekopantswe AO using questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. The aim was to obtain diverse views regarding the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers and also from the assessment documents in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. The above mentioned strategies enabled the researcher to examine different participants in this study experienced the implementation of assessment rubrics.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaires

White (2003) describes a questionnaire as an instrument with open or closed questions or statements to which a respondent must react. The questionnaire was designed to collect data from the Intermediate Phase teachers. It was used because it was relatively economical, had the same questions for all subjects, ensured anonymity and contained questions or statements, but in all cases respondents were responding to same set of questions. Johnson & Burke (2008) clarify this by saying that questionnaire is not restricted to a single research method. Questionnaire can be used to collect data with multiple research methods. The key point is that the questionnaire is a versatile tool available to one and other educational researchers.

The questionnaire was designed to allow teachers to self-report their experiences on the implementations of the assessment rubrics. The teachers were asked about policy issues, their professional development programmes, classroom practice, teaching strategies and assessment and support and resources they obtain from the SESs. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions (Appendix D).

#### 3.5.1.1 Closed-ended Questions

Cohen et al. (2011) state that closed-ended questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondents may choose. In this study teachers responded to the same questionnaire but with a variety of answers to choose from. They also recommend that highly structured, closed questions are useful in that they can generate frequencies of response amendable to statistical treatment and analysis. Closed-ended questions also enable comparisons to be made

across groups in the sample. They are quicker to code up and analyse and often, they are directly to the point and deliberately more focused. The closed-ended questionnaire was used to score and code for analysis of the responses of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. The teachers responded to the same questions and standardised data was provided. The questions were used to measure the opinions, attitudes, knowledge, of the Intermediate Phase teachers on their experiences regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

Johnson and Christensen (2008:203) emphasise closed-ended questions as questions that force participants to choose from a set of predetermined responses. The teachers chose from a limited number of questions that were predetermined by the researcher. They provided primarily quantitative data. The researcher used this type of questions to ensure that the questions to which the respondents were to provide answers were relevant to the research question, that is, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

#### 3.5.1.2 Open-ended Questions

Johnson and Christensen (2008:203) explain an open-ended question as a question that allows participants to respond in their own words. They enable the participants to respond in any way that they please. In this study the teachers chose from a limited number of responses that were predetermined by the researcher. They primarily provided qualitative data. It allowed teachers for more individualized responses. The researcher also used the open-ended questions to explore the respondents view on their experiences on the implementations of the assessment rubrics. The problem of interpretation of the questions was solved by face-to-face consultations where teachers asked for clarity if needed. It was enhanced by explaining the purpose of the study and how it was supposed to benefit the teachers and other stakeholders.

Neuman (2000) ended the discussion by explaining open-ended questions as unstructured and free response type of questions and closed-ended questions as structured and fixed response type of questions. These explanations were relevant in this study and enabled the researcher to gather all the necessary information. The researcher was able to gather information from both types of

questions. Cohen et al. (2011) see open-ended questions as useful if the possible answers are unknown or the questionnaire is exploratory, or if there are so many possible categories of response that a closed question would contain all extremely long list of options. They enabled the teachers to answer as much as they wish, and were particularly suitable for investigating complex issues, like their views on policy issues, to which simple answers cannot be provided. Open-ended questions enabled the teachers to freely write account in their own terms, explain and qualify their responses and avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of responses. The open-ended questions complemented closed-ended questions by allowing free responses.

#### 3.5.1.3 Ensuring completion of the Questionnaire

White (2003) explains that when the questionnaires are handed out directly to a group of people under the researcher's supervision, high response rate expected. It is more difficult to find an acceptable response rate when questionnaires are sent by mail to respondents. In this study, the experiences of the IP teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics, the questionnaires were handed out by the researcher to the targeted IP teachers. Some questionnaires were immediately completed, others later. Individual appointments were made for collecting the remaining questionnaires from the respondents for later completion in the absence of the researcher. The questionnaires were checked on submission whether all the questions were answered or not.

#### 3.5.1.4 Questionnaire Administration

The researcher distributed questionnaires to eight (8) IP teachers and explained the procedure and how to fill them. All questionnaires were completed within 20 minutes and minimal errors were found within set questionnaire. They were rectified and the expectations of responses were as the researcher thought. The language used in the questionnaire was easy to understand and the presence of the researcher also complemented the understanding of it by her or his availability to answer all necessary questions. In this study 108 questionnaires were distributed and 97 were returned.

The questionnaires were hand delivered and the participants chose when they were to be completed. Some respondents immediately completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher and some preferred to complete at their own time. The researcher then made an appointment with the respondents to collect them later at their preferred place. Some were collected at their place of work and some at their homes but many were immediately completed. According to De Vos et al. (2002), handling questionnaires in this way saves time and the response rates are raised because of the personal contact and the fact that the questionnaires are hand delivered and the participants are left to fill them out in their own time.

Follow-ups concerning the retrieval of the questionnaires were made for questionnaire surveys, and were planned in advance. This was done with the teachers who promised to respond to the questionnaires at a later stage. Cohen et al. (2011) further believe that questionnaires can be administered in several ways, including self-administration, post and face-to-face. The researcher considered how best to achieve reliability by taking into the setting and preferences of the respondents into account. In this study, the researcher used self-administered questionnaires in which the respondents had a choice of when and where they wanted to complete their questionnaires.

**Self-administered questionnaires in the presence of the researcher**

Cohen et al. (2011) are of the opinion that the presence of the researcher is helpful because it enables any queries or uncertainty to be addressed immediately with the questionnaire designer. That is why the researcher found it suitable to personally administer the questionnaire. Furthermore, it typically ensured a good response rate. It also ensured that all the questions were completed; the researcher checked these before finally receiving the completed questionnaires.

**Self-administered questionnaires without the presence of the researcher**

Some of the questionnaires were administered without the presence of the researcher. The absence of the researcher was helpful because it enabled the respondents to complete the questionnaire in private and to devote as much time as they wished for its completion, to be in familiar surroundings, and to avoid the potential threat or pressure to participate that might be caused by the researcher's presence (Cohen et al., 2011). It was inexpensive to operate and

ensured more anonymity than having the researcher's presence. In this study, most of the respondents answered the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. Only a few did so without the research depending on their preference.

### 3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are explained by Johnson and Christensen (2008) as data-collection techniques in which an interviewer asks an interviewee questions. That is, the interviewer collects the data from the interviewee, who provides the data. In this study, interviews were conducted with the HoDs in the Intermediate Phase schools and SESs in the AO regarding the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics.

The purpose of the interview was to obtain information regarding experiences of the IP teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics, by interviewing to the HoDs (Appendix E) and the SESs (Appendix F). The researcher asked the HoDs and SESs questions and they responded in a face-to-face situation. The interview was done on a face-to-face basis using an audio tape recorder. The interviews were conducted at the interviewees' place of work and some in their homes. At the end of the interview the researcher requested the HoDs and SESs to be the experiences of IP teachers in implementation of the assessment rubrics and how they dealt with these experiences including their intervention strategies. The interviewer enabled the HoDs and SESs to express themselves on experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics and how they dealt with those experiences including their intervention strategies.

#### 3.5.2.1 Semi-structured interview

The researcher used the semi-structured interview to investigate the study of the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. This method was seen by the researcher as the appropriate method for data collection, as it gave the respondents opportunity to ask questions in order to obtain clarity where they did not understand. Since the interview questions were presented in the same way for all the participants that

minimized the role and influence of the researcher and enabled a more objective comparison of the results (Appendices E and F).

#### 3.5.2.2 Interview Administration

Interviews should be done in such a way that the necessary information is obtained efficiently in a businesslike atmosphere (Wierma & Jurs, 2005) because qualitative research is "researcher dependent". This means that the researcher is the instrument, and she or he makes the decisions about which data to collect and or whom to interview. In this study 8 HoDs and 3 SESs responsible for monitoring and supporting the Intermediate Phase teachers were selected.

Prior preparation in terms of a convenient venue and time was made before the interviews were conducted. The participants were allowed to choose their preferred venues where they felt comfortable to be interviewed. An audio tape recorder was used to collect the data from the respondents. An advance letter informed the respondents about the purpose and the importance of their contribution to the study (Appendices B and C). This letter, according to Wierma and Jurs, (2005), helps in obtaining cooperation from the respondents who should not feel threatened by the interview.

The primary data from the qualitative interviews are verbatim accounts of what transpired in the interview sessions: that is why a voice recorder was used. Neuman (2006) states that recording ensures completeness of the verbal interactions and provides material for reliability check. In addition to the voice recorder, the researcher took notes. According to Neuman (2006), this helps to formulate questions and probes and to record non-verbal communication, which facilitates data analysis. Permission was asked from the participants before using the voice recorder. The importance of the voice recorder was explained to the participants so that they might not feel threatened by it. The length of the interview was determined by the type of participants and, their level of interest and understanding of the subject of the study. Time taken on each interviewee was about 15 minutes. It was determined by different reactions of interviewees.

### 3.5.3 Document Analysis

Anne, Orison and Anneta (2009) explain document analysis as a social research method and an important research tool in its own right and an invaluable part of most of the triangulation processes. Documentary work involves reading many written material (it helps to scan the documents onto a computer and use a qualitative analysis package). A document is something that can be read and which relates to some aspect of the social world. Official documents are intended to be read as objective statements of facts but they are themselves socially produced. Sources of documents include public records, the media, private papers, biography and visual documents. In this study, educational assessment documents that were used for analysis were: Government Gazette number 29467 of 2006, Gazette number 29626 of 2007, National Protocol on Assessment (NPA) and qualifications for schools in the GET Band, RNCS Grades R-9 (schools) policy of 2002 and NCS GET Assessment Guidelines.

Document analysis, with specific reference to assessment documents, is the systematic examination of assessment documents such as syllabi, assignments, learners' notes and course evaluation results in order to identify assessment needs and challenges and describe instructional activities. The focus of the analysis was critical examination of assessment documents, rather than a mere description of them. The analysis included questions about instructional purpose of the document; its implementation by teachers and learners, and how it was or was not contributing to learners' achievement. Document analysis works best when the purpose is to gather insight into an instructional activity or approach. In this study, the researcher used documents that only addressed assessment in teaching and learning.

#### 3.5.3.1 Planning Document Analysis

The planning of document analysis was done by the researcher with the support of teachers. Documents analysed were those of educational assessment. Teachers described the context of the document in connection with their educational background regarding assessment, motivational level acquired and skills levels to be developed. Identification of the teachers' needs and develop central questions regarding assessment rubrics, identify what was most essential for learners,

their needs, any organisational priorities that impact their learning. They also determined the purpose of the document because it was too cumbersome to examine every aspect of instruction at once, starting with clear goals about what would be learned and narrowed. The researcher analysed documents by using a questionnaire to check whether the teachers are able to correctly interpret and use the assessment rubrics from the assessment documents.

## 3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher used the qualitative and quantitative methods in this study to ensure that the ethical considerations are taken into account. Creswell (2003) states that by using both methods, that is, combining quantitative and qualitative research, ethical considerations need to be typical ethical issues that surface in both forms of enquiry.

Quantitative issues related to obtaining permission, protecting anonymity of respondents, not disrupting sites, and communicating the purposes for the study were dealt with. In qualitative research, these issues relating to conveying the purpose of the study, avoiding deceptive practices, respecting vulnerable populations, being aware of potential power issues in data collection, respecting indigenous cultures, not disclosing sensitive information, and masking the identities of participants were considered.

Kruger and Muller (1990) explain that concerns about validity and reliability are common to all forms of research, as is the concern that the investigation should be conducted in an ethical manner. As Sieber (1992) asserts, sound ethics and sound methodology go hand in hand. The researcher therefore adhered to the ethical principles and also gave the necessary guidelines of how the respondents' rights were protected in this study. The principles of the ethical research were followed by following the measures discussed below:

### 3.6.1 Access and Acceptance

Access and acceptance to carry out the investigation was sought at an early stage with the District Director of Ngaka Modiri Molema through a written request. As soon as the researcher

had an agreed project outlined and had read enough to be convinced that the topic was feasible, the researcher also found it suitable to make a formal, written request to the HoDs and SESs for their participation in the study. Honesty was also ensured.

### 3.6.2 Permission

Permission was sought through a written request to the District Director of Ngaka Modiri Molema. A written request was also sent to the participating teachers, HoDs and the SESs. This ensured mutual respect for the interviewees, the authority and the researcher. The permission was granted to conduct the study among the Intermediate Phase teachers on their experiences in the implementation of the assessment rubrics and furthermore how the HoDs and the SESs interpreted the teachers' experiences (Appendices B and C).

### 3.6.3 Informed Consent

Arends (2001) emphasised the process of informed consent, as the procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions. The respondents were asked whether they wanted to participate in the study after being informed about the purpose of this study, procedures, risks, benefits, alternative procedures and limits of confidentiality and their write to withdraw. Four elements were involved in the study; those were competence, voluntarism, full information and comprehension (Appendix A).

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and its nature, whether they wished to participate or not. Permission to record information provided by the HODs and SESs through interviews was requested and the participants were assured about the confidentiality of the information. Advice was given to the participants that they might withdraw at any stage and had their recorded information returned. The teachers that took part in the study through the questionnaires were asked to indicate by yes in affirming their permission. The respondents were fully informed and understood the nature of the research project.

### 3.6.4 Privacy

Right to privacy ensured the respondents' freedom to decide when and where the study was to be conducted. Teachers completed the questionnaires and HoDs and SESs were interviewed. Sensitivity of information that was given was treated with outmost privacy. The respondents chose the preferred setting and that was observed, and dissemination of information. These were indicated by anonymity and confidentiality.

### 3.6.5 Anonymity

The study was done in a way that kept the identity of the respondents from everyone excluding the researcher. All participants' information was kept strictly confidential. Identity of respondents remained anonymous and the information provided was used only for this research purpose. This provision was respected. The questionnaire did not require any identification of region, school name or personal details to be filled in.

The biographic data did not involve any characteristic that might 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 not be disclosed and that the information provided would not be used for purposes other than those of the study (Appendix A).

### 3.6.6 Confidentiality

The second way that was used to protect the respondents' privacy was through the promise of confidentiality. The researcher promised not to reveal the identity of the participants to everyone. This means that although the researcher knew who had provided the information or was able to identify participants from the information given, they would in no way make connection known publicly; the boundaries surrounding the shared secrete was protected. The essence of anonymity

was that information provided by the participants in no way revealed their identity. Thus respondents completed questionnaires that bore absolutely no identity marks; names, addresses, occupational details, or coding symbols and this ensured complete and total anonymity.

## 3.7 Ensuring Reliability and Validity

Suter (2012) says that triangulation means a method used in qualitative research and involves cross-checking multiple data sources and collection procedures to evaluate the extent to which all evidence converges. The researcher ensured that by collecting data from the teachers, HoDs and SESs by using the questionnaires for teachers and interviews for HoDs and SESs and the analysis of documents. The researcher found reliability and validity as central issues in all measurements. Both concern how concrete measures are connected to constructivity. Neuman (2000) explains reliability and validity as central issues in all scientific measurement. Validity and reliability complemented each other in this study. In order to ensure that the results of the scientific research can be relied upon for application and for generalisation, the quantitative methods of inquiry pay special attention to reliability and validity (Babbie & Mouton, 2005).

### 3.7.1 Strategies to Enhance Reliability and Validity

Frankel et al. (2012) say that reliability refers to the consistency of scores or answers from administration of an instrument to another, and from one set of items to another. Schumacher and McMillan (2001) further explain that reliability refers to the consistency of the measurements, as well as the extent to which the results are similar with regard to different forms of the same instruments or occasions of data collection.

In this study, a conceptualisation of constructs was done using simple clear language free from errors in the questionnaires and in the interviews with the participants. To ensure reliability, preliminary versions of both the interview schedule and the questionnaire were proof read before using them in the study, the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. In addition, to enhance reliability, a standard condition

of data collection was used, that is, respondents were given the same questions and the language was simple and appropriate.

Frankel et al. (2012) say that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the specific references that a researcher makes based on the data they collect. According to Wierma and Jurs (2005), the validity of research involving questionnaires depends on the response rate and the quality of the response. He defines response rate as the percentage of respondents returning the questionnaire, and feels that the quality of the responses depends on the completeness of the data. Therefore, to enhance the response rate, follow-ups were made with the participants. The response rate of the questionnaires was good, that is, 97 questionnaires returned out of 109.

The researcher used the following strategies: member checking, participants' review and triangulation to enhance the validity of the qualitative data. Member checking according to Schumacher and McMillan (2001), refers to providing feedback to the participants regarding the preliminary findings, and interpretations and securing the participants' reactions. This was done through feedback emerging from the respondents' reactions and their comments on whether the themes captured their experiences or not. This happened during the interviews through rephrasing questions and through probing to obtain more complete and subtle meanings. The participants who were interviewed were asked to review a synthesis of data that was obtained. They were asked to modify any information or interpretation of the interview data.

Polit and Beck (2004) describe triangulation as the use of multiple referents to draw conclusions about what constitutes the truth. To ensure validity, triangulation was obtained through method triangulation, data triangulation and the use of multiple data sources. Schumacher and McMillan (2001) hold the view that different strategies may yield different insights about the topic and increase the credibility of the findings.

### 3.7.2 The Cover Letter

The purpose of the cover letter was to indicate the aim of the research, to convey to respondents its importance, to assure them of confidentiality, and to encourage their responses. Cohen et al.

(2011) clarify this by explaining the purpose of the cover letter or sheet as to indicate the aim of the research, to convey to the respondents its importance, to assure them of confidentiality and to encourage their replies. Wierma and Jurs (2005) further explain a cover letter as an essential part of any survey research involving questionnaires. It is the mechanism for introducing individuals to the questionnaire and motivating them to respond.

The cover letter was straightforward, explaining the purpose and potential value of the study and transmitting the message that an individual's response was important. The researcher ensured that the cover letter explained the purpose and importance of the study in a professional manner and why it was worth studying. In that case the respondents were interested in the study, co-operated and answer reliably. The cover letter was used at the Area Office to ask for permission of the participant to take part in the study and it was shown and read to the respondents before engaging in the interviewing and distributing the questionnaires (Appendices A, B and C).

The effectiveness of the cover letter was ensured by the fact that the respondents' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were maintained. The respondents were assured that the researcher was interested in the overall responses of the group and that the individual responses would not be singled out. These guidelines were used to ensure that the research ethical considerations were maintained.

