

**A self study of curriculum design for the  
teaching and learning of isiZulu as an  
additional language in primary schools in  
the *Maye babo!* series**

**by**

**Sumithra Jaysooklal Soni**

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A self study of curriculum design for the  
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*Maye babo!* series

by

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Thesis in compliance with the requirements for the Doctor's Degree in  
Technology: Language Practice in the Department of Media, Language and  
Communication, Durban University of Technology

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any  
other degree or examination at any other institution.

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## Abstract

This autoethnographic self study tracks my new ways of knowing in the various roles I play from daughter (passive recipient) to curriculum designer (active analytical composer). It retells my journey in the teaching profession at a school in Durban, in South Africa. The story occurs during a period when schools were racially desegregated in order to address the anti-apartheid policies that were prevalent prior to the first democratic elections in 1994. The story captures the challenges I faced during the transformation era in education and how I went about addressing two of the main challenges I faced:

1. Cultural diversity in racially desegregated schools.
2. Teaching isiZulu as an additional language as a pioneer, non- mother tongue teacher of learners with mixed abilities in an environment deprived of resources in terms of mentorship, and teacher/learner resource material.

This study reveals how the challenges I experienced were, in retrospect, the disguised opportunities that led to my growth from teacher to textbook writer. It gives an account of the “behind the scenes making”, of the *Maye babo!* series, with a view to offer an exemplar for curriculum development. The study uses autoethnography (Ellis 2004) as a method to bring to life the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language in South Africa. It defines some of the difficulties experienced by teachers during a transformation era in education. In this study I clarify the relationship between Outcomes Based Education and the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), as well as where the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is located within the NCS. More importantly, I use the tacit knowledge gained from intuition and experience to demonstrate how these policies can be applied in the classroom to achieve effective learning, an aspect often ignored in in-service teacher education. Readers (particularly teachers) will resonate with the experiences described in the stories, and, in so doing, gain a better understanding of themselves and their teaching practices; this might provide the much needed optimism amongst teachers, and might motivate and inspire them to grow professionally. The personal benefit in writing this thesis is that it renewed my place in the academic world, and more importantly, it has satisfied my quest for self realisation. Through personal exploration, questions such as *who*

*am I?* and *how did I become?* reveal my evolvement. This project has been a soul satisfying and enriching journey. It is hoped that this study will in some way contribute to the transformation in education process in post liberation South Africa.

# Preface

## Declaration of Originality

I, Sumithra Jaysooklal Soni, declare that this thesis is my own work and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. The only form in which this work has previously been published is in the publications and resources listed below.

## Prior Publications and Resources

### Papers

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### **Compact disk (audio-visual)**

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## Acronyms

ANA	- Annual National Assessment
APEK	- Association of Professional Educators KwaZulu- Natal
AS	- Assessment Standard
BA	- Bachelor of Arts
CAPS	- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CO	- Critical Outcome
CLT	- Communicative Language Teaching
C2005	- Curriculum 2005
DBE	- Department of Basic Education
DO	- Developmental Outcome
DoE	- Department of Education
EMS	- Economics and Management Science
FET	- Further Education and Training
GET	- General Education and Training
HOD	- House of Delegates
KZN	KwaZulu- Natal
LIEP	- Language in Education Policy
LO	- Learning Outcome
LO	- Life Orientation
LoLT	- Language of Learning and Teaching
MIT	- Multiple Intelligence Theory
NAPTOSA	- National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa
NCS	- National Curriculum Statement
NQF	- National Qualification Framework
NS	- Natural Science
OBE	- Outcomes Based Education
PGCE	- Post Graduate Certificate in Education
RNCS	- Revised National Curriculum Statement

SADTU	- South African Democratic Teachers Union
SGB	- School Governing Body
SKAV	- Skills, knowledge, Attitude and Values
SMT	- Senior Management Team
SAQA	- South African Qualifications Authority
SS	- Social Science
TPR	-Total Physical Response
UDW	-University of Durban Westville
UKZN	-University of KwaZulu- Natal
UNISA	- University of South Africa
ZEST	- Zulu Educators Support Team

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## **Part 1**

**Setting the scene:  
background to the writing of the *Maye babo!* series**

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## The trigger

The buzzer sounds signalling the end of a lesson. I gather my books hurriedly and bid farewell to my learners in isiZulu:

“Sala kahle bantwana<sup>1</sup>”, to which a chorus of grade five learners respond,  
“Hamba kahle thisha”<sup>2</sup>.

I make haste and proceed towards a classroom which is a block away in order to get to my next lesson promptly. I remind myself that I must hurry, as a class left unattended by a teacher for too long can be difficult to calm down. The time in-between lessons, when teachers move from one class to the next, is an opportune time for ill disciplined learners to get out of hand<sup>3</sup>. I detest commencing a lesson with an admonition or a sermon on self discipline and have learnt from experience that it is best practise to get to my lessons on time, a mission impossible to achieve with accuracy since the time taken for a teacher to relocate from one class to the next is never accounted for on the school time-table.

As I walk down the corridor, I overhear my colleague Jenna<sup>4</sup> reprimanding Sipho, a pupil. In my haste, and amidst the noise of the chatter of children who await their teacher in the classroom I pass, I cannot hear clearly why Jenna is infuriated. As I approach her, I notice the fine veins of her throat pounding as her blood rushes through them. Her face is flustered and red with fury. I feel compelled to stop and find out what caused this outrage. Jenna continues in a demanding tone of voice.

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<sup>1</sup> Stay well children.

<sup>2</sup> Go well teacher.

<sup>3</sup> Learner discipline was a major point of concern at the school.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all names in this account are pseudonyms.

Jenna: “Look at me when I speak to you....how dare you ignore me? Don’t you have any respect? You should be ashamed of yourself. Haven’t your parents taught you any manners?”

Sipho, the grade four pupil, drops his head in shame and confusion, his eyes tearing, feeling embarrassed and devastated by his teacher’s outburst.

I stand motionless, feeling paralysed by what I had just witnessed, and indecisive as to who needs to be pacified – should I soothe the rage of my colleague Jenna, who in her anger could not control her mouth and was also endangering her physical health; or should I appease Sipho who was trembling, and whose tears rapidly flowed down his cheeks and splashed on the back of his palm? I am tempted to intervene, but Jenna’s indifference of my presence, and my intuition forbids me to say anything immediately. I walk away grappling with feelings of cowardice - because I cannot take a stance and I am confused about who is the persecutor and who is persecuted in the scene I witnessed.

I proceed towards the classroom where I am due to deliver my next lesson. During the lesson, I find it difficult to focus on my teaching, as my mind relentlessly tries to uncover what transpired between Jenna and Sipho.

During the break, Jenna looks a little calmer, and I pluck up the courage to talk to her.

“Are you okay, Jenna?” I ask, not knowing what to expect. Jenna is known to be straightforward, and does not hesitate to tell anyone to “mind your own business”. To my surprise, she appears compelled to explain her outburst.

Jenna: “I’ve cooled down a bit...can you believe that child could be so insolent...he had the nerve to look at his feet when I scolded him, as if he didn’t care about what I was saying to him. He is so rude and insolent. Some children have no respect for teachers whatsoever. I don’t think I can cope with this job any more – who do these children think they are that they can abuse us and be so arrogant!”

I immediately realise what has angered Jenna, and I want to defend Sipho's actions, and afford an explanation for his behaviour, but the rising pitch in Jenna's voice cautions me that the timing is inappropriate. My timid response is to support my colleague's incorrect assumption temporarily.

"I wonder what he was thinking." I reply, hoping that Jenna might give some thought to what prompted Sipho's behaviour.

The next day I decide to teach a lesson on isiZulu culture in Sipho's class. Sipho is embarrassed to look at me at first. As I speak about how respect to elders is shown in different ways in the western and Zulu cultures, I see a revelation in Sipho's eyes. While the learners stick their worksheets in their books, I walk to Sipho's desk, pat him on the back and whisper – "It's okay to look me in the eye when I address you, Sipho." Sipho's smile convinces me that he has made a connection between my lesson and the painful, embarrassing experience of the previous day.

My mind drifts on to the bigger picture – the mischief of what such misinterpretations of cultural practises could bring about. How many Jennas and Siphos are the daily casualties due to being ignorant of cultural differences, I thought. What was I as "knower" going to do about this debacle? The daily articles I read in the newspaper describing the anger and violence that emerged due to cultural misunderstandings could not be ignored<sup>5</sup>. Did I have the capacity to make a difference? How could I remain silent and indifferent to the pain and problems that were caused as a result of a misunderstanding of cultures? As I said (later) in an article<sup>6</sup> written in the Sunday Tribune, a national newspaper:

I felt compelled to address the issue of multicultural education after seeing so many children "suffer". In November last year I approached my superintendent of education to consider a workshop on the issue.

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<sup>5</sup> Appendix 1 shows the invitation to the workshop. The headlines from newspapers were used to design the invitation.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 2 shows copy of the article

The department agree (that it was necessary) but couldn't offer any financial assistance (Naidoo 1999:6).

The article below further describes the concern that other academics had with the lack of initiatives to address diversity.



Photograph 1 *The Mercury: Thursday, August 19, 1999:5*

The incident described above was the trigger that led to the discovery of my purpose in life. My goal in life is to make a difference in the lives of the people I meet<sup>7</sup>. At first I had no idea on how to resolve the problem. It was the strong compulsion I felt to make a difference to the lives of others that led me to a possible solution.

We have all been granted a unique set of gifts and talents that will readily allow us to realize this (our) lifework. The key is to discover them, and in doing so, discover the main objective of your life. ... Self knowledge is the DNA of self-enlightenment (Sharma 2004:76-77).

## **A living contradiction**

Without realising it at the time, I was experiencing what Whitehead (1999) describes as a “living contradiction”. My teaching environment was in contradiction to the values I cherished and upheld. According to Whitehead:

...values are the human goals that we use to give our lives their particular form. They are embodied in our practice and their meaning can be communicated in the course of their emergence in practice (1988:5).

During the time when schools became racially integrated, I recall how aware I was of educators misinterpreting the actions of learners belonging to a culture that they were unfamiliar with, the anger felt by the educator who reads rebellion instead of respect. My subsequent action was evoked by the pain and the confusion felt as a result of cultural miscommunication. I realised that an awareness campaign was necessary if integrated schools were to function effectively. Could I, a young teacher with no previous experience in such matters, make a difference? The words of McNiff about the power of the self echo here:

I am convinced of the need to encourage people to appreciate the power of the self, when that self engages in the process of her own development; of the power of the self to create her own understanding. This power allows us to apply our educational practices to the process of transforming our lives (1993:4).

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix 10 See personal whole life plan devised in 1998



Photograph 2 Post, February 21-24, 1996

Perhaps it was this power referred to by McNiff which gave me the courage to try to do something about the situation<sup>8</sup>. A reflection of my practice allowed the scope to broaden my knowledge on multicultural education and more importantly, it led to living theories (Whitehead 1999) being produced in the way in which isiZulu as an additional language can be taught. My challenging experiences as an additional language isiZulu teacher motivated the writing of the *Maye babo!* series. As Whitehead says:

In a living educational theory the logic of the propositional forms, whilst existing within the explanations given by practitioners in making sense of their practice, does not characterise the explanation. Rather the explanation is characterised by the logic of question and answer used in the exploration of questions of the form, “How do I improve my practice?” (1999:22)

## **The doctoral study**

I had always desired to undertake a study towards a doctorate, but I did not think that this thought alone was the sole justification to enrol for doctoral work. After writing the *Maye babo!* series, I had the idea to somehow extend the value of the decade I had invested in writing the series.

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<sup>8</sup> The action plan is discussed in Chapter 5.



I recall my telephonic conversation with Dr. Pratt:

Sumi: I have written a series of textbooks for isiZulu additional language called the *Maye babo!* series and I was wondering how I might undertake a doctoral study based on it.

Dr. Pratt: Tell me Sumi, this series you wrote, the mmmabi bba what is it called again?

Sumi: The *Maye babo!* series

Dr. Pratt: Yes, that's it.....hmmm....sounds interesting Sumi, tell me more about the series.....

Sumi: (I deliberately use the name of the series again as her response warrants it.)  
The *Maye babo!* series is a graded series of textbooks written for the promotion of the teaching and learning of isiZulu as a first or second additional language in primary schools.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Pratt: (Sounds very excited and interrupts) Er... so it sounds like there is hope for me to learn Zulu.

Sumi: Well, not really Dr. Pratt.... (I giggle)...it is actually designed for children ....but I have come across many adults who would like to learn isiZulu. A doctor friend has been nagging me to run a series of courses at the hospital for a group of doctors and another friend who is a judge has in desperation taken a set of books from me.....he says that whatever he learns from them would be useful..... but let me tell you more about the books.

Dr. Pratt: Yes, go ahead Sumi, I'm listening.

Sumi: The learner's book adopts a thematic approach and contains activities which we call umsebenzi<sup>10</sup> in Zulu. These activities address all the learning outcomes and assessment standards as prescribed by the National Curriculum Statement..... are you familiar with the NCS?

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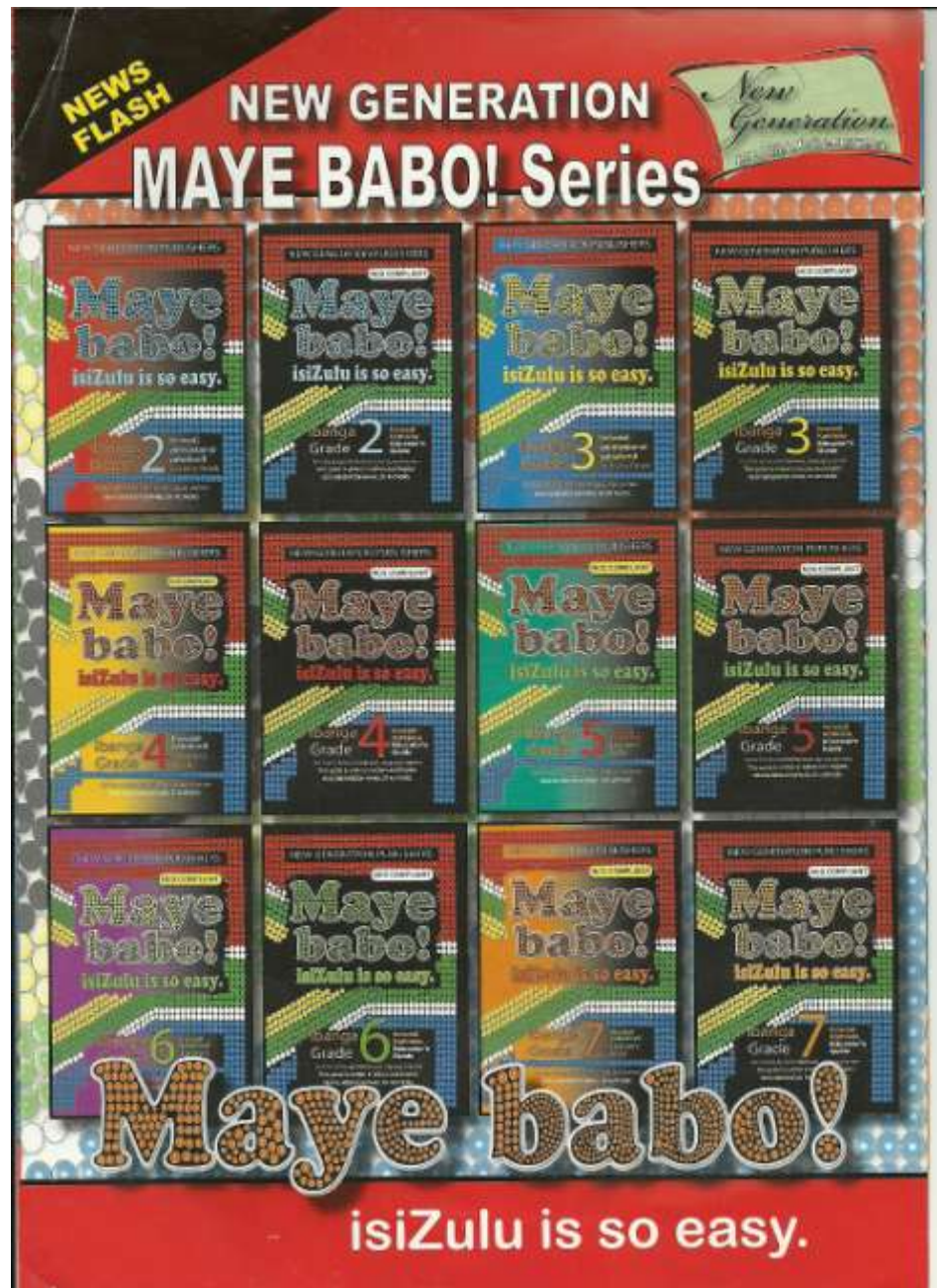
<sup>9</sup> During this conversation, I referred to the NCS version. The writing of the CAPS version followed in 2010 and was published in 2011. Several schools in South Africa use the textbooks.

<sup>10</sup> This isiZulu word means activity or exercise.

Dr. Pratt: Is that the OBE curriculum?

Sumi: Well not just OBE.... that is just the methodology, but .... Well I suppose it has become the name that people use these days to refer to the new curriculum.

(We drift a little into a discussion on the success and failure of “OBE”. I feel as if I haven’t described everything about the series.)



Photograph 3 *Brochure of Maye babo! books*

Sumi: Oh! I almost forgot to mention, I interrupt) there is also a set of educator guides. It's actually twelve books in total, six books for learners...that's grade two to seven, and six educator guides – one for each grade. The educator's guide includes lesson plans for each activity in the learner's book and there are also suggestions for the teaching strategies and learning styles that give support on how to implement the learning material in order to address the curriculum needs. In fact all of the planning, and paper trail demanded by the NCS can be found in the educator's guide.

(We spend a few minutes chatting about the series and set up an appointment to meet the next week).

Sumi: Is there anything in particular that I should bring with me, Dr. Pratt? I know you would like to see the series.

Dr. Pratt: Yes that would be wonderful, and I was wondering, what methodology are you planning to use?

Sumi: Methodology... err.... I haven't really given that much thought .... I feel out of touch with research methods as I completed my master's degree nine years ago. I will need to be guided by you.

(We discuss my master's thesis which is a critical analysis of a few isiZulu novels.)

Dr. Pratt: It sounds to me that autoethnography would be suitable to what you want to do.

Sumi: How do you spell that, Dr. Pratt? I haven't heard of it.

(Dr. Pratt spells the word and, as she speaks, I scribble a few notes).

Dr. Pratt: It is a qualitative study .... Edwina Grossi has just published her thesis using autoethnography, you should read it...it's when you reflect on your past as a means to make meaning... well let me put it this way... in your situation, you would write the story behind the making of the *Maye babo!* series ... what prompted you to write the series, and how did you go about it? ... you could also do a self study ....which will require you to reflect on your values and beliefs in relation to the making of the *Maye babo!* series. Do a little reflection

on our discussion and we will talk more next week. I look forward to meeting you.

Sumi: Me too. Thank you very much for your time. I feel really excited about this project.

In the months that followed, I began my own study of narrative research, commencing with Grossi (2005), Harrison (2009), Whitehead (1987, 1999, 2009), Loughran (2002, 2004) McNiff (2002), Hamilton (1998), Hamilton and Pinnegar (2000), Lomax (1986), Pithouse (2007) and later, Ellis (2004), Schön (1991, 1995) and others. My initial view about autoethnography, particularly after reading Grossi (2005), was that I was not comfortable with its intrusion into my private life, yet the fact that my research tells a personal story about my professional development as an educator within the context of the chaos caused as a result of desegregation in schools fitted well with the narrative nature of autoethnography. As I began to read literature on self study (Whitehead 1988, 1993, 1999, 2009) and action research (McNiff 1993, 2002 2006, 2009, 2010), I found the common threads in all three methods that matched the voice of my research. These are revealed in greater detail in Chapter 3 (Research methodology). Autoethnography *grew* on me when I read the work of Ellis (2004), but it was Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), Gladwell (2002, 2007) and Schön (1991, 1995) who helped to locate my reflections on the curriculum development in *the Maye babo!* series in terms of the way in which learning occurs. Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1996), and the work on curriculum reconceptualisation by Pinar (1975), provide a conceptual framework (see Chapter 3) to this study.

In this thesis I analyse my educational development in my career in teaching as a South African teacher during a period when there were massive transformations in education in South African Schools, in an effort to address the imbalances of the apartheid era. The use of personal exploration has enabled me to understand my responses to the challenges that multi-racial schooling presented. Through a journey undertaken into my past, I have come to realise that: who I am, my values, and the human qualities that I have adopted in my life,

have defined and guided me in the choices I have made and continue to make. The gaze into my teaching experiences has helped me to understand the rationale for the values I practise in my daily living, and those that underpin my practice as an educator (Pinar 1975). It has been an answer to the quest of “my becoming”, an answer for which I have searched by reading in personal development books (Kehoe 2002; Sharma 2004; Covey 2004; Goleman 1995; Wilding 2011; Vermuelen 2002; Tolle 2001, 2005) and attending seminars on time management (APEK 2000),<sup>11</sup> Unlocking Creativity through right brained methods (APEK 2000)<sup>12</sup>, International Workshop on multicultural education (Centre for Educational Research, Evaluation & Policy 2000<sup>13</sup>), spiritual awareness (Divine Life Society 1999) and emotional intelligence (Gerry 2000; ICC 2002). My naïve view of what knowledge constituted had blindfolded me into believing that there was only one way of knowing, that is – by reading and listening to others. In retrospect, my gaze inwards has determined that the source of this belief was embedded in my upbringing. My beliefs were changing, however. I felt a sense of connection upon reading the learning and becoming experiences of Tai Peseta (2005), and Barnett’s (2004) work on supercomplexity, which now validate my strong attachment to the belief that in teaching there is no “one size fits all”. I began to trust and rely on the *tacit knowledge* that Polanyi (1983) speaks of, the knowledge gained through training and personal experience.

As I traced my journey through my teaching career I was mindful to answer the question that Liz Harrison, my co-supervisor, nagged me to answer in order to trace the values that underpinned this study.

Liz:           Why did you care?” (Liz asked me this question when I related the opening story in this chapter).

(I look at her, wondering how anybody could *not* care. Liz repeats her question.)

Liz:           Why did Sumi care?

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<sup>11</sup> One day course entitled *Expanding the now! Moving from time management to self management* attended on 09/09/2000 at the Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu- Natal (APEK) headquarters. Certificate in Appendix 5

<sup>12</sup> Appendix 6 shows certificate and Appendix 7 contains report .

<sup>13</sup> Appendix 8 shows certificate

The answer did not come immediately, and I realised in retrospect that it was because “the gaze was outward” as opposed to looking inward at Sumi. When I looked inward, I realised that my understanding of good care depends upon what I know about how to live a good life. Hence my way of life and the set of values I hold are significant to my response to the conditions of the people with whom I interact. Fisher and Tronto define care as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (1990:40).

The initial questions posed by Liz and Dee (Liz noticed with amusement, how Dr. Pratt converted to Dee after a few meetings), may seem simplistic at face value, and I thought how would I write a doctoral thesis based on this. As I began to look inward, and my story unravelled, I could see that, by not allowing myself to live in contradiction to my values, I had developed professionally. I felt inspired by many of the gurus of self study, such as Russell (2002), Whitehead and Lomax (1987), realising that the journey through teaching can be an enlightening and educative one. If we, as teachers could teach with the comfort of knowing who we are, and why we do what we do, then we would be able to tap into a more unarticulated intuitive awareness (Claxton 2000; Gladwell 2007; Loughran 2002; Schön 1995). Schön maintains that reflection-in-action requires the teacher to trouble shoot – to consider her objectives, her present action in terms of how these objectives are or are not being met, and then to be guided by her intuition (which is often built on past experiences), on her course of action. By being aware of our intuitive processes, we are able to bring clarity to the connection between our actions and the theories we adopt. Our awareness helps us to find solutions to the practical uncertainties that so often present themselves in the classroom. This level of introspection allows us to be true to ourselves and must surely produce the kind of theories that work best for our respective teaching scenarios. Sharma affirms the value of this introspective process:

I once read that people who study others are wise but those who study themselves are enlightened (2004:74).

The reflection of my teaching career through this study has changed my philosophy of what obstacles represent. As I looked back at the many challenges I faced as an educator, I realised that these obstacles were in fact the opportunities for my own professional advancement. At a *Mind Power* seminar I attended, Robin Banks displayed several quotations to entertain the audience before he commenced with the seminar. One of them affirmed my new ideology – it read<sup>14</sup>:

Today I shall look at every obstacle as a down payment on my success  
and let them strengthen me, not weaken me (Banks 2010)

## **Purpose of research**

The purpose of this thesis is twofold:

1. To provide a narrative account of my journey in the teaching profession during a period of massive transformation in South Africa. This account reveals the challenges confronted by teachers and how these in retrospect are seen as disguised opportunities which led to my professional development. I hope to make a connection with teachers who are sure to encounter challenges, albeit of a different sort, in their teaching life time and to provide insight into how reflection on such challenges could prove to be the means of developing teachers professionally. If we can learn to trust that superior power of the inner voice that often only reveals itself in the confines of our minds and be courageous enough to make public its wisdom, we could derive enormous rewards for our educational practices and for our “selves”.
2. The narrative account will attempt to:
  - highlight the significance of an awareness and understanding of values in educational practice;

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<sup>14</sup> Source of quote is unknown.

- illustrate how my living theories (Whitehead 2009) on multiculturalism in schools and teaching isiZulu as an additional language originated from addressing the contradictions of my values in my practice;
- show how theory, experience and intuition were creatively intertwined in the creation of the *Maye babo!* series; and
- make recommendations as to how the resulting exemplar of curriculum development could be used in other educational contexts.

In doing so, I will provide an exemplar of curriculum design using self-study and autoethnographic elements with which teachers can identify, and thus might feel encouraged to emulate or be guided by their own educational practice. The autoethnographic approach will provide a framework for intuition and experience to develop resonance. This is thought to be the main contribution of this study to the development of language teaching expertise in the transforming landscape of South African post liberation education where the teaching and learning of indigenous languages can contribute to the healing and transformation process.

## **Research problem and questions**

The research problem:

How can I, in my role as isiZulu additional language teacher and author, reflect on my experiences when developing the *Maye babo!* series so as to present an exemplar of curriculum design which not only has relevance for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language, but also for teaching/learning in other contexts?

The narrative account will answer the following questions:

- Why did I want to improve my teaching – what were my concerns?
- What did I do about my concerns and how did I go about it?
- What were the theories that underpinned my actions?
- How did it change my practice?



- How has it contributed to my educational growth?
- How has it contributed to the body of knowledge of isiZulu additional language teaching?

## **Structure of thesis**

There are several theories adhered to in this thesis and these are unpacked in the Literature Review (chapter 2) so that they acknowledge the field of knowledge that exists in language teaching. Initially I was unsure as to where to place these theories and tried several options before I decided to use the traditional placement, in the beginning chapters of this account.

In the next chapter, Research Methodology (chapter 3) I describe the methodologies I use in this study. I make a distinction between qualitative and quantitative studies, and explain the distinction as well as the link between self reflection, self study, action research and autoethnography in conjunction with my study.

In this autoethnographic self study it is crucial to provide a background of my personal and professional history (chapter 4) to gain an understanding of my actions.

I experienced several concerns in my practice (chapter 5) which in retrospect I see as opportunities which led to my professional growth. Two major concerns I experienced in my practice were the challenges faced by myself and educators teaching in a multi-cultural society and secondly, the quality of the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language in primary schools.

In the process of addressing these concerns I embarked on two major projects. The first was to create an awareness campaign on multicultural education and, secondly, I developed the *Maye babo!* series (chapter 6).

Part two of this study gives focus to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the latest Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which is currently

implemented at South African schools. These are discussed closely using the *Maye babo!* series as an exemplar to show how the theories contained in the NCS and CAPS can be implemented. These policies are unfolded in the context of reconstructed discussions by the ZEST<sup>15</sup> group, a group of isiZulu teachers who are keen to learn about the curriculum policy. Discussions in the context of the ZEST group provide a suitable environment in which to share the tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983) which is often not alluded to at teacher training workshops.

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<sup>15</sup> ZEST: Zulu educators' support team. A description of how the group started is described in Part 2 of this study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### About this chapter

While working on the proposal for this doctoral study, I began to research the literature on language teaching and discovered the void that exists for language teaching theories for the South African context.<sup>16</sup> I began to make connections and see similarities in the ideologies that exist in some of the theories of language teaching (and second language teaching)<sup>17</sup> I encountered and those that I have relied on in my practice as an isiZulu educator and author of the *Maye babo!* series. With the exception of the theories adhered to in the NCS, most of the theories described below were unknown to me when I wrote the first edition of the *Maye babo!* series. They are discussed here, as it is important that I acknowledge the connection between my work and that of other language practitioners.

The theories that underpin the design of the *Maye babo!* series were conceived through an analysis of what worked well for me in my practice - my “gut feeling” (Gladwell 2007, Schön 1995) of best classroom practice. Furthermore, when I designed the *Maye babo!* series, a requirement from my publisher was that the series should seek the approval of the Department of Education.<sup>18</sup> I was therefore compelled to rely heavily on the theories which were prescribed in the National Curriculum Statement (2002).<sup>19</sup> Hence theories of best classroom practice were intertwined with theories dictated in the NCS to form my own home grown approach to the teaching of isiZulu in the *Maye babo!* series. These practised theories are not discussed in this chapter, but in Part 2 of this thesis so that the tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983) for understanding and putting these theories into practice can be demonstrated more explicitly. The interaction in the environment of the ZEST group

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<sup>16</sup> Mail and Guardian online article (Alcock: 2008) with no page numbers.

<sup>17</sup> In this chapter I describe the language teaching methodologies that reflect in my practice. During the writing of the thesis I became aware of the modeling of some these ideas in my teaching. I studied and researched language teaching theories during my teacher training course so the knowledge of these theories could have emerged without me being consciously aware of it during the design of the NCS edition.

<sup>18</sup> It is now called the Department of Basic Education.

<sup>19</sup> The policy of the Department of Education which replaced Curriculum 2005 and was implemented in primary schools in 2004.

during which exemplars are drawn from the *Maye babo!* series provides a perfect scenario to highlight the tacit knowledge of teaching that is often absent in the best of theories.

Research on the acquisition of second languages spoken in South Africa is new and difficult to find (Alcock 2008), hence this review of literature on language theories is on second language acquisition in general or that pertaining to English.

## **Gladwell's theory**

The learning programme I created in the *Maye babo!* series relied heavily on my teaching experience, intuition and creativity. After the publication of the first edition of the series, I was introduced to Malcolm Gladwell's book (2007) *Blink – The power of thinking without thinking*, where Gladwell proposes that we develop our theories of how learning works based on our experiences of what worked in the past.

In reflection I realise that this is precisely what happened in the creation of the *Maye babo!* series. I developed the programme on the “hunch” of what worked in my classroom, the “hunch” which was based on the knowledge gained from experience. I formulated my own programme for learning isiZulu as an additional language by reflecting on my teaching and addressing my concerns. I wanted to create a user friendly, fun-filled approach that addressed the needs of both mother tongue and non- mother tongue speakers of isiZulu.

Gladwell quotes scientific experiments that confirm that the conclusions reached by the brain are at first entirely below the surface of consciousness. Initially the brain sends its messages through for example, the sweat glands in our palms. Gladwell calls this part of the brain the “*adaptive unconscious*” (2007:11). He describes the brain as a “*giant computer*” that quickly processes a lot of the data we need in order to keep functioning as human beings. Gladwell states that the brain makes use of “*thin slicing*”. Our brain, without us realising it, has the capacity to find common patterns of behaviour in certain situations based on our past experiences. Gladwell calls this “*thin slicing*” (2007:23).

# Look who's making isiZulu as easy as ABC

TASCHICA PILLAY



LEARNING THE LINGO: Sumi Soni teaches isiZulu to her Grade 4 class at Berea Primary School using books she compiled herself

Picture: JACKIE CLAUSEN

A DURBAN Indian teacher is making isiZulu fun to learn in primary school.

Sumi Soni, 44, who has a master's degree in isiZulu, has written a series of textbooks and teaching guides for grades two to seven.

Soni's series, titled *Mave Babo!* — a Zulu exclamation meaning "Good Heavens!" — uses dialogue and songs to promote the learning of the language.

Grade two and three books were launched by the Education Department this year, and books for higher grades are being printed for next year.

Soni said she related the content of her books to topics pupils were studying in the school curriculum.

She said the books, which contained the repetition of words in songs, were so simple that anyone would be able to use them to learn and teach.

"It's repeated activity, but it's done with joy while learning, which is so much more effective."

"All the songs are age-appropriate to tunes such as *Baa Baa Black Sheep* and *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* for the younger kids."

"You want children to learn the language from an early age and in an informal manner, because it's easier for them to grasp and remember the words."

She said before the books were edited, she tested the content among different grades and sought feedback from fellow teachers.

"The actual material in the books is my work, but it was eventually put together with the help of mother-tongue speakers, who assisted in the editing and translation."

Soni, who has been teaching for 21 years, was a graduate of the former University of Durban-Westville and was one of the non-Zulu first-language speakers to obtain a qualification in the teaching of the language.

Photograph 4 *Sunday Times*, 22 April 2007:3<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> The learners' books were written by me. The educator guides were written in English by me and the assistance of a translator was required for sections of the educator guide.

In applying Gladwell's explanation to the creation of the *Maye babo!* series I have come to realise that my "adaptive unconscious", and "*thin slicing*" played a definitive role in terms of marrying "*gut feelings*" (intuition) with "slices of experience" of what worked for me both as a learner and teacher. I experienced without realising it, that the techniques I adopted were influenced by the experiences I had with the pupils in my classroom. For this reason, Schön (1995) encourages us to reflect on our "*knowing in action*". Schön maintains that it is through this *knowing*<sup>21</sup> that theories are born. By reflecting in-action, I became a researcher in the context of my practice and constructed my own theory to suit my unique context. Strevens's (1985) *mystique – dominated* paradigm of language teaching and learning and Krashen's (1985) *ideas and intuitions from experience* approach to second language acquisition give further claim to Whiteheads (1988) *Living Educational Theory* which claims that living theories are produced through personal reflections about how educators can improve their respective practices.

### ***Saturday meeting with Dave and Sibongile***

Dave and Sibongile are two teachers who are part of the ZEST<sup>22</sup> group. They are also furthering their education, and requested a meeting to discuss the theories of second language acquisition. The following dialogue looks at these theories in conjunction with the design of the *Maye babo!* series.

Sumi: Hi Dave, hello Sibongile, you are right on time. Did you find it easy to get here?

Dave: Hi Sumi, your directions were easy to follow. Actually, a relative of mine lives two streets away, so I am familiar with the street names in this area.

Sibongile: Hello Sumi (she looks nervous). Do you have any dogs? I'm afraid of dogs.

Sumi: No I don't Sibongile, you're safe. Unfortunately our dog Busby passed away a few months ago. Let's go inside. I was just about to pour myself a mug of tea. The kettle has boiled. Would anyone like a cup?

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<sup>21</sup> The knowing that results from experience.

<sup>22</sup> The ZEST group is a group of isiZulu teachers who meet once a week to gain a better understanding of the NCS and CAPS.

Sibongile: Me please, I can never refuse a cup of tea. Sorry to hear about your dog.

Sumi: Thank you; he had a very peaceful death. He was old and his health and eyesight were failing. Dave, tea for you?

Dave: I hope I don't sound fussy, but I prefer coffee please.

Sumi: Not at all, two teas and one coffee coming up. Take a seat at the dining table. I have set up my laptop there.

Sibongile: Wow, your home is beautiful, Sumi. I love the open plan. It is so spacious.

Sumi: That is the first comment I get from most people on their first visit. I hate clutter and unnecessary furniture. I don't see the point of buying things to fill spaces. I love it the way it is. The openness somehow gives me a sense of freedom not to mention that it is easy to maintain and clean.

Dave: What is the size of the pool? It's huge. Are you a regular swimmer?

Sumi: Its twelve metres by six. I swim in summer, in the evenings. The water is cold in winter, much too cold for me.

(I pour the beverages and make my way to the dining table with a plate of rusks.)

Sumi: Shall we get started? I feel a need to clarify terms that I will be using. The terms "approach", "method" and "technique" are hierarchical concepts which are closely intertwined.

Sibongile: I'm glad you are addressing this. I am confused with the different terminology and am keen to hear the distinction.

(Dave has just taken a huge bite of his rusk. He gives an affirmative nod to signal that he feels the same. I turn to my laptop and proceed with the discussion.)

## Approach, method and technique

- Sumi: An approach in the context of this discussion refers to the beliefs adopted about the nature of language learning (Johnson and Johnson 1999:12, Richards and Rodgers 2001:19).
- Dave: I'm keen to know how you adopted your approach when you designed the *Maye babo!* series. How did you go about it?
- Sumi: I looked at the language structure of isiZulu and the application of teaching and learning principles drawn from my own experience as well as those propagated by the DoE<sup>23</sup> in the NCS and in 2012, CAPS together with research and theories on language teaching<sup>24</sup> and educational psychology to develop the approach I use in the *Maye babo!* series.

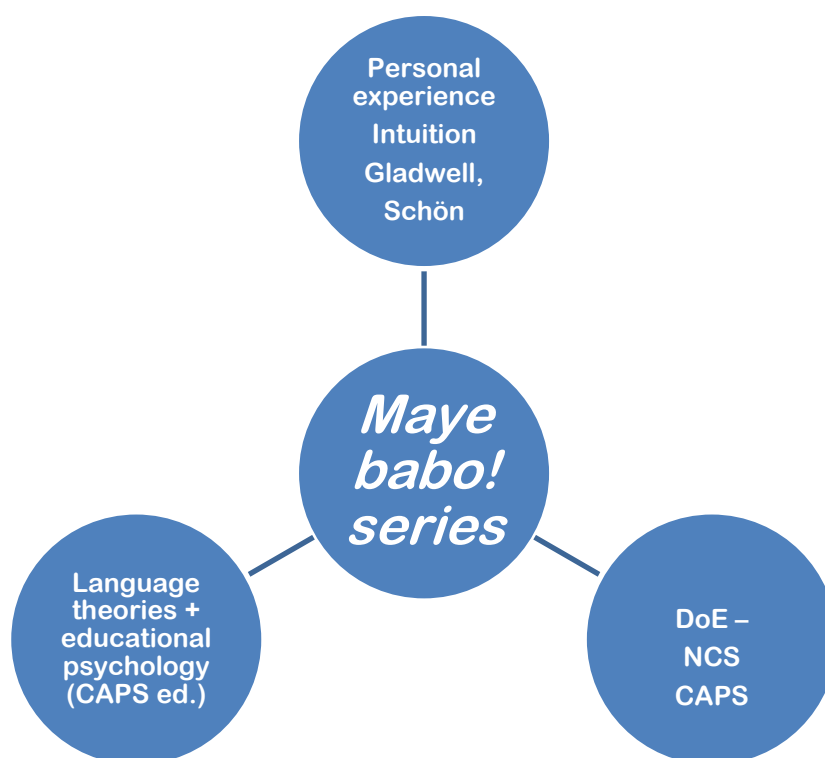


Figure 2.1 Soni's approach to language teaching

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<sup>23</sup> Department of Education, presently known as Department of Basic Education

<sup>24</sup> Reference to language theories coincided with writing of CAPS edition



Sumi: This table provides a quick reference to the approaches to language learning that I identify with. Many of these approaches share the principles of the Communicative language approach and continue to be adopted and practised today.

Table 2.1 Language learning approaches

<b>Approaches to Language Learning</b>
1. Communicative language approach or CLT which emerged in the 1960's adopts the principles of the later OBE approach where the language learning is connected to social context so that it is functional and interactional (Richards and Rodgers 2001:146). The teacher instigates situations which promote the practice of spoken and written communication skills.
2. The Natural Approach: Focus on comprehension and meaning (Krashen 1982:137). Adheres to principles contained in Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis (Richards and Rodgers 2001:178).
3. *Cooperative (collaborative) learning makes use of debate, group work. Competition is replaced with team based learning, an aspect of OBE.
4. *Multiple Intelligences approach - acknowledges different learning styles (Gardner 1993).
5. *Task-based language learning encourages natural language acquisition. The teacher prepares and assigns tasks which are meant to be accomplished rather than learned. The focus is on meaning and interaction which is attained through engagement in problem-solving activities or knowledge-gap activities. The syllabus is developed by the teacher on the basis of experience and knowledge of learner's stage of conceptual development (Yalden 2000:67, Richards and Rodgers 2001:223).
6. * Whole language approach focuses on using a tailored combination of addressing the development of speaking, listening, writing, reading skills.
7. *Scenario approach: (Pratt 2011) sets language learning in a natural context. This approach is compatible with OBE and encourages learners to actively participate in the learning process. It addresses higher order competencies. The learning brings satisfaction and fulfilment. It involves cooperative learning which is task driven.

\* These approaches are discussed in Part 2 of this study since they relate closely to the principles of OBE.

## *Communicative Language Teaching*

Sumi: My work leans closely with the ideas contained in the Communicative language approach. The goal of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is communicating successfully in real life situations as opposed to understanding grammatical structure. CLT tries to find opportunities for teaching listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to second language learners through the use of appropriate activities that promote real communication, provide tasks with meaning, and are meaningful to the learner. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning by drawing out a plan on how to teach the language skills as well as organizing and guiding learners (Richards and Rodgers 2001:151). These strategies are used abundantly in the *Maye babo!* series.

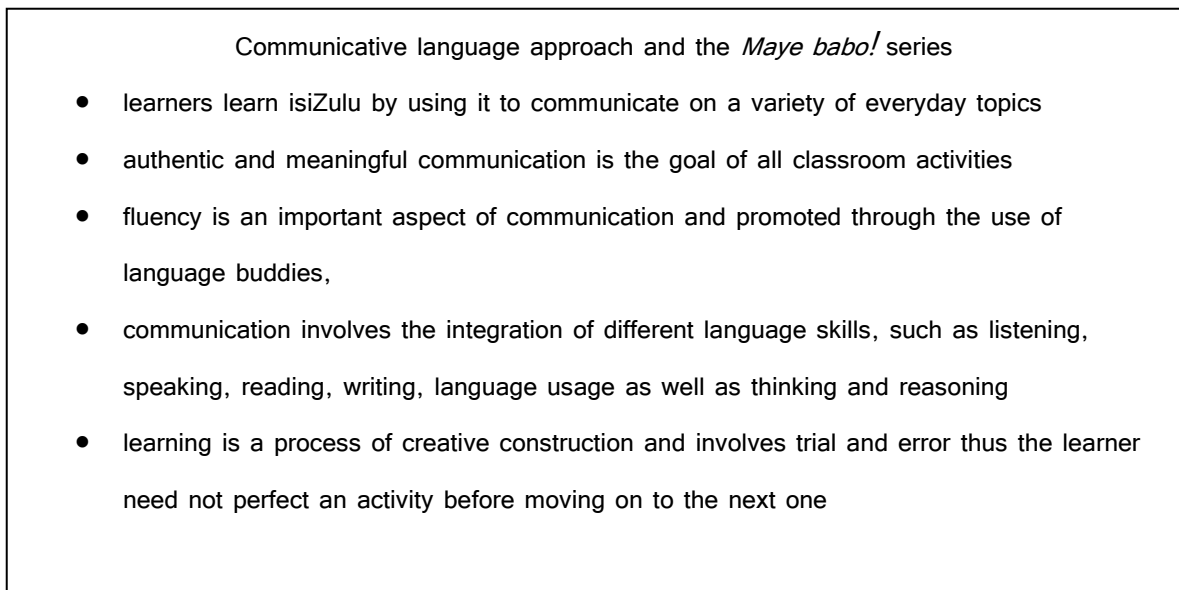


Figure 2.2 Communicative language approach and the *Maye babo!* series

Communicative language teaching led to the development of the Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-based Teaching, and Task-based Teaching (Richards and Rodgers 2001:151). Now, let's discuss the Natural Approach.

## ***The Natural Approach***

The Natural Approach is a communicative method developed by Tracy Terrell and Steven Krashen in 1983 (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Richards and Rodgers 2001:178). This method places focus on the use of the second language in communication and the comprehension of meaning. Any classroom aids that assist comprehension are important, should focus on listening and reading while allowing delayed speech. The focus of communication should be on meaning not form, and communication activities should be interesting and learner friendly creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere. The syllabus is based on the needs of the students and on situations, functions, and topics. Learners should involve themselves whole-heartedly in the communication activities and participate to whatever degree their fluency has developed. Teachers play a dominant role in the selection of language activities in which the learners participate (Krashen and Terrell 1983; Richards and Rodgers 2001:187-188). This approach compares closely with Krashen's theory which will be discussed later together with how it is applied in the *Maye babo!* series.

Now let's look at what is meant by method. A method is formulated from the philosophies of language teaching adopted in an approach. It describes how the learning content is selected and organized; the learning activities; as well as the role of the teacher, learner (and language buddy – in the case of the *Maye babo!* series). We will look at a few popular methods which I use in the *Maye babo!* series, later on in today's session.

A technique is sometimes referred to as a strategy. It is a procedure that is designed to accomplish a certain skill. It relates more closely to the method rather than the approach. For example, code switching is a technique which I use where the pupil changes between isiZulu and English at some point in the discussion when they lack the required vocabulary. There are also techniques

to teach particular skills such as listening, speaking reading and writing. We will discuss these during our ZEST meeting together with the NCS (Part 2 of this thesis).

Dave: I can see why you say they are intertwined. An approach can be translated into a method which incorporates the use of several techniques.

Sumi: That's correct Dave. The *Maye babo!* series was constructed from a series of lesson plans I was successful with in the classroom. I need you to be aware that I did not set out to enquire what my approach or method was, as one would do when doing a formal research study. In the process of compiling research for my doctorate, I am reviewing the series through a different lens, a researcher's lens to investigate the approaches and methods of language learning I use in my teaching. This experience has enriched me with new knowledge, which I will apply in the rewriting of the series – the CAPS version. Talking about this new knowledge with you will help me understand it better and reveal the gaps in my existing knowledge thus directing my research. So I suppose I need to say a big thank you to both of you for this opportunity, and for agreeing to be part of my research.

Sibongile: I'm glad that there will be mutual benefit but I still feel guilty about taking up your time on a Saturday morning. Sumi, tell me about the context for which you designed the *Maye babo* series. Did you give this any consideration this?

Sumi: Yes, the series is designed in particular for primary school learners between the age of 6 and 12 years. This method suits the structure of a school environment, where the time allocated to teach the second language ranges from about two to three hours a week, with homework prescribed at least three times a week. The method is designed particularly for a South African school where the learners come from diverse cultures. It relies on peer support and the use of code-switching<sup>25</sup>. This method has been used in a situation where the target

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<sup>25</sup> Code switching refers to using more than one language in a conversation. The instructions for learners in the workbook are in isiZulu and English. The readers are also in isiZulu and English and new vocabulary (*amagama amasha*) is translated into English in the learner's workbook.

language, isiZulu, is taught as an additional (second) language and the LoLT (Language of learning and teaching) is English. Through my own experience of teaching and learning languages (Gujerathi, Afrikaans and isiZulu), I have come to the conclusion that educators need to move away from the drill of grammatical rules and meaningless recitals of phonic sounds and rather encourage real dialogue and interaction amongst learners on a level that is age appropriate and suitable to the learner's needs and interest.

Dave: So you believe that verbal communication is one of the key features of language acquisition, but isn't this difficult for second language learners? What do the various theories on language acquisition say about this?

### **Theories on second language acquisition**

Sumi: There are various schools of thought on how language is acquired. There is the Innatist view of language acquisition which postulates that every human being has the innate capacity to learn a language (Johnson and Johnson 1999:37). The Behaviourist view suggests three important things in language learning, stimulus, response and reinforcement (Kumaravadeivelu 2006:100). Gardner (1999) maintains that each of us has different intelligences and that some people appear to have a greater affinity for language acquisition than others because they are linguistically intelligent. There are many theories that exist on second language acquisition, but it is difficult to predict a defined set of procedures for every teacher or learner to follow because personality characteristics of learners are often a huge determining factor for second language acquisition. I try to remind myself to be consciously aware of my learner's responses as well as their concerns so that I can address their individual needs. This as you probably know is easier said than done. I will discuss the two most popular and perhaps contested views, namely the Behaviourist and Innatist theories for now if that suits both of you, and we will then look at Krashen's theory of language learning.

Dave: That's perfect for me.

Sibongile: Wonderful for me too.

### ***Behaviourist Theory***

Sumi: The Behaviourist theory in language acquisition was based on educational psychology, and was popular during the 1950s and early 1960s. B. F. Skinner was a major proponent of this theory. He believed that the principles of language acquisition are conditioning, association, imitation and reinforcement. Children learn to speak their mother tongue language at home. They do this by listening carefully to the words and repeating them. Spoken words are opportunities for learning thus I recommend that verbal communication should take place throughout the day - especially during conversations between children and between teachers and children. Children tend to use their senses to attach meaning to words, and when confident, articulate the word. Positive reinforcement in the form of a cheer or applaud from the teacher encourages the child to repeat the word (Johnson and Johnson 1999:28).

Sibongile: I guess this makes reference to Skinner's stimulus response theory.

Sumi: That's correct Sibongile. One of the greatest criticisms of the Behaviourist view is that it ignores the significance of context, culture, or personality. Behaviourists place importance on repetitive drills, memorization, and error-free production.

Sibongile: Did you say error free? Can you imagine trying to aspire towards error free productions in a primary school? Language acquisition is a developmental process which occurs over time.

Sumi: Exactly, we become proficient in a language over a period of time. Contrary to the Behaviourist view, I believe that context and learner personalities are very important considerations in the learning process. Whilst I support the view of a place for repetition and memorization, I recommend that this be done creatively through the use of song or role playing and in the context of a theme. I introduce new words with each theme. I use word games such as word searches and crosswords to help the children to learn the names of new objects. In this

way they learn by reasoning as well as making associations with words and pictures and the learning is not a meaningless regurgitation of words they hear. They are given opportunities to use the new words and this makes learning meaningful and useful.

Listening and repeating after a teacher or language buddy is an important activity that promotes correct pronunciation and acquisition of vocabulary. In a classroom situation where there are insufficient mother tongue speakers, the teacher is encouraged to use audio tapes, or walk around the class from group to group to offer assistance to the learners.

Dave: Sorry Sumi, I didn't want to interrupt you when you used this term earlier. What is a "language buddy"?

Sumi: The strengths of learners in English and isiZulu differed in my classroom, thus a buddy system was developed where learners from diverse language backgrounds were grouped so that they could offer each other support. A language buddy is a pupil, preferably in the same class, who speaks the isiZulu at home, and who can therefore assist the non- mother tongue speaker with pronunciation by engaging in conversations with them. I help my learners to discuss various topics with their language buddies several times during the day. Topics for discussion might include what they did during the weekend, what they thought of a story or who they know that reminds them of a character in a book I read to them.

I also engage my learners in listening exercises. We must not forget that language is both receptive and expressive. It is important to make sure that children don't just mimic words and learn to say things. They must listen carefully, receive the correct pronunciation and effectively process what they hear. Exercises where children are asked to repeat back what they heard you say will reveal any varied or inaccurate interpretations. This can include an activity where the learners are asked to relate the key elements of a story or an activity.

Dave: I think that the buddy system is a great idea. It also encourages peer teaching which is endorsed by the NCS.

Sumi: That's an excellent observation Dave. The Behaviourist view favours the direct approach to teaching and the learner's first language was viewed as a hindrance to acquiring a second language.

Dave: Does the direct approach refer to teaching through the medium of isiZulu?

Sumi: Yes it does Dave. Personally, I don't favour the direct approach, particularly not in the primary school. I think it has the tendency to make learners feel very anxious. I have vivid memories of a particular Afrikaans teacher who refused to speak any English during her lesson. I was so nervous during her lessons and this deterred my progress. Krashen (1982) refers to this as the Affective – Filter Hypothesis. We will discuss Krashen's theory shortly.

The latest CAPS policy recommended by the Department of Basic Education, recommends additive bilingualism, which encourages the teaching of the additional/ second language through the use of the first/ home language. I feel this is a gentler approach and one that can work successfully in the primary school; however the teacher needs to be guarded and must ensure that she allows every opportunity for learners to speak isiZulu as often as possible.

Sibongile: I think that a decision of how much communication will be done in isiZulu would depend on the learner's strengths or ability to communicate in isiZulu. For example, a teacher in a classroom with predominantly isiZulu mother tongue speakers could use the direct approach however in a classroom consisting of mainly non- mother tongue speakers, additive bilingualism would be the preferable approach.

Sumi: Most definitely, Sibongile, as I mentioned earlier, the context of your learning environment is an important consideration particularly with the teaching of languages. You also need to remember that students are different in many



ways. Some are quick, others are slow<sup>26</sup>. Some are confident, others are shy. Some like working with friends, others are happier working alone. It is impossible to cater for all these differences all the time however it is important for teachers to be aware of learner differences and address them where possible. Howard Gardner (1993, 1999) encourages teachers to give important consideration to the different intelligences that learners have when planning learning programmes. We will discuss Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence and how it relates to the *Maye babo!* series at our ZEST meeting (Part 2). Let's take a look at the Innatist Theory.

### ***Innatist Theory***

Sumi: Leninburg proposed Universal Grammar, the Innatist theory of language and first language acquisition, in the late 1950s. His theory also influenced a view of second language acquisition. Chomsky believed that human beings have an innate capacity for language and that language acquisition was not habitual but created. He stated that people are born with the ability to construct language. He called this innate mechanism the language acquisition device (LAD). (Caasi 2005:10, Johnson and Johnson 1999:37)

Sibongile: So did Chomsky believe that every child has this device?

Sumi: Yes, Sibongile, according to Chomsky, all children are born with a universal grammar which makes them receptive to the common features of all languages. As more research into the role of the brain and cognitive processes in language acquisition surfaced, both the Innatist and Behaviourist theories received discredit from many critics. (Caasi 2005:10, Cook 2008:215)

Dave: So whilst the Behaviourists believed that language is learned through a stimulus response process, the Innatists maintained that language acquisition is innate.

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<sup>26</sup> The NCS and CAPS encourage teachers to cater for these principles which are adhered to in the principles of OBE and in Part 2 of this study.

Sumi: You summed that up very well Dave. One of the theories that is relatively new and which has been criticised particularly because it lacks scientific proof is Krashen's theory.

Sibongile: Why does everything have to be scientifically proven to be accepted? Sometimes we know that things work but cannot explain why.

Sumi: That's true Sibongile; personally I give precedence to my own gut feelings and test what I feel to be right. I interact with my learners to gain feedback. I can identify many of the hypotheses in Krashen's theory.

### ***Krashen's Theory***

Sumi: Krashen's Input Hypothesis was originally referred to as the Monitor Model. I mentioned earlier that the major criticism of Krashen's theory is that it has not been scientifically proven, yet his model has received the support of the TEFL<sup>27</sup> because it feels "intuitively correct." Krashen's model consists of five parts:

- The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis
- The Monitor Hypothesis
- The Natural Order Hypothesis
- The Input Hypothesis
- The Affective Filter Hypothesis

### ***The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis***

This hypothesis draws a clear distinction between language acquisition and language learning. Acquisition is the unconscious process of hearing and understanding communications; learning is the conscious attention given to language through study and memorization of rules. Krashen gives primary importance to acquisition, which is responsible for fluency and the functional use of language but asserts that learning cannot become acquisition. Learning

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<sup>27</sup> Teaching English as a foreign language

(as opposed to acquisition) serves to develop a monitor- an error detecting mechanism that scans utterances for accuracy in order to make correct errors and grammar. Such an emphasis might inhibit language acquisition, particularly at the early stages of language development (Krashen 1982:10; Richards and Rodgers 2001:181, Johnson and Johnson 1999:4, Caasi 2005:12).

As a young teacher of isiZulu, I was guilty of trying to get my pupils to master the grammatical rules of isiZulu, because these were stressed in the resources I used. I soon realized that this was a useless and meaningless exercise which did little to promote the effective communication in the language.

### ***BICS and CALP***

What Krashen says about language acquisition relates closely to the concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This is because BICS is concerned with unconscious language learning and CALP with conscious language learning (Appalraju 2010:30). I have found the technique of role playing to be very useful in promoting Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which are those skills that are cognitively-undemanding and include known ideas, vocabulary and syntax. They are the aspects of communication that are used daily in routine communicative exchanges (e.g., while dressing, eating, bathing, playing, etc.).

Sibongile: I am familiar with BICS. These skills represent the informal aspects of social talk as well as skills that do not require a high degree of cognition for example, when we name objects and actions, as seen in the Foundation Phase series of the *Maye babo!* series. I have found that students demonstrating BICS tend to recognize new combinations of known words or phrases and produce single words or short phrases.

Sumi: BICS can be developed in 2 to 3 years. BICS is different from Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, or CALP. CALP takes much longer than BICS to develop; usually about 5-7 years. CALP skills are those that are necessary for literacy attainment and academic success. CALP enables students to have academic, analytical conversation and to independently acquire factual information. CALP is used to acquire information, to find relationships, make inferences, and draw conclusions (Appalraju 2010:30).

### ***The Monitor Hypothesis***

Most mother tongue speakers do not monitor their speech to the extent that non-mother tongue speakers do. They are not as self conscious as a non-mother tongue speaker and may occasionally make grammatical errors which they will often self correct. I have noticed that with the speaking of isiZulu, mother tongue speakers sometimes use the incorrect subject concord, often because they do not *monitor* their speech as carefully as a non-mother tongue speaker who is so afraid of making a mistake that they are inclined to *monitor* their speech more carefully. Krashen (Krashen 1982:15, Richards and Rodgers 2001:181) calls such a learner, a “type one performer” because they overuse the monitor. As a teacher, I assist such learners by encouraging the use of masks during oral performances, or in very severe cases, allowing them to recite an oral without an audience. This helps to shift the learners’ attention from the speaking activity and helps to relax the learner who need not fear being embarrassed or teased by his or her peers. It also addresses the needs of a shy learner.

Krashen proposes that conscious learning is better suited for writing than for speaking, and that since conscious learning is a supplement for language already acquired, the focus of language teaching should be toward acquisition rather than learning.

- Dave: I support the precedence given to language acquisition over language learning.
- Sumi: So do I Dave, and it is for this reason that the activities in the *Maye babo!* series are structured so that written activities are recommended only after sufficient opportunities are provided for listening, speaking, and reading.

### ***The Natural Order Hypothesis***

- Sumi: Krashen's Natural order hypothesis was based on morpheme studies that show learners typically progress through the acquisition of morphemes (such as *-s*, *-ed*, and *-ing* in English) according to a fairly predictable sequence. Krashen proposed that language learners would progress according to the natural order regardless of the order in which morphemes were presented by formal language classes and regardless of the learner's first or target languages. He also noted that many language rules which are more easily stated and therefore more easily learned consciously are among the more difficult to acquire (Krashen 1982:12, Richards and Rodgers 2001:182). In the compilation of the *Maye babo!* series I encourage the learning of rules unconsciously through inclusion in a dialogue or story and then I explain them so that the way in which the rule functions is understood at an unconscious level first, and subsequently on a conscious level. This is similar to the way a child learns a new language.
- Sibongile: I have noticed this characteristic in the *Maye babo!* series, particularly in the Intermediate Phase and definitely agree that it helps the learners to learn them naturally. It's almost as if they learn the rule as a formula.

### ***The Input Hypothesis***

- Sumi: The Input hypothesis states that the only way to acquire language is through exposure to comprehensible input. Krashen (Krashen 1982:20, Richards and Rodgers 2001:182) proposes that input in the second language should be just a little above the current level of the learner's acquired understanding of the

language  $(i + 1)^{28}$ . In reality this is very difficult to achieve in a classroom where the learners' level of acquired understanding is of diverse strengths. I have been teaching isiZulu in a classroom that consists of both mother tongue and non- mother tongue learners. When designing the *Maye babo!* series, I have designed separate secondary activities catering for the learners of diverse strengths. These activities appear under the heading *Expanded Opportunities* in the lesson plans which can be found in the educator guide.

Dave: I think another difficulty is for the teacher to know exactly what the level of *acquired understanding* of the learner is. This might be possible if we teach a few children, but in a classroom of about thirty learners or more, it is not possible to ascertain what the *comprehensible input* should be.

Sibongile: In other words, the input hypothesis has its limitations for application in a classroom environment.

Sumi: Yes, and this relates to the OBE principles of expanded opportunities and high expectations which we will discuss at the ZEST meeting. The NCS and CAPS expectations are that teachers cater for the different learner abilities. Many of my colleagues have found this expectation to be very demanding; however I have tried to address them in the *Maye babo!* series.

### ***The Affective Filter Hypothesis***

Sumi: The Affective filter hypothesis refers to the barrier that keeps language learners from achieving acquisition through comprehensible input. Variables such as motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional states contribute to raising or lowering the affective filter. For example, if the language learner is nervous or tense, the affective filter is raised, blocking comprehension of input. However, if the language learner is relaxed and happy, the filter is lowered, maximizing the benefit of comprehensible input. Language teachers should take heed of the

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<sup>28</sup> This means that "i" represents the current level of the learner's acquired understanding and "1" represents a level that is just above the current level.

importance of creating a classroom environment that allows learners to feel safe and free of unfair criticism, ridicule and nervous tension (Krashen 1982:30, Richards and Rodgers 2001:183, John and Johnson 1999:4-5).

The *Maye babo!* series encourages learners to recite dialogues. Learners who are nervous gain comfort in working with a classmate or language buddy. Learners are also encouraged to wear masks or dress up as characters in the dialogue and this creates a fun-filled and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. I ensure that I also do not make unrealistic demands on my learners, by this I mean that I will say things like *Do you understand what is required of you?; Who is not sure how to do this?; Would you like me to do another example?; Are you enjoying this section?*. I try to create a non threatening environment so that my learners feel comfortable to ask for clarification if required.

I think you are probably experiencing theory overload so perhaps you should take copies of the section on Multiple Intelligences and language acquisition methods to peruse through at home. I identify closely with Gardiner's (1983) views and have taken care to incorporate them when designing programmes for learning in the *Maye babo!* series. We will discuss this at one of our ZEST meetings soon. Shall we call it a day?

Sibongile: What time is it? (She glances at her watch.) Oh my word! I can't believe how quickly the time has passed. I'm going to be late for my appointment with my hairdresser. Dave please can we leave. Thank you very much Sumi. I feel much more confident about tackling my assignment on language methodologies after this meeting.

Dave: Yes, thanks a million Sumi. I'm really grateful for your help. I think we must leave asap if Sibongile wants to keep her appointment.

Sumi: Bye and take care. Will see you two on Thursday.

Dave: } Bye, Sumi.  
Sibongile: }

Discussing these approaches and theories with the group has made me realise that my perspective has shifted from when I originally came across these theories, where I viewed them as informing teaching practice. Rather than seeing them as informing my teaching practice, I now see them in terms of how the approaches used in *Maye babo!* series validates or authenticates the theories and the methods based on them. Some of the methods I used (although intuitively at the time) in the NCS version of the series are summarised below:

## **Language learning methods**

There are three principal views to language teaching. The structural view treats language as a system of structurally related elements to code meaning (e.g. grammar translation and audio-lingual method).

The functional view sees language as a vehicle to express or accomplish a certain function, such as requesting something (e.g. situational language teaching). The interactive view sees language as a vehicle for the creation and maintenance of social relations, focusing on patterns of moves, acts, negotiation and interaction found in conversational exchanges (e.g. Direct Method, Communicative Language Teaching, the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, The Natural Approach, and Total Physical Response). This view has been fairly dominant since the 1980s (Richards and Rodgers 2001:21, Krashen 1982:125-145). The methods adopted in the *Maye babo!* series relates closely to many popular methods of language learning (see Table 2.2), but in some instances these have been adjusted to suit my context. Below is a brief look at some of the methods I use and how I have adapted them in the design of the *Maye babo!* series.



Table 2.2 Language learning methods applied in the *Maye babo!* series.