## 3.8 Data analysis procedures

Data analysis entails the breaking down of the data into constituent parts to obtain answers to the research questions. The purpose of analysis was to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of the research problems could be studied and conclusion drawn (De Vos et al. 2002). Analysing data on its own, cannot answer research questions that is why the researcher felt that an interpretation of the data was necessary. The researcher compared the results and inferences that were drawn from the Intermediate Phase teachers, HoDs and SESs from data to theory.

The three main sources of data collection techniques in this study were questionnaires, interviews and documents analysis. Completed questionnaires were collected from teachers and interviews from the HoDs and the SESs. Data from the questionnaire were analysed by means of frequencies, whereas data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using procedures.

### 3.8.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Data collected by means of closed questions in the questionnaire were analysed statistically. This was because they could be quantified since the raw data was already in the form of numerical codes in the questionnaire. For the analysis of quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the sample that was used. Charts, tables and graphs were used. According to Neuman (2006), frequency tables show the distribution of cases into categories of one variable, that is, the number or percentage of cases in each category. As Neuman (2006) points out, they give a condensed picture of the data and allow one to see the evidence collected by the researcher and learn for oneself what it covers.

### 3.8.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The data collected from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the interview schedules were analysed by qualitative procedures, since this type of data cannot be quantified easily. Neuman (2006) states that qualitative data are in the form of text, written words, phrases or symbols of describing or representing people, actions and events in social life. Punch (2005) maintains that qualitative research concentrates on the study of social life in the natural setting. Its richness and complexity mean that there are different ways of analysing social life; therefore, there are multiple perspectives and practices in the analysis of qualitative data.

For the purpose of the qualitative data analysis, the Miles and Huberman Framework for Qualitative Data Analysis (The Flow Model) was used. They define the qualitative data as consisting of three categories of activity flow, namely:

- Data reduction;
- Data display; and

- Conclusion drawing and verification.

#### 3.8.2.1 Data reduction

Since large quantities of descriptive information from interviews were produced, the information was organised, which can bring about data reduction. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This occurs continually throughout the life of the research project. According to Punch (2005), the objective of data reduction is to produce the data without a significant loss of information. He argues that the later stages of data analysis involved conceptualising and explaining, since developing abstract concepts was also a way of reducing data. In this study, the researcher searched for patterns of thinking, words or phrases that appear regularly or appear to be trustworthy. The words describing such were coding categories.

#### 3.8.2.2 Data display

Data display is an organised, compressed assemble of information that permits conclusion drawing action. Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that data display helps the researcher to understand what is happening and enables him or her to do something that is either further analysis or takes action. This was done in the form of graphs, diagrams and or charts to assemble organised information into an immediately accessible compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening and draw conclusions.

#### 3.8.2.3 Verification and conclusion

At this stage, the researcher notes regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations and cash flows. Conclusions are drawn in the form of prepositions. They are tentative, pending further work and are sharpened during the process. Once conclusions have been drawn, they need to be verified as the analysis proceeds, according to Miles and Huberman (2005), the

meaning emerging from the data needs to be tested for plausibility, sturdiness, conformability and validity.

The interviews were transcribed from the voice recorder and prepared in visual written presentations from the eight (8) interviews with the HoDs and three (3) with SESs responsible for Intermediate Phase grades. The researcher read, organise and interpret the transcriptions to make sense of the data. Neuman (2006) indicates that a qualitative researcher analyses data by organising it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features and this was the basis of the researcher.

## 3.9 Summary

In this chapter, the research methodology and design were discussed, as well as how ethical considerations of data collection were maintained and strategies to enhance both reliability and validity. Data analysis procedures for qualitative and quantitative data are also highlighted. In the next Chapter, the results of the research are presented and analysed.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

## 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, chapter three, outlined the research design and methods used in conducting the research on Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers' experiences in implementing assessment rubrics in the North West Province. The chapter discussed the population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection techniques and ensuring that validity and reliability of the study were achieved. Ethical considerations were also taken into account.

This chapter presents a detailed presentation and interpretation of the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of assessment rubrics in the North West Province. The analysis of the data was based on the total number of returned questionnaires (n=97). Qualitative data have been reported from a sample of eight (8) HoDs in selected schools and three (3) SESs in the Area Office (AO) who were interviewed and assessment documents were also analysed. The data collected from the teachers, HoDs, SESs and the documents were analysed using tables, graphs and comments. Statistical tables were drawn and interpreted to show the general trends and commentary was provided on the qualitative data.

## 4.2 Demographic and Biographic Data of Respondents

This section provides the demographic characteristics of the teachers, who responded to the questionnaires.

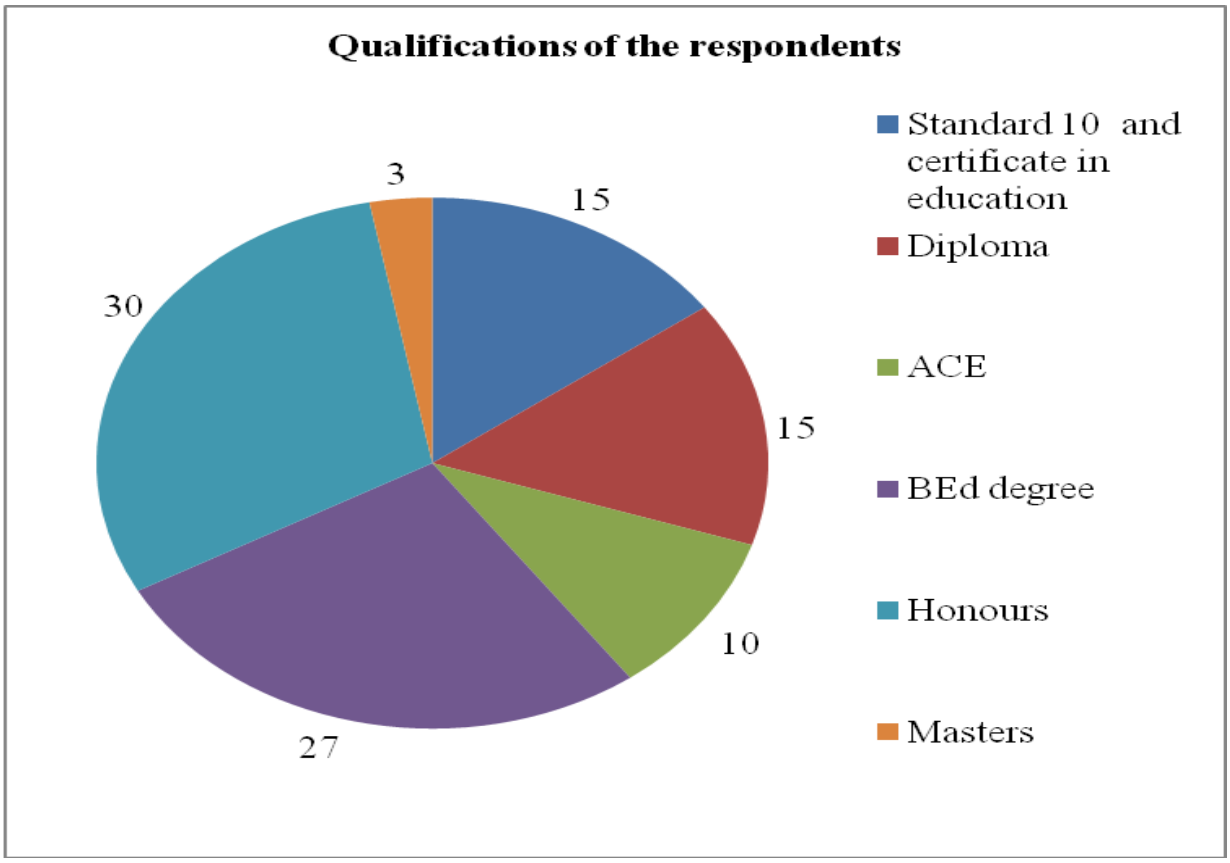
The respondents indicated whether they were males or females. The majority, 91(94%), of the respondents were females and the remaining 6(6%) were males. The results reflect that the teaching profession in this study in the Intermediate Phase schools is dominated by females who constitute 94% of the respondents.

The respondents indicated the location of their schools. The majority of the schools included in the survey were urban, 53(55%) schools and 44(45%) were rural. The location of the schools might have an effect in the provision of some of the important matters, such as, professional support by the departmental officials and resources (human and physical). It is a common acknowledgement that rural schools are disadvantaged as far as resources and support from the department and other stakeholders are concerned. Implementation of the assessment rubrics can be less of a challenge when all schools are appropriately resourced and the teaching staff empowered or capacitated to do their work effectively.

The respondents were asked to state their age category. 3% of the respondents were in the age group of 60 years and older and 9% in the age group of younger than 30 years. 48% of the respondents were in the age group of 40-49 years and 20% were each in the age group of 30-39 years and 50-59 years. This shows that only 9% of the respondents were trained with special reference to assessment rubrics. As indicated in Figure 3, most of the teachers might have received training on the previous curriculum, for example, curriculum 2005 and RNCS, where pen and paper tests were emphasised. They might not be conversant with the recent assessment techniques used in CAPS.

The respondents were asked to state their work experience in teaching. 2% of the teachers had teaching experience of 5 years or less, 39% had 6-10 years, 49% had 11-15 years, 7% had 16-20 years and 3% had 21 years or more. This indicates that most of the teachers had an experience of 11-15 years (39%). Taking into account this considerable amount of experience, it could be deduced that most of the teachers were not sufficiently trained on the new assessment techniques. These teachers were exposed to different curriculum changes which might have resulted in the resistance to the use of the new assessment techniques. They might still be using old methods of teaching, learning and assessment which are out-dated and, thus not meet the requirements of the new curriculum.

**Figure 3: Qualifications of the respondents**




The respondents were asked to state their highest academic qualifications. Figure 3 indicates that most of the respondents had an Honours degree in Education, which is 29, as their highest qualification. On the contrary, 15 had Standard 10 certificate, 15 Diploma in Education, 10 Advanced Certificate in Education and 3 had Masters' degree in Education. Only a small number of respondents have Masters' Degree. In general, most teachers are qualified according to the South African Council of Educators (SACE), which requires Matric or Grade 12 certificate and Diploma in Education (M+3), Relevant Equivalent Qualification Value (REQV) in the DoE. This implies that the academic level of the teaching staff might have a positive effect on learner and teacher performance.

## 4.3 Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of Assessment Rubrics

### 4.3.1 Analysis of Data from Questionnaires

This section presents teachers' responses to the questionnaire relating to their experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics. It sought to explore their understanding of the assessment policy in relation to assessment rubrics in particular. Teachers were requested to respond to five statements and to rate each item on a scale agree, disagree and undecided.

**Table 9: Policy issues**

| Statement | Agree | | Disagree | | Undecided | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Teachers need to be engaged in making changes in the policies regarding assessment for the relevant educational reform. | 18 | 19 | 32 | 33 | 47 | 48 | 97 | 100 |
| Teachers are consulted when policies on assessment are made. | 71 | 74 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 13 | 97 | 100 |
| Policy changes in assessment are accompanied by supportive procedures to strengthen teachers' role. | 36 | 37 | 53 | 55 | 8 | 8 | 97 | 100 |
| There are different understandings of assessment rubrics by teachers | 43 | 44 | 28 | 29 | 26 | 27 | 97 | 100 |
| Teachers are critical agents in creation and development of assessment rubrics. | 67 | 69 | 17 | 18 | 13 | 13 | 97 | 100 |

Table 9 shows that majority of respondents, 47(48%), indicated that they were undecided on whether they should be engaged in making changes in the policies regarding assessment for the relevant educational reform or not, 32(33%) disagreed and 18(19%) agreed. This is an indication that the majority of teachers were not confident in their knowledge of the successful implementation of assessment rubrics, as well as their role in mastering assessment rubrics or techniques. Only a minority of teachers wanted to be involved. Furthermore, a vast majority of teachers 71(74%), agreed that teachers were consulted when educational reform policies in assessment were made and an equal number of teachers, 13(13%), were undecided or disagreed. This shows that most of the teachers were exposed to the new assessment tools and this might

bring about a positive impact on curriculum delivery and better or improved achievement of learner performance.

The majority of the teachers, 53(55%), disagreed with the fact that policy changes in assessment were accompanied by supportive procedures to strengthen teachers' roles, and 36(37%) agreed but 8(8%) were undecided. These findings indicated that little support was provided to ensure implementation of the new assessment changes. Lack of support to capacitate the teachers on assessment changes may lead to poor assessment practices or techniques. This may impact negatively on the implementation of the new procedures in curriculum with special reference to assessment rubrics. They might also lead to low performance of learners.

Data in Table 9 further shows that a vast number of teachers, 43(44%), indicated that there were different understandings of assessment rubrics, whereas 28(29%) disagreed and 26(27%) were undecided. If teachers do not have the same understanding of the assessment rubrics, results of performance of learners may be affected. Teaching, learning and assessment go hand in hand; these results may impact negatively on learner performance. The same activity may be assessed differently by different teachers because of different interpretations. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. Learners need to be continuously assessed, informally and formally to ensure learners understanding of what is learned.

Finally, 67(69%) teachers agreed that teachers were the critical agents in the creation of assessment rubrics, 17(18%) disagreed but 13(13%) were undecided. This finding shows that the existence of different understandings of assessment rubrics may lead to confusion and affect learner attainment and the development of the content knowledge by teachers. The findings also show that most teachers agreed that they need to develop and use assessment rubrics correctly and properly so that they can assess learner performance objectively and accurately. There is a need for teachers to be wholly involved in curriculum activities because they are the curriculum implementers.

**Table 10: Professional development**

| Statements | Agree | | Disagree | | Undecided | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Teachers receive adequate training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics. | 56 | 58 | 32 | 33 | 9 | 9 | 97 | 100 |
| Training improves the knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics. | 37 | 38 | 23 | 24 | 37 | 38 | 97 | 100 |
| Teachers are consulted when developing assessment rubrics. | 21 | 22 | 51 | 52 | 25 | 26 | 97 | 100 |
| Most teachers are able to create and develop assessment rubrics. | 27 | 28 | 59 | 61 | 11 | 11 | 97 | 100 |
| Feedback on training with special reference to assessment rubrics is done. | 16 | 17 | 63 | 64 | 18 | 19 | 97 | 100 |
| Assessment rubrics have improved the quality of teaching and learning. | 21 | 22 | 54 | 55 | 22 | 23 | 97 | 100 |
| Professional development takes explicit account of the assessment rubrics. | 34 | 35 | 26 | 27 | 37 | 38 | 97 | 100 |
| Professional development takes explicit account of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics. | 40 | 41 | 26 | 27 | 31 | 32 | 97 | 100 |
| Teacher development programmes are based on teachers' needs. | 58 | 59 | 22 | 23 | 17 | 18 | 97 | 100 |
| Teachers are consulted on the preparations of their development on assessment. | 40 | 41 | 47 | 49 | 10 | 10 | 97 | 100 |

Professional development focuses on issues of how to promote effective teacher development programmes in the implementation of assessment rubrics. The respondents were requested to respond to ten statements. They were asked to rate the items on a scale of agree, disagree and undecided. Table 10 above shows that majority of the teachers, 56(58%), agreed that teachers received adequate training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics and 32(33%) of the teachers did not agree. It was not just enough in their view, and a further 9(9%) of teachers were undecided. This finding indicates that most teachers agreed that they received adequate training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics; this may result in teachers being competent and able to correctly assess learners using the assessment rubrics. On the other hand, an equal number of teachers agreed or were undecided, at 37(38%), on the fact that training

improves the knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics and only 23(24%) disagreed. This finding contradicts the first statement of adequate training. The majority of teachers agreed that training offered regarding the assessment rubrics was sufficient, it does not mean that adequate training necessarily resulted in improved knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics. It implies that the training provided may not have been effective.

Furthermore, 51(52%) teachers disagreed that they were consulted on developing assessment rubrics, only 21(22%) agreed and the other 25(26%) were undecided. This large number of teachers that disagreed shows that teachers felt a need for their involvement in developing rubrics. It further clarifies the difference between the number that agreed on adequate training received and improved knowledge on assessment rubrics. Training given might not be relevant because no consultation was made when developing the assessment rubrics. The nature and effectiveness of their involvement is essential and their active involvement and participation may make their understanding easy. Even if teachers indicated that their training on the assessment rubrics was sufficient, an overwhelming majority, (59/61%), disagreed that most teachers were able to create and develop assessment rubrics, while only 27(28%) agreed and 11(11%) were undecided. This also shows an emphasis on the results of the type of training received by teachers on the assessment rubrics.

The majority of teachers, 63(64%), disagreed that feedback is given on training with special reference to assessment rubrics, only 16(17%) agreed and another 18(19%) were undecided. This is an indication that the need for feedback is highly recommended after training. This further suggests that training is not a finality in itself, but supportive follow ups and interactions with teachers are essential to emphasise what was entailed during training. It may be possible that after training, only a few schools were visited by the SESs for monitoring and support, that is, 16(17%) and large numbers of 63(64%) and 18(19%) were not visited for follow up after training; hence the indicative that there was no feedback after the training was done on assessment rubrics.

Most of the teachers, 54(55%), disagreed that assessment rubrics have improved the quality of teaching and learning, 22(23%) were undecided but 21(22%) agreed. This finding may indicate that as much as the teachers can use good assessment rubrics, they may have not changed their teaching methods in order to yield improved learner performance. The twenty two percent (22%) of teachers that agreed seem to be much on track with how to develop and put assessment rubrics into use, hence improvement in teaching and learning. This might be because those teachers were initially not involved in developing assessment rubrics, thus no improvement in teaching and learning because they were minimally used. Table 10 also showed that 34(35%) agreed and 37(38%) were undecided that professional development takes explicit account of the assessment rubrics and only 26(27%) disagreed. This finding shows that the majority of teachers did not find assessment rubrics in their professional developmental programmes. On the contrary, 34(35%) agreed that professional development takes assessment rubrics into account and plan for it.

Furthermore, the majority of teachers, 40(41%), agreed that professional development takes explicit account of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics, 26 (27%) disagreed and 31(32%) were undecided. 37(38%) teachers agree and 37 (38%) were undecided that training improves the knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics and only 23(24%) disagreed. This is an indication that most teachers acknowledge that training improves their knowledge on assessment rubrics. Extra curricula activities on improvement of curricula implementation are needed with special reference to assessment rubrics. This finding may imply that prior knowledge and expertise of teachers in implementing assessment rubrics is recognised.

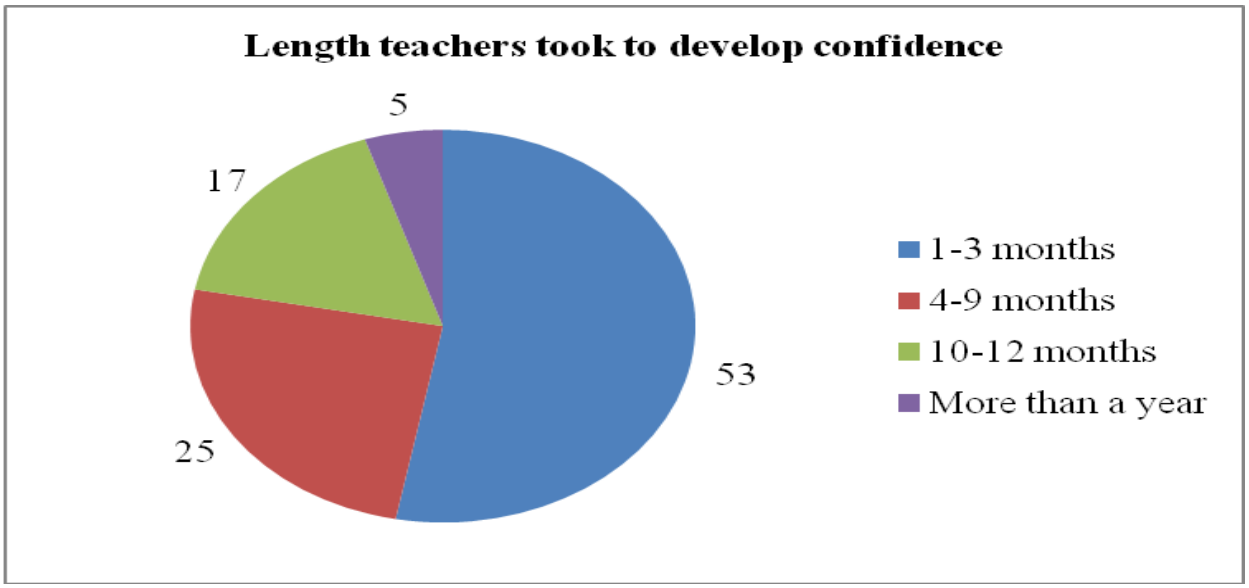
This finding implies that only 38% of the teachers gain knowledge on assessment rubrics from training and possibly assessment practices in general. It is likely that the 23(24%) that disagreed were made up of experienced teachers who have more knowledge on assessment rubrics and as such there is nothing different from what they already know about assessment rubrics.

Teachers were further asked about whether their development programmes were based on their needs on curriculum development. 58(59%) of the teachers agreed that the teacher development programmes were based on their needs, 22(23%) disagree and 17(18%) were undecided. These findings show that the majority agreed that needs' analysis was always done prior to teacher training (development). This implies that reports from schools were taken into account for planning on developmental programmes.

Finally, the results show that 40(41%) agreed that teachers were consulted on the preparations of their development on assessment, 47(49%) disagreed and 10(10%) of the teachers were undecided. This shows that preparations of teachers' development programmes might be based on what the DoE's curriculum developers think were the needs of teachers without consulting with the teachers. The findings imply that perhaps the consultation was not formalised, rather it was based on regular visits made to schools by departmental officials, and finally the officials determined the gaps and developed teachers based on those gaps.

This section sought to explore the length of time taken by the teachers to develop confidence for the effective implementation of assessment rubrics.

**Figure 4: Classroom practice**



Teachers were asked to indicate the amount of time they took to feel confident in their effective implementation of assessment rubrics. Figure 6 above outlines the duration taken by teachers to be confident in the implementation of assessment rubrics. A large number of teachers, 52(53%), took 1-3 months, 24(25%) 4-9 months, 16(17%) 10-12 months and only 5(5%) took more than a year. The finding indicates that most of the teachers are able to understand the implementation of rubrics within a short period. This might mean that most teachers are competent enough in the implementations of the assessment rubrics. In this case, a small number of teachers, just 5(5%) took more than a year to understand or be comfortable in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Training of teachers in this case might be enough and only regular monitoring of implementation is necessary.

Figure 5 below highlights the teachers' knowledge regarding the content of assessment rubrics when implementing the assessment rubrics. They were asked to indicate that by using good, satisfactory, poor and not sure.

**Figure 5: Content knowledge**

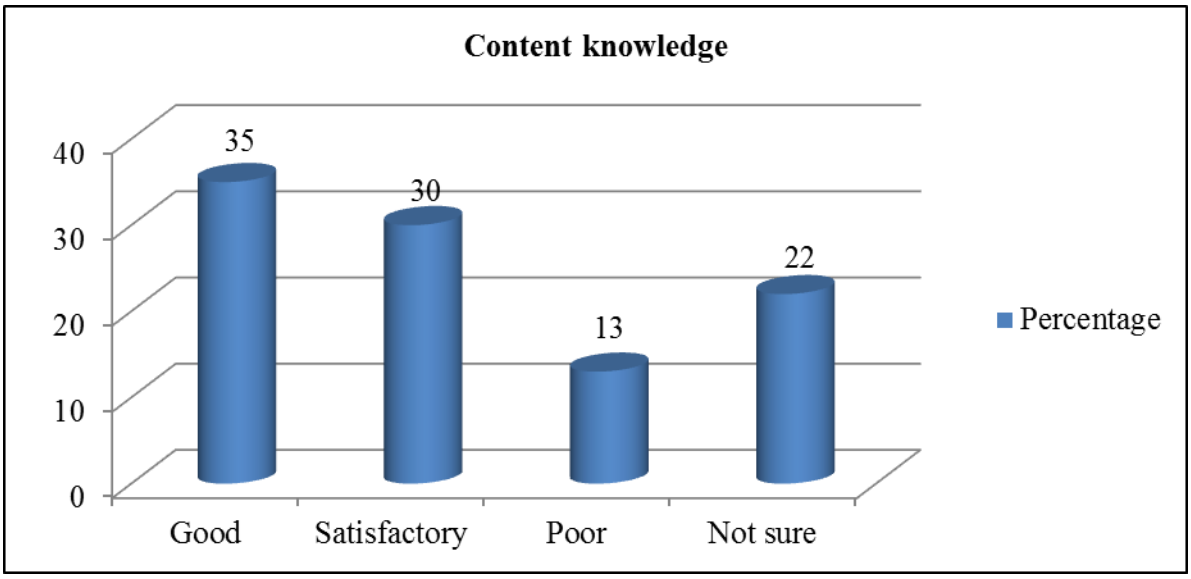



Figure 5 above reveals that 35% of the teachers rated themselves good in their content knowledge of assessment rubrics, 30% indicated satisfactory content knowledge, 13% poor and 22% were not sure. This shows that most of the teachers at that time were confident with their

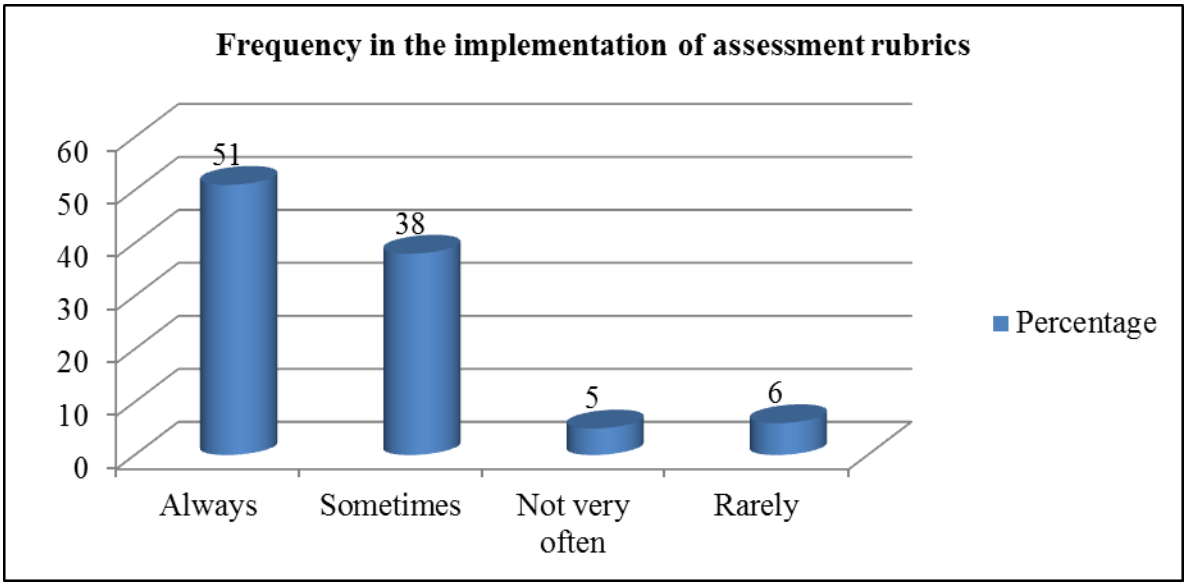
knowledge content on assessment rubrics. This might be an indication that these teachers were using assessment rubrics in their teaching and learning.

**Table 11: Description of assessment rubrics**

| Description | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Easy | 35 | 36 |
| Difficult | 62 | 64 |
| **Total** | **97** | **100** |

Table 11 indicates how teachers describe their difficulty in the implementation of assessment rubrics. They indicated this by using easy and difficult. The results highlighted in Table 11 show that the majority of the teachers, 62(64%), indicated that they found it difficult to implement assessment rubrics and the remaining 35(36%) found it easy. The result might mean that most of the teachers do not use assessment rubrics when assessing learners because they find them difficult to use. This might impact negatively on the performance of the learners. On the other hand, this finding shows that teachers find it difficult to use assessment rubrics, but they use them anyway. This might include using them but ultimately being unable to interpret the results.

**Figure 6: Frequency in the implementation of assessment rubrics**



The teachers outlined how often they use assessment rubrics when assessing learners' performance. They indicated that by using always, sometimes, not often and rarely. Most of the teachers, 51%, indicated that they always implement assessment rubrics, 38% sometimes, 5% not often and 6% rarely. This is a good indication of the implementation of assessment rubrics. This finding indicates that the teachers use assessment rubrics despite the fact that they say it is difficult to use them.

**Figure 7: Learners' performance after the implementation of assessment rubrics**

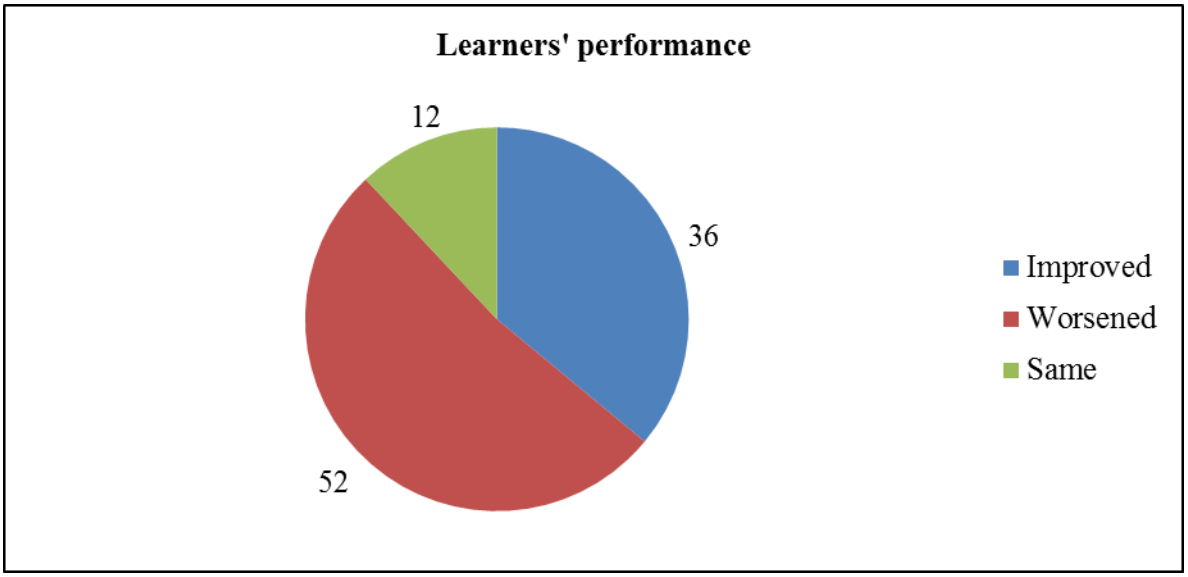



Figure 7 illustrates the views of the teachers about the performance of the learners after the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Teachers were requested to answer by using improved, worsened and same. Figure 7 above indicates the rating of teachers of learners' performance after the implementation of the assessment rubrics. It indicates that 36% of the learners' performance improved, 52% indicated that performance worsened and 12% just indicated that it stayed the same. This might be an indication that even if the teachers used the assessment rubrics, they did not understand the implementation of assessment rubrics hence the poor performance of learners. This finding also implies that the implementation of assessment rubrics in this case is correct, but learners' performance may not have changed because of other factors, for example, poor learning, lack of preparation for assessment activities by learners and

parental involvement in learners' learning. Lack or minimal understanding of the requirements of the assessment rubrics by learners may also result in lower performance of learners.

## 4.4 Analysis of Qualitative Data Regarding Classroom Practice

Qualitative results were obtained from section B3 of the Intermediate teachers' questionnaire on classroom practice where they were required to answer an open question on the effectiveness of the implementation of assessment rubrics and how they contributed towards learner performance. Some teachers' comments were the same, some left the questionnaire blank. Those who answered commented as follows:

> *Performance can be good or bad. It depends on how the learners understood the questions and how the questions were laid down.*

Some teachers indicated that the learners' understanding of the questions might influence their performance. The performance of learners can improve, be worsened or stay the same depending on the understanding of the assessment rubrics by learners. This might be made possible by the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics by teachers. An effective teacher development programme on assessment rubrics might help teachers with the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics.

> *Marks were allocated accordingly. No cheating and marks were given correctly.*
> *Checks learners understanding and interpretation of terms given.*

Teachers' further indicated that implementation of assessment rubrics might prohibit cheating by learners and understanding of questions might be improved. Implementation of the assessment rubrics might also help learners' performance to improve if expectations of the task were clearly outlined before learners performed the task. Bias might also be prohibited because the same tool was used to mark the task of all the learners, so mark allocation might be done the same way for all the learners. Teachers also highlighted that learners' active participation during teaching and learning might be improved and feedback could be timeously given.

> *Learners are actively involved and it makes them to be more attentive and they will be given feedback immediately.*

It further highlighted that learners might be well prepared before the task because of proper guidance of the assessment rubrics.

> *It gives common guidance as to what is expected. As teachers have not received proper training about the usage of rubrics, therefore there is no impact after the implementation of assessment rubrics.*

Teachers' highlighted that rubrics give a common guidance to what is expected from learners. Teacher further cited that teachers did not received proper training of rubrics no impact evident after the implementation of assessment rubrics.

The common views of the teachers were that learners were actively involved during the implementation of assessment rubrics. They further stressed that assessment rubrics made assessment activities clear and this might result in the improvement of learners' performance. Marks allocations were correctly done and learners were given feedback. Generally, teachers regard the implementation of the assessment rubrics as important. They also cited that even if implementation of the assessment rubrics were done, it did not necessarily result in improved performance of learners.

## 4.5 Analysis of the Data from Questionnaires on Teaching Strategies and Assessment

The section addressed teachers' experiences on teaching strategies and assessment and their experiences when implementing the assessment rubrics. Teachers were requested to rate their experiences by indicating with "yes" or "no".

**Table 12: Guidelines on assessment rubrics**

| Statement | Yes | | No | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Do you have specific guidelines on how to assess learners using rubrics? | 58 | 60 | 39 | 40 | 97 | 100 |
| Do you have specific guidelines on how to record learners' achievements after using rubrics? | 60 | 62 | 37 | 38 | 97 | 100 |
| Do you believe that assessment rubrics influence the learners' performance? | 68 | 70 | 29 | 30 | 97 | 100 |
| Do you use a variety of assessment tools when assessing learners? | 78 | 80 | 19 | 20 | 97 | 100 |
| Do you adhere to the principles of assessment when assessing learners? | 86 | 89 | 11 | 11 | 97 | 100 |

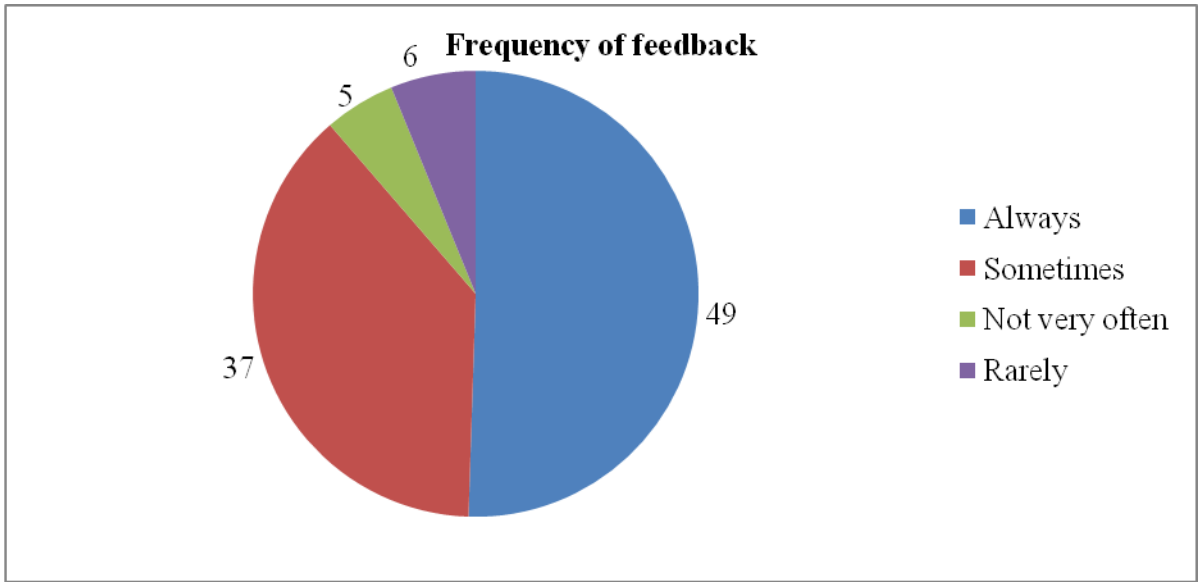
Table 12 above indicates the responses of teachers on teaching strategies and assessment. About 58(60%) teachers indicated that they had specific guidelines on the implementation of the assessment rubrics and 39(40%) had no specific guidelines. This is an indication that the majority of teachers had guidelines on the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Thirty-nine (40%) teachers who indicated that they had no guidelines on assessment rubrics might be because they were not aware of them, or they never read them. If teachers were knowledgeable in the usage and interpretation of the assessment guidelines, this might positively affect teaching and assessment. Table 12 also indicates that the majority of teachers 60(62%) had specific guidelines on how to record learners' achievement and a further 37(38%) had no specific guidelines on how assessment was recorded. This finding shows that most of the teachers did have specific guidelines on recording assessment, but whether they were correctly used or not is another thing. This might indicate that learners were correctly assessed and performance correctly recorded. This also suggests that there is need for monitoring to ensure that all the teachers receive the same information throughout the Province, Districts, AOs or circuits.