<b>Methods used in the <i>Maye babo!</i> series</b>	<b>Language Learning Method</b>	<b>Teacher's role</b>	<b>Learner's role</b>
Understanding grammatical rules, memorising vocabulary which is tested fortnightly and translation of sentences in the form of written exercises. The learning programme is carefully designed so that the above learning is integrated within the context of the theme being studied.	Grammar Translation Method emerged in 1800's put emphasis on grammatical rules and morphology, doing written exercises, memorizing vocabulary, translating texts. Traditionally this method did not consider learning in the context of the text (Richards and Rodgers 2001:5).	Source of knowledge input	Passive recipient Follows instructions Takes in knowledge
Repetition is creatively used to drill vocabulary, language structures and spelling	Audio Lingualism emerged in 1942 in USA. It is skills based and stresses memorization, repetition, tapes and structure.	Modeller Drill leader	Models teacher Passive follower
Repetition of new vocabulary is learned through song which are often in L2 and L1	Suggestopedia emerged in the 1970's. It was largely an authoritative, holistic, lexical approach using music and ambiance. 25 times faster than other methods.	Auto-hypnotist Authority figure	Relaxer True believer
Game - UThemba uthi Songs with action	Total Physical Response (TPR) was promoted by Palmers in 1925. This method provides opportunity for learners to coordinate speech and action. Learners were encouraged to repeat in L2 process what was learned in L1	Commands Action monitor	Takes orders Performs action

### ***Grammar-translation***

Grammar-translation is also known as G-T, and was popular in the 1800's in the public school system for teaching Latin and Greek as it allowed access to ancient literatures. The Grammar-translation method involved the translation of sentences from and into the target language. This process relied heavily on the isolated memorization of grammatical rules and lexical items (Krashen 1982:127; Richards and Rodgers 2001:5-7).

The *Maye babo!* series differs in its application of the Grammar translation method in that it integrates the learning of grammatical rules, vocabulary and translation activities within the context of the theme being studied. In so doing, learners learn these skills in a meaningful way so that they can apply them practically in a conversation or when doing written work. For example, in the Grade 6 learner's book (2007:69-71) there are several activities which require the learner to learn the vocabulary, translate the commands and rewrite the commands in the polite form. These activities are based on the dialogue (2007:64-66) which contains exemplars of the use of commands in isiZulu.

### ***Audiolingualism***

The roots of Audiolingualism can be traced in the Army Specialized Training Programme of 1942. Audiolingualism is believed to be the first scientific language acquisition method to have reflected behavioural learning theory and was based on structural linguistics. It involves the use of tapes, teacher-led drills and memorization exercises that were believed to lead to habit formation. The theoretical basis of Audiolingualism was seriously challenged when Chomsky proposed the Innatist view (Krashen 1982:129, Richards and Rodgers 2001:50, Johnson and Johnson 1999:20).

### ***Suggestopedia***

Suggestopedia, a humanistic approach to second language acquisition was developed by Georgi Lozanov in the 1970s (Richards and Rodgers 2001:100). It incorporates interaction

as a means to acquisition with links to yoga and Soviet psychology, it encourages manipulation of the states of attentiveness in order to maximize learning and recall and claims the best language learning is achieved subliminally and unconsciously. This is in agreement with Krashen's Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. According to Lozanov, the optimal mental state for language learning is aware and alert versus asleep (the most relaxed state) or agonized (the tensest state). Lozanov recommends that special care be given to the décor and environment of the language classroom as students are supposed to learn both through direct instruction and the environment in which the information is exchanged.

Fundamental to Suggestopedia is the use of Baroque instrumental music, featuring slow movements to create both an atmosphere and a state of mind that is open to retention of language. Activities in Suggestopedia revolve around comprehension of whole meaningful texts – often extended texts, and its focus is conversational fluency. Suggestopedia is based on a Structuralist view of language where the roles of the teacher and learner are important. The learner accepts the childlike position of following the teacher, and the teacher authoritatively directs the learner toward communication. Activities such as dialogues, imitation, question and answer, role play, and listening to language tapes upon retiring and rising are typical of Suggestopedia (Krashen 1982:142, Richards and Rodgers 2001:100).

The *Maye babo!* series makes use of some of the techniques suggested by Suggestopedia such as dialogues, role play and question and answers, as well as songs which aid the memorization of vocabulary.

### ***Total Physical Response***

Total Physical Response (TPR) was developed by James Asher in the 1960s and 1970s. TPR is interactive and incorporates the whole person into the learning process. TPR is unique in that it links physical activity with language and meaning. The teacher gives commands in the second language, and the students respond by following the command. Once, the learner is confident, he or she progresses to the next level, and gives the

commands. TPR facilitates comprehension and does not require an immediate spoken response by the learner. TPR begins with simple language selected according to the communication needs of the learners and can increase to very complicated structures, but it is often used only in the early stages of acquisition in most classrooms (Richards and Rodgers 2001:73, Krashen 1982:140).

I have found the use of games employing the TPR technique to be very useful in assisting learners to memorize vocabulary, particularly, verbs. Learners are taught a series of verbs in the context of a particular theme. Learners are encouraged to show the action denoted by the verb. The teacher then plays the game “UThemba uthi” which requires the learners to close their eyes and perform the action that is expressed by the verb. Learners who perform the incorrect action sit and open their eyes. They watch the learners that continue to play and in this way remediate learning that did not take place. The last learner standing (i.e. the learner who did not perform any incorrect actions) is the winner. The young learners I teach enjoy this game which can be played at the beginning of a new lesson to recap vocabulary that was previously taught.

## **Conclusion**

Second language acquisition is best served when methodology is based on theory that accounts for cognitive, psycholinguistic, and social factors with communicative ends in view. Therefore, methods such as Grammar-Translation and Audiolingualism are considered less effective than newer models such as Total Physical Response and Suggestopedia, which more closely meet the above criteria for effective second language acquisition. It is also helpful when methodology is made practical through synthesis of procedures, as seen in Part 2 of this thesis. Studies on second language acquisition are linked to the fields of linguistics, psychology, sociology, and education. Research in these fields is ongoing thus new ideas in the field are bound to emanate for the South African language learner.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### About this chapter

This chapter describes the process of enquiry employed in the investigation of the writing of the *Maye babo!* series. The description of this process presented difficulty in terms of where it should be located in this thesis since the time frames in the entire research process stretches over two decades. What complicated the matter further, was that these time frames intersect with the numerous changes that occurred in the South African education system after the first democratic elections in 1994.

The methodologies adhered to in this thesis are described in two categories in this chapter. Through the use of Autoethnography (Ellis 2004) and Self Study (Whitehead 1999), which use the self and subjective experiences as a source of data, I was able to adopt a qualitative style which suited the insider position adopted in my research. The use of this methodology required introspection into my past, and described the motivation that led to the writing of the series. Subsequently, by engaging in mental dialogue and reference to personal diaries, notes, story boards, mind maps and minutes of meetings, I was able to bring to life the tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983) and knowing-in-action (Schön 1991, 1995) which I have relied on in the compilation of the *Maye babo!* series. Ongoing self reflection has helped me to identify certain recurrent themes in my practise as an isiZulu educator (positive and negative), motivated further literature review, and guided the rewriting of the series to align it to the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which will be effective in South African schools from January 2012. Whilst working on this thesis, I submitted a revised, CAPS compliant version of the *Maye babo!* series to the national department of basic education and received an excellent rating, as well as approval for listing on the national catalogue of textbooks circulated by the department of basic education.

I have included excerpts of ethnographic scenes compiled from data discussed at the ZEST (Zulu Educators Support Team) meetings as well as discussions with my supervisors;

Professor D. Pratt (Dee) and Dr. Elizabeth Harrison (Liz) in the following narrative account which encapsulates my lived experiences.

## **A revelation**

On the tenth of the tenth of the tenth month in the year 2010, at ten to ten, I gave myself 10 out of 10 for finally arriving at a conclusion on how I would unravel to my readers; the teaching programme contained in the *Maye babo!* series<sup>29</sup>. I was reading page seven of Ellis's novel, *The Ethnographic I* (2004), when I experienced this light bulb moment and the "coincidence" of the "tens" in terms of the date and time were startling. In *The Ethnographic I*, Ellis showcases the process of doing and writing Autoethnography as she teaches her students about this research method. As I read the work of Ellis, I thought, "What a *real* way of showing readers what autoethnography is." For months, I had been searching for a way in which to explain the methodology I employ in the *Maye babo!* series to my readers. I recall saying to Liz:

Sumi: I seem to be stalling with the writing of my thesis and I know why. Part one of the thesis tells a real story and the theoretical aspect of my work in Part two is cold and dead, in contrast to the warm lived experiences I describe in Part 1 of this thesis.

Liz: Cold and dead. That's a strange description.

Sumi: I don't want my thesis to be filled with boring theoretical jargon that seems removed from the actual process of teaching.... yet, I am aware that without doing this I give this work a fairytale status. What I find challenging about writing this thesis, is... how do I present the scientific evidence I have adopted, (which can be quite boring to read if one cannot see its relevance in practice) so that I can "show and tell" my story. This stems from who I am, and how I learn as a learner. I'm a "practical" person, my motivation for learning stems from observing the knowledge in practice.....seeing how it works. It is my

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<sup>29</sup> This section appears in Part 2 of this thesis.

understanding, based on my interaction with teachers for over twenty five years that the majority of teachers would prefer this approach.

I want the readers of this thesis to *feel* and *see* how the methodologies I describe in this thesis and which are employed in the *Maye babo!* series, work in a *real, lived* way so that it will convey meaning at a deeper level. Readers, particularly teachers must be able to resonate easily with my work.

The meeting with Liz ended (unbeknown to me at the time) with the answer I had been searching for. At the meeting, Liz encouraged me to read several articles as well as *The Ethnographic I* written by Caroline Ellis. Ellis describes autoethnography as “writing about the personal and its relationship to culture” (2004:37).

In this account I bring to life the personal lived experiences of teachers (including me), during a period in South African education (teaching culture), which encountered extensive changes (1994-2011). The problems encountered by the teachers in implementing the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), are described in the composition of my story in the hope that it will help teachers to make sense of their own experiences in their practices as teachers.<sup>30</sup> The CAPS policy which implemented in the Foundation Phase (grade R - 3) in 2012 is a simplified version of the NCS.

As I continued to read Ellis’s work, I began to see parallels of *how* I could achieve this objective. I thought about some of the moving, heart rending stories captured in movies about teaching such as *Dead Poets Society* and *Mona Lisa’s smile* which Ellis (1999) refers to as *Heartful Ethnography*<sup>31</sup> and was reminded of how they resonated with me. I wanted my story to make a similar connection with my readers. I decided that like Ellis (2004: xx) my story will consist of a combination of fictional, non fictional and ethnographic scenes. The characters will be given pseudo names to avoid ethical issues of identification, and the scenes abridged and reorganised to suit the pedagogy under discussion.

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<sup>30</sup> Ellis maintains that resonance is an important component in autoethnographic writing.

<sup>31</sup> <http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/5/669>

On making this decision, I was as thrilled as a child who had just jumped off a meandering roller coaster ride. I felt the urge to talk about it, in order to clarify it more deeply in my mind.<sup>32</sup> I could not contain my excitement, so I called my supervisor Dr. Pratt to tell her about my new plan for Part two of my thesis.

Sumi: Dee, you know how I have been searching for a way to make the methodology part of the thesis more real, well I am thrilled to inform you that finally, finally, I have a plan on how to make it happen.

Dee: Tell me, you sound very excited.

Sumi: Well you have encouraged me greatly with your inspiring comments about my writing style, so I thought I would put it to use. I am going to write a methodological novel about the design of the *Maye babo!* series and how it addresses the needs of the NCS. I feel inspired after reading Ellis's book (2004), *The Ethnographic I*. I don't know if you recall, Liz lent it to me at our last meeting. I am glad I read it now, meaning that the timing is perfect in relation to the section I am writing in my thesis. I have been struggling to write for some time now because I seemed to have lost the passion and drive I experienced while telling my personal story in Part one of the thesis, which provides the background and rationale for this thesis. I just did not feel inspired to tackle Part two in the same way I felt kind of hypnotised to write Part one. Well, not anymore. I am on a roll once again, thanks to the inspiration I derived from reading the work of Ellis (2004).

Dee: That's wonderful to hear Sumi. You know I never really worry when I don't hear from you because I know you slip into those modes of not writing for a while and then every now and again you surface with several chapters. You tend to process things in your mind and you write when you get a good feeling about it.

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<sup>32</sup> This is one of the ways in which learning takes place. It is referred to as interpersonal learning and is one of the strategies recommended in the NCS.



- Sumi: Yes, that's me for sure, I'm glad you realise that the thinking never stops. So technically I am working on my thesis even when I am not physically at my computer. I guess this "aha moment" as Oprah Winfrey calls it was created by all the thinking and reflecting I have done. I have written a few chapters of the theoretical stuff, but you know that if I am not happy with it, I will not e-mail it to you. I hope we can meet with Liz soon so that I can reveal my excitement in greater detail.
- Dee: Well, I am a little tied up this week. By the way, I have been given a professorship and...
- Sumi: Wow, that's wonderful Dee, I'm so happy for you. You certainly deserve it, and it is long overdue.
- Dee: Thanks Sumi. I am very excited. I think I can meet next week. I will speak to Liz and get back to you. I'm in a hurry, I was about to step out before you called. Need to get a few documents signed urgently. Speak to you soon.
- Sumi: Yes, Dee. Will see you soon, and we will need to celebrate the good news.

### *A special meeting on research methodology*

Dave and Sibongile are two teachers in the ZEST<sup>33</sup> group who are furthering their studies. They are working on an assignment on research methodologies for their Masters degrees and have requested my help in this area. The following ethnographic scene was composed to describe the research methodology I engage in, in this study.

- Sumi: Shall we get started? I would like to record this session so that I can use it as part of my doctoral research. Are you willing to be participants in my research? (I receive an enthusiastic nod from both Sibongile and Dave). I mentioned at our ZEST meeting that I am working on an autoethnographic self-study of my practice, with specific reference to the teaching isiZulu as an additional language and the thesis is constructed as a living theory account (Whitehead

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<sup>33</sup> Zulu educators support team. A description of how the group started is described in Part 2.

2009). We will look at each of these research methods shortly. I have been trying to fathom out the differences between Autoethnography, Action Research and Self Study, so I have done quite a lot of research on it. When I read *An Ordinary Teacher* by Edwina Grossi (2006) I said to Dr. Pratt, my supervisor, that I didn't think I could "bare my soul", so to speak, the way Grossi does. Ellis says that, with autoethnography, "not only your work, but your personal life is scrutinized and critiqued" (2004:19). Grossi has written her life story about how a little pre-school she started grew to become a school and ultimately a training college for teachers. What a remarkable lady. She used autoethnography as her methodology.

Dave: Are you talking about Embury College?

Sumi: Yes, Dave, do you know it?

Dave: Yes, my sister is studying there. I think I must read Grossi's book. Now tell me more about the narrative style methodologies you mentioned earlier.

Sumi: When I read Grossi's thesis, I developed great admiration for her and her achievements. I also admired her courage to open up her personal life. I read excerpts of it to my husband, Moss, and we were uncomfortable to expose everything about our personal lives with the intensity modelled by Grossi; neither did I see the relevance for such an intrusion.

After Grossi's book, I read several internet articles on McNiff's (1993, 2002) Action Research Methods and Whitehead's (1988, 1993, 1999, 2009) Self Study and Living Theory Methodologies. I thought that these methods fitted well with my work, because I have a natural tendency to self reflect on my work and take action to improve my shortcomings. Much later, I read another autoethnography by Tai Peseta (2005), which once again drew me towards this method of research. From a reader's perspective, it was light to read, yet it was research, it was informative. I wanted the reader of my thesis to have a similar experience. Then I read Ellis's book, *The Ethnographic I*. Ellis, like Grossi shares everything about her life. What I was most intrigued by was her methodological approach to teaching autoethnography. She teaches it as a

method by showing the reader how she has lived it. The *Maye babo!* series has consumed a major aspect of my life in the last two decades. I drew on ideas that I had practised and lived, and I decided therefore that this aspect had to be visible in my story. This is when I decided that I would use the data I collect at the ZEST meetings to compile my story.

Sibongile: Tell us more about Action Research and Self Study.

Sumi: Action research is defined by McNiff as follows (showing them on the laptop screen)<sup>34</sup>:

“.. a term which refers to a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be. Because action research is done by you, the practitioner, it is often referred to as practitioner based research; and because it involves you thinking about and reflecting on your work, it can also be called a form of self-reflective practice” (2002:6).

The study of the work done by Whitehead (1993) in what he calls self study (which is practitioner based research and which involves self reflective practice) and that of McNiff’s (2002) who tends to use the term action research have many parallels in the context of my research. These parallels will become more explicit to you soon. I discovered that like myself, there is a whole movement of teachers who know a lot more about their practices than they can put into words. Theories learned at teacher training colleges cannot always equip us to meet the challenges of teaching. We therefore have to rely on “theories” learned in practice. This is what Whitehead calls living theories. Teachers can establish their own theories by thinking about what they are doing, sometimes in the process of doing it. They ask:

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<sup>34</sup> Texts shown in the following format are those shown on the laptop.

“What features do I notice when I recognise this thing? What are the criteria by which I make this judgement? What procedures am I enacting when I perform this skill?” (Schön 1991:50).

Schön refers to this type of reflection as *knowing-in-action*. This skill develops one’s experience and intuition, which is founded on theories that worked in the past.

Sibongile: In other words, when you compiled the *Maye babo!* series, you drew on the knowledge of what worked for you in the classroom. (I give an affirmative nod). Sorry Sumi, before we look at the methodologies, please clarify what is meant by research methodology.”

Sumi: Research methodology..... ummm...I see it as a set of ideas, or techniques on how you collect the data for your research. In the past, researchers were focussed on *what* they wanted to say in their research, and not *how* they wanted to say it. The how generally followed a traditional approach characterised by quantitative methods.

Modern researchers have understood the need to be unique and to take cognisance of the way in which they present their research. There is a new shift towards qualitative methods which connect the researcher’s personal identity with the research topic allowing the researcher’s voice to emerge in an emotive way.

Dave: What you say is so true. I agree that how we present things is equally important today. It even applies to food. My wife had a discussion last night about the effort that goes into how food is presented today. The creativity of chefs is personalised in the presentation of the cuisine making it appealing... so this shift that you speak about seems to be present in different aspects of our lives, even the way we dress too.

Sumi: Yes, it does, Dave. That's an interesting way of explaining it. After our first ZEST meeting, I wondered why educators who had access to the educator's guide of the *Maye babo!* series had not made an attempt to read it. I realised that I needed to bring this explanation to life in my thesis, and flesh it out through discussion, questions and answers, and make it appealing by making dialogue the main discourse in this section of my thesis. I even thought that I would use our present discussion as data in my methodology chapter.

With regard to the analogy with clothes, just as you dress, according to your personality, and eat according to your personal taste, your research method should not only suit the nature of your research, but also your personality, and it should be one that you are comfortable with. For instance, I am naturally prone to reflect on my actions, personal and professional, so Action Research, Self Study and Autoethnography fit in with my actions. In my practice as a teacher, I often tell stories, show and explain things to my learners by looking at ways to make learning real. The focus of my teaching is on ensuring that learners can apply the knowledge they learn in other contexts. For this reason, I instinctively chose narrative research methods for my research on teaching isiZulu as an additional language to assist me to convey my teaching methods in a creative and reader friendly way. This is the style that I find comfortable.

The persistent habit of examining my teaching by reflecting on my personal experience in some respects validates the nature of curriculum as being dynamic and essential. As Grumet explains, "Curriculum is our attempt to claim and realize self-determination by constructing worlds for our children that repudiate the constraints that we understand to have limited us" (Grumet, cited in Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman 1996:379). Pinar suggests that by looking back at our past experiences, we can relate lived experiences more fluently and accurately, and in so doing, we make known "aspects of a collective or transpersonal realm of educational experience" (1975:411). Pinar calls this part of *currere* (the active verb for curriculum) transbiographic, meaning that it goes beyond the individual in revealing some of the basic structures that exist in humanity. In this light, *currere* the "kernel of a

reconceived and revitalized curriculum theory field” (1975:411) can provide a different and lively discourse which involves a deeper consciousness and understanding of learning and teaching.

Grossi (2006:7) describes self-actualisation as a person’s instinctive need to make use of everything in their capacity to reach their maximum potential. She maintains that self reflection can assist teachers to develop self-actualisation. The bonus in choosing autoethnography as a research method has been self fulfilling in that I now have a better understanding of who I am, how I became, and a valid understanding of my actions and my past.

“Sometimes the impetus for writing autoethnography comes ... from desire to remember and honor the past. We write to find the truths of our experiences...” Ellis (2004:111).

I also learned that there are different ways of accessing knowledge. I discovered something about myself when I read Laurel Richardson’s quote.

I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn’t know before I wrote it. How we are expected to write affects what we can write about. Writing is a method of knowing.” (Ellis 2004:170-171).

Let me not drift from our topic. You have probably heard of qualitative and quantitative research methods, during the course of your own studies...”

Sibongile: I’m not sure. I need you to jolt my memory.

Dave: And me.

Sumi: I have tabulated the differences from an article I read on *wisegeek.com*. The methodology I am using is qualitative, so let me tell you about that first. I open the relevant page from a working document on my laptop and read it.

## Differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods

Table 3.1 Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods<sup>35</sup>

Qualitative	Quantitative
Data includes stories, pictures, descriptions, feelings and emotions.	Data is absolute e.g. numbers
Source of data is reflexivity, self consciousness, self study, critical reflection and memory.	Data obtained from experiments or studies set up with controls and a very clear blue print. The tools used (e.g. machines) to collect the data are intended to minimize bias.
Closer to art	Closer to science
Richer study	Aim is to test hypotheses
Allows for information to be gathered that may otherwise be missed.	Answers specific questions
Subjective form of research- more prone to bias.	Results are usually a collection of numbers which are statistically analysed.
Researchers don't have a clear idea on exactly what they are going to research from the outset. During the course of the research new ideas emerge.	Researchers have a clear idea what they are going to measure before they start measuring it.

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<sup>35</sup> McGuigan, B. (2003: 1-3)

Sibongile: So does this mean that as a qualitative researcher you don't have a problem statement, research aim or hypothesis?

Sumi: Not really. You do have a good idea about what you are researching, but should you come across something that you did not set out to research, but which is meaningful to the research, you would include it in your findings. This is why it is said that in qualitative research, you are able to gather information that you may otherwise have missed. This makes the study richer.

My research problem is:

How can I, in my role as isiZulu additional language teacher, reflect on my experiences when developing the *Maye babo!* series so as to present an exemplar of curriculum design which not only has relevance for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language, but also for teaching/learning in other contexts?

I leaned on autoethnographic, self study and action research methodologies which required a gaze into my past. The narrative account answers the following questions:

- Why did I want to improve my teaching – what were my concerns?
- What did I do about my concerns and how did I go about it?
- What were the theories that underpinned my actions?
- How did it change my practice?
- How has it contributed to my educational growth?
- How has it contributed to the body of knowledge of isiZulu additional language teaching?

I would be reluctant to say that I have a hypothesis or set out to prove anything. This stems from my belief that teaching is a supercomplex activity in which there is no *one size fits all*. What works in my teaching scenario may or may not work for another.

With regard to data collection, I think Schön sums this up well in this quote:



“When someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case. His inquiry is not limited to a deliberation about means which depends on a prior agreement about ends. He does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation. He does not separate thinking from doing, ratiociting his way to a decision which he must later convert to action. Because his experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into his inquiry. Thus reflection-in-action can proceed, even in situations of uncertainty or uniqueness, because it is not bound by the dichotomies of Technical Rationality” (Schön 1991:68).

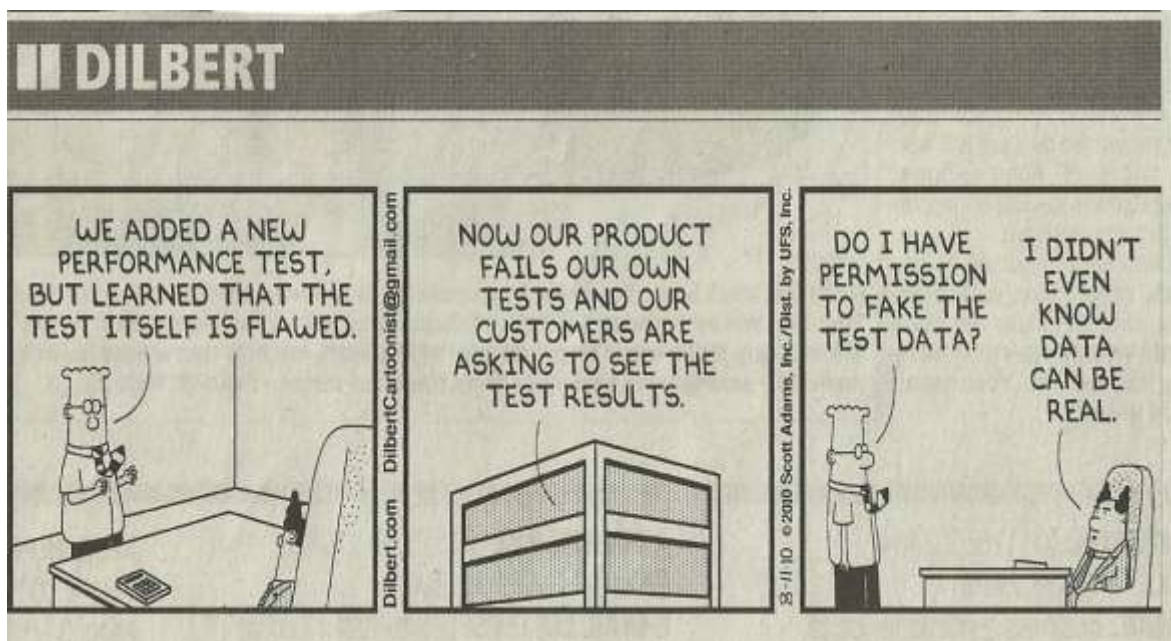
So, to apply what Schön is saying to my practice, my data for my research was collected as I reflected on my teaching practise. I habitually reflect on my teaching on a daily basis, both during and after lessons; and in this way form my own theories for teaching isiZulu as an additional language. As I reflect on my teaching, I try to rectify what I am doing wrong. The series of cyclic actions of thinking and implementing changes to improve my practice eventually produced a unique theory that suited the needs of my pupils. While I was guided by the theories contained in the NCS and theories that address additional language teaching, I was not totally dependent on them. In compiling the *Maye babo!* series, I applied what worked in these theories and combined it with the insight I gained through my experience. The objective was not to collect data, but rather to improve my teaching. This is in contrast to quantitative research methods in which data are carefully collected and used to prove the hypothesis.

Sibongile: Sumi, I'm trying to match what you are saying to what I recollect about quantitative methods. Let me use an example from Natural Science. Let's say I was doing an experiment that proves that: *Hot air rises*. Would this be my hypothesis?

Sumi: Yes, Sibongile, and the experiment you design will be focussed on proving it instead of thinking about it. You will focus on collecting as much data as possible to show how air rises when it is hot. In the process of searching for the different scenarios where this happens, you may not give thought and acquire insight into the scientific process of how and why hot air rises.

Dave: I get it. In contrast to this, when you use qualitative methods you think about the problem, and this process not only brings you closer to the outcome of the research, but it also gives you a better understanding of it.

Sumi: That is precisely the case. Okay, I think it's time for an ice-breaker. Take a look at this cartoon. (I read it.)



Photograph 5 *Cartoon in The Mercury 13/08/2010:16*

I think it is hilarious and sums up the debate on whether qualitative or quantitative methods use reliable data. It also reminds me of the ANA<sup>36</sup> results. The tests often have errors and the design is so different from the design that my colleagues and I use that they often bring out the worst in my children. Furthermore, the tests are implemented in February, which is after the children have had a long break from school, and based on the work taught in the previous year. If you work closely with children, you would know that most need revision and recapping after the long break to get back on track with their learning.

Sibongile: Why on earth do we adopt this crazy system? Our principal wrote to the department about it, but got no response and the superintendent says it is not his department that makes such decisions.

Dave: So with unsuitable tests and testing times, we collect inaccurate test data and hence the results cannot be reliable.

Sumi: Precisely, Dave. However I need to stress that there are many instances when data can be reliable. Let us not drift onto that topic or else we will not achieve what we planned to discuss today. Let's look at a few interpretations of autoethnography.

### **What is autoethnography?**

Sumi: In order to give you a good understanding of autoethnography, I will make reference to several interpretations of autoethnography, and then show you how the key elements of each description are reflected in my doctoral thesis. Ellis (2004:37) maintains that autoethnography “refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to the culture.”

My doctoral research is mainly about my personal experiences (personal) in relation to the teaching profession (culture). I found that the narrative style enabled me to relate my stories with ease and bring them alive for the reader:

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<sup>36</sup> Annual National Assessments set by the Department of Basic Education

“If we think of theory as social, ... then the concerns become less those of representation and more those of communication. Do our stories evoke readers’ responses? Do they open up the possibility of dialogue, collaboration, and relationship? Do they help us get along with each other? Do they help us change institutions? Promote social justice and equality? Lead us to think through consequences, values and moral dilemmas?” (Ellis 2004:195)

Sumi: I’m sure you will agree with me that the ZEST meetings and this one encourage *dialogue, collaboration and relationship*. Dialogue is a common form of discourse in most of the scenes that help unpack the theories of NCS and the implementation of OBE. I use it to help me unpack the theoretical jargon, and to show how the theory *can* be implemented.

Bochner and Ellis (2004), cited by Harrison (2009:66) clarify the three axes of autoethnographies: “the self (auto), culture (ethno), and the research process (graphy)”.

My thesis is autoethnographic in that it describes my life’s journey: My early life (auto), the values that guided my teaching practice (teaching being a culture – ethno aspect) and the research that led to the development of a programme to address teachers’ needs, and a resource for the teaching and learning of isiZulu as well as its evaluation (graphy).

According to Mills:

“... for public theory to influence educational practice it must be translated through the personal. Only when a theory can be seen to have efficacy in a practical arena will that theory have life” (in Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001:15):

My personal account is about a teacher who was dissatisfied with her practice and who took a decision to do something about it. In this way, I created new parameters for language teaching, as in South Africa methodologies of additional language teaching were not “state of the art”<sup>37</sup> (Alcock 2008).

I want my story to encourage other teachers to grow professionally. The theory in this doctorate is compiled by a simple, ordinary teacher who relied heavily on common-sense, personal values, experience, as well as intuition and relative literature to address issues of concern in her teaching.

Through the process of writing my personal narrative, I experienced a reinterpretation of my life. The clarity of the wholeness of life became more apparent as I began to make the connection between my values and the life I lead. Polkinghorne (1988) (cited in Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001:16) mentions three levels of narrative: experience, telling, and interpreting.

A good autobiography uses telling and interpreting effectively so that it allows the reader to experience the narrative as if they lived it with the insight of the interpretation. In my case, the interpretations of my experiences were a huge bonus in that they revealed a new way of knowing. In Part 1 of my doctoral thesis I revisit my past experiences and in telling them, I interpret them with the wisdom of maturity. Things that I did not like or appreciate, such as the imposition of certain values in my childhood and the regimental routine that was entrenched in our household, are appreciated today for the structure and order they bring in coping with personal and professional demands.

Ellis (2004:32) says that “autoethnography refers to the process (of doing research) as well as what is produced from the process.”

I use a literary style because it is one that I am comfortable with and Liz and Dee my supervisors have commented that it is a style that allows the humanistic complexities of teaching to become “visible”.

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<sup>37</sup> Page number not available in article.

Sibongile: Sounds to me like you need to have certain special qualities as a person to write an autoethnography.

Sumi: I agree. Before I decided on my methodology, I did a lot of research, and made the following summary after reading Ellis (2004:xviii): (I sift through a folder and pull out a hand written page.)

<u>Challenging things</u>	<u>Good things</u>
<i>1. Must be introspective.</i>	<i>1. You come to understand yourself in deeper ways and through this you understand others.</i>
<i>2. Confront things that are not flattering about yourself.</i>	
<i>3. Generates fears and doubts – emotional pain.</i>	
<i>4. Vulnerability of revealing yourself – not being able to take back what you have written – no control over how readers interpret what your story says – hard not to feel that critics are judging your life as well as your work. The critique can be humiliating.</i>	<i>2. Autoethnography provides an opportunity for you to do something meaningful for yourself and your profession.</i>
<i>5. Ethical issues with regard to writing about family, loved ones, colleagues.</i>	

There are many different approaches you can use to do autoethnography, such as personal ethnography, reflexive ethnography, narrative inquiry and biographical method (Ellis 2004:45). Ellis maintains that in a good autoethnography there is a well constructed balance between the autobiography and ethnography. Grossi (2006:9) cites Vryan in saying that teacher self study can be seen as an application of autoethnography. She continues that the “..focus of autoethnography is on experience and interpretation...”

I would describe my research as a personal narrative or interpretive autoethnography. According to Ellis (2004:30), the main features of interpretive narrative autoethnographies are as follows:

1. The author writes in first person and is the object of the research.
2. The narrative text focuses on a generalisation of a single case over a long period.
3. The text is presented as a story.
4. The story reveals details of the author's private life and emotional experiences.
5. The episodes in the story depict a reflexive connection between the participants in the research and the researcher.

I write about my reflections in my teaching career and describe some of the trials and tribulations I experienced as a teacher. Through telling our stories and sharing our teaching experiences at the ZEST meetings, we can become better informed about our practices. These meetings are evocative in the way they describe the struggles of teachers during a period of massive transformation in the South African education system.

Sibongile: That's true Sumi. I've gained so much clarity on the NCS since we started with our ZEST meetings, particularly because they are presented in such a practical manner. Thank you, Sumi.

Sumi: You have just affirmed point 5, Sibongile. Thank you.

(We giggle, and then continue with our discussion.)

Sibongile: Please can we discuss action research, self study and self reflection - they seem so closely related."

Dave: Yes, can you describe them more clearly Sumi. What are the similarities and differences?

Sumi: Certainly Dave. Let me refer you to the notes I compiled on this topic.

(I read the notes, and the session ends with Dave and Sibongile making copies of the notes before they leave.)

## **What are action research, self study and self reflection?**

Sessions such as the above with Dave and Sibongile obliged me to interrogate my methods more rigorously for my thesis account, so as to sum them up satisfactorily in ways which complemented my study. In this section I will attempt to give the gist of each of these methods, revealing their commonalities and connectivity with particular reference to my research. In undertaking this research I have found the works of Whitehead (1988, 1993, 1999, 2009) (whose publications are in particular on self study) and that of McNiff (2002) (who has written widely on action research) to be very useful.

Action research began in the USA, and became prominent in the UK in the 1970s. By the 1980s it became very popular in the field of teacher professional education. Its influence has spread worldwide, particularly for the improvement of personal and professional education (McNiff 2002). Table 3.2 shows a distinction between action research (self study) and traditional forms of research. The information used to compile this table was taken from McNiff (2002).

Table 3.2 Distinction between traditional research and action research

<b>Traditional Research</b>	<b>Action Research</b>
1. Researchers do research on other people or topics.	1. Researchers do research on themselves.
2. Researchers enquire about other people's lives.	2. Researchers enquire about their own lives – their behaviour and the reasons for it. If the behaviour is not in accordance to the individual's values, an action plan is drawn to correct this.

Three important methodological elements that feature in most of the literature reviewed on self-study are:



1. The importance of an understanding of personal values.
2. The experiences described are a resource for research.
3. Self critique leads to personal and professional advancement.

In my research self study played a major role in defining the focus of my study. The process of introspection into my practice brought to light the “problem” that I needed to address – the contradiction of my values and self critique led to a plan on how to remedy the concerns I describe in chapter 5. According to Whitehead (2009) the method of self study is contained in action research which is often the outcome of self study. Once the problem is identified it is addressed. This is where action research methodology comes into play.

The basic action principle underpinning action research (and self-study) requires the researcher to identify the problem, looking for a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it so that the end result is an improved practice (McNiff 2002). This is similar to the basic problem solving principle advocated by Dale Carnegie (1984) in *How to stop worrying and start living*. I recollect reading the book during my early years of teaching when I was plagued with the many challenges referred to in chapter one of this thesis. The approach involved introspecting as a tool to identify the problem, then ask “what is the worst thing that can happen?” preparing myself for the worst, and then trying out a set of possible solutions to resolve the conflict. In retrospect, I realise that I applied this reasoning to the challenges I faced as an additional language teacher.

The problem solving approach in action research differs in that being a formal study; it requires evidence in the form of data (McNiff 2002).

The distinction between informal and formal action research requires mention. Informal action research takes place regularly in the workplace, particularly when trainees undergo close supervision. This is informal action research. Formal action research requires greater transparency and a collection of before and after data upon which the research evidence is based (McNiff 2002).

The process of writing the *Maye babo!* series was somewhat autonomous. While it was governed by the structure provided in the NCS, and drew on my experience; it did not involve significant collaboration with others, nor did it include data collection of the sort described by McNiff. This research however involves collaboration with others as echoed in the ZEST meetings, which in a subtle way evaluates and provides feedback on the *Maye babo!* series. Self evaluation and feedback from others proved useful when the series was rewritten in 2011 to accommodate curriculum changes.

As mentioned earlier I had no knowledge that these methods of research existed during the time that I was working on my own research. To say that my work in designing the *Maye babo!* series is “pure” action research would be incorrect as it would fit the scenario of “The cart before the horse”, which in reality is false. The birth of my work did not commence as pure research, yet its birth was as a result of personal values that underpinned my practice (a significant starting point in action research/ self study). The action research ideology triggered it without a conscious awareness on my part:

Action research is open ended. It does not begin with a fixed hypothesis. It begins with an idea that you develop. The research process is the developmental process of following through the idea, [*this is in sync with what happened with my research- I did not begin with a hypothesis, but rather an idea*] seeing how it goes, and continually checking whether it is in line with what you wish to happen (McNiff 2002:4).

Whilst I tested the new learning programme on my learners, and amended it as I saw fit, it was done intuitively, and because this was the way in which I function. I have a natural tendency to introspect and self evaluate. My actions were not motivated as a study using action research methods.

Since the intent of my work on the *Maye babo!* series was not from a research perspective (in the traditional sense of the word); it lacks the documented evidence called for. I do not have the before and after samples of my learners work that I would naturally have collected had I approached my work as an empirical study. I have not kept the raw stages of the learning programmes I developed to demonstrate how I developed them further to make

them workable for me. What I do have evidence of, is the resource in the form of a series of textbooks.

The process of self reflection involves looking into my past and understanding the values which underpin my actions. It was the feeling of not being honest with my “self” that troubled me most about my teaching. I was not being accountable in my teaching and I realized that improvements needed to be made if I was to get rid of the torment caused by the inner conflict I experienced. It is the “self” that we are accountable to, and the self that we can never deny, so when my teaching was incongruent to what my “self” demanded, my soul was at war with the mind.

### ***The relationship between self reflection, self study and action research***

Loughran et al (2004) clarifies the differences between self study and self reflection very clearly:

Self study builds on reflection as the study begins to reshape not just the nature of the reflective processes, but also the situation in which these processes are occurring...reflection is a personal process... Self study takes these processes and makes them public, thus leading to another set of processes that need to reside outside the individual. (2004:25)

Self study, reflection and action research contain the “problem” that initiates the research. Whilst reflection resides within the individual, self study makes the “problem” public, and action research provides the methodology to address the “problem” from a research perspective. Figure 3.1 illustrates the relationship between self reflection, self study and action research.

When my “problems” were in my mind, I was practicing reflection, which is the first step of self study and action research. When the “problems” became public, they evolved into a self study and in addressing the problems, I produced research in action. It must be remembered that I was *summoned into action*. I did not plan to undertake formal research therefore I would be reluctant to refer to my work as action research. Self reflection and

self study were mental activities stemming from who I am; this forms the theoretical aspect of my research.

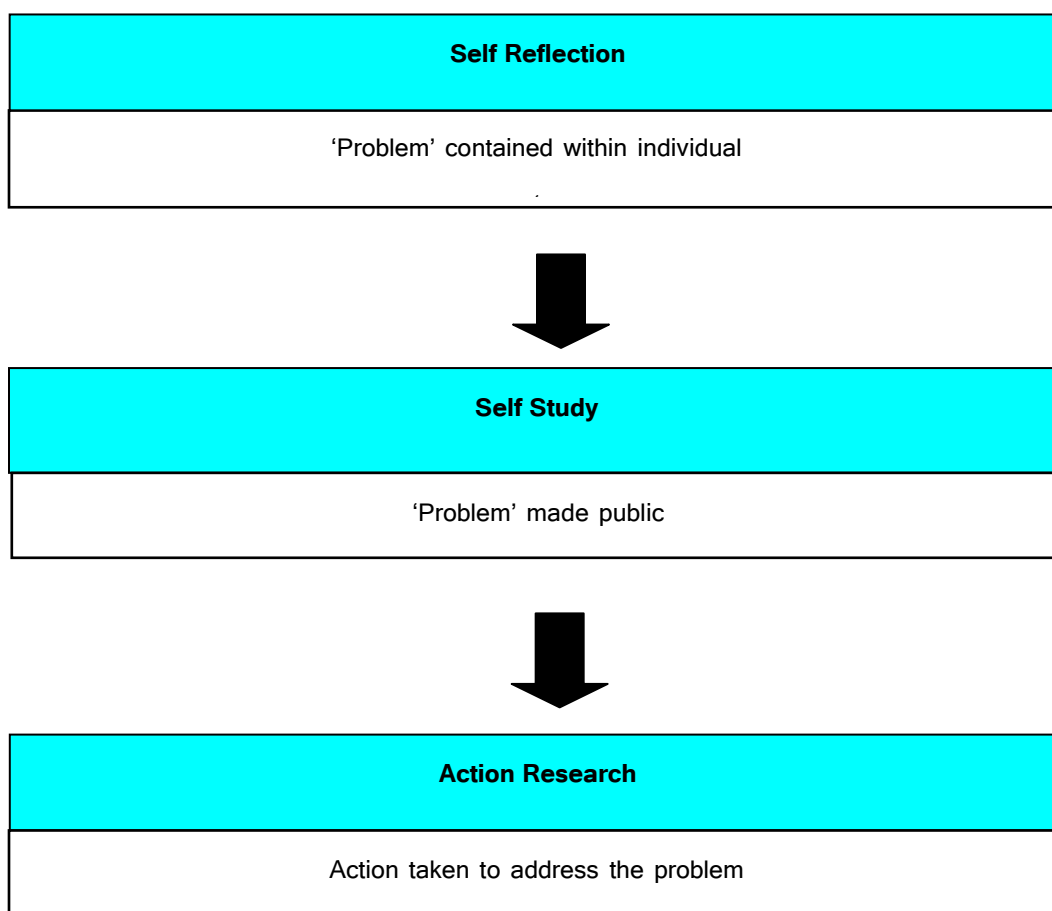


Figure 3.1 The relationship between self reflection, self study and action research

### ***Similarities between Action Research and Self Study***

The studies of works by McNiff (2002), Lomax (1986) and Whitehead (2009) have led to the following assumptions about the similarities between action research and self study:

- Both are practitioner based where the researcher is inside the situation and questions his or her practice
- Both focus on learning from the “problem” at hand and contribute to educational improvement
- Both are responsive to social situations where the practitioner makes an observation and takes action

- Both require higher order reasoning which stems from not accepting things at face value and being critical
- Both emphasize the value base of practice – the research often stems from “living contradictions” of personal values
- Both require stating the context
- Both encourage collaboration with stakeholders in the field of study
- Practitioner self confidence is a crucial element in both because the researcher experiences a sense of vulnerability when the source of personal conflict is made public.

## **Maintaining reliability and validity in qualitative studies**

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:105) define validity as follows:

Validity is concerned with the extent to which descriptions of events accurately capture these events, for example, the extent to which the material being collected by the researcher presents a true and accurate picture of what it is claimed is being described.

This study has researched the processes of teaching and learning at classroom level. It looks at the dynamics of policy implementation within the South African education system and shows how the NCS policy can be applied to create a curriculum for isiZulu teaching through the application of my own educational values as I have integrated them into my work, the compilation of the Maye babo series. Mental dialogue and reference to personal diaries, notes, story boards, mind maps and minutes of meetings are some of the data I used to bring to life the tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983) and knowing-in-action (Schön 1991, 1995) which I have relied on in the compilation of the Maye babo! series. This is described in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990:7) suggest that each enquiry must find the most appropriate form of validation.

We think a variety of criteria, some appropriate to some circumstances and some to others, will eventually be the agreed-upon norm. It is currently the case that each inquirer must search for, and defend, the criteria that best applies to his or her work.

In the conclusion of this study (pg 263) I discuss five criteria used by Ellis (2004:253-254) and Richardson (2000:254) to assess the validity of this study, namely: substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, intellectual and emotional impact, and the extent to which the text expresses a reality.

The type of validation used was chosen to fit the purpose of this study, which is not to proclaim a theory, but rather to give an account of how I developed a curriculum for teaching isiZulu as a teacher in a South African education setting during a period of massive transformation. Oleson (2005:263), citing Deborah Lupton, states:

The point is not to seek a certain ‘truth’, but to uncover varieties of truth that operate, to highlight the nature of truth as transitory and political and the position of subjects as fragmentary and contradictory (1995:160-161).

Ellis (2004:124) emphasises the impact that research has on the researcher, reader and research participants in her interpretation of validity.

In autoethnographic work, I look at validity in terms of what happens to readers as well as to research participants and researchers. To me, validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible. You also can judge validity by whether it helps readers communicate with others different from themselves or offers a way to improve the lives of participants and readers – or even your own.

I believe that this research has the potential to encourage teachers to self reflect on their teaching practices and in so doing, offers further value to teaching and learning. It has given me the confidence to value the insight I have gained through my classroom experience and has the potential to improve the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language.

## Conclusion

Self study and autoethnography are authentic ways in which I can shed light on my personal and professional dilemmas and in this way I hope to contribute in the field of teacher development. Through personal experience, I have felt the negative impact of misdirected troubleshooting by outsiders who misconstrue the realities that teachers are faced with daily, and misdiagnose solutions. This is the root evil of the problems in the South African Education System. Teachers at grass-root level are not allowed sufficient input on designing curriculum policies, yet they are the ones who understand firsthand what works, and what doesn't. This work gives insight into the complexities of cascading curriculum content and will be of interest to teachers, academics and curriculum planners.

At a recent Mathematics workshop I attended, we were told that National Assessments will be written in October. I attempted to explain to the facilitator that this would be problematic because most teachers would not have covered all the work done. I received an indifferent response – “I don't set the date.” I tried to explain that there needed to be a two way communication between the powers that make these decisions - *them*, and teachers – *us*. Through the prolonged argument that followed I got the feeling that I was categorized as complainer.

Studies such as the one I undertake might go some way towards rectifying this crisis. It is hoped that the Department of Education will view such studies with seriousness as a step towards addressing the real needs for an overall improvement of education in South Africa because evidently, from the number of times the curriculum has been revised, a long road lies ahead.

## Chapter 4: Background

### About this chapter

This chapter explains the context of my practice in which this research is based. It outlines the concerns I had in my practice by detailing some of the predominant factors affecting the quality of the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language in primary schools in an effort to address some of the challenges faced by educators teaching isiZulu in a multi-cultural society. It also traces my values, the intent of this self reflection being to provide an understanding of myself and what drives my work – an autobiographical context. There are two threads that dominate my concerns as an educator, one being the general challenges faced by teachers during the period of transformation, when schools became racially integrated; and the other being the challenges specific to the teaching of isiZulu as additional language to mixed ability groups. Traces of these threads run concurrently throughout this thesis.

### The context of my practice

#### *Climate, time and place*

It is important to understand the context of my practice which presented several complexities due to the historical changes occurring in South Africa. I entered the teaching profession in 1986, at a state school in Durban. The context of this research originates in the year 1996 at a state school which was also in Durban. It was a time when transformation in education was at its peak. The “build up” to the first democratic elections (which took place in 1994) had begun. The eradication of the Group Areas Act and ultimately apartheid itself spelt massive changes for the entire country. Segregated schools became integrated within a short period of time and several educators were perplexed about how to deal with racially integrated classrooms<sup>38</sup>. Teachers were faced with a shockwave of changes, with absolutely no warning or preparation on how to deal with them.

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<sup>38</sup> These concerns are described in greater detail in Chapter 5.



The effects that desegregation had on teachers<sup>39</sup>, learners and the prevalent ethos of schooling is pertinent to my story. It was a time when teachers were prescribed on what and how to teach. The role of teacher was restricted to the confines of the classroom and school authorities adopted stringent measures to ensure that all policies were effectively implemented. There was no room for any deviation and this discouraged self sufficiency. In our passiveness, we were groomed to be obedient and respect authority.

The year 1998 saw the introduction of a new curriculum, designed particularly to address the imbalances of the apartheid era. The new curriculum invited teachers to create their own learning programmes, to suit their context, and learners to be active participants in their education. The theory underpinning the new curriculum is discussed in Part 2 of this work.

### ***Autobiographical context***

This thesis describes a contradiction between my values and my practice. The educational and personal values I adopt guide my choices in my practice. It is therefore important to contextualise them and to locate their origin.

In my practice as educator, I value:

Making a difference to my learner's holistic education

Being accountable for my teaching

Good organisational skills

Being the best I can

Caring and sharing

Social justice, fair-play and democracy

Mutual respect and tolerance

Good work ethic

Good time management

Serving as a good role model

One of the primary purposes of education is to provide an environment where teaching and learning takes place. Part of the learning experience involves an anticipation of the

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<sup>39</sup> The slogans used on the invitation in appendix 1 are newspaper headlines.

responsibilities of adulthood the success of which is mainly dependent on the rules and beliefs one chooses to adopt. The inclusion of a study of values in this research has two significances:

1. The understanding of one's values is a criterion for action research, self study and autoethnography.
2. A values based education is the core of my practice.

### **The significance of values in relation to my research methodology**

According to McNiff (2002:13), action research is a research method that “helps us to identify the values that are important for our lives and to live in the direction of those values, that is, take them as the organising principles of our lives”. The beliefs that the researcher values, says McNiff become the criteria for action research projects.

In the process of clarifying the meanings of your embodied values, as they emerge in practice, you transform your values into your criteria (or standards). You can share these living standards with others, and use them to test the validity of your claims to have influenced the learning of others in an educational way. They are “living” because they can change during your enquiry (2002:17).

McNiff (2002) is of the firm opinion that our values dictate the way in which we lead our lives as well as the choices that we make:

Action research begins with values. As a self reflective practitioner you need to be aware of what drives your life and work, so you can be clear about what you are doing and why you are doing it. You might need to spend time clarifying for yourself the kinds of values and commitments you hold. This would be a firm starting point for your action enquiry (2002:11).

When we believe in something, but do not live in a way that supports our beliefs, our actions are contrary to our beliefs. Jack Whitehead calls this “living contradictions”. Action research begins with finding a way to overcome the contradiction between our values and our actions.

The evidence is flowing through web-space in the living theories of individuals who have explained their educational influences in their own learning and in the learning of others. The evidence shows how the values individuals use to give meaning and purpose to their lives can be transformed into living standards of judgement (Whitehead 2005:3).

My practice was in contradiction with the emphasis I placed on accountability, social justice, equality, fair play and making a difference in my learners. My teaching plan: teaching strategies and goals did not accomplish the level of progress I desired. I did not feel confident that my teaching programme met the level of expectation and progress I desired for my learners. I cannot say what was expected of me as an isiZulu teacher as no guidance was provided for isiZulu additional language prior to the introduction of Curriculum 2005. The fact that the education of the Black learners I taught was being marginalized because their need to develop greater fluency in English was not being met, was in contradiction to my belief in equal opportunities for all my learners.

This thesis has reminded me that these values were established in my past. My values were formed as a result of who I am. Who I am cannot be separated from where I come from, my past, the influence of my family in my upbringing, my interactions, and the environment I grew up in, as well as the circumstances, experiences and the opportunities that crossed my path. This thesis seeks to address the interconnections between my values and my “self”, and the significant role that my values played and continue to play in my role as an educator.

Ellis (2003: xix) describes autoethnography as “...research, writing, story and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political.” The following memoirs give an understanding of who I am and how I became.

### **A journey down memory lane to clarify my values**

Teaching is part of who I am. Understanding teaching is my work.... Knowing myself as a person is very much part of knowing myself as professional. The better I understand myself as a teacher and teacher educator, the better I understand myself as a person and vice versa... My whole practice as teacher, professor, and teacher educator is integrally connected with who I am as a person (Cole and Knowles 1995:131)

In order to clarify my values, I undertook an enlightening and treasured trip into my past. I started my journey as far back in my history as I could recall, because I wanted to capture and acknowledge the imprint of all the people and circumstances that led to my development. The Chinese Proverb quoted by John Kehoe (2002b:177) states: “A child’s life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression.”

I would like to extend the above quote as follows: “A child’s life is like a piece of paper on which everyone **and everything that** passes by leaves **a lasting** impression.”



Photograph 6 *Metaphor of the train*

This is my story. It is a story that contains many tales of an analytic thinker whose train travels into her past stopping at the different stations en route. As the train meanders through her life’s journey, trotting uphill, then quickly rolling downhill, stopping to off-load passengers and collecting new ones, it sheds light on her trials and tribulations, her thrills, fears, disappointments and celebrations. The journey enriches character development strongly influenced by the passengers she meets, as well as the circumstances which affect the mood on each station platform. The role that each passenger plays and the impact of the climate on each platform are validated through this reflection. In unison the tales combine to reveal how she came to be; they construct her identity.

The following account is written with the focus on tracing my values, and where applicable how they influenced my journey through life. I contemplated for a long time on how I would organize this section. At first, I thought I would look at the different epochs of my life discussing the values I developed, but soon found that the focus seemed to lie in their compartmentalization. I then decided to group my values according to the sources that influenced them:

- Values inculcated by my family
- Traces of values in my education and profession

This mission also proved difficult as the topics intertwine and move back and forth through my time-line. I apologise in advance for the uncomfortable motion, nevertheless I have chosen to pursue this route, my explanation for using it being that this plan was the best route to keep the focus and clarity on my values. In essence what I have done, is revisited my past life so that it in retrospect affords meaning to the life I lead. In so doing, I hope to unravel the wholeness of life which became blatantly visible to me in the writing of the autobiography that follows. In writing this story, I attempt to understand how and why I as a language educator have evolved based on the values I hold in my personal and professional life. Table 4.1 shows “Sumi’s timeline” – key episodes in my life story, which I shall discuss in more detail below.

Table 4.1 Sumi’s timeline

1962	Born in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Lived in extended family situation.
1967	Attended pre-school.
1968-1972	Schooled at M.A. Motala Primary School in Durban, Grades 1-5.
1973	Surat Hindu Primary School-Grade 6 in Durban.
1974	Extended family moved to Reservoir Hills. Grade 7 Resmount Primary School.
1975-1979	Studied at Reservoir Hills Secondary, Grades 8-12. Frog, cake and rat vignettes.
1980	Student at University of Durban Westville (UDW) now UKZN. B.A. degree.
1983	Part time student at UDW. Locum teaching at V.N. Naik School for the Deaf.

1984	Part time student at UDW. Completed degree. Teller at Barclays Bank.
1985	Married in February. Full time student at UDW - University Higher Diploma in Education.
1986	First full time post as teacher at a school in Overport under the supervision of the House of Delegates (HOD). Registered for Honours Degree in isiZulu. Manish my son was born.
1989	My daughter Nishkal was born. Registered for Master of Arts Degree (MA) in isiZulu.
1991	Completed M.A. My daughter Sonal was born.
1992	Transferred to school in Newlands West-HOD.
1993	Transferred to school in Sea Cow Lake. Taught in multi-cultural classrooms. Began to invent own strategies to cope e.g. multi lingualism- code switching.
1999	Multi-Cultural Education Workshops offered to teachers. Woza Funda Series published.
2000	Promoted to Head of Department-School in Berea-well resourced school.
2001	Holiday in Canada.
2002-2005	Attended several courses-NAPTOSA (APEK).
2003	Grade 7 of the <i>Maye babo!</i> series published.
2007	Grade 2 and 3 of the <i>Maye babo!</i> series published.
2008	Grade 4-6 of the <i>Maye babo!</i> series published.
2009	Registered for Doctoral Degree-Durban University of Technology.
2010	CAPS workshops at school level. Doctoral candidate. Submitted first draft of thesis.
2011	Grade 1 of the <i>Maye babo!</i> books written for pupils and edited. Grade 2-7 <i>Maye babo!</i> series rewritten to align with CAPS. 30 readers written in dual language (English and Zulu): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 x Grade 1</li> <li>• 10x Grade 2</li> <li>• 10x Grade 3</li> </ul> Review of draft copy of doctoral thesis. Travelled to India in March.

## Values inculcated by my family

“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty” (Winston Churchill in Kehoe 2002b:120).



Photograph 7 *A family get together at our home in 1994*

I grew up within an extended family situation living a fairly modest lifestyle (which I believe developed humility and contentment) with little if any pampering (developing strength of character). Hard work, respect for others, the importance of caring and sharing, integrity as well as being responsible and accountable for my actions were some of the values that were deeply entrenched by my family. Taking responsibility for the household chores as well as assisting at the local ashram printing press (community service) were activities that played a significant part in our daily lives. It was during this time that I developed the time management skills which serve me well in my profession. Bapuji, the vernacular term I used to call my dad often reminded “procrastination is the thief of time”, and “do it now”.



Photograph 8     *Picture of my younger sister, Renuka, and I working at the Sivananda Printing Press in the ashram. My dad is on the far right.*

“The values, beliefs and habits you instil in your child now will become the foundation they’ll use forever” (Sylvia Bak in Kehoe 2002b:111).

This journey into my past has helped me to analyse the values that were instilled in me as a child and substantiate the choices I make both as an educator and mother.

How we utilise our time is an important indicator of what we value in life. I discovered at a time management seminar I attended that my problem was that I had become a freak at utilising my time constructively. I attended the course offered by the teacher union I belong to (Naptosa)<sup>40</sup> in the hope that I could shed the “late Sumi” reputation I had developed for my lack of being punctual at family events.

Much to my dismay the course catered for the opposite category, those that could not use their time productively. I recall thanking the course conductor at the end of the course

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<sup>40</sup> Appendix 5



stating that while the course was well designed, my personal needs were not met. The penny dropped in the discussion that followed. I was trying to do too much within a limited period of time – my early experiences had taught me the value of time to the point that utilising it wisely had become an obsession. Whilst this had earned me the “notorious” title I despised, it had also allowed me to make headway in my studies whilst following a career and starting a family of my own.

Sharma (2004:159) cites Sir Isaac Pitman on time-management: “Well arranged time is the surest mark of a well arranged mind.”

Sharma continues stating that “time slips through our hands like grains of sand; never to return ... Those who use time wisely from an early age are rewarded with rich, productive and satisfying lives.” As a class teacher of grade four learners I find myself constantly nagging my learners about using their time wisely and fruitfully. I am fortunate in that most of my learners buy readily into the advice I provide so they willingly work efficiently so that they can do more maths problems within a given time as they are convinced that the more maths problems they solve the better it will get “stuck in their heads”.

The present *wire* generation children that I teach would certainly not have coped with what was achieved by us in a day. Children today spend far too many hours watching television or playing computer games and often neglect to prioritise time for activities such as homework and hobbies. Family interaction is diminishing with both parents and children spending much time chit- chatting on mixit, facebook and other internet sites. I was shocked to discover whilst watching my favourite talk show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, that a family in America sms each other to communicate in their home. Oprah discloses the challenges the family members are confronted with when television and cellphones are removed from their lives. They suddenly had more time for each other and interacted on a level that was deeper and more meaningful for all the family members.

Religion and the traditional values which stemmed from my culture also played a key role in our lives. As a family we practised vegetarianism.

I remember trying to please my family and my teachers and finding it difficult. At the age of about thirteen (the typical teenage rebellion stage) I was given an assignment by my Domestic Science teacher to bake a birthday cake for a toddler. My previous experience with baking, both at school and at the homes of my friends taught me that eggs were the vital ingredient when baking a sponge cake. I “smuggled” the eggs which were taboo in our home in an effort to obtain a good mark for my practical task. I recall being severely admonished by my aunt (whose intentions were pure) as I had defied our tradition. The guilt and confusion of who to please left me in tears as I gazed at the cake in the oven. This in essence was after all a case of one’s belief in what came first: the chicken or the egg? During the period of transformation in education many of my isiZulu learners experienced similar frustrations which stemmed from differences in cultural beliefs and practices. I now understand why the opening story in this thesis resonated so powerfully with me. I had the advantage of having a similar experience, and the further advantage of having knowledge of isiZulu cultural practices. I therefore understood why Sipho did not make eye contact with Jenna, and I also understood why the lack of eye contact was misconstrued by Jenna – in essence it was a case of what this action meant for each of them.

Another example of the contradiction of values between school and home was the ordeal I suffered to please my Biology teacher who had commissioned the class to bring a skeleton of an animal. I recall boiling a frog in an empty can of beans on the primus stove outside the house. Being inexperienced in this field (we were vegetarians and I had never witnessed the process of cooking meat) I overcooked the frog and the bones broke. I was devastated as I had broken tradition and my own beliefs which were entrenched in my upbringing.

Killing and boiling the frog was a task enforced on me by my teacher. I wanted to do well at school; the task was “for marks” and I stemmed from a generation of learners who would move the earth to please the teacher. My value for education, and respect for the teacher superseded the traditional beliefs imposed on me with regard to the killing of animals. What annoyed me the most was that after all the mental conflict I endured, the death of the frog was to no avail. Fortunately for me, a family friend whose mum had a stall at the

market came to the rescue. Restructuring of the market and partial demolition had lead to the discovery of my treasure - the skeleton of a rat which I was overjoyed to possess.

Today, as a teacher, I am mindful of these experiences and guarded when setting projects for my learners. I am grateful that the National Curriculum Statement encourages teachers to take cognisance of cultural diversity when planning a learning programme. It has encouraged me to see diversity as a resource<sup>41</sup> which can extend learning and foster greater understanding amongst learners of different cultural backgrounds and race groups. Such understanding is vital for harmonious relationships to survive in a multi-cultural society.

Our daily routine was well outlined and at no point was there any doubt as to what was expected of us. Adult supervision was ever present. Our family started the day united in prayer. We met in the prayer room at 5:00 am every morning where we sang bhajans (religious songs) and recited the sacred mantras and religious verses. My older sister and I took turns to play the harmonium (a musical instrument with a keyboard). After the prayer we were responsible for cleaning and neatening the bedroom we shared and getting ready for school. Home cooked oats was often the porridge served and my mum made the packed lunch we took to school. The strong bond and interaction I feel so fortunate to have had as a child is rapidly fading in today's society. I was recently shocked to discover that family members SMS each other at home and that family dinners are an occurrence reserved for special occasions. I felt a sense of sadness when I discovered that some ten year olds did not know their parents occupation or place of employment. The scarce interaction between children and their parents is rapidly contributing to the moral degradation in society. Children arrive at school knowing less about basic manners, and how to handle conflict because they are being deprived of the learning opportunities that can be provided through interaction in the safe and secure home environment through close personal supervision.