Furthermore, 68(70%) of the teachers indicated that they believed that assessment rubrics influenced the learners' performance. About 29(30%) held the view that good teaching methods compliment good assessment rubrics. This is an indication that teachers realised a need for the implementation of assessment rubrics. The majority agreed that implementation of the assessment rubrics influenced performance of learners. A further 78(80%) indicated that a

variety of assessment tools were used when learners were assessed and only 19(20%) revealed that they did not use a variety of assessment tools to assess learners. This shows that teachers use a variety of assessment tools which are in line with CAPS assessment policy regarding assessment rubrics.

A large number of teachers, 86(89%), indicated that they adhered to the principles of assessment when assessing learners and 11(11%) did not adhere to the principles of assessment in this regard. This is a good indicator that a significant number of teachers adhered to the principles of assessment as required by CAPS. Finally, the findings also show that adherence to policy regarding assessment is considered. This is one of the main requirements of CAPS and might have an impact on greater improvement on learners' performance.

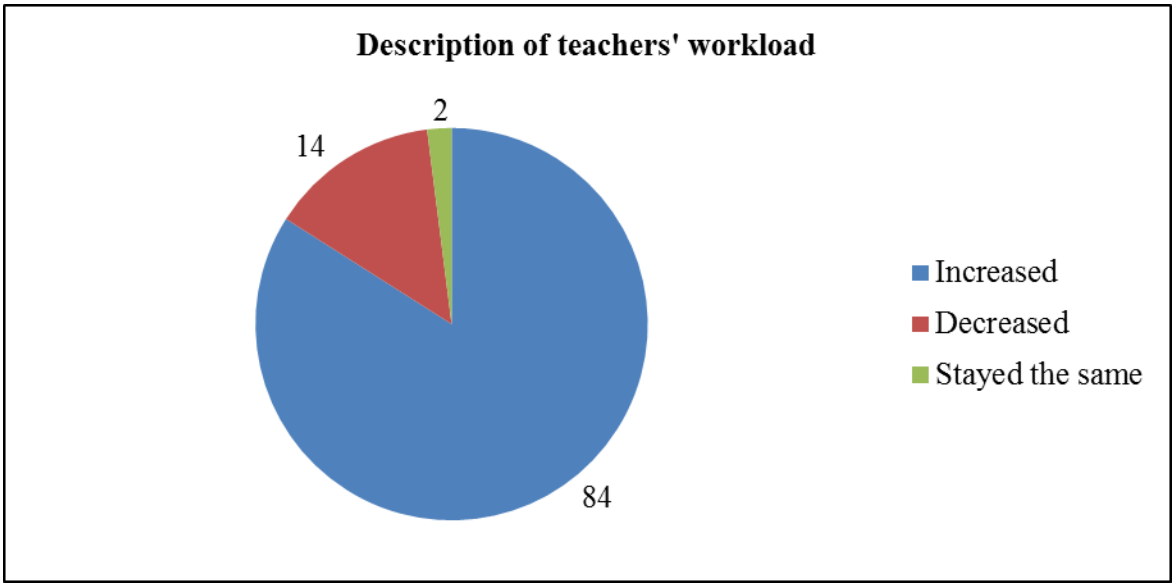
**Figure 8: Frequency of feedback after assessment**




The teachers were requested to indicate how often learners obtained feedback after the implementation of assessment rubrics. Teachers were requested to respond by using the following: always, sometimes, not very often and rarely. Figure 8 above shows the results of the teachers' indication of how often learners got feedback after assessment. 49 teachers indicated that they always gave the learners feedback after assessment, 37 indicated that feedback was sometimes given, with the other 5 saying feedback was not often given and 6 rarely gave it.

This shows that the majority of teachers provided feedback to the learners all the time before any new task was given in order to ensure continuity and consistency of learning. Learners may be able to identify their problem areas and be able to deal with them. They might also seek clarity from the teachers if necessary.

**Figure 9: Description of the teachers' workload**



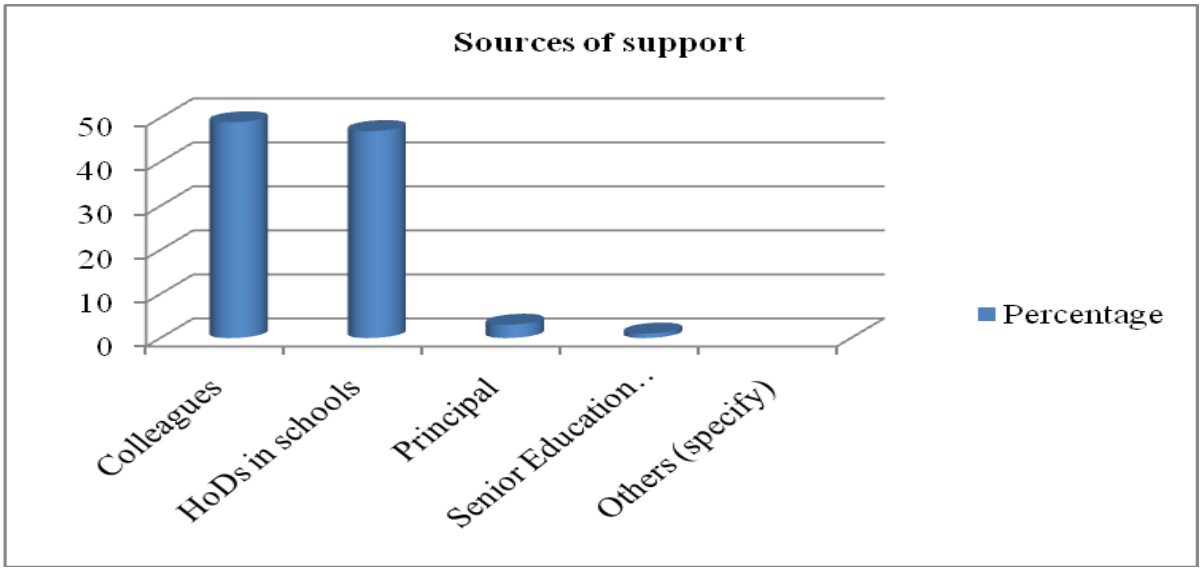

The teachers were requested to describe their workloads in terms of administrative aspects when implementing assessment rubrics. They were requested to tick one of the following categories: increased, decreased or stayed the same. The majority of the teachers, 84%, indicated that their workload increased in terms of administrative aspects when implementing assessment rubrics, 14% showed that the workload decreased and only 2% stayed the same. This finding supports the observation that more time is spent on paper work when assessment is done. It may also imply that more time is spent on administering assessment because it is integral to teaching, learning, progression and promotion.

**Table 13: Support and Resources**

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Sufficient | 67 | 69 |
| Insufficient | 30 | 31 |
| **Total** | **97** | **100** |

The teachers were asked about the support and resources they received for the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics. The respondents were asked to answer by responding with; sufficient or insufficient. The responses of teachers according to Table 13 show that 67(69%) received sufficient resources and support for effective implementation of assessment rubrics and only 30(31%) indicated that resources were insufficient. This shows that there was great improvement in the supply of resources and support from the DoE and other stakeholders. This finding that resources and support were sufficient could imply that effective implementation of assessment rubrics could improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

**Figure 10: Sources of support**




Teachers were asked to indicate where they got their curriculum support from in terms of the implementation of assessment rubrics. Teachers had to mark all categories from which they received support. The results from Figure 10 above show that 49% of the teachers indicated that

they received support from colleagues, 47% from HoDs in schools, 3% from principals and only 1% from SES's. In general, this is an indication that teachers received support especially from colleagues and HoDs in schools. This might be an indication that teachers were mainly supported by colleagues and HoDs. It is evident that there is a good relationship between colleagues. This finding may also imply that SESs do provide support, but it might be mainly on curricular content and least on assessment.

**Table 14: Assessment training**

| **Statement** | **Yes** | | **No** | | **Total** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fr | % | Fr | % | Fr | % |
| Have you attended assessment training with specific reference to assessment rubrics? | 79 | 81 | 18 | 19 | 97 | 100 |

Table 14 presents responses to whether teachers attended assessment training with specific reference to assessment rubrics. Teachers were asked to answer by indicating with "yes" or "no". The majority of teachers, 79(81%), had attended training on assessment rubrics but 18(19%) never attended any training on assessment rubrics. It was previously indicated in Figure 10 that there was a good peer and management support in schools, these few teachers could be internally trained at school level. This finding also showed that the majority of the teachers had been trained on assessment rubrics which could result in improved learners' performance and minimising teachers' workload on administration of assessment. The 18(19%) might be newly appointed Intermediate Phase teachers who had never attended any training on the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

Teachers were asked to indicate the type of training they preferred with special reference to assessment rubrics. They were requested to answer by using the following: workshop, seminar or specify any other type.

61(63%) teachers showed that they preferred workshops, 28(29%) preferred seminars and 8(8%) indicated other unspecified training. This showed that there is a need for more workshops. Most of the teachers preferred workshops for training on assessment rubrics. This might be because during workshops there is active involvement of participants and meeting teachers from other schools to share ideas. The participants learn through practical demonstrations, presentations, sharing with other colleagues and consistent questions and answers.

## 4.6 Analysis and Presentation of Qualitative Data from the Questionnaire Regarding the Training of Teachers

Teachers were asked to comment on the importance of their training with regard to the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They commented as follows:

> *I think it may improve the standard of learning. When it is a fully fleshed workshop where learners in the whole class are used, it will be an interactive knowledge sharing session which benefits learners and teachers mutually.*

Teachers also indicated that training might improve the standard of teaching and learning. Preferences of the type of training were workshops because of active participation. They also highlighted that demonstration lessons could be conducted during workshops and good practices might be shared. In this case, both learners and teachers might benefit.

> *It will be important because even the specialist will realise that more than enough work needs to be done by teachers teaching overcrowded classrooms.*

They also stressed that training could equip teachers with skills to deal with overcrowded classrooms. They highlighted that training might improve their understanding of how effective implementation of assessment rubrics could be in overcrowded classes. Assessment rubrics might be a solution in overcrowded classes because of the use one tool to assess all the learners. Learners might also do tasks in groups or pairs and even peer marking under the guidance and control of teachers.

> *For thorough understanding of assessment rubrics and effective implementation to take place, an insight is needed on how to develop a rubric which will in turn*

*help many by eliminating the "unsureness" of using the assessment techniques – specifically the usage of rubrics.*

Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of acquiring the skills and techniques to develop their own assessment rubrics. Teachers believed that these might improve their self-esteem and confidence and also lead to feeling comfortable in implementing assessment rubrics. Confidence of teachers might also bring about confident learners and ultimately improve learners' performance. Generally, the teachers felt that there was a need for training on assessment rubrics. This section presents and analyses views expressed by teachers on the factors affecting the implementation of assessment rubrics in the Intermediate Phase. The total number of teachers that responded to the question was 91, 6 of them were left blank. The table below indicates the responses of the teachers to the different categories.

**Figure 11: Factors affecting the implementation of the assessment rubrics**

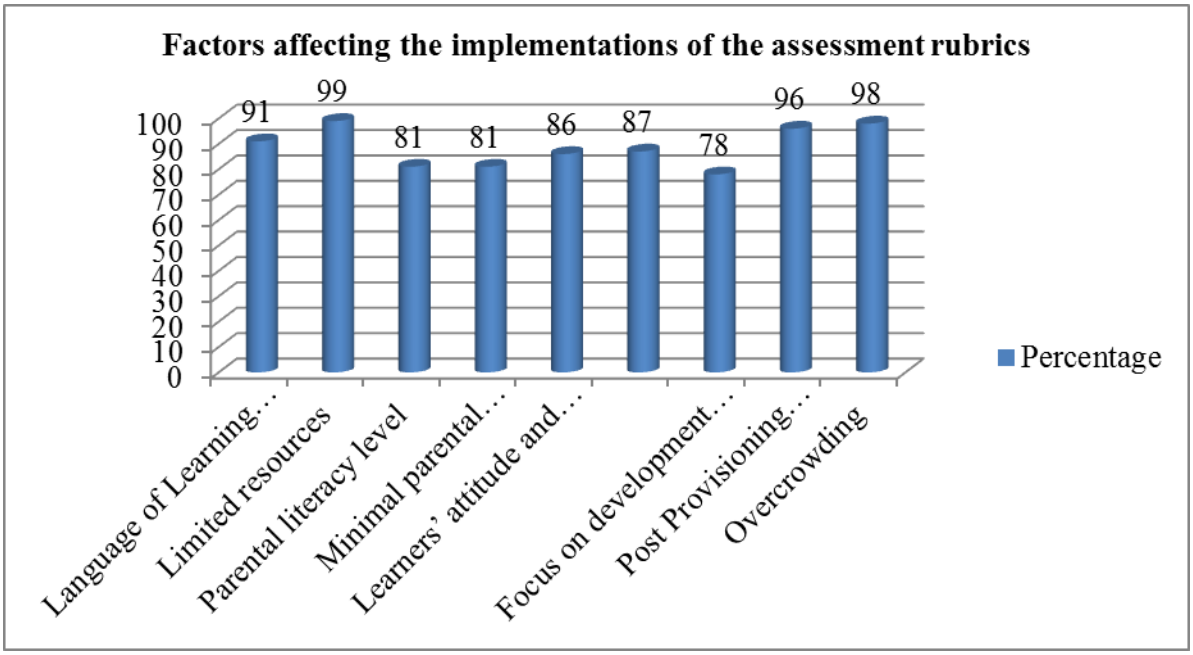



Figure 11 reveals the responses relating to factors that affected the implementation of assessment rubrics by Intermediate Phase teachers. Most of the respondents, 90(99%), indicated lack or limited availability of resources as the most challenging factor in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. This contradicts information in Table 13, were 67(69%) of teachers indicated

that support and resources were sufficient. They emphasised that schools had to be provided with the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning that might lead to effective and relevant assessment measures. Minimal parental involvement and literacy level of parents, each with 83(91%) and LoLT 91% were factors affecting the implementation of assessment rubrics. These factors seemed important because if parents' literacy level was below average, they would likely not to show interest in their children's education. The LoLT in the Intermediate Phase is English; therefore it is possible that parents might not be able to help learners with homework. If parents can attend the Adult Education Training centres (AET), there is the likelihood that their literacy level might improve and then they will be able to assist learners with their school work.

In addition, 72(86%) of the teachers pointed out that learners' attitude towards learning was not commended because they showed lack of interest in their school work. They emphasised that learners lacked motivation and showed laziness in attending to their schoolwork. This tallies with their parents' lack of interest towards education in general. They also identified other factors such as overcrowding 89(98%), and Post Provisioning Model (PPM), which is the learner teacher ratio of 1:34 in the Intermediate Phase schools 87(96%). The model highlights that one teacher is allocated to every 34 learners. Infrastructure was indicated by 67(69%) of teachers in Table 15, as being sufficient for all learners being sufficiently spaced in classrooms contributing to healthy teaching and learning. Some schools were faced with insufficient teachers leading to teaching many subjects because of PPM often result in multi-grade classes, that is, more than one grade in one classroom.

Finally, some of the teachers' development programmes designed by Departmental officials as indicated by 71(78%) of teachers are not relevant to the teachers' needs.

### 4.6.1 Teachers' general views about the implementation of assessment rubrics

Teachers were also asked about their general views regarding their experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics and how those experiences affected teaching, learning and assessment. Majority of the teachers left the question unanswered and some answers were almost the same. Here are their comments:

*Not so much was achieved in the implementation of rubrics. One of the teachers will use rubrics in a single question in one learning area.*

The comments showed that teachers felt that much was not achieved through the implementation of the assessment rubrics. This tally with the previous findings in Figure 9, where 84% of teachers indicated that workload increased during the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They also indicated that knowledge in the implementation of the assessment rubrics was minimal. Many felt that assessment rubrics did not cater for all learners, that is, their differences in learning.

*One rubric assesses learners with different abilities and this disadvantages the other learners.*

Teachers also felt that implementing the assessment rubrics created more workload. On the contrary, they indicated that implementation of the assessment rubrics made assessment easier. Assessment rubrics clearly indicated the task or activity expectation before learners performed the task. The teachers' was to make sure that learners understood the requirements of the task. This might help learners to prepare for the activities given and this might lead to good performance. One of the teachers said the following about assessment rubrics:

*Help identify learners according to their ability and where to help learners who cannot achieve. It makes assessment easier and accommodates all learners.*
*Learners know how much they are working for; it helps them to improve marks.*

Generally, teachers felt that implementation of assessment rubrics was of utmost importance even to the learners. Learners knew beforehand the requirements of the given task and how assessment would be done. This practice could encourage them to be prepared and for parents to assist. Implementation of assessment rubrics might also lessen the work of the teachers and minimise bias in assessment because the same tool was used for all the learners. This could also ensure validity and reliability of the learners' performance and even correct recording of learners' marks.

## 4.7 Analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews

Data collected through the interviews were captured and interpreted according to themes. Eight (8) HoDs from the Intermediate Phase and three (3) SESs responsible for the Intermediate Phase from the Area Office were interviewed for this study. For the purpose of this analysis, HoDs are referred to as HoD A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H; and SESs as SES A, B and C.

Table 15 presents an overview of the themes and categories in the participants' experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics. Four main themes emerged from the study.

**Table 15: Themes and categories emerged in qualitative data analysis**

| **Themes** | **Categories** |
|---|---|
| • Learner achievement | Overcrowding<br>Training<br>Motivation<br>Parental support |
| • Classroom practice | Overcrowding<br>Resources<br>Training<br>Language barrier |
| • Professional development | Workshops/seminars<br>Continuous training<br>Content-based training |
| • Factors affecting implementation | Training<br>Resources<br>Parental support<br>Content gap<br>Attitude |

### 4.7.1 Heads of Department

#### 4.7.1.1 Learner achievement

HoDs were requested to indicate whether the implementation of assessment rubrics resulted in the improvement of learner performance or not. Here are their comments about learner achievement:

HoD A: *Yes, learners are assessed for a component of work done and they tend to perform better.*

HoD B: *Yes, it improves learners achievement because when given task to them rubric is also given to them, so they can know what is expected.*

HoD F: *Yes, different learning styles have been addressed by this and also the teacher is able to know how to assess each learner in the classroom*

HoD G: *Yes*

The four HoDSs above agreed that the implementation of the assessment rubrics resulted in improved learner performance. They indicated that rubrics outlined clear criteria used for allocation of marks and the learners could clearly understand what was expected of them and how the task or activity would be marked. They also highlighted that rubrics included different forms of assessment and this might cater for different types of learners.

HoD C: *Some, e.g., assessment that deals with inclusivity and practical assessment tools.*

HoD E: *For some learners. We have learners who can't read; they experience problems, because they do not understand what is expected from them.*

HoDs C and E also agreed, but in addition, they indicated that the improvement of learner performance appeared in some of the learners but this might be due to using the practical assessment tools. Learners with barriers to learning seemed to be encountering problems, for example, they highlighted learners with reading problems.

HoD D: *No*

HoD H: *Not to the expected level, learners are assessed with too many forms as each task has about three forms.*

On the other hand, HoDs D and H disagreed with the fact that implementation of the assessment rubrics resulted in improved learner performance. Their reasons were that performance was not up to the expected level and that there was a variety of questions asked (different forms of assessment) in a task or activity. This is the same view as that of the teachers who indicated in Figure 7, 50(52%) that learner performance worsened after the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

#### 4.7.1.2 Classroom Practice

HoDs were asked questions to explore whether teachers had the relevant skills for the implementation of assessment rubrics. They commented as follows:

HoD A: *Not really, most teachers are not conversant with rubrics.*

HoD B: *Teachers do not have relevant skills, they need to be developed.*

HoD C: *No, more information on application of rubrics on a variety of situations and contexts is needed.*

HoD D: *No, some schools' enrolment (learners' number) makes it difficult for the proper implementation of rubrics.*

HoD E: *Not all of them.*

Five HoDs, disagreed that teachers had the relevant skills to assess learners using rubrics. They maintained that teachers needed to be developed or empowered on how to develop and implement rubrics. They also added that teachers needed to be equipped with relevant skills of implementing assessment rubrics in different situations and contexts. Overcrowded classrooms were also indicated as a challenge regarding implementations of assessment rubrics.

HoD F: *Only those having an understanding of the use of rubrics are able to display the knowledge and others need training and more mentoring.*

HoD G: *Some teachers still need to be developed regarding rubrics*

HoD H: *Majority of teachers do not have the necessary skills.*

Furthermore, HoDs F, G and H indicated that some teachers had relevant skills for the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They observed that other teachers still needed to be

empowered on how to develop and use the developed rubrics. Teachers also needed consistent mentoring regarding the assessment rubrics.

The above HoDs views showed that though teachers were expected to assess learners using assessment rubrics in certain activities, yet they were not well empowered or not empowered at all to do so. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that there were some teachers who were knowledgeable in this regard; perhaps they acquired such skills elsewhere through their studies or inadvertently during some workshops they attended. The result tallies with that of the teachers in Figure 4 where 52 (53%) of teachers indicated that they took 1-3 months to feel confident in the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics. This shows that more teachers were able to use assessment rubrics.

#### 4.7.1.3 Professional Development

##### 4.7.1.3.1 Training

HoDs were asked whether teachers had received sufficient training for the implementation of assessment rubrics. Here are their answers:

HoD A: *No.*

HoD B: *Teachers did not receive enough training; only one teacher was trained per school and that particular teacher had to train the rest of the school, it's impossible.*

HoD C: *No*

HoD D: *No, rubrics are only discussed in the context of other assessment tools and are never given specific and exclusive discussion.*

HoD E: *No*

HoD F: *No, an extensive training is needed.*

HoD G: *No, training was insufficient.*

HoD H: *Training of teachers on assessment is not enough.*

All the eight HoDs disagreed that teachers received sufficient training for the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Three of the HoDs disagreed without any supporting statements but the

others felt that even if teachers were trained that was not enough. The HoDs used the Cascade model of training in training teachers. According to Kennedy (2005:24), the cascade model involves individual teachers attending training events and then cascading or disseminating or passing on the information to colleagues. Teachers were trained by the SESs in a two to three day workshops regarding the implementations of the assessment rubrics and then were in turn expected to train their colleagues in their schools. They also stressed that the fact that training regarding the implementations of the assessment rubrics was never carried out and this posed a challenge. This might hinder the understanding of the implementation and development of the assessment rubrics. The teachers might not be able to disseminate the information correctly as highlighted in the training.

The HoDs' responses differed with those of the teachers in Table 10 where 56(58%) of teachers agreed that training received was adequate in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Only 32(33%) of teachers disagreed that training received was adequate and 9(9%) were undecided.

#### 4.7.1.3.2 Professional needs

Here, HoDs were asked to indicate whether professional needs of teachers were taken into account when training programmes were designed. They commented as follows:

HoD A: *I do not think so, in most cases training is short and rushed.*

HoD B: *No, teachers' professional needs are not considered. They should also be part of designers because they are the ones who will implement those programmes.*

HoD C: *They were never taken into consideration and were never given any intensive training concerning this matter. Only instructions from above.*

HoD D: *They are not taken into account. Teachers are never given intensive training regarding new programmes.*

HoD E: *No, some teachers are forced to teach a subject they are not qualified in (Primary school). We do not have or are given a choice.*

Five HoDs, disagreed that teachers' professional needs were taken into account when training programmes were designed, particularly assessment. They further emphasised that there was

never any intensive training with particular focus on assessment rubrics. Some indicated that even the duration of the training was not taken into consideration; they were either short or done without in-depth preparations. This does not tally with the result from teachers in Table 10 where 40(41%) agree that they were consulted on the preparations of their development on assessment

HoD G: *Yes, but the only problem is with the time frame allocated for training teachers with these programmes.*

HoD H: *Yes there were enough advocacies and teachers' needs were considered. The only problem is those teachers do not apply their minds.*

On the other hand, two HoDs agreed that teachers' professional needs were taken into account when training programmes were designed, particularly assessment rubrics. This result tallies with that of the teachers in Table 10, where 58(59%) of teachers agreed that their teacher development programmes were based on their needs. HoDs also noted with great concern the duration of the training regarding the programmes on teacher professional needs. The other HoD further indicated ignorance of teachers regarding advocacies on teachers' developmental needs as a challenge. This was stressed by the response of the teachers 40(41%), in Table 10 where they indicated that they were consulted on the preparations of their development on assessment.

HoD F: *It would be working if the department of education and universities work together in the training of teachers in order to make sure that similarity in what is needed, is achieved.*

Only one HoD, F had a different opinion that the Department of Education and the institutions of higher learning should synergise their approach to teacher training so that there would be common knowledge and understanding of the teachers' practical applications regarding assessment rubrics. The views from the HoDs did not tally well with the view of teachers in Table 11, where they indicated that no consultation was made regarding the curriculum development programmes. Above all, they made a very important input by suggesting that the Department of Education and the tertiary institutions needed to work together regarding the content of teacher training, so that the content gap between the schools and the institutions might be narrowed.

#### 4.7.1.3.3 Training required

HoDs commented as follows regarding the kind of training required for the implementation of assessment rubrics and why they thought the training might be important.

HoD A: *How to use rubrics, because it is important that implementers should know exactly what to expect.*

HoD B: *Training is for the benefit of learners, so it should be done in the morning while teachers are still active, after school they are tired, they don't concentrate.*

HoD C: *Proper training on how to use rubrics is highly recommended. It would enable teachers to be sure of what they are doing.*

HoD D: *Training on the use of rubrics is needed. It may help reduce subjectivity among teachers.*

HoD E: *So that teachers have the knowledge to carry everything to learners e.g. you are qualified in languages, but must teach Technology.*

HoD F: *More intense mentoring support to teachers must be provided by the Department of Education and skills development programmes must be in place regularly.*

HoD G: *Training on different assessment tools. This will help teachers to assess learners using different forms of assessment and to cater for those learners with barriers.*

HoD H: *Training on assessment is only relevant during Professional Support Forum (PSF) meeting time should be set aside for assessment and also at subject meetings at schools.*

All the HoDs felt that training of teachers on assessment rubrics was important and necessary. The reasons cited by the HoDs about the importance of training were that assessment rubrics were specific in terms of their criteria on assessment; it catered for learners with barriers to learning; it reduced workload of teachers and also improved learner performance. They also indicated that training needed to be followed by intense monitoring and support and had to be done in the mornings when teachers were fresh and active. HoDs did not single out the type of training they needed but they highlighted that training was important and also needed by teachers. This is an indication that training is needed regarding the assessment rubrics.

On the other hand, even though all the HoDs saw a dire need for training of teachers on assessment rubrics, three HoDs, (F, G and H) were vague. They interpreted the question

differently and stated that training on assessment rubrics was only relevant during professional support forums (PSFs) and also during subject meetings at schools.

#### 4.7.1.3.4 Developmental programmes

The HoDs were asked about the impact of professional development programmes on the successful management of learners' assessment. Here are their comments:

HoD A: *It plays a pivotal role. Because, that is where one may need reinforcement.*

HoD C:*Proper training of professional development programs will have good or positive impact on the successful management of learners' assessment.*

HoD D: *Professional development is crucial on the successful management of learners' assessment.*

HoD H: *Teachers who understand what is expected will perform better and learners will achieve.*

Out of the eight HoDs, four of them, (A, C, D and H) were of the view that professional development programmes impacted on the successful management of learner assessment for the following reasons:

- Teachers who know and understand what is expected of them might perform better and thus learner achievement may improve.
- Different assessment techniques and approaches shared by teachers might help them on quality teaching and effective assessment practices
- The programmes might reinforce the quality of teachers' assessment skills.

HoD B: *Not sure, but I think they moderate papers.*

HoD E: *A lot.*

HoD F: *Learners are assessed using different techniques which are enabling the teacher to improve on the quality and competence of teaching, thus helping teachers to acquire more knowledge and skills.*

HoD G: *It helps teachers to give learners' feedback regularly and timeously*

Four HoDs responded with some ambiguity and uncertainty. This might be the result of understanding the question differently. The inference that could be made from their response is that there is an impact was made in the professional development programmes. To some extent they saw a positive impact in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Their responses were that there was a lot of impact of the developmental programmes on the successful management of learners' assessment. Developmental programmes played a pivotal role on assessment and they were crucial on the successful management of learner performance.

All the HoDs felt that professional development programmes had an impact on the management of learner assessment activities. It was emphasised that programmes served as reinforcement tool on learner assessment and improved the quality of learning and teaching and also developed teacher confidence in teaching.

In addition to the above, HoDs indicated the support given to teachers in their professional development on assessment rubrics. Their comments were as follows:

HoD A: *Affording them the opportunity to attend workshops or seminars, but most importantly to orientate or workshop them at school or departmental level.*

HoD B: *Every time after monitoring or moderation, I sit down with them and show them how to do things correctly.*

HoD C: *We meet timeously to discuss daily problems we encounter in classes, work as a team and share ideas.*

HoD D: *We always work as a team and meet to discuss.*

HoD E: *Help when they set papers, rubric, etc. Give ideas.*

HoD F:*Encourage teachers to meet regularly and discuss problems encountered in assessment and that in itself promotes team-work and share ideas.*

HoD G: *We discuss learner assessment with teachers and encourage them to communicate their challenges with other schools.*

HoD H:*During learning area meetings assessment is catered for and teachers are encouraged to read more.*

The HoDs highlighted that teachers were afforded the opportunity to attend workshops or seminars to enhance their professional growth. Moderation and monitoring of the teachers' work was also highlighted and feedback was needed immediately. HoDs further identified teamwork as an important factor for the professional development of teachers. Furthermore, in their teams, teachers shared problems encountered in their different schools, assessment and the setting of question papers. Teachers would share common practices in teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the HoDs were asked to respond to whether assessment tools used by teachers were easy to implement. Their responses were as follows:

HoD A: *No, they did not really understand how to use them.*

HoD B: *Not easily implemented, but it will be only if the training is well done.*

HoD C: *They are totally not, especially the rubrics, they are confusing.*

HoD D: *They are not. Most of them particularly rubrics are difficult to use and comprehend.*

HoD E: *No. Some teachers themselves don't know the tools.*

Five HoDs did not think that assessment tools used by teachers were easy to implement. The main reasons were that teachers did not understand the implementation of the assessment rubrics and in this regard they considered their implementation as difficult. HoDs F, G and H further highlighted the ignorance of some of the teachers by indicating that some teachers were not even aware of the assessment rubrics.

HoD F: *Yes, they are easy to implement to those teachers who are familiar with it and have knowledge and skills for implementation, whereas others find it difficult.*

HoD G: *Yes, they are because teachers were not sufficiently trained but they are able to implement as required.*

HoD H: *Yes as they are subject specific.*

On the contrary, the three HoDs above indicated that whereas there was insufficient training on assessment rubrics, the assessment rubrics were easy to implement. It suffices to conclude that

the eight respondents did agree on the fact that lack of proper training and knowledge were barriers to easy implementation.

The findings are the same as those of the teachers in Table 11 where 64% of the teachers described the implementation of the assessment rubrics as difficult. They emphasised that developed rubrics that were subject specific were difficult to use and comprehend.

Furthermore, HoDs were asked to give suggestions on what could be done to improve the situation regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They responded as follows:

HoD A: *Workshops and teacher retraining.*

HoD B: *When designing the programmes include teacher delegations, and training should be done for all teachers.*

HoD C: *Proper training on assessment tools should be dealt in detail.*

HoD D: *Intensive training on the use of assessment tools is necessary.*

HoD E: *More workshops or seminars.*

HoD F: *Extensive training which is done on regular basis is needed and follow ups done in order to make sure that the teachers are able and improvement is visible.*

HoD G: *Regular Professional Support Forums (PSFs) and most importantly, follow-ups should be encouraged. Assessment should be done to trace learners' progress and not for the sake of monitoring and moderation.*

Seven HoDs suggested that there was a need for intervention on what could be done to improve the situation regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They highlighted that workshops, seminars, PSFs, retraining and intensive training of teachers on the use of the assessment tools be done as well as seminars and PSFs. They further emphasised that training of teachers needed to be followed by continuous monitoring and support of the implementation process of the assessment rubrics. They also indicated the need for teachers' involvement when designing their professional programmes.

HoD H: *Teacher is there to ensure that learners achieve. Assessment programmes and time tables should be given to parents as well to encourage learners.*

Only one HoD provided a conflicting view when he indicated that teachers were to give learners and their parents' assessment programmes for encouragement in learning and assessment.

#### 4.7.1.4 Factors that affect the implementation of assessment rubrics

Factors that can affect the implementation of assessment rubrics were highlighted below by the HoDs as follows:

HoD A: *Time, practicality and lack of knowledge.*

HoD B: *Lack of knowledge; they don't know how to do it especially the new teachers' lack of time. It is time consuming.*

HoD C: *Allocation of marks as well as interpretation of tools is time consuming.*

HoD D: *Time as well as interpretation of the tools.*

HoD E: *Again: Time, workload, classes are too big; teachers teach up to six subjects, not only Technology.*

HoD F: *Lack of understanding what is needed on the site of the HoD as well as the teacher him/herself.*

HoD G: *Teachers' creativity, learners' creativity and incorrect assessment plan.*

HoD H: *Some teachers fail to explore and read a lot about rubrics hence they hate or have* phobia *for it*.

All HoDs were of the view that there were factors that affected the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Indicated factors by the HoDS were, duration of the development programmes of teachers, workload of teachers especially in small schools, content gap regarding assessment rubrics. The scenario might even become worse in a multi-grade school where one teacher was expected to teach all the subjects in the phase, for example; Grade 4 to 6. Lack of knowledge or understanding on the implementation of assessment rubrics was also highlighted as a contributory factor and they also felt that interpretation of the assessment rubrics was time

consuming. Lack of teachers' interest in exploring and reading about assessment rubrics also affected the implementation of assessment rubrics in a negative way.

#### 4.7.1.5 HoDs' general views regarding the teachers' experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics

The following section presents the general views of HoDs with regard to the implementation of assessment rubrics. The following were their comments:

HoD A: *In some cases, there are inconsistencies and the frustrations of time factor.*

HoD B: *Most of the time they don't use it because they are not clear on it.*

HoD C:*Most of teachers find difficulty in its usage and rather prefer to use it when dealing with "graphs" only.*

HoD D: *Most tend to ignore using them because of frustration.*

HoD H: *Majority of teachers still lack experience. They do not like it.*

HoD E: *Spelling for learners is a huge problem. If it is one of the assessments, most learners do not achieve.*

The above HoDs felt that there was a great challenge as far as implementation of the assessment rubrics was concerned. They indicated that some teachers felt that assessment rubrics were difficult in interpretation and implementation. They also highlighted that teachers even resorted to not using them due to frustration. The HoDs felt that learners' spelling problems could lead to under or non achievement of learner performance. Inconsistencies and the frustrations of time factor were also highlighted as a concern with regard to the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

HoD F: *Some teachers prefer rubrics and are not aware that other subjects need different assessment tools, rather those rubrics.*

HoD G: *It differs from one teacher to another depending on the subject while some focus mainly on other assessment tools.*

Contrary to the other HoDs, these two HoDs felt that teachers were aware that assessment rubrics were subject specific and preferred using them. In general, HoDs felt that teachers were not consistent in the implementations of the assessment rubrics.

Generally, the findings showed that teachers needed intensive and structured training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics followed by consistent monitoring of the implementation process.