The close supervision and structured daily activities during my childhood gave me security and encouraged me to value how I utilise time. This reflection has reminded me about the depth of care and nurturing I received as a child. In my practice as educator in a primary

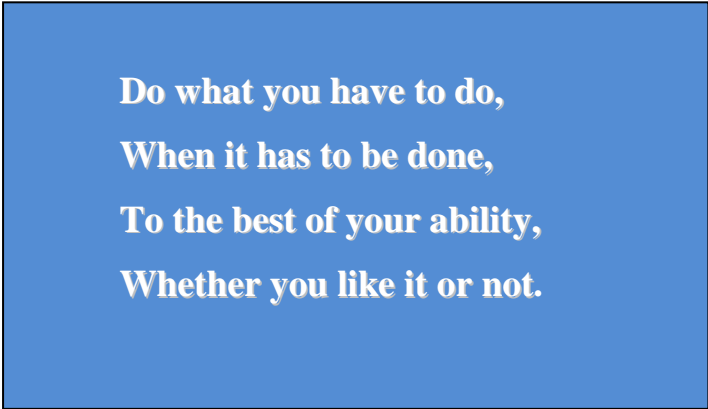
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<sup>41</sup> See Pillay:1999 and appendix 2 and 13

school, I find it sad that many parents do not invest in their children's education. Parents that work often find it challenging to supervise homework or sign homework books. Many parents today do not guide their children by structuring their activities after school hours. It is not uncommon for children to return from school to unsupervised homes where a carer or domestic worker is tasked with ensuring their safety.

Ensuring a well structured programme for my learners is a dominant aspect of my teaching practice. I learnt firsthand from my own upbringing about the power of close supervision of the youth and feel inwardly compelled to model it in my practice.

The Golden Rule in my classroom is simple. It reads:



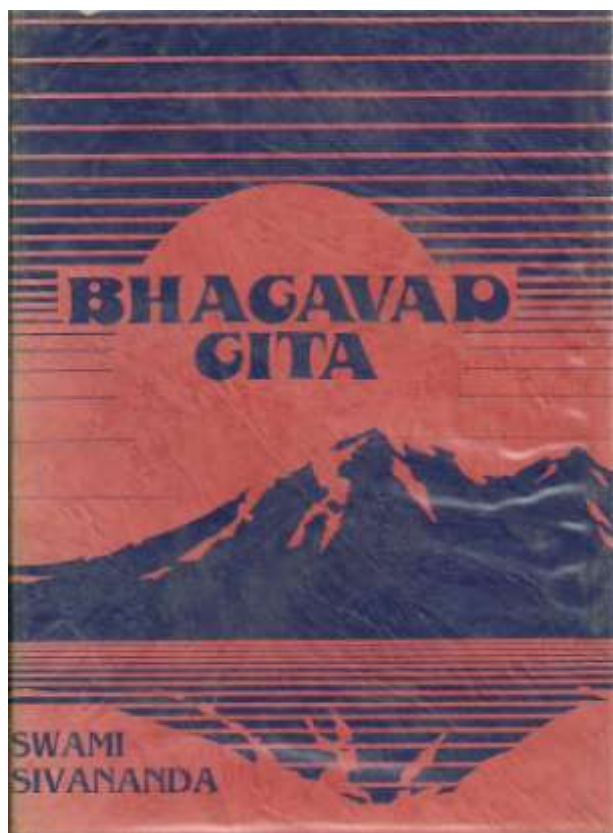
**Do what you have to do,  
When it has to be done,  
To the best of your ability,  
Whether you like it or not.**

Photograph 9 The *Golden Rule*

Classroom discipline I find is incredibly easy to manage when the boundaries are clear to the learners. Whenever a learner is in "trouble" I ask her: "What should you be doing now?" the anticipated reply from the learner is a description of the task at hand. My next question is: "When do you have to do it?" To which she is sure to reply: "Now." I then ask: "How must it be done?", and the reply is: "to the best of my ability. Finally I ask: "Are we interested in whether you like it or not?", and the response is: "No." I have used this basic rule to maintain order and discipline in my class for over two decades, as it has never failed me. It might sound regimentary in its approach, however I believe that I cannot achieve what I am contracted to achieve without a well disciplined class of learners. My approach

helps me and my learners to function in an environment that is calm (not necessarily quiet, because there is often constructive engagement amongst the learners and between the learners and myself) and conducive to learning. I am sometimes perplexed as to why teachers have to resort to yelling in order to maintain discipline.

I have offered this basic rule to the teachers I mentor and, like them, I am delighted with the positive feedback received.



Photograph 10 *A copy of the Bhagavad Gita given to my husband and me as a wedding gift, by Sri Swami Sahajananda<sup>42</sup>*

Spirituality played a dominant role in our family life. Our day began at 5.00 am with a family prayer service. The greater part of each Sunday was also dedicated to the local ashram. Prior to the move to the new family home whose occupation today has diminished

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<sup>42</sup> The inscription inside is shown in Appendix 16

to mom and aunt, we lived closer to the city. A place of worship for Hindus was nonexistent within walking distance of our rented home thus my elders encouraged us to join a group of Christian missionaries at Sunday school. The unorthodox understanding of God and religion created a respect and acknowledgement for people of different faiths. I was taught that God has many names and forms, and that all religions are similar in their preachings. I learnt respect and tolerance for religious and cultural differences at an early age. On Saturdays we went to the Ramakrishna Ashram and learnt the epic stories of Lord Rama and his disciple Hanuman in the Ramayan, of Lord Krishna and his disciple Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita (I have named two of the important Hindu scriptures). On Sundays, I recall joining a procession of children walking down the street; ringing a bell while chanting songs such as “when you’re happy and you know it clap your hands...” The Sunday school venue was the steps leading to the entrance of the local high school. Whilst this choice of venue sounds unpretentious it was in contrast to the outstanding moral education provided by the dedicated missionaries of Christianity.

The move to the new home in Reservoir Hills brought about a change in Sunday school. We attended the ashram called The Divine Life Society, and as we grew older our role at the school changed from pupil and passive participant to an operational one. Our duties involved cleaning and arranging the massive prayer hall, playing a leading role in the Sunday school programme which consisted mainly of singing, discourse and discussion, and tidying the hall as well as swamiji’s (priest’s) kutir (residence), a task envied by the young and old as it was considered a privilege. I am ever grateful to Bapuji (my dad) for his insistence on the love for God. I recall the many hours he and my mum spent teaching us recitations of religious songs as well as the Hanuman Chalisa (a verse paying tribute to Lord Hanuman) which I in turn have taught my children. How proud my parents were when we had memorised the long verse at the tender age of about ten. (This same prayer was recited by our family in unison when my dad was on his death bed).

I recollect a conversation that my dad and I had about six months prior to his death. I was married at the time but went to live with my parents so that they could support me during my confinement. I had given birth to our second child a few days prior to this

conversation. Bapuji returned home late one evening from the ashram where he devoted all his leisure time. His passion and commitment to the work he did at the ashram was an excellent exemplar for me and my siblings. I try to emulate this passion in my role as educator and derive abundant joy and job satisfaction.

I offered Bapuji a snack and while he partook of this, we engaged in conversation. That conversation little did I realise then, is the most cherished one that I ever had with him. It offered me great consolation during my grieving after his death. It was during this conversation that I first reflected on my upbringing, our introduction to the ashram and the seva (service) we gave to our beloved Gurudev (master). I thanked my dad for his guidance and the emphasis he placed on being spiritual. His faith was so strong that he trusted in the divine master. He would often advise in the midst of a calamity “leave it to Gurudev, he knows what is best”, as well as “whatever happens, happens for the better.” On page eight of a letter dated 04/08/1992<sup>43</sup>, written to my sister, Renuka who was living in Virginia (USA) at the time, I wrote:

*Bapuji's death has given me a new outlook to life, its meaning, purpose and goal. We should remind ourselves of these things if we want to lead a more meaningful life and if we wish to obtain inner peace. We hold the key to this inner peace. Most of us have the key but don't use it. Perhaps it's time we do.*

“The greatest gifts my parents gave me...were their unconditional love and a set of values. Values that they lived by didn't just lecture about” (Colin Powell in Kehoe 2002b:31). Bapuji's words continue to be my guiding force and I gained much strength from my spirituality during some of the darkest hours in my profession. Bapuji taught me to believe that God listened when spoken to with sincerity. (An incident that describes this more fully is narrated in this thesis). The conversation with Bapuji was an emotional dialogue, not

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<sup>43</sup> Copy of extract on page 8 in appendix 14

only for me, but also for him. I recall the gratification he expressed (with tears in his eyes), for sharing my thoughts with him, stating that he had often wondered whether he was too imposing on us - his children. Is this one of the reasons that I value gratitude and acknowledgement?

The importance of acknowledgement continues to be modelled by me and adds great value in my practice. As a manager, I am aware of the motivating power of acknowledging the contributions of those I lead.

Rules in our household were sometimes regimental, but in retrospect it was the order of the day in most families at that time, and it instilled a level of discipline that is fading rapidly in today's society. I remember the chores that were expected of me, such as washing the clothes by hand in the morning before I left for university while my mum prepared the breakfast and packed the mid morning sandwiches for the family. Upon returning home, there was a hot lunch awaiting us, prepared by my mum, aunts and granny. Team spirit was perfectly exemplified by the senior members of our household thus one felt "in sync" to follow likewise.

One of the things that I place enormous significance on in my practice as an educator and school manager is being a good role model. A reminder on the door of my classroom cupboard reads: *what you do shouts louder than what you say*. Is it the opportunity I had of observing good role models and the positive implications it had for me that motivates the importance I place on this value?

The latter part of the afternoon on a week day was spent doing homework, gardening or assisting with chores in the kitchen in preparation for the family dinner. Roti (Indian bread) was served and made daily. It was often my task to take the piping hot roti to the men who ate dinner at the first seating (with the extended family consisting of fourteen, dinner was served in shifts). Men were seen as the superior sex in my culture, and it was imperative that their dietary needs were met with enthusiasm. My care givers and advisers were my parents as well as my uncles, aunts and grandparents. We *belonged* to all of them



and loved and respected them equally. There was a strong presence of inter-dependence amongst the members of my family (a sense of *ubuntu*) as opposed to the stronger prevalence of “each for their own selves” which we see in most families today.

I recall how alarmed and confused I felt when I encountered educators in my field that were reluctant to share their knowledge, ideas, worksheets, etc with their less experienced counterparts that may have benefited from such an exchange. This was utterly out of sync with the caring and supportive approach inculcated by my family.

In financial matters also, there was sharing of a kind that is almost unheard of today. This was not peculiar to my family; it was the norm in most Indian homes. My eldest uncle who I called Adha (he is now a swami) demonstrated such selflessness. He bore the bulk of the financial burden of the household and supported his younger siblings. We lived together in a huge double storey home with a granny cottage. Whilst this might sound luxurious and upmarket, it was quite the contrary. It must be clarified that fourteen of us shared the home when we first moved in. As my younger uncles gained independence and married they moved to a place of their own.

We lived a simple lifestyle that was based predominantly on satisfying our basic needs, as my dad’s family came from very humble beginnings. Through their hardships they had learnt to be thrifty and the term “*waste not, want not*” echoed in the running of our household. This characteristic reveals itself in my ability to manage school resources effectively. Our spending was priority driven, and we quickly learnt to be satisfied with basics, (food and clothing included). Anything additional such as a coke or doughnut from the school tuck shop had to be earned, even if it meant using the bus fare and paying the penalty of walking a distance of five kilometres to get home.

The norm with clothing was to inherit the outsized articles from older siblings and richer relatives. Desired clothing was obtained by earning a salary at the age of sixteen. I worked as a packer and later as a cashier at a supermarket. Self reliance and improvising were skills that were learnt firsthand through concrete experiences building the financial and

overall independence with which I lead my personal and working life. In the eyes of a young child, my story appeared to be one of victim. In contrast my mature side sees it as one of victor. Being forced to earn my own pocket money has made me financially sensible. Without having had this experience, I do not think I would be as thrifty and cautious with money matters that pertain to my personal affairs and in my role as school manager.

Our family did not hire help for the household chores instead they were shared by the young and old in the family. My grandmother, who I called Ba, was extremely hardworking, wise, loving, and intelligent; and showed great courage in the face of the many adversities she faced<sup>44</sup>. I remember how supportive she was particularly when I was studying for an examination. Ba would inquire what time I would like to awake. Ba was an early riser. She would arrive faithfully the next morning at the requested time with a cup of coffee to refresh me. She often sat a while making conversation and when she was sure that I would take my place at my desk, she would leave to prepare my breakfast. I could ask Ba to make my favourite dish at the most unearthly hour and she would be ever obliging. Ba loved cooking and being of service to her family. She shared Bapuji's passion for serving the ashram where everybody, including swamiji (the priest) called her Ba (mother).

Our family had its strength in that there was much caring and sharing. Everybody had a role to play and more often than not we were diligent about it. I have become so accustomed to the idea of sharing that I do this subconsciously in my practice as a teacher and mentor. I was surprised when a student teacher I mentored was taken aback by my generosity. "You give your notes so readily", I recall her saying. My expectation that responsibilities at school are shared amongst educators teaching in the same grade can sometimes cause me great frustration, particularly when time frames are not adhered.

If I appear to present a perfect picture about my early years then I have misled you. Some of the tensions we suffered were due to my grandfather's illness. I am not sure of the exact

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<sup>44</sup> See tribute I gave at Ba's funeral in Appendix 17

nature of his illness, though I do recall my uncles seeking the help of a psychiatrist. I remember the pain my siblings and I felt more out of sympathy for him. There were times when he had to be institutionalised in a mental hospital to prevent him from doing harm to himself or the family. It was difficult to hold back the tears when we visited him. Still there were the many happy memories of outings he took us on, to feed the fish at what is now named Wilson's Wharf as well as to Burman Drive to feed the monkeys which inculcated a love and concern for animals. Through my grandfather's illness we learnt tolerance and endurance. Did this experience influence my choice of Psychology as a major?

My dad had a physical disability which was caused by a stroke during his teenage years. The stroke paralysed his right arm and leg. He was able to walk and use his arm but this had major limitations. I often wondered about my mum's feelings with regard to marrying a disabled man. I later learnt that prior to my dad's stroke; nana, (my maternal great grandfather) had agreed to offer my mom's hand in marriage. When my dada (paternal great grandfather) asked nana if he had a change of heart after my dad's stroke, nana stated that he had given his word and he would stand by it. He stated that it was my mom's naseeb (fate) to be in this predicament with my dad. Fate played and continues to play a dominant role amongst Hindus who believe that much of what happens to us is due to our karma (actions) be it in this life or the previous ones<sup>45</sup>.

My dad was the epitome of optimism. To some extent he rejoiced in his disability stating that had the stroke not occurred, he would be like most other worldly people chasing material objects instead of being of service to the Lord. In my maturity I realize that Bapuji understood the importance of a good well-being, as opposed to being well-off. He often said that everything happened for a reason and that we should embrace what life offers without lament or regret:

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<sup>45</sup> When my aunt told me this story I felt appalled at how marriages were decided in my family and the community. This process has since changed so that most marriage choices are made by the couple in modern families in our community.

What really separates people who are habitually upbeat and optimistic from those who are constantly miserable is how the circumstances of life are interpreted and processed (Sharma 2004:44-45).

Bapuji always saw the cup as half full as opposed to half empty. He searched for the positive in every facet of his life which kept a smile forever etched on his peaceful expression.

I met two associates of Bapuji recently, (on separate occasions), who both marvelled about Bapuji's peaceful nature and the joy they experienced in his company. I became emotional with the awe with which his radiant glow was described and the only response I could offer before the threat of a shower of tears (happy ones) was that it was and is an honour to be his daughter.

The stroke denied Bapuji further education (he wanted to be a teacher) and he had to settle for the job of a salesman in a jewellery store. The service my dad offered to his employer and to the ashram was impeccable. I was at times overcome with jealousy and felt neglected by him due to the passion he showed particularly to the work he did at the ashram as it sometimes imposed on our family time. My dad was aware of this and often extended our already productive day by taking us to the ashram to work in the printing press and be with him. I emulated Bapuji's passion and enthusiasm for his jobs (as a salesman and ashram devotee) when I began my teaching career in 1985. I recall my very first principal, Mr Bisseswar asking me to slow down with the extra-curricular work I took on stating that I will "burn out" if I did not take heed. In a heavily pregnant condition I would run on the netball field, tummy bulging, umpiring matches. I was fortunate in that I had healthy pregnancies. I recall Mr Bisseswar approaching me at one of the school's annual swimming galas, requesting to do my duty of chief judge. He seemed to feel uncomfortable with this heavily pregnant teacher who walked up and down along the pool side during the events. My passion and enthusiasm for my job blinded me from interpreting the perceptions of others who sometimes felt embarrassed, particularly when I did not allow my pregnant state to deter me from my duty.

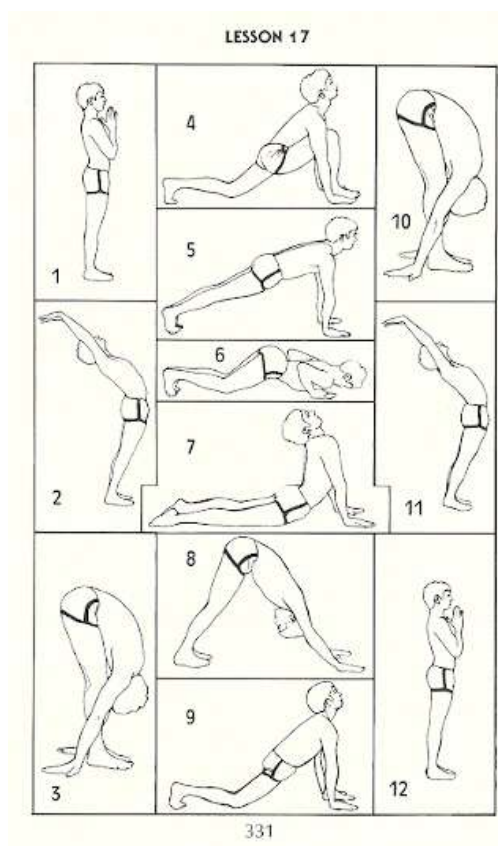
Being accountable for how we spent our time was emphasised and I recall having to give an explanation to my uncle, Adha, who questioned the importance of viewing a television programme. “How will this help you” he asked. If we could provide sufficient justification for watching a programme, it was allowed; otherwise we were encouraged to read a book. Once I recall telling Adha that the programme I wanted to watch gave me ideas for my creative writing lessons. I was allowed to watch the programme. Whilst there was a strong imposition of rules in our household, logic and reason superseded any rule, thus we did not feel threatened or robbed by their imposition. When I relate these dialogues to my own children they see the circumstances of my upbringing as harsh and dictatorial. I know now, that they have allowed me to put things in perspective and to ensure that there is a good balance of activities in my life. Teachers have often asked me how I am able to find the time to engage in activities that further my professional development – the answer lies in having a great respect and value for time and being mindful on how I spend it.

Let it not be seen that there was no fun in my childhood. Maintaining physical health and eating healthy food was given priority on weekends. Sport and games furthered family time. I recall going to the beach with my siblings in uncle Gopal’s blue Datsun, or in the huge Valiant that Adha drove. Adha and uncle Gopal would walk us into the sea and we would hold hands and jump or duck as the waves that towered over us broke. Sometimes they would dump us and tease us as we grappled to gain footing after being tossed and turned by the heavy waves we called dunkers. Punishment for uncle Gopal would be a live burial in the sea-sand, after being captured by the army of nieces and nephews he so enjoyed teasing. Uncle Gopal would never dream of doing such things to his own children today, and whilst some may see his mischief as cruel it was all in the spirit of fun – it was a different time, and a different way in which children in many families were brought up. It was a time that frowned on the molly-coddling of children as this weakened them.

Bapuji introduced us to yoga and meditation practices at an early age. During a maths lesson one morning I noticed that several children lacked the capacity to stay focussed. It dawned on me to introduce my learners to yoga. My learners are excited to perform a series of stretches called the Surya Namaskar (Greeting the sun). My learners’ flushed

cheeks after three cycles of the Surya Namaskar which takes a few minutes to complete is evidence of the good blood circulation it provides. This simple addition to our morning routine allows us to start our day calmly and feeling refreshed and invigorated.

On most Sunday afternoons we were visited by cousins, aunts and uncles. Fun was down-to-earth and found in the joy of riding down a bank on a sack, or a game of three tins, rounder or harbour. Our free, undemanding, simple pleasures are in stark contrast to lazy, couch-bound leisure activities of the present day youth. Perhaps this was because our parents spent less time creating a living and more time creating a life. Our family home radiated with laughter and joy on weekends and was open without appointment. The appetising scent flowing from the kitchen was the substitute for the welcome mat at the door. There was such sharing and giving which is in stark contrast to the “to each their own” attitude that we have resorted to in today’s society. My cousins and siblings lament at the extinction of the time when we could visit without making business-like appointments.



Photograph 11 Yoga chart (Sivananda 1987:331)

## **Traces of values in my education and profession**

My schooling was during the apartheid regime when schools were racially segregated. During this time, corporal punishment was a popular means of enforcing discipline and learning. We knew to put our hand out and accept the stinging slap of a thick ruler or cane on the inside of the palm if we did not learn our spelling or tables. Whilst we received a holistic education, there were no assessments in Art, Music, Physical Education, Guidance and Right Living. For most of my primary school life, we were taught for the purpose of regurgitating knowledge in tests. A learner who had poor memory retention skills was a learner destined for failure. In my practice as educator, I am conscious to make learning more meaningful to my learners, in fact they are well aware of how my face brightens when they relate stories of making their own meaning from classroom lessons, or when they feel encouraged to borrow and read other books on the topic.

I was vague about what to do when I left school. My initial choice was to enter the law profession, an option influenced largely by the movie *Kramer versus Kramer*, starring Dustin Hoffman. The lack of financial support for this choice was a real obstacle as opposed to the easy acceptance of a government bursary if I chose teaching. Teaching seemed the obvious choice and it was well promoted by my aunt and uncle (my dad's siblings) who were both teachers. My family held teaching in great esteem: it is a profession to be proud of said my uncle, who had gained much recognition for athletic coaching, and my aunt gave the woman's perspective stating that it was a good job for a woman - when I married and had children, I would be able to have time for my family and my career. I had applied for a bursary however this meant that I could not choose the subjects I wanted to teach. The bursary was offered to me on condition that I major in Home Economics. Once again my commitment to vegetarianism was tested as the practical aspect required the handling of meat. I declined the bursary choosing to study for a Bachelor of Arts Degree. I applied for a loan from a community organization and was successful. When orientation day arrived I was clueless as to how to choose my courses and was guided by complete strangers. I decided to major in Physical Education (P.E.), (influenced by my aunt and uncle who were both P.E. teachers) and Psychology, as I had developed a passion to learn about the human mind, human relationships and personal

development from the many books I had read. I still continue to read books of this nature and my quest to develop in this field grows stronger with age, stemming from the belief that *success on the outside begins with success on the inside*.

IsiZulu was a new course being offered and one of the students who assisted me with my course selection, suggested that I take it as an ancillary. I also enrolled for Education 1 and Communication 1, courses encouraged for prospective teachers. I enrolled for five courses in my first year and passed them despite the rampant student unrest and boycott of lectures and examinations as a means of protest against apartheid. These protests continued in my second year when we boycotted the June Examinations once again. Many of us suffered severe penalties for this as we were not granted a D.P. (duly performance certificate) to enable us to write the final examination. During this time many repressed feelings endured as a result of the implementation of apartheid laws were unleashed. I became defiant, spoke my mind and asserted my views in ways that sometimes surprised me. This was the first time I experienced academic failure, albeit for reasons beyond my control. It was one of the most painful experiences of my life, more so because I felt that I had disappointed my parents. My self-inflicted punishment was to find a job and study part time.

The apartheid years had silently and subconsciously built feelings of poor self esteem, because as a child not being allowed to sit on a bench marked “Whites only” or to glide down the water slide situated at the Durban Beachfront or to ride the bus that took the city route, meant for me (and several others sharing this situation) that I was not good enough. It took many years to remove the dent it caused to my self confidence, and even today I have to be guarded that the ill effects of this great evil do not derail my self-worth. A personal Renaissance was born during the freedom fight as we marched the campus chanting<sup>46</sup>:

We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome some day,  
For deep in my heart, I do believe that we shall overcome some day.  
Mandela shall be free, Mandela shall be free, Mandela shall be free some day,  
For deep in my heart, I do believe that we shall overcome some day....

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<sup>46</sup> Appendix 14



The political gatherings were a forum to collaborate and express the damages of apartheid. We gained strength and courage from the stories of others, building new self images through viewing our circumstances through clearer lenses. The gatherings were often dispersed by tear gas bombs and the incident of being chased by a riot squad through the bush where I lost the gold anklet given to me by my sweetheart will forever remain etched in my mind.

During the student unrest, I was not a leader, but a follower. My leadership role manifested itself in my second year of teaching which was sometimes taxing for my principal. I questioned anything that did not conform to social justice and fair play. My friends Pamela, Denise and Soraya endured my complaints and were very supportive. I am grateful for their friendship, and they continue to be the ever eager beacons of enlightenment and strength in my life.

Being rebellious often got me into a lot of trouble with the principal, but the resultant wrath did not deter my actions. With improved maturity I have come to understand that this kind of behaviour leads to self destruction, and that sometimes we have to give in to the little things in order not to lose sight of the bigger picture.

I stood in leadership positions on several committees, including sport organizations and developed a zest for living my life the way I saw fit. In retrospect I realize that it was the first time in my life where I was “free”. I had not known about this magical feeling of freedom in my parent’s home so I cannot say that I longed for it in my childhood, but having tasted it in my adulthood, I did realize that I would certainly have craved it had I known its existence. In my youth I was indoctrinated into the “*You do as you are told and do not question your elders*” mode. This was probably the reason why I never questioned the policies of apartheid. If I read a sign on a bench that read “Whites only” it was adhered to without question. We were kept very busy and focused, and except for a flickering moment, the thought of questioning things was often absent. “An idle mind is a devil’s workshop,” we were told.

When I entered high school, I was exposed to the study of literature and partook in debates which encouraged me to develop my own perspective on life, but as this attitude was in contrast to the mood at home if I disagreed with anything I often kept it to myself. Freedom of expression had its confines in the English literature classroom where I stubbornly insisted on my stance in Thomas Moore's *Tess of the D'urbervilles* or William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. *Spare the rod and spoil the child* was the mentality of my elders, and I soon learnt from the consequences my siblings faced that the price of disobedience was physically painful. It is necessary for me to explain why this new self deserves mentioning in this study. It was the birth of the new "me". The birth of the new leader might have stemmed from repressed feelings of the great evil, yet it was a turning point in my life which led to the achievement of goals and dreams that were way beyond the imagination of the old follower.



Photograph 12 *Grade 9 at Reservoir Hills Secondary. I am standing behind the Principal on the left.*

Moving back to my university career, at the beginning of my second year at university, I realized that physical prowess was not my strength, in fact, my skills at tennis and swimming caused me great embarrassment. During my first year at university I met my husband to be whose attempts at coaching in tennis at swimming failed dismally, more so due to my inabilities. My calf muscles and physique improved and I recall my uncle musing over this as I was always lean and physically under-developed. Physiology was a compulsory ancillary to be taken with P.E. I had heard that several students were denied their degree because they encountered difficulty with passing Physiology. My lack of physical prowess and my fear of being in the same predicament as the students mentioned, resulted in a change of major to isiZulu, a decision that changed the path of my career. I did not apply for a loan in my third year, choosing instead to study part- time. I took a locum teacher post at a school for the deaf, where I gained wonderful hands on experience in teaching and knowledge of sign language. Within a year I changed jobs as the locum position I held was not financially viable nor was the employment permanent (I could be given 24 hours notice to vacate my post). I worked as a banker and received training to be a bank teller.



Photograph 13 *Picture taken upon completion of Teller's Course sponsored by Barclays Bank*

Once I completed a Bachelor of Arts degree, I studied full-time (I received a bursary) for the University Higher Diploma in Education.

## Marriage

Marriage brought with it increased responsibilities and major changes to the kind of lifestyle I was accustomed to. My skills of being adaptable proved handy as I was faced with the physical challenges of exchanging my huge living space for a small flat, and the emotional challenges of trading my beloved family for one that I hardly knew (I lived with my in-laws). The typical tears of the Bollywood brides were replicated in torrents at the conclusion of our wedding ceremony as I bid farewell to my family, in particular, my younger sister who was often referred to as my handbag. Adaptability as well as endurance was required in large doses as I grappled to come to terms with lifestyle changes. My husband was often supportive of the decisions I made with regard to running the household and those that pertained to my career and future studies.



Photograph 14 *Wedding photo*

His task was huge in that he became the sole provider of the love, courage, and guidance which was in huge supply in my parent's home. My role as a wife was one of co-leader as opposed to the cap of follower I wore in my parent's home. We often bounced ideas of each other when making decisions as a couple. In many ways he was and continues to be a life boat that I can turn to when the rough sea leaves me out of breath. During the writing of this work he has been the voice of discipline by tracking my progress and popping his head at the computer screen every now and again – his way of supporting my project.

## **Synopsis**

This chapter has outlined how the values entrenched in my youth were at the forefront of my teaching. I want to value my students as important human beings and I feel accountable for their future. I do not want my students to endure the prejudices I suffered during apartheid or those expectations my teachers ignorantly imposed in violation of my cultural background and values. This thesis has enabled me to see how the values inculcated in me by my family and my education influence me, how they contribute to my work, and how they continue to play a part in my educational development. As a young teacher, I had a tendency to embrace the challenges I faced, and to do whatever was in my power to address them. My value for social justice, respect and concern for others and the desire to make a difference where I could was a driving force in my career as an educator and guided my response to the many concerns I wrestled with in my practice.

## Chapter 5: Concerns in my practice

### About this chapter

The previous chapter describes the values that I adopted in my daily living, and how many of these values were developed in my early life. In this chapter I discuss the concerns I had as a teacher during a period of massive transformation in South Africa. This chapter explains how the contradiction of my values were the fundamental cause for the concerns in my practice.

### Effects of desegregation on schooling

Desegregation of schools was a means of addressing the injustices of the apartheid era, and was implemented with the purpose of improving the educational needs of non-whites in South Africa; however it ironically led to racial tension and an escalation of violence in schools. Professor J. Jansen (quoted by Pillay 1999:5) states in a newspaper article, *The Mercury*:

Very few schools have used the anti-racist approach to culture by dealing openly and honestly with the fact that there are real differences and distortions about race, nor has the school curriculum taken race seriously. Many teachers still use history textbooks and teaching methods used during the apartheid years.

As an insider, (a teacher teaching at a desegregated school), I do not think that teachers or the management of the school envisaged that it was their prerogative or task to implement anti-racist and anti-colonial policies. It was an era of teaching when we lacked the privilege to be partners in curriculum design. We were accustomed to following precise instructions on what to teach and how to teach it. Close supervision by school management and subject advisors ensured that we *toed the line*. Lesson preparations were signed on a weekly basis and teaching progress was recorded in our journals that outlined the scheme of work to be taught for each school term and signed by the head of department on a weekly basis. Tests and worksheets were moderated and approved before they were printed and no printing could be done without the approval of the head of department or principal.

We were not encouraged to be creative and self sufficient, particularly with regard to problems that stretched beyond the confines of our classroom. Within these parameters, it was to be expected that teachers would wait to be instructed on new policies, yet there was no systematic programme in place to develop school policies or to promote racial and cultural integration. In the absence of such policies, racial tensions grew and violence, particularly amongst children of mixed race groups escalated rapidly at schools.

The apartheid laws had ensured that people of different race groups i.e. Black, White, Indian and Coloured, lived in separate areas and went to separate schools. The schools that children of different race groups attended did not follow a common curriculum, nor were they resourced equitably; in fact, deliberate attempts were made by the apartheid government to stagnate or retard the education of Blacks. Thus when schools were integrated, a grade seven pupil, for example, who had previously attended a Blacks only school had difficulty coping the academic standards that were taken for granted at a school that was previously reserved for Indians only- this was similar for an Indian pupil who attended a school that was previously reserved for Whites only. Understanding the ethos of the new school, particularly the cultural norms and values was an added challenge. The attention of teachers at the school where I taught was directed mainly at trying to uplift the academic standard of new learners. This was a huge challenge and distracted teachers from addressing the other pertinent issues relating to racial integration that are described above.

## **Language issues**

The imbalance of learner strengths and weaknesses was an even greater concern for language teachers such as myself. The baggage of apartheid compounded the challenges of general classroom dynamics bringing with it a surge of confusion for learners whose language of learning and teaching (LoLT) often did not match the LoLT at the school of their choice. I, like many teachers experienced a difficult period in my career during which I felt that I was not achieving the level of success which I desired in my profession. I recall discussing this with my friend Sheila. I was a language specialist teaching three languages:

- English (some learners spoke English at home and some did not).
- Afrikaans (none of the learners spoke Afrikaans at home).

- IsiZulu (some learners spoke isiZulu at home and some did not).

I recollect revealing my innermost thoughts to Sheila explaining that I did not feel content and fulfilled with what I was doing, as it did not serve the best interests of my learners. What troubled me the most was the conditions and the context within which I was expected to serve my learners. I was expected to teach three languages to mixed ability groups, within the constraints of a prescribed time-table and curriculum. English was the language of instruction at the school. My logic dictated that learners who did not have a good grounding in English should not be forced to study three languages. The learners I taught were extremely weak in Afrikaans, often due to the circumstances that they found themselves in at the new school, as some of them were admitted to the school in grade seven. They had no prior teaching in Afrikaans and therefore obviously could not cope with the level expected of them. The expectations for grade seven learners, taking Afrikaans as an additional language was based on the assumption that learners were introduced to Afrikaans in grade three. These expectations did not change for a Black grade seven pupil who arrived from a township school where the LoLT (Language of teaching and learning) was isiZulu and the additional language was English (thus no Afrikaans was learnt). At the previously all Indian school, the LoLT was English. By grade seven most pupils could read as well as write in Afrikaans. Grade seven pupils were expected to read prescribed set works in Afrikaans and answer questions based on them. How was a Black pupil, who arrived at a previously Indian school supposed to cope with this? None of my seniors (principal, head of department) could offer an answer or were willing to sanction any suggestions. Separate tests for learners placed in such a situation would have been a plausible solution, but ordinary teachers were not allowed to interfere with policy, nor were my concerns taken seriously. I recall complaining to my colleague Shiksha.

Sumi: I feel guilty and as if I am doing something that is unjust when I teach Afrikaans, particularly to the new learners who arrive at our school in grade seven. How can they be expected to cope with grade seven Afrikaans when most of them have never heard an Afrikaans word before arriving at this



school? These learners are also weak in English. Surely my time with them will be better spent if I assisted them to improve their spoken and written English.

Shiksha: I understand what you are saying. Some learners are extremely weak at reading as well. Nobody in a senior position can advise us or have the courage to make a policy on how to deal with the massive transformations that are taking place at schools. It seems that in the Department of Education, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing.

Sumi: I find it difficult to cope with the guilt that I am not improving the education of my learners.

Shiksha: Just treat your teaching of Afrikaans as an exercise in learning.

Sumi: An “exercise in learning” is not worth the high degree of effort and emotional strain that this situation requires on my part, as well as my learners. I’ll gladly put in the effort and endure the emotional pain if a constructive outcome to our situation can be anticipated.

Venting my feelings to my colleague about the problems I encountered, was the only comfort available. It gave me clarity of thought and unknowingly at the time, it this reflection that planted the seeds for the address of my concerns described in Chapter 6.

With regard to curriculum issues my feeling was that surely the urgent need for these learners was to strengthen their ability to communicate in English which was the LoLT at the school as this will assist them to cope more adequately with the other learning areas. Of what use was it to these learners to study Afrikaans, particularly as it is not a widely spoken language in Durban, the location of my story? My mind became restless as it searched for an answer to the situation. The Black pupils had come to previously Indian schools in search of greener pastures, but they were trapped by the baggage of apartheid which continued to hinder their learning. I was desperate for a swift solution to save the future educational growth of thousands of Black learners whose parents were convinced that they had sent their children to the schools of “milk and honey”. I suggested to the

principal that a survey be carried out using parent input to review the language policy of the school. After much collaboration with the staff and persuasion on my part the principal of our school supported the idea of conducting a survey. The survey was printed and handed out to the learners. On the same day, the superintendent of the school arrived at the school. The principal mentioned the survey to him. He asked for the survey to be withdrawn from the learners stating that although it was a reasonable idea, it could lead to complications and it was ten years ahead of its time. How can “being ahead of its time” be damaging I thought. I felt trapped as well as enraged by this response and continued to search for solutions that I felt would better serve the needs of my learners. Lomax and Whitehead (1996, in Holley 1997:2) state that the source of self study often stems from:

- the imposition of values and practices that disable us from participating as fully as we might in our educational enterprises.
- imposed change that alienates us by appearing to devalue our educational values and practices.

### **Feeling handicapped, tormented and devalued**

Implementing the knowledge gained through my teaching experience was being denied by my seniors, and the slow pace at which the Department of Education addressed transformation at schools was in contrast to my urgent ambition for a way forward. Bureaucratisation and management (described above) killed my sense of authenticity as a teacher and it disabled me from serving the needs of my learners. It devalued my attempts to improve the quality of education being offered to my learners. I felt handicapped because I was aware of my learners’ educational needs, yet I was not at liberty to address them. My common sense solution was superseded by suggestions from school inspectors who were out of touch of my learners’ needs. In my weaker moments I felt disillusioned and wanted to “chicken out” by exiting the profession. What are you actually achieving here, Sumi? Where are you taking your learners? Can you account for learner development? Are you making a difference? Questions of this nature tormented me mentally. I was no longer cheerful and optimistic about being a teacher and the guilt of not being productive and ineffective made it ethically unacceptable for me to remain in my

position. In a letter dated 09/06/1992 written to my sister who is also a teacher, and who was living in Virginia (USA) at the time I wrote:

*I don't know if you've heard about SADTU now being finally recognized by H.O.D. (House of Delegates). Well it took another march by the teachers, this time of all races... to achieve this. Furthermore the department has appointed a Committee of Enquiry to attend to several grievances of teachers, ..... so my case is receiving attention.*

This letter helped to bring flashbacks of the many visits I made to senior officials in the department to hear my story.

I cannot recall where I heard or read the phrase: “true happiness lies in being in harmony with yourself ”, perhaps it was the thought for the day in one of my diaries. The mental torment I engaged in due to the lack of power to change my situation was emotionally draining. The school environment in which I taught did not allow me to function in accordance with my values and this made me extremely restless.

The inner conflict I experienced certainly accounted for the depression that resonated feelings of helplessness and dejection. I hated going to school every morning and I feel embarrassed to admit that in order to protect my sanity I forced myself to become numb in my teaching. I taught my lesson and ticked it off as done. Lesson reflection and following individual learner progress was no longer a priority in my numb approach. I soon realised that this could not be a lengthy resolution, or pattern of behaviour, because it was out of sync with my character. If I was to remain in the profession, I had to revise my strategy so that I could be at peace with myself. It is appalling how the stench of a “deep pit” can permeate and cloud one’s thinking. My mind quickly filled with the negative factors of my position. Lack of gratitude, acknowledgement from my seniors and learners, and poor the conditions of my teaching and learning environment dominated my thoughts.

The high absentee rate of some educators meant that we seldom had thirty minutes a week of non-teaching time and the small classroom packed with  $\pm$  forty five learners that reeked of perspiration, particularly in summer, did little to remedy thoughts of disillusionment.

It was during this oppression that I began to explore the ideologies of multiculturalism and multilingualism. I had no idea about the existence of these dogmas. I discovered them out of necessity, in an effort to address my dilemmas. Little did I anticipate that the painful quest to address the challenges I faced would provide the seed to my professional development. It was as Lomax and Whitehead (1996) call it, my “educational response to the politics of oppression.”

A few years later the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was implemented in an attempt to address transformational changes. Multiculturalism and multilingualism was recommended as a policy in the NCS to address transformation in education. The irony is that the new curriculum called for a move away from the top – down approach to teaching, yet this continued to be the way in which the Department of Education functioned with educators, with the bureaucrats making decisions without having the first hand experience of the realities in the classroom.

Another change that was introduced was the introduction of a new language policy which gave school governing bodies the power to determine the LoLT and additional languages offered at the school.

### **Lack of professional support for the teaching of isiZulu additional language**

Prior to the transformation period, isiZulu additional language was not taught at most schools. It was therefore a new subject on the curriculum at many of the schools that I taught at. There were very few teachers who were qualified to teach isiZulu as additional language. Personnel who spoke fluent Zulu were hired by several schools, however they had no theoretical background on the language, nor did they have any teacher training. Whilst a teaching qualification may not be a necessary pre-requisite for everybody (as I

know of some people who can teach relatively well with little teacher training and close supervision); it did in many instances compound the problem of the ineffective teaching of isiZulu at several schools. Collaboration with other educators was not an option as it often resorted to the “blind leading the blind”, and the complicated logistics of organising meetings, resulted in poor attendance creating a stalemate in the quest to address the challenges faced.

A point of concern for teachers teaching isiZulu as an additional language in the mid 1990’s was that guidance in this field was almost nonexistent. School managers, Heads of Department, Deputy Principals and Principals at most schools lacked the knowledge thereof and with intensive restructuring in the senior level of the Department of Education, Subject Advisors of isiZulu were a rare commodity. Massive changes in the curriculum further exacerbated the challenges for teachers who were left to swim in the deep sea with no life saving device nearby. As teachers of additional language isiZulu, we did not receive the support that we did in the other subjects we taught. My assumption was that my task as teacher was to follow a curriculum outlined for isiZulu additional language since this was what was expected of teachers in all other subjects. Such a curriculum was provided by the Department of Education in all subjects except isiZulu additional language. Workshops were organised at least once a year per subject, but this was not the same for isiZulu additional language. Subject advisors in other subjects were very dogmatic about what and how we taught; and teaching and learning material (textbooks) were prescribed and distributed by the Department of Education. IsiZulu additional language was a new subject, and its introduction with no orientation programme and support from subject advisors was quite daunting in the pre-Curriculum 2005 era (1994-1997), during which teachers were not invited to be curriculum planners. There was so much restructuring going on, that attention was quite understandably focussed on the more pertinent issue of designing a new curriculum and the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language was a forgotten cause.

This situation did not contribute positively to that ever nagging voice in my head imploring me to make changes to the way in which I was teaching isiZulu, (I was the only isiZulu

teacher at the school and because I was equipped with a masters degree in isiZulu I felt the pressure to ensure that my one woman department was “producing the goods”). The fact that there were not many suitable teaching resources (textbooks) to suit my context (i.e. additional language) nor could the school I was teaching at afford to buy any resources added to my woes. A new “educational response” was required. I reflected on ideas as to how I could create a learning programme that worked for my learners (it was the learners whose mother tongue was not isiZulu that I was concerned about in this instance). I required a programme that would trace the progress of my teaching, and allow learners to assess their development. During this time, I realised from observation of my own children’s learning experiences and from conversations with my colleagues that I was not alone in the challenges I faced. I often supported my son and daughters’ studies by supervising their homework and assisted them to prepare for tests. My participation in my children’s education led to the observation that the subject matter or themes they studied seemed to be repeated every year, the common themes being Greetings, Weather, The home, Shopping. I also noticed that much emphasis was placed on the acquisition of grammatical concepts with little opportunity to apply these concepts, thus pupils were expected to regurgitate knowledge through rote learning without being given the opportunities to utilise their knowledge in new and different situations. I was conscious of the need for greater progression to be made from one grade to the next. As a parent, viewing my children’s progress through the eyes of a teacher, I could see firsthand, the damaging effects of the lack of a syllabus and established grade by grade learning programme of what and how to teach. Most pupils lacked oral and written competence and there was a general feeling amongst learners that isiZulu was a difficult language to learn.

Many of the teachers employed to teach isiZulu as additional language at other schools, had an excellent command of the language, but lacked the knowledge of how to plan a learning programme. Without teacher training they experienced difficulty in creating a curriculum for additional language learners. I found myself in an advantageous position not only because of my education, experience and insight into the teaching of an additional language, and a sound understanding of the National Curriculum Statement, but also because as a parent, I had the opportunity to observe from my own children’s education,

what some of the general shortcomings were with regard to the teaching of isiZulu additional language. This situation planted the seeds for the vision of a new learning programme.

Before South Africa became a democratic country, my classroom consisted of learners from one racial group. All the learners were non- mother tongue speakers of isiZulu. Transformation brought with it racially integrated classrooms. As a language teacher, teaching English as the main language, Afrikaans as first additional language and isiZulu as second additional language I was overwhelmed with many challenges I faced. My research pays particular attention to the teaching of isiZulu because as mentioned above it was the language that I spent the most time teaching, and the teaching of which challenged me the most. The problems I faced included teaching mixed ability groups i.e. mother tongue learners and non- mother tongue learners at the same time. The abilities of my learners in the different languages varied considerably. This was a new experience for me as prior to this schools were racially segregated and learners had very similar strengths and weaknesses in the different languages offered. The new classroom situation made teaching more challenging as most learners could not cope from a common learning programme. I felt extremely challenged with the mixed ability class, particularly because their abilities were so diverse in the two languages that I taught: Afrikaans and isiZulu (none of these languages are my mother tongue). This was a new experience for many teachers in the transformation era and one for which there were no quick solutions, guidance or support programme. Apart from the diversity of strengths amongst the learners which required a review of my teaching strategies, the novel situation planted feelings of fear and anxiety which stemmed from another new experience: for the first time in my career I was placed in a situation where I was intimidated by my learners' level of competence in a subject in comparison to my own. The mother tongue isiZulu speakers demonstrated a level of fluency in isiZulu that I was still aspiring towards. Despite shortcomings in their grammar, spelling and reading, which stemmed largely from the fact that they were not subjected to the written text, they had a never failing storehouse of vocabulary. I felt I could redeem my place as teacher when I explained grammatical rules or corrected their use of prefixes.

On the other hand there were the non- mother tongue speakers who displayed strengths at their learnt spelling and grasped reading with ease (particularly modelled reading), however they experienced difficulties with sentence construction, did not have a good storehouse of vocabulary (this was to be expected as the language was new to them) and therefore lacked confidence in oral communication. They understood the grammatical concepts but could not apply them. They understood the vocabulary but lacked the ability to apply it in composing dialogues.

I was concerned about the lack of guidelines on the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. Since there was not much direction given by the Department of Education in the early 1990's in terms of syllabus guidelines for each grade, teachers did as they pleased without consultation with each other and in many schools this led to the same things being taught over and over again. This was part of the reason why many learners were not making progress in the language. I experienced this first hand, both as a teacher, and as a mother of three children who were constantly receiving similar learning material, which impeded a healthy level of progress in the new language.

The amount of time allocated to the teaching of isiZulu on the school time-table (60 to 90 minutes a week) was another stumbling block, as it did not give teachers enough time to teach a new language effectively. Whilst the mother tongue speakers of isiZulu needed more time allocated to the teaching of English and Afrikaans, the non- mother tongue speakers of isiZulu would have benefited from more time being allocated to the study of isiZulu. The obvious solution would be to separate the learners and address their needs, but the logistics and cost of such a solution was not as simple. Schools that had the resources to address the learners' needs were criticised and accused of implementing apartheid in disguise. (It must be mentioned here that the Department of Education had made no stipulation as to how the time allocated to languages was to be shared amongst the three languages offered at schools. Schools therefore differed in terms of the notional time offered to the languages taught. The CAPS policy has rectified this and stipulates that schools teach two languages within the time allocated for languages. Furthermore there is



detailed guidance on how to divide the time between the two languages and within each language).

At times I wondered if my efforts were worth the trouble because to me it seemed that some of the learners were extremely lazy, and lacked the most basic rules of classroom etiquette that I was accustomed to. Reprimanding and detaining these learners often revoked them to puncture the tyres of my car (I had an average of twelve tyres punctured in a ten month period). Calling for the parents of these learners for support, I soon realised was not an option, because parents failed to attend meetings. This was because they were not informed of the meeting by their child, or because most did not supply a telephone number for contact purposes, or because they had not arrived to admit their children in person (school admission forms were often sent home with the children to be signed and were often returned with no proper postal address or telephonic contact details).

Seeing the problem through my learners' lenses, I could understand their disinterest in Afrikaans and although I cannot honestly pardon their lack of discipline, I can perhaps understand some of the emotions that they could have experienced due to a lack of:-

- Food (some pupils arrived at school hungry and with no lunch)
- Sleep (they awoke at 4:30 a.m. and travelled a long distance to get to school)
- Tender loving care (many pupils came from single parent homes where the parent's work demands did not make them readily available, some lived with grandparents)
- Family interaction (pupils did not know where their parents worked)
- Self confidence
- Motivation
- Familiarity with school, school system, school culture and norms
- Serious regard for their education and future goals (not much thought given about their ambition in life)
- Anger management

There were times when I felt that emotionally they were as dead as wood. They would not hesitate to stab a peer with a sharp object because of a disagreement. Hence apart from the curriculum issues, there were social, physical and emotional needs that my learners

grappled with. This awareness was another living contradiction for me as their teacher. I had studied psychology and was well aware of Maslow's Hierarchy of basic needs. How could I expect my learners to be motivated to study if their basic needs were not being met? At times like this, I felt overwhelmed and helpless. How many issues was an ordinary teacher expected to deal with before she could focus on teaching. At other times the voice in my head dictated: "Do what you can, the rest will follow."

This voice gave me the strength to start a "hungry box" campaign with neighbouring schools. I worked with Rekha, a colleague who was very eager to assist by asking the pupils at the school she taught at to bring extra lunch once a week. Word soon spread, and with the help of community organisations, committees were formed, and several pupils were provided with lunch to sustain them for the school day. Once a month, grocery hampers were sent to families where both parents were unemployed. Whilst these efforts were a start to addressing one of the basic needs of the indigent learners, a lot of work still had to be done.

### **My "attachment" to isiZulu**

I was concerned because of my interest in isiZulu and the significant role it plays in South Africa. IsiZulu is one of the most commonly spoken official languages in South Africa, (Census 2001). There are 10,677,305 (23.82 %) first language speakers which makes this the language in South Africa with the most first language speakers. IsiZulu is mostly spoken in and around KwaZulu-Natal though there are an increasing number of first language people in Gauteng and the Cape. KwaZulu-Natal is considered the home of the Zulu nation, yet many urban schools in KwaZulu-Natal still offer Afrikaans as a first additional language. This situation is contrary to statistics (UKZN Entrance Requirements 2009) which show that there is a need for graduates in most fields of study to be conversant in isiZulu. Universities insist that prospective students (especially those considering a career in the health sciences) be able to communicate in isiZulu (UKZN Entrance Requirements 2009), yet there are very few non-mother tongue speakers of isiZulu who study isiZulu as a first additional language in high school (Alcock 2008). The few students

that do attempt it often experience difficulties coping with the level of competency expected of them: they often switch to Afrikaans so that they can have higher scores on their school reports line and, as a result, complete their schooling career being unable to communicate effectively in isiZulu (Glenwood High School isiZulu Report 2004). This creates a communication barrier in many of the professions that these learners pursue.

My personal experience with my children was similar. My daughter Nishkal had the desire to study isiZulu as first additional language in grade eight, however before the end of the first term she switched to Afrikaans, stating that it is easier to score well in this language. I have been an additional language learner and teacher of both isiZulu and Afrikaans and would agree that the language structure of Afrikaans is simpler in comparison to isiZulu. What I found useful when studying and teaching Afrikaans was the abundance of resources to aid the learning and teaching of Afrikaans. This was in stark contrast to my experience when teaching and learning isiZulu. I therefore can identify with the quick fix solution adopted by several high school learners who out of concern for higher scores choose the easier option Afrikaans instead of isiZulu as first additional language.

During my teaching I observed that many pupils who come from a Zulu cultural background and who spoke fluent isiZulu studied Afrikaans as their first additional language at primary and high school instead of isiZulu. I felt that this prejudiced them in that they could not gain from the advantageous ability they had in isiZulu. I found this rather strange and from speaking to a few parents discovered that this choice was based on the fact that Blacks were previously denied entry into good jobs for their lack of fluency in Afrikaans and English. The parents of the pupils I taught had understood the power of the languages and did not wish for their children to be in a similar predicament. Today, many Black parents use English as a medium of communication at home so that they develop good speaking skills in English at an early age. Whilst this has ensured that their children start on a somewhat equal footing with most other children at school entry level, it has adversely affected their ability to communicate in their mother tongue.

My attachment to the Zulu language is deep rooted and stems from the lengthy period I invested in the formal study of isiZulu. I majored in isiZulu (three years), completed my BA honours degree part time (two years), and completed my MA degree part time as well (three years). Despite the eight years of formal education, I do not proclaim to be a fluent speaker of the language, but my mental contemplation gave me the drive and the courage to take action. My little voice continued to nag me, demanding an answer for a response to remediate the situation. “Look and thou shall find” I thought. My educational response to the dilemma mentioned above was the non formal educational research that followed. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6. I felt a sense of liberation with the educational knowledge that resulted from my research, because it addressed deep seated issues which were unresolved for a lengthy period. I also felt a sense of pride and accomplishment, as my research was home grown, I could identify with it, because it was to a large extent my point of view.

## Chapter 6: How did I begin to address the situation?

### About this chapter

This chapter reveals my response to the challenges described in chapter 5. Mental reflection of my concerns provided the opportunity to process possible solutions and to find a way forward. Once again, the two threads of concerns that run parallel in this thesis will be discussed in the light of how these concerns were addressed.

### My response to the challenges I faced

#### *First thread: My response to facing the challenges of racially integrated schools*

Pitajali, a great Indian philosopher said:

When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project; all of your thoughts break their bonds: your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents become alive and you discover yourself to be a greater person than you ever dreamed yourself to be (Sharma 2004:50).

I was well aware that I was not equipped to handle the task of creating a programme to address the challenges of racial integration faced by teachers on my own. The will to be of seva (service) in my profession would allow no boundaries or obstacles in its path. I approached my isiZulu lecturer Mrs Ntuli<sup>47</sup> for assistance. Mrs Ntuli felt that this was out of her domain and suggested that the junior lecturer at the time, Mrs Taylor<sup>48</sup> might be of assistance. Mrs Taylor remembered Nigel Shepherd who had gained acclaim to the work he had done on Multicultural Education. She recommended that I speak to him.

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<sup>47</sup> Not her real name.

<sup>48</sup> Not her real name.

Nigel kindly provided me with a towering stack of literature on multi cultural education. After educating my self by reading literature on multi cultural education and engaging in discussions with Nigel, we held several meetings to embark on a programme to educate other teachers (Minutes of these meetings are in the Appendix 21). Both Nigel and I did this on a voluntary basis, using our own resources. We shared the strong intent as well as the discipline to make a contribution during this period of transformation, and were committed to this intent. What followed was a series of seminars for educators<sup>49</sup> on Multi Cultural Education. The first workshop was not well attended, but Nigel and I persisted with our plan. It did not take long for word to go around and subsequent workshops were well attended. In fact after we organised what we thought might be the last workshop, one of the largest teacher unions, SADTU, invited us to address their members. I delivered a talk on “A Teacher’s Perspective on Multi Cultural Education.”<sup>50</sup>

Victor Frankl said:

Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued. It must ensue. And it only does so as the unintended side effect of one’s personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself (in Sharma 2004:56).

The objective of the workshops on Multi Cultural Education was to make a difference by addressing concerns in education. Both Nigel Shepherd and I did not set out to measure our input in education, but the publicity that it received from the media both tabloid and television<sup>51</sup> certainly caused a huge stir and highlighted our cause. This work was well recognised by the Sunday Tribune<sup>52</sup> who credited me with the title of “Mover and Shaker” in the field of education for the year 1999.

My dad often said that if you perform good karma (actions), good will return to you. The address of general concerns amongst educators led to fulfilling a personal goal. My actions were not motivated by what I could receive, meaning that I did not organise the workshops

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<sup>49</sup> See Appendix 1 for invitation to workshop, Appendix 2 newspaper article on workshop and Appendix 21 for minutes of meetings held and programme.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix 13 for the talk I delivered.

<sup>51</sup> Not all reports are placed in the appendix due to similarity of content. Video recordings of television programmes are available.

<sup>52</sup> A South African weekly newspaper

for personal gain, nor did I expect to achieve fame and glory. The motivation for workshops as expressed in the opening chapter of this thesis stemmed from the single painful experiences of Sipho and Jenna. The success that “ensued” for me is that these workshops set the stage for my dream of writing a series of textbooks for the teaching and learning of isiZulu as an additional language. At one of these workshops, unbeknown to me sat a publisher who approached me after the meeting with a view to write a book on multi cultural education. I explained that I did not think I had the credentials to write on the topic and revealed to her my dream of writing a series of isiZulu textbooks to address another compelling concern. A meeting was arranged, planting the seed to address a more specific challenge experienced in the teaching profession. This is where the two threads described in this thesis cross paths. Sharma says: “the quality of your life will come down to the quality of your contribution” (2004:174).

### ***Second thread: My response to the problem I faced with teaching isiZulu***

In chapter 5, I explained the challenges I experienced with the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. Since the programme I was using was not successful, I had to develop a new one. I started to experiment and take notes of what worked and what did not. The knowledge I gained during the study of the teaching methods course on the teaching of isiZulu proved useful. I researched the teaching of languages as an informal study and applied it together with the ideas that developed from *hunches* I had on best classroom practice to design new learning material.

Did the fact that isiZulu is not my mother tongue create limitations for me in my work? The answer to this question is affirmative and negative. Yes I did have limitations, because it is not the language that I am most fluent in and in which I think; which is why I felt the need to make use of a mother tongue editor. On the other hand, my limitation was advantageous because it helped me to easily identify with the difficulties and inadequacies experienced by my learners as I had travelled the same path as them. I was in tune with my learners’ needs, which proved advantageous in the process of developing a programme to address them. The challenge brought about a sense of commitment and happiness that was

not anticipated. Whilst working on this thesis I read the work of Sharma (2004) whose description of the secret of happiness has helped me understand my experience.

Find out what you truly love to do and then direct all your energy towards doing it.....Once you are concentrating your mental power and energy on a pursuit that you love, abundance flows into your life, and all your desires are fulfilled with ease and grace (Sharma 2004:55).

I recall my son Manish taking notice of the fanaticism demonstrated by me in utilising all my *free* time to develop the *Maye babo!* series. I was glad to stay at home weekend after weekend, holiday after holiday, feeling content to do nothing else, but write. This feeling has replicated itself in my new project which is the writing this thesis. At times I would become so engrossed that the hours would tick away unnoticed and I was sometimes faced with the scorn of hungry faces for the lack of a cooked meal. I was not extremely computer literate at the time and physically penned my ideas which were later converted into manuscript. My son asked me what I hoped to achieve by the extensive time I had spent working on this project. I stated that it was not the uppermost thought on my mind, but that I did hope that I could share my work through publication with the many teachers who found themselves in a predicament similar to mine.

Like my dad, I sometimes feel guilty that my passion sometimes took my attention away from my children. This I see in retrospect; yet when I read the autobiography of myself written by my older daughter Nishkal, and the writings of Sonal, my younger daughter who claims to emulate me, I am reminded of the discipline I modelled in my passion: “A strong, disciplined mind ... can achieve miracles” (Sharma 2004:63).

Sharma shares in the writings of Kehoe and others who describe the power of visualisation:

...see yourself as you want to be, whether this means serving as a great judge, a great father (a great teacher) or citizen in your community..... your mind has the magnetic power to attract all that you desire into your life... Once you start to experience the joy this ancient technique brings, you will realise the infinite potential of your mind and begin to liberate the storehouse of ability and energy that currently sleeps within you (Sharma 2004:67-68).



The wisdom in the words of Sharma to a large extent dictated the spirit with which I have led my life. They were discovered in the volumes I read on personal development, the ideologies were absorbed and implemented on an unconscious level. The startling reality of their testimony is surreal in the context of writing the *Maye babo!* series. They help me to understand how this joyful creation despite being at times an insurmountable task, became a reality.

## **How did my reflection develop my teaching?**

Action research and self study enquiries begin with the question:

“How do I improve my work?”

Sometimes we say we believe in something, but are unable to live according to what we believe, for a variety of reasons. Here we would experience ourselves, in Jack Whitehead’s words, as ‘living contradictions’. A point of entry for action research would be to find ways of overcoming the contradiction so that we might live more fully in the direction of our values (McNiff 2002:13).

My reflection was useful in that it provided clarity in terms of my concerns which ultimately led to their address. A hint of how my reflection engaged me into action is provided below.

### ***First Thread: How did self reflection and my observations contribute to my profession when schools became racially integrated?***

Racial integration proved difficult for South African educators and learners, because people from the different race groups did not understand one another nor did they identify with the background and cultures of each race group. My observation of the challenges faced by teachers propelled me into action to address the issue, which in turn developed my teaching.

A Self Study approach to research is relevant when the researcher shows a definite personal interest in the research (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001:13).

I grew up in a racially segregated environment. I attended a primary and high schools that admitted Indians only, and lived in an area designated for Indians only. Despite the racial segregation imposed by the apartheid government, there were several opportunities to integrate with people of different racial groups. Many White devotees belonging to the ashram we attended visited our home and I was often impressed with the gentleness, love and kindness they showed towards us. Mrs. Harman was one of them. She later became known as Mataji<sup>53</sup>. I recall how she surprised us with gifts on special days such as children's day. I still have a little pink book she gave me to collect autographs. I was glad to have had positive interactions with a few White people as it helped give me a balanced perception of White people.



Photograph 15 *Mrs Harman with pets*

I did not have very close relationships with many Blacks until I went to University. The few Blacks I encountered during my youth were at a local church at which I attended few weddings or church services as a curious, uninvited child. At university I was one of two Indians in the isiZulu class and was often glad for the peer assistance provided by the mother tongue speakers of isiZulu. I did not feel in the least bit uncomfortable to meet them on the Umlazi Campus for group study sessions when we studied for the BA (Hons) course in 1986 and 1987. I drove to the campus alone without any fears for my safety.

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<sup>53</sup> Title given to a Hindu saint.

Most of the students in my class were teachers who were interested in their professional development and upward mobility. I developed respect and admiration for them and we shared common interests which helped us identify with each other. My interactions with my peers taught me a lot about their culture, traditions and habits. My lecturers were both Black and White, and because of the low enrolment of students, they got to know us on first name basis. This experience was to stand me in good stead during the time when racial integration took place at schools.

The positive interactions and opinions I had of Whites and Blacks was a large contributing factor that created the momentum to address the chaos caused in many schools due to racial integration. I did not know this at the time however upon reflecting on my values and experiences, I am convinced that they played a huge role in engaging me into action to address the situation. I wanted to share the advantage I had with others to promote racial integration and a united South African Society.

***Second Thread: How did the reflection of my teaching contribute to the improvement of my teaching of isiZulu?***

Prior to the writing of the *Maye babo!* series, I was constantly attacked by the inner voice in my head which shouted that my teaching of isiZulu lacked amongst other things, continuity and cohesion. Since my pupils were not learning in the way I taught, I had to create a programme so that I could teach in the way they learnt.

By reflecting on my problems, I began to understand ways in which I could engage in them. My teaching was not giving me joy because I could not see the level of development in my learners that I aspired towards. My values for social justice, the right of every learner to have his or her needs expressed, being honest and in harmony with myself by listening to the nagging voice in my head were being contradicted in my practice. These were the “living contradictions” mentioned by Whitehead and McNiff earlier, which I experienced. My style of teaching as well as the environment in which I taught was not in harmony with my personal expectations of myself in my career. McNiff’s (2002:3) words sum up my predicament.

action research is based on certain principles – the need for justice and democracy, the right of all people to speak and be heard, the right of each individual to show how and why they have given extra attention to their learning in order to improve their work, the deep need to experience truth and beauty in our personal and professional lives.

They say that desperate times call for desperate measures. My initial response to my lack of job satisfaction was to exit the profession. In addition to the curriculum challenges, there were the unfair expectations from teachers teaching large classes of learners. The ethos of the public school that I taught at, de-motivated me and poor learner discipline and disinterest added to the challenges I faced. I scanned the local newspaper every weekend in an effort to change my job. This did not prove successful.

Being unsuccessful at exiting the profession, I turned to option two which was a change of environment. I applied for a promotion post at another school. I turned to my spirituality and will never forget the conversation I had with God. “I want to be of service to you, yet I am unable to in my present environment. Lord, grant me a change so that I can better serve you,” I pleaded. That same evening the telephone rang. What I am about to say may sound a bit weird to those who are not able to identify with my beliefs, yet it remains an incident that continues to give me goose bumps each time I revisit it in my mind. Before I answered the call, I knew it had something to do with my prayer. I was invited to attend an interview for the post of Head of Department in the Intermediate Phase. After the interview I recall saying to a friend that success in my application for the new position would be a dream come true.

I sometimes see my movement to the new school as a defeatist approach in my plight at resolving some of my woes, but at the point in time it was a decision that was the best for me, a decision that was made in order for my sanity to prevail. The state of mind that I was in at that time, in that environment, was not conducive to good teaching. Had I stayed, the school, its pupils and I could have been the casualties. Let me not dwell on the unknown, or appear to justify why I lacked the power to ride the storm. In retrospect I am glad that I

made the decision and in my mind I have no doubt that it was more God's plan for me. I had followed my dad's advice and trusted in the lord.

What followed has been the happiest days served in my profession. I was successful in my application and reported for duty to a new school the following year (2000). Though the curriculum challenges remained, my teaching was motivated by the positive learning environment that prevailed amongst all the stakeholders at the school, teachers, pupils and parents. For the first time in many years, I had a mentor, my principal Miss St. George who I truly admire and from whom I have gained a wealth of management experience. My organisational and ability to cooperate with others developed rapidly under Miss St. George's leadership. I recall going to her on a Friday afternoon asking for an evaluation of my performance and trying to obtain any guidance as to how I could improve my practice. Her genuine passion, interest in the well-being of staff, compassion and understanding won my trust and I feel truly blessed to have her as my role model.

My new position brought with it a renewed zest for my job. My job description changed in that I was class based as opposed to being a specialist teacher. Whilst my work load had increased in that I taught a variety of learning areas and the grade that I now taught shifted from grade seven to six, my work load was still more manageable and the dedication of my learners provided the potion to toil tirelessly. Most importantly, I started to feel more at peace with myself, as the manner in which I was able to function in my new environment was more in sync with my values and beliefs as well as my personal expectations of job performance. The new feelings of self contentment provided clarity of many repressed feelings of the past, feelings that were repressed because attempts to address them had failed. I was able to focus on the real issues of teaching as opposed to constantly being burdened with the negativities of disciplinary matters. I spent a good deal of time especially during weekends and school holidays to develop a learning programme that addressed the needs of pupils studying isiZulu as an additional language.

## **The birth of a new learning programme**

The contentment of the mind, I discovered, is the perfect condition for the birth of new ideas. I began to see my practice with new lenses:

I believe that when people begin to study their own practice, they celebrate their own development as human beings whose values are independence of mind and action, as human beings who have come together on terms of equality and cooperation to achieve common goals, in relation to their educative influence in one another's lives (McNiff 2003:9).

My thirst for knowledge saw me attending several workshops (certificates can be found in the appendix); the knowledge gained formed the building blocks of my research. Apart from reading appropriate literature, I experimented with the introduction of different programmes using logic as well as intuition and creatively wove these into the theories and methodologies contained in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to path the way forward. Whilst working on the new programme, I was fortunate to attend the international conferences on Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as well as Multi-cultural education<sup>54</sup>, both conferences having a profound influence on the development and content of the language programme.

I devised detailed short and long term plans focussing on skills such as listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing and language structure. These were skills that were emphasized in the NCS. I chose themes that suited the age group of my learners and which promoted interaction amongst the learners.

The theme often contained a dialogue which pupils were encouraged to learn with emphasis being placed on understanding. Pupils listened carefully to the dialogue which was modelled to gain understanding of pronunciation and to comprehend the story. They then read the dialogue using a variety of methods, for example modelled reading, paired reading and shared reading. Pupils then performed these dialogues and they were encouraged to act them as mini plays, using any suitable props. This playful way of encouraging learners to

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<sup>54</sup> See Appendix 8

speak worked effectively and learners often inquired about when they would be doing the next oral. It was pleasing that the opportunities created for speaking was great fun for my learners yet previously they found it intimidating.

Pupils were also encouraged to learn for weekly spelling and vocabulary tests. These were marked and returned to them within a day. Once pupils were confident with role playing the dialogue, the focus shifted to grammar. The aspects that I chose to focus on were incorporated into the dialogue so the learners had already seen the rules at work. They had subconsciously learnt the rules and could apply them with ease. The translation activities, matching of words to pictures, crosswords and songs were tremendously enjoyed by my learners as it made learning fun. I also had a buddy system, where learners supported their peers in the language in which they were more confident.

As changes continue in South African education I also see shifts in the dominant language of my learners. English has replaced isiZulu as the spoken language in many Zulu households. As these changes occur so will I continue to adapt my teaching.

At the time of writing this thesis, the Department of Education yet again reviewed the NCS, and in the light of this further changes to my practice and the *Maye babo!* series were made. These are discussed in greater detail in Part 2 of this study.

## **Part 2**

**A methodological novel on the compilation of the *Maye babo!* series**



## Chapter 7: Introduction

### Re-searching the researcher

In this story, I am the researcher, and my journey in the teaching profession constitutes much of the data for my research. It is therefore vital for the background of this thesis to offer insight into my life history, my values as well as my professional experiences in teaching. Part 1 of this thesis encapsulates vividly some of my life experiences in an extended family household and offers a rationale for the values I hold both as a teacher and mentor, as well as in other roles I adopt in my daily living. This section of the thesis offers insight into the development of my teaching style, an understanding of which is necessary since it provides the rationale for the *theories* implied in the *Maye babo!* series. The time frames for writing the series and the thesis are the same, yet they are also different. The first version of the series took nearly a decade to write and was completed in 2008. The proposal for this thesis was submitted in December 2009. In 2010, the Department of Education (DoE), now known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE) announced that the curriculum (NCS) was reviewed and introduced CAPS<sup>55</sup>. The *Maye babo!* series were re-written to align it with CAPS in 2010 and 2011. Hence I rewrote the revised version of the series and this thesis intermittently.

### From follower to leader

As a first year teacher I was empowered with the theoretical methodologies on how to teach a language, but was nonetheless, unsure about how to create learning programmes that suited my learners' needs and future growth, particularly with regard to the speaking and writing of isiZulu. In retrospect, it is apparent to me that my teaching leaned heavily on the Communicative Language Approach (CLT) which replaced the Situational Approach in the 1980's (Richards and Rodgers 2001:146). I started my teaching career in 1986, and during

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<sup>55</sup> Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, a document regulated by the Department of Basic Education and published in 2011.

my early years as a teacher, I was hesitant to assert my own voice and understandably, lacked the confidence to make changes to the norm. I was a typical follower. I wanted to follow a textbook and do as I was told because I did not believe that I knew any better. I coped well with this practice in established subjects (that were part of the South African curriculum for decades before I was born) because there was superb guidance provided in textbooks, and the regular meetings held by subject advisors supported my teaching and kept me up to date with syllabus changes and new approaches to teaching. I was blissfully unaware of theories of how learning takes place and the importance of incorporating different learning styles to cater for the diversity of learners in my classroom, but in retrospect, I can see that it was to some extent detrimental for the learners in my classroom whose needs I did not meet. In my defence, I must add that I was distracted by challenges of a different sort, challenges that were brought about by the desegregation of schools which have been alluded to in Part one of this study.

My easy approach to teaching was not successful with isiZulu, which was a new subject at our school (and at all schools that previously did not admit Black learners due to the policy of segregated education during apartheid.) It lacked the vital resources such as textbooks and a grade by grade syllabus. In desperation, I tried to use resources that I had used at university, when I studied isiZulu for the first time. Needless to say, I discovered that this easy option was not successful. My ongoing search for a suitable textbook was in vain.

My experience and insight into the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language has quite understandably improved my knowledge pedagogy over the last two decades. I have taught isiZulu as an additional language to both mother tongue and non- mother tongue speakers of isiZulu as a combined group for nearly twenty years. During this time I made a concerted effort to educate myself and improve my knowledge pedagogy particularly by reading personal development books to give me the strength to overcome the many adversities that I , like many other teachers faced, as well as attending workshops relevant to teaching which helped to improve my *teacher awareness*. More importantly, I observed and listened to my learners' responses on what they found difficult to grasp, gained insight into their learning by marking their work, listening to oral presentations, and eavesdropping

on their verbal interactions with their peers, as well as meeting with their parents. Schön states:

Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is *in* our action (1995:49).

Daily reflection on my teaching (a habit instilled in my teacher training) empowered me with valuable insight into my learners' needs. An example of my reflective practice appears in the following excerpt. The comments I read in the 1998 diary<sup>56</sup> triggered a recollection of an incident which is not an isolated one, and one that was probably experienced by other additional language teachers.<sup>57</sup>

Larisha, a conscientious Grade 4 pupil, nervously struggles to pronounce the words for her oral on *Ngingubani?*<sup>58</sup> It is apparent to me (from her manner and expression) that she does not fully understand the meaning of what she probably struggled to memorise. I sense her nervousness and stop her gently, thanking her for the enormous effort she has evidently made in trying to memorise many of the long isiZulu words. I ask her if she understands the oral composition about herself which she seems to have painstakingly composed and, although she is reluctant to disappoint me, her honest reply confirms that she had memorised it without comprehension. That afternoon I wrote in my diary and reflected on this incident. I wondered about what I could do differently.

*...If a top achiever like Larisha cannot achieve the outcome for my lesson, then I cannot expect success from learners who lacked the same level of linguistic intelligence. I need to change my strategy. In order to do this, I need to know, exactly what aspects my learners find difficult.*

*I will share some of my difficult experiences while learning Zulu at university with them. I hope that they will feel comfortable to do likewise.*

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<sup>56</sup> The impetus to think on paper had come from the many books on personal development I had read, such as Covey (1989), and later Kehoe(2002), Sharma(2004).

<sup>57</sup> Ellis (2004) sees resonance as a useful feature in autoethnographic studies.

<sup>58</sup> *Ngingubani?* Is an isiZulu word which translates to *Who am I?*

I was amazed at what this simple exercise revealed about what my students found difficult, as shown by the following responses:

Sipho: I don't have a problem at all with the orals, it's the spelling tests that trouble me, because I am not used to writing in Zulu.

Themba: Me too, the spelling is hard. The words are so long. I also struggle with the reading. We don't have Zulu books at home.

Jamie: I can read well, and understand when you teach me, but find it hard to make sentences with the words. I have to think a lot about how to apply the rules and sometimes I am confused and don't know if I am using the right word. There is so much to remember all at once.

Neha: I enjoy the dialogues and I don't mind doing a dialogue in front of the class but when we have to do an oral on our own I get very nervous.

Larisha: I can learn a whole passage by heart, but I don't always understand what it means. The words in Zulu, as you have shown us, are often joined in a sentence, and this makes it difficult for me to understand the sentence. Zulu is so different from English.

Schön maintains that teachers need to be in touch with their students' concerns:

The best teacher will be he who has at his tongue's end the explanation of what it is that is bothering the pupil. These explanations give the teacher the knowledge of the greatest possible number of methods, the ability of inventing new methods and, above all, not a blind adherence to one method but the conviction that all methods are one-sided, and that the best method would be the one which would answer best to all the possible difficulties incurred by a pupil, that is, not a method but an art and talent (1995:66).

It took several incidents such as the one I describe above, and the reflection thereof, to propel me into changing the way in which I was teaching isiZulu. My reflection on my teaching produced astounding revelations that were sometimes embarrassing to acknowledge to myself and others. I was of the opinion then, that by graduating with a teaching degree and diploma, I would be able to teach. In retrospect I realise that my

narrow understanding of teacher knowledge and the lack of experience and tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983) prevented me from having an in depth understanding of *how* to teach. At times, I lacked the courage to ask for help, fearing judgement of a negative sort from my seniors, and at other times when I did pluck up the courage to make inquiries, not so much about a teaching approach, but rather about a programme of learning for isiZulu, my search often landed in a dead end – since a syllabus for teaching isiZulu as an additional language was nonexistent, and nor was there, to my knowledge, and that of my seniors, a subject advisor designated particularly for the supervision of isiZulu additional language to be found.

I realise now that I had to acknowledge failure and identify its root clearly, in order for improvement of my teaching to be forthcoming. I had to be honest with myself and respond to the unfulfilling thoughts that nagged in my head each night. My unsuccessful teaching style and its lack of delivery was out of sync with my values for caring and making a difference to the learners in my classroom. How could I expect them to respect me, and claim to be a good role model for them if my teaching lacked sincerity and the passion to address their needs? (In some respects I felt as incapacitated as I did when I was compelled to teach Afrikaans to Grade 7 learners who had never studied Afrikaans before.) This reflection provided the focus of study for aspects of my teaching that required address. Once I knew *what* needed to be done, my awareness to find ways of *how* to do this was raised. The heightened awareness resulted in the epiphanies I describe in this study which empowered me with the confidence to devise new ways to address my learners' needs, and this in turn, led to the compilation of my own learning programmes. As Schön points out, knowing in action is heightened by consciously reflecting on practice (1995:50).

I began to enjoy a sense of self satisfaction and fulfilment with my work. The rapport I had gained with my learners not only guided my teaching but established trust and honesty. The stress factor in the lessons gradually minimised once the communication channels between my learners and myself were open and this led to our classroom environment adopting a more relaxed, transparent and happier tone. I was not *afraid* to ask learners the

kind of questions that allowed me to track the effectiveness of my teaching, and they felt *safe* to ask questions which supported their learning.

Teaching experience played a pivotal role in my *learning to become* a teacher. As my confidence and knowledge grew, so did my energy improve to tackle the issues I grappled with in my teaching. I overcame the lack of a suitable textbook resource by creating my own learning programme. The absence of a syllabus (I gradually began to see), gave me the freedom to teach what I considered to be important. This brought with it the pressure to be accountable for whatever I introduced. I silently began to enjoy the self awarded shift I had made from teacher to isiZulu curriculum designer and began to entertain thoughts of writing my own textbooks for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. When the opportunity to write for a publisher arose at the workshop on Multicultural Education (adhered to in Part 1), I trusted that this was God's will for me and accepted the challenge.

Learning programmes that were successfully implemented in my classroom and which served my learners' needs in terms of improving their linguistic ability in both spoken and written isiZulu were used to compile the first series of textbooks I wrote for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language – the *Woza Funda* series. At that point in time, Curriculum 2005 was in operation in South African schools, so I was obliged to address its requirements especially since my publisher and I wanted my books to receive the endorsement of the Department of education. I have included the discourse of ZEST meetings in this section of my study to show how the theories prescribed in the NCS were applied in the *Maye babo!* series.

When the NCS was introduced, the series was revised and this paved the way for a new series, which addressed the requirements of the NCS, namely the *Maye babo!* series. The *Maye babo!* series was approved by the Provincial Education Department in five provinces and appears in the recommended LTSM<sup>59</sup> catalogue. Presently the series is used by several teachers and learners at a number of schools across the country. I host workshops on a regular basis to support teachers who (like me in my trainee days) require assistance. I

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<sup>59</sup> Learner teacher source material

have recorded minutes of these workshops and the discussions form part of the ethnographic scenes that follow. In 2010 the NCS was adapted once again and at the time of this study CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) was introduced. CAPS implementation dates in the Foundation Phase (Grade 0-3) and Grade 10 are January 2012, in the Intermediate Phase (4-6) and Grade 11, January 2013 and in the Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) and Grade 12 January 2014. The *Maye babo!* series was rewritten to satisfy the requirements of the CAPS. The rewriting of the *Maye babo!* series for the Foundation and Intermediate Phase was done concurrently with the completion of this thesis. The Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3) was submitted to the Department of Basic Education in June 2011. The Department of Basic Education decided to develop a national LTSM catalogue this time (previously each province had their own catalogue). The national evaluating team gave the new CAPS compliant *Maye babo!* series a very good rating and it was one of the two workbooks selected in the country for the DBE<sup>60</sup> National LTSM Catalogue. The Foundation Phase series was expanded to include ten graded readers for each grade, a phonics book for each grade, a CD containing songs for each grade and an educator's guide for each grade. In February 2012 the Intermediate Phase series was revised and extended to include readers and submitted to the DBE evaluators for CAPS screening. Future plans involve the publication of resources for the Senior Phase and extending the series of textbooks from Grade 8 to 12 with workbooks, readers and novels for each grade. This project has already commenced and it involves empowering other teachers to write. Regular meetings are held with these teachers and these form part of the ethnographic scenes adhered to in Part 2 of this study.

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<sup>60</sup> Department of Basic Education. The department indicated to publishers in 2011 that eight books in each category will be accepted for the National Catalogue which was introduced in 2011. Previously each province evaluated their own LTSM and there were separate catalogues for each province. Schools may use the funding provided by the DBE to buy approved LTSM which appear on the National Catalogue. Due to the stringent criteria demanded by the DBE, many books were rejected and only two series were approved for placement on the National Catalogue. The *Maye babo!* series was approved for the National Catalogue.

## Tools that aided me

There are several factors which include experiences and skills that aided both the compilation of the *Maye babo!* series as well as the writing of this thesis. These are discussed below. The writing of this thesis has given me the opportunity to identify them, and I humbly do so with the hope that it offers motivation to scholars and teachers. I had ambivalent feelings about listing these, because I did not want them to be seen as a prototype for teachers, nonetheless I felt a compulsion to continue because they provide meaning interpretation (Terre Blanche and Durrheim 1999:1) of my lived life and offer an understanding to the factors that played a significant role in the writing of the *Maye babo!* series.

Howard Gardner (1983)<sup>61</sup> describes eight types of multiple intelligences. Spiritual intelligence has more recently been recognised as a ninth intelligence by Emmons (2000). Gardner believes that each of us possess a variety of *smarts* (Armstrong 1999). In the process of reflecting on my journey from teacher to author and doctoral candidate, I have come to realise my own *smarts* (which function at different degree of strengths) include verbal/linguistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, logical, musical and spiritual.

My greatest aids in my quest to uplift the quality of teaching isiZulu as an additional language have been my ability to reflect thoroughly (intrapersonal) and honestly on my lessons and my problem solving capability (logical), together with my perseverance, personal values and will to make a difference in my profession (intrapersonal).

My Linguistic intelligence, demonstrated by my ability to communicate in four languages, namely English, isiZulu, Gujarathi and Afrikaans was also very useful. I often reflected on the teaching and learning strategies I engaged in both as a student and teacher, and borrowed and tweaked them to suit the teaching and learning of isiZulu. I borrowed ideas that worked well with the teaching of Afrikaans as an additional language and applied these to develop lesson plans for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. Memories of

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<sup>61</sup> Howard Gardner (1983), *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*



my personal experiences (Mitchell 2011)<sup>62</sup> of being a learner of isiZulu helped me to understand readily the difficulties that the non- mother tongue learners experienced. I identified with their initial nervousness of pronouncing words for fear of being laughed at or embarrassed, and how daunting a task it was for me to learn a language that had a language structure very different from the languages I had previously learned (English, Gujarathi and Afrikaans). I will shed more light on the influence that Gardner's Multiple Intelligence Theory has had in designing the learning programme contained in the series when we study the contents of the series in greater detail.

Interpersonal (social) skills were useful when learning took place in a professional group setting. I have kept minutes of meetings I have attended, with colleagues at other schools who teach isiZulu as an additional language, and this support and exchange of ideas has played a supportive role for all the members of our group. For this reason, I have chosen some of these ethnographic scenes for the fictional account that follows.

A prominent feature of the *Maye babo!* series is the use of songs to promote the learning of both pronunciation and vocabulary. My interest in music as a member of the school recorder group and study of music (as an examination subject) at secondary school level was resourceful and empowered me with the skill and confidence to write my own songs.

Religion and my faith in God (spiritual) is the guiding force in my teaching and daily life. When the 'going got tough', I offered prayer, trusted in the Lord, and sometimes even tried speaking to the Lord asking for guidance<sup>63</sup>, such as when I wanted to quit the teaching profession. My morning routine includes a prayer to Mother Saraswathie, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, asking Her to give me the power and strength to do my best to serve Her.

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<sup>62</sup> This research explores links between memory and pedagogy.

<sup>63</sup> Described on page 105 and 123 of this thesis.

## **Autoethnography and the *Maye babo!* series**

Combining literary and ethnographic techniques allows me to create a story to engage readers in methodological concerns in the same way a novel engages readers in its plot (Ellis 2004: xx).

This story is set in a series of classes on the use of the *Maye babo!* series. It combines fictional and ethnographic scenes. It showcases the teaching strategies and methodology of teaching isiZulu as an additional language to primary school learners at South African Schools mandated to follow the NCS. The series of classes are attended by teachers of isiZulu who have formed a support group to assist each other in the teaching of isiZulu. None of these teachers have been trained as isiZulu language teachers. Some of them have training for the teaching of Afrikaans and English while others have no training as teachers and have been appointed to their position as teachers on the basis of their linguistic ability in isiZulu. During the workshops, I make reference to documents that were provided at the teacher training meetings held specifically for the implementation of the NCS. Unless otherwise stated, the information pertaining to the NCS that is discussed with the support group has been obtained at these meetings.

I have recomposed and re-sequenced significant *aha moments* in my teaching career so that they follow the natural flow of a story designed to engage readers in the methodology employed in the *Maye babo!* series including the NCS. In this way, I adhere to the curriculum requirements as stated in the NCS, and more recently in CAPS. I am also able to reflect on teaching guidelines in general and address some of the crucial issues that educators face on a day to day basis – issues which pertain to general classroom management and which are often taken for granted and not addressed at teacher training courses. Most of the scenes in the stories that follow are based on ethnographic details and while some scenes are fictional, they could have happened.

Vignettes have been useful in facilitating reflection of teachable moments experienced in my career and document data from my research (Spalding and Phillips 2007:954). They encapsulate my fieldwork findings in a way that helps bring the data to life creatively, and

promote understanding and meaning in a lively and interacting way. The use of vignettes has revealed me, the writer and researcher (to myself and the reader). I portray myself as the interpreter of events. I therefore need to state at the forefront that like with other forms of data collection, in composing these vignettes, I am aware and wish for the reader to know that selection, sequencing and interpretation has taken place. They therefore provide a mediated account of the truth.

## **How the support group (ZEST) started**

It's a bright Saturday morning and I'm awakened as usual by the call of the birds in the garden and the natural bush on the vacant property that surrounds our home. I delight in the pleasure of not following my daily routine and linger in bed, attempting to decode the chatter of the variety of bird calls. Despite my vivid imagination, I surrender in defeat and commence with my mundane early morning routine of body care. An hour later, I am seated in the dining area in our open plan home, day dreaming in front of the magnificent swimming pool and indulging in my favourite breakfast- an avocado sandwich with whole wheat bread accompanied by side salad and a mug of tea. My mind drifts to the pleas for assistance in the teaching of isiZulu with reference to the NCS, made at the workshop I held the previous afternoon. Maggie, in particular was vociferous in her call to form a support group for teachers of isiZulu. I was startled to uncover the sense of confusion that was experienced by an overwhelming number of educators that attended the workshop.

The traditional role of a teacher, who was previously given a syllabus to follow, had suddenly been elevated to curriculum designer with very little training. Most teachers were baffled by the theoretical jargon<sup>64</sup> as well as the administrative overload. The curriculum consisted of eight learning areas, each with their own learning outcomes (LO) (an average of five per learning area), and hundreds of assessment standards (AS) (skills) which had to be assessed, recorded and the evidence thereof, stored. Teachers were required to develop learning programmes within a phase (three specified grades), work schedules, assessment and lesson plans for the forthcoming year and submit them to the school management team

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<sup>64</sup> These are unpacked in the ethnographic scenes that follow with members of the ZEST group.

at the beginning of the year. These documents had to indicate the LO, AS, time frames, resources, activities, assessment (i.e. form, method and technique used). Assessment tasks had to be planned for the year, and dates given to parents. Transparent, detailed feedback to the child was demanded from the teacher and this had to be forwarded to parents for their scrutiny. Teachers were required to network in their districts and set common assessment tasks which were moderated by other teachers at the meeting.

I recall the conversation with Maggie in my mind. I am about to pour myself a second mug of tea when the telephone rings.

Maggie: Hello Mrs Soni, its Maggie. Do you remember me? I attended your workshop yesterday.

I am astounded by the coincidence, and respond.

Sumi: Hello Maggie, I know this might sound clichéd but I've just been thinking about what you said yesterday.

Maggie: I'm glad you are giving some thought to our discussion. I am one of a group of teachers that would really like your assistance in the teaching of isiZulu.

Sumi: Well Maggie, as I told you yesterday, my reason for writing the *Maye babo!* series is to assist teachers such as yourself. I have experienced the same confusion of not knowing where to begin, so I fully understand your concerns. Perhaps we should form a support group of teachers who teach in our area. Ummm... (I pause for a moment while trying to think how this will fit into my weekly schedule). I have extra mural Maths on Mondays, Tuesdays are reserved for management meetings, Wednesdays are my Me days, reserved for things I love doing like line dancing, and Thursdays – yes, that's a good possibility because Fridays are booked for grade or staff meetings). I am available on Thursdays between three and five in the afternoon. I hope that suits you, Maggie.

Maggie: Believe me Mrs Soni, I will cancel or move my appointments if I have to. I am desperate for help. I have two friends who are interested. May I invite them?

- Sumi: Certainly. I'll fax an invitation to other teachers who have made a similar request. There is a lot of talk in the press about OBE and I think that the public is being misled that it is going to be thrown out of the curriculum. Sometimes I wonder if the reporters understand what OBE is. So often it is considered to be synonymous to the NCS when in actual fact, it is only one of the five principles of the NCS. (We discuss a few issues that require address and I make a suggestion). I would like to discuss the four principles of OBE and compare it to the draft version of the CAPS document. I will also use the first session for introductions and for teachers to raise their concerns so that I can plan the future sessions around these concerns. I think it will be a good idea to submit our concerns about the curriculum to the DBE. I have the details of the website.
- Maggie: That's a great idea. I am a little confused about the media reports too. Last week, I read that OBE is going to be scrapped, and then last night the minister of education, Angie Motshekga is quoted again as saying that it is not scrapped, but tweaked. (We giggle as we gossip on the influence of politics on education). Thank you very much Mrs. Soni, I think this is a good starting point.
- Sumi: It's a pleasure. Please call me Sumi. I think we can begin on the first Thursday next month. This will give everybody enough time to be informed. We can meet at Hope Primary School (pseudo name) where I teach. I am sure my classroom will be suitable, besides I have all my resources there.
- Maggie: That sounds wonderful. I am very grateful for this opportunity. I look forward to it.
- Sumi: The pleasure is mine. Take care, Maggie.

As I hang up the telephone a feeling of uncertainty grips me. Will I cope? I begin to juggle my responsibilities in my head and smile as I recall my late dad's words: "Where there's a will, there's a way". I know that once I commit to something, I always find a way to make it work. Besides, my family of five is shrinking. Manish, my son is now working in Johannesburg, and Sonal my daughter has moved to Pietermaritzburg to study BSc in

Dietetics. This leaves just the three of us at home – my daughter Nishkal, who is studying law and who enjoys cooking, (very useful to me), my husband Moss who allows me the freedom to pursue my dreams and me. Helping teachers like Maggie requires enormous effort on my part. What gives me the motivation to give my time which I am usually so possessive of, to this cause? I mull through a few reasons in my mind. Hinduism, my religion, preaches that it is our dharma (life duty) to share our gifts for the betterment of all mankind. These workshops will be my contribution to the promotion of the teaching of isiZulu. Furthermore, as author of the *Maye babo!* series, I feel obliged to support the teachers who use my books. The motivation for writing the series was to make a difference in the teaching of isiZulu so how can I refuse Maggie's sincere call for assistance?

During a discussion with Dee and Liz, I recall stating that sometimes during my meetings and workshops, several teachers ask me questions about policies and confuse me for the Education Department's facilitator. I recall Dee saying that it is because I am the Department's surrogate facilitator. I pondered over this title, and wrote the following in my diary<sup>65</sup>.

*Date: 04/10/2011,*

*It's October yet no CAPS training done for teachers in KZN. Some talk about training next term but no dates confirmed. I wonder whether it will be general workshops on CAPS or for individual subjects. B (my colleague) says that the one I am organizing on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at our school for isiZulu teachers and managers will be well attended because there is great confusion and concern in this area. (At present, most primary schools offer three languages. CAPS requirement is that only two languages be taught within the time allotted for languages on the school time-table. This has major implications for schools).*

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<sup>65</sup> More than 100 teachers attended the workshop mentioned in the diary and many of them approached me after the workshop to personally thank me for taking the initiative to offer support to teachers. Several teachers expressed their anxiety about changing to CAPS prior to the workshop.

*Date: 05/10/2011, teacher's day.*

*I was touched by the beautiful sms that A sent for teacher's day. (It reads):*

*"As a teacher you have been a friend, nurturer, doctor, counsellor, educator to many. U have contributed to our nation. God bless u for your commitment to the children of our land. Have a wonderful day. U r valued and appreciated. Angie" (my school principal)*

I received this message while working on the concluding chapter of this thesis, and I was emotionally overwhelmed, more particularly for how it merged with the thoughts about this study. Another co-incidence?

## **Class One Introductions and NCS**

### **The support group**

Nine teachers in total were invited to join the support group. Seven teachers responded positively. Aasha and Maggie are good friends. They studied together at university and are newly qualified teachers. Dave and Sibongile teach at neighbouring schools and have been working closely with one another. Martha sits alone and reads the charts on the wall and does not seem to know anybody. Muzi and Doris who live in the same neighbourhood walk in hurriedly into my classroom, as I am about to begin.

Sumi: Hello everyone, and welcome to our school. I do hope you find my classroom comfortable. My principal has kindly supplied refreshments for us. Please help yourselves.

### **Character introductions and an expression of concerns in practice**

Sumi: I am Sumi Soni. I have been teaching isiZulu for more than two decades now, and I have also created my own series, the *Maye babo!* series. During our meetings, I hope to share my experiences on how I devised the learning material in the series and you will see how it addresses the curriculum requirements. I will be revising the series soon, and will appreciate feedback on the series from you. If any of you are keen to be co-writers I will be happy to accept help with creating readers for the intermediate phase. I hope to grow further through our discussions and by exchanging ideas with you. It is my wish that we will develop our teaching through the support we offer each other at our weekly meetings and in so doing feel better equipped in our practices as teachers and in our own professional development.

Everybody claps in agreement and the visible nods and affirmative chatter fills me with a sense that these meetings are going to be rewarding for *all* the members.



Sumi: Perhaps we should give our group a name, and we should have a motto as well as a mission statement. This will guide us towards our individual and collective goals. I know that you are each making a tremendous sacrifice to be here. I value this, and your dedication to the teaching profession. I suggest we start with a group discussion on these issues. If we know why we are here, and what we want to achieve, and keep this in clear sight, we will be destined to achieve the results we desire from our weekly meetings. I also suggest that we establish a few basic ground rules. (Once the ground rules are established I suggest a name for the group). I gave some thought to a name for our support group. I tried to imagine the kind of spirit we should have and thought of the name ZEST. My perception is for our meetings to be filled with enjoyment as we discuss the promotion of a common interest. How do you feel?

Sibongile: Ummm..... I like that, just the kind of thing I would like from this group.

Dave: Sounds like you have given a great deal of thought to this whole thing. What did you intend the individual letters to stand for, Sumi?

I use the chalkboard to explain.

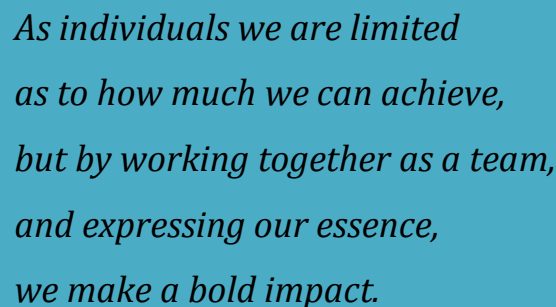


Photograph 16 *ZEST Acronym*

Muzi: I agree with Dave. Sumi, it must have taken you ages to come up with this idea.

I smile and am glad that the name is well received, yet I am keen to hear the ideas of other members of the group.

Sumi: I suggest you give it some thought. It should be a joint decision. We don't have to settle on this issue today.....and I also thought that our mission statement should be something that reminds us of the strength of our unity. Whenever I conduct workshops at schools, I always start with this quote:



*As individuals we are limited  
as to how much we can achieve,  
but by working together as a team,  
and expressing our essence,  
we make a bold impact.*

Photograph 17 *Philosophy for teachers (source unknown)*

I project the quote on the screen and read it.

Sumi: I think it is a useful philosophy for teachers to adopt. If we can practise it, we will be able to lessen our overburdened work load.

Maggie: So what you're saying is that our mission is to help one another.

Sumi: That's exactly it. As I said, this is a suggestion, *we* must decide, not *me*.

Aasha: I think it describes why we are meeting very simply. It serves our interest for now, so I am happy with it. I don't think I can think of anything else.

Martha: I just got an idea for our motto. *Together with ZEST.*

Muzi: You guys are brilliant. That includes our name and gives a hint of our mission. I like it.

Sumi: I still think that we should mull it over in our heads and finalise this next week. Let's move on with introductions. I will begin. I am presently studying towards a doctorate degree in language practice at the Durban University of Technology. I will tell you more about my research topic at our next meeting because I would like each of you to play a role in it. I suggest we keep the introductions brief for today since most of us have met before. Please elaborate on what topics you would like addressed at future meetings, or what concerns you in your practice as an isiZulu educator. I want to reserve some time for a discussion on OBE today, if possible, because there has been so much misinterpretation in the media recently about what it is. Last week I told my doctorate supervisor, Dr. Pratt that I feel like writing to the editor of one of the newspapers and offer to assist them to publish an article to clarify this issue.

A rising chatter amongst several pairs in the group emerges with an explicit communication of personal views and interpretations of OBE. I did not plan on having this discussion so early in the meeting, but I decide to seize the teachable moment like I do during my lessons with my learners, because I sense that a lot of teachers want to give vent to their feelings (Havighurst's "teachable moment", in Posner, Hawkins, Garcia-Espana and Durbin, 2004:1606).<sup>66</sup> This is the unintended bonus of our weekly meetings, I tell myself. As the chatter begins to fade, Sibongile asks for my opinion of OBE.

Sumi: I think, that like it is with everything in life, you need to take a balanced approach, with regard to what extent, you teach the OBE way, and as a teacher, you also need to see what works for you in your context. By this I mean that you must consider the type of learners you have, the resources you have available for you and your learners, such as school structures, and support services. Well equipped schools with good teacher expertise, libraries and

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<sup>66</sup> A "teachable moment" is an unplanned moment in teaching where learners display an interest and desire to learn, or make inquiries on a related topic that may not have been planned for in the lesson.

laboratories, internet access, small classes, an educated and supportive parent community promote the implementation of OBE methodology<sup>67</sup>. Personally, I have taken what works for me in my context from OBE and adapted it together with other teaching methods I adopt in my teaching.<sup>68</sup>

OBE methodology encourages educators to take cognisance of the diversity of learner strengths, (Gardner 1993) interests, backgrounds, needs and learning styles (Armstrong 2009). In teaching, there is no *one size fits all* (Barnett 2000), therefore it is important for educators to be aware of what works for them and their learners in their teaching and living environment. A good teacher is observant and constantly reflects on her teaching, or his (I quickly add in response to Dave's mischievous attempt to be acknowledged). Reflection helps me to recognise the diversity of my learners, as well as the strengths and weaknesses in my teaching programme (Schön 1995; Whitehead 1999). Once the needs of my learners are recognised, I plan lessons to address these needs. OBE allows me the *freedom* to do this because I can select my learning content according to my learners' needs or interests.

The thing I like best about OBE is its emphasis on developing skills and values, as opposed to being knowledge driven and in this way it prepares learners for their future in the workplace and the social and community roles they will encounter. In my days as a scholar, which was during the apartheid era, the emphasis was on learning facts and regurgitating them during tests and examinations. If you did not have good memorising skills your education was doomed,...a definite failure. I like the new focus on the application of knowledge since it equips a learner for life. Knowledge learned without application can be forgotten over time, skills remain with us forever, but they do need to be practised (Sticht, Beck, Hauke, Kleiman and James 1974). Just now, you discussed your feelings on OBE. I am sure you got a better understanding of it through the discussion, and it prompted you to think and

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<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately most South African schools lack these resources as stated by Vally in Serrao (2009) in Appendix 3.

<sup>68</sup> A prerequisite for the success of OBE is teacher expertise.

reflect and give your own voice on the topic. This is precisely what is intended when you teach the OBE way. You, as the learners, were active participants and not passive listeners, and by participating in the discussion, you got a deeper insight into the topic.

Dave: What you say is very true, but why has the standard of education in South African Schools deteriorated since the introduction of OBE?

Sumi: I was about to say, that there has to be a good balance between skills and knowledge or else there is danger of overemphasizing the importance of skills to the detriment of learners who may not memorise knowledge. There is an important place for knowledge as well as skills in education. Basic knowledge, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy, must be taught or drilled if necessary to enable learners to engage in activities which promote the acquisition of skills. For example, one of the reasons for the ZEST meetings is to develop our teaching skills, with particular reference to isiZulu. If we did not know how to communicate in a common language, we would be unable to engage in discussions (Daily News: July 8, 2011).<sup>69</sup> In my opinion, this is the root cause of the failure of OBE in South African schools. The rainbow nation of learners at racially integrated schools, particularly at primary school level need to share and be fluent in a common language as this is a basic prerequisite for the acquisition of skills. If we want to educate pupils to compete in the global world, then we need to seek ways in which to promote literacy in English from an early age. Ethnic languages must be the additional language status, and not the language of teaching and learning (LoLT).<sup>70</sup> I am pleased that the new CAPS document prescribes English as the LoLT from Grade 4. Furthermore, there will only be one additional language. In 2012, when CAPS is introduced

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<sup>69</sup> The journalist, Greg Dardagan, makes reference to comments by Professor Michael Samuel, Dean of the Education Faculty at the University of KwaZulu-Natal who states that a high level of early literacy in the mother tongue is required to improve the latest literacy statistics in South Africa where the national average for Grade 6 is 28 percent.

<sup>70</sup> South Africa lacks the resources and infrastructure to provide education in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase in 11 official languages. Pupils who study in their mother tongue (excluding English) and who are not fluent in English, experience challenges since not much resource material exists for learners in most of the indigenous South African languages. The (LoLT) at most FET institutions is English.

in the Foundation Phase, the additional language will be taught from Grade 1. I think that the Language in Education Policy (LiEP)<sup>71</sup> needs revision. The decision by the DBE to allow the governing body of a school to decide the language policy of the school could prove problematic for learners when they transfer from one school to another. Perhaps the time has come for South Africa to reduce the nine official languages it presently has. India had a similar problem until it made a decision to have two main languages, English and Hindi. According to the 2001 Census statistics, isiZulu is the most commonly spoken indigenous language in the country. Perhaps our two official languages should be English and isiZulu.

Oh dear, I tend to be drifting from our topic to *Why OBE is failing in South African schools and what should our official languages be?*<sup>72</sup> I promise we will have more discussion on OBE later this evening. I do feel we need to quickly introduce ourselves. Who wants to go next?

Maggie pushes herself forward and sits upright so that she is in full view of everyone.

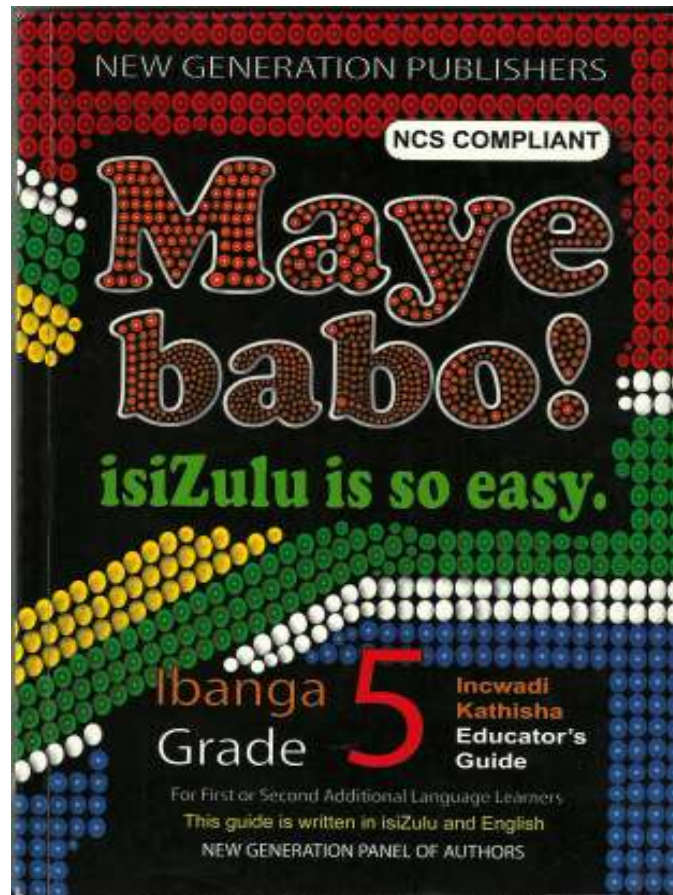
Maggie: Hi everybody. I am Maggie. I teach at Peacevale Primary School. This is my second year of teaching. I studied isiZulu at university and have been given the undeserving title of an isiZulu specialist teacher. I completed my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) two years ago. I like teaching isiZulu, however I feel overwhelmed with this task, particularly because I don't have adequate training or experience to teach it. I have just started using the *Maye babo!* series, but I think I need further insight into the methodology you use.

Sumi: (I hold up the Grade 5 book.) Have you read the educator's guide? (Soni 2007)

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<sup>71</sup> Department of Education:1997b

<sup>72</sup> The danger of teachable moments is that they can lead the teacher astray and lose the sequence, planned for in the programme of learning. It requires good teacher awareness and discipline in its use.



Photograph 18 *Grade 5 Maye babo!* cover

Maggie: Not yet. I have glanced through it. I hope you don't mind me saying this, but I find it difficult to comprehend, particularly all the theory in the NCS. I hope that our meetings will give me further clarity on compiling a learning programme that is NCS or perhaps I should say CAPS friendly and well suited for my learners.

Sumi: Your comment about the educator guide is justified given the fact that we have a very sophisticated curriculum, Maggie. It is sometimes referred to as a Rolls Royce Curriculum, a term it earned for its sophisticated quality. The guide *can* be quite intensive, particularly for a new teacher who has not received training on the NCS. In my role as head of department at my school, I have offered workshops to the teachers at our school. In order to do this, I had to have an in depth understanding of the NCS. The writing of the *Maye babo!* series

involved an application of the theories in the production of the learning programmes. While the *Maye babo!* educator guides<sup>73</sup> promote a basic understanding of the NCS, it was not written to replace teacher training on the NCS. I guess you are eager to understand the NCS to see how you can address its requirements in your teaching.

Maggie gives an affirmative nod and nudges her friend Aasha to go next.

Sumi: I think that will be a good place to start, thank you Maggie.

Aasha: Hello, I'm Aasha. Like Maggie, I am in my second year of teaching. I teach Zulu, Maths and English in Grade 4. My mum is also a teacher, and she says that she does not think that OBE is new. She says she has always used the outcomes based approach. I'm confused about why people complain that it does not work. I did not do a methodology course on how to teach isiZulu, and I hope that I can get more clarity through these workshops, because like Maggie, I have also just started using the *Maye babo!* series. My mum glanced at it the other day and said it is quite a creative way of applying the NCS. She mentioned the principles of the curriculum. I suppose we will be looking at them more closely at some point.

Sumi: Yes we will Aasha.... and your mum has a point. I read an article in the *Mail and Guardian* (Lourens 2010:50)<sup>74</sup> which says that OBE was in practice by good teachers 30 to 40 years ago. Lourens makes this remark with reference to the planning aspect of OBE and maintains that good teachers have always planned what they want to achieve and endeavour to reach their objectives. I agree that planning is an essential aspect of teaching, but the level of detailed planning enforced in the name of OBE has for me, been a teaching nightmare. I am a Grade 4, class based teacher<sup>75</sup> so I (like the millions of other teachers), am

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<sup>73</sup> An educator guide has been written for each of the learner books Grade 1 – 7). It includes all the planning documents, (work schedules, lesson plans, assessment plans as well as exemplars of recording sheets and rubrics for use during assessments.

<sup>74</sup> Article in Appendix 18

<sup>75</sup> Class based teachers usually teach most of the learning areas to one class of learners.



expected to do all this detailed planning in all the learning areas I teach, in my case it is seven because I do not teach Art and Culture.

Sibongile: I am class based as well ... oh! Sorry, I need to introduce myself - for those of you who don't know me, I am Sibongile. I teach most of the subjects in my class. I teach Grade 5. I find it difficult to prepare and plan lessons in so many different subjects. The administrative work expected of us is unrealistic. Just think about it carefully. The NCS names eight learning areas, but it is actually twelve. There is English, Zulu and Afrikaans, which are grouped together as Languages,<sup>76</sup> History and Geography which are grouped as Social Science, Music/Drama and Art which are grouped as Art and Culture, and then Maths, EMS, NS, Technology and Life Orientation. I find the planning and assessment of the hundreds of skills, not forgetting the paper trail that goes with it so exhausting that I have little energy left for the actual lesson which is the most important part to me. I'm so glad that there is talk of just one file for each educator and for the administrative load to be reduced. (Appendix 3, 4, 11, 12)

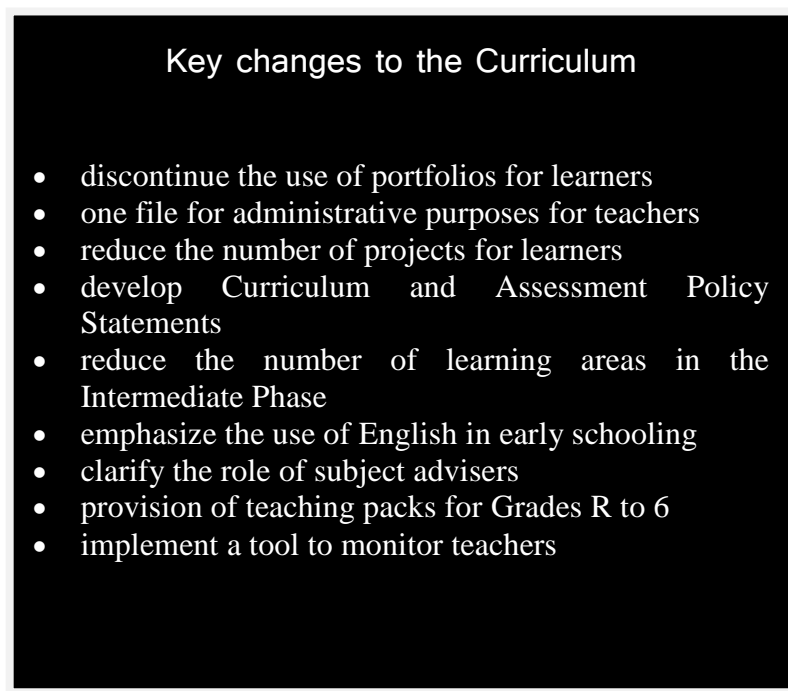
Dave: One file, that is absolutely ridiculous. Oops! Hi everybody, I'm Dave. I used to teach Afrikaans but last year I was given the option of switching to isiZulu or become redundant at my school and possibly move to a school further away from home, so you all probably know what I chose. Going back to what I was saying, yesterday, I read an article, urr...I think it was in the monthly newspaper supplement, *The Teacher* where it stated that teachers are required to keep just one file. When you take a look at what has to be included in that *one* file, you realise that it will be *one* extraordinary, gigantic file. Sibongile, can you imagine keeping one file for all the learning areas you teach? It is impossible, if you ask me. This is somebody's idea of making it look like the administrative load of teachers is lighter ... and have you heard of the basic school bag. How is this going to happen? When will the books be delivered?

Sumi: I have an article similar to the one you are referring to Dave. I found it on the internet. (I find the article and project it). Look at this article entitled *South*

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<sup>76</sup> This learning area is called Literacy in the Foundation Phase (Grade R-3).

*Africa -changes to schooling in 2010* dated November 10, 2009.<sup>77</sup> (Appendix 11) It addresses some of the key issues<sup>78</sup> we have discussed as well as the distribution of workbooks. (As I continue, I write the key changes on the board). I feel a need to emphasize the relationship between CAPS and NCS.



Photograph 19 *Key changes to the curriculum*

The new curriculum is still called the NCS and CAPS is one of the three policies of the NCS- the other two are the National policy for the programme and promotion requirements and the National Protocol for Assessments.

Sibongile: I thought that NCS was given the *death sentence*.

Sumi: This is a huge misconception amongst educators and it is for this reason that I felt a need to clarify this.

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<sup>77</sup> <http://freenetafrica.com/node/1097#main-content>

<sup>78</sup> These address many of the issues that teachers (like Sibongile) have had difficulty with. It points to the assumption that CAPS is in this way, a move in the right direction.

Let us focus on completing the introductions now. Some of you have been silent all evening.

Muzi has been quiet for most of the evening. I signal to him to go next.

Muzi: Sanibona bothisha. NginguMuzi.<sup>79</sup>

All: Sawubona Muzi. Siyajabula ukukwazi.<sup>80</sup>

Muzi smiles and continues.

Muzi: I am a part time teacher at Funda Kahle<sup>81</sup> Primary School. I only teach isiZulu. I am not yet a qualified teacher. I am studying towards a diploma in teaching at UNISA this year. I know isiZulu, but I need help on how to teach it to children. I find it difficult to teach the non- mother tongue speakers. I am constantly receiving letters from their parents stating that their children find my lessons difficult to understand and that I should please explain things again. This does not do much for my reputation as a teacher. I need to do much better if I want to secure a permanent job when I qualify.

I would like to learn to draw up a learning programme, particularly for children who do not speak isiZulu at home. I can identify with some of their difficulties because it reminds me about the time when I struggled with Afrikaans at school, nevertheless, I really don't know how to help them. I hope I can get some guidance at these workshops. I will be really grateful if we could discuss how to go about planning lessons that are in line with the NCS or CAPS. I did not have the opportunity to attend any of the training sessions the department organised. My head of department gave me a big file with all the documents, but I really don't understand it and I haven't got a clue on how to apply all this stuff in my teaching. (Maggie pats him on the back and whispers, what appears to be words of comfort, to him. Muzi looks at her with a thankful smile and continues).

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<sup>79</sup> Hello teachers. I am Muzi.

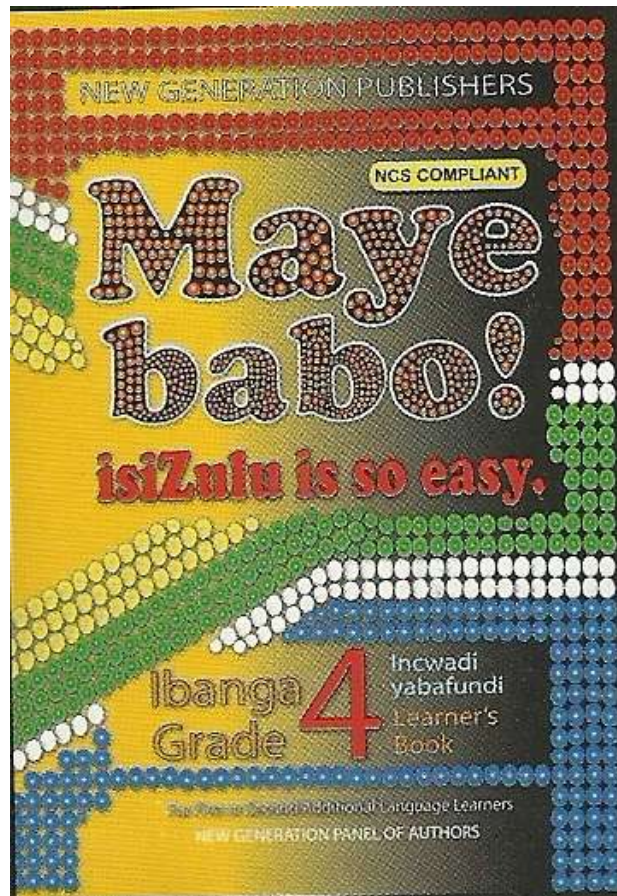
<sup>80</sup> Hello Muzi. We are pleased to meet you.

<sup>81</sup> Learn well

I would like to hear more about the *Maye babo!* series. (Muzi smiles as he names the series.) What an unusual name! Why *Maye babo!*?

Aasha: That's what I want to know too. My mum asked me what the title meant, and I was embarrassed to tell her that I did not know.

Muzi: I know that it means Good heavens. I'm curious as to why the series was given such an unusual name. Did you choose it, Sumi?



Photograph 20 *Grade 4 cover of Maye babo! learner's book*

Sumi: Yes, I did, Muzi. (I pick up the Grade 4 learner's book, Soni 2007) from my table and explain by pointing to the title.) It was no easy task. From the first time I came across the exclamation, *Maye babo!* I liked it. I found it to be catchy, particularly if you say it in a surprised tone of voice. To obtain the

intended meaning, you have to read it with what follows, like this. (I read the title as I point to the individual words.) *Maye babo!* isiZulu is so easy. The dual language (isiZulu and English) title was deliberate, to convey the dual language style of the series.

Muzi: Ohhh! So that's what it means. Good heavens, isiZulu is so easy. Sorry, I feel foolish. You see... I did not see the cover before, I only heard about the book today and nobody used the dual language title.

Muzi puts his hand over his mouth and shakes his head expressing a sense of embarrassment. Muzi's reaction encourages me to reflect on why we as teachers (in particular) get embarrassed when we don't know things. I wonder if it comes from a notion of teacher identity as one who is supposed to know. I adopted this notion as a young teacher, but have since dropped this façade and embraced the fact that I do not know all there is to know. Once I adopted this attitude and made it known to my students, I found (quite ironically) that my confidence grew and I was prepared for any unexpected question with a response such as – I'm not sure why that happens, let's look it up.

Aasha: I'm glad you clarified that Muzi. Now I can convey the answer to my mum. I think it's a lovely title.

Sumi: Thanks Aasha. Muzi you have given me the opportunity to clarify the rationale for the title. Thank you for this. Now going back to your other concerns Muzi, your story reminds me of how insecure I felt in my first year of teaching because I lacked the tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1983)<sup>82</sup> to put the theories I had learned into practise. Fortunately, I had an aunt who was a senior teacher and my mentor. I remember calling her at least twice a week for assistance on how to plan my lessons or tackle issues of discipline. Teaching is one of those professions that can be quite daunting as a junior teacher because there are not many in service support programmes available that address the needs of newly qualified teachers.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore during my early teaching, there were not as

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<sup>82</sup> Tacit knowledge involves learning and skill, and it is transferred through personal contact and trust.

<sup>83</sup> This is the role of a management member at a school, but in many schools, their status is reduced to class teacher. They therefore do not have the time or energy to mentor junior teachers.

many curriculum changes to contend with. I had a chance to settle into the profession before the rapid onslaught of changes took place. I can understand why you are so overwhelmed with the present situation. Some of my colleagues who were experienced teachers, close to the retirement age opted for the early retirement option offered to senior teachers in 1997 (Maluleka 2011:6) when there was talk of major changes to the education system.

I promise you teaching know-how improves with experience, in the same way as the skill to ride a bicycle improves with practise, and through attendance at support group sessions such as this one, you will gradually learn the *tricks of the trade*. I will focus a lot on the NCS and CAPS and how the series addresses the curriculum. This will help you to create your own learning programmes.

Theories cannot be taught in isolation (Polanyi 1983). During the training session I attended, we worked in groups and interpreted the theories and principles of the NCS. Thereafter we were given a task to show how we can apply the principles to compose our own learning programmes. The practical sessions were very useful, but only for those teachers who were able to grasp the theory<sup>84</sup> and for those who showed initiative in trying to apply it<sup>85</sup>. These sessions were designed to ensure that we had a good conceptual understanding of the policy documents and gave us an opportunity to clarify issues that we were not sure of. I'm sure you feel the same way, when you work with new knowledge. You gain a better understanding when you apply it, like we did at the training sessions. This is why I agree that the shift of focus in the new curriculum from testing content, facts and figures, to developing skills through the application of knowledge is a step in the right direction.

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In the days when I was a scholar, heads of department did not have their own class, and they were given contact time to mentor and assist teachers.

<sup>84</sup> My advantage was that I had already processed the theory through my own reading of the material which I received from my sister, a teacher in the province of Gauteng. As a school manager, it was my responsibility to guide teachers on how to apply the new curriculum. During the December holiday, I read and made the notes for meetings that were to follow at our school. Teachers from our school who were also present at these meetings shared this advantage.

<sup>85</sup> At the workshops I attended, the interest of teachers ranged from those teachers that furiously tried to write down every word uttered by the facilitators to those who fell asleep or sought the first opportunity to leave early.

Doris, tell us about your interest in joining this group.

Doris: Sanibona.<sup>86</sup> I am Doris. I really think all this is a waste of my good time. I am here because my principal insists I attend. I don't have a problem with my teaching, but my principal complains that the isiZulu marks are always low. He needs to tell that to the children. They don't want to learn so that is not my problem. My teaching hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Why must I attend these meetings? It's not like I am being paid for my time, and frankly it's a huge inconvenience. Anyway, I have been teaching isiZulu as a home language for the past fifteen years. I have lots of worksheets, so I don't need much help.

I sense uneasiness in the group and quickly respond.

Sumi: Well maybe you can share what works for you with the rest of us.

I glance at Maggie who is trying very hard not to burst with laughter.

Sumi: I also suggest that you explore the difficulties experienced by your pupils more carefully. I, personally, would be hesitant to use worksheets I designed for home language learners when teaching isiZulu as an additional language. With a home language, the pupil is conversant in the language at school entry level. Most of the pupils that I teach have little or no knowledge of isiZulu. As teachers we need to be aware of this and ensure that our pace of teaching is in coherence with the needs of our learners. If it is too fast, they could lose their confidence and develop a negative attitude to the subject. We need to pace our teaching and supply our learners with the relevant 'crutches' so that they will feel supported, motivated and gradually develop competence. The NCS (Department of Education 2002a) uses the term *progression* to describe the gradual shift in the level of difficulty of a learning programme from one grade to the next, and within a grade. Let me explain this by using examples from the *Maye babo!* series. We must start with the simple things and then move on to things that are more complex. Teachers who have been using the series, will

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<sup>86</sup> Hello all (a plural form of greeting in isiZulu).

recall that a theme that addresses *Greetings*, appears in each of the learner's book in the series. In Grade 3 (Soni 2007:2-13) it is linked to Sawubona (*Hello*); Grade 4 (Soni 2007:2-18) Ukubingelela; Grade 5 (Soni 2007:3-30) *Hlangana nomngane* (*Meet a friend*); Grade 6 (Soni 2007:3-16) *Ocingweni* (*On the Phone*). In each grade the work covered in the previous grades is reviewed with new vocabulary added, so that the crutches I referred to above are the familiar words that the pupils learnt previously, yet it is presented with a new flavour which extends the prior learning. This makes the progression from one grade gentle and comfortable for the learner.

Maggie: I really like that about the series. I also noticed that in Grade 5 (Soni 2007:33), in the theme *Esitolo sezincwadi* (*At the Bookshop*), you deliberately use a stationery shop so that you recap the vocabulary introduced in Grade 4 (Soni 2007:50-63) *Ekilasini* (*In the Classroom*) and (Soni 2007:32-49) *Esikoleni* (*At School*). The best part is how you bring in *Linjani izulu?* (*What's the weather like?*) in the theme *Esitolo sezincwadi* (*At the Bookshop*), with the radio playing in the stationery store announcing the weather report. It recaps the weather theme which was introduced in the Foundation Phase with a slight twist ... actually I should say a creative twist. These links must have taken a lot of planning. I'm sure they were not coincidental.

Sumi: They certainly did take a lot of planning, Maggie. You would not want to know what my study looked like with the charts on the wall providing me with a quick reference as to what theme is taught in each grade, and the arrows showing the links. It was a bit like solving a maths puzzle, and it's no secret to anyone who knows me how much I enjoy a brain teaser. I think the detailed planning that went into the design of the learning programme in the *Maye babo!* series is one of the key elements that promote the learner friendly characteristic it has earned. During the planning stage I painstakingly analysed each theme to ensure that my learners will cope adequately with the learning content. I feel that it is very important to boost learner confidence and this can be achieved by pacing the learning at a level that is comfortable, yet slightly above what the learner already knows. Dave and Sibongile, this relates to Krashen's (1983)



input hypothesis. Krashen proposed that input in the second language should be just a little above the current level of the learner's acquired understanding of the language ( $i + 1$ ). I did not know about Krashen's theory at the time that I designed the series; it just seemed like the natural thing to do. Upon reflection I realise that this gut feeling was what Gladwell (2007:23) refers to as thin slicing or what Schön (1991:50) called our knowing in action.

Dave: So you lived these theories in the process of designing the *Maye babo!* series without realising it?

Sumi: That's correct Dave. I discovered while working on the research for my doctorate that I had unknowingly implemented Krashen's input hypothesis based on my own experiences on how to pace the learning. The fact that this concept has been theorised makes me feel good because it elevates the status of my gut feeling or *hunch* as Gladwell calls it.

Muzi: This programme sound's interesting and I hate to change the topic, but I am very concerned about what Doris mentioned earlier. Sorry Doris, but I don't think I can use a programme designed for isiZulu mother tongue speakers for the mixed group I teach. I have observed that my mother tongue isiZulu learners and non-mother tongue isiZulu learners have different strengths and weaknesses. Strangely, the non-mother tongue learners do well in their spelling and language tests, except for the translations and the mother tongue learners, as expected, speak fluently and write lovely stories but their spelling is weak. Does this mean we have to have different learning programmes for each group?

Dave: That would be hectic. I'm just about coping with one programme.

I turn to Martha who has been quiet for most of the evening.

Sumi: What do you do, Martha?

Martha: Hi everybody, I'm Martha and I'm here because I have been using the *Maye babo!* series for two years now, and I would like your help with the songs. I wish they were on a CD.

Sumi: Sorry to interrupt, Martha. This has been a long standing request from many teachers and I am glad to announce that the CD's are finally available. I did experience problems with compiling the CD and because of the danger of piracy; my publishers were not keen to produce them. I took a decision to produce these on my own, so please contact me if you require them.

Martha: Great stuff! You will definitely receive my support. Getting back to your question Sumi, I teach the same lesson to all the pupils, but at some point in most of my lessons, the pupils are divided into groups with the mother tongue speakers doing an extension activity and the non-mother tongue speakers engage in a remedial activity, as suggested in the lesson plan found in the *Maye babo!* series educator guide.

Sibongile: What lesson plan are you talking about? Do you mean you have a lesson plan for each lesson?

Martha: Yes, the *Maye babo!* series has an educator guide for each grade and there are work schedules, lesson plans, spelling lists and even examples of tests. I read my educator guide before each lesson. I find it very useful.

As I listen to the excited chatter, it occurs to me that very few of the teachers in the group have actually studied the educator guides of the *Maye babo!* series, probably because it does involve a lot of reading, and the guides are written on the presumption that all teachers have a good understanding of the theories contained in the NCS. These workshops will allow the opportunity to unravel the curriculum jargon. We are at an in-between stage with regard to the curriculum, I remind myself. The *Maye babo!* series is based on the old NCS which replaced Curriculum 2005. The new CAPS will be implemented in the Foundation Phase in 2012. Perhaps these workshops should focus on the latest CAPS. I have read the CAPS document and gave a talk to the teachers on our staff on it recently. Some questions have already emerged during our discussion. During today's meeting, I will focus on the Aims and Principles of the CAPS Curriculum and compare it to the NCS. I tap my teaspoon on my tea mug to call everybody to attention.

Sumi: We will take a five minute break. If anybody would like to visit the loo, it is situated at the end of the corridor. Turn right as you exit the classroom. There's a jug of water on the refreshment table. Please help yourself. We will continue our discussion here in five minutes please (I repeat).

Martha and I engage in conversation on the way to the loo.