## 4.8 Views of Subject Education Specialists (SESs) regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics

### 4.8.1 Learner achievement

SESs responses on whether the implementation of assessment rubrics resulted in improvement of learners' performance. Here are their comments:

SES A: *No, these changes have impacted negatively on the current learning and teaching approach because the teachers were still struggling so they adopted a negative attitude towards some of the tools, e.g. the rubrics and checklists.*

SES B: *No, learners' achievement is not improving because teachers are not well trained in using assessment tools.*

SES C: *No, most of them are not reliable and valid.*

All the three SESs, (A, B and C), disagreed with the fact that the implementation of the assessment rubrics resulted in improved learner performance. Their reasons were that the assessment tools such as rubrics and checklists were introduced whilst the teachers themselves were still experiencing challenges regarding some of the assessment tools. They further indicated that even if the teachers were trained, their training was not effective and, as a result, learners' achievement did not improve. SESs further cited that most of the rubrics are not reliable and valid. The above explanation indicates that the teachers used what they were using during assessment because they did not understand the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

The majority of teachers in Figure 7, 50(52%), felt that the performance of learners worsened with regard to the implementation of the assessment rubrics. These findings showed that teachers were still struggling with other assessment tools. They cited the training of teachers regarding the implementations of the assessment rubrics as important in contributing to the improvement of learner achievement. The SESs responses ran contrary to those of 5 HoDs, (A, B, F, and G) who stated that learner performance improved when assessment rubrics were implemented.

### 4.8.2 Classroom practice

SESs were asked questions on whether teachers had relevant skills for the implementation of assessment rubrics. Here are their comments:

SES A: *No, teachers look for skills concerning rubrics, designing the rubrics together with the assessment criteria for designing the rubrics.*

SES B: *No, some teachers do not know how to draw a rubric or what a rubric is.*

SES C: *No, in most cases they don't have skills to design rubrics and even use the one that has been developed.*

All the three SESs (A, B and C) interviewed, were of the view that teachers lacked relevant skills for the implementations of the assessment rubrics. They indicated that teachers lacked skills for designing, developing and using the developed rubrics for effective assessment of learner achievement. This was also indicated by the teachers in Table 11, where the majority of teachers, 62(64%) felt that the implementation of assessment rubrics was difficult. This showed that there was the need for intense training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics by teachers.

### 4.8.3 Professional development

#### 4.8.3.1 Training

SESs presented their views on whether training received by teachers was sufficient for the implementation of assessment rubrics. Here are their comments:

SES A: *No, the training did not provide much information on the introduction and*

*implementation of the assessment rubrics, resulting in teachers still lacking skills to develop rubrics.*

SES B: *No, there was no training done for the teachers to develop rubrics.*

SES C: *No, teachers need a full training on assessment (quality of assessment)*

The SESs did not agree that teachers received sufficient training for the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They highlighted that training received by teachers on the implementation of the assessment rubrics were ineffective and there was still need for effective training of teachers. The response is similar to that of the HoDs who also believed that training was insufficient. Even where most of the teachers, 79(81%), in Table 14 indicated that they were trained regarding the assessment rubrics, it showed that it was not effective. This was an indication that the teachers' training lacked relevant skills regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics.

#### 4.8.3.2 Professional needs

Here, SESs were asked whether professional needs of teachers were taken into account when training programmes were designed.

SES A: *No, the knowledge and skills of some teachers are inadequate and irrelevant for training programmes that are designed. The real needs of teachers must first be identified before training programmes are designed.*

SES B: *No, teachers are not involved when the training programmes are designed to voice out their needs. Teachers are told what to do and at times tasks are given to implement and as professionals they are never offered an opportunity to practice what they learned from tertiary institutions.*

Two of the three SESs disagreed that teachers' professional needs were taken into account when training programmes were designed, particularly on assessment. This shows that no need analysis was done prior to training so as to identify areas of great concern and this might have resulted in training programmes that were not suitable for the needs of teachers. This was also emphasised by the majority of teachers in Table 10 where 51(52%) indicated that no consultation was made when assessment rubrics were developed.

SES C: *Provisioning of support material and external sources of references are provided and materials for practical tasks need to be further rolled out.*

The third SES did not indicate whether he or she agreed with the question or not. The response confirmed that resources and support materials were provided for teachers.

#### 4.8.3.3 Training required

Here the SESs needed to identify the type of training suitable for teachers regarding the implementation for the assessment rubrics:

SES A: *Provide teachers with adequate and relevant working sessions that will enhance their knowledge. Develop programmes relevant to the present education system in order to adapt to the challenges and changes in education.*

SES A interpreted the question differently and indicated that there was the need to provide teachers with adequate and relevant working sessions that would enhance their knowledge of the implementation of assessment rubrics. He or she further highlighted that there was the need for programmes to be developed which were relevant to the present education system. The programmes must be developed in order to adapt to the challenges and changes in education.

SES B: *Content training; classroom management, development and management of assessment and etc.*

SES C: *Support in terms of Professional Support Forums (PSFs), school moderation and content training. Teachers must affiliate to professional bodies e.g. South African Association of Science and Technology Educators (SAASTE).*

The two SESs identified content training, classroom management, development and management of assessment as forms of training to be conducted with teachers. They also indicated that support of teachers by conducting PSFs, school moderation and content training must be done as well as the need for teachers to affiliate with professional bodies like SAASTE.

#### 4.8.3.4 Developmental programmes

The SESs were asked to highlight the impact of professional development programmes on the successful management of learner assessment. Here are their comments:

> SES A: *Might help to expand philosophy and their educational practice, which could help to equip managers for a role in bringing about qualitative changes to address educational needs.*

SES A, holds the view that professional development programmes might assist teachers to expand philosophy and their educational practice which could help them to equip managers for a role in bringing about qualitative changes to address educational needs.

> SES B: *Teachers and School Management Team (SMT) constantly receive upgrading management programmes/ courses which empower them with managerial skills. Impact is positive. It makes school management to adapt to the changes in the curriculum which affect the management of the school support.*

The SES B above said that regular professional development programmes could empower teachers' and school management teams' managerial skills. The very programmes could afford School Management Teams (SMTs) the ability to adapt to curricular changes which affected them so that they could provide effective school support.

This view shows that well designed professional development programmes are a key to the management of curricular changes and assessment which are very central in this regard because all curricular activities culminate in assessment.

> SES C: *They help the school to manage the schools professionally. Not visible, some schools are in the same position like they were even before professional developments.*

SES C maintained that professional development programmes helped with professional management in schools. Contrary to that he or she was of the opinion that some schools were in the same position as before professional development take place.

The SESs were asked to comment on the impact of professional development programmes on the successful management of learner assessment.

SES A: *Training teachers on assessment in the classroom. Teachers lack skills concerning assessment, recording assessment, the different forms of assessment, devising assessment tasks, devising tasks appropriate to assessment criteria and learning outcomes.*

SES B: *Content and assessment training will assist. To refresh oneself and for the sake of those who have not majored in subjects they offer.*

SES C: *Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) programmes need to be used to train teachers about assessment for two years programme. The specialist must monitor the process. New development in education offered by accredited suppliers/institution.*

The three SESs supported the view that professional development programmes did have a certain impact on the successful management of learner assessment. It suffices to state that the SESs had a different interpretation of the question asked in the question 5, and they responded by highlighting educational practices or needs, changes in curriculum which were embracive of assessment as a practice. Educational professional programmes like ACE programmes were also stated as the programme that could be used to train teachers. SESs must help in monitoring the progress and new development programmes to be offered by accredited institutions.

SESs were asked to recommend the type of support to be given to teachers in terms of their professional development. All the SESs emphasised the importance of assessment support. To a large extent assessment was seen to be interlinked to content taught and upgrading of the qualifications.

The SESs were further asked to evaluate the implementation of assessment rubrics by teachers with reference to level of difficulty.

SES A: *Yes, except for the rubrics.*

SES A agreed that assessment tools used by teachers were easy to implement, except for rubrics.

SES B: *No, teachers know learners; know how to assess learners; but don't know how to assess them using the right assessment tools, especially rubrics.*

SES C: *No, there are too many assessment tools and teachers don't have enough skills to use them. They only use test as a tool to test memory of the learner. Rubrics are regarded as demanding by teachers.*

On the other hand the other two SESs disagreed that the implementation of the assessment rubrics was not easy. They indicated that teachers knew the ability of the learners and how to assess them, but did not know how to assess them using the right assessment tools, especially rubrics. They also highlighted that there were too many assessment tools and teachers did not have enough skills to use them. They only used tests as a tool to test the memory of the learners. Rubrics were regarded as demanding by teachers.

The SESs were also required to identify what could be done to improve the skills of teachers relevant for the implementation of assessment rubrics.

SES A: *Teachers should be trained and retrained on the use of assessment tools, the implementation process. Hold workshops on rubric development.*

SES B: *Teachers need to be trained on assessment once per term for development.*

SES C: *Continuous training by SES's for different subjects and ACE programmes. Tools should be straightforward and assess one aspect at a time.*

The SESs emphasised the need for regular training on assessment rubrics. This training might equip teachers with the necessary skills on how to assess, develop and use assessment rubrics. SESs believed that consistent training of teachers by SES's on assessment might encourage teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They must also be work-shopped on their development to improve their competence in the implementation. Advanced Certificate in

Education (ACE) programmes might also help to make assessment tools easy and straight forward.

## 4.9 Analysis of Data from Interviews on Factors that Affect the Implementation of Assessment Rubrics

The SESs further commented on factors affecting the implementations of the assessment rubrics as follows:

SES B: *Lack of knowledge on how to draw or use a rubric by teachers.*

*Factors which are not objective but are subjective.*

SES B indicated lack of knowledge on how to develop and use rubrics as a major factor. To a large extent subjective factors were also seen by the respondent to be affecting the implementations of assessment rubrics.

SES A: *Evaluation criteria, scoring strategy and quality definition. Learner numbers.*

SES C: *Rubrics assess value and skills, knowledge not just what the teacher expect.*

The other two SESs responded to the question by giving evaluation criteria, scoring strategy, quality definition and learner numbers as factors affecting the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They also indicated that rubrics assessed value, skills and knowledge not just what the teacher expected.

## 4.10 General Views of SESS about the Implementation of the Assessment Rubrics

Below, SESs present on their views regarding teachers' implementation of the assessment rubrics. Their comments are as follows:

SES A: *Little use of rubrics.*

SES B: *Teachers don't know how to develop and allocate marks using rubrics.*

SES C: *Rubrics are not up to standard. They use wrong rubrics in wrong activities. They don't mark according to the rubric they designed. All learners achieve if rubrics are used.*

SES A stated that there was little use of rubrics by teachers. This experience might not necessarily imply that teachers did not know how to use rubrics. It might mean that the nature of activities given to learners did not require the use of rubrics. SES B further indicated that teachers lacked knowledge on how to develop and allocate marks using rubrics. SES C emphasised this by stating rubrics used were not up to standard; wrong rubrics were used in wrong activities. They further stated that teachers did not mark according to the rubrics they designed and this contributed to all learners achieving as if rubrics were used. Two SESs in this regard viewed lack of knowledge and understanding on how to develop and use rubrics as a critical issue.

## 4.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings were presented and interpretation of data was outlined including analysis of the results of both qualitative and quantitative data. The factors that affect the implementations of the assessment rubrics found were: Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT), limited resources, parental illiteracy level, minimal parental involvement, learners' attitude and motivation, content gap regarding assessment rubrics, focus on development programme, Post Provisioning Model (PPM) and overcrowding. The next chapter gives a summary of the findings, the recommendations and conclusion.

# CHAPTER FIVE
# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and gives a summary of the findings. Based on the research findings on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics, this chapter suggests recommendations on how the implementation of the assessment rubrics could be enhanced. The chapter also highlights areas of further research, based on the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

## 5.2 Summary of Findings

This section consists of a brief summary of each research question investigated. The data used for the research questions was collected through the use of questionnaires from the intermediate phase teachers and interviews conducted with the HoDs of primary schools and SESs from the AO.

The study revealed that most teachers had teaching experience of between 11 to 15 years, with only a few having five years or less in the teaching profession. This indicates that most teachers have been in the system for a long time, that is, long before the introduction of C2005. They were trained in the old curriculum which resulted in their minimal understanding of the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Consequently, they might not be conversant with the new assessment techniques, as indicated in CAPS, with special reference to assessment rubrics.

The level of education was questioned to determine whether their qualifications had had any influence on their experiences of the implementation of assessment rubrics. The results showed that the majority of the respondents had B.Ed and Honours Degrees. It was evident that most teachers were qualified as reflected by the DoE (2007) which indicated that a teacher's minimum qualification should carry REQV 13 and the study had shown that the majority of teachers are in

this category. It emerged that their level of qualification did not influence their experiences in the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

## 5.3 Major Findings Pertaining to Research Questions

### 5.3.1 Research Question 1: What are the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics?

The Primary School Management Team (PSMT) in the Intermediate Phase comprises a principal, deputy principal, HoDs and senior teachers who are responsible for the total management of the school. From this team the deputy principal, HoDs and senior teachers are responsible for overseeing the smooth implementation of curriculum at school level. SESs are also responsible for monitoring, guiding and supporting the proper implementation of curriculum and the assessment rubrics at school level from the AO.

In particular, the research focused on the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. From the study, teachers, HoDs and SESs were asked to indicate what their experiences with regard to the implementation of assessment rubrics had been and what meaning those experiences had for them. In Table 11 in Chapter four, it is indicated that most teachers, 62(64%), were unable to understand the implementation of assessment rubrics. They both had negative and positive experiences in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They agreed that the assessment rubrics were good and could yield positive results. They further mentioned that the assessment rubrics indicated that values such as independent learning and accountability of the learners are achieved.

However, most teachers had their reservations as far as the implementation of the assessment rubrics is concerned. They believed that the implementation of the assessment resulted in poor learner achievement and low teacher morale due to classroom problems such as, lack of infrastructure, insufficient resources, overcrowding resulting from workload due to Post Provisioning Model (PPM), and teacher pupil ratio. LoLT also plays an important role in this regard because the illiteracy level of the parents is a little high. Restructuring of schools, that is,

primary schools from Grades R to 7 and secondary schools, from Grades 8 to 12 also poses a greater challenge in the performance of learners. If the school upgrades, that is, adding more grades, the school is expected to use the same teachers. Those teachers are not trained in the curriculum of those classes. Content gap will only be closed through Professional Support Forums (PSFs). Secondary schools, that is, Grades 8-12, emphasis in teaching is focused more on the Grade 12, thus neglecting the lower grades.

**Policy issues**

Policy issues in this study are based on Table 11 and refer to the implementation of the assessment rubrics by the setting of specific goals related to policies, the development and creation of assessment rubrics. These are designed in line with the Departmental Education policies on assessment rubrics. The significance of involvement emerged in the findings, as the majority of teachers felt that they needed to be engaged in making changes in the policies for educational reform. It was indicated in Table 9 that a minority of teachers 13(13%) stated that they needed to be consulted when educational reform policies are made. This might be an indication that teachers are not confident in their knowledge of the successful implementation of the assessment rubrics. There is an indication that teachers were not given sufficient training as far as implementation of rubrics are concerned, this might have resulted in their low level of interest and the low achievement of learners in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Teachers need to be engaged in helping to make changes in the policies for educational reform because they are responsible for curriculum implementation. This can be made easier if they are involved when curriculum programmes are identified because they will be able to identify their needs. This can be done through questionnaire and interview of teachers.

Teachers also strongly believe that they are the critical agents in the assessment implementation. This is indicated in Table 9 by the majority of teachers where 67(69%) indicated that they were central to any assessment innovation; therefore, their commitment and involvement in assessment will determine the success of implementation of assessment rubrics. This is an indication that teachers' involvement is essential for successful and meaningful creation, development and implementation of the assessment rubrics, as they will be the eventual implementers and they might experience the first problems to experience in implementation.

Changes regarding assessment in the school system or in the classrooms should be addressed through teachers as this is an integral part of teaching and learning so that intended outcomes might be achieved. Even if teachers are not expected to make all decisions regarding assessment rubrics, at the very least, there must be ways for them to develop a feeling of commitment to the innovation process. Therefore, the need to involve teachers cannot be overemphasised.

In addition, teachers strongly felt that policy changes should be accompanied by supportive procedures to strengthen their roles. This was indicated in Table 13, where 67(69%) of teachers felt that the support they received from the Departmental officials is sufficient. Successful implementation of the assessment rubrics might depend on the extent to which all curriculum stakeholders are informed and have been prepared for the envisaged change and whether they are also prepared to associate themselves with it. Teachers should be given all the support they need so that they do not feel isolated but be continuously assisted while implementing the assessment rubrics. Intense support of the departmental officials, as well as continuous monitoring, support and evaluation of the implementation of the assessment rubrics are correctly done by teachers.

The findings also showed in Table 9 that 43(44%) teachers indicated that there were different interpretations of the implementation of the assessment rubrics among them. The interpretation of assessment rubrics is always subject to multiple versions of interpretation, depending upon the standpoint of the teachers doing the interpretation. This implies that different teachers can interpret assessment rubrics differently, and this could create problems when it comes to implementation. The teachers should have been taken through the implementation of the assessment rubrics to ensure that there was uniform understanding that would enhance implementation. Different interpretations of the implementation of the assessment rubrics might affect the performance of the learners.

The study further emphasised that the implementation of assessment rubrics might pose challenges for teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which could not be met without the interpretation, creation and development of assessment rubrics. From the study it was further highlighted that, after training, the assessment rubrics were re-interpreted at school level by the trainer teachers in an attempt to articulate the meaning of change to their colleagues. It

shows that most of the teachers did not quite understand what was expected of them and the different roles they had to play. This could be blamed on the method used by the DoE to train teachers. This could also explain why learners were underachieving and teachers were not confident in their work regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

**Professional development**

Professional development was outlined from Table 10 and it was stated that teacher development programmes need to be tailored in such a way that they meet the professional requirements of teachers. Teacher development programmes might also be planned to enhance the quality of learners' learning by identifying, clarifying and meeting the individual needs of the staff within the context of the institution as a whole with the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Assessment rubrics and teachers' professional development is a two-way relationship. This suggests that for assessment rubrics to have their intended outcomes, teachers and their professional development programmes should be included in the process.

Professional development was seen by teachers (Table 10, 40(41%)) as a significant factor in improving the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Structured and well planned professional development programmes might bring about improvement in the learners' academic performance. It has shown that the implementation of assessment rubrics by teachers could have a negative effect on learners' achievement. It is possible for a teacher without specific training regarding the assessment rubrics to learn to assess using them, making the level of preparedness, both in subject content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge low. This is further emphasised by the fact that professional development programmes play an important role in changing teachers' teaching methods, and these changes may have a positive impact on learners' learning and performance. Professional development programmes are considered to be an essential mechanism for increasing teachers' knowledge and development regarding the assessment rubrics.