Sumi: I'm glad you have found the educator guide useful Martha. When I wrote the series, I found them to be a laborious task to write. I felt the need to spell out all the mundane things I practise; for example, how I would introduce a lesson, what resources I would use, the vocabulary I would focus on, how I would develop the lesson, the extension and remedial tasks, as well as the details of how to assess the lesson, yet I forced myself to persevere patiently, hoping that they would give guidance to younger teachers in particular. For this reason, the lesson plans in particular are very detailed. When I wrote them, I tried to find ways in which I could reduce the administrative load for the teacher. As a teacher and head of department, I am aware of the pressures teachers endure,<sup>87</sup> so I supply many of the necessary planning documents in the educator guides. What motivates you to read them, because as Maggie says, they are quite lengthy to read?<sup>88</sup>

Martha: I think they're brilliant. You can't blame yourself if the curriculum is complicated. It's not like you wrote the curriculum, you are merely applying it. Besides, the advantage for me is that I don't have any other preparation except for a few charts that I make. I only teach one subject - isiZulu, so I literally don't have as much planning or preparation to do as Sibongile who teaches most of the subjects in her class. I have four classes of isiZulu to teach in each grade - that is Grade 3 to 7. I did a quick read of Chapter 1, where you introduce the NCS and show its application in the *Maye babo!* series. I like the way you tabulated the learning outcomes and assessment standards and show

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<sup>87</sup> Teachers must deal with curriculum overload as well as other issues such as discipline and classroom dynamics.

<sup>88</sup> Upon reflection of this dialogue, I realized that I was once again *testing the water* by asking this question to find out if the guides were useful or how they could be improved.

how they are addressed in each theme. This makes my planning easy. I don't really understand how to develop learning material to address the requirements of the NCS. I don't have a flair for creative stuff of this nature. You have incorporated all the nitty gritty stuff, which I am still battling to understand. Using your series keeps the Education Department and my HOD happy. I give her all the necessary paperwork like the work schedules and assessment plans, which you allow us to copy from your book. I have made a copy of the work schedules and placed them in my educator file. I am so happy not to engage in starting my planning from scratch.<sup>89</sup> My only preparation for a lesson in each grade is to read the lesson plan from the teacher's guide and follow the guidelines. It makes my task so easy. I also love how you have worked out the assessment plan in each grade. The assessment plan ties in beautifully with the layout of the lessons. I really enjoy using the series because it releases me from the administrative overload so I have the energy to focus on my teaching activities and my learner's progress. I can really zone in on what takes place during the lesson, since much of the administrative work has been done for me in the guide.

I roll out copies of the spelling and vocabulary lists provided in the educator guide for my pupils which further cuts down the admin for me. At the moment, this helps me a lot, especially since my laptop was stolen, and I am without my own computer<sup>90</sup>. I schedule weekly spelling and vocabulary tests, like you recommend and find that this really motivates my pupils to study. You even have exemplars of tests which...

I interrupt Martha as we return to the classroom.

Sumi: Martha, I am really excited to hear this feedback. You are using the series as per my plan, just like I had imagined teachers would use it, and yes, it does

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<sup>89</sup> This is the lingo of teachers. It means starting with the process of designing a learning programme from the beginning. Not all teachers have the tacit knowledge to do this. Some teachers such as Martha are text book reliant and do not want to be concerned about the *why* and *how* of the NCS. Their attention is fixated on the lesson itself and how the child copes with it.

<sup>90</sup> Denotes how the provision of a basic textbook and well resourced educator guide can assist to reduce the administrative role of teachers, which is one of the aims of CAPS.

work very well for me too. I'm always delighted and feel encouraged when I hear this from other teachers. I feel that all those laborious hours spent writing the educator guide, which I must confess, I did not enjoy as much as I did writing the learner's book, were not in vain.

Martha: You give considerable thought to just about everything that is required from teachers in the educator guide, yet there is ample room for extension and individuality if a teacher wants to add her personal flavour to her lessons.<sup>91</sup>

Our discussion about the educator guide ends abruptly as we reach the classroom door. The others are already seated as I make my way to the data projector. While I search on my computer for the information I used for the CAPS workshop I held with the staff at school, I inform the group about the programme of discussion ahead. There is discussion about how many times the curriculum has changed and it reminds me about what I said to the district official at the time when I attended a meeting on the revised NCS in 2005, which for a short while was called the RNCS. I can't remember her name. I said the curriculum remains complicated and in jest or perhaps rather cheekily asked: "When is the revised, revised NCS going to be introduced?"<sup>92</sup> Like many experienced teachers I could see that the RNCS was not the solution to our educational problems. Input from teachers is often not taken seriously, and five years later, as projected, we have another revised NCS.<sup>93</sup> This thought reminds me that I should commence with a history of the education system since 1994, to give the younger teachers insight into the changes that have taken place in the last sixteen years. I project the following timeline – the information was derived from the notes that were circulated at the RNCS training workshop which I attended in 2005 (Department

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<sup>91</sup> Allowing for individuality in teaching was a skill passed on to me by my principal Ms A.B. St. George. Under her leadership I also learned about the power of gratitude and being practical about teacher expectations in my role as manager.

<sup>92</sup> I knew then, like many teachers, that the NCS would not survive in South Africa.

<sup>93</sup> *Curriculum 2005* (C2005), formulated in 1997, was revised into the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2001, revised further in 2002 (called the *Revised* National Curriculum Statement, RNCS, but later changed back to NCS); In 2010 the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was drafted. The main changes involved simplification and specification of content, as well as a detailed plan on when and how it could be implemented. In January 2012, schools received documents informing teachers that the curriculum is still called the NCS and that CAPS is one of the three policies of the NCS- the other two are the Policy for programme and promotion requirements and the National Protocol for Assessments

of Education 2005). I have updated the timeline in line with the latest changes to the curriculum.

Table 7.1 Curriculum reform timeline

1953-1994	Bantu Education and Christian National education
1995	National Education and Training Forum prepares the way for the development of a core interim syllabus
1995	South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) enacted and establishes the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF integrates education and training at all levels; allows transferability of credits for academic courses & recognises prior learning by means of modular courses through 'unit standards' and registered programmes.
1996	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa The South African School's Act – establishes one national education system; Compulsory schooling for children aged between 7 and 14; School Governing Bodies established.
1996/7	Process of designing Curriculum 2005 begins
1997	Curriculum 2005 becomes national policy
1998	Implementation of Curriculum 2005 begins (C2005)
2000	Ministry of Education commissions a review of Curriculum 2005
2001	A set of National Curriculum Statements (NCS) was released for public discussion
2002	The review committee publishes its findings in 'A South African Curriculum for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Report of the Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 which identified strengths and flaws in C2005 and made specific recommendations. C2005 is revised and appears as the Revised National Curriculum Statement. The RNCS becomes policy.
2004	Implementation of RNCS begins in the Foundation Phase
2005	Implementation of RNCS in the Intermediate Phase
2006-2008	Literacy and Numeracy levels found to be extremely low
2009	Review committee appointed to simplify curriculum
2010	Draft Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) made public for comment
2011	CAPS to be finalised. Teachers to receive training
2012	CAPS to be implemented in Foundation Phase and Grade 10
2013	CAPS to be implemented in Intermediate Phase and Grade 11
2014	CAPS to be implemented in Senior Phase and Grade 12

I go through the points on the timeline and give clarity where requested.

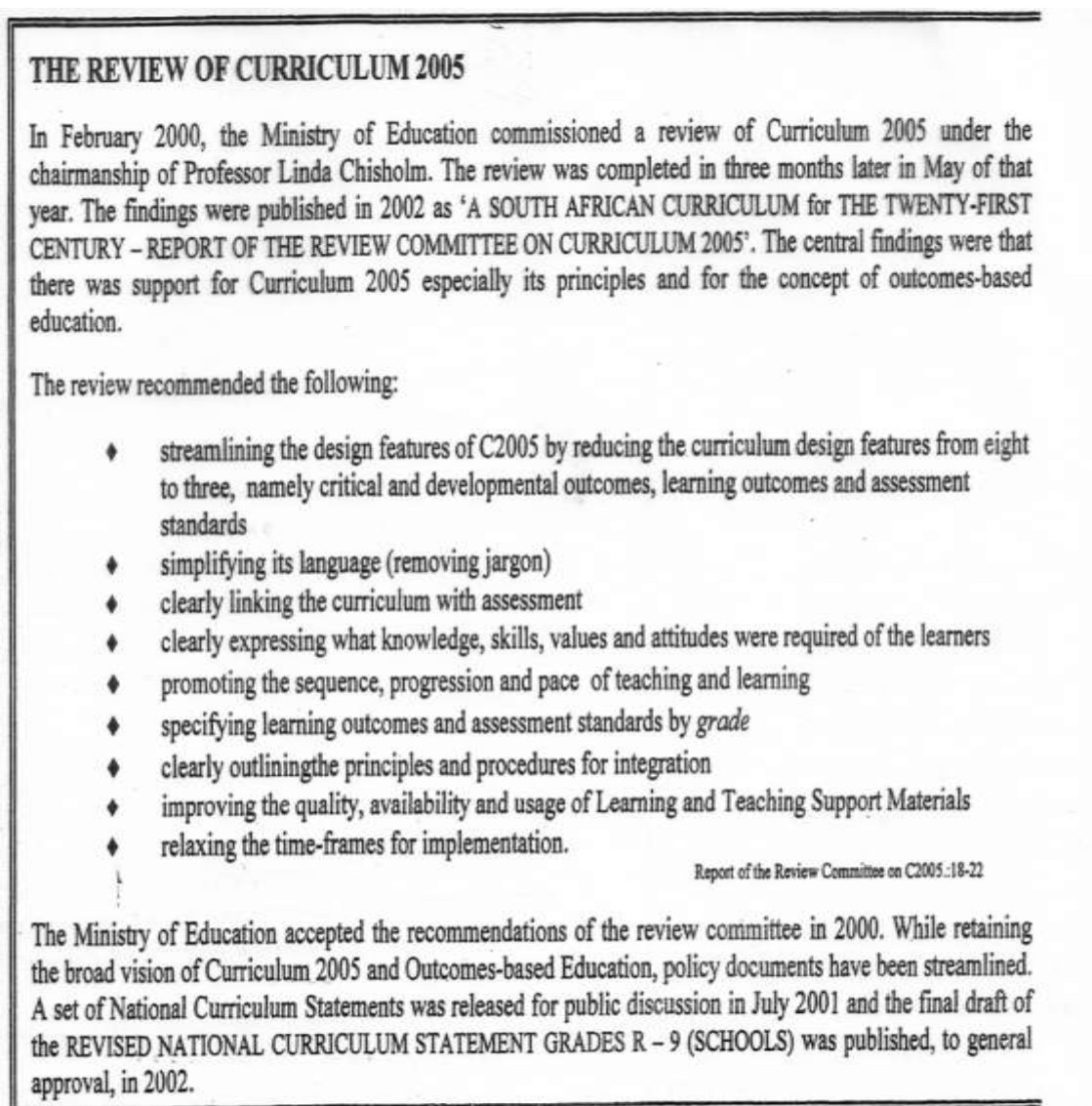
Sumi: This visual provides a quick glimpse in the form of a timeline. The NCS is a simplification, streamlining and strengthening of curriculum 2005. I have studied the review committee reports for each time that the curriculum was revised, and the striking similarity in each report is the focus on simplifying the curriculum. I will discuss this point in greater detail shortly. Take a look at this very relevant and funny cartoon. I thought you will enjoy it. This is exactly how many teachers felt. I know of quite a few that took early retirement packages because they could not face the ridiculous demands of C2005. There were so many criteria to consider when planning a learning programme that it was an unrealistic expectation, particularly if teacher training of C2005 was lacking and if over 9000 of South African teachers are unqualified.<sup>94</sup> I made a transparency of this cartoon from notes I received at the training I attended when NCS was introduced (Department of Education 2005).



Photograph 21 *Cartoon from notes received at training when NCS was introduced*

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/9003-unqualified-teachers-in-KZN-20101211>

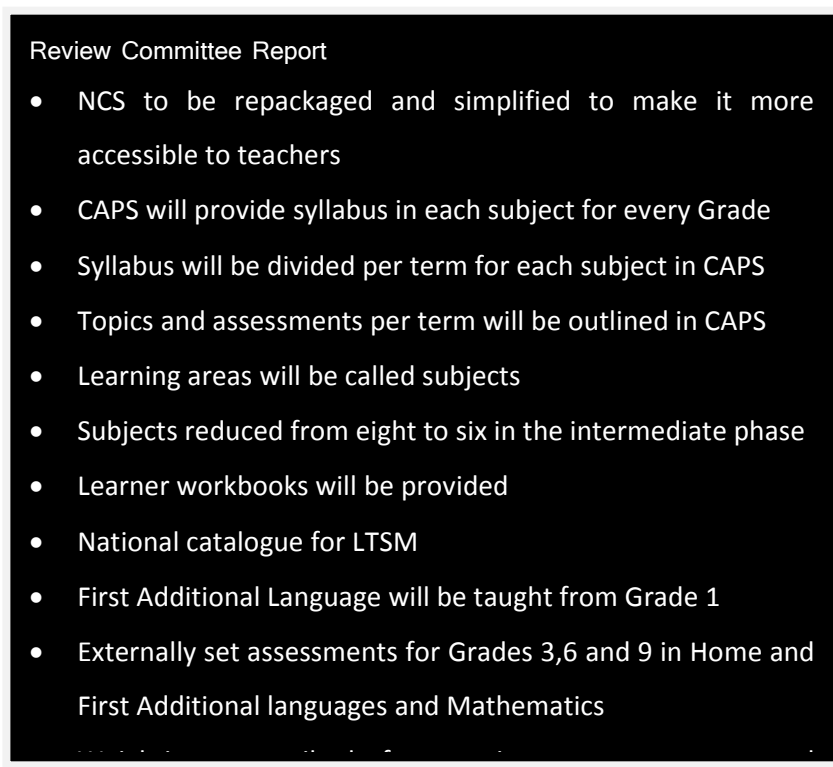
In 1994, the newly elected democratic government inherited a system of education that was divided and unequal. After much discussion with various stakeholders, C2005 was introduced in 1997. What scares me is that all the review committees' attempts to simply the curriculum and its implementation have failed to produce anything to date that most teachers can describe as teacher friendly. To give you a more in- depth idea of my concern, let us look at this report (I project it), and compare it with the latest report that prompted the switch to CAPS.



Photograph 22 Extract from report that prompted the switch to CAPS



The NCS was introduced to create equity and democracy in education. It was revised and called the RNCS, but later reverted to its original name NCS. It encouraged the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. It adopts a multi-cultural and multi-lingual approach and encourages code switching which is one of the underlying features of the *Maye babo!* series. In October 2010, an amendment was made to the NCS Grades R-12. A single comprehensive Curriculum Assessment Policy was introduced to replace the Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines in Grades R-12. The amended NCS; Curriculum and Assessment Policy replaces the NCS Grades R-9 (2002) and the NCS Grades 10-12 (2004). Here is a copy of the review committee report I obtained from the education government's website. (I issue the copies).<sup>95</sup> In the report the minister explains (I write the important points on the board):



Photograph 23 *Points from Review Committee Report*

<sup>95</sup> The report can be found in Appendix 4.

Sumi: If you compare the two reports which are a decade apart, you will notice that the following points are mentioned in both reports:

- Simplification of the curriculum
- Streamlining the design features
- Linking the outcomes to the aims and assessment
- More guidance on sequence and pace of teaching
- Improved supply of learning and teaching resources
- Teacher training and support

In my opinion, while we seem to be getting closer to resolving our education mess, it is taking mighty long, and the learners are the casualties of the enormous crises.

I hope that the ZEST group meetings will prove useful for all of you in terms of bringing the NCS theories to life and in so doing address the gaps in the training provided by the Education Department. Furthermore, I hope that in applying the theories contained in the NCS, we will be able to generate new home grown theories which are applicable for our unique contexts.

Time has passed so quickly this evening. I think it's time for an ice breaker. Take a look at this e-mail which I received from my sister (31/05/2011), who teaches in Pretoria.

Dave volunteers to read it aloud while I take a sip of water.

### **Ice breaker**

A new school inspector is assigned to the Grade 4 class in one of the local schools. He is introduced to the class by the teacher.

She says to the class: Let's show the inspector just how clever you are by allowing him to ask you a question.

The inspector decides to ask a biblical question. He asks: Class, who broke down the walls of Jericho?

For a full minute there is absolute silence. The children all just stare at him blankly. Eventually Sipho raises his hand. The Inspector points excitedly to him.

Sipho stands up and says: Sir, I do not know who broke down the walls of Jericho, but I am innocent.

The inspector looks at the teacher for an explanation. She says: Well, I've known Sipho since the beginning of the year and I believe that if he says that he didn't do it, then he didn't do it.

The inspector is shocked at the level of ignorance and storms down to the principal's office and tells him what happened. The principal replies: Look I don't know the boy, but I socialise every now and then with his teacher and I believe her. If she feels that the boy was not involved, then he must be innocent.

The inspector can't believe what he is hearing. He grabs the phone on the principal's desk and dials the Minister of Education. He relates the entire episode and asks her what she thinks of the education standard in the school.

The Minister sighs heavily and replies: Eish wena<sup>96</sup>. You know I am very busy. I don't know the boy, the teacher or the principal. Just get three quotes and have the wall fixed.

As Dave reads the last line there are guffaws of laughter. I caution that in reality this is not funny at all.

Sumi: This is precisely what is happening in the education sector in South Africa. The implication that we don't seem to know what the problem is about, is precisely the problem. The researchers, members of the review committee, and policy makers are out of touch with the problems of teaching and learning that occur at grassroots level. They think that by simplifying the curriculum, (fixing the

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<sup>96</sup> A Zulu expression used to denote frustration.

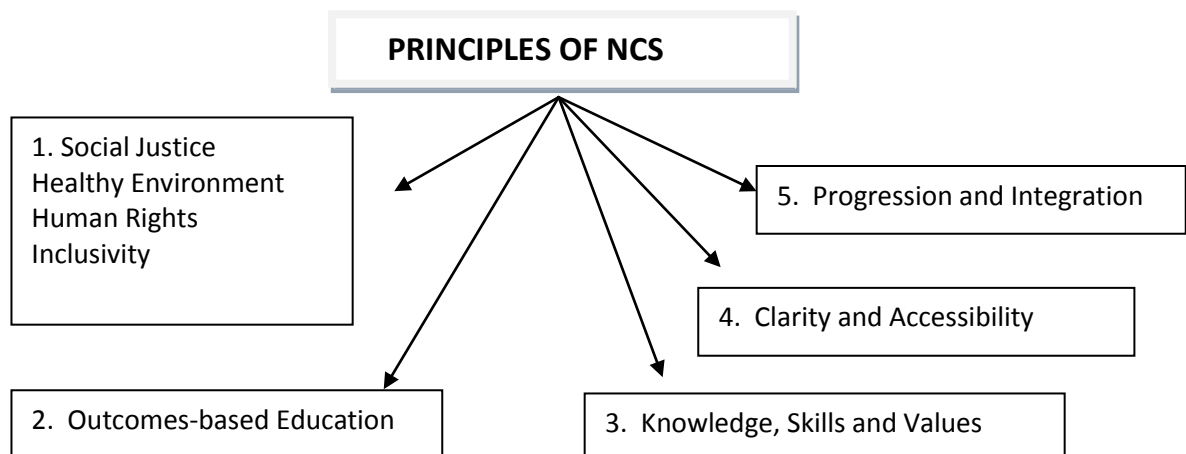
wall), the problem will be resolved. The curriculum cannot succeed (no matter how many times it is simplified), until the necessary tools to deliver it are functioning effectively. One such tool is to create a positive ethos of learning and teaching in schools. Motivational speaker John Demartini says When (teachers) truly want to teach, the student is far more inclined to want to learn (*The Teacher*, June 2011). The reverse is also true. When learners truly show an interest in learning, teachers feel motivated to do more and better. It is not an easy task to arrive at this healthy equation; it is a long term process that requires much support. It requires good teacher expertise, a high level of school management, the support of modern teaching resources as well as a dedicated attitude of learners and parents. Many well equipped schools have continued to produce good results, despite the in-numerous changes to the curriculum, and this is because they had the tools described above to make it work. In this way the inequalities of the apartheid era continue to stifle the education of the masses (Tikly 2003:171). We will talk about these issues again. Let's take a look at the underlying Principles of the NCS and the aim of CAPS.

Martha: I understand that the number of learning areas has changed from eight to six.

Sumi: Yes, that is true. We will discuss that in greater detail next week. I want to discuss the principles of NCS first. We are going to run out of time soon so let me begin.

## **Principles of NCS**

I display the following visual and discuss each point briefly since it is fairly self explanatory and will be discussed shortly with exemplars from the *Maye babo!* series.



Photograph 24 *Principles of NCS*

Sumi: Before I forget, let me mention that I would like feedback on the amended curriculum and to communicate this to the department on behalf of our group... that's if everybody is in agreement.

Maggie: Yes, Sumi and I had a brief chat about this. I think we should submit our views or concerns. We should take advantage of the opportunity to give our input. As denoted very skilfully in the ice breaker, there is a communication gap that derails progress in education. Curriculum designers are sometimes out of touch with what goes on in the classroom. We might as well speak now or forever hold our peace.

Everybody giggles and there is general agreement to go ahead with the plan.

Sumi: Thanks Maggie you can be very convincing. Let's proceed with the principles of the revised NCS and then we will see how the *Maye babo!* series addresses these principles.

## **The Principles of the revised NCS**

These are (I project the principles on the screen):

1. Social transformation and equal educational opportunity for all.
2. Active and critical learning approach (move away from rote learning and given truths).
3. High level of knowledge and skills (minimum standards specified for each grade).
4. Progression of content and context in each grade from simple to complex.
5. Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice (sensitive to issues such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors).
6. Value for indigenous knowledge systems (acknowledges rich history and heritage of South Africa).
7. Credibility, quality and efficiency in the provision of education.

Sumi: You will notice from the Principles of the revised NCS that OBE is not mentioned. When we study the principles of OBE, you will notice that its application is simplified in CAPS. Social transformation and providing equal opportunities for all (point 1) as well as adopting an active and critical learning approach (point 2) are the key words used instead of OBE. Integration of learning areas is not mentioned while the value of indigenous knowledge (point 6) is a new principle. It is pleasing to note that credibility, quality and efficiency in the provision of education (point 7) receives attention.

Doris: Does this mean we must change everything again? I'm not going to redo all my work schedules again. Do you know how long it takes to do all that planning?

Sumi: Believe me Doris; I know exactly how long it takes to do all the planning. The report I read states that they have stream lined these things and simplified the expectations in the new CAPS document so that you are told exactly which LO's to address in the time allocated each week for each learning area.

Dave: You mean we are also told how many lessons are set aside each week for reading and writing and all the other LOs?

Sumi: That is absolutely correct, Dave. Here is an exemplar from the CAPS document.

<b>SUGGESTED CONTACT TIME</b> <b>PER WEEK : 4 hours</b> <b>PER DAY : +/- 45 minutes</b> <b>Integrated in Daily Planning</b>
<b>TERM 1</b>
<b>LISTENING AND SPEAKING (ORAL)</b>
<b>CONTENT/CONCEPTS/SKILLS</b> <b>Daily activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to simple greetings and farewells, using phrases (e.g. 'Good morning' 'Good bye')</li> <li>• Follows simple classroom instructions (e.g. 'stand', 'listen')</li> <li>• Sings simple songs and does actions with help (e.g. Heads and shoulders...)</li> <li>• Recites simple rhymes and does actions with help (e.g. 1, 2,3,4,5, once I caught a fish alive....)</li> <li>• Sings birthdays songs in a number of languages</li> </ul> <b>Twice weekly activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens to well illustrated short stories with enjoyment and joins in choruses at the appropriate time (e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar)</li> </ul>
<b>ASSESSMENT</b> <b>Informal Assessment:</b> <b>Observation and checklist</b> <b>Oral and/or practical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens attentively to questions and instructions</li> <li>• Sings simple songs and does actions with help (e.g. Heads and shoulders...)</li> </ul> <b>No Formal Assessment</b>

Photograph 25 Exemplar of prescriptive planning from CAPS document

Sumi: Personally, I find it to be very prescriptive and rigid. I like to work at the pace of my learners, and according to my learners' needs. Furthermore, it has just occurred to me that by following this prescribed format, we have a greater danger of ignoring learner differences. I am sure we will be allowed to use our

discretion. One thing that I am excited about is the fact that the number of hours allocated towards the study of an additional language has increased greatly. In fact, it was never specified before. Furthermore, there has been a call to teach only two languages. Three to four hours per week are allocated towards the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language in the Foundation and Intermediate Phase. I am very excited about this change. At least the department is not paying lip service to the teaching of additional languages.

Aasha: How many does the home language get?

Sumi: It depends on the Phase. The Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase get about six hours per week.

Maggie: That means about ten to eleven hours a week is given to teaching languages. I welcome that for sure, this is definitely a change in the right direction, and teaching only two languages instead of three will see us make greater headway. At present I have been allocated only one hour a week to teach isiZulu. It's so difficult because I have to spend at least ten minutes recapping over previous lessons before I can move on to new work.

Doris: If you think that's bad, at my school I have been given one hour a week for each class, by this I mean a whole sixty minute session together, on one day, so this means I see each class only once a week.

Sibongile: I am in the same situation. It makes the timetable easier to draw up for the timetabling committee, but it is just not practical for teachers. I am excited about the new time allocation. This means I can see each class every day, but I won't be able to teach all the classes. I suppose our school will need an additional isiZulu teacher.

Sumi: Let's look at how these principles can be addressed. The educator guide that I am working on currently for the new CAPS compliant *Maye babo!* series indicates how the *Maye babo!* series addresses the principles of CAPS. I have made copies for you. Dave please distribute these notes to everybody. I read the notes.



## How the *Maye babo!* series addresses these principles

I read from the working document on my laptop:

The *Maye babo!* series is designed for a multicultural society and provides an equal opportunity for all the race groups in South Africa to study isiZulu. It deliberately uses names and pictures of the diverse race groups. The new Curriculum Assessment Policy sets out the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be acquired by a learner in each grade. The series was compiled with close reference to the learning outcomes and expected level of achievement of learners, for each learning outcome. It caters for learners studying isiZulu as a first additional language.

Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice are addressed through the content of the material contained in the series. Themes such as Epulazini (On the Farm), Izikhathi Zonyaka (Seasons), Izilwane (Animals), Siya Olwandle (We go to the Sea), Amanzi aligugu (Water is precious) and Engadini (In the Garden), to name a few give attention to environmental issues; whereas themes such as UThemba Uliqhawe (Themba is a Hero), Ubungane (Friendship), Umshado kaNkosazane Mthembu (Miss Mthembu's Wedding) and Isikhathi sokudla (Dinner Time) highlight social issues such as human rights and inclusivity as well as cultural heritage.

The outcomes for each chapter are stated at the outset in the learner's book in the *Maye babo!* series (Grades 4 to 7). In the *Maye babo!* series, the learning content forms the context of the learning activity. It is the medium through which the skills are taught. The teaching methods and strategies used, and the learning styles that are encouraged, facilitate the achievement of the outcomes through activities that involve active learner participation and critical thinking.

The material affords an opportunity for every learner to perform at their optimum level, thus catering for inclusivity. Each activity makes provision for extension or remedial work as indicated in the activity plans contained in the educator's guide. The material is simple, clear and easily accessible to all learners including learners with barriers in learning.

Progression is of paramount importance when learning a new language. The themes are selected carefully with a gentle shift from what the learner knows and can identify with, to the unknown. The *Maye babo!* series introduces new vocabulary (amagama amasha) gradually and allows learners sufficient opportunities to learn this vocabulary. This is done through repeated use of the core vocabulary in the various activities (umsebenzi). The creative use of stimulating and fun-filled activities makes teaching and learning an enjoyable experience.

Vocabulary and language structures cannot be taught in isolation. In the *Maye babo!* series, language structures are taught within the context of a story often in the form of a dialogue and learners can readily absorb the rules that govern the isiZulu language in the context provided. Hence knowledge is taught together with the skills required to use it. The discussion of cultural attitudes and values is encouraged (sometimes by code switching to the learner's home language).

The *Maye babo!* series understands the challenges faced by the educator in a multi-cultural classroom. Teaching isiZulu to learners in a mixed ability class can seem very daunting for the educator. In order to create a win-win situation for all and address inclusivity, the *Maye babo!* series has adopted a dual language approach and encourages the use of code switching. The dual language approach is user friendly for pupils who study isiZulu as an additional language. It is in keeping with the CAPS policy on Additive bilingualism. The instructions are in isiZulu and English. It allows learners whose home-language is English to understand instructions easily and to gain an insight into the similarities and differences between the two languages. The translation creates an opportunity to strengthen the English ability of learners whose home language is isiZulu. Educators are offered support and guidance to enable them to cope with learners with mixed abilities

The credibility and quality of the content of the *Maye babo!* series lies in the wealth of teacher knowledge that the author has gained through her teaching experience of twenty six years as an additional language teacher as well as through her own professional development (Schön 1995:49). The use of colourful pictures and the neat and well organised setting of the books enhance their quality and make them enjoyable and appealing for learners. The series are efficiently distributed by New Generation Publishers who have the infrastructure to deliver the books throughout the country.

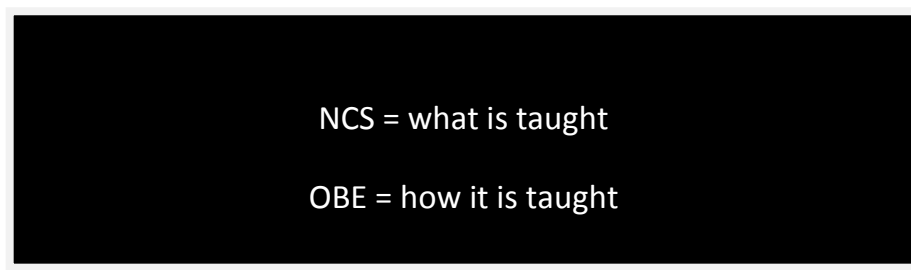
We discuss the principles for a few minutes and then I proceed to explain the difference between OBE and NCS.

Muzi:        Sorry to interrupt you, Sumi. Although I have heard a lot about OBE, I am a little confused. Why do some people call it the OBE curriculum, and others say NCS curriculum. What is the difference?

## Clarifying OBE and NCS

Sumi: You need to understand firstly, that OBE is a methodology, not a curriculum. It is a *way* of teaching and learning which states *beforehand* what learners are expected to achieve. You are not the only one confused about this. Just last week I read an old clipping of a newspaper article in my scrap book, which quoted a department spokesperson who said *OBE* remains the broad *curriculum* (Mail & Guardian 2010). OBE is *not* a curriculum. *NCS* is the *curriculum*. It describes the content that must be taught in each grade, in each subject. *OBE* is the *method* prescribed to implement the curriculum.

To emphasize, I write the following on the board and say:



Photograph 26 *Distinction between NCS and OBE*

Maggie: I thought OBE was out.

Dave: The newspaper reports I read said it will be tweaked so how exactly has this been done?

Sumi: You are both right. The Minister of education, Angie Motshekga announced in Parliament on November fifth:

...if anybody asks us if we are going to continue with OBE, we say that there is no longer OBE. We have completely done away with it (Mail & Guardian 2010:50).

The same article states that, the very next day: “she refused to repeat what she had said about OBE”. In subsequent interviews, I recall her using the word tweaked which to me means amended. I tried to investigate how this was done by studying the Principles of OBE and then compared them with the CAPS document.

## OBE 'to be changed, not scrapped', 06/07/10

**The outcomes based education (OBE) system will not be completely scrapped but will be modified to improve the performance of school pupils, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said on Tuesday.**

Admitting that the old curriculum had major problems, Motshekga said her department was reviewing the design and methodology of the OBE system. "We have and will continue to make changes on an ongoing basis where they can be made with minimal disruption. We expect better outcomes from the system," she told media in Pretoria.

Acknowledging that the curriculum had been reviewed twice since its introduction 12 years ago, Motshekga said this shuffling was basically "removing the last ghost of 1998" but it was not a wholesale abandoning of the system. "We now talk of a national curriculum and not OBE... It can't be true that we are phasing it out, we want to ensure stability and no fatigue."


Some of the changes in the system included the reduction of the number of projects for pupils. The department had also since the beginning of the year, done away with the need for portfolio files of pupils' assessments and discontinued the Common Task for Assessment for Grade 9s.

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Sumi: I will discuss this with you next week as we are running out of time today. In another internet article I read, .... hold on, I have it on file,....here it is and I've recorded the site if anybody wants to visit it.

I write it on the board.



[www.teacher.org.za/index.php?](http://www.teacher.org.za/index.php?)

Photograph 27 Website for article on OBE

Maggie indicates by pointing to her watch that it is time to close the meeting.

Sumi: I would like to discuss the principles of OBE next week in detail and show you how the *Maye babo!* series addresses them. Please take a copy of the reading on your way out. I do apologise for going five minutes overtime. I did not anticipate the lively discussion we've enjoyed. I'm sure you are all better informed on the difference between OBE and NCS after today's meeting.

Photograph 28 Internet article on status of OBE

I conclude by asking everybody to collect the reading for the meeting next week, on their way out and bid them farewell.

Sumi: I'm glad we all got to know each other today and I have a better sense of some the concerns I need to address at the future meetings. Please fill in your details on the form that has been circulating during our meeting ... if you haven't. I will make copies of it for everybody and forward it to you via e-mail. Hamba kahle!<sup>97</sup>

All: Sala kahle!<sup>98</sup>

I proceed to switch off my computer and tidy my classroom. Maggie lingers and offers to assist. We walk to the car park which is close to my classroom.

Maggie: Sumi, thank you once again. I feel a sense of relief knowing that we can clear up most of our uncertainties at these meetings.

Sumi: I think *most* is the apt word. Remember that we are once again in a transition phase with regard to the curriculum, so there are a lot of uncertainties at present. You should look at the CAPS document and offer your comment. You have another two weeks before the closing date. I will e-mail the details to you. I think we should discuss it at our next meeting and offer our comments as a group.

Maggie: Yes, that sounds great. See you next week, Sumi

Sumi: Certainly, take care Maggie and drive carefully.

Its five thirty in the evening and the traffic is at its peak. Perhaps I should have worked on my research for half an hour, or until the traffic calmed. I will remember to be wiser next week. Thank goodness Nishkal is cooking supper today and Moss is fetching her from university. During the staggered, bumper to bumper ride home, my mind drifts to the doctoral research. I need to discuss it with the group next week and tell them about my

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<sup>97</sup> Go well!

<sup>98</sup> Stay well!

plan to use our discussions as ethnographic data. I wonder what the reaction would be from the group. After supper I reflect on my discussion with Maggie. I decide to write down some of the problems that teachers have expressed with the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language.

### *Problems with teaching isiZulu*

- 1. Not enough time allocated to subject on time table.*
- 2. Teacher qualification needs address. Some have academic qualification but lack confidence in speaking and experience while others have no qualification to teach but know the language.*
- 3. Some teachers cannot understand learner difficulties and needs.*
- 4. Learner motivation needs address. In some schools, setting a high level of learner expectations has led to a lack of confidence and disinterest amongst learners resulting in poor classroom discipline as well as a lack of respect for teachers.*
- 5. Unqualified teachers experience difficulties with designing learning programmes as well as pacing learning, and available teaching resources cannot be purchased to due to lack of funding.*
- 6. The status of isiZulu requires elevation – its importance in terms of the fact that nearly a quarter of all South Africans speak the language is under mentioned.*
- 7. Assessment of learners as prescribed in NCS is complicated and teacher focus has shifted from teaching to assessing in order to meet NCS requirements.*
- 8. Ongoing teacher training is required with NCS/CAPS.*
- 9. Subject advisors must hold regular meetings with teachers to provide support.*
- 10. Not enough teachers available for the teaching of isiZulu.*
- 11. Need for additional resources for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language.*

## **Class Two**

### **The principles of OBE**

#### **Introduction**

I mark the last book in the tall stack then glance at my watch, hoping there is time to pour myself a cup of tea before the next ZEST class. As I walk to the school kitchen, I mentally reflect on my planning for the ZEST meeting. I am aware that I have been optimistic in my attempt to discuss all four principles of OBE today. I will gauge the time as we progress and carry the lesson forward should the need arise (which is precisely what I do when I teach my pupils). The active participation of the teachers makes my task of planning our discussions difficult, because the time taken for discussions cannot always be gauged accurately. The teachers in the ZEST class are extremely enthusiastic, and each of them wants to offer their opinion or input when invited. The week by week plans prescribed in CAPS concern me. Last week I asked a school superintendent about how rigidly these plans will be enforced. He could not give me clarity on it, but stated that he assumed that they are to be followed so that the syllabus can be completed on time. When I teach, whether it is this ZEST group or my learners, I find it difficult to ensure that I keep to the topic, the time allocated, observe what input is made by whom, and that everybody has a turn during class discussions. In the classroom situation with learners, teachers also have to control the volume, and make sure that the learners don't drift off into peer discussions when class discussions are taking place. These are some of the challenges that teachers face when they engage in class discussions with their learners. The further challenge arises when the class teacher is expected to informally assess learners' contributions during these discussions, an expectation of CAPS.

I remind myself about how quickly time raced by at our last meeting and am determined to make greater headway at this meeting. I am grateful that the members are punctual and after we have engaged in a few minutes of idle chatter I signal for order and for everybody to take their seats.

Sumi: Hi everybody. Good to see all of you today. I'm sure you have received the e-mail and telephonic details of all the members of the group. If anybody would like a hard copy, I have printed a few. Please check your e-mail on Tuesdays because I will forward any relevant news about the meeting on Thursday to you so that you have an idea on what we will be discussing. I will also forward any relevant notes and minutes of the meetings to you. Maggie has kindly volunteered to be our secretary. I hope you received the minutes of the last meeting.

There is an affirmative nod from the members with a few verbal affirmative responses. Muzi uses the opportunity to arrange a lift home with Maggie.

### **The doctoral study**

Sumi: Before we commence with today's session, I want to tell you a about my doctoral study. I have been working on it for the past two years.

Aasha: Sumi, I really don't know how you manage to juggle all the different roles you play. What's your secret?

Sumi: It's called time management Aasha. Besides, I enjoy reading, studying and growing professionally. I also enjoy challenges, so I guess when one enjoys a task the will to pursue it flows naturally. Writing is a hobby for me, not a chore. I have always had a desire to write a novel. A few years ago, my husband and I took our friend Mahen to the *Time of the Writer Festival* which is hosted annually in March or April at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College campus. It was there that I first felt inspired to write a novel. As I listened to several novelists read their work and discuss it with great passion, I felt a yearning to write my own novel. Composing the short stories and dialogues for the *Maye babo!* series was my apprenticeship. I think my dream will be realised somewhat in the process of writing my thesis.

Martha: What do you mean, Sumi? I thought your doctorate is in Language Practice. How does a novel fit into this picture?



Sumi: Well, to explain it very briefly, the methodology I am using allows me to do this. It is autoethnography, and self study.

Dave is also studying towards a Masters degree. I notice his deep interest and keep my eyes in his direction, anticipating a question.

Dave: I have heard of self study. Did you attend the conference held at the Botanic Gardens where Jack Whitehead was the keynote speaker?

Sumi: No, I was not able to take leave from school, but I did attend the workshop he held the next day, which was a Saturday, for Master and Doctoral students. I enjoyed it and was delighted to meet Jack Whitehead in person. In fact, the best part for me was that during the lunch break I had the opportunity to discuss my thesis with Professor Whitehead. That was quite something.

Dave: I'm sure it was. I haven't heard of autoethnography though.

Sumi: Well, I was just about to explain it because I need to get everyone's consent for what I plan to do.

Sibongile: I don't understand. Why would you need *our* consent for *your* thesis? How do *we* fit in?

### **A brief explanation of autoethnography**

Sumi: In order to understand it, I first need to explain what autoethnography is?

Martha: Is it related to autobiography?

Sumi: An aspect of it. Take a look at this quotation by Ellis.

I display the following quotation.

Doris: What on earth does this mean?

Aasha: I haven't got the foggiest idea.

I chuckle to myself as I listen to the confused responses and guesses before I intervene and read the quotation.

Autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness.....Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition (Ellis 2004:37).

Sumi: I think the best way to describe it would be to tell you what I am doing in my doctorate study and explain autoethnography simultaneously. I am writing about my personal experiences in the teaching profession in Part one of the thesis; some of the concerns I had, and how I went about resolving them. In essence, it links my personal experiences to my professional experiences and affords a rationale for the values and strategies I used to compile the *Maye babo!* series. Through the writing of this thesis I was able to gain an understanding of who I am and how I came to be. It has been an incredible journey. I thoroughly enjoyed writing about my past and found it to be therapeutic. I also compiled a history of my teaching experience reflecting on the changes that took place when schools were desegregated. I describe the challenges I faced, and my attempts to resolve them. One of the challenges I faced was the lack of a suitable textbook for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. Through self reflection, I was able to discover my other. I was reminded that we become who we are in relation to others. Circumstances and interactions play a significant role in the shaping of our lives (Dewey 1938). This autoethnographic self study has helped to unravel and expose my *knowing in action* (Schön 1995:49) moments which created the teaching approach I use in the *Maye babo!* series. It has brought to the forefront, the successes and failures as well as the tribulations encountered by me as a teacher

and author. I did most of my writing in December, during the school holidays, so I was able to accomplish a lot.

Doris: I don't know where you get the energy Sumi. I don't even want to read a book during the holidays. I take a complete break away from books.

Sumi: Writing is what I enjoy doing. It keeps me focussed on what I am doing in the present moment. Pamela, my colleague lent me two books by Eckhart Tolle (2001, 2005). The first one is called the *Power of Now*, and the second one he wrote is called *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. In the books Tolle says that we spend far too much of time and energy by thinking of the past or the future, and in the process, we lose the present. He shows how having present awareness can help you attain your goals and bring you eternal peace and happiness. When I returned the books to Pamela I told her that I now understood why I feel so content and happy when I write. Writing helps to keep me in the now. It keeps me motivated and the contribution I make to my profession through my writing is self fulfilling.

When I write, I am in a world of my own. I forget all my concerns, and sometimes even forget to eat. That's a great substitute for a diet. So there you go Doris, I've given you quite a few reasons why I write. I hope I can inspire you to do likewise. I could do with some help when I write the readers.

Doris signals a negative gesture.

Doris: No, writing and I don't go together.... thanks for the offer.

Sumi: In Part two of the thesis, I decided to do something that is similar to what we ask our pupils to do- a show and tell. I describe the teaching methodology I use in the *Maye babo!* series, so I tell the story as I explain (show) it to our support group and this is how all of you are involved. You are the characters in my methodological novel that reveals how I compiled the series, how it addresses the curriculum demands and the teaching strategies and theories involved.

Suddenly, the penny drops for everyone and from the mixture of voices, I hear a distinct "I get it" and "Oh! Now I understand what Sumi is talking about".

- Sumi: So, now that you understand your involvement, how do you feel?
- Doris: Well I don't want every word I say to be quoted. Do we have a say in what we want and don't want you to include?
- Sumi: Most certainly, and I will use pseudo names for you and the schools you teach at. I will circulate the final document to you and meet with each of you individually to gain your consent before I submit this work. If any of you has a problem with this arrangement you are welcome to speak to me about it.
- Maggie: Maybe it will be made into a movie some day, and then we will be the understudies.
- Everybody giggles.
- Sumi: Well it could be made into a movie. It certainly has quite a few elements that are movie like. According to Ellis (2004:26):

Ethnography... means writing about or describing people and culture using firsthand observation and participation in a setting or situation. The term refers both to the process of doing a study, and to the written product. .... Ethnographic fieldwork includes everything you do to gather information in a setting, especially hanging around, making conversation, and asking questions, but also formal interviewing and other information gathering.

Amongst the many techniques that Ellis describes when doing autoethnography, is conversational analysis research. This is the technique I would be using with the data I collect at our weekly meetings. This technique will assist me to see the world through your eyes, and make explicit the difficulties you experience. According to Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), it is through written reflection and teacher conversations that we negotiate the tensions between ourselves and our contexts. I hope that by working together, I can inspire some of you to write your own resources for teaching. There is a dire need for additional resources in isiZulu, or if you like, you could team up with me when I revise the series or take it to the next level.

Sibongile: Don't look at me..... I barely have time to breathe with teaching, studying and planning a wedding.

Dave: So Sid has finally plucked up the courage to pop the question hey. That's great news. Don't forget my invitation Bongi.

Sumi: Congratulations Sibongile. When is the wedding planned for?

Sibongile: Next year. Sid and I can't afford a wedding planner, on our teacher's salaries, so there is so much to sort out.

We chat for a few minutes about the wedding and Sibongile receives offers of support from members of the group. Telephone numbers of catering and décor companies are exchanged, together with dress designers, hair stylists and photographers.

Sumi: This is the power of networking, Sibongile. Everything is at your finger tips. See, many hands make light work. This is precisely the planned outcome of ZEST. Shall we take a two minute break? (Everyone is in agreement.)

## **The principles of OBE**

As soon as everybody is seated I call them to attention and begin with the day's lesson.

Sumi: I know that you are going to find today's lesson interesting. Last week we discussed that NCS is the curriculum and that OBE is the methodology, or the way in which the NCS is implemented. Before we look at each of the four principles of OBE I would like to clarify why OBE was included as a design feature in C2005.

### ***Why OBE?***

Sumi: Professor Linda Chisholm was chair of the Committee to review C2005 and she also headed the processes of revision and creation of the RNCS. In a paper entitled *The Politics of Curriculum Review and Revision in South Africa*.

Chisholm reveals the following reasons for the introduction of OBE (I display the citation):

Outcomes-based education ... was, for its initiators, the pedagogical route out of apartheid education. In its emphasis on results and success, on outcomes and their possibility of achievement by all at different paces and times rather than on a subject-bound, content-laden curriculum, it constituted the decisive break with all that was limiting and stultifying and in the content and pedagogy of education. OBE and C2005 provided a broad framework for the development of an alternative to apartheid education that was open, non-prescriptive and reliant on teachers creating their own learning programmes and learning support materials (Chisholm 2003: 3).

Unfortunately, and ironically, it is (in my opinion as an educator and head of department of the intermediate phase) the non-prescriptive nature of the OBE methodology where content was context driven and composed by individual schools, which led to its threatened demise. Teachers who did not have the capacity to be curriculum designers felt helpless and were perplexed as to how to formulate learning programmes. Most teachers in the profession in the late 1990's were trained with the expectation that they would be teaching with the traditional, prescribed syllabus orientated, text book approach (Tikly 2003:171). The NCS required teachers to use OBE methods to design learning programmes to suit the context of the learners in their schools. Teachers were required to think about the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values (SKAVS) that were important for their learners and the community in which they lived; and plan learning programmes that were designed to develop these SKAVS. Some teachers made attempts to develop this capacity but many did not- some because they tried and failed, and others because they failed to try.

Martha: So in essence, by not laying down a curriculum for teachers to follow, teachers did as they pleased, and drew up a curriculum based on their own interpretations of learner needs.

Sumi: Yes, to a certain degree this is true, but it was guided by several principles, one of them being OBE. We will take a look at the principles of OBE next; and in order that you understand them well, I will show you how these principles are applied in the *Maye babo!* series. The four principles of OBE are...:

I write them on the board as I say them.

### **The four principles of OBE that underpin the NCS Curriculum**



Photograph 29 *The four principles of OBE*

As I turn around, I am confronted with frowns and expressions of confusion. I cannot contain the laughter that this funny picture brings on and burst into a giggle. Everybody joins in when they realise the source of my amusement.

Sumi: Never despair when Sumi is near. (The rhyming phrase rolls out of my mouth without much thought). Each of these principles will be looked at in greater detail with detailed explanations and reference to exemplars of how the *Maye babo!* series address them.

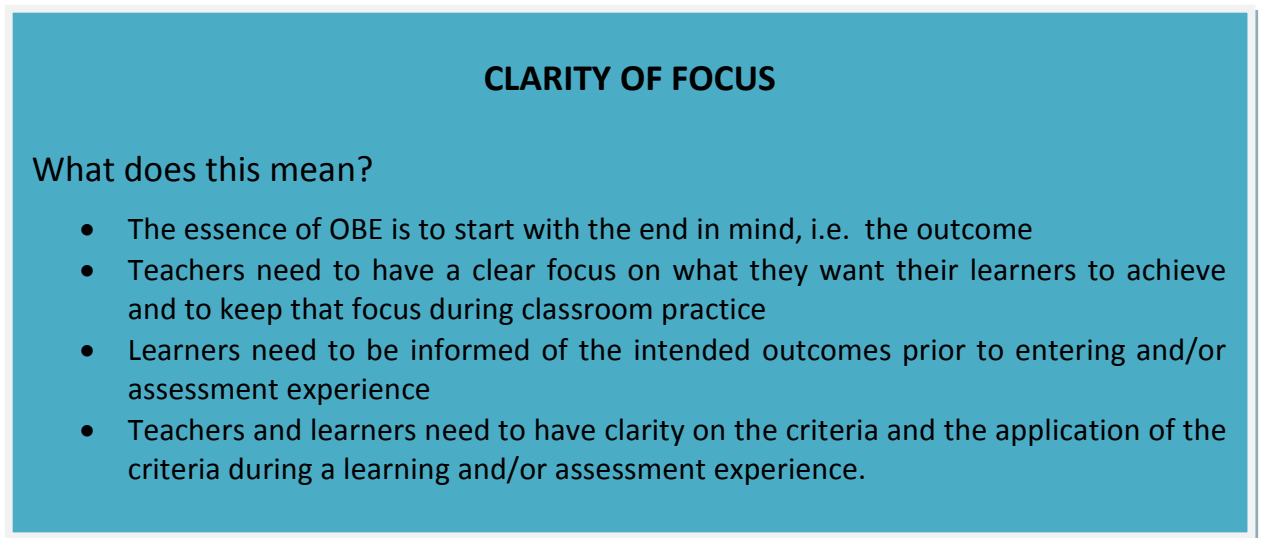
## The First Principle of OBE: Clarity of Focus

Sumi: The first principle of OBE, Clarity of focus implies that teachers and learners should know the outcomes at the beginning of the lesson. Let me use this session as an example. I have planned my lesson for today on the Principles of OBE. My aim is that by the end of this session you will know exactly what the first principle of OBE refers to and how to apply it to design learning programmes.

Muzi: Is that a promise, Sumi.

Sumi: That depends on how quickly we get started and how much time is spent on discussions.

I move towards my laptop and call up the following visual.



**CLARITY OF FOCUS**

What does this mean?

- The essence of OBE is to start with the end in mind, i.e. the outcome
- Teachers need to have a clear focus on what they want their learners to achieve and to keep that focus during classroom practice
- Learners need to be informed of the intended outcomes prior to entering and/or assessment experience
- Teachers and learners need to have clarity on the criteria and the application of the criteria during a learning and/or assessment experience.

Photograph 30 *Clarity of focus*

Sumi: This visual is from notes I received at the NCS training meeting I attended on the twenty first and twenty second of September, 2005 at the Durban Teachers Centre. (I begin to read).

Martha: Oh! I get it. We plan our learning programmes, work schedules and lesson plans with the learning outcomes, assessment standards, forms and tools of assessment, and all the other headings so that we have clarity on what we want

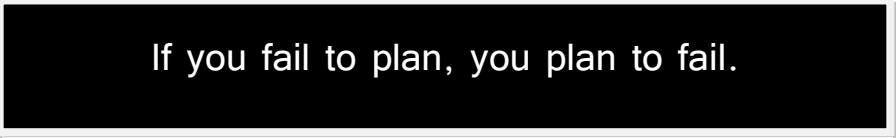


the pupils to be capable of doing and how we are going to assess at what level this has happened. This is where the rating scale and rubrics play a part. This is very different from the days when we had journals instead of work schedules. The journals contained schemes of work that focussed on the knowledge content that was taught, whereas OBE is more skills driven and involves the process of being able to apply the knowledge. In other words, the reason we are asked to indicate the learning outcomes and assessment standards on our macro, meso and micro planning is so that we have clarity on what we will be teaching and assessing.

I notice a confused look on Muzi's face. I am aware that he has had no previous training in OBE and is new to the profession. He is not used to the terminology used by Martha who is better informed on OBE and NCS in comparison to the others.

Sumi: Here is a copy of one part of the work schedule for the theme *Esitolo sezincwadi* that can be found in the Grade 5 educator guide in the *Maye babo!* series. Do you recognise it Maggie? It's the one you referred to last week.

Maggie looks at the title, nods her head and voices her agreement. While the copies of the work schedules are distributed, I write the following on the board.



If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Photograph 31 *Failing to plan is planning to fail*

## **A work schedule**

Sumi: This is only the first page of the work schedule. The complete work schedule that illustrates the activities that address all the other learning outcomes can be found in the *educator's guide*. The activities are described briefly here and in greater detail in the lesson plan which is the micro plan.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Standards	Integration	Learning Activities	Forms of Assessment / tools	Resources	Date commenced/ completed
LO 1 Ukukhulisa	The learner: Understands story Understands oral instructions, directions and descriptions Understands oral descriptions  Understands recounted events Respects other learners	Life LO : 2 : AS 5 Arts and Culture Music AS 4	<p>Listens to story in Umsebenzi 3.5 A, izinsuku zesonto, and tries to answer questions</p> <p>Gives a personal account of weekly programme</p> <p>Follows a series of oral instructions on the procedure to follow when doing group or pair work. Shares tasks according to instructions and gives report on views expressed by the group members</p> <p>Applies instructions about grammatical rules</p> <p>Identifies items of clothing, colours on the chart</p> <p>Answers questions about what happened first in the week and explains events in their order.</p> <p>Respects peers when working in pairs and groups by giving other learners a chance to speak; listening to and encouraging their attempts to speak isiZulu and encourages other group members to support fellow learners</p>	Spoken language observation by educator	Learner's book Charts Flashcards	
LO 2 Ukukhuluma	The learner: Interacts in additional language Acts in culturally appropriate ways The learner: Uses additional language to communicate information Uses additional language creatively		<p>Learners switch from one language to another to include all members of the group in the discussion.</p> <p>Talks about weekly time management</p> <p>Performs songs "izinsuku zesonto" and Ngigqoka</p>	Spoken language Response to text Rubric 1,2,4 Observation by educator / peers	Learner's book Dictionary CD/ cassette player Internet Charts Flashcards	
LO 3 Ukufunda nokubuka	The learner: Reads for information Reads media texts		<p>Reads Umsebenzi 3.5A izinsuku zesonto and summarizes in table form. Answers questions based on reading</p> <p>Reads about other religions. Talks about layout and design of information</p>	Responds to text Rubric 2,4,7 Observation by Educator	Learner's book Dictionary Encyclopedia Internet	
LO 4 Ukubhala	The learner: Writes to communicate information Writes creatively		<p>Labels, articles and clothing</p> <p>Labels, colours</p> <p>Writes a story recounting events as they occurred during the day/week</p> <p>Writes a song or stanza of a song</p>	Creative Writing Rubric 7	Learner's book Dictionary	
LO 5 Ukucabanga nokucabangisa	The learner: Uses language for thinking Collects and records information in different ways Transfers information from one mode to another		<p>Asks questions about different religious practices</p> <p>Formulates questions to interview a friend about his / her religion</p> <p>Records information in umsebenzi 3.5 A on a table</p> <p>Translates sentences from English to isiZulu and vice versa</p>	Spoken Language Investigation Rubric 1 and 2 Observation by educator and peers	Learner's book Transparency showing examples of possible questions for Interview	
LO 6 Ukuvakhiwa nokusatshenziswa kofimi	The learner: Uses language forms and structures Develops own vocabulary		<p>Uses adjectives (colours)</p> <p>Writes sentences in the : Present tense and negative present tense, past tense and negative past tense, future tense and negative future tense</p> <p>Writes words in personal dictionary</p>	Functional Writing Rubric 7 Educator, self or peer assessment	Learner's book Transparency with examples of rules with regard to tenses Dictionary	

Photograph 32 First page of the work schedule from *Maye babo! Educator's Guide*

Sumi: One of the reasons that OBE is rejected by some teachers is the paper trail that it entails. Teachers are expected to record learner progress against each of the assessment standards listed below. The assessment standards adhere to the skills we spoke about earlier. So for example, in the third column which is labelled assessment standards, you will see the skills the learner is expected to acquire. Personally, I find it very tedious and more tedious than this is the fact that the learner's report must also include all this detail. If we had five children in a class we might be able to accomplish this because we would be able to observe them closely and get to know their abilities well but asking this from a teacher who teaches thirty five to forty children is totally unrealistic. We raised this point at our training session and we were told that teachers are supposed to have special eyes. In fact one presenter showed us a cartoon picture of all the extraordinary characteristics that a teacher should have. Most people laughed about it, but I was worried because in reality we don't have the capacity to do what was being asked of us. Anyway, let bygones be bygones.

On a positive note the new CAPS document does simplify the implementation process considerably through the distribution of a nationally approved text book. This will be of great help particularly to schools that are under resourced. In addition the basic needs of learners need to be met and the facilities and other structural resources must be put in place for the curriculum to be successful. Teacher morale is at the lowest level I've seen in the last two decades. A more efficient system of monitoring and evaluating teacher performance must be developed and teachers need to further their studies if they do not have the minimum qualification of a teacher's diploma. District officials need to play a more supportive role, and programmes on parenting will inform parents on how they can play a supportive role in promoting their children's education (Marrow 2007, Bloch 2009). I have seen first -hand, the remarkable difference dedicated parents can make in enhancing their children's education. All the role players need to pull together and work in harmony like the cogs of a well greased machine.

Oh dear! I appear to be drifting from the topic. Forgive me please. I sometimes get carried away because of my passion for improving education. We were discussing the first principle of OBE. Previously, we did not inform learners about the outcomes prior to teaching the lessons. I like this about OBE. If learners know what is expected of them they are more inclined to achieve the outcome.

## Outcomes

Dave: Sumi, I noticed that in the learner's book of the *Maye babo!* series you start each new theme with a summary on what the learners are going to learn and then end with a self assessment activity, which allows learners to see for themselves where their strengths and weaknesses lie. In this way you address point three above which refers to keeping learners informed on the outcomes to be achieved. I often read that section with my learners when we commence with a new theme, and some of my learners get really anxious about the high level of expectations. Then, I remind them that this is how they feel each time we commence with a new theme, and if they work consistently, they will achieve the outcomes easily. Then they smile, and realise that it not as daunting a task as it seems.

Sumi: I think some people in our group are not familiar with what you are referring to. I have a few Grade 4 textbooks on this shelf. (I point to the shelf). Please pass them out Muzi. (I wait until everybody has a book. Doris glances at her watch and this reminds me to take note of the time). Turn to page 19 everybody; it will clarify what Dave is referring to (Soni 2007:19). Is everybody on page 19? (I receive affirmative nods and verbal replies.) This is a simple way of showing the learners what you will cover in the theme. I always say that if you have the map, you can get to your destination. This page enlightens the learners on what they will be learning in this theme. I asked my graphic artist to use colour and illustrations related to the theme to make it appealing. I like my pupils to be excited and motivated particularly when we commence with a new theme.

# Umndeni Wami (My Family)

Kulesi sahluko uzofunda:

In this chapter you will learn:

- \* Amagama azokusiza ukuba uchaze umndeni wakho.  
Words that will help you to describe your family.
- \* Imithetho yokuguqula amagama asuke ebunyeni aye ebuningini.  
Rules on changing words from the singular to plural.
- \* Ukusebenzisa u 'na' - 'and'.  
How to use 'and' - 'na'.
- \* Ukusho igama lakho nesibongo sakho.  
To say your name and surname.
- \* Ukubuza nokuphendulo ukuthi uhlalaphi nokuthi uhlala nobani.  
To ask and reply where you live and who you live with.
- \* Ukwenza isaziso/isikhangisi ubhale isigaba ngomndeni wakho.  
To prepare a poster and write a paragraph about your family.
- \* Ukubhala iculo.  
Write a song.



Photograph 33 Section informing learners what they will be learning in a theme

## Umndeni (My Family)

Yiziphi kulezi zinto ongazenza ngesiZulu? Beka uphawu. ✓

Which of these things can you do in isiZulu? Tick ✓

<b>Ukuzihlola (Self Assessment)</b>	<b>Kahle kakhulu Very Well</b>	<b>Ngiyazama Getting there</b>	<b>Angikwazi nakancane Not at all</b>
1. Ngiyawagonda amagama amasha akulesi sahluko. I understand the vocabulary in this chapter.			
2. Ngingawaguqula amagama egiwafunde kulesi sahluko asuke ebunyeni aye ebuningini. I can change words learnt in this chapter from the singular to the plural.			
3. Ngingabubhala ubulili obuphikisanayo. I can write the opposite gender.			
4. Ngiyakwazi ukusebenzisa u 'na' (and) I know how to use 'na' (and).			
5. Ngingalisho igama lami nesibongo sami. I can say my name and surname.			
6. Ngingasho ukuthi ngihlalaphi. I can say where I live.			
7. Ngingasho ukuthi ngihlala nobani. I can say who I live with.			
8. Ngingasenza isithombe ngomndeni wami. I can make a poster about my family.			
9. Ngingayilungiselela ingxoxo futhi ngixoxe ngomlomo ngomndeni wami. I can prepare and recite an oral about my family			
10. Ngingaligula inculo ngomndeni wami. I can sing a song about my family.			

Photograph 34 Self assessment activity and rating scale

I listen to the positive remarks about the design and contents of the page. The enlightened expressions signify permission to proceed. I then ask them to turn to page 31 and we discuss the self assessment activity and the rating scale (Soni 2007:31).

I can see that some of the members are not familiar with the design of the series. I take a mental note to make reference to the relevant pages in the series as we progress to give them clarity.

## **Activity plan**

Sumi: As the teacher, you also need to know how you are going to break up the learning programme shown in the work schedule into individual lesson plans. This is also an expectation in CAPS. Take a look at this lesson plan from the Grade 4 Educator's guide (Soni 2007:156).

The worried look on Muzi's face prompts me to add:

Sumi: Do you see why I say that unqualified teachers need this kind of help? When will they ever get the time to do this detailed planning? Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that detailed planning is unnecessary, but do teachers, particularly class based teachers have the capacity in terms of time, knowledge and resources to do it? This is a question for the education bureaucrats. In fact many qualified teachers also cannot cope with this level of administrative work. When are they supposed to do their marking, not to mention extra-mural and other co-curricular activities which also require a high degree of planning, organising and administration?

You will notice a section on *Integration* in the activity plan. This refers to how this lesson is integrated with the learning outcomes and assessment standards of other learning areas. Remember that integration with other learning areas must not be forced; it must happen naturally, as shown in the example above. This table shows how the Grade 4 learning programme in the *Maye babo!* series is integrated with other learning areas in the Grade 4 curriculum.

**UNIT 2: Umndeni wami (My family)****Activity 2.4****Critical Outcome: 4****(Learner's book – page 23, 24)****Developmental Outcome: 1, 3**

IsiZulu Learning Outcome	Assessment Standards
LO 5 Thinking and Reasoning LO 6 Language Structure and Use  LO 4 Writing	AS 2 Uses language for thinking AS 5 Understands and uses plural forms of nouns AS 5 Uses knowledge of language structure and use to spell correctly

**Integrated Outcomes**

Learning Area	Learning Outcome	Assessment Standard
EMS	LO 1 The Economic Cycle	AS 1 Describes the roles of members of a family

**Resources**

Learner's book

**Vocabulary**

As per activity 2.4 B in learners book

**Introduction**

Begin the lesson with a class or group discussion on family traditions. Investigate similarities and differences with other cultures. How are chores shared at home? Are there cultural differences? Talk about the tradition of communal living amongst the Zulu people. Discuss the practice of polygamy in simple terms. Explain how a child can have several mothers or that an uncle is sometimes called father. Discuss the vocabulary list.

**Development (Teaching and Learning Process)**

Discuss the rule when changing nouns to the plural. Nouns beginning with u: take an o instead of a u in the plural e.g. ugogo > ogogo.

Nouns beginning with um take aba in the plural e.g. umntwana changes to abantwana in the plural. Encourage learners to learn the vocabulary list and spelling

Complete umsebenzi 2.4.C by writing the correct plural form. Encourage learners to spell correctly.

**Extension / Remedial Activities**

Look up words in the dictionary and add to vocabulary list.

**Continuous formative assessment**

Can the learner: Use the plural form of the nouns correctly

Assessment Method: Educator

Assessment Tool: Rubric 7

Assessment Technique: Umsebenzi 2.4.C

Forms of Assessment: Functional Writing

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Photograph 35 Activity plan from *Maye babo! series*



## Integration

Unit	Title	Learning Area	Learning Outcome and Assessment Standard	
1	Ukubingelela	Life Orientation	LO 2	AS 3
		Arts and Culture	LO 1 LO 3	AS 1 (Visual Arts) AS 1 (Music)
		Technology	LO 3	AS 2
2.	Umndeni wami	EMS	LO 1	AS 1
		Arts and Culture	LO 2	AS 1 (Visual Arts)
			LO 3	AS 1 (Music)
3	Esikoleni	Arts and Culture	LO 3	AS 1 (Music)
4	Ekilasini	Arts and Culture	LO 3	AS 1
		Social Science (Geography)	LO 1	AS 3
		Mathematics	LO 5	AS 5
		Life Orientation	LO 3	AS 3
5	Ubuso	Life Orientation	LO 3	AS 5
		Arts and Culture	LO 3	AS 1 (Music)
6	Kwadokotela wamazinyo	Arts and Culture	LO 3	AS 2 (Drama)
			LO 3	AS 1 (Music)

Photograph 36 *How Maye babo! series uses integration in Grade 4*

We discuss this in greater detail and I am about to close the meeting when Muzi signals that he wants to ask a question.

Muzi: Sumi, I like the way you design the learning programmes in the *Maye babo!* series. I can see that it follows closely with the principles of the NCS, but is there a particular format you followed in terms of the actual learning content?

Sumi: I use themes that allow literacy to grow progressively. You will notice that the vocabulary in the different themes follows progression and that spelling, grammar and sentence writing is continuously reinforced in a variety of ways.

Muzi: Is there a checklist you followed. I would like to try to create a programme for my learners and would really appreciate some guidance.

Sumi: I don't have a checklist Muzi, (it would be a good idea to have one) but I certainly followed a pattern. I would suggest that the starting point would be to select an appropriate theme reflecting a topic incorporated in the curriculum which will be sure to capture your pupils' interests. It should also be a topic that lends itself to interaction in a functional way, that is, your students should see it as a useful topic to learn. This creates the motivation for learning.

The next step is to ensure that the level of the content is appropriate for the grade level. This can be tricky if you are a new teacher and might require a little investigation such as reviewing existing texts.

I then write down the main outcomes that I would like students to aspire towards or develop by the completion of the unit. These are guided by the NCS and more recently CAPS. I plan material for each of the learning outcomes to ensure that I provide opportunities during the lessons to help learners develop their listening, speaking, reading, comprehension, writing, thinking and language usage (grammatical) skills. I try to begin the topic with a dialogue or narrative which incorporates the grammatical skills that I plan to focus on in the topic/theme.

I try to use a variety of resources for my lessons to make them motivating for my learners. I also use different text types such as poems, diaries, advertisements, cards, and dictionaries. The CAPS document provides guidance on how this can be done. I have noticed that my learners love the songs. Last week I asked the Grade 5 learners (I don't teach them isiZulu) if

they are enjoying the Grade 5 *Maye babo!* book. One child responded that she preferred the Grade 4 book. When I inquired about this she responded that there are not as many songs in the Grade 5 book. Several other pupils echoed these sentiments later in the discussion. I thanked them for their observation and comments and made a note to add more songs to the revised CAPS version which I will be submitting to the DBE evaluating team in 2012. I also decided to make a CD of the songs in the books.

It is important that assessment activities be given careful thought. Devise appropriate means of evaluating learner progress on a continuous basis throughout the unit. Avoid relying only on formal pencil and paper tests. I select the criteria for assessments carefully so that it allows me the ability to measure the progress that the learner has made. I also ensure that there is sufficient scope to extend the lesson for learners who are confident and remedial activities are prepared for those learners that require additional support. These requirements are stipulated in CAPS. I hope this gives you a good idea, Muzi. I will discuss some of these points at a later stage. We do need to close this meeting now as we all have family commitments. Thank you everybody. Hamba kahle. Sizobonana.<sup>99</sup> Next week we will discuss the second principle of OBE.

On my way home I reflect on Muzi's ambition to develop his own learning programme and smile at the thought that others in the ZEST group are starting to gain confidence at developing learning programmes. There is a backlog of resources for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. Perhaps I should set a project that encourages this. I map out in my mind how this might work as I drive home.

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<sup>99</sup> Go well. We will see (meet) each other.

## **Class Three**

### **The second principle of Outcomes Based Education: design down**

#### **Introduction**

I gather the pile of scripts which I have spent most of the afternoon marking and smile. Teaching is one of the most rewarding jobs I know of. It is a wonderful feeling to know that I have made a difference in the lives of the learners I teach. I feel fortunate at my school because learner motivation is positive and teacher morale is high. Teaching in South Africa can differ vastly from one school to the next. My mind drifts to the discussion I had with Munira, a teacher friend who I taught with at my previous school. Munira expressed her concern and frustration with the learners she teaches.

Munira: My blood was boiling this morning when a pupil opened his desk while I was teaching and deliberately distracts other learners in my class by flashing a vulgar picture from a magazine at them. These learners have no respect at all. Last week one of them looked at me cheekily when I ask him for a project. He could not be bothered when I said that he will get nought because he did not submit it on time. Sometimes I wonder if this job is worth the stress it puts me through.

A flashback of similar personal experiences sends a shiver down my spine. I embrace with gratitude the positivity with which I am surrounded presently and smile as I think that even though I am working harder than I ever did before, I am happy. I feel inspired by my learners and the positive ethos that exists at this, my present school encourages me to go the extra mile because my work receives appreciation from my learners, their parents and the various role players at school. One of my greatest joys is when I discuss a topic and the next day, a learner arrives excited at my door, before school has begun to show me a book she has borrowed from the library on the topic. I feel super fantastic; because it indicates that the learning did not end with the lesson, but continued. This is one of the positive

features that OBE promotes. It does not separate school from the rest of life, but rather breaks down the barriers between all the resources that bring about learning. It also involves parents and peers in the learning process.

I see a reflection of a shadow on my classroom door and stand up anticipating an early arrival of one of the members of the ZEST group.

Sumi: Hello Muzi. You're very early today.

Muzi: Yes Sumi. How are you? I wanted to see you before the meeting to discuss an idea I had with the reader I'm planning. Do you have a few minutes to take a quick look at it? I feel really excited about what I have written and would love your opinion about it. I can't believe how much fun I had composing it.

Sumi: Most certainly. Do you mind if we make tea before we start? I was about to go to the staffroom to do so before you arrived. Would you like a cup?

Muzi: That would be lovely. I had hoped that you would have some on offer.

We discuss the reader over tea in the staffroom and Muzi evidently feels encouraged by the positive comments he receives. I guide him on how to develop the story and link the content to curriculum guidelines, promising him a copy of the criteria for the readers. We return to the classroom in anticipation of the arrival of the ZEST group. After the usual meet and greet I commence with the discussion.

## **What is design down?**

Sumi: Let's look at the second principle of OBE.

(I read the second principle, stopping after each bullet for discussion.)

## DESIGN DOWN

What does this mean?

- The **Constitution** provides the vision for the kind of society we want to develop within a democratic framework
- The **Critical and Developmental Outcomes** derived from the Constitution describe the kind of citizen the education system aims to develop
- **Learning Outcomes** are derived from the Critical and Developmental Outcomes and enable us to operationalise this broad division. Learning Outcomes describe what learners should know and be able to do
- **Assessment Standards** describe the minimum level of achievement of learning outcome(s) and the depth and breadth of what is to be learnt
- Assessment Standards often need to be broken up into **smaller parts, steps or learning opportunities** in order for learners to eventually master the Assessment Standard and to accommodate diverse needs and abilities amongst learners

Photograph 37 *Second principle of OBE*

(I then project the next image, GDE 2004.)

Sumi: Let's look at the first bullet. (I read it). "We want to employ people who: **are literate**." After consulting with the business community the following criteria were developed for the kind of employee that is required.

Dave: I think that these are reasonable expectations, don't you.

Sumi: Absolutely. These are the basic skills that we need to develop through the medium of the knowledge we teach at school.

Martha: Sorry to interrupt you Sumi. Being literate, having good reading, writing and arithmetic abilities have been part of the curriculum since my granny was at school, so that's not new.



Photograph 38 *Criteria for employees*

Sumi: That's true, Martha. The things that are different from the traditional method of teaching are the emphasis on social learning, the environment and technology.

Martha: Well with all the talk on global warming it is understandable that environmental issues are emphasized at school. How do we incorporate this with the teaching of isiZulu?

Sumi: When compiling the *Maye babo!* series I selected the learning content carefully so that it incorporated environmental issues.

- Muzi: Oh, so you mean that when designing a reader for example, you tried to include knowledge on saving trees or water.
- Sumi: Precisely, Muzi and at the same time I also considered other aspects of the language structure that I wanted to teach as well as the outcomes that needed address. Before I discuss the outcomes, let's look at the third point, which refers to working as a team.
- Doris: If this refers to group work then you have my ears because it is my area of difficulty. I suppose the whole idea of getting learners to work in groups or pairs was to develop team spirit, social skills, cooperation and good communication skills. I definitely see the logic in this, but to be honest, I hate group and pair work. I like a quiet classroom where there is good control and discipline. Some children sit back and expect others to do the work for them and others are control freaks who just take over and do not allow anybody else a chance to talk.

## **Group work**

- Sumi: I share some of your sentiments Doris. Group work can be very demanding for the teacher. On a positive note, group work also encourages learners to be active participants in the learning process and I find it to be a useful technique of developing oral communication in isiZulu, particularly in the Intermediate Phase and higher grades, as the learners have a basic storehouse of vocabulary at this stage.

I do group work as a small part of my lesson, and only when it suits the style of my lesson. We have several skills to teach our learners, and while we can achieve a lot of these through group work, it should not be to the detriment of sacrificing the ability to work independently, being able to think and make independent decisions and being motivated and creative.

As you mentioned Doris, if a group does not function effectively, and there are control freaks, the desired aim of group work is lost. In this instance, I would first teach the learners what the outcomes are of doing group work. You would



obviously make this age relevant. For example, if the learners are young, you can delegate roles for each learner, so that everybody has a task. I made little badges for them, so that the group was reminded of each member's task. I did not plan on going into great detail on this topic today, nonetheless, I will be glad to deviate from my plan if this suits everyone.

Muzi: I would like that if it is not too much trouble for you Sumi.

Aasha: Me too.

Dave: Me three.

Everybody laughs and a rising chatter begins amongst the group on some of their experiences when doing group work.

Sumi: That settles it then. Group work it is. While I look for the relevant information on my lap top, you can have group discussions on your personal experiences with group work. You can rotate clockwise so that everybody has a turn. Each group must have a scribe and nominate someone to give feedback on your group's views on group work. I hope everybody took note of my flexible approach to entertain a session on group work. This is how I work with my pupils as well. Sometimes, the class discussions naturally take you to a section you planned to address in the future. Be flexible, provided you have the necessary resources to enable you to teach the lesson. Don't kill the thirst to teach something when the opportunity presents itself naturally, as there is never a better time than that moment.

The round of applause is indicative that the point is taken. While I open the relevant document I marvel at how I am able to model my teaching style (which was unintentional yet very relevant) in the process of our discussions. I come across an article that reminds me of the positive effect that emotions have on learning. Paul Maclean's book *A Mind of three minds* is mentioned in the notes, but no bibliography is given. I recall our discussions at the NCS workshops that encouraged us to make learning personal and compelling by engaging the emotions of learners. During my lessons I encourage my learners to express how they feel. I create scenarios that are authentic and real for my learners. The present discussion taking place amongst the members of the support group is a perfect example.

They are interacting with emotion about group work. What they say and hear will be well remembered and they will derive valuable knowledge about different techniques as well as the do's and don'ts.

The timer sounds signalling the end of the ten minute discussion. There is a bit of shuffling with teachers moving back to their places. I begin with the roles of group members that I had adhered to earlier.

Sumi: Look at this visual everyone. Isn't it cute? These are the badges that I spoke about earlier.

I hear a few chuckles of laughter as the group scrutinize the cards.



Photograph 39 Badges showing group roles

Dave: I love the expression on the Noise Nabber. I think that is the most difficult task.

Sumi: It certainly is. You should get an assertive person to perform that task. I find that it works for me.

Aasha: My pupils shy away from being the reporter. That role probably requires a confident, loud speaker.

Sibongile: I think the chairman has the most difficult task. He or she has to ensure that everybody gets a turn to speak and keep some order in the discussion. Young children often become emotional when their point of view is rejected. Sometimes they squabble over a difference of opinion. They do not understand that it is possible to have different views on a topic. These cards are lovely. Could we have copies please, Sumi.

Sumi: I will make copies for all of you. You can roll it out on cardboard, punch the hole in the top, middle section and learners can pin them on when doing group work. It works well for me. You can add group work monitor to the list of duties in your classroom. I have seven packs of these, for the group work monitor to hand to each group, who then distribute the cards amongst themselves. At the end of group work the cards are collected by the chair person and the group work monitor collects them and stores them in that box. (I point to the chocolate box on the shelf to my right).

Apart from the roles that each group member plays there should be a set of rules that define how the group will function. It is best to allow each group to develop their own rules as this gives them an opportunity develop decision making skills. Group work helps to develop several social skills in learners.

I turn to the board and begin to write them.

Social skills developed through Group work:

- Accountability
- Responsibility
- Mutual respect and tolerance
- Empathy
- Effective and appropriate communication
- Constructive criticism
- Time management

Photograph 40 *Social skills developed through group work*

Maggie: These skills are useful life skills. I find that most children do not share adequate time talking to their parents and siblings. We learn so much through social interaction. The introduction of television has caused a negative effect on family communication.

Aasha: My mum says that television was introduced in South Africa when she was in high school. She does not share the addiction of the youth of today to watch television. As a kid she had such fun growing up in a household where everyone was in the present moment, *with* each other. Last week she tried to get my nephew's attention. He was so engrossed in his tv game that he did not even hear her. I find that it is the same with a lot of people that have the latest cell phone. They are constantly messaging each other and forget about the people they are with. In the process of becoming technologically advanced, we are becoming socially dead.

Sumi: Aasha, I don't know if this was your intent, but you have just justified the need for our education system to address the improvement of social skills because children are not given sufficient opportunity to practise their communication skills. Now moving back to group work, I like to arrange my classroom so that learners are able to sit comfortably when working in a group. I don't like my learners to be seated as groups all the time. I adjust the furniture in my classroom as the need arises. As you can see, I have this area that is carpeted,

(I point to the carpeted area at the front of my classroom) which I sometimes use for group work. If the groups need more space, I use the area on the patio just outside my classroom.

I like to select the groups and I try to separate strong personalities. During group sessions I observe the group dynamics and make adjustments. This is a time when teachers have to be vigilant. I move from one group to the next offering guidance on how to function cohesively. I also find that when I explain to my learners that the rationale for doing a particular activity is to develop their social skills and that these skills could be useful to them in their future careers, it motivates them to cooperate.

The thing I don't like is that we have to assess group work. This task is extremely difficult and I rely a lot on these guidelines which I received at the NCS workshop. I wish we did not have so many assessment tasks. Sometimes I feel that this is all I do. It is such a time consuming paper trail. I think a mental note made by the teacher, on how a pupil is progressing is sufficient, and the aim of this observation must be to guide future learning and not competence. I'm so glad that the CAPS document has clarified that we do not need to record informal assessments. Here is a quick way of taking note of how the group functioned. (I project an image of the recording sheet which follows on the next page from the Grade 5 educator guide (Soni 2007:174).

Sumi: I will make copies of this for you to read at leisure and refer to when the need arises or you could make a copy from the educator guide. Please start a file for all the material you receive if you have not done so already. You notice how quickly I can access information at these meetings. It comes from filing everything and marking files clearly with a contents page for easy reference. Even electronic data stored on computers or flash sticks need to be properly filed and named for easy access. Now let us look at the outcomes referred to in the policy document. Outcomes are the end products of learning.

## ***Group Assessment Recording Sheets***

### ***Group Self Assessment***

How well did we do ?

Circle Yes or No

Did we complete the task ?	YES	NO
Did we work quietly ?	YES	NO
Did we take turns to speak ?	YES	NO
Did we praise those who did well ?	YES	NO
Did we build on each other's ideas ?	YES	NO
Did we work out our differences ?	YES	NO
Did we help each other ?	YES	NO

### ***Individual Group Assessment***

Circle Yes or No

Did I do my job ?	YES	NO
Did I share my ideas ?	YES	NO
Did I listen when others were talking ?	YES	NO
Did I help others in my group ?	YES	NO
What can I do to help my group next time we meet?	YES	NO

### ***Assessment by Teacher***

Name of group:

How was the team effort ?		
Rating	Description	Percentage
1	very weak	1 – 34
2	weak	35 – 49
3	satisfactory	50 – 69
4	good	70 – 100
		Mark
How was the group at working together and encouraging one another ?		
How was the group at making sure everyone had a chance to speak ?		
How was the group at sorting out disagreements without hurting the feelings of others?		
Did the group finish on time?		
How well did the group use everyone's abilities to the best?		
Did the group use the time wisely?		

Photograph 41 *Group assessment recording sheets*

## **Critical outcomes (CO) and developmental outcomes (DO)**

Maggie: I have never really understood the Critical and Developmental Outcomes. Can you explain them Sumi, and tell me, are they included in the new CAPS document?

Sumi: Certainly, Maggie, and I will also show you how the *Maye babo!* series addresses these outcomes so that you are able to do likewise when planning additional tasks for learners. Yes, they are included in CAPS they are part of the curriculum since Curriculum 2005 was introduced. I'm afraid you will need to gain a good understanding of what they are and the rationale for their inclusion. You will notice that there are 9 critical outcomes and 5 developmental outcomes. These were derived from the S A Qualifications Act (1995) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) policy statement. Considerable research and meetings with representatives from the business sector took place in order to develop the following outcomes so that the education curriculum addressed the needs of the business community. This was revealed at the NCS meetings I attended in September 2005.

The critical and developmental outcomes address the above mentioned needs of the business community. They describe the kind of citizen our educational system aims to create. Turn to page 104 of the *Maye babo!* series Grade 5 Educator guide<sup>100</sup> (Soni 2007:104) for more clarity. Those of you that prefer to read it in isiZulu can look at page 5 (Soni 2007:5). The guide is written in isiZulu and English for your convenience. (Doris gives a “thumbs up” sign indicating her approval). According to the curriculum the critical outcomes envisage learners who are able to (we read the following from the educator guide).

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<sup>100</sup> This reference is for the *Grade5 Educator guide*.

<b>CRITICAL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES in <i>Maye babo!</i> series</b>
1. Identify and solve problems, make decisions using critical and creative thinking	Follow instructions, analyze, classify, observe, solve problems, predict, compare and contrast, draw conclusions.
2. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organization and community	Paired work, group work, formulate rules, class and team building activities, activities that develop friendship, respect, tolerance and social development skills.
3. Organize and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively	Personal development skills, coping and safety skills, physical development skills, health promotion, independence and responsibility skills.
4. Collect analyze, organize and critically evaluate information.	Projects, investigation, survey, research.
6. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.	Create, designs or construct cards / posters projects.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.	Inter-relationships and inter-independence amongst members of the family, extended family, school and broader community.

Photograph 42 *Critical outcomes and associated activities*

Martha: I finally understand why there has been so much emphasis on things like group work, discussion, getting learners to figure things out for themselves, role playing, and parent involvement and so on in NCS. These ideas stem from the critical outcomes. Actually, this is the first time that I have made sense of the rationale behind OBE and I'm surprised at myself for saying this, but it makes sense.



Dave: I also understand the Cos. Tell me Sumi, what role do the developmental outcomes play?

Sumi: The DOs overlap to a large extent, with the COs listed above, and I think it is for this reason that they are not mentioned in CAPS yet they are certainly implied in the principles of the curriculum which we discussed earlier. This is one way in which NCS is simplified. Look at the following visual. The first point relates to different learning strategies. In the past the emphasis was on memorising. OBE encourages learning through problem solving, games and other child friendly means. The developmental outcomes envisage learners who are able to:

<b>Developmental Outcomes</b>	<b>Activities in <i>Maye babo!</i> series</b>
1. Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.	Problem solving, quiz, games
2. Participate as responsible citizens in the light of local, national and global communities.	Community involvement, adopt a spot in school, classroom or neighbourhood.
3. Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.	Develop respect, tolerance and understanding for diverse cultures and religions. Develop moral values
4. Explore education and career opportunities.	Role play, class tours

Photograph 43 *Developmental outcomes and associated activities*

Doris: It also encourages community and cultural awareness and involvement. For the ‘rainbow nation’ to live in harmony, we have to learn to understand each other and this begins with gaining a cultural understanding of a variety of cultures.

Sumi: I recall how I struggled to understand pupils, parents and learners that belong to another culture at the time when schools first desegregated. In fact it was this experience that led to the workshops I held on multicultural education.

Aasha: My mum told me that she attended one of the workshops and it was very useful. She said that since she was a little girl, she did not experience much contact with people of different race groups because of the group area act and segregated schooling. I can see why you felt the need for the workshops on multicultural education, Sumi.

Sumi: Thanks Aasha. If any of you would like a copy of the paper I delivered, please see me after the meeting (Appendix 13). We seem to be drifting from the topic of discussion again. The critical and developmental outcomes are indicated for every activity found in the learner's book of the *Maye babo!* series. These are shown in the activity plans, which can be found in Chapter 2 of the educator guide. You will see this in the next visual. It is impossible to address every outcome in every lesson. The aim is to identify at least two or three outcomes that will be developed during a particular unit when doing your planning.

Sumi: The third bullet refers to Learning Outcomes which all of you are familiar with. I had hoped to discuss this today, but time is running out. Drive safely please. I'll see you next week. I hope you found today's meeting useful.

I accept the applause and expressions of appreciation as an affirmative reply. I quickly close the documents on my laptop and shut down. It has been a long day and I begin to feel the signs of exhaustion as I make my way to my car accompanied by Muzi and Maggie.

On the drive home I reflect on how my teaching has transformed through implementing some of the principles contained in the NCS. My lessons seem to be lively with active pupil participation and my learners are much more excited about their learning than they have ever been. The NCS has been severely criticised, yet I believe that it has brought about a new approach to teaching. I have applied the COs and DOs to the teaching of isiZulu. For

instance, the use of role play, dialogues and songs are enjoyed by my learners. I recall how excited my grade fours were when they dramatised the short play – *Kwadokotela wamazinyo*<sup>101</sup> today. They could not wait for the Zulu lesson to perform the play. They brought costumes from home, and made props. During the break, I observed that the individual groups practised their parts instead of eating their lunch. The comment by one of the learners that the lesson went so quickly sums up how much they enjoyed this project. This was in huge contrast to nervous Larisha's experience described on page 130 of this thesis. In fact, the learners were so absorbed in the play, that many were oblivious of my red file in which I record their assessments. I also think about the *UThemba uthi*, game and the songs that they love singing. These are some of the enjoyable ways in which isiZulu has been made easy in the *Maye babo!* series.

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<sup>101</sup> At the dentist

## **Class Four**

### **Learning outcomes (LO) and assessment standards (AS)**

#### **Introduction**

I am seated in my classroom and await the arrival of the ZEST members. I think about the learning outcomes and am reminded of my experience when I taught Afrikaans. At one of the meetings I attended (prior to C2005), we were given expert advice on the order to follow when introducing a new theme. We were told that the initial step was to provide sufficient listening opportunities for learners to hear the language, then encourage speaking and comprehension of what was heard or spoken, and only when this was achieved, then writing should follow. I consider this advice in the line of the latest CAPS document and smile. When the members arrive, we briefly chat about the pressures of the fourth term which involves considerable planning for the first term of the forthcoming year. There is a suggestion that the ZEST meetings be put on hold for a few weeks. A consensus is reached to resume in January since there are only three challenging weeks left before the end of the school academic year. I explain that we will complete the section on the principles of OBE with a discussion on the LOs and ASs today.

Sumi: The learning outcomes are designed down from the critical and developmental outcomes. The learning outcomes and assessment standards clearly define for all learners the goals and outcomes that must be attained in order to proceed to each successive level of the system. Like the critical and developmental outcomes mentioned above, learning outcomes are the means by which standards are set throughout South Africa in the different learning areas. Learning outcomes generally are the same from Grade R to Grade 9. They describe what knowledge/concepts, skills and values learners should know, be able to demonstrate and be able to do in a specific learning area by the end of the GET phase. The six learning outcomes for languages listed below have been amended in CAPS. This table describes the change for languages. (I project the table on the screen).

## A comparison of LO in the NCS and revised NCS

Old NCS – 6 outcomes	NCS with CAPS – 4 outcomes
Listening	Listening and Speaking are combined as one outcome
Speaking	
Reading and viewing	Reading
Writing	Writing
Thinking and reasoning	No time is to be allocated specifically for this outcome, but it is recommended that this skill be absorbed in the lessons addressing the other four outcomes.
Language structure and use	Language structure and use is mentioned as an outcome but it is to be taught together with one or more of the other three outcomes.

Photograph 44 *Comparison of LO in NCS and CAPS*

Sumi: This table shows how the learning outcomes have been simplified in the CAPS document. The generic document which I downloaded from the government website.... You know what, ... mmm let me give you the address so that you can view the changes in the other learning areas.

I write the address on the board.



*[http:// www. education.gov.za/CAPS.asp](http://www.education.gov.za/CAPS.asp)*

Photograph 45 *Address of Government website*

Sumi: In this document, on page 6, it is stated that emphasis should be placed on developing a learner's reading and writing skills in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. Listening and speaking, as well as language skills will be

introduced in the Foundation Phase and refined as learners continue to progress through the education system. I'm glad that listening and speaking are combined as one learning outcome because these activities go together. It helps us to simplify our lesson planning. I think this is a good time to tell you how the activities in the *Maye babo!* series are organised.

### **How the *Maye babo!* series is organized**

Sumi: Each unit commences with a dialogue, story or discussion (Grade 4-7), that incorporates the vocabulary and language such as the focus of learning in teaching the theme covered. The units are divided into activities (Umsebenzi). I suggest that teachers exercise discretion when planning and decide on the number of activities that will be done in one lesson.

Muzi: How is the series structured with respect to the Foundation Phase?

Sumi: The units in the Foundation Phase focus on building literacy. A core group of words is introduced at the beginning of the unit and learners are engaged in a series of activities, which promote the understanding of the material and the achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment standards.

Martha: I find it difficult to teach learners with mixed abilities in isiZulu. What do you recommend Sumi?

Sumi: Learners in a mixed ability class can work at their own pace where applicable. I give additional homework to learners who require it, to keep them on par with other learners, but you must ensure that the learners have the necessary knowledge to cope with the homework activity. You must not stress if individual learners do not know everything perfectly. Move on to the next activity even if all the learners have not mastered the skill as the book is designed to reinforce prior learning and sufficient opportunities are provided for learners to attain a higher level of proficiency in a variety of skills.

Also, try to speak as much isiZulu as possible during the isiZulu lessons and create opportunities for the learners to speak isiZulu without feeling threatened or self conscious.

Sibongile: Sumi, how do you address the learning outcomes in the series?

### **Activities in the *Maye babo!* series that address the outcomes**

Sumi: The learning outcomes Listening, Speaking, Reading and viewing, Thinking and reasoning, and Language structure and use are fully integrated in the *Maye babo!* series. I will discuss the different types of activities I use and make suggestions about how each type of activity can be approached.

#### ***Activities related to listening and speaking***

Sumi: It is necessary for you to be aware of your learners' needs from the outset. Allow learners with hearing problems to sit near the front of the class where they can hear you easily. Look at the learners when you speak and articulate well. The use of a CD with the recorded dialogues and songs is recommended as this will assist the learner to adopt the correct pronunciation of words.

#### ***Songs***

Sumi: Most units in the Foundation and Intermediate Phase contain songs that reinforce the vocabulary dealt with in that unit. Listening to rhyming words and sounds in the songs strengthens phonic awareness and develops knowledge of spelling patterns in an informal and enjoyable way. I'm pleased to inform you that the CD's for the Foundation Phase are now available. The learners can sing the songs in groups. I encourage learners to pay particular attention to the pronunciation of the words. Singing is an enjoyable and stimulating time for the learners, as opposed to a rote-learning activity where learners monotonously repeat the vocabulary. To make the lesson exciting, I divide the class into

groups and they compete to see which group sings the best. This creates a competitive spirit which promotes enthusiastic participation, and allows some learners to listen while others sing.

Martha: I find the songs that are sung in dual language (isiZulu and English) are very effective in building vocabulary in a meaningful way. My learners often tell me that they can't stop singing them.

### ***Read – aloud stories and dialogues***

Sumi: Thank you Martha. In the *Maye babo!* series effective use is made of dialogues and short stories (Grade 4 – 7). I have recently written readers for use in the Foundation Phase and am presently working on readers for the Intermediate Phase (Soni 2011 in print). Readers help to improve the learner's listening skills. I find that the listening skills of the learners I teach these days seem to be weaker than those of the learners I taught a few years ago. Many of my colleagues share this concern and I think it is a good topic to research. Let me not drift from the topic of discussion.

Dave: I would have thought that the main focus of the readers would be to improve reading skills. Can you explain how the readers could be used to develop listening skills?

Sumi: Yes Dave, during the reading, the educator can ask learners questions and get them to predict what will happen next, or ask learners to respond personally, or let them retell the story in small groups, using the pictures for support. The stories can also be used to discuss ethical or social issues. In this way you encourage the learners to be attentive and listen while the story is being read. I encourage you to ask learners to dramatise and role-play the dialogues to give the learners sufficient practice in isiZulu. These activities should be relaxed, and be as much fun as possible. Simple class and group dramatisations are recommended. Make every attempt to encourage the students to speak isiZulu. Try not to correct the learner while he or she is performing. I suggest you make notes of common errors and address these at a suitable time, preferably



privately. If you find it difficult to manage group work, you can divide the class into two groups when doing a dialogue that involves two people. I do this in such a way that the learners seated next to each other read the parts of different characters- that's assuming that there are two characters. Then I ask each group to recite their part after me. I model the pronunciation and tone of voice. They turn towards each other pretending that they are conversing. They practise their parts in a controlled classroom environment. Once they are familiar with their parts you can take them to the field so that they can practise in their pairs or groups.

### ***Oral language Work***

Each chapter in the learner's book provides dialogues, poems, pictures, stories or songs, which form the basis of stimulating oral-language activities, to develop learners listening and speaking skills. All of these link to the theme of the unit and ensure that the learners practice new language structures, new vocabulary, respond to instructions, play games involving language and take part in conversations on a familiar topic. Educators should make use of classroom resources and repetition, to ensure that skills are sufficiently taught before the learners are required to do written work. Every effort must be made to make learning enjoyable and within the capability of the additional language learner.

### ***Oral pair work***

Some activities require the learners to work in pairs. Pair work is easier to organize than group work and ensures that each learner has an opportunity to speak and listen. Pair work allows the learners to discuss pictures, retell stories, role-play the dialogues and interpret the text together in a supportive way. It also creates a means of developing improved social skills.

### ***Oral group work***

Group work, as we discussed already, gives the learners the opportunity to work co-operatively and stimulates meaningful speaking and listening. There are many problem solving, story- telling and dramatization activities suggested in the *Maye babo!* series, which involve group work. The key to successful group work is good classroom management and thorough preparation. Learners also need to learn how to take turns, give everyone a chance to speak and to listen to each other carefully and politely. These social skills may have to be modelled and taught specifically. If children know exactly what to do, how they will be assessed, and how they will be monitored by the teacher, they are more likely to be productive when working in groups.

### ***Activities related to Reading and Viewing***

Educators must make sure that everything read is understood and that learners get into the habit to look for the meaning in everything they read. I recommend that you remember to place learners in your class with visual disabilities near the front of the class.

A variety of types of texts recommended by CAPS, are employed in the *Maye babo!* series workbooks and readers (Soni 2007, 2008 2010, 2011). Reading different text types teaches learners to read, analyze and compare different texts. Draw attention to the structure and purpose of each text type, and help learners to identify the tone, intended audience and any bias in texts.

### ***Reading Methodologies***

A variety of techniques can be used to assist learners to progress to higher levels of reading competency. These include: (I project the following highlighted bullets and explain each methodology).

- **Modeled Reading:** The educator or a fluent reader models the correct pronunciation.
- **Shared Reading:** In this activity, the educator reads aloud and the learners repeat after him / her. The use of shared reading is suggested when learners start a new theme. Shared reading enables learners to read stories about their reading level, and to concentrate on making meaning rather than decoding each word.
- **Group Reading:** When doing group reading, the class can be divided into groups. Each group takes a turn to read. The educator listens and assesses whether all the children can read the text.
- **One-to-one Reading:** Learners respond very well to one-to-one reading sessions with the educator. During this time the educator must praise the learner sincerely. Help should be given gently, without killing the learner's confidence. Learners should be encouraged to read at home. Ensure that suitable readers are available in the school library. Learners with learning difficulties should read a familiar text from the learner's book.
- **Independent Reading:** Learners should have opportunities to read familiar texts, silently to themselves. The emphasis during this activity should be on reading for pleasure.
- **Multimedia text:** The RNCS recommends that learners read and interpret multimedia texts as well as text in the printed form. Encourage learners to take notes of road signs and newspaper headlines written in isiZulu and to try to comprehend them.
- **Television:** This is a popular text amongst the learners. Encourage learners to watch isiZulu programmes on television, and to give a report the next day on what happened. They should be able to say what they watched, at what time they watched the programme, and what happened. They should also express an opinion about what they watched.
- **Films and Videos:** Educators can arrange a trip to the local cinema to view a suitable film, or the educator could hire a video or DVD. Before viewing the film tell the learners what they should pay particular attention to. A class discussion can be held after the film.

- **Radio and television advertisements:** Encourage the learners to take note of advertisements on the television or radio. Learners should write down what is being advertised and what is said to advertise the product. They should also write down whether they were influenced to buy the product and explain with reasons. They can be asked to dramatise the advertisement they saw on television, heard on the radio, or create their own.
- **CD ROMS & Internet:** Sending e-mails is an exciting way for learners to practice their writing skills. There are many useful language programmes available on CD-ROMs.

### *Activities related to writing*

The *Maye babo!* series contains the following to develop writing skills: (I project the following highlighted bullets and explain each method).

- **Meaningful Writing Activities:** All the writing activities are given the context of a text that has been introduced in the Learners Book. This ensures that the writing is meaningful and relevant. It also ensures that the learners already have some of the necessary vocabulary. When the educator reads learners writing, the educator should try to think mainly of the content or what is being said, and respond to this positively by writing a meaningful comment e.g. : You certainly had fun Thabo!
- **Variety of writing types:** Learners are introduced to a wide variety of writing types. They learn to write dialogues, poems, songs, stories, diaries, letters, reports, lists, tables, greeting cards etc in the *Maye babo!* series.
- **Writing frames:** In each unit there is a writing frame for the learners to model. Make sure that the learners understand this well before they attempt the activity. Sufficient oral work should be done before the task is given. Learners should be encouraged to use a dictionary, refer back to the learner's book, and work individually. Completed written work must be assessed by the educator, parent (if appropriate), fellow learner or the actual learner. Specific comments may be made to enhance the learner's progress.

- **Language activities:** Each unit has activities to improve the learner's language ability. The language is drawn from the text in the learner's book thus it is meaningful and learnt in context.
- **Spelling and Dictation:** Lists of vocabulary (Amagama Amasha) are discussed at the beginning of each unit. Spelling lists are provided on photocopiable pages in chapter 3 of this guide. Learners can be given ten words to learn each week. The educator can administer a spelling or vocabulary test each week or fortnightly. Dictation can be taken from the text provided in each chapter, to help learners develop language and spelling skills in context.
- **Personal Dictionaries:** Simple exercise books can be used by the learners to compile their personal dictionaries. Divide the book by writing the letter of the alphabet at the top of each page. Each time the learner uses a new word, he/she must enter it into the book.

### ***Activities related to thinking and reasoning***

Thinking and reasoning activities are integrated into each unit in a systematic way. They include identifying parts from the whole. The *Maye babo!* series uses word searches and crosswords to engage learners in thinking and reasoning. Educators can also use any stories and texts from the learner's book and encourage learners to give their opinions and reasons for these on a variety of topics. The expression of opinions must be encouraged through praising. Where learners do not have the necessary vocabulary to express themselves, code – switching may be used.

### ***Activities related to language structure and use***

Language activities in the *Maye babo!* series have been structured so that there is good progression from the simple to more complex language structures. In the Foundation Phase emphasis is placed on punctuation, and simple sentence structure. Parts of speech and tenses are introduced in the intermediate phase.

Language structure is taught in the context of the theme and not in isolation, to provide meaning. My pupils love the simple games such as Simon says which in the isiZulu lessons is played as uThemba uthi. These games help to reinforce language structure and vocabulary.

Okay, now that you have a better idea of how the learning outcomes are addressed in the *Maye babo!* series, I will move on to clarify the assessment standards.

### **Assessment standards (AS)**

Sumi: The assessment standards describe the minimum level, depth and breadth of what is to be learnt in order to proceed to the next Grade. Like the LO, the AS also help to standardize learning throughout South Africa. Generally, the AS varies from grade to grade and indicates conceptual progression. While the LO describes what the learners must know and be able to do or show, the AS describes the level at which the learners should demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes and the depth and breadth of their achievement. The CAPS document has condensed the assessment standards and simplified them. The assessment standards in the old NCS assessment policy were too detailed and had many overlaps. As I have already mentioned, I found it very difficult to complete complex and detailed assessments for all the learners in the classroom and I was spending more time administering assessment tasks and less time teaching. The assessment standards prescribed in NCS prior to CAPS have unrealistic expectations of the educator. Personally, I found that at times I rushed the teaching process so that I could complete all the assessment tasks. Learning was compromised because the focus was placed on assessments as opposed to learning.

Maggie: How does OBE assessment differ from the traditional approach?

Sumi: That is exactly what I was going to discuss next. I have printed a copy for each of you so you don't need to take notes.

Muzi: Yeah! Thank you Sumi. That will be a great help.

A comparison of assessment practices	
Traditional norm-referenced	Outcomes-based criterion-referenced
Is summative (at the conclusion of a period of learning)	Is formative and diagnostic (ongoing / continuous and used to identify difficulties); stresses a continuum of learning
Content based	The process of learning is also assessed
The product is assessed	Both the product and process are assessed at different stages
Learners are assessed in relation to others in the class and are ranked according to ability	Learners are assessed in relation to their own ability and pace of learning in order to create opportunities for success
Testing and assessment is formal and standardised	Assessment may be formal or informal, taking into account the needs of the learner and the context of the learning
Questions have no bearing on the life of the learner	Assessment is contextualised in life-like situations
Answers are either right or wrong	Questions may be open-ended requiring skills in articulating personal opinions / argument, and critical thinking / problem-solving
Competitiveness can be taken to destructive levels	The learner measures him or herself against his own progress
Power is in the hands of the examiner or outside authority	The learner takes responsibility for his own progress
Assessment focuses on the individual	Assessment may be individual or occur in a group situation
Tests may employ a taxonomy to test various skills	Assessment focuses on achieving specified outcomes in the form of assessment standards
The content of tests and examinations is often random and left to chance	Assessment is controlled by predetermined outcomes and performance indicators
Answers in tests are primarily given in written form	A variety of assessment tools are used

Photograph 46 *How OBE assessment differs from the traditional approach*

Muzi puts his pen down and leans back in his chair as he begins to study the table. I ask the group to discuss it in pairs since it requires little explanation, and reach for a glass of water to soothe my dry throat.

Sibongile: Hmm....it does look pretty impressive on paper, but when you try to apply it, it is quite problematic. At our school, we hosted a workshop on assessment which was organised by the teacher union Naptosa. As a result, I understand what needs to be done, and agree that it is a change in the right direction, but nonetheless, I find the application difficult to accomplish.

Sumi: This is precisely the reason why CAPS had to be introduced. The suggested weekly plans in CAPS demonstrate clearly how the learning outcomes and assessment standards can be addressed and achieved during the course of the year. Teachers are not curriculum planners and learning programme designers. Many of us can accomplish this requirement, but the workload of teachers is enormous, and if designing learning programmes does not interest you then you will appreciate the detailed planning that has been done for you in the term plans. On the other hand, if you enjoy something, you *create* the time for it. I can honestly say that I enjoyed creating the stories in the themes and designing the learning programmes. It put my problem solving skills to work when I designed the series to ensure that I covered all the LOs and ASs. I also enjoyed the freedom of deciding *what* I would teach *when* in the programme.

Then my organisational skills came in handy because I kept a close record of the different learning outcomes and assessment standards I addressed. If your school can afford to buy a good textbook for the learners, this could be an easy escape from having to toil through the loads of theory to ensure that your planning is CAPS compliant. In the *Maye babo!* series I have illustrated in table form how the learning outcomes and assessment standards are covered. I have made a copy from the Grade 5 educator's guide for you (Soni 2008:115).



**1.6 Table of how Maye babo addresses the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards in Grade 5**

Learning Outcome	AS	Unit 1 Hlangana nomngane	Unit 2 Esitolo sezincwadi	Unit 3 Izingubo zokugqoka	Unit 4 Ekhishini	Unit 5 Ukuhlanzeka komzimba	Unit 6 Epulazini
L.O 1 Ukulalela Listening	AS 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	✓		✓	✓		✓
	3	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	4		✓	✓			
	5	✓		✓	✓		✓
L.O. 2 Ukukhuluma Speaking	AS 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	5	✓					
	6				✓		✓
	7		✓	✓		✓	
L.O.3 Ukufunda nokubukela Reading and viewing	AS 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	✓					
	3		✓	✓			
	4						
	5	✓					✓
L.O.4 Ukubhala Writing	AS 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	✓					
	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	4						
	5	✓	✓		✓		
L.O.5 Ukucabanga nokucabangisisa Thinking and reasoning	AS 1	✓			✓	✓	✓
	2	✓		✓		✓	✓
	3	✓		✓		✓	
	4	✓	✓	✓			
L.O.6 Ukwakhiwa nokusetshenziswa kolimi Language structure and use	AS 1	✓					✓
	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3	✓	✓		✓		✓
	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Photograph 47 *How Maye babo! series addresses learning outcomes and assessment standards in Grade 5*

I look at Muzi and receive the gracious smile I expected. I silently admire his dedicated attention to every word uttered during the support group sessions. He seems so *starved* of knowledge and guidance with regard to the present NCS curriculum. I hope he has an opportunity to attend the CAPS training sessions.

While the group refer to the assessment standards in the NCS and discuss how they are addressed in each of the themes, I reflect on the difficulties experienced by the thousands teachers who teach particularly in rural areas. Many of them do not have any teaching qualification. If learned teachers like Sibongile find difficulty in implementing the curriculum, how are the under qualified teachers expected to cope. A recent article which appeared in the *Daily News* on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010, reported that 9000 teachers in Kwazulu-Natal are unqualified. The Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament, Alf Lees is quoted as stating that of these, 8317 teachers had a Grade12 qualification only and no other teaching qualifications. If this figure is accurate, even CAPS is too sophisticated for these teachers. The documents for the teaching of languages still require the teacher to be a learning programme designer. Not every teacher, urban or rural has the capacity to creatively design learning programmes; besides the task is extremely time consuming. (It took me nearly ten years of *free time* to write the entire *Maye babo!* series. I worked mainly during weekends and school holidays.

Many teachers need a good textbook to follow with a plan on *what page* to teach on *which day*. This is not to imply that they are incapable of anything better. We need to take into account the other difficulties teachers contend with on a daily basis. They teach large classes with combined Grades and do not have adequate resources. I have read newspaper articles about teachers teaching under trees, and others where pupils have no desks. At some schools, teachers have started vegetable gardens, so that starving pupils can receive nourishment. I have great admiration for many of the dedicated rural teachers, whose heroic efforts play a huge role in uplifting the quality of life led by rural pupils. Many of them play the additional roles of cooks, nurses, counsellors, and care givers, so how are they supposed to have the time or energy to design learning programmes.

Even a well qualified teacher in a rural area will experience difficulty in implementing CAPS. For CAPS to be successful in the teaching of isiZulu, they will need readers and a variety of reading texts such as newspapers, magazines, and poetry books to name a few. They will also need printing equipment to roll out worksheets, dictionaries, and a good textbook that covers the range of learning outcomes and assessment standards. District officials need to play a more supportive role in guiding and monitoring curriculum implementation by conducting regular workshops at least once a term, in each learning area. Hosting annual workshops, when the curriculum changes, is insufficient. The department has promised to supply learners with a basic school bag which will contain the basic textbooks. These resources for teaching the home language and Mathematics will provide support to teachers and learners and thereby address some of the difficulties they undergo.

A question by Muzi quickly returns my attention to the discussion on assessment.

Muzi: Sumi, I notice that there are so many assessment standards for each of the learning outcomes. Do teachers have to record the learner's progress for each assessment standard?

Sumi: I am not sure how this will work with CAPS, but with previous assessment policy, many schools gave performance ratings in the assessment standards covered in that particular term in the report. Teachers also had to reflect the assessment standards on each assessment task. There are 30 assessment standards for isiZulu additional language only. You can imagine the administrative overload for teachers teaching a variety of subjects, and quite frankly it is meaningless because we use numbers to represent the assessment standard, like I have done in the table above. It is not practical to write a description of each assessment standard as it appears in the policy document, because they are too lengthy. I look at them carefully when I plan a learning programme; thereafter I make reference to the assessment standard by using the number. Teachers need to read the lesson plans to make meaning of the assessment standards. I'm sure you recall seeing this in the exemplar of the lesson plan I presented during our discussion on lesson planning.

Assessment should not be done in isolation. It should be included as part of the planning, teaching and learning process. These notes will guide you when you plan your assessments (DoE 2005).

I read the following notes.

### ***Principles of assessment***

Every assessment should have a clear focus in terms of what you want to find out.

Every assessment should have a clear purpose in terms of why you are doing it. Is it to find out how much learners already know in order to decide on where to start your teaching? This is called baseline assessment. In the middle of a series of lessons you may want to check how the learners are getting on. This is called formative assessment. If learners are experiencing difficulty, you need to find out why or search for the cause of the learning problems. This is called diagnostic assessment. Once learners have completed a section of work, you need to sum up how the learners have progressed. This is called summative assessment.

The focus and purpose of the assessment determines what method should be used. You need to decide how you are going to do the assessment. Make every effort not to choose the same method of assessment every time you assess learners. Be clear about what you want to assess and why, then you will be able to decide on how to assess it.

Assessment activities should match the outcomes, which are the things we want our learners to be able to do by the end of the learning programme. Assessment should concentrate on selected outcomes. Concentrate on the important outcomes and assess progress towards them thoroughly but don't assess minor content of trivial outcomes.

Assessment should be built into the process of teaching and learning from the start. Constantly check your learners' progress and modify your teaching plans to meet the learners' needs.

### Assessments methods, tools and forms / techniques (notes)

A variety of methods and appropriate tools and forms must be used for assessment. Chosen methods, tools and forms must provide for a range of opportunities for learners to demonstrate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (SKAVs). The educator's choice of methods depends highly on what is to be assessed.

### List of some of the assessments methods, tools and technique / forms

METHODS	TOOLS	FORMS / TECHNIQUES
Self Assessment	Portfolio	Project work
Peer Assessment	Observation sheet	Collage
1. Group to learner	Rubric	Research project
2. Group to group	Worksheet	Assignment
3. Learner to learner	Journal	Survey
4. Learner to group	Questionnaires	Role-play
5. Class to learner	Cassette	Verbal responses
Group Assessment	Assessment grids/ rubrics	Interview
Educator Assessment	Exhibition	Drama
Interviews	Photographs / videos	Presentation
Conferencing	Class Lists	Practical demonstration
Observation	Profile	Scenario
Oral Questions / Answers	Test, examination	Construction
Self-reporting and answers by learners	Written assignments	Music / songs
Performance assessment		Poetry / Rhymes
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)		Story telling / Oral
		Presentation
		Model
		Making plans/designs e.g.
		Toys
		Sculpture / paintings
		Drawing-graphs
		Mind mapping
		Game design
		Physical activities
		Maps
		Posters
		Charts
		Tables
		Descriptions
		Written presentations

#### Note:

Distinction between methods, tools, forms, and types or strategies need not be rigidly applied as a tool or a technique can be used as a method, given the circumstances, e.g. a test can be a tool, or a method or a technique. The activity plans in chapter 2 of the *Maye*

*babo!* educator guides (Grades 4-7) provide useful suggestions on what to assess. (We look at page 156 of the Grade 5 educator's guide (Soni 2007) to see how this is applied when doing a lesson plan).

### **Continuous formative assessment**

Can the learner : interact verbally and in writing using the new vocabulary.

Assessment Method : Educator / Self

Assessment Tool : Rubric 2, 3, 6 and 7

Assessment Technique: Umsebenzi 4.3 and 4.4

Forms of Assessment : Spoken language, Functional writing, Investigation

Sumi: In the *Maye babo!* series, I have condensed the formal assessments as shown on this visual.

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Mark scheme</b>
Spelling and vocabulary	20
Language	20
Writing	20
Listening and Speaking	20
Reading and Viewing	20
Total	100

Sumi: With regard to the formal assessments, I accumulate marks for each of the above areas and then use the average mark or rating in the term report. This is

called continuous assessment. I prefer to record marks in the report, together with the rating code because with the present, four point rating scale, most pupils are rated as either a two or three, and as far as I am concerned, the rating code is not as accurate an indicator as the marks. CAPS changed the four point scale to a seven point scale for all grades. I still prefer marks, because they motivate pupils and they are more meaningful to parents. At our school we also indicate the grade average of the learner assessments for each learning area in the report. It allows parents to see how their child is performing in relation to other learners in the Grade. When I started teaching, I used assessment mainly to sum up my learners' abilities in what I had taught. At the NCS training, I was enlightened on continuous assessment. It encourages educators to assess learners on a continuous basis. Educators are encouraged to assess the tasks as outlined in the learner's book on a continuous basis in order to understand and monitor the learner's progress. Continuous assessment assists educators in diagnosing problem areas in both learning and teaching.

Tasks assessed by the educator must give positive, helpful and accurate feedback. Learners must be encouraged to reflect upon such feedback positively in order to enhance their progress. The self-assessment tasks (Gr. 4-7) in the activity books will assist the learners to reflect on their progress. Continuous assessment makes use of:

(I read the following notes).

Baseline assessment	- indicates what the learners know before the lesson
Diagnostic assessment	- indicates individual strengths and needs
Formative assessment	- monitors and supports learning. It is ongoing during the teaching and learning process.
Summative assessment	- occurs at the end of a learning programme, term or year. It provides an overview of the learners.
Systematic assessment	- occurs at the end of each phase i.e. in Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9. It is used to evaluate the appropriateness of the education system.

The following forms of assessment are particular to the Language Learning Programme:-

- Creative writing;
- Functional writing;
- Spoken language;
- Response to text;
- Investigation

Sumi: The material in the *Maye babo!* series addresses these forms of assessment and engages the learners in the various activities in the learner's book as seen in the table extracted from the Grade 5 educator guide.

#### ***A practical guide to assessing learners***

Sumi: Educators should build formative assessment into their lessons as shown in the activity plans in the educator guide of the *Maye babo!* series. Assessment must be built into routine classroom interaction. There is more likely to be an improvement in the learner's progress when the learner is given written feedback as opposed to marks only. The educator must develop his/her own assessment tools. The following rubric was used prior to CAPS. It was replaced by the seven point scale which I will show you in a moment. I welcome the change to a seven point scale because it provides a more accurate indication of learner's performance. This grid could be used when assessing group work.

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Description of competence</b>
4	70-100	Participates actively in-group and often play a leadership role.
3	50-69	Participates actively in-group work on a regular basis.
2	35-49	Contributes to group work occasionally
1	1-34	Does not contribute to group work: may disrupt group interaction



The National Protocol on Assessment (21/10/2005) recommended that the following national codes be used when recording / reporting on learner achievement in the Foundation and Intermediate Phase (Grade R-6)

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Description of competence</b>
4	70-100	Outstanding / Excellent Achievement
3	50-69	Satisfactory Achievement
2	35-49	Partial Achievement
1	1-34	Not achieved

The codes and percentages for Grade 1-12 recommended in CAPS are as follows:-

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Description of Competence</b>
7	80-100	Outstanding achievement
6	70-79	Meritorious achievement
5	60-69	Substantial achievement
4	50-59	Adequate achievement
3	40-49	Moderate achievement
2	30-39	Elementary achievement
1	0-29	Not achieved

Sumi: Rubrics relating to specific tasks contained in the Maye babo series have been compiled for the educator and appear at the beginning of Chapter 2 of the educator guide. These codes and percentages have changed in CAPS where all Grades will follow the seven point scale. My goodness! I can't believe how quickly time has passed. I spent a lot of time discussing the LO and AS today because these form one of the fundamental parts of the entire design process when planning a learning programme, and it is important that you have good clarity on them. You can access the AS for each of the LO from the Revised National Curriculum Statements, Grades R- 9, (Schools) Policy, Languages, IsiZulu – First Additional Language (DoE 2002). This is what it looks like. (I show the cover page of the document to clarify to the members of the ZEST

team the document I am referring to). The new CAPS document is much more user friendly since the AS have been simplified. I look forward to implementing it in the Intermediate Phase in 2013. Hamba kahle everybody. See you next week when we discuss the fourth principle of OBE.

## **Class Five**

### **The third and fourth principle of Outcomes Based Education: high expectations and expanded opportunities**

#### **Introduction**

It's the last class for the year. The ZEST group meetings will come to a halt until next year. I reflect on the meetings that I have had with the ZEST group and am pleased that we have come to the last class on OBE. The last two principles of OBE are quite simple so I have decided to discuss them in one class. These meetings have given me further clarity on curriculum issues and I have benefited from this at an opportune time – the rewriting of the series to make them CAPS compliant. 2011 has certainly been a very busy year for me. I must try to take some time to rest during the festive period. Maintaining a balanced perspective in life is important. I seem to be forgetting this. I must go to the gym more regularly. Perhaps my new year's resolution should be: Keep a balanced perspective of life.

After the usual “meet and greet” I commence with the meeting.

Sumi: This is our last meeting for the year. I have organised refreshments for us after the meeting. I hope you can stay and socialize. We will meet in the first week of February next year. Some of you have expressed a keen interest on joining me as co-writers when I submit the readers for the intermediate phase. We will discuss how we can take this project forward. Let me start with today's meeting. The third principle of OBE is High Expectations. Look at the following visual. (I read the third principle).

## High expectations

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS

What does this mean?

- All learners can learn, and need to be assisted to reach their maximum learning potential.
- All learners can succeed but not necessarily at the same time, in the same way and on the same level.
- All learners have particular strengths and weaknesses. Strengths should be developed to higher levels and weaknesses addressed.
- Teachers need to maximize opportunities for every learner by challenging learners to achieve, enhance their strengths and improve on their weaknesses as individuals rather than compete against other learners.
- Teaching and learning should not only focus on knowledge acquisition but also on the development of the ability to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in specific/authentic contexts.

Photograph 48 *The third principle of OBE: high expectations*

Sumi: Basically, we all know that learners have different strengths and weaknesses; hence we must be conscious of these and address them where possible. Obviously we cannot have a different programme for every learner, but I think this principle applies to those of us who teach both mother tongue and non-mother tongue learners. We need to address the needs of all the learners. We must ensure that we develop strengths and address weaknesses in learners. Martha and I discussed this on our way to the classroom at our last meeting and she has told me that she uses the suggestions I make in the lesson plan contained in the *Maye babo!* educator's guide.

Martha: Yes, I do, and you know, quite often the mother tongue learners finish their work well before the others. If I don't keep them well occupied, I am bound to have problems with discipline, so I've learnt through experience that it is best

to have additional activities which are related to the lesson for them to complete on their own or with a peer. The *Extension/Remedial Activities* suggested in the educator guide offer good suggestions for the learners that cope well and those that struggle. Sumi, can we make a quick reference to the ed. guide for clarity?

Sumi: With pleasure, Martha, thank you for your patience and consideration for your colleagues.

### **Extension / Remedial Activities**

Learners match the words with the pictures (Umsebenzi 4.4 B).

Learners look at the picture clues and communicate (in sentence form) what the person likes. (Umsebenzi 4.4 C)

Spelling test

Learners write step-by-step instructions on how to cook a meal or set the table for dinner.

Photograph 49 *Extension / remedial activities*

I ask the group to turn to page 156 of the Grade 5 educator's guide, and we discuss the section shown above.

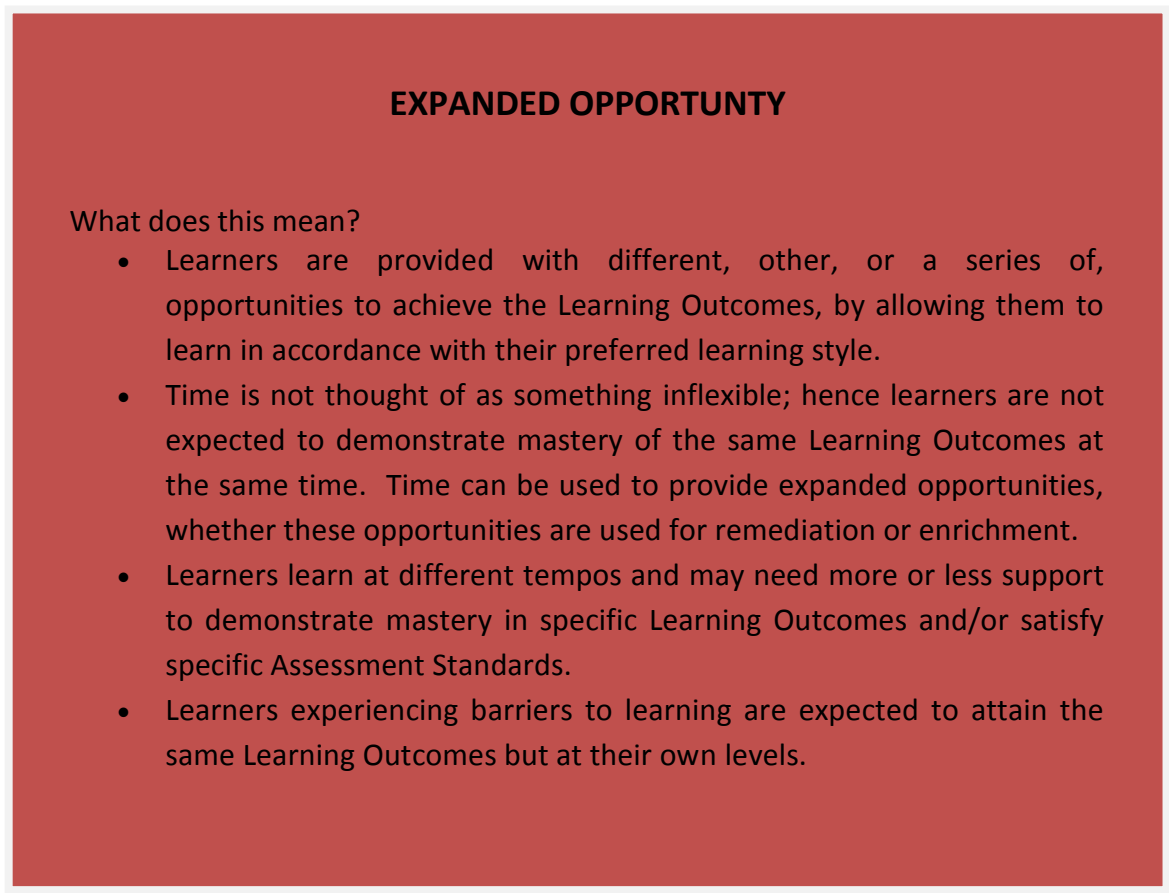
Sumi: The last point was discussed earlier.... Do you all remember? In my days as a scholar, we were taught a lot of knowledge, and asked to regurgitate it in the exams. Today, the emphasis is on understanding knowledge and being able to apply it. We must remember this when we assess. We must set questions that can tell us whether the learner has learned something with understanding, or have they simply memorized something without any understanding of it.

Sibongile: I think that is definitely a step in the right direction. It shows learners that knowledge is useful. I find that the best way to motivate my learners is to explain why they need to know something. Once they know this, and buy into

the rationale for their learning, I get their full cooperation and the enthusiasm to learn flows without much effort on my part.

Sumi: If there are no questions, that completes our discussion on the third principle of OBE. The last principle, expanded opportunity, also caters for individual learner needs, but from a different angle.

## **Expanded opportunity**



**EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY**

What does this mean?

- Learners are provided with different, other, or a series of, opportunities to achieve the Learning Outcomes, by allowing them to learn in accordance with their preferred learning style.
- Time is not thought of as something inflexible; hence learners are not expected to demonstrate mastery of the same Learning Outcomes at the same time. Time can be used to provide expanded opportunities, whether these opportunities are used for remediation or enrichment.
- Learners learn at different tempos and may need more or less support to demonstrate mastery in specific Learning Outcomes and/or satisfy specific Assessment Standards.
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning are expected to attain the same Learning Outcomes but at their own levels.

Photograph 50 *The meaning of “Expanded opportunity”*

I read each point and explain.

Sumi: I have read several books that address this point (Armstrong 2009, 1999; Gardner 1993, 1999). Basically this principle refers to the fact that we each have different types of intelligences.

- Aasha: Isn't that the book by Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences? I attended a Naptosa (teacher union) workshop on it.
- Sumi: Yes, I found the workshop very interesting and subsequently read the books. The gist of it is that learners have different styles of learning which we as teachers need to be aware of, and again, you are not expected to have a separate learning programme for each learning style, but overall we should try to address as many different learning styles as possible during the course of our teaching, to give all our learners equal opportunities. We should not expect every learner to achieve at the same level within a specified period because the pace at which learners learn is not important. What *is* important is that learner needs are addressed. I will quickly read the summary of notes I prepared on multiple intelligences to give you a clearer idea of how Gardner's theory is applied in the design of the *Maye babo!* series. (I read the notes.)

### **Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT)**

Dr. Howard Gardner-Professor of Education at Harvard University developed the theory of Multiple Intelligence in 1983. He found that the traditional I.Q. testing of intelligence which was practiced in South Africa until about 1990 was far too limited. Gardner proposed eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of smarts (Armstrong 1999). These intelligences are:

- Linguistic intelligence (word smart)
- Logical-mathematical intelligence (number/reasoning smart)
- Spatial intelligence (picture smart)
- Bodily-Kinaesthetic intelligence (body smart)
- Musical intelligence (music smart)
- Interpersonal intelligence (people smart)
- Intrapersonal intelligence (self smart)
- Naturalist intelligence (nature smart)

In 1999 Gardner postulated a quality called Spiritual Intelligence, but had reservations about classifying it as a type of intelligence, however, Emmons (2000) has recognized it as so.

Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) helps to give recognition to the holistic nature of learners and addresses student diversity. Through the framework of Multiple Intelligence Theory, the *Maye babo!* series offers learners a variety of ways to encourage meaning and strengthen memory pathways. The National Curriculum Statement implemented in South African schools in 2004, recognises the importance of the implications of the MIT.

## **Frames for language teaching**

We need to teach in ways that enable the diverse learners in our classrooms to acquire the information in their preferred way.