The study found that the majority of teachers 58(59%) (Table 10) indicated that teacher development programmes are based on teachers' needs. For learners to receive quality education, teachers needed to be exposed to and developed through quality training programmes on a

continuous basis to put them on par with the changing demands of the curriculum regarding assessment rubrics. These development programmes might also close the content gap making professional development a crucial part of the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics.

Criticism emerged on training strategies preferred by teachers in Figure 11 that is used by the DoE to train teachers on curriculum issues because training was within hours. Teachers and HoDs from schools, SESs from the AO felt that the strategy was ineffective. They expressed the need for intensive training regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics as well as consistent monitoring and support. They maintained that long-term training would be ideal, as the many new things in the implementation of the assessment rubrics could not be learned within a short period.

Most respondents (63%) concurred that training would improve classroom practice. However, the school environment was not conducive to the successful implementation of the assessment rubrics by many teachers. This suggests that schools should create a conducive atmosphere for teacher development, for example, time could be allocated on the schools' time-tables for teachers' development activities. The teachers could have discussions with their colleagues, which would provide them with opportunities to reflect on their implementation of the assessment rubrics and share their experiences. These activities can be done by teachers' different schools with their peers; in this instance, they might feel comfortable to address all their challenges regarding the assessment rubrics.

The in-service training provided to teachers failed because the programmes rarely addressed the teachers' needs and concerns. This was indicated in Table 10 where 40(41%) of teachers indicated that they were never consulted on the preparations of their development on assessment. Developmental programmes were frequently selected by curriculum developers rather than the teachers for whom the in-service training was provided. It is further highlighted that one-shot workshops were widespread, but were ineffective. In some instances presentations were used for training teachers but were not effective. Teachers attend these trainings in the afternoons coming from schools and being very tired from other school activities. This view is shared by Chisholm

(2009) who stated that, despite the ineffectiveness of short workshops for training purposes, the DoE still persists in presenting them. One could argue that the DoE needs to revise its development programmes to ensure that teachers do benefit from them.

**Classroom practice**

Learners should be engaged during the development of the assessment rubrics. This may allow for easy implementation of the assessment rubrics. Figure 4 showed that 53% of teachers felt that they took more than a year to be confident in their effective implementation of assessment rubrics. The overwhelming majority of teachers felt that it was not easy for the implementation of the assessment rubrics and this could be attributed to a lack of training or the insufficient training that the teachers received before the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Overcrowded classrooms could be seen as a barrier to the teaching and learning required by the implementation of assessment rubrics, such as peer assessment and group assessment. Furthermore, administrative aspects of the assessment activities have increased and this impacts negatively on the teachers' performance as they spend most of their time filling in forms.

The study also revealed (Figure 4) that most teachers were not competent to implement the assessment rubrics meaning that teacher training did not equip teachers for realistic classroom practice regarding the assessment rubrics. This could explain why learner achievement has decreased since the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Teachers were not conversant with the implementation of the assessment rubrics.

**Teaching strategies and assessment**

Assessment rubrics are learner-centred, learner-paced and specific as far as what is needed; they also cater for different types of learners regarding learning suggesting that learners are active participants who take responsibility for their own learning and performance. Assessment rubrics are used to determine whether the learners' level of knowledge and performance accurately reflect the specific outcomes that the learning programmes expect of them. Therefore, teachers need to carefully plan their assessment strategies to ensure that the assessment activities reflect the type of evidence to be collected including competencies. This can be assured by showing the

learners the assessment rubrics before activities begin so that learners can know what is expected of them.

It should be pointed out that assessment rubrics have ushered in several changes to the assessment practices in school, to ensure that the teachers adhere to the implementation of the assessment rubrics, and the Assessment Guidelines. Most teachers (58(60%); Table 12) indicated that they had specific guidelines that helped them to assess and report learner achievement. From the observations it been clear that teachers did not use the given assessment documents. The study established that teachers were doing well regarding learner assessment (Table 12; 68(70%)). Although 84% of teachers (Figure 9) highlighted an increased workload in terms of the administrative aspects of assessment rubrics, it appeared that they were coping with the demands of learner assessment.

### 5.3.2 Research Question 2: What are the factors that affect the implementation of the assessment rubrics?

The successful implementation of the assessment rubrics depends on the extent to which targeted teachers are informed and have been prepared for the envisaged change and whether they are prepared to associate with it. Successful implementation of assessment rubrics requires planning, an appropriate strategy and well-structured development programmes. Teachers contend that this component, that is, assessment rubrics, is often mostly neglected by curriculum developers.

Teachers were asked to identify the factors that affect the implementation of the assessment rubrics and this was outlined in Figure 11. The most prominent aspects were the following: resource availability and mobility, teacher-learner ratio (PPM), content knowledge, workload, lack of proper training, parental support and LoLT. Other factors mentioned by the teachers include: teacher resistance, learners' lack of motivation and overcrowding in the classrooms.

**Teachers' attitudes and motivation towards teaching**

Teachers' active and beneficial involvement in curriculum matters may lead to greater job satisfaction. The findings showed that there was no room for teachers' input in policy issues as

stated in Table 9 where 71(74%) agreed that they were never consulted when policies on assessment were made. This might influence the morale and the quality of teaching and assessment prejudicially. Therefore, teacher involvement is crucial to gain their support and motivate them when implementing the assessment rubrics.

Any innovation is prone to resistance if teachers were not informed of the envisaged change regarding assessment rubrics. The teachers needed to understand the rationale for the implementation of the assessment rubrics and how that would affect their assessing and their comfort zones. The study contends that any form of compensation, such as financial compensation, praise, or acknowledgement, and also the intrinsic aspects of compensation, should be considered for teachers to successfully implement the assessment rubrics.

The teachers indicated that there was loss of interest on the part of the learners when the assessment rubrics were implemented. This might have caused the worsening of learner performance when assessment rubrics were implemented as indicated in Figure 7 (52% of teachers). Teachers felt that the learners were not motivated and this could be attributed to the teachers' lack of confidence in implementing the assessment rubrics and this could affect learner performance. The learners would not be eager to learn due to their inability in comprehending the LoLT in the assessment rubrics. Lack of parental involvement which might be caused by the illiteracy level of the parents might also be a contributing factor towards learners' lack of motivation in learning. The assessment rubrics encouraged the active involvement of learners in learning because learners knew beforehand the assessment requirements of any given activity. If learners were not active in class, this could defeat the intended purpose of the active participation of learners in the learning process. This active involvement and understanding of the requirements of teaching and learning could improve learner performance.

Although teacher development programmes help to improve the implementation of the assessment rubrics, teachers' active involvement in the development would bring change in their attitudes and beliefs. The study further pointed out that it was not professional development programmes per se that changed teachers' attitudes and beliefs, but their attitude towards experience on successful implementation of the assessment rubrics. Teachers believed in things

that they saw working and that experience could shape their attitudes and beliefs. This explains why teachers had mixed feelings regarding the assessment rubrics; it had not worked for them as they had anticipated which became evident in their learners' poor performance.

**Parental support**

The study found that the role of parents was significant in the successful implementation of the assessment rubrics. This is backed by the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), where all the stake holders in education including the parents were expected to actively participate in the learners' learning. Parents have a very important role to play in the new education system, especially regarding the assessment rubrics. The study argues that the progress of the learners' educational development in the school context depends, to a large extent, on effective contact with and cooperation between parents and school personnel. The parents are required to share the responsibility for the education of their children with the government and their teachers. There is strong emphasis on the role of parents in the education of learners. Teachers recognise the role of parents and believe that if parents are involved in the education of their children; this would facilitate the improvement of learner achievement. They can do these through assisting learners with homework and even checking their performance at school. Learners' performance may improve because learners might realise that their parents are fully engaged in their school work.

The successful implementation of the assessment rubrics was meant to be supported by parents at home through the supervision of homework and also helping learners to do their works in line with the given rubrics. One of the aspects that emerged in this study was that parents, especially those in rural areas, are illiterate making it difficult if not impossible for them to assist their children. This finding concurs with what Kihato and Kabemba (2003) state, namely, that many parents lack the education to be able to help their children. They maintain that it is difficult for parents who have gone through the previous system to understand the requirements of the new curriculum, especially the assessment rubrics. In this regard, siblings can help one another even neighbourhood, thus the saying "it takes a village to raise a child".

This view is emphasised by Plourde and Hawes (2005) that there are some barriers that can hinder parents' participation in their children's education and these include lack of education, not feeling welcome, inferiority complex and time constraints. Schools need to make an effort in ensuring that the parents are involved and their efforts are acknowledged. This could be done by holding regular parent meetings and workshops to explain what role they could play in ensuring that their children receive sufficient assistance from them. The school must make an effort of showing some of the parents that even if they are not literate their informal knowledge and input is essential.

**Content knowledge**

There was a strong emphasis on content of assessment-based training to prepare teachers for the implementation of the assessment rubrics. One can argue that there is a relationship between the teachers' content knowledge and learner achievement. If teachers are well informed about the content to be taught and assessment correctly done there is the likelihood of improvement in learner performance. Figure 5 revealed that 35% of teachers indicated that their content knowledge regarding the implementation of the assessment rubrics was good. How learners perform will be related to the teachers' confidence in assessment especially the rubrics. Most teachers felt that learner performance had not improved since the implementation of the assessment rubrics. This was emphasised in Figure 7 where it was indicated that 52% of learners' performance worsened when assessment rubrics were implemented. This indicates that teachers were not given sufficient training and support to meet the demands of the assessment rubrics.

**Support and resources**

The teachers are the central curriculum reformers and they are supposed to implement educational policies regardless of their personal feelings, views and competencies. This was indicated in Table 14 where 79(81%) teachers indicated that they had attended training with specific reference to assessment rubrics. It is therefore important for the teachers to get the necessary support coupled with the resources for them to carry out their teaching, learning and assessment obligations. Support and resources received by teachers from different stakeholders

was highlighted as sufficient in Table 13. Teachers should not feel that they are isolated and no one cares about what they are doing.

Smit (2001) indicates that lack of appropriate resources and materials surely worsens the possibilities of sound implementation in the classroom. Resources are still a very serious issue as far as the implementation of the assessment rubrics is concerned. He argues that new policies cannot promise the intended outcomes, provided that appropriate teaching and learning materials efficiently support them. Support and resources must be relevant to the prescribed outcomes. Teachers must also be assisted with the skills to improvise as far as resources are concerned.

### 5.3.3 Research Question 3: What strategies could be used to facilitate the implementation of the assessment rubrics?

The DoE has developmental programmes in place to address the need for teacher development, however, there are still some daunting challenges in South Africa that relate to the implementation of these policies in the school environment. Many teachers were not satisfied with the development programmes that were being offered to them and felt that it did not address their needs. It was earlier indicated that the teachers were never involved when training programmes were identified and developed. By so doing, the teachers found the professional programmes not addressing their needs. Teachers were asked to indicate what strategies could be used to facilitate the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They were expected to come up with suggestions that could improve implementation. A brief report of their views is given below.

**PPM and overcrowded classrooms**

The teacher-pupil ratio used by the DoE, which is 35 learners to 1 teacher, in the Intermediate Phase poses a challenge regarding the assessment rubrics. Overcrowded and small classrooms make it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to successfully implement the assessment rubrics. PPM could bring relief to overworked and overloaded teachers for smooth teaching, learning and assessment. This would, in return, reduce the paperwork that most teachers felt hindered their effective implementation of the assessment rubrics and might cater for the

learners' individual needs. These may lead to non-improvement of learners' performance. Due to the PPM, some teachers found themselves expected to teach learners with different grades within the same class, that is, multi-grade teaching.

**Guidance and continuous support from SESs**

It appeared that the teachers had confidence in their SESs and appreciated their consistent monitoring, guidance and support. SESs as the main teacher supporters needed to make follow-up visits to schools. This would assist the teachers in dealing with the problem they encountered during implementation of assessment rubrics in the classroom.

**Increased teaching staff**

Teachers stated that they were overwhelmed by the kind of work they needed to do. They were expected to teach many subjects together with performing the other co-curricular and extra curricula activities. Some teachers were expected to teach multiple classes which consisted of large numbers of learners, or even do multi-graded teaching. This they argued made their work difficult, if not impossible, to complete their assessment activities in time. They pointed out that increasing the number of teachers might help alleviate their problem. Teachers were even expected to teach learners with learning barriers without proper training in this regard.

**Parental involvement**

It is imperative that both the teachers, HoDs from different schools and SESs from AO felt that parents should play an important role in ensuring that learners' performance was improved. They felt that parental involvement is minimal and thus have a negative impact on learners' performance. This was even emphasized during the QLTC campaign.

**Long-term training and in-service training**

Long-term training and in-service training accompanied by consistent follow-ups might be beneficial to the teachers. A large portion of teachers and HoDs in schools as well as SESs were also of the opinion that training could improve content knowledge on the implementation of the assessment rubrics. They believed that being exposed to longer periods of training ranging from

six months to a year could make it easier for them to successfully implement the assessment rubrics.

In addition, the preparation for the implementation of assessment rubrics should be done in advance to ensure that all materials and training needed were done and the anticipated problems were well catered for. Jones, Harlow & Bowie (2004) argue that emphasis on professional development at the beginning of the implementation phase could have a positive impact on teachers knowing about the curriculum and, in many ways, what was expected of them in the classroom.

Based on the above-mentioned factors, it is clear that support, resources and training are the main factors that are needed for successful and meaningful implementation of assessment rubrics to occur. These must be followed by regular support and monitoring of the implementation process.

## 5.4 Recommendations

Recommendations for the experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of the assessment rubrics in this research are as follows:

**Teacher training to achieve intended objectives**

Teacher education is pivotal for the effective and efficient improvement of the teaching practice of teachers and learner support. The training needs must be subject-specific accompanied by relevant assessment techniques including rubrics and be addressed on a long-term basis. They must also be tailored according to the teachers' needs for learner performance. Training received by teachers was ineffective, intensive and result oriented training is needed for improvement of teachers' competence in teaching and assessment as well as learners' performance. In addition, adequate monitoring, support and evaluation mechanisms for teacher development programmes need to be put in place. This would ensure that development programmes achieve their intended goals. Furthermore, the teacher assessment techniques needed must be reviewed to ensure that

teachers are equipped with skills and expertise that would enable them to implement the assessment rubrics effectively. These skills must also be in line with the assessment policy.

**Involvement of teachers in the planning of development programmes**

Intermediate Phase teachers' involvement in the planning of the development programmes is crucial in the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics. Since teachers have identified the need for consultation and involvement, meetings need to be held between SESs, HoDs and teachers to establish the teachers' needs. The SESs might further contact the curriculum developers, dealing with developmental programmes regarding the needs of teachers for assessment rubrics. This would ensure that whatever intervention is put in place, would be relevant and beneficial to teachers as well as learners.

**Providing support**

SESs need to be continuously available to offer assistance and encouragement during implementation of the assessment training. SESs need to make follow-up visits after training the teachers to ensure effective and successful implementation and also to assist if problems surfaced during implementation. This would ensure that the teachers' morale is boosted and would increase their level of confidence while implementing the assessment rubrics.

**Involvement of stakeholders in learning activities of learners**

Parents need to make efforts to fulfil their roles in ensuring that learner achievement is improved. Schools need to make a platform for parents to air their views and to be involved in the affairs of the schools. Parents should attend parent-teacher meetings and occasionally visit their children's schools. In addition, schools need to hold parents' workshops to indicate to them in which areas they would need their support. There are also structures in schools to involve parents as active stakeholders. These include School Governing Body (SGB), Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) and School Assessment Irregularity Committee (SAIC). These are some of the structures in which constitute parents can be represented at the school.

**Providing resources**

Sufficient and relevant resource materials should be supplied and teachers to be trained on their usage. However, auditing of the resources needs to be done to ensure that the required materials are supplied to schools and good retrieval system must be in place and functional. Schools need also be trained on top-up of the used resources as resources are essential for the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics and for increased learner performance. They should also make the learners to be active in class and this might improve their performance. Active participation of learners during teaching and learning might make learners to be interested in their studies.

It is also imperative for the DoE to conduct Media Literacy training through workshops to empower teachers for maximum usage of the materials in the classrooms. This can also be made possible by using other professional bodies like the Information Technology (IT) Department. Twinning of schools might also help, that is, schools that are resourced and under resourced together for exchanging of resources. There is also the need to develop Teachers' technological literacy, that is, teachers need to be taught computer skills that might help searching for content, created and developed assessment rubrics from the internet that might help during assessment of learners. Thus, the learners would be able to do their own research guided by the assessment rubrics.

**Evaluation of the impact of in-service training of teachers**

In-service training is regarded as one of the teacher development programmes used to enhance the teachers' assessment and content knowledge. In-service training is the development of refinement programmes of competencies necessary to implement the innovation of the assessment rubrics. This may include workshops, presentations, and sharing sessions among colleagues on implementation of the assessment rubrics.

The DoE should design intensive capacity building programmes that are informed by teachers' experiences and their level of understanding on the implementation of the assessment rubrics. The training could be staggered and could deal with different aspects of assessment. However, the teachers should not be taken out of their classrooms as this might hamper teaching and

learning; contact time with learners need to be respected. Alternatively, a two-year programme on teacher development could be developed, with a certificate being awarded at the end of the programme.

**Using context-sensitive, experiential and reflective methods when conducting assessment training**

Human factors, including teachers and trainers, cannot be dissociated from the effective implementation of the assessment rubrics. Therefore, interpersonal characteristics and factors such as personalities, values and/or experience should be taken into account during the training of the teachers. It is worth noting that it is impossible for SESs to prepare teachers for all the contexts in which they work. They should attempt to involve them as far as possible in the process of their own training by allowing them to voice out their views concerning their working situations. The researcher recommends that SESs should devote more time to experiential learning and practice.

**Creation of effective communication**

The researcher recommends that there should be communication among curriculum developers, supporters or trainers in education and implementers of the assessment rubrics. At school, there must be a working relationship between SMT and teachers and between teachers and departmental officials like SESs. In this study, teachers, HoDs and SESs are involved. This is done to ensure that any problems that might be encountered during the implementation of the assessment rubrics could be addressed. Furthermore, given that, government consults with the unions when policy decisions are made, it is important to strengthen communication between the unions and their members to ensure that teachers make input and are aware of the developments in their teaching fraternity.