### ***Musical-rhythmic frame***

The musical-rhythmic intelligence refers to the ability to perceive and appreciate rhythm, pitch and melody (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:126). Songs are an important feature in the *Maye babo!* series. At the end of most themes in the learner's book, a song has been composed to incorporate the basic vocabulary focused in the theme. (I ask the group to refer to the newly revised Grade 1 learner's book (Soni 2011) and to take note of the songs on pages 1, 5, 6, 9, 15, 22 and 27. I add that all my learners love singing the songs, and quite often the response I get from many of them, particularly when we sing the same song several times is that: "the song was ringing in my head and I could not stop singing it".<sup>102</sup>

(Dave suggests that we sing the song on page 27. Everybody is in agreement. We sing the song.)

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<sup>102</sup> An example of Suggestopedia





Photograph 51 Songs are an important feature in the *Maye babo!* series

### ***The visual-spatial frame***

Some learners learn better when exposed to visual teaching aids such as charts, pictures, and figure representations or by making other mental images of the learning content. CAPS encourages the use of mind maps as a way of summarising learning content. Visual-spatial intelligence refers to the ability:

...to perceive elements such as form, shape, line, space and colour to create a mental image of something. Mental images are present in thought and have a strong influence on reasoning (Arnold 1999). Visual elements are especially useful for providing comprehensible and meaningful input for second language learners... because they facilitate information retrieval (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:126-7).

(To demonstrate this point, I ask the group to refer to the Grade 6 learner's book (Soni 2007:19-24). The theme is *Abantu basebenzaphi?* We look at the visuals that describe the occupations. The *Maye babo!* series makes abundant use of visuals to promote learning.)

**Abantu basebenzaphi? Where do the people work?**

13



Umbhaki ubhaka amakhekhe.  
(The baker bakes cakes.)

14



Ubhusha uthengisa inyama.  
(The butcher sell meat.)

15



Udokotela wamazinyo uhlola amazinyo.  
(The dentist examines the teeth.)

16



Umcimimlilo ucima umlilo.  
(The fireman puts out the fire.)

22

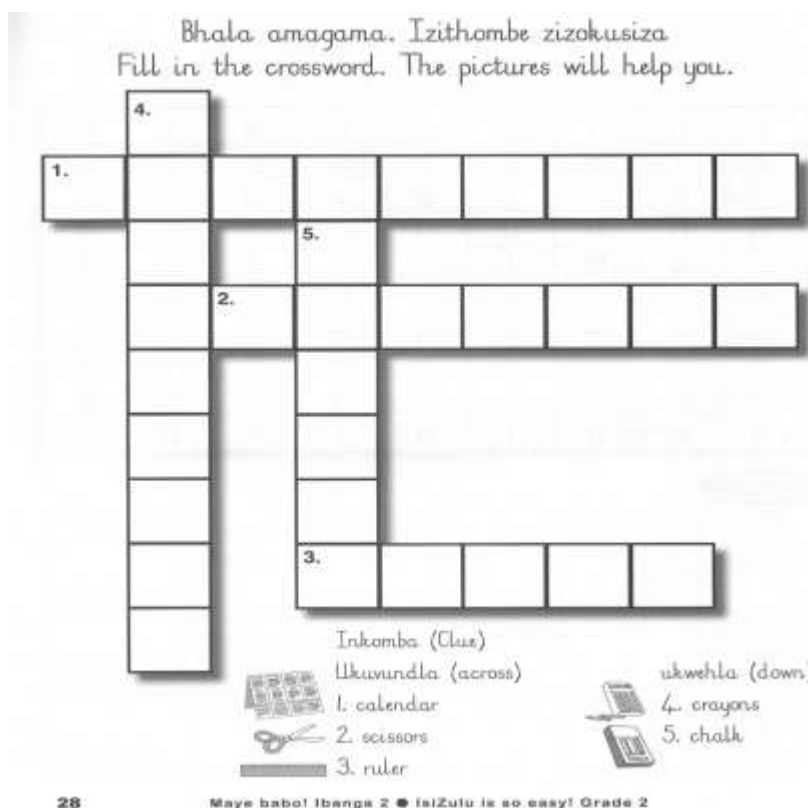
Maye babo! Ibanga 6 • IsiZulu is so easy! Grade 6

### *The logical-mathematical frame*

This intelligence gives us the ability to use numbers effectively and to understand the underlying principles of a causal system (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:127).

In the language classroom problem-solving tasks are useful as learners focus mainly on meaning, but through constant rereading of the text to solve the problem, they acquire a familiarity with the vocabulary and structure used (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:127).

The NCS and CAPS propose *Thinking and Reasoning* as one of the Learning Outcomes for the teaching of languages. The *Maye babo!* series uses crosswords and engages learners in activities that encourage Grade 4 learners for example, to devise ways in which they will manage name calling in the classroom, (Soni 2007:62) or how Grade 7 learners can save water (Soni 2008:126). In the lower grades I use crosswords. We refer to page 28 of the Grade 2 book (Soni 2011:28).



Photograph 53 Crossword puzzle in isiZulu

### ***The bodily-kinaesthetic frame***

Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence refers to the ability to use the body to express oneself, to handle physical objects dexterously (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:127). The NCS discourages the chalk and talk approach to teaching, where students sit in rows for hours and are asked to pay attention to verbal input. I use role play, games such as *uThemba uthi*, puppets as well as paired and group work to address the bodily kinaesthetic frame. When using role play, pupils practise their roles in groups and after a few days, usually feel confident to recite the dialogue showing meaning through the use of simple actions (TPR). I encourage my learners to use props where applicable to make the learning enjoyable however it must be remembered that the time spent in preparing the props should not detract from the actual learning of the language. I have enjoyed great success through the adoption of this method, and the confident, eager and willing learner participation provides testimony that repetition with understanding eventually leads to acquisition. (We refer to the Grade 4 learner's book (Soni 2007:77) and I describe the fun my learners had role playing the dialogue based on a visit to the dentist.

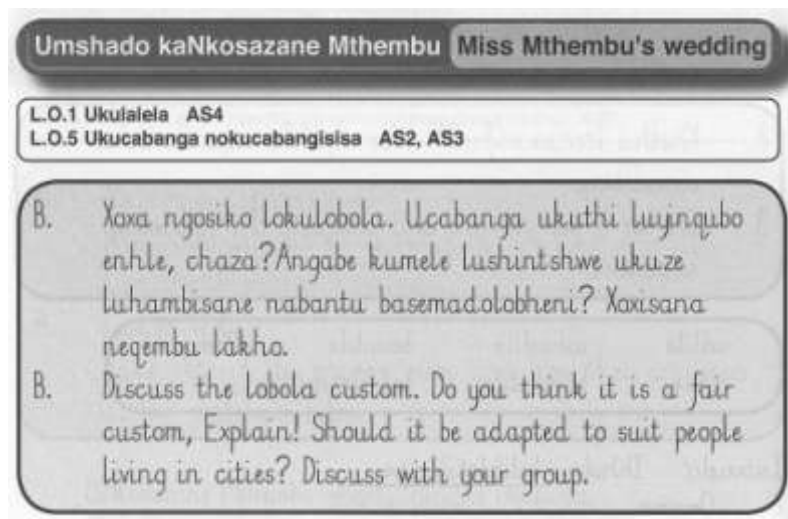
### ***The interpersonal frame***

This frame refers to the ability to understand other people, to work cooperatively and to communicate effectively.

Vygotsky (1978 in (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:128) emphasized the importance of social interaction in language learning. Cooperative learning in the form of debates where students are given opportunities to convince others of their point of view or to understand the point of view of others addresses the interpersonal frame. Another example is in the practice of group work where the group discuss a topic, listen to individual views on it, and assimilate these to arrive at a stance that they take as a group. Another activity would involve asking the learner to place themselves in the *shoes* of another (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:128). An example of this can be seen in the Grade 7 learner's book (Soni 2008:70) in the theme *Ubungane (Friendship)*.

### ***Intrapersonal frame***

This frame gives us the capacity to understand the internal aspects of the self and to practice self-discipline. It involves being aware of personality traits, feelings, motivation, attitudes and learning styles (Arnold and Fonseca Mora 2004:129). In the *Maye babo!* series creative writing tasks are recommended such as writing songs or dialogues where learners are encouraged to express their feelings, likes and dislikes. Reading activities encourage discussions on a problem and develop attitudes to the problem. (We refer to the theme *Umshado kaNkosazane Mthembu* (*Miss Mthembu's wedding*) in the Grade 7 learner's book. (Soni 2008:106)



Photograph 54 Theme encouraging discussion

### ***The naturalist frame***

This frame refers to the enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world. Learners are encouraged to use, for example, brainstorming in Grade 7 (Soni 2008:126) to arrive at ways in which they can conserve water. Themes such as *Engadini*, Grade 6 (Soni 2007:63) *Izinyoni*, Grade 1 (Soni in press) and *Izilwane* Grade 3 (Soni in press) develop a love for nature

(I complete the reading and after a short discussion, the meeting is closed. Dave and Sibongile are the first to speak to me after the class.)

Sibongile: Sumi, you are very kind to assist us. I really appreciate it. I like the way you explain things. You make it sound so simple. I now understand why you decided to study the field of multiple intelligences in greater detail. The notes you gave me on the topic explain how you created expanded opportunities to cater for the different learning styles in the *Maye babo!* series. I like the way you bring in songs and drama to cater for different learner styles.

Sumi: It's a pleasure Sibongile. I think the ability to simplify things comes from my teaching experience of over 26 years. I learn by explaining things to others, so you have helped me to understand gain a better understanding of the curriculum. Furthermore, I plan to use our discussions in my thesis. I will use pseudo names, but it is important for me to obtain your permission first.

Sibongile: It will be an absolute pleasure. I can't wait for you to complete it so I can read it.

Dave: I don't have a problem being quoted in the thesis. I'm sure we will get to read it before it is published. On a lighter note, I will be famous.

Muzi: I can't wait to see what you have planned for next year. I think you have spread the writing bug to me.... I shouldn't call it a bug; it was actually a feeling of accomplishment that I felt when I finished my first short story. I hope to continue to be creative during the school holiday. I am sure the relaxation will be just the thing I require to induce creativity. I will try to remember the principles of OBE and inculcate them where possible.

Sumi: Wow! Muzi, I am impressed. You didn't tell me you finished the short story. I would love to read it. Have you sent it to the publisher?

Muzi: No Sumi. I still have some final editing to do. Perhaps you can help me with it.

Sumi: I'd like to see how you developed the plot. (Aasha and Martha interrupt to say thank you).

Aasha: Thank you Sumi. These meetings have been enlightening for me. I am now beginning to see the whole picture about the curriculum and feel empowered to participate in staffroom debates about OBE. I guess it's not as bad as the press make it sound.

Martha: I agree with Aasha although I must confess that packing all these principles into a learning programme is a daunting thought...but that's me...mmm I suppose being creative in a literary way is not my smart.

Sumi: You certainly excel in intrapersonal intelligence. You get along well with others and look how well you have managed to assist in getting the ZEST group started. I tell my little grade fours often, that we all have smarts and that we need to identify them, strengthen them and use them to make this world a better place. This reminds me about the 2012 theme I suggested at our management meeting last week. *Change begins with me*. I thought that there is so much of moaning and blaming going on about the mess in South Africa's education system that it is time to stop passing the buck. If we each try to make positive changes towards better schooling then we are sure to improve the quality of education in South Africa.

Doris: What you say is very true, Sumi. When I started attending the meetings with the ZEST group, I was not in a happy place. I think the perseverance and positivity that the ZEST members embraced rubbed off onto me. I feel so much better inside of me. It is as if I am a new person. I don't feel angry all the time and I'm beginning to enjoy teaching.

Everybody is so surprised at the confession made by Doris that for a moment there is absolute silence. I embrace Doris and whisper that I am very proud of the courage she had - firstly to change, and secondly to make the confession. We discuss holiday plans and wish each other well over the festive period.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion and recommendations

### The doctoral journey

How far have you gone? Moss asks this question almost daily. Only a research student can understand that the answer to this question changes daily. I write, I read, I think, I rewrite, I *see* something, I make a connection (aha moments), then the cycle repeats itself.

#### Diary entry

Date: 07/10/2011

I must complete the conclusion today. 5 drafts done already – work is scattered – need to review – too many quotes – that's what Liz will say and she is right – this section needs my voice. This stuffs in my head and won't let me sleep. I must try to put on paper asap – must finish soon – deadline is looming.

This doctoral process has been an emotional rollercoaster. Joy came with the epiphanies, feeling at the top of the world overrode doubt as new knowledge became meaningful, self worth and confidence was boosted when accomplishments were recognised but with the thrill and the excitement came the uncertainties of: *Am I on the right track? Will I meet the deadline?* The restlessness was overwhelming when sometimes, after five entire days of working on the same topic, the end result did not satisfy self expectations yet it deprived sleep and then, on a *scenic* day momentum gained once again as clarity of thought *shone*.

During a conversation with my friends in the teaching profession I was lectured on the workaholic status I had acquired. It brought to light my hypnotic attraction to *work*.

Soraya: You need to take time to smell the roses. You're taking on too much (... then she tells me about a 56 yr old man who died).



Pam: Friends are important, too ...

Denise: You do need to take it easy but you must do what makes you happy.

My concerned friends understood much later that I see writing as my calling in life. Writing- whether it is a chapter in this study, or a section in the *Maye babo!* series brings out the passion in me. It fills my cup, it satisfies my soul, it raises me and drives me beyond personal expectations, it protects me by keeping me engaged and focussed on the Now (Tolle 2001, 2005) and saves me from the unnecessary emotional turmoil over insignificant incidents in my daily life. Despite this, I do need to take heed to maintain a balanced perspective to life<sup>103</sup>, because I do not want to become a recluse.

## **A self evaluation**

This chapter evaluates this study on three levels and asks the following questions:

- Is it a doctorate?
- Does it fulfil the purpose it set out to achieve?
- Does it compare favourably to the criteria for evaluating self study and autoethnography?

Research in the field of what constitutes a doctorate (Cantwell and Scevak 2004; Biggs and Collis 1989) offers the following criteria:

1. It displays reasoning and thinking, by questioning the conventions of theories and practices and establishes new ones. In this way it shows a shift in the role of the doctoral researcher from spectator to agent.
2. It demonstrates the acquisition of and understanding of knowledge in a particular field.

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<sup>103</sup> Appendix 10 provides my personal plan of a balanced perspective.

3. It demonstrates the ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project to generate new knowledge and to adjust this design in the light of problems which were unforeseen.
4. It reflects the personal development of the candidate with reference to an advancement of personal skills and professional knowledge.

### **How does my work compare to the expectations of a doctoral candidate?**

In this section, I make reference to my contribution in the field of teaching and the views cited above on what constitutes a doctorate to evaluate my work.

*1. It displays reasoning and thinking, by questioning the conventions of theories and practices and establishes new ones. In this way it shows a shift in the role of the doctoral researcher from spectator to agent.*

I once read that people who study others are wise but those who study themselves are enlightened (Sharma 2004:74).

Self reflection and self evaluation channelled an interrogation of the theories I practiced with regard to teaching isiZulu as an additional language, and this created the motivation to develop a new programme. The process of developing the new programme for teaching isiZulu required an analysis of existing theories (contained in NCS). I utilised the power of experience, intuition and creativity to create the *Maye babo!* series.

I believe that through the favourable response drawn by the *Maye babo!* series, I have demonstrated high-level research capability and made a significant and original academic contribution in the field of isiZulu teaching. My work has been reviewed by the evaluators representing the Department of Basic Education and has received a very good rating. It has also received positive comments from my peers – (one e-mail reads This is the best thing that has happened to us isiZulu teachers.) At present, the *Maye babo!* series is in its second

publication. Through this doctorate I hope to inspire others and to make further contribution in the field of teaching isiZulu to children at primary schools in South Africa.

The meaning interpreted in the discourse analysis of the ZEST meetings has pointed to gaps in the education reform process as well as implications for further changes, to bring about an improvement of literacy results amongst South African scholars.

All of the above reflects how my involvement in the promotion of isiZulu first additional language teaching has been more one of agent than spectator.

*2. It demonstrates the acquisition of and understanding of knowledge in a particular field.*

This study reveals my understanding of several aspects related to my work:

- It has clarified my understanding of the concept of what knowledge is, how it is gained and how it can be shared.
- The ZEST meetings reveal my understanding of the history of curriculum reform as well as the expectations of the curriculum- past and present.
- A reflection on my practice revealed my understanding of the needs of additional language isiZulu learners. I was able to resonate with their fears and anxieties by reflecting on my own experiences as an isiZulu learner.
- My confidence to return to the academic world was reinforced during my inquiry on where to locate this research epistemologically. I started this research with vague ideas of: - what a doctorate requires, research methods and terminology. I now feel confident to defend the stance I have taken to call this an autoethnographic self study.

Liz: Do you see your work as a self study or autoethnography?

Sumi: Why do I have to choose? I see it as both.

Liz advises that I give this question more thought.

Two days later, while working on the conclusion, I skim read the draft copy and am confident of my response. Self study has provided the focus for this study. It identifies with Whitehead's (1999) contradiction of values and living theory, but by Whitehead's own admission and that of Mills, Bullough and Pinnegar (2001:15), *self study is a mongrel ...and its methods are borrowed*. Autoethnography provided the method to flesh out the meaning of my experiences. It encouraged the unpacking of the theories I relied on to design the *Maye babo!* series.

*3. It demonstrates the ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project to generate new knowledge and to adjust this design in the light of problems which were unforeseen.*

The ZEST meetings reveal my ability to interpret the theories contained in the curriculum and to implement these. The meetings also make public the intricate process of designing a learning programme. The meetings unravel the course followed by me to create learning material and adjust existing material so that it is CAPS compliant. Inherent in this process is the reference to fundamental skills in teaching which are brought to the fore by *doing and showing* – one of the key characteristics of autoethnography.

*4. It reflects the personal development of the candidate with reference to an advancement of personal skills and professional knowledge.*

I have cherished the opportunity that this study has provided to engage into a historical reflection of my past. As I looked into my past – my upbringing and the values imposed on me by my family, I realized the important role that these values played in my personal and professional development.

This study has also satisfied a personal quest. In my late 30s I felt a strong need to discover who I am, and what my purpose in life is. I sensed that I had lost my personal identity because I was constantly attending to the needs of others. While watching one of Oprah Winfrey's shows I realized that there are many women who feel likewise. Taking Oprah's advice, I began to create, and, if necessary, demand 'me time', but I did not know what to

do during this time because I was a stranger to my Self. I began to read personal development books (Kehoe 2002; Sharma 2004; Goleman 1995; Gladwell 2002, 2007; Covey 2004) and several others. These books were extremely useful, and while I will recommend, Sharma's *The monk who sold his Ferrari* as a must read; it was through this study that I truly discovered my *Self*. As the common saying goes: *the whole is the sum of its parts* - the literature was the isolated puzzle pieces. During this study, the pieces of the puzzle were put together and for the first time the wholeness of the picture of my life - how I had evolved was revealed. The urge to *see* my life unfold was so strong, that I wrote with incredible speed and passion without the need for sleep or food. I was immersed in a place I had longed to be in; - on a journey I had longed to travel, for too long.

While I can say that my research certainly did bring about personal development, in terms of the personal skills I acquired such as understanding myself and my work better, this was not the motive at the outset. This is the cherry as well as the icing on the cake. My focus in undertaking this research was to advance my professional development and to make a contribution to the teaching profession, in particular the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language.

### **Does my work fulfil the purpose it set out to achieve?**

In this study, I have tried to synthesize the pre - , in - , and post process associated with the creation of the *Maye babo!* series and to identify the *tools* that enabled the accomplishment of the project. The purpose of this study is to share what I have learnt in my teaching journey with a broader audience and in this way I hope to fulfil my social responsibility to my profession. Through reflection on the writing of the series, I provide an exemplar of how the curriculum policies were applied to create a series of isiZulu additional language resources.

Part 1 of this study invites the reader to accompany me on a journey that seeks to clarify who I am, my values and the way in which they have influenced how I have evolved in the teaching profession during a period of massive transformation in South Africa. The story in this research is larger than a narrative discourse about my personal and professional life.

It describes the challenges confronted by teachers, personal turmoil and anguish which almost resulted in my exit from the profession. This study allowed me to see the obstacles I faced with new lenses – they were the disguised opportunities which led to my professional development. During this lengthy period of massive transformation in education, many teachers continue to be confronted with challenges of a similar sort and are sure to resonate with the stories contained in this work. The challenges that teachers faced are captured in personal stories and those contained in the ZEST meetings, providing insight to the DBE of grass root difficulties. In this way, I have used narrative as a *mode of reasoning and a mode of representation* (Ellis 2004:195).

In this study I have tried to provide insight into the power of introspection in teacher development. This work reveals how theory, experience and intuition were creatively intertwined in the design of the *Maye babo!* series. I developed my own strategies and techniques for designing the series, built on ideas gained from attending NCS training meetings and by reflecting on what worked effectively with the teaching of Afrikaans as an additional language as well as collaborating with teachers, learners and parents. I used story boards to achieve a flow of progression. The wall space in my study was covered with checklists, diagrams, flow charts and reminders that helped me to sequence the series.

An important contribution of this study is the recommendations I make for stakeholders in education.

This work, in the field of teaching isiZulu as an additional language, at South African schools, is unique and useful because it is within the context of an under resourced field. Attempts to source existing literature in this field ended in vain. I have found much literature on the teaching of English and several foreign languages, but none for isiZulu. The head of the African languages department at the University of Johannesburg, Professor Manie Groenewald states:

As in other spheres of education the methodology for teaching second and third languages is not state of the art in South Africa." (Alcock 2008).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> No page number available. See full internet article in Appendix 19.

This research addresses some of the backlog that exists in the field of teaching isiZulu as an additional language.

As seen in the curriculum reform timeline (page 165) the curriculum had to be streamlined and simplified several times before we arrived at CAPS. In my opinion, the curriculum failed several times because the training offered to teachers ignored the tacit knowledge that is required to bring theories to life. This research is valuable because it embodies humanistic theory (Polkinghorne 1982) of teachers and their teaching experiences in their respective scenarios and within the common platform of South African additional language isiZulu educators. Through the discussion of shared experiences the NCS and CAPS policies are explained with exemplars of how it can be implemented taken from the *Maye babo!* series.

## **Does this study compare favourably to the criteria for evaluating self study and autoethnography?**

### **Criteria for self study**

Whitehead (1988:7) uses the following criteria to judge living theory claims:

- a) Was the enquiry carried out in a systematic way? (One methodological criterion I have used is the action reflection cycle described above, in Foster 1980, Forrest 1983.)
- b) Are the values used to distinguish the claim to knowledge as educational knowledge clearly shown and justified?
- c) Does the claim contain evidence of a critical accommodation of propositional contributions from the traditional disciplines of education? Are the assertions made in the claim clearly justified?
- d) Is there evidence of an enquiring and critical approach to an educational problem?

Whitehead's views are closely related to those of Habermas (1976). The narrative account in this study:

- Expresses how the contradiction of values led to concerns in my practice and how I address these concerns.
- Clearly describes and justifies the values I hold.

- Explains the theories (in particular, NCS and CAPS) that underpinned the design of the *Maye babo!* series.
- Provides data in the form of newspaper articles, the textbooks I compiled as well as evidence of the workshops I held and attended provide evidence to the claims I have made.
- Shows how the principles of OBE were applied in the design of a learning programme in the *Maye babo!* series (through the medium of the ZEST group meetings).

### **Criteria for autoethnography**

Laurel Richardson (2000:254) and Bochner cited by Ellis (2004:253-254) list five criteria for reviewing ethnographic works:

1. Substantive contribution - how has my understanding of the human world contributed to the construction of the text?
2. Aesthetic merit - does the use of artistic narratives open up the text so that it invites interpretative responses?
3. Reflexivity - how did I come to write the text and gather the information? Is there an indication of self awareness, self exposure, vulnerability, honesty and accountability?
4. Impact - Is the text emotionally and intellectually moving?
5. Expresses a reality - Does the text flesh out a credible, lived experience?

In this study, I chose an autoethnographic method because it provided the most suitable means of investigating the research focus which was to unravel the tacit understandings of teaching isiZulu as an additional language and how this understanding led to the design of the *Maye babo!* series. The narrative account of the research involves more than an emotional expression of teaching during a transformation era. It simplifies the curriculum policy by demonstrating how it can be implemented in practice and further makes a recommendation of the successful teaching programme contained in the *Maye babo!* series. The multiple sources of evidence (see appendix), and the use of peer review provide support for my study to be seen in the light of a scholarly account.



The supercomplexity of human nature (Barnett 2004) implies that as people, we respond differently to common situations. The meanings we derive from similar situations and the stories we tell are based on our own interpretations and are therefore different. This study acknowledges this through the exhibition of the discussions of members of the ZEST group, about teaching isiZulu as an additional language during a period of recurrent curriculum reform in South African schools. It supports the view that as humans, we will continue to have different opinions and responses even when the object of our attention is a common one.

The danger of the method used in this research arises from the different connections that both, *insider* and *outsider*<sup>105</sup> readers make from the stories contained in this study. It is for these reasons that I stated at the beginning of my research that this study does not set out to prove a hypothesis or theorise language teaching, but rather to expose my own response of how *I* came to *know* – and when I *knew* better, I *did* better.<sup>106</sup> The aim of self study, according to Bullough and Pinnegar (2001:20) is to *provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle*.

Harrison (2009:194) advises doctoral candidates not to lose the - *me* - element in the process of acquiring their doctorates. These words are significant for my research because of the reality of how - *me* - I was able to be in this doctoral process and the understanding it has brought about of my Self and my profession. This study has given me a voice to articulate my own experiences and that of other teachers. Through the use of discourse, the various caps I have worn as daughter, student, wife, teacher, mother, head of department, teacher mentor, and author have been traced. I came to know my *Self* through reflecting on *how I came to be* and by *tracking* the challenges I faced during the transformation era in education. Through the process of *analysing* my responses to the challenges, my story exposes how I *developed* ways to handle them and *designed* home-grown resources for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language in South Africa.

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<sup>105</sup> Teachers and non teachers.

<sup>106</sup> A cliché used often by Oprah Winfrey on the Oprah Winfrey show – “When you know better, you do better.”

The stories contained in this work could act as a springboard by being analysed and debated about to generate new research in the field of either isiZulu teaching or postmodern research.

The worst case scenario for this study (in my opinion), is that it could receive the status of a subjective account of the experiences of several teachers during a historical period of recurrent curriculum reform in South African schools. Even in this reduced position, this study is useful, because it documents the emotional experiences of educators during a challenging period. Furthermore, this study contributes to an under-researched field in education making valuable recommendations for the improvement of education in South Africa. As Eisner comments:

If there are different ways to understand the world, and if there are different forms that make such understanding possible, then it would seem to follow that any comprehensive effort to understand the processes and outcomes of schooling would profit from a pluralistic rather than monolithic approach to research (1993:8).

## **Findings and recommendations for the improvement of education in South Africa**

This study encounters the dismal atmosphere of teaching in South Africa nonetheless there are many success stories of teachers who have survived despite the many adversities they endure. While these teachers represent only a minor percentage, I believe that the way forward is for each of us to adopt personal responsibility for educational progress in South Africa by adopting a change of mind-set. *Change begins with me* is the theme we have adopted at our school for 2012. Through this study I encourage all stakeholders in education, particularly teachers to make a serious effort to uproot the evils that rot and deprive our learners from achieving excellence in education.

Rosenthal (2011:145) describes five essential functions for interpreting service delivery: Contextualise, sanctioning, resourcing, organizing and regulating. The recommendations made by this study, contextualise the problems in our education system under the following headings. This is my *insider* account of what needs to be done to bring about an improvement of education standards in South Africa.

- Learner support
- Quality assurance from all stakeholders in education
- Teacher training and support
- The process of curriculum reform and implementation
- Resources for improving educational standards in schools.

### ***Learner support***

Chapter five of this study describes some of the concerns in my practice. It inadvertently makes reference to an inquiry into the address of the physical, social and emotional needs of learners, and how these can be supported. Learner motivation depends on the provision of basic needs such as food, water, sleep, a conducive learning environment, proper sanitation facilities, positive social interaction, emotional and psychological support. The standards of living in many poor communities results in education receiving a second or third priority. Children are taught survival strategies and teaching time is spent growing vegetable gardens – this happens despite the numerous school feeding schemes offered to some schools. The debilitating social problems in South Africa (Marrow 2007:56) are a reality that has become the burden of many teachers.

Once the basic learner needs are met, the educational requirements become significant. Two basic educational skills for survival in the modern world are thinking and feeling; and the subjects on the school curriculum that afford the most opportunities to develop these are Literacy and Numeracy (Marrow 2007:64). OBE called for a shift in the way we teach. Instead of seeing learners as empty vessels that need to be filled, new approaches to teaching such as those that engage learners in debate, predictions, critiquing, comparing and composing are required. These approaches will give learners the opportunities to think for themselves. The knowledge they gain through these methods of teaching and the skills

they develop, will be the conceptual frameworks from which they gain further understanding. Unfortunately, South Africa lacks the teacher expertise to offer this level of education. Minister of education, Angie Motshekga (Maluleka 2011:6) stated that 4% of teachers in South Africa are under qualified. While the percentage is small, the actual number of teachers is large. An article which appeared in the *Daily News* on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010, reported that 9000 teachers in Kwazulu-Natal are unqualified. In my opinion this factor played a significant role in the failure of OBE in many schools. It will take several years and great effort and resources to eradicate the poor levels of teacher expertise, thus Marrow (2007:65) suggests textbooks as a resort.

### ***Quality assurance from all stakeholders in education***

A greater degree of commitment is required from all stakeholders in education. New and reliable systems designed to measure and promote quality assurance are significant for improved results in education. The present IQMS (Integrated Quality Management System) with a four point scale does not distinguish teacher excellence.

The quality and reliability of the Annual National Assessments (ANA) requires review. In February 2011 pupils wrote the tests designed for the previous grade. This situation cannot produce reliable results because not all pupils have the capacity to recall the previous year's knowledge after five weeks of school holiday. It has become evident to teachers that many pupils do very little reading (if any), and do not revise mathematic concepts during the December holiday. ANA must be written at the end of the academic year for more accurate results.

Accountability from all stakeholders must be demanded and severe consequences imposed on those that underperform. Teacher unions must act with responsibility to ensure that the education of learners is not compromised in their efforts to improve the conditions of service of teachers.

### ***Teacher training and support***

The desegregation of schools which was a necessity to eradicate the evils of apartheid brought with it many challenges for teachers. Schooling under the apartheid system had huge disparities for the different racial groups (Marrow 2007:140). Teacher support for the transformation that desegregation brought was and continues to be lacking. These challenges require investigation and professional intervention which will have a major impact on curriculum policy. South Africa needs its own solutions to resolving the poor literacy standards in education. As an insider, I question the practice of using first language methods of teaching English to pupils whose main language of communication is an indigenous one. It is of concern that direct address of this issue which affects a significant percentage of our learner population is not a significant feature of CAPS. The logistics of resolving issues such as this, however difficult, cannot be ignored if improved literary standards is our goal.

Poor conceptual understanding of pedagogical issues in teaching such as teaching method and teaching content as well as limitations in the language of instruction hinder the opportunity of achieving basic education for all South Africans (Marrow 2007:59). Teacher professional development must be encouraged (with incentives for teachers), as a measure to improve teacher performance.

Teacher training and support at present is inadequate. Teachers require training on policy issues, as well as support and guidance in the various subjects they teach. Harrison distinguishes between having knowledge about teaching and being able to implement this knowledge.

Accumulation of know *that*, does not lead to knowing *how*. Know *that*, we acquire in the form of explicit, codified information. By contrast, “we learn how ... by practice.” (Paul Deguid, cited by Harrison 2009:41)

The NCS teacher training workshops I attended did not provide sufficient opportunities to *learn how*. The workshops were conducted with large groups of teachers and did not allow for adequate interaction. The lack of follow up workshops left many teachers helpless and confused (as seen in the discourse analysis of the ZEST meetings).

Teacher expertise of senior teachers is at present under-utilised. Whitehead urges academics to give importance to theories developed by individuals in their practice.

In a living educational theory the logic of the propositional forms, while existing within the explanations given by practitioners in making sense of their practice, does not characterise the explanation. Rather the explanation is characterised by the logic of question and answer used in the exploration of questions of the form, 'How do I improve my practice?' (Whitehead, 1988:3)

The ZEST meetings provide an exemplar of how a deeper level of conceptual understanding is possible through this type of setting. A saying that is commonly used states: experience is the best teacher. My journey of over two decades of teaching primary school learners in a variety of learning areas as well as at a variety of schools, namely state, state-aided and ex model C schools, each of these schools having its own ethos, structure and identity has led to the understanding that teaching involves far more than the transference of knowledge. I recall exchanging stories about our first few weeks at school with my colleagues and we were overwhelmed because no course at university prepared us adequately for the situation that many of us found ourselves in. We had acquired knowledge, the *know that*, but the *know how* was absent due to our lack of experience or practice. In my roles as teacher and management educator, I often mentor new teachers and student teachers. I understand their nervousness as well as their needs. Many of them have commended me on my mentorship stating that this ought to be my full-time job (Japp-Pearse 2009; Mkhize 2008).

Through my experience I also discovered that having knowledge of teaching methodologies does not make an effective teacher. The key to developing a successful learning programme lies in the conceptual understanding of these methodologies. The challenge in the application process requires the ability to integrate insight, intuition, creativity and experience with the knowledge of the methodologies. This practise involves perseverance, dedication, discipline and lots of hard work. The combination of these powerful ingredients can create a programme that is destined for success.

Successful teaching relies on having a good understanding of the learner. It would be foolish to attempt to operate a sophisticated machine without reading the manual to find out how it functions. Why then, in teacher education, is so little attention placed in handling the biggest and most precious component of the teaching process – the learner (Marrow 2007:95). A successful teacher understands the intellectual, emotional and social level of her learners. She is able to read the emotional imprints on their faces as clearly as the writing on the pages of her manual and more importantly, she knows how to react to these messages in a way that benefits everybody in the classroom. It is only when these basic needs are met that we can begin to serve our learners at the intellectual level. Sadly this area of teacher education and awareness receives little attention. A successful teacher is positively assertive, fair, mostly democratic, has reasonable expectations, remains positive and doesn't give up, a good role model, patient, tolerant, understanding and sympathetic to the right degree, hardworking, energetic, observant, excellent at multi-tasking.... - these are some of the qualities at the top of my list and those that I try to aspire towards.

Teacher expectations need to be realistic and systems should be put in place for multi party communication so that grassroot concerns can be addressed. Teachers at several schools teach under unrealistic teaching conditions. The despair of dealing with overcrowded classrooms, violence and the frustrations of repeated changes to the curriculum and poor salary increases is de-motivating. Many teachers have ceased to care - they do the bare minimum, pay more attention to their second job, or exit the profession.<sup>107</sup> A change of mind sets and attitudes is therefore a crucial priority.

Teacher needs require intensive support to boost the low morale of teachers. The promotion of the ethic of care in teaching requires investigation and incentives to drive teacher motivation, commitment, competence and quality teaching must be forthcoming.

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<sup>107</sup> I experienced similar feelings in the late 1990's when I struggled to deal with the confusion that desegregated schooling brought about. These feelings are described in Part 1 of this study.

### ***The process of curriculum reform and implementation***

The curriculum reform time- line suggests that the process of how curriculum changes are decided requires investigation. A study of the reports and recommendations of several review committee points to similar recommendations being made each time:

- Simplification of the curriculum
- Streamlining the design features
- Linking the outcomes to the aims and assessment
- More guidance on sequence and pace of teaching
- Improved supply of learning and teaching resources
- Teacher training and support

While we seem to be getting closer to resolving our education mess, it is taking mighty long, and the learners are the casualties of the enormous crises. Curriculum reform impacts heavily on a variety of resources in education, namely – finance, teacher resources, teacher training, production of policy manuals and new textbooks, to name a few. It is therefore alarming that from 1998 to 2011 the curriculum has changed four times: Curriculum 2005 (1998), NCS (2001), RNCS (2004) and CAPS (2012) nonetheless many pedagogical issues such as those involving the teaching of English to learners whose main language of communication is an indigenous one, are not addressed. Another important issue that has direct reference to this study involves the DBE's approach to the selection of an additional language as described in LiEP.<sup>108</sup> According to this policy, the school governing body chooses the home and additional language to be adopted at the school. This policy has lead to several problems when children transfer from one school to another, particularly when moving from a junior primary school to a senior primary school, or when moving from a primary to a high school. I share the views of Simphiwe Dana (2010) that we should agree on Zulu as our first additional language. In the Sunday Times article she describes her difficulty in finding a good school for her children that offered an indigenous language. She asks a pertinent question: *What is the current government doing to protect and strengthen our languages?* She suggests that since isiZulu is the most widely spoken

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<sup>108</sup> Language in Education Policy



language in South Africa, we should make it the official language in schools.<sup>109</sup> India and several other countries with many official languages suffered similar problems until a decision was reached to reduce the number of official languages. Unless a concerted effort is made by the state to limit and stipulate the official languages at schools to two, there will continue to be problems in this area and there is the fast approaching danger of the language policy being misused to bar children of colour from certain well performing and well resourced schools.

Marrow (2007:133) suggests that we do not allow curriculum policies such as those on OBE to undermine successful existing practices of education in South Africa and that teacher training programmes (at teacher training institutions and in- service training) require review so that they include a deeper level of some field of knowledge which is deeper than the current school curriculum (Marrow 2007:105). He suggests that teachers be trained on how systematic learning can be organised to suit the context and conditions under which they teach. This line of thought is not reflected in the detailed plans contained in CAPS on how the syllabus of a subject in the school curriculum is to be followed. The rigidity of week by week plans listing what to teach during each school term ignores the disparities that exist in the standard of education amongst learners of a particular age group studying in different learning environments. This is sure to frustrate many teachers such as myself because it poses the dilemma of: *Should I teach to satisfy the demands of CAPS, or the needs of my learners*. Teacher initiative to address pertinent learner needs may be dispelled for fear of scorn from rigid school managers and superintendents. Learners, particularly those that do not grasp concepts quickly and easily, and who require repetitive opportunities to establish learning will be the casualties. It is recognised though that such rigidity is required in dysfunctional schools and in schools where teacher expertise is lacking.

An important improvement in the curriculum reform process is the consultation done by the DBE with teachers. The relevance of teacher input in CAPS is a step in the right direction.

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<sup>109</sup> Dana is Xhosa speaking.

In June (2009) the public was invited to have an input into the matter, through comments. As a result 500 written submissions were received, citing a lengthy list of classroom related curriculum issues (SABC News 2009).<sup>110</sup>

***Resources required for improving educational standards in schools.***

Physical Resources such as well equipped schools, classroom furniture, textbooks and other teaching resources for all are a priority.

Specific mention must be made here for more resources for the teaching of indigenous languages, particularly as additional language. Curriculum demands must be realistic in the light of unqualified teachers and poor supply of resources.

Through the experiences of my children, I have understood the difficulties that exist for additional language students at high school. A study of the draft documents of CAPS offers me little hope that this problem will be rectified soon. I believe that the expectations of the skills that learners need to acquire for example in Grade 8 is too high and that this deters several learners from studying isiZulu at high school. Alcock (2008)<sup>111</sup> offers hope for aspirant high school students when she cites the success story of matriculant Caitlin Came, who resisted the trend to switch to Afrikaans, persisted with isiZulu as additional language, and obtained a distinction in 2008, as well as an increase of almost 13% in registration in isiZulu as additional language that year. In spite of this, education in African Languages still continues at a snail's pace in schools. The lack of skilled teachers in this field and good teaching resources compound this problem.

While there is an abundance of research on the teaching of English and Afrikaans, as well as of several foreign languages such as French and Indian Languages, to date few effective resources exist to support additional language isiZulu teachers and learners. The problem lies in the fact that South Africa does not have a background of standard approaches to language teaching, as well as requiring educators to keep to the national framework and level. What makes my work in the *Maye babo!* series authentic and apt for the South

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<sup>110</sup> No page number available. See full internet article in Appendix 20.

<sup>111</sup> No page number available. See full internet article in Appendix 19.

African teacher is that it is written for the teacher, by a practicing teacher, to satisfy the curriculum requirements of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa.

Human resources to address teacher shortages, smaller classes, specialist teachers, psychologists and counsellors to deal with problems that stem from the impact of Aids, alcohol and drug abuse are an urgent necessity.

The launch of the Funza Lushaka Bursary scheme to attract young people to consider a career in teaching African languages appears to bring some hope. Maluleka (Daily News, 05/10/2011:6) reveals that in the last four years, more than 5500 South African students have obtained this bursary but it will take several years to address the present shortage of 40 000 teachers. The shortage of teachers is prevalent mainly in the Foundation Phase, mathematics, physical science and indigenous languages. Since this study pertains to the teaching of isiZulu the lack of qualified teachers in this subject requires special mention. The following statistics on teacher intake provided by the head of the Wits University School of Education, Mary Metcalfe, as cited by Alcock (2008) is of concern:

(In) 2006 just 50 new teachers out of 6 000 showed an interest in teaching an African language in the critical foundation phase. As the new teacher intake is about the same each year, this would equate to less than 1% a year (2008).<sup>112</sup>

Parents are important role players in education. Programmes to educate parents on the significant role that proper nutrition, emotional support and cognitive stimulation can play in enhancing the education of their children must be available. Story telling as opposed to reading has been the culture amongst most indigenous groups in South Africa. The advantage of introducing reading to children at a young age must be highlighted if they are to be equipped to compete in the global world. The importance of the family as a supportive unit and its role in promoting a positive learning culture in the home cannot be over emphasized.

There is no doubt from the above that the problems in South African education require urgent address to avoid further decline in the standard of education presently offered.

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<sup>112</sup> No page number available. See full internet article in Appendix 19.

## **Forthcoming projects**

There is huge scope for additional resources in the teaching of isiZulu. My future plans include developing readers and novels, phonics books and CDs of the songs contained in the Grade 4 to 7 series. I also have a vision to extend the series to Grade 12. Work in this area has already begun. I have recruited the help of a working committee of three teachers who are guided closely and hope to recruit a few more to join me in my quest to expand the availability of teaching resources for the teaching of isiZulu as an additional language. In this way I hope to empower mother tongue speakers of isiZulu to become writers. I also have plans to offer further workshops to support teachers in the Intermediate Phase and later, the Senior Phase on the implementation of CAPS.

## Appendix 1

### Invitation to workshop on Multicultural Education

Growing and learning through cross-cultural communications

**Pro racism**  
WHERE DO I BELONG?

**Teacher fired after K-word**  
Tension between Indian and African pupils grows  
*Learners must lead combat against racism*

**Need to help schools deal with tension**  
A SCHOOLBOY being hunted by police for shooting dead a teacher in front of other pupils

The provincial Department of Education this week stepped in to diffuse increased racial clashes at KwaZulu-Natal schools.

- Are you concerned?
- Are you teaching or working in a multicultural environment?
- Do you experience difficulties working with the "Rainbow Nation?"
- Would you like to play a part in easing tensions prevalent at many schools and creating a better future for South African Education?

Cultural diversity can be seen as a challenge and resource.  
Your contribution is needed!

You are requested to attend a workshop on  
**"Multicultural education in our schools : Fact or Fallacy?"**

Date : 18 August 1999, Wednesday  
Time : 14h00 to 15h30  
Venue : University of Durban-Westville  
Room T2

Full programme on reverse side

# Looking for new ways to teach

About 40 grade seven children stand to attention to greet the visitors who have come to interview their teacher and in unison ring out a rehearsed "Good morning ma'am, good morning, sir".

There is momentary disorder as the children settle down before directing their attention to their teacher Sumi Soni in their Sea Cow Lake school.

It is the middle of their Afrikaans reading lesson and three translations - in Afrikaans, Zulu and English - of the chapter they have just read, are written on the board to help the children understand the book.

Soni, an Afrikaans, Zulu and science teacher at the Dr Macken Mistry primary school, is being interviewed for her role in helping to convene a multicultural education forum to help local schools deal with ongoing integration problems at schools.

The current Afrikaans lesson is an example of Soni's attempt at using multilingualism to promote cultural understanding and racial integration.

Soni together with Nigel Shepherd, who is attached to the centre for educational research, evaluation and policy at the University of Durban-Westville's education department, convened the forum at the university on Wednesday because of their concern at the number of integration problems at schools.

Armed with a master's degree in Zulu and having majored in psychology, Soni is well equipped to deal with the controversial subject of racial integration at schools.

## ISSUE

*As incidents of racial violence and tension continue to escalate around the country, a glimmer of hope for the future of our nation's schools was visible this week at a forum on multicultural education. Yasantha Naidoo reports*

At Soni's school, where the majority of pupils are African, Zulu has been a priority on the syllabus.

"I am the middle person at school because I have established a great rapport with the African pupils. As a result of knowledge of their language and the culture I am able to pick up problems. For example the issue of eye contact is very important in African culture.

## Differences

"It is considered disrespectful to look directly at someone during a conversation but I have often heard teachers shouting at African pupils to look at him or her when she is talking to them."

Soni said it was important for teachers to take into account cultural differences when teaching.

"I felt compelled to address the issue of multicultural education after seeing so many children 'suffer'. In November last year I approached my senior superintendent of education to consider a workshop on the issue.

"The department agreed but couldn't

offer any financial assistance."

Soni and Shepherd presented papers at the forum which was addressed also by education expert and University of Durban-Westville vice-rector Professor Jonathan Jansen.

Other education experts who addressed the forum included University of Natal's Lebo Moletsane from the education faculty while University of Durban-Westville's Nhlamhla Cele presentation was submitted in writing in his absence.

"Dealing with diversity in the classroom has presented several challenges. This is further exacerbated by the fact that in the sixth year of democratic governance, South African educators still do not have a foundation which can offer specialised direction in this field. Due to the near absence of programmes promoting the need for cultural integration, mindsets of the apartheid past have remained intact."

Soni said one of the most difficult tasks in promoting racial integration would be to "cleanse minds of stereotypes and false perceptions".

"At present, newcomers are expected to follow the dominant ethos of the schools and while most of the role-players claim to be 'colour blind', the 'us and them' in their responses are very apparent. In general, diversity is being ignored and/or misunderstood."

She said the present curriculums and syllabuses needed to explore South African cultural history.

"Many of us have learned to dance the macarena and experience much joy in sharing in the South American dance, but how many know about the uMbanqanga, the garba or the





**DIVERSE:** Afrikaans, Zulu and science teacher Sumi Soni puts her multilingual skills to use during her teaching lessons

Picture: RANJITH KALLY

Afrikaner folk dances?

"Our Eurocentric education system has to a large extent emphasised Western culture and values. We have been taught to believe that 'West is best' and 'home should remain unknown'."

Soni said, however, racial clusters are not only confined to schools but also exist in churches, shopping malls and at private functions.

### All levels

"Integration is therefore needed at all levels. The Group Areas Act, along with several laws enforced by the previous apartheid government, allowed us little, if any opportunity to interact racially.

"This has, in some instances, led to a lack of understanding, tolerance and fear demonstrated by the confused mass movement of Africans to ex-Indian and ex-white schools, Indians to ex-white schools and whites to private schools or schools that have still managed to remain mainly white."

She said the new Schools Act had provided for, among other things, desegregation and greater powers in terms of language policies.

"What is still needed is a large-scale programme to develop open minds and flush out preconceived ideas and stereotypes of different cultures created by our apartheid past.

"Perhaps one of our greatest challenges of teaching in a diverse society is that we, as educators, are trying to develop skills and knowledge in an area in which we ourselves need training.

"I am not saying I know all the answers or that I am a model of success. It is a matter of urgency that a support base be created and more workshops be held to provide direction on racial integration policies. Many educators have been innovative in this field but are working in isolation."

Soni said while she had hoped the department would help with the logistics of planning and publicising the workshop, it had shown interest in the multicultural education workshop.

"We would have liked a bigger turnout but many of the educators were attending union meetings, but at least we have formed a solid foundation and organisations are not working in isolation."

## Appendix 3

### Education gets make-over from Motshekga

October 30 2009 at 07:18am

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By Angelique Serrao

From next year, pupils across the country will do fewer projects, and teachers' workloads will be reduced. This will be the effect of some of the changes to the National Education Curriculum that were announced yesterday by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga.

Education experts say the changes are significant, and many see the move as the first in a series of many changes to the much-debated Outcomes-Based Education system.

Some of the more significant changes include:

- Matric pupils will no longer produce portfolios. At present, these count for a percentage of their total year-end marks, and in 2008 thousands of matric results were not complete because their portfolio marks were lost;
- Pupils across the grades will do fewer projects in the year;
- Children in grades 4 to 6 will do fewer subjects next year - six instead of eight - a move that teachers' union SADTU says will enable teachers to focus on developing deeper understanding.
- English will be introduced earlier than Grade 3 for pupils who want to use English as their language of learning. At present, English is introduced for non-mother-tongue pupils when they reach Grade 3.

This becomes effective when the new school term starts in January.

Many of the changes are an attempt to limit the time teachers spend on administration so they can spend more time in class teaching. From 2010, teachers would only have one file for administration purposes, said Ezra Ramashela, president of the National Professional Teachers Organisation of SA. "They are cutting out the things that don't work. In a way you could call it a slimming of OBE," he said.

Rej Brijraj from the South African Council for Educators said: "This has been some time coming. But we ask the minister to go one step further and make sure teachers are better equipped for the classroom of today."



There is also a plan to provide children between grades 4 and 12 with their own textbooks in every subject. Guidelines at present do not exist on textbooks, and many provinces do not hand out schools textbooks.

Salim Vally, from the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg, warned that many of the problems in education were not necessarily because of the curriculum.

He said some of the issues that needed to be dealt with were teacher training, early childhood development and access to books.

Vally said only seven percent of schools in the country had libraries. In some provinces, only two percent had libraries.

Gustav Niebuhr, head of curriculum service for the South African Teachers Union, said: "What is interesting is that it seems we are going back to the old system of doing things. The issue of subject advisers caused much frustration to teachers, making them do unnecessary work."

Professor Kobus Maree from the University of Pretoria commended Motshekga on her efforts. "The challenge now is to have teachers in class seven hours a day," he said.

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## Appendix 4

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY : Overview of the brief**

In July 2009, the Minister of Basic Education, Minister Motshekga, appointed a panel of experts to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the *National Curriculum Statement* and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve the implementation of the *National Curriculum Statement*.

The Minister's brief was in response to wide-ranging comments in writing and verbally from a range of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, teacher unions, school management and academics, over several years, on the implementation of the *National Curriculum Statement*. 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 over time to address some of the challenges of implementing the curriculum, these changes had not had the desired effect.

The panel consequently set out to identify the challenges and pressure points, particularly with reference to teachers and learning quality, to deliberate on how things could be improved and to develop a set of practical interventions.

This report of the panel presents an understanding of the context, nature and causes of these pressure points, and presents the Minister and the DOE with a five-year plan to improve teaching and learning via a set of short-term interventions aimed at providing immediate relief and focus for teachers; and medium and longer-term recommendations with the vision to achieve real improvement in student learning within a five year period.

### **Key questions framing the findings and recommendations**

Working closely with the two Deputy Directors General for the General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET) branches from the Department of Education (DOE), the panel identified key areas for investigation based on the major complaints and challenges encountered since 2002, when the National Curriculum Statement was introduced for the first time. The key areas were identified as:

1. Curriculum policy and guideline documents
2. Transition between grades and phases
3. 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 to include:
4. Learning and Teaching Support materials (particularly textbooks)
5. Teacher support and training (for curriculum implementation)

### **Policy and guideline documents**

The panel focused specifically on the development and purpose, dissemination and support, use and availability, adequacy, clarity, accessibility and load with regard to policy and guideline documents for the National Curriculum Statement.

## **Transition between grades and phases**

Regarding transition between grades and phases, questions were posed around whether teachers and stakeholders thought there were problems; if so, where these problems occurred specifically; what the nature of the problems were; and what stakeholders thought should be done about them. Particular attention was given to the transition from Grade 3 to 4 and from Grade 9 to 10.

## **Assessment**

Assessment has been the area where most criticism has been aimed at the national curriculum since C2005. The panel 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.

## **Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) and Teacher support**

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 and are critical to successful curriculum implementation.

## **Summary of methods**

The methods employed in collecting comments, evidence and data included document review, interviews and hearings with teachers from all nine provinces, hearings with teacher unions, and electronic and written submissions from the public (through the DOE's Thutong website).

Across the nine provinces, teachers were extremely clear about their views on the curriculum and its implementation, what the strengths and challenges were, and what could be done to address them. There was also remarkable consensus across different provinces and amongst teachers and unions about what the problems were. The panel had an overwhelming sense of the overall commitment of teachers across the country to try and improve learner performance, and this was very reassuring. The recommendations that follow draw primarily on what teachers themselves recommended, as well as on what other stakeholders (such as parents, subject advisors, unions) identified as the barriers to successful implementation of the curriculum and solutions to these barriers.

## **High-level recommendations**

### **1. Five year plan**

An important finding of the review is that there is no clear, widely communicated plan for the implementation and support of the *National Curriculum Statement*. Many teachers and parents complained that they had no vision of the 'bigger picture' in terms of what education and the curriculum set out to do and achieve, specifically with regard to the learners of South Africa. Coupled with poor learner performance in local and international tests, this has led to pockets of distrust in the education system. The panel is of the view that this presents a unique opportunity for the new Minister to communicate transparently her plan for the future of basic education to all South Africans.

**Recommendation:** A coherent, clear, simple *Five Year Plan to Improve Teaching and Learning* across the schooling system needs to be developed and adhered to; it must be 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. **October 2009**

## **2. Streamline and clarify policies**

There is a plethora of policies, guidelines and interpretations of policies and guidelines at all levels of the education system, from the DOE down to provincial, district and Subject Advisor level. Exacerbating the situation is the reality that many teachers, as well as some DOE and PDE staff, have not made the shift from C2005 to the revised *National Curriculum Statement*. This has resulted in widespread confusion about the status of curriculum and assessment policies. The current set of *National Curriculum Statement* documents should be rationalized into a set of single, coherent documents per subject or learning area per phase from Grade R to Grade 12. Discrepancies in and repetition of information in the different *National Curriculum Statement* documents (especially the *National Curriculum Statement*; *Learning Programme Guidelines*; and *Subject Assessment Guidelines*) must be resolved. These new documents need to be made available to *all* schools, district offices and to parents via print and digital media. In other words, *everyone* should have access to the national curriculum in the form of a comprehensive document. The documents should be prepared by September 2010, for implementation at the beginning of 2011. The Foundations for Learning documents at GET and the Subject Assessment Guidelines at FET, will provide useful starting points for production of the new *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*.

**Recommendation:** Develop one *Curriculum and Assessment Policy* 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. **(October 2009 to September 2010, for implementation January 2011)**

## **3. Clarify the role of subject advisors**

The current system is almost completely dependent on Subject Advisors (and district staff) to act as intermediaries between curriculum policy and implementation in the classroom. In every province, teachers mentioned that there were several challenges around the role of the district. This was reinforced by numerous electronic and written submissions. Firstly, the role of the subject advisor differs from province to province. Secondly, many teachers see the role primarily as technician and demanding of unnecessary administrative tasks and 'box ticking'. Thirdly, there are too few subject advisors nationwide to do justice to thorough and qualitative in-class support for teachers. Many do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to offer teachers the support they require to improve learner performance. Finally, in the absence of role clarification and training for the subject advisors, many have resorted to developing tools to help interpret policies and guidelines that have contributed to the confusion and proliferation of documents and paperwork.

**Recommendation:** Clarify Subject Advisor roles nationally and specify the exact nature of in-classroom and school support they should provide to teachers. Subject advisor roles differ from province to province and district to district; and yet this role is the main intermediary between the curriculum policy and classroom interpretation. **(January 2010)**

#### **4. Teacher workload and Administrative burden**

Teachers across the country complained about onerous administration requirements and duplication of work. This has partially been addressed by the above recommendation about support roles in the districts and the subject advisory services. However, the planning requirements of teachers has become unnecessarily complicated and appear to make little contribution to improving teaching or learner attainment; on the contrary, the administrative burden around assessment and planning appear to impact negatively on teaching and contact time.

**Recommendation:** Reduce teachers' workload particularly with regard to administrative requirements and planning, to allow more time for teaching. **(January 2010)**

#### **5. Assessment**

Assessment has been a challenge for teachers ever since C2005, when an unnecessarily complicated approach to assessment was introduced. Further complicating the situation in the GET phase, a new assessment policy was never developed to support the *National Curriculum Statement*. As a result, teachers and parents are confused about several aspects of assessment, from progression requirements to performance descriptors. Furthermore, C2005 discouraged the use of marks and percentages, and introduced a number of complicated assessment requirements such as Common Tasks of Assessment, portfolios and research projects as well as related jargon. The country's repeated poor performance in local and international tests has left parents and other stakeholders skeptical of the curriculum and related assessment practices.

**Recommendation:** Simplify and streamline assessment requirements and improve the quality and status of assessment by making the GET and FET phases consistent, conducting regular national systemic assessment at Grades 3 and 6, and replacing the Common Tasks 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 should be used to diagnose what to prioritise and target for teacher and learner improvement. **(2009 to 2011)**

#### **6. Transition and overload in the Intermediate Phase**

South African children have fared particularly poorly in local and international testing in Grade 3 and Grade 6. This was repeatedly mentioned in parental submissions and at the teacher hearings. Teachers pointed to several factors that contribute to this result. Firstly, there are too many subjects in the Intermediate Phase, where learners shift from three learning areas in Grade 3 to nine in Grade 7. Secondly, most provinces only introduce English as a subject in Grade 3 and not in grade 1 as suggested in the *National Curriculum Statement* policy. In making the transition to Grade 7, learners are faced with English as LoLT, and triple the

number of learning areas. This makes for a challenging transition for both learners and teachers and contributes to underperformance in the senior and FET phases.

**Recommendation:** The concern about transition from Grade 3 to 4 must be addressed firstly by reducing overload in the Intermediate Phase through reducing the number of Learning Areas to six subjects, including two languages. 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. **(2011)**

## **7. LTSM (textbooks)**

The proper and comprehensive use of textbooks was discouraged and undermined by C2005, and teachers were encouraged to produce their own materials. Yet, both local and international research has shown that the textbook is the most effective tool to ensure consistency, coverage, appropriate pacing and better quality instruction in implementing a curriculum. During the hearings, teachers complained that they were expected to perform tasks, such as developing learning materials, which were best placed in the hands of experts. Having to be 'curriculum developers' eroded their time for teaching. Other LTSM related complaints were that some provinces had not provided sufficient textbooks for learners for years, and that some provincially developed catalogues contained LTSM of dubious quality.

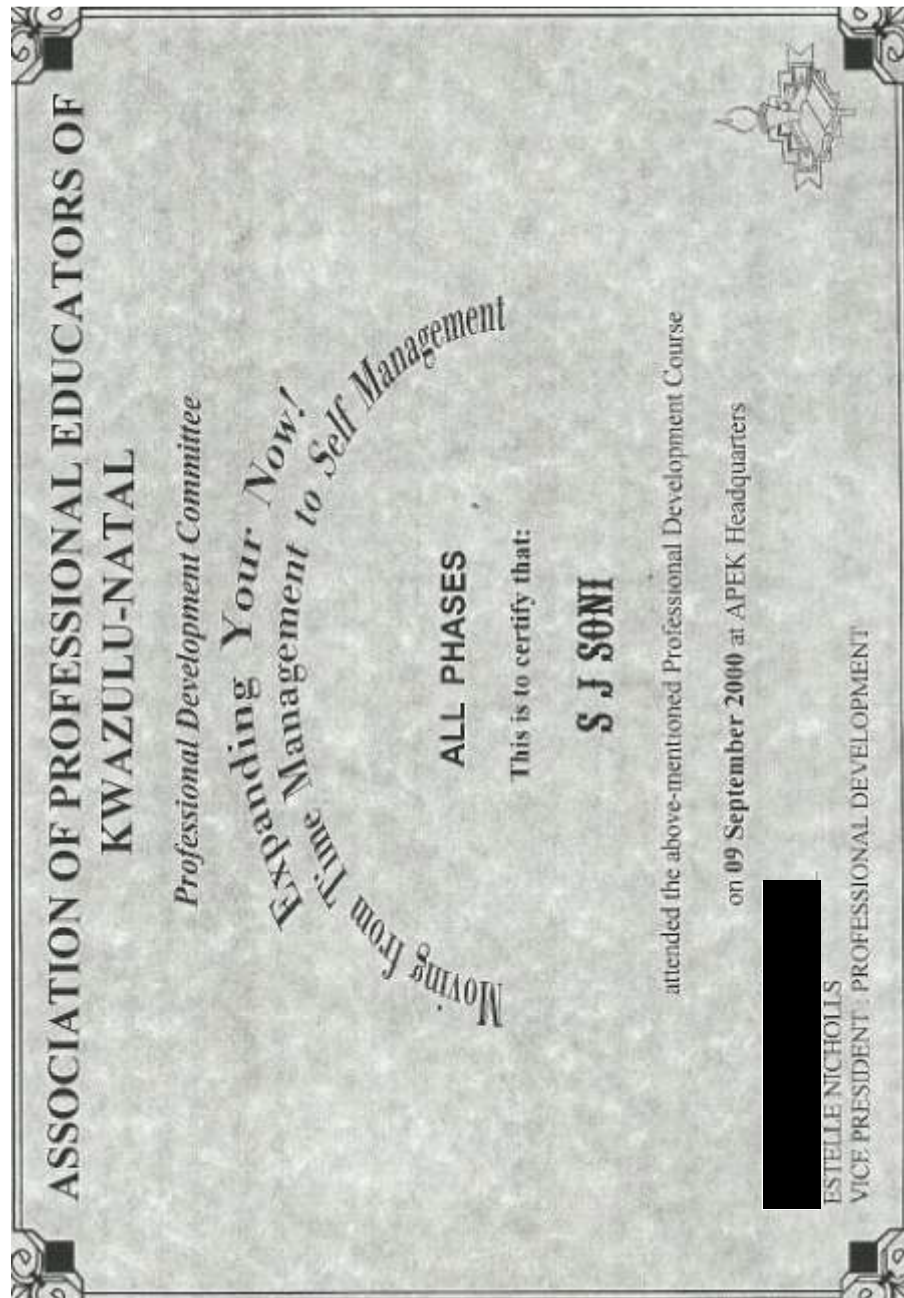
**Recommendation:** The quality assurance and catalogue development for textbooks and other LTSM need to be centralized at the National level; the useful role and benefits of textbooks needs to be communicated at the highest level, and each learner from Grade 4 to Grade 12 should have a textbook for each learning area or subject. **(2010/2011)**

## **8. Teachers and training**

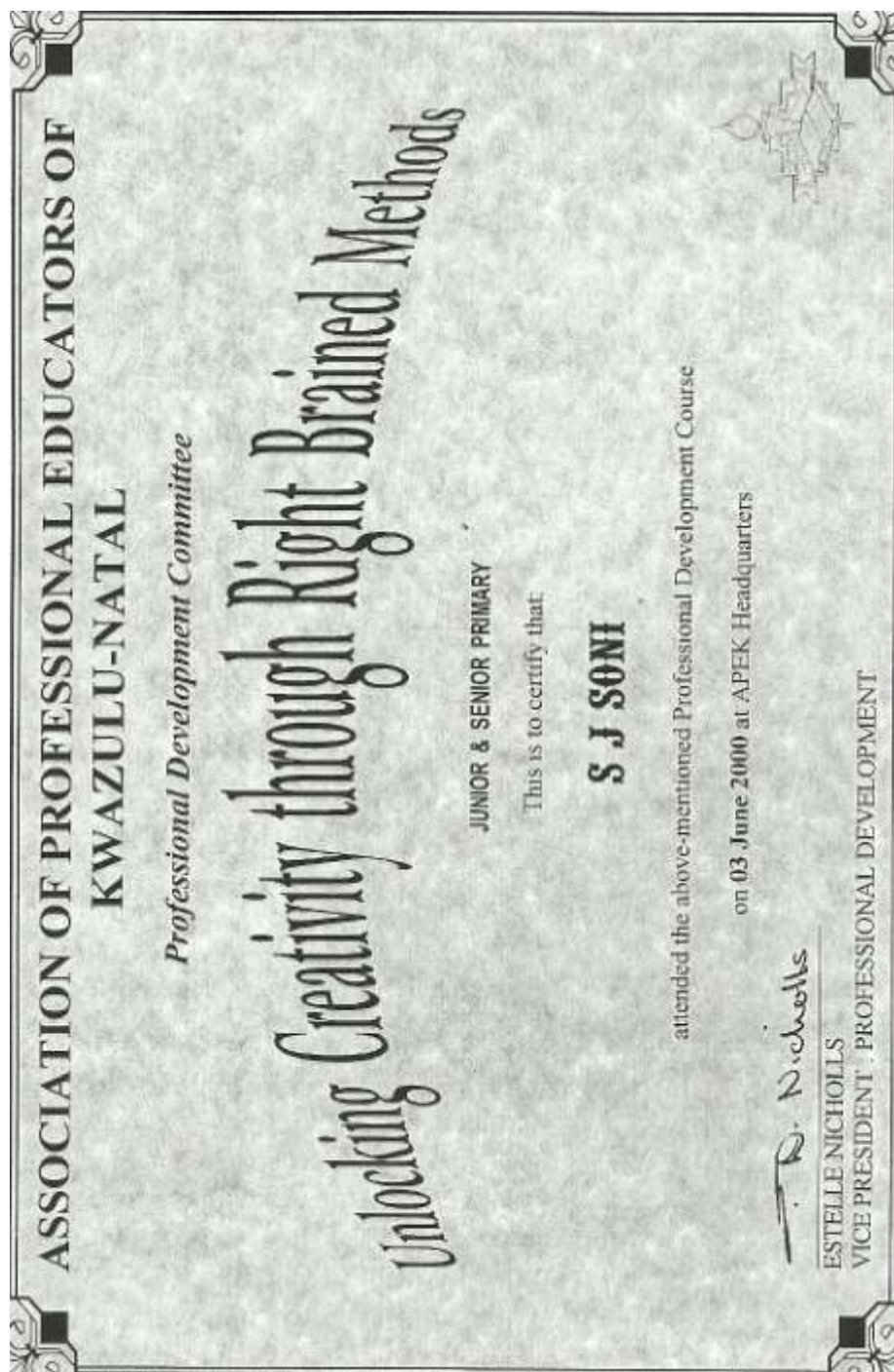
The teacher hearings and submissions were unanimous in suggesting that current teacher development policies to support the curriculum were often too generic and superficial and did not provide the needed support to teachers. They made it clear that addressing the need to upgrade teachers' skills would not be appropriate with a 'one size fits all' approach. Teachers also complained that most tertiary institutions did not cover the *National Curriculum Statement* thoroughly enough and that many newly trained teachers were not competent to teach the curriculum. It was almost unanimous, across all provinces, that any future training needs to be subject specific, and that support staff such as school management, subject advisors and district staff also need to be trained and have clarity on their roles and responsibilities.

**Recommendation:** The training of teachers to support curriculum implementation should be subject specific and targeted only where needed; and all support staff, including school management, subject advisors and district officers, should also undergo training on the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy*. **(September 2010 onwards)**

## Appendix 5



## Appendix 6





## Appendix 7

### IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHT BRAINED TECHNIQUES TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY

*A report by Sumi Soni - Head of Department, Berea Primary School.*

June, 03, 2000 was a day that changed my approach to creative writing. It was the day that I attended a course delivered by Felicity Keats on Unlocking Creativity through Right Brained Methods organised by APEK at the APEK Headquarters.

As an experienced teacher in languages, (English, Afrikaans and Zulu), there was one set of books that I did not look forward to marking, namely creative and composition. Most of the work produced was stereotypical. At the commencement of any composition or a creative writing lesson I would caution pupils on the use of correct grammar, punctuation and spelling, in so doing stimulating the left part of the brain and making it dominant. I now understand why much of the work produced by the pupils lacked creativity and imagination. Having gained greater insight on "switching on the right brain", I was keen to try out these techniques in the classroom. For myself I had never considered writing seriously, but was inspired by my attempt made at the workshop. Being able to practice the technique allowed me to see first hand it's effectiveness and I knew immediately that it would be useful in awakening the imagination. At home I experimented the effectiveness of the technique on my daughters aged 9 and 11. We were pleasantly amazed.

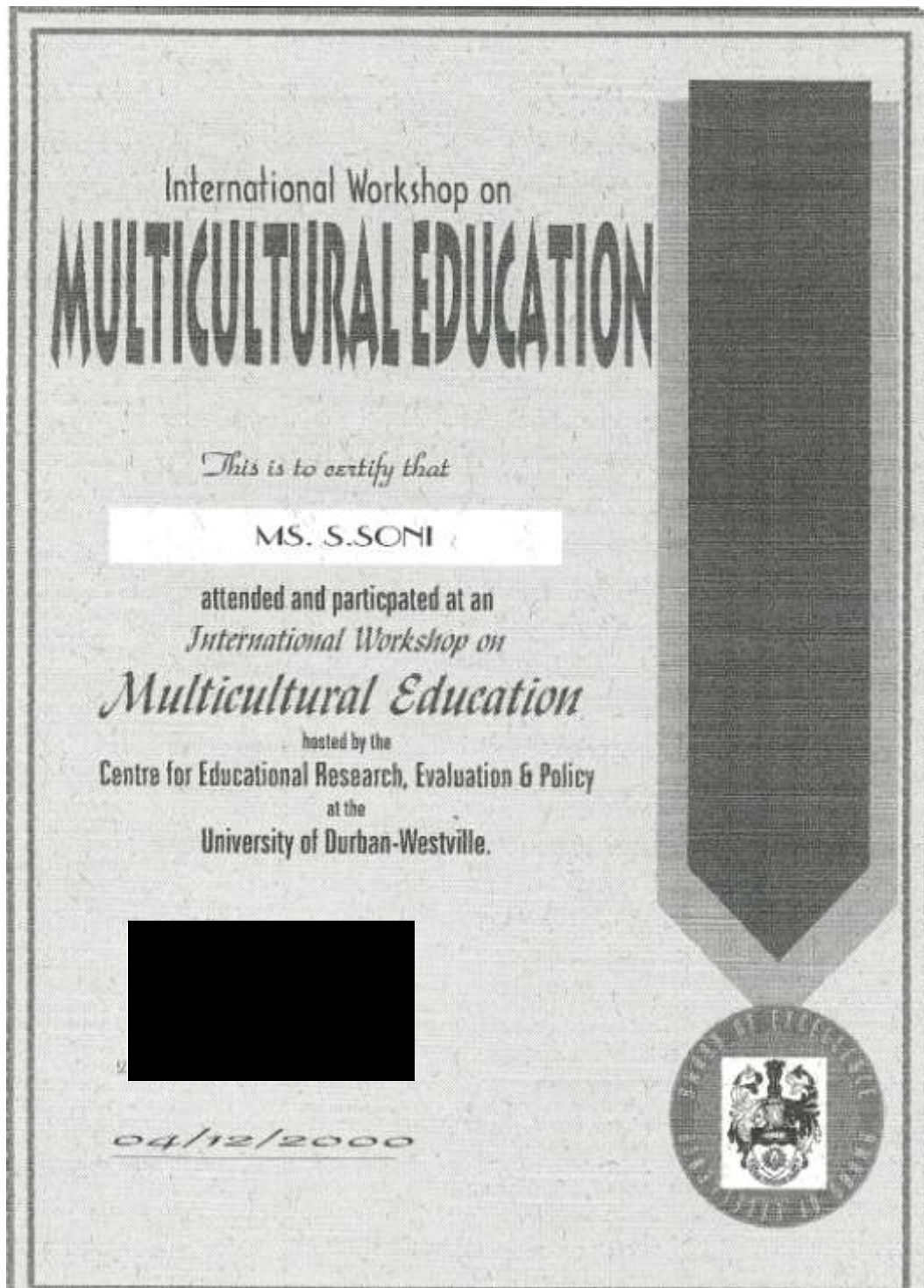
At the next creative writing lesson with my class, my pupils were informed about the course I attended. Each of them was given a blank sheet of paper. They were asked to close their eyes. They then carried out a few relaxation exercises. It was beautiful to watch the calm relaxed faces. At this point I said the word "Trapped". The pupils were given the freedom to think of their own setting, and write a story about someone or something being trapped. They were encouraged to see a story unravel in their minds, as if they were watching a movie in their minds. They were reminded to use all their senses and express emotion. The only rule was that once they picked up their pencils they were not to stop writing until they received a signal ten minutes later. They were also not to read or alter what they had written.

Within two minutes all except one of the 32 pupils started writing. At the end of ten minutes, they begged me to allow them a few more minutes to finish their stories. By the end of thirty minutes, most of them were so excited and fascinated by what they had achieved that they asked if they could read their stories to the class. A lesson that was once tedious and cumbersome was now buzzing with great excitement and enthusiasm. When one particular pupil who was usually not keen to do anything academic read her story, I was so moved that I could not hold back the tears.

Once an imaginative story was captured on paper, the pupils did not need much encouragement to correct the grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils who had produced outstanding work were sent to the Principal for good work stamps and invited to read their stories at assembly. Pupils whose talents lay in illustrating a story through pictures instead of words teamed up with those who were better at writing. At present, we are in the process of writing short stories for our Media Science Centre. Similar techniques have been used in the writing of poetry which has boosted the confidence of many budding poets.

On 20 October 2000, Felicity Keats was invited to Berea Primary School to conduct a similar workshop with the staff. Subject advisors in English from the department of Education are keen to receive a report on the progress made in Unlocking Creativity through Right-Brained Thinking Techniques.

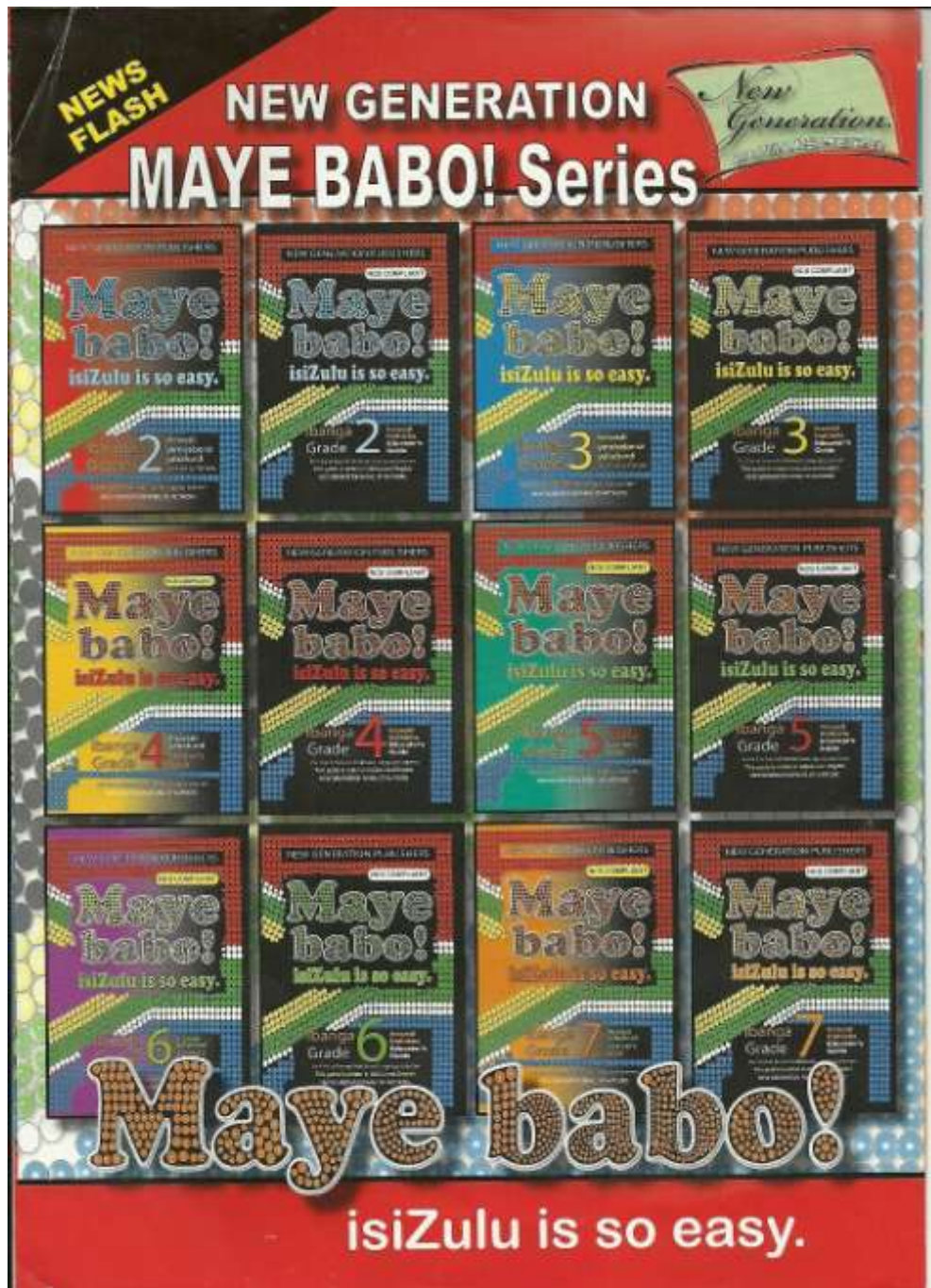
## Appendix 8





## Appendix 9

This brochure shows all the books that are NCS compliant. The series consists of one learner's book and an educator's guide for each grade from Grade 2 to Grade 7.



## Appendix 10

PERSONAL WHOLE LIFE		
Magic duo: 1. 100% Commitment 2. Act as if you count		
<b>Chores</b> Be organized and efficient See them as rewarding Delicious meals Pride in presentation Do lovingly	<b>Gym</b> Attend 3 times a week Keep fit Control weight Shape up Control blood pressure	<b>Leisure</b> 1 hour each day to do what I want • Watch tv • Read newspaper • Movies • Read magazine
<b>Family</b> • Positive interactions • Be first emotional when things don't go the way I desire (say yes) • Be supportive • Be nurturing • Spread the love - notes • Good role model • Phone calls • E-mail	<b>Alone Time</b> • Meditate • Yoga • Prayer • Listen to soothing music • Sleep	<b>Personal Growth</b> • Read books • Attend talks • Follow your impulses • Affirmations
<b>Work</b> • Be a moulder of mind set • Be focused, organized, industrious & efficient • Good role model • Plan effectively • I count at work	<b>Relationship</b> • Invest time • Do things together • Talk about things on my mind and engage discussion • Show that you love and value them	<b>Friends</b> • Show your care • 100% commitment • Change meetings to walk on beach/park • Phone calls

## Appendix 11

<http://freenetafrica.com/node/1097#main-content>

Date accessed 03/01/2011 Time: 2.54pm

### South Africa - Changes to schooling in 2010

November 10, 2009

Cape Town – A series of changes are set to come into *effect from January 2010*<sup>113</sup> to *simplify the administrative functions* that teachers are responsible for that do not have a major bearing on their teaching and to provide more support to them.

Government has moved with speed to respond to the recommendations of the recently published Report on the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement by the task team that highlighted various challenges to quality curriculum delivery.

"Our focus is *to strengthen curriculum delivery* and thus we have identified those steps that can be taken immediately to streamline delivery and others that will take slightly longer to implement," Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga said on Tuesday. She was reporting on the progress made in government's Human Development cluster.

As such, a series of changes will come into effect in 2010.

The changes include *discontinuing the use of portfolios for learners* of all grades from next year; keeping only *one file for administrative purposes* from teachers; *reduce the number of projects* required by learners; *developing Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* for each grade in each year for implementation in 2011; *reducing the number of learning areas* in the Intermediate Phase; *emphasizing the use of English*<sup>114</sup> from as early as possible and *clarifying the role of subject advisers*.

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<sup>113</sup> This has since changed to January 2012.

<sup>114</sup> The need for a common classroom language as a tool for communication, in order to engage in learning activities that promote the acquisition of skills has been identified.

Motshekga said to support these interventions, government would ensure that The Foundations for Learning – a programme for the foundation and intermediate Phase (Grades R–6) will be implemented in all schools in 2010.

"*Extensive learning and teaching packs for grades R to 6*<sup>115</sup> teachers have been developed that will assist teachers with planning, teaching and learning. These packs will be distributed to all primary schools for the start of the school year in January 2010," the minister said.

For Grade R, the packs will include lesson plans for teachers for literacy, numeracy and life skills as well as learners' workbooks, poster and story resource books.

For Grades one to three, the workbooks will target *literacy and numeracy*<sup>116</sup> next year, while those for grades four to six will include workbooks for learners for language and mathematics.

The Presidency has allocated R524 million to ensure that learners from Grades one to six are able to receive workbooks for numeracy and literacy for next year.

Motshekga said the department was also looking at the feasibility of implementing a tool by which it could *monitor teachers*<sup>117</sup> and pointed out that this might be a mix of a development-type approach and an inspectorate type approach. – BuaNews

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<sup>115</sup> This will to a certain extent assist schools that lack the necessary curricular resources and teacher expertise to design learning programmes. It will also reduce the burden of work overload described by Sibongile.

<sup>116</sup> Basic knowledge in these learning areas during early childhood education is vital for future learning.

<sup>117</sup> The monitoring of teacher performance and functionality of schools is a crucial factor for an improvement of education standards in South African schools.

## **Appendix 12**

### **STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION, MRS ANGIE MOTSHEKGA, MP ON THE PROGRESS OF THE REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT, TUESDAY 06 JULY 2010**

#### **Curriculum**

I am pleased to use this opportunity to brief and update you on the steps we have taken in 2010 to act on the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee that was tasked with the review of the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement in 2009. It is vital that South Africans are kept abreast of the progress that the Curriculum Review process is making in order that all education stakeholders can take ownership of the process. Public consultation is vital and we stand firm on the principle that the process is open and transparent.

Curriculum reform is not something that the system takes lightly. My message from the onset of the Curriculum review process has been that we need to work against change fatigue in order to build confidence and enthusiasm amongst all our stakeholders. Therefore we are proceeding deliberately and decisively to effect the broad recommendations of the Ministerial Committee.

At the same time, we need to deal quickly and efficiently with curriculum implementation challenges and difficulties that do exist. We have already started the process of identifying problems and have taken the necessary steps to find solutions. We have and will continue to make changes on an on-going basis where they can be made with minimal disruption.

#### **Short-term, immediate changes with long-term implications**

The Review Committee confirmed that teachers experience curriculum and administrative overload. We have taken steps to provide short-term relief on these matters. We have reduced the number of projects for learners, and have done away with the need for portfolio files of learner assessments. We have also discontinued the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTAs) for Grade 9 learners with effect from January 2010. Provinces have already informed their schools about the form of assessment that will replace CTAs in 2010.

#### **Medium-term curriculum change**

Earlier this year, I established three Committees of highly respected experts led by three able people, with the requisite experience and qualifications, to enable the smooth implementation of the main recommendations of the 2009 Curriculum Implementation Review Committee.

The main Committee is ensuring that the National Curriculum Statement is repackaged so that it is more accessible to teachers. Every subject in each grade will have a single, comprehensive and concise Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement that will provide details on what teachers ought to teach and assess on a grade-by-grade and subject-by-subject basis.

Currently the design features of the National Curriculum Statement learning areas comprise of outcomes and assessment standards. Assessment requirements are mapped onto the

achievement of outcomes and assessment standards. The new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements will repack the existing curriculum into the general aims of the South African curriculum, the specific aims of each subject, clearly delineated topics to be covered per term and the required number and type of assessments, also per term. In this way, outcomes will be absorbed into more accessible aims, and content and assessment requirements will be spelt out more clearly. Topics and assessments to be covered per term are being aligned to available time allocations per subject.

The Council of Education Ministers' meeting that met on the 29th June to consider these and

other curriculum matters agreed to call all learning areas and programmes SUBJECTS. From 2011, learning areas and programmes will be called subjects across the curriculum from Grade R-12.

Council has further taken on board the recommendations of the Review Committee to reduce the number of learning areas in the Intermediate Phase from eight to six. That means that in grades 4 to 6 technology will be combined with science, arts and culture will be combined with life orientation and economic and management sciences will be taught only from Grade 7. A committee I established has investigated the implementation implications and confirmed that this can be done without destabilising the system and is indeed in the interests of teaching and learning.

Mindful of the need for teacher orientation and development of appropriate textbooks and learning and teaching support materials, we will start phasing in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements in the Foundation Phase in 2011. We will phase in other grades in 2012 so that we can make the necessary preparations.

### **Workbooks**

One of the key priorities that I set in my Budget vote speech in March this year in order to achieve our education targets is the development and distribution of adequate learning and teaching materials particularly to those schools we have identified as part of a broader strategy of improving the learning and teaching of these critical foundational skills. A crucial pillar in the Department's determination to improve learner performance is the provision of learner workbooks. This project is a result of the injunction by the Presidency to provide resources to teachers and learners to improve learner performance in literacy and numeracy.

To this end, the Department of Basic Education has developed **a plan for the development of the Work Books for Grades 1 – 6** in order to ensure the development, piloting, printing and distribution of learner workbooks early in 2011. We will pilot the workbooks in schools in 2010 and they will be available for use in all schools in 2011. The project will provide resource support to 6.5 million learners and approx 180 000 teachers in nearly 20 000 schools. This will place workbooks in the hands of each and every learner in the system.

The development of the workbooks will be done internally in the Department. The Department will utilize capacity within the system including the Department of Basic Education and Provincial Departments of Education. A team of curriculum experts/materials developers/translators is developing the workbooks. These individuals have proven experience in the development of learner workbooks, are conversant with



resource based methods and are able to produce high quality output according to project deadlines.

The 2009 Curriculum Implementation Review Committee had recommended the increased and improved use of textbooks, a national catalogue of learning and teaching support materials and greater efficiency in the pricing and procurement of textbooks and learning and teaching support materials. The third Committee I established earlier this year has provided guidance on the procedures by which this can most effectively be achieved. This has been done in consultation with key stakeholders.

**Additional recommendations** that Council approved include the following:

Firstly, the Council approved the recommendation that from 2011, the language chosen by the learner as a Language of Learning and Teaching shall be taught as a subject, or as a First Additional Language, from Grade One (1) and not from Grade 2, as is currently the case.

What this means, for instance, is that the teaching of English will occur alongside mother tongue instruction for those learners who choose English as a language of learning and teaching. English will not replace the mother tongue or home language in the early grades, as some commentators have interpreted the recommendation.

Secondly, Council agreed to regular, externally-set assessments at grades 3, 6 and 9 in literacy (in home language and first additional language) and numeracy/mathematics. It agreed on a weighting of continuous assessment and end of year examinations as follows: Grades R-3: 100% continuous assessment; Grades 4-6: 75% continuous assessment: 25% end of year exam; Grades 7-9: 40%: continuous assessment: 60% end of year exam and Grades 10-12: 25% continuous assessment : 75% end of year exam.

Council thirdly agreed that the symbols or rating scales used to rate learner performance in Grades 10-12 will, from 2011, be extended to Grades R-9, so that there is consistency across the curriculum.

Council will consider the recommendations of the National Teacher Development Stakeholder process soon so that we can act to provide the necessary support.

Finally, all policy-related matters arising from the decisions of the Council of Education Ministers will be put out for formal consultation as per our normal statutory and non-statutory procedures. Since some of the changes have policy implications, we will, in keeping with due process, publish and invite public comment on the decisions taken by the Council of Education Ministers.

Effective communication of all these changes is critical. In addition to our official and formal notification, we have begun a curriculum newsletter and distributed the first one to all teachers and officials in time for the beginning of the school year in 2010. *Curriculum News* will be produced quarterly. Its purpose is to ensure that all teachers and officials are kept abreast of changes and what to expect in the future.

Finally, all the above will allow us to address key challenges with regard to curriculum implementation. However, our overarching priority is to bring about a fundamental change in schooling outcomes. To this end I will shortly be unveiling a comprehensive turnaround plan for the schooling sector. This plan is branded: Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025.

**Issued by the Ministry of Basic Education**

**Enquiries: Hope Mokgatlhe**

**Spokesperson – Minister of Basic Education 071 680 6849**

## Appendix 13

### Soni's message at workshops on Multicultural Education

A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION.  
DIVERSITY: A SOURCE OF PROBLEMS OR A MAGNIFICENT RESOURCE.

#### INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a privilege for me to share with you my perspectives on multicultural education, ideas which I have developed based on academic research in the field as well as my own practical experiences in the classroom. The survival and harmonious existence of our South African society, especially in its transition phase, depends to a large extent on the initiatives we take in discovering its diversity. As a society our success will be determined by our response to: Diversity: A source of problems, or a magnificent resource? At the outset, I would like to acknowledge, that dealing with diversity in the classroom under the present conditions, has presented several challenges. This is further exacerbated by the fact that in its sixth year of democratic governance, South African educators still do not have a foundation which can offer specialised direction in this field. Due to the near absence of programmes promoting the need for cultural integration, mind sets of the apartheid past have remained intact. This has led to the misconceived perception of diversity being problematic.

My discussion commences by exploring the present scenario at desegregated schools. I will then highlight the role of the educator in a diverse society, the relevance of our present curriculum and the changes required so that our education can cater for a plural society. Perhaps one of the most difficult tasks we will encounter in promoting racial integration would

be to cleanse minds of stereotypes and false perceptions which have become inherent due to our history. In conclusion, a few broad recommendations are suggested. Due to time constraints, these cannot be dealt with comprehensively. However, it is hoped that this will be possible at subsequent meetings.

#### 1. THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Surveys undertaken by the Education Policy Unit (Naidoo, 1996; Zafar, 1998) indicate that there has been little, if any, racial integration at desegregated schools. Newcomers have been expected to follow the dominant ethos of the schools and whilst most of the role players claim to be "colour blind", the "us" and "them" in their responses were very apparent. In general diversity is being ignored and/or misunderstood. How can we as educators promote integration ?

#### 2. THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

As educators we have an important role to play in our diverse society. Diversity, if seen as a resource, a gift, a source of richness and goodwill, will be enjoyed and cherished. Our first step in this direction would be to create an awareness of and to acknowledge our multicultural differences. Innovation in the classroom can enhance and enrich our physical, mental and spiritual lives. To accommodate and see all cultures as being on an equal plane should be our goal. No culture should be seen as superior or inferior, neither should it be assumed that the views expressed by a particular group, be it the status quo or not, is necessarily the only or correct one. Showing respect

towards the views adopted by the different cultural groups and being sensitive to their needs will certainly create more harmonious relationships in a multicultural society.

### 3. RELEVANCE TO THE CURRICULUM

Many educators have taught lessons about foreign countries and their people. Our pupils have studied at length about the Eskimos, where they live, what they eat, social customs and so on. Is it not more important and relevant for us to learn about the people we share the country with ? Many of us have learnt to dance the Macarena and experience much joy in sharing in this South American dance, but how many here know about the uMbaqanga, the garba or the Afrikaner folkdances ? We are familiar with Guy Fawkes and Halloween, but how many here know about Kavady, Holi, Rath Yatra or Umkhosi wokuhlolwa Kwezintombi (Virginity Testing Ceremony) or Nomkhubulwane (Rain Queen Festival) ? Our Euro-centric education system has to a large extent emphasized Western culture and values. We have been taught to believe that "west is best" and "home should remain unknown".

### 4. CATERING FOR A PLURAL SOCIETY

Schools need to be redesigned to cater for the needs of a plural society. There needs to be a fair representation of cultural groups in all the activities of the school. School functions need to be transformed by adding a touch of our ethnic culture. The curricula and syllabi need to explore our cultural history.

Our curriculum can be revitalised to include the variety of spices, herbs, medicines, jewellery, song, dance, folktales, legends, food and tradition found in our rainbow nation..

With this knowledge pupils will develop mutual acceptance and respect leading to greater self esteem. Furthermore, we will be assured that our cultural language and religion will remain protected.

The general school programme needs to look at innovative ways to promote learner integration. Encouraging learners to socialise across cultures is no easy task, or as Bongani Madondo (Daily News; August 6, 1999) describes it "Unzima lomthwalo". Racial clusters are not only confined to schools, but also churches, shopping malls and private functions. Integration is therefore needed at all levels of society.

#### 5. BARRIERS OBSTRUCTING INTEGRATION

Lack of knowledge about our diverse society has created strong barriers which obstruct integration. The Group Areas Act, along with several laws enforced by the previous apartheid government allowed us little, if any opportunity, to interact racially. As a result we have all developed stereotypes about cultures we remain ignorant about. This has in some instances led to a lack of understanding, tolerance and fear demonstrated by the confused mass movement of Africans to ex-Indian and ex-white schools, Indians to ex-white schools and whites to private schools or schools that have still managed to remain majority white. Many parents who have placed their children at desegregated schools, have done so for several reasons, one important one being so that they can learn to integrate and socialise racially. This I believe should be the central focus of our education in its transitional phase.

## 6. CONCLUSION

President Thabo Mbeki, in a recent speech addressing a 1000 strong Afrikaner audience, said:

"We are faced with the challenge: whether it is better to proceed on different roads, each alone, that become increasingly narrow as we travel, or whether it is possible to build one road through which we can all travel forward, faster, together." (Daily News: July 28, 1999)

The new Schools Act has provided for, amongst other things, desegregation and greater powers in terms of language policies. What is still needed, however, is a large scale programme to develop open minds and to flush out preconceived ideas and stereotypes of different cultures created by our apartheid past. This must be the responsibility and obligation of all members of the new South African Society. Let us focus on remedying this situation.

As educators we have a profound influence on the minds and lives of our learners. This is particularly true in the junior primary phase where what teacher says holds prominence in comparison to suggestions offered by mum, dad or grandparents. What is appropriate is not a sophisticated approach to teaching, but the evolution of our own "home-grown" education system which will address the needs of our country - a system that will create togetherness and a true 'simunye' spirit in our society.

Perhaps one of our greatest challenges of teaching in a diverse society is that we as educators are trying to develop skills and knowledge in an area in which we ourselves need

training. It is therefore a matter of urgency that a support base be created and more workshops be held to provide direction on racial integration policies. Many educators have been innovative in this field but are working in isolation. By sharing, pooling our resources and networking, we can achieve greater and swifter success.

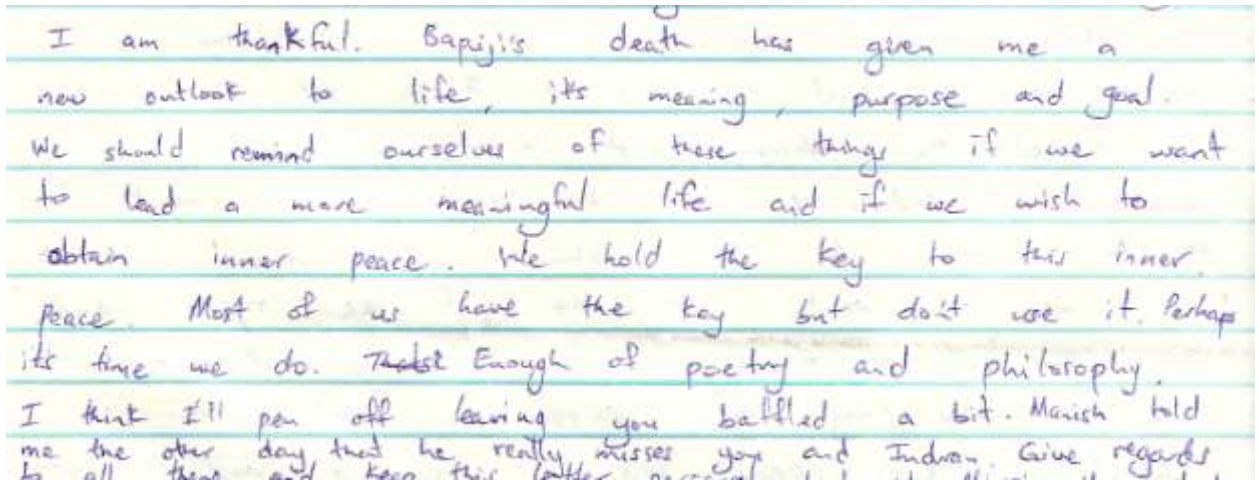
South Africa has a rich culture and tradition which is still not understood by its citizens. If we are to succeed together as a nation, if true liberation and democracy is our destination, then this has to be our starting point. This calls for a new beginning, or as our President calls it, an "African Renaissance" in education.

SUMI SONI



## Appendix 14

Page 8 of the letter I wrote to my sister on 04/08/1992. My sister and her husband were living in Virginia, USA at the time.

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The handwriting is in blue ink and is somewhat cursive. The text is as follows:

I am thankful. Bapuji's death has given me a new outlook to life, its meaning, purpose and goal. We should remind ourselves of these things if we want to lead a more meaningful life and if we wish to obtain inner peace. We hold the key to this inner peace. Most of us have the key but don't use it. Perhaps its time we do. ~~That's~~ Enough of poetry and philosophy. I think I'll pen off leaving you baffled a bit. Manish told me the other day that he really misses you and Indran. Give regards to all there and keep this letter as a reminder.

## Appendix 15

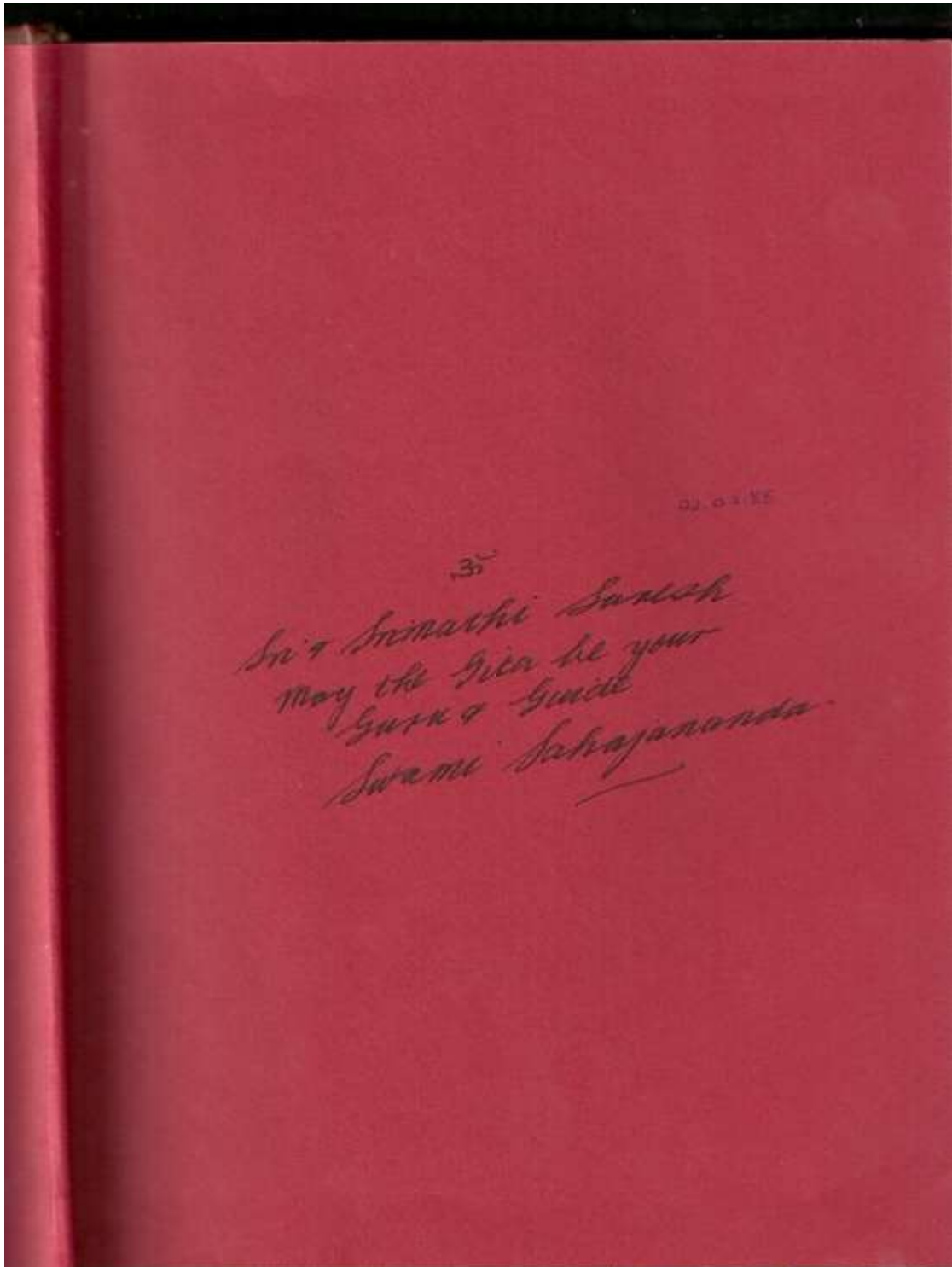
One of the songs we sang during the student protests at the University in 1980

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,  
We shall overcome some day ay ay,  
For deep in my heart,  
I do believe that we shall overcome some day.  
Mandela shall be free, Mandela shall be free,  
Mandela shall be free some day ay ay,  
For deep in my heart, I do believe,  
Mandela shall be free some day.



## Appendix 16

Inscription in the Bhagavad Gita given to my husband and I by Sri Swami Sahajananda



## Appendix 17

You were an excellent role model, and through your difficult life experiences, you have taught us to have courage in the face of adversities. The strong moral and spiritual values you instilled in us as children has held us in good stead, and we feel blessed to be part of your strong family tree. You have played a pivotal role in maintaining unity within our family.

Ba you have been the community adviser when it comes to matters of Gujarati customs and traditions. You played a major role during Navaratri festivals, in announcing the mantras and supporting families during the Matka Therva Prayers. Your jovial and voiceferous nature earned you the title "Radio Truro".

Ba today we bid farewell not only to a mother, but a dear friend and an outstanding community leader.

Gurudev we trust that you will take care of Ba in the journey that lies ahead.

Hari Om and Jai Ambe.

## Appendix 18

Mail and Guardian: July 23 to 29 2010, Page 50

<http://mg.co.za/article/2010-07-23-does-obe-deserve-the-death-penalty>

### **Does OBE deserve the death penalty?**

**JUNITA KLOPPERS-LOURENS: COMMENT** JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA – Jul 23 2010

14:50

Angie Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, announced two weeks ago the umpteenth education dispensation since the ANC government came into power in 1994. Her announcement resulted from an investigation undertaken by a ministerial task team that had to revise the implementation of the current school curriculum. This news was generally received with scepticism in the media.

The ANC Youth League's Steven Ngubeni wrote: "Goodbye, OBE, hello, Oh what on Earth is next?"

According to David Macfarlane in the *Mail & Guardian*: "Rumours of OBE's death this week were not so much exaggerated as stupendously belated."

Tim du Plessis in *Beeld* referred to the "OBE mess", said it was the ANC's fault, and accused Motshekga of refusing to admit that OBE was in the "trash can".

The larger picture concerning revisions of the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement suggests Motshekga has been sweeping the truth under the carpet to cover up the ANC government's maladministration of education.

When she announced in Parliament on November 5 last year that her department was revising the curriculum, *Hansard* records her saying: "The question on everybody's lips is why we do not, as Mamphela Ramphele always wants us to do, declare the death certificate of outcomes-based education, OBE. I must say that we have, to all intents and purposes, done so. So if anybody asks us if we are going to continue with OBE, we say that there is no longer OBE. We have completely

done away with it." (Applause).

Yes, MPs applauded her in mute astonishment for her audacity, but from the next day she changed her tune. She must have been rapped over the knuckles by her ANC colleagues: her remark in Parliament was an indirect acknowledgement that the government was responsible for the incalculable damage done to an entire generation of learners' school education and future careers -- a lost generation of young people without the necessary knowledge and skills, without Grade 12, or with a useless Senior Certificate.

The day after her parliamentary announcement in November, she refused to repeat what she had said about OBE. At the next meeting of the portfolio committee meeting on basic education she backed down and tried to reassure members with vague explanations that OBE was still in the picture. She even dragged in the Constitution to justify this.

In her media statement two weeks ago she did not refer to OBE at all. During question time she was reluctant to call it by name. She did, however, state that one should no more refer to "that 1998 thing" (OBE), but rather to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).

Her departmental spokesperson, Granville Whittle, later told *Rapport*: "OBE remains the broad curriculum framework." In these comments both Motshekga and Whittle make the mistake that has led to untold confusion since 1998.

One should distinguish between the NCS and OBE. The NCS outlines what content has to be dealt with in each subject in each grade, while OBE is an education approach -- a way of teaching. And it is but one of many tuition methods.

A good educator constantly makes use of different methods of tuition, including OBE, while a poor educator might, for instance, merely present content knowledge to learners and then expect of them to reproduce it in an examination in parrot like manner.

In brief, the difference between the NCS and OBE is the difference between *what* and *how* -- what needs to be taught in the classroom and how it could be presented.

Ministers of education since 1998 have not only confused the what and the how in a multitude of contradictory and complicated policy documents, they have also presented such different types of outcomes that the curriculum was incorrectly referred to as the outcomes-based curriculum. Learning outcomes and skills have been so exaggerated that the memorising of content has been regarded as an unnecessary and useless exercise.

Learners have been expected to create content knowledge by themselves through research, exploration and working in groups or pairs, and then to reproduce what they have found out while the educator merely acted as facilitator. In the process reading, writing and numerical skills receded.

An assessment policy was simultaneously forced on educators that resulted in a ridiculous administrative workload and prevented them from spending time on their primary task, namely to teach their learners. Skills should not dominate the classroom to the detriment of content knowledge. Both are important.

A balance should be maintained between what a learner has to know and what he or she has to do with such knowledge. Learners cannot interpret a cartoon about World War II if they do not have factual knowledge about the war.

The "OBE mess" has also resulted from education authorities failing to ensure that all schools have the necessary resources, structures and support services, such as properly equipped school libraries, computer laboratories, access to the internet, manageable class sizes, an informed parent community and the absolutely essential involvement and guidance of expert and capable district authorities.

Furthermore, basic teacher training as well as the in-service training of educators have been inadequate. So, does OBE deserve the death penalty and should it end up in the trash can? No.

Thirty and 40 years ago, good educators also taught according to an outcomes-based approach. The only difference is that they did not give it a name. Teachers worth their salt plan what they want to achieve with specific lessons before tackling a topic and make sure that they have reached their objectives before turning from it.

The top schools in our country achieve success with this method because they are in all respects well equipped for the task and because their educators approach it with great dedication and a positive attitude, without losing sight of the necessity of content knowledge.

So what do the changes Motshekga announced mean and can they start fixing the chaos of our education system? In reality curriculum content has not changed much, except for grades four to six, in which the number of learning areas has been reduced from eight to six. Now, too, the curriculum will be known as Curriculum 2025 and it promises to be a better structured, more streamlined and simplified document than the National Curriculum Statement and to have much more focus on basic reading, writing and numeric skills.

Much more emphasis is placed on content knowledge through the provision of workbooks and textbooks for all subjects for all learners in all grades, although there are still deficiencies in certain subject curriculums. Regarding the greater emphasis on subject content, care should be taken that textbook content does not become the alpha and omega of what a subject entails.

The curriculum should still be the most important prescription and the specific goals, objectives and assessment instructions for all defined subject topics should dictate the teaching in the classroom in each subject.

Curriculum development should be undertaken by trained developers attached to a permanent unit: they should develop, implement and maintain the curriculum continually in accordance with constantly changing demands of society -- and according to scientific principles and methods.

*Dr Junita Kloppers-Lourens MP is the Democratic Alliance's spokesperson on basic education.*

## Appendix 19

### PRINT MEDIA ARTICLES

#### MOTHER TONGUES IN A TWIST

Sello S Alcock

**Mail and Guardian Online  
April 03 2008**

For Caitlin Came choosing to study isiZulu proved to be the best decision of her school years. Came (18), now a first-year BA student at the University of Cape Town, ignored advice to switch to the entrenched and therefore "easier" second-language option Afrikaans, which, by common consent, is the safer route to an overall better matric result for non-isiZulu speakers.

Through diligence, and with the help of a committed teacher at her school, Came passed isiZulu with a distinction in her finals.

Came was one of 8 391 second-language learners who sat the isiZulu exam last year, 963 more than in the previous year.

Despite this encouraging increase in the number of second-language learners taking isiZulu, obstacles still stand in the way of national efforts to turn the department of education's vision of a multilingual South Africa into a classroom reality.

Problems include a shortage of suitably skilled teachers, imperfect methodologies and, in some cases, reluctance on the part of schools to promote African second-language options that may cause learners to do badly and lower the schools' success rating -- measured, often obsessively, by matric results.

Introduced as part of Curriculum 2005 in 1997 and revised in 2006, the education department's schools language policy sets out to encourage the promotion of African languages by empowering learners to choose the language in which they want to be taught.

It also promotes, at the very minimum, bilingualism in schools by making two languages compulsory for the attainment of the Further Education and Training (FET) certificate, which has replaced the matric certificate. The policy also encourages learners, especially in the foundation phase, to be taught in their mother tongue.

Though implementation of the department's bold thinking about a coherent, practical policy of multi-lingualism is plagued by many factors - from a lack of resolve to a lack of resources - pockets of excellence do exist.

Came passed isiZulu with flying colours at St Mary's College, an elite private school in Johannesburg.

Not restrained by the lack of resources that hinder most South African schools, St Mary's has shown a remarkable commitment to making the language policy of "two-way immersion" -- or bilingualism -- work.

Under principal Meg Fargher, the school has created a department of African languages responsible for teaching isiZulu and Sesotho.

The department's head, Phumzile Sithebe, who has been teaching isiZulu since 1994, was singled out by Came as a major contributor to her success.

"She was incredible," says Came. "Always ready to help us and give us extra lessons in her own time."

St Mary's employs two isiZulu teachers, enabling small, intimate classes of about 10 learners.

Sithebe teaches the non-mother tongue speakers using a grammar-translation method that allows her to give lessons mostly in English. Her colleague is responsible for teaching mother-tongue speakers and others who may not speak isiZulu at home, but who display a strong predisposition towards the language. Teaching of this group takes place almost exclusively in isiZulu.

Fargher says St Mary's is guided by "what's best for the students' [results], not what's best for the school".

In another part of Johannesburg Alex Irwin, a Grade 12 learner at a former model-C school in Parktown, is having a harder time learning isiZulu. Irwin (18) says she's constantly "terrified" by the prospect of failing the language -- and with it her final FET certificate.

Unlike Came, Irwin has had to find a private tutor after school hours to help her catch-up.

Though Irwin has studied isiZulu since grade four, she has struggled at high school and finds the environment "not supportive enough" in terms of offering extra teaching to those with no other background in the language.

As the recent legal battle between the chief executive of the Pan South African Languages Board, Rosemary Ntombehle Nkosi, and Durban High School demonstrates, balancing implementation of policy and integration of learners can prove tricky.

Nkosi recently made headlines when she accused the school of not taking isiZulu seriously because it taught her son isiZulu -- his mother tongue -- as a third additional language.

Arguing that her son's rights had been infringed, Nkosi said he'd been forced by available options to take Afrikaans as a second language instead.

In its defence Durban High School said practical considerations relating to teaching the language had resulted in classes being split along racial lines. This situation has been



described by the school's headmaster, Dave Magner, as going against the spirit of integration.

Bhukulani High School in Soweto has been rated one of the best schools in Gauteng. Thanks to its learner population of readymade multilinguals -- because of exposure to a variety of languages in a typical township environment -- the school does not experience the same problems.

If anything, says principal Dr Mduduzi Mathe, his learners are disadvantaged when it comes to English. Though it remains the medium of instruction at Bhukulani, Mathe says dryly it often ends up as being his learners' "third language after tsotsi taal".

The school teaches both isiZulu and isiXhosa as home languages.

However, Mathe believes that better resourced schools are more likely to overcome teaching problems in general.

And some former model-C schools, he says, show little commitment to ensuring the success of African languages and don't --- or can't -- employ suitably skilled teachers.

This can result in a history of a maths teacher being taken on to teach an African language simply because it's his or her mother tongue.

One educator who has been involved in teaching isiZulu since the 1970s, who asked to remain anonymous, stops short of saying that only mother-tongue-speaking teachers should teach the language. "I don't care who teaches the language as long as they are trained."

But the absence of developed teaching techniques for second languages remains, according to all educationists interviewed, the most pressing problem of all.

Says the head of the African languages department at the University of Johannesburg, Professor Manie Groenewald: "As in other spheres of education the methodology for teaching second and third languages is not state of the art in South Africa."

The methodology issue is exacerbated by the fact that there are not enough African teachers entering the teacher pool who are interested in teaching African languages.

According to the head of the Wits University School of Education, Mary Metcalfe, in 2006 just 50 new teachers out of 6 000 showed an interest in teaching an African language in the critical foundation phase. As the new teacher intake is about the same each year, this would equate to less than 1% a year.

But the tide could be turning.

Last year the national education department introduced the Funza Lushaka Bursary scheme to attract young people to consider a career in teaching African languages.

So far 330 students at South African universities have been awarded this bursary to study to become African language teachers. These are spread among eight African

languages, with about 103 teachers dedicated to isiZulu. IsiXhosa netted the highest number of student teachers with 116.

Breaking out of what Came calls "comfort zones" puts educators and learners alike on a steep learning curve. For Came it's been worth the slog.

"Facing new experiences is an integral part in a child's transformation into a mature, open-minded adult. Learning isiZulu as a White teenager in South Africa provided me with the opportunity to do this and I hope to continue with IsiZulu in the future."

## Appendix 20

SABC News (2009) <http://www.sabcnews.com/portal/site> OBE report handed to Education Minister, Date:26/08/2009, Time: 6:15

South Africa's national curriculum review committee has wrapped up its work and handed a report to Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga. In recent months calls have been echoed for the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) to be scrapped, but the ministry says a dramatic curriculum change is not on the cards. Instead the department wants to eliminate stumbling blocks in teaching what is currently on offer.

In June the public was invited to have an input into the matter, through comments. As a result 500 written submissions were received, citing a lengthy list of classroom related curriculum issues.

The department's Vivienne Carelse says there were broad sentiments expressed around the teacher workload, the administrative burden, the interpretation of the curriculum as well as the implementation of challenges that are based on issues of resources availability and textbooks for learners.

While OBE has come under fire for not being effective, some believe it is necessary. Independent education analyst Bobby Soobrayan is of the opinion that calling for OBE to be scrapped diverts the attention from important matters. Soobrayan says the country needs OBE and thus a revised curriculum won't be an answer to making teachers competent.

Soobrayan says the only way to ensure that teachers are competent is through content, how they teach as well as measuring their commitment levels to their everyday job. Motshekga is expected to make the committee's report public by early next month. Some of the recommendations could be implemented as soon as January next year.

Use your mobile phone to find news in a flash at [www.sabcnews.mobi](http://www.sabcnews.mobi)

## Appendix 21

### MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A WAY FORWARD FOR KWAZULU-NATAL SCHOOLS

#### MEETING AT DURBAN NORTH OFFICES OF THE KZN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, TRURO HOUSE ON MONDAY 26 JULY 1998 AT 14H00

##### 1. PRESENT

Mrs. C. Msiba (Director of Provisioning Services) (Chairperson)  
Mr. D Singh  
Dr. J. Hiralal  
Mrs. S. Soni (Macken Mistry Primary School)  
Mr. N. Shepherd (Lecturer, Faculty of Education, UDW)

##### 2. MATTERS DISCUSSED

- 2.1. Mrs. Msiba welcomed Mrs. Soni and Mr. Shepherd to the meeting. They in turn thanked Mrs. Msiba and her colleagues for the invitation to meet them, and to share ideas on multicultural education in our province.
- 2.2. Mrs. Soni outlined the reasons for the initiative for the Multicultural Education Forum at 14h00 on the 18 August in T1 at UDW. Both she and Mr. Shepherd stressed the need for a partnership, and the other members of the meeting present endorsed this sentiment.
- 2.3. Mrs. Msiba noted that this was a very timely initiative, and she was willing to give her and her regional department's full support.
- 2.4. It was stressed that the development of any programmes would be on an *on-going basis*, and that the classroom teacher would be at the centre of such programmes.
- 2.5. In the pursuit of developing effective multicultural education initiatives, it was recognised by all present that all stakeholders must be involved in any such programmes. Identified stakeholders were the *department, interested teachers, teacher unions, parents, parent governing bodies and associations, tertiary educators, NGO's with an interest and commitment to the field, the learners themselves, and any other interested persons*. It was acknowledged that to leave any significant stakeholders out, would marginalise them and that this could ultimately undermine our mutual efforts.

- 2.6. It was noted that the department would play a vital role in facilitating the process, the framework and procedures to be used, will be subject of discussion of further meetings subsequent to the Forum on the 18/8/99. Although the Department will be playing a dominant role in facilitating the process in terms of logistical support, it was felt that all the stakeholders should have the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way. The promotion of multicultural education should be seen as '*commitment driven*', and a '*top-down*' approach would not be appropriate in this context.
- 2.7. Nigel Shepherd offered the support of the Faculty of Education at UDW, and noted that he had the endorsement of the Dr. Michael Samuel, the Deputy Dean for the initiative. He then went on to describe three very important research and development initiatives that will complement the drive to promote multicultural education in the province:
- *Ten Schools Project.*
  - *The Upward Bound Project*
  - *The SANPAD teacher education project.*

He handed over a variety of documents pertaining to his own work in the field, as well as documents specific to the SANPAD project.

- 2.8. Mr. Singh noted that programme(s) that result from this initiative must not be superficial, and there was need for a *strong theory-practice link*. The UDW research programmes, in collaboration with Edgewood College of Education, and the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, should provide this very necessary input.
- 2.9. Dr. Hiralal and Sumi Soni will *promote* the *Consultative Forum* through a variety of *media*.

### 3. WAY FORWARD

It was agreed that those present at the meeting, perhaps including others, would meet again at a still to be determined date after the 18 August.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Mrs. Msiba closed the meeting at 15h15, and thanked members for their presence and contributions.

.....  
Nigel Shepherd (Reporter)

## MEETING WITH MS. SUMI SONI TO RUN A WORKSHOP ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

At a meeting held on 9 March 1999 at Macken Mistry Primary School, I met Ms. Sumi Soni. I was approached by Sumi to help her organise a Workshop on "*Multicultural Education*".

### **Matters discussed**

1. She sketched out her interest in MCE, and why she felt it was necessary to have a workshop.
2. She noted who she felt she should invite, namely teachers, administrators, governing body members, union members etc. (See attached sheet).
3. Initially, she had intended to have the UDW Zulu department helping her, but Nolene Turner pointed out that MCE was not their area of expertise. She referred Sumi to me.
4. The conception of the workshop needs to be fleshed out, but we started to feel that one workshop would not be enough. Nor did we want a 'workshop' dominated by talks. Rather it should be an interactive workshop, discussing core issues, and engaging the participants in discussion.
5. The value of this exercise for the SANPAD project is that we are starting to act on our research mandate which is to engage schools in our project, as well as to start disseminating information and developing skills in the field.

### **FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONIC MEETING ON THURSDAY 25 MARCH 1999**

In a follow-up to our last meeting, Sumi and I up-dated one another on progress and shared some ideas:

1. I stressed that this was very much her initiative, in the sense that her efforts to get the issue of multicultural education on to the agenda for teachers within the context of the classroom, as teachers must be seen to be as much in the '*driving seat*' as teacher educators such as ourselves. Empowerment can only come about if this kind of relationship is built up.



2. With this in mind, I suggested that the workshop be used as a vehicle to initiate an interest group who would pursue the issue of MC and anti-racism in all the necessary arenas. We could look at the issue of MCE in KZN schools in broad terms, and then perhaps follow on with a discussion on the means and procedures to set up this interest group, and how to sustain its momentum. We will have to encourage a wide cross-section of people to come, including teacher educators from other institutions.
  3. I also noted that this initiative of Sumi opens up great opportunities for the institutional collaborators in the SANPAD project. Phase 2 is focused on a curriculum analysis of our teacher education offerings, and followed up with the development of a new curriculum. The efficacy of this new curriculum will then be assessed in our partnership schools. At the core of this research process are teachers, and their role be vital in assessing our current programmes, and then assisting us with the development of new programmes, and concluding with the assessment of the latter.
  4. It was noted that I would take these ideas through to Jonathan Jansen initially, and then to the SANPAD research groups in general to get their comments and suggestions.
  5. We concluded by stating that I would get back to Sumi as soon as possible.
- 

Nigel Shepherd.

MINUTES OF A MEETING WITH SUMI SONI HELD ON 4 MAY 1999 IN THE  
EDUCATION STAFF TEA ROOM TO PLAN FOR A TEACHERS'  
CONSULTATIVE FORUM AND FOR OTHERS INTERESTED IN  
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION TO BE HELD ON 18 AUGUST 1999

1. PRESENT

Sumi Soni  
Nigel Shepherd

2. DATE, TIME AND DURATION

**Date:** Wednesday 18 August 1999  
**Time:** 14h00 – 15h30  
**Venue:** T1

3. NUMBERS

Sumi is confident that with the Department and media advertising the meeting that there will be a good attendance in the region of 500 people. She will see to the advertising.

4. ADVERTISING

Sumi will design the first draft of the 'Flyer' for the meeting. It will include a brief but hard hitting 'blurb' to attract the masses to the meeting. The flyer will capture the essence of the challenge facing teachers in classes that are culturally diverse and in other respects. She will crystallise some objectives/outcomes..

5. TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

"MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOLS/CLASSROOMS:  
FACT OR FALLACY?"

Convenors: Sumi Soni and Nigel Shepherd

Chair: Dr. Michael Samuel

1. *Welcome:* Sumi Soni

- "Why are we here to-day?" (Rationale for the forum)
- "What do we hope to achieve?" (Outcomes of the meeting)

2. *Speakers*

*(Speakers will be given ten minutes each. To be strictly adhered to)*

- *"Multicultural education in context: The realities of our racially and culturally diverse classrooms."* **Prof. Jonathan Jansen\***

*\* Subject to availability.*



➤ *"A teacher's perspective on multicultural education: Diversity in my Classroom: A resource or a problem."* **Sumi Soni**

➤ *"Multicultural education in KZN schools: All things to nearly all people, and to some, nothing at all."* **Nigel Shepherd**

➤ *"Multicultural education: A management nightmare or a challenge to be met?"* **Nhlanhla Cele**

➤ *"Multicultural education: An African perspective"*

**Prof. Zondi Lebo**

##### 5. Plenary Session: "A way forward"

*A Panel and Audience interaction Chaired by Dr. Michael Samuel.*

*PANEL: Speakers including Dr. Reshma Sookraj and Ms. Bharathi Tugh.*

Back-up speakers: Crispin and Lebo

(Make use of roving mikes)

##### 6. PROGRAMME OF ACTION

TASK	PERSON	DEADLINE
1. Flyer: First draft	Sumi	18/5
2. Venue Booking	Nigel	11/5
3. Jonathan	Nigel	11/5
4. Michael	Nigel	11/5
5. Prof. Zondi	Sumi	11/5
6. Nhlanhla	Nigel	11/5
7. Reshma	Nigel	11/5
8. Bharathi	Nigel	11/5
9. Draft of the programme	Nigel	11/5
10. Liaise with the media	Sumi	Early August
11. Chairs, mikes etc.	Nigel	1/8

Nigel Shepherd

The Regional Director

Please find enclosed an invitation to a workshop on multicultural education.

The issue being addressed is both important and current. It is a topic, on which guidance is sought by educators at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The proposed workshop is an introductory one. It is my intention to form a committee of interested persons, who are knowledgeable in the field, so that we can address the issue of diversity in our rainbow nation.

It would be appreciated if notice of the above workshop is circulated to the schools and educational institutions in your region. Your co-operation in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking You

Sumi Soni  
Ph. :(031) 823760 Home  
Ph. :(031) 5771072 School

## Appendix 22



**ETHICS STATEMENT:** Please complete and sign the attached Ethics Questionnaire.

All students who intend to complete research projects under the auspices of Durban University of Technology are required to complete this form. This is an abridged version of DUT's ethics questionnaire for students conducting research in the field of commerce.

Use the Durban University of Technology's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines to ensure that ethical issues have been identified and addressed in the most appropriate manner, before finalizing and submitting your research proposal.

Please indicate [by an X as appropriate] which of the following ethical issues could impact on your research. Please type the motivations/further explanations where required in the cell headed COMMENTS. Copying and pasting the appropriate sections from your proposal may not suffice - please ensure that your justification/comments are addressed fully, as issues that inadequately answered will be returned to the student for further comment.

No	Question		
1.	<b>DECEPTION</b> Is deception of any kind to be used? If so, provide a motivation for acceptability. Comment:	No Yes	X 
2.	<b>CONFIDENTIALITY</b> Does the data collection process involve access to confidential personal/organizational data (including access to data for purposes other than this particular research project) without prior consent of the subjects? Comment:	No Yes N/A	X  
3.	Will the data be collected and disseminated in a manner that will ensure confidentiality of the data and the identity of the participants? Please explain Comment:	No Yes N/A	  X
4.	Will the data obtained be stored and ultimately disposed of in a manner that will ensure the confidentiality of the participants? If "No" please explain. If "Yes" how long will the confidential data be retained after the study (and by whom) and how will it be disposed of at the end of the period?	No Yes	 X

	Comment: The data will be retained for the duration of the study by the researcher; copies would be given to DUT. At the end of the study period data will be deleted from all data bases. Printed material will be shredded by the researcher.		
5.	Will the research involve access to data banks that are subject to privacy legislation? If yes, specify and explain. Comment:	No Yes	X 
6.	<b>RECRUITMENT</b> Does respondent recruitment involve any direct personal approach from the researchers to the potential subjects? Refer to the sampling plan in your proposal and copy the relevant sections here. Comment: Educators at training colleges as well as schools will be approached to offer participation in the project. Pupil data has already been collected and viewed on national television.	No Yes	 X
7.	Are participants linked to the researcher in a particular relationship i.e. employees, colleagues, family, students? If yes, specify how. Comment:	No Yes	X 
8.	If yes to 7, is there any pressure from researchers or others that might influence the potential subjects to enrol? Elaborate. Comment:	No Yes	X 
9.	Does recruitment involve the circulation/publication of an advertisement, circular, letter etc? Specify. Comment:	Yes No	 X
10	Will subjects receive any financial or other benefits as a result of participation? If yes, explain the nature of the reward, and safeguards. Comment:	Yes No	 X
11	Is the research targeting any particular ethnic or community group? If yes, motivate why it is necessary/acceptable. If you have not consulted a representative of this group, give a reason. In addition explain any consultative processes, identifying participants. Should consultation not take place, give a motivation. Comment:	Yes No	 X
12	Does the research fulfil the criteria for informed consent? [See guidelines]. If yes, no further answer is needed. If no, please specify how and why. Comment:	Yes No	X 
13	Does consent need to be obtained from special and vulnerable groups (see guidelines). If yes, describe the nature of the group and the procedures used to obtain permission. Comment:	Yes No	 X
14	Will a Subject Information Letter be provided and a written consent is obtained? If no, explain. If yes, attach copies to proposal. In the case of subjects who are not familiar with English (e.g. it is a second language), explain what arrangements will be made to ensure comprehension of the Subject Information Letter, Informed Consent Form and other questionnaires/ documents. Comment: Letters of information and consent will be sent to all participants (see attached example).	Yes No	X 

15	Will results of the study be made available to those interested? If no, explain why. If yes, explain how. Comment: Copies of the dissertation will be displayed in the DUT library as reference material for educators.	Yes	X
		No	
<b>RISKS TO SUBJECTS</b>			
16	Will participants be asked to perform any acts or make statements, which might be expected to cause, discomfort, compromise them, diminish self-esteem or cause them to experience embarrassment or regret? If yes, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
17	Might any aspect of your study reasonably be expected to place the participant at risk of criminal or civil liability? If yes, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
18	Might any aspect of your study reasonably be expected to place the participant at risk of damage to their financial standing or social standing or employability? If yes, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
19	Does