The above-mentioned recommendations could largely contribute to bringing about new strategies that could facilitate the successful implementation of the assessment rubrics. The implementation of new policies regarding the assessment rubrics by the curriculum developers has resulted in a significant impact on the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and administration practices. These suggestions could help educational policy makers to better

understand the experiences of teachers regarding the assessment rubrics as important stakeholders who have experienced the reality in respect of the implementation of the educational policies. The policy makers would align their decisions with the evidence that this research has obtained.

## 5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

It is evident that the teachers experienced problems when implementing the assessment rubrics and this had a detrimental effect on learner performance. The assessment rubrics are good assessment tools and aim to equip teachers with skills and knowledge that would enable them to function effectively and independently within their environment and be able to come up with practical solution to learners needs. Learners are even able to show their creativity in doing their practical work and this might result in learners' achieving beyond expectations. For the teachers to achieve their intended goal, research has to be done to ensure that all factors that might hamper or impede implementation are taken into account.

The following are proposed recommendations for future research:

- The experiences of professional staff regarding conducting in-service training for teachers on assessment;
- The effectiveness of the in-service training on assessment matters conducted by professional staff;
- Collaboration is needed between the DoE and parents to establish how best parents could assist teachers and learners in the implementation of assessment rubrics. Therefore, there is a need to find out ways of improving relationships among these stakeholders, especially the parents; and
- More research is needed to find out why learners seem de-motivated and not eager to learn. What can be done to increase learner motivation towards learning?

## 5.6 Conclusion

This research concentrated on the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics. The respondent teachers gave feedback on what they conceptualised to have happened in the implementation of the assessment rubrics. Lack or limited resources, limited content knowledge regarding the assessment rubrics, learner-teacher ratio, lack of parental support, illiteracy level of parents and increased workload were identified as some of the factors that affected the implementation of assessment rubrics.

The study also highlighted the need for the provision of opportunities for continuous teacher support and professional development programmes especially during the implementation of assessment rubrics phase in order to promote successful implementation. This must be accompanied by regular support and monitoring. Lastly, there are challenges in addressing the high priority core factors. These factors include, among others, training, support and resources. Teachers need time to learn and accept new assessment techniques; they also need support and resources to carry out their duties diligently. They even need the training on resources provided by the stake holders.

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## APPENDIX A

LETTER TO REQUEST TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a post graduate student at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, doing research on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics in the North West Province.

You are kindly requested to participate in the study by responding to the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be collected after a day. The information collected will be used for the purpose of this study only and the ethical principles of the research where privacy and confidentiality of the participants are ensured will be strictly adhered to.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Regards

_____

Ceveline Mpho Lephogole

## APPENDIX B

LETTER TO REQUEST THE HEADS OF THE DEPARTMENTS IN SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a post graduate student at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, doing research on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics in the North West Province.

You are kindly requested to participate in the study. The interview will be conducted at any time and the preferred place that will be agreed upon. The information collected will be used for the purpose of this study only and the ethical principles of the research where privacy and confidentiality of the participants are ensured will be strictly adhered to.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Regards

_____

Ceveline Mpho Lephogole

## APPENDIX C

LETTER TO REQUEST THE SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALISTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a post graduate student at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus, doing research on the experiences of Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics in the North West Province.

You are kindly requested to participate in the study. The interview will be conducted at any time and the preferred place that will be agreed upon. The information collected will be used for the purpose of this study only and the ethical principles of the research where privacy and confidentiality of the participants are ensured will be strictly adhered to.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Regards

_____

Ceveline Mpho Lephogole

## APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

EXPERIENCES OF THE TEACHERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

This questionnaire aims at getting information and opinions of teachers on their experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics. Educational policies on assessment are reviewed and implemented on continuous bases; therefore, it is imperative to gain some understanding of what teachers have experienced in the implementation of these policies. Your contribution will help educational policy makers to better understand the experiences of teachers as stake holders who experience daily, the reality in respect of the educational assessment policies being implemented and to take better decisions based on the evidence that will be obtained from this questionnaire.

The information provided in the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential and strict anonymity will be maintained in any ensuing publications.

Please bear in mind the following when completing the questionnaire:

- Do not write your name or school's name, it remains anonymous.
- There are no correct or incorrect answers, your experiences are merely required in order to obtain reliable and trustworthy data.
- Please answer all questions in all sections.

### Consent from participant

- I hereby agree to participate in the study: Experiences of the Intermediate Phase teachers in the implementations of the assessment rubrics.
- I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so.

- I also understand that I can stop completing the questionnaire at any time and withdraw as a participant in the research.
- I have received the details of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise from the study.
- I understand that my answers will be anonymous and will remain entirely confidential.

I understand that the research will be a public document.

***If you agree with all the above, please mark "Yes" and proceed.***

| **I agree with all the above** | **Yes** | |
|---|---|---|

**Answer each question by marking the appropriate number in the box with an "X" or fill in the information asked for:**

| **SECTION A: PERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION** |
|---|

1. Gender:

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | |
| Female | |

2. Age group:

| | |
|---|---|
| Younger than 30 years | |
| 30-39 | |
| 40-49 | |
| 50-59 | |
| 60 years or older | |

3. School situation:

| | |
|---|---|
| Rural | |
| Urban | |

4. Years of teaching experience:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 years or less | |
| 6-10 years | |
| 11-15 years | |
| 16-20 years | |
| 21 years or more | |

5. Highest qualification:

| | |
|---|---|
| Grade 12 and certificate in education | |
| Diploma in education | |
| Advanced certificate in education | |
| B.Ed degree | |
| Honours | |
| Masters degree | |
| Other (please specify) | |

**SECTION B: TEACHERS EXPERIENCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT RUBRICS.**

**Section B1: Policy Issues**

This section seeks to explore teachers' understanding in the implementation of assessment rubrics.

1.1 Respond to each of the following statements by marking the applicable options, using the scale: **Disagree**, **Undecided** and **Agree**

| **Statements** | **Disagree** | **Undecided** | **Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers need to be engaged in making changes in the policies regarding assessment for the relevant education reform. | | | |
| Teachers are consulted when educational reform policies in assessment are made. | | | |
| Policy changes in assessment are accompanied by supportive procedures to strengthen teachers' roles. | | | |
| There are different understandings of assessment rubrics by teachers. | | | |
| Teachers are critical agents in the creation and development of assessment rubrics. | | | |

**Section B2: Professional Development:**

This section on professional development focuses on the important issues of how to promote effective teacher professional development concerning the understanding of the implementation of assessment rubrics by teachers.

2.1 Respond to each of the following statements by marking the applicable options, using the scale: **Disagree, Undecided** and **Agree.**

| **Statements** | **Disagree** | **Undecided** | **Agree** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers receive adequate training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Most teachers are able to create and develop assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Teachers are consulted when developing assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Feedback on training with special reference to assessment rubrics is done. | | | |
| Assessment rubrics have improved the quality of teaching and learning. | | | |
| Professional development takes explicit account of assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Professional development takes explicit account of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Training improves the knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics. | | | |
| Teachers' development is based on teachers' needs. | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers are consulted in the preparations of teachers' development on assessment. | | | |

**Section B3: Classroom Practice**

This section explores how effective the implementation of assessment rubrics by teachers is.

3.1 From your experience in the implementation of assessment rubrics, how long did you feel confident using them?

| | |
|---|---|
| 1-3 months | 1 |
| 4-9 months | 2 |
| 10-12 months | 3 |
| More than a year | 4 |

3.2 How would you rate your own knowledge of assessment rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Good | 1 |
| Satisfactory | 2 |
| Poor | 3 |
| Not sure | 4 |

3.3 How would you describe the implementation of assessment rubrics in assessing learners?

| | |
|---|---|
| Easy | 1 |
| Difficult | 2 |

3.4 How often do you use assessment rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Always | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Not very often | 3 |
| Rarely | 4 |

3.5 How would you describe the achievement of learners after the implementation of assessment rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Improved | 1 |
| Worsened | 2 |
| Same | 3 |

3.6 Explain your answer in 3.5 above:

_____

_____

_____

**Section B4: Teaching Strategies and Assessment**

This section is based on the teaching strategies and assessment as experienced by teachers.

4.1 Do you have specific guidelines on how to assess learners using rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

4.2 Do you have specific guidelines on how to record learners' achievements after the implementation of assessment rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

4.3 Do you believe that assessment rubrics influence learner performance?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

4.4 How regular are you in giving learners feedback after assessment?

| | |
|---|---|
| Always | 1 |
| Sometimes | 2 |
| Not very Often | 3 |
| Rarely | 4 |

4.5 Do you use a variety of assessment tools when assessing learners?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

4.6 Do you adhere to the principles of assessment when assessing learners?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

4.7 How would you describe teachers' workload in terms of administrative aspects of assessment in implementing assessment rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Increased | 1 |
| Decreased | 2 |
| Stayed the same | 3 |

**Section B5: Support and Resources**

This section of the questionnaire focuses on support and resources for effective implementation of assessment rubrics.

5.1 Resources (teaching and learning materials) to use different assessment techniques:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sufficient | 1 |
| Insufficient | 2 |

5.2 From whom do you get curriculum support with specific reference to assessment (mark all applicable):

| | |
|---|---|
| Colleagues | 1 |
| HOD in the school | 2 |
| Principal | 3 |
| Senior Education Specialists | 4 |
| Others (please specify): | 5 |

5.3 What can be done to improve the situation regarding resources and support?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5.4 What support do you need to improve the frequency in the implementation of assessment rubrics?

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Section C: General**

1. May you describe any professional development that you were involved in, where you were addressing assessment issues:

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Have you attended any assessment training with specific reference to rubrics?

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 1 |
| No | 2 |

3. What type of training do you prefer with specific reference to assessment rubrics? (Mark only one).

| | |
|---|---|
| Work-shop | 1 |
| Seminar | 2 |
| Other (please specify): | 3 |

4. Why do you think this training might be important?

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. What factors do you think affect the implementation of assessment rubrics?

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. In what way can the implementation of assessment rubrics be made easier?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. To what extent does teacher development enhance the knowledge of assessment rubrics?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. In general, what have been your experiences with regard to the implementation of assessment rubrics?

_____

_____

_____

_____

**We have come to the end of the questionnaire, thanks for your time and participation in the study.**

## APPENDIX E

Interview questions schedule for Heads of Departments in schools

1. Has the implementation of the assessment rubrics resulted in improved achievement for the learners?
2. Do you think that teachers have relevant skills to assess learners using rubrics?
3. Do you think that teachers received sufficient training for the implementation of the assessment rubrics?
4. Do you think that teachers' professional needs are taken into account when training programmes are designed regarding assessment rubrics? Substantiate your answer.
5. What is the impact of professional development programmes on the successful management of learner assessment?
6. What type of training on assessment rubrics would you like to see made available to teachers? Why do you think this training might be important?
7. What support do you give to the teachers in terms of their professional development endevours on assessment?
8. Do you think that assessment rubrics implemented by teachers are easy? Substantiate your answer.
9. What can be done to improve the situation as far as assessment rubrics are concerned?
10. What are the factors that affect the implementation of assessment rubrics?
11. Can you describe your experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics and explain the meaning of those.

**We have come to the end of the questionnaire, thanks for your time and participation in the study.**

## APPENDIX F

Interview questions schedule for Senior Education Specialists in the Area Office.

1. Has the implementation of the assessment rubrics resulted in improved achievement for the learners?
2. Do you think that teachers have relevant skills to assess learners using rubrics?
3. Do you think that teachers received sufficient training for the implementation of the assessment rubrics?
4. Do you think that teachers' professional needs are taken into account when training programmes are designed regarding assessment rubrics? Substantiate your answer.
5. What is the impact of professional development programmes on the successful management of learner assessment?
6. What type of training on assessment rubrics would you like to see made available to teachers? Why do you think this training might be important?
7. What support do you give to the teachers in terms of their professional development endevours on assessment?
8. Do you think that assessment rubrics implemented by teachers are easy? Substantiate your answer.
9. What can be done to improve the situation as far as assessment rubrics are concerned?
10. What are the factors that affect the implementation of assessment rubrics?
11. Can you describe your experiences in the implementation of assessment rubrics and explain the meaning of those.

**We have come to the end of the interview, thanks for your time and participation in the study.**

## APPENDIX G

**Frequency Tables**

**SECTION A: PERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Gender

| **Gender** | **Frequencies** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 6 | 6 |
| Female | 91 | 94 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

School location

| **Location** | **Frequencies** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Rural | 44 | 45 |
| Urban | 53 | 55 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Age group

| **Age** | **Frequencies** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Younger than 30 | 9 | 9 |
| 30-39 years | 19 | 20 |
| 40-49 years | 47 | 48 |
| 50-59 years | 19 | 20 |
| 60 years and older | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teaching experience

| **Years** | **Frequencies** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| 5 years or less | 2 | 2 |
| 6-10 years | 38 | 39 |
| 11-15 years | 47 | 49 |
| 16-20 years | 7 | 7 |
| 21 years or more | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Highest qualifications

| **Qualifications** | **Frequencies** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Standard 10 and certificate in education | 15 | 15 |
| Diploma | 15 | 15 |
| ACE | 10 | 10 |
| BEd degree | 25 | 27 |
| Honours | 29 | 30 |
| Masters | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

**SECTION B: TEACHERS EXPERIENCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSESSMENT RUBRICS.**

**SECTION B 1: POLICY ISSUES**

Teachers need to be engaged in making changes in the policies regarding assessment for the relevant education reform.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 32 | 33 |
| Undecided | 47 | 48 |
| Agree | 18 | 19 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teachers are consulted when educational reforms policies in assessment are made.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 13 | 13 |
| Undecided | 13 | 13 |
| Agree | 71 | 74 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Policy changes in assessment are accompanied by supportive procedures to strengthen teachers' roles.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 53 | 55 |
| Undecided | 8 | 8 |
| Agree | 36 | 37 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

There are different understandings of assessment rubrics by the teachers.

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 28 | 29 |
| Undecided | 26 | 27 |
| Agree | 43 | 44 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teachers are critical agents in creation and development of assessment rubrics.

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 17 | 18 |
| Undecided | 13 | 13 |
| Agree | 67 | 69 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

**SECTION B 2: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Teachers receive adequate training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics.

| Statement | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 32 | 33 |
| Undecided | 9 | 9 |
| Agree | 56 | 58 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Most teachers are able to create and develop assessment rubrics.

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 59 | 61 |
| Undecided | 11 | 11 |
| Agree | 27 | 28 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teachers are consulted when developing assessment rubrics is done.

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 51 | 52 |
| Undecided | 25 | 26 |
| Agree | 21 | 22 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Feedback on training regarding the implementation of assessment rubrics is done.

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 63 | 64 |
| Undecided | 18 | 19 |
| Agree | 16 | 17 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Assessment rubrics have improved the quality of teaching and learning.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 54 | 55 |
| Undecided | 22 | 23 |
| Agree | 21 | 22 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Professional development takes explicit account of the assessment rubrics.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 26 | 27 |
| Undecided | 37 | 38 |
| Agree | 34 | 35 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Professional development takes explicit account of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of assessment rubrics.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 26 | 27 |
| Undecided | 31 | 32 |
| Agree | 40 | 41 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Training improves the knowledge of teachers on assessment rubrics.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 23 | 24 |
| Undecided | 37 | 38 |
| Agree | 37 | 38 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teacher development is based on teachers' needs.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 22 | 23 |
| Undecided | 17 | 18 |
| Agree | 58 | 59 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Teachers are consulted on the preparations of teachers' development programs on assessment.

| **Statement** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 47 | 49 |
| Undecided | 10 | 10 |
| Agree | 40 | 41 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

## SECTION B3: CLASSROOM PRACTICE

From your experience in the implementation of assessment rubrics, how long did you feel confident in using them?

| Duration | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1-3 months | 52 | 53 |
| 4-9 months | 24 | 25 |
| 10-12 months | 16 | 17 |
| More than a year | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How would you rate your own knowledge of assessment rubrics?

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Good | 34 | 35 |
| Satisfactory | 29 | 30 |
| Poor | 13 | 13 |
| Not sure | 21 | 22 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How would you describe the implementation of assessment rubrics when assessing learners?

| Description | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Easy | 35 | 36 |
| Difficult | 62 | 64 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How would you use assessment rubrics?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 49 | 51 |
| Sometimes | 37 | 38 |
| Not very often | 5 | 5 |
| Rarely | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How would you describe the achievement of learners after the implementation of assessment rubrics?

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Improved | 35 | 36 |
| Worsened | 50 | 52 |
| Same | 12 | 12 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

## SECTION B4: TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ASSESSMENT

Do you have specific guidelines on how to assess learners using assessment rubrics?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 58 | 60 |
| No | 39 | 40 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Do you have specific guidelines on how to record learners' achievement after using assessment rubrics?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 60 | 62 |
| No | 37 | 38 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Do you believe that assessment rubrics influence the learners' performance?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 68 | 70 |
| No | 29 | 30 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Do you use a variety of assessment tools when assessing learners?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 78 | 80 |
| No | 19 | 20 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

Do you adhere to the principles of assessment when assessing learners?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 86 | 89 |
| No | 11 | 11 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How regular do you give learners feedback after assessment?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Always | 65 | 67 |
| Sometimes | 28 | 29 |
| Not very often | 2 | 2 |
| Rarely | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

How would you describe teachers' workload in terms of administrative aspects of assessment when using assessment rubrics?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Increased | 81 | 84 |
| Decreased | 14 | 14 |
| Stayed the same | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

## SECTION B5: SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Resources (teaching and learning materials) when implementing assessment rubrics:

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Sufficient | 67 | 69 |
| Insufficient | 30 | 31 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

From whom do you get curriculum support with specific reference to assessment rubrics?

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Colleagues | 47 | 49 |
| HOD in schools | 46 | 47 |
| Principal | 3 | 3 |
| Senior Education Specialists | 1 | 1 |
| Other (specify) | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

## Section C: General

Have you attended any assessment training with specific reference to assessment rubrics?

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 79 | 81 |
| No | 18 | 19 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |

What type of training do you prefer regarding assessment rubrics?

| Category | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Workshop | 61 | 63 |
| Seminar | 28 | 29 |
| Other(please specify) | 8 | 8 |
| Total | 97 | 100 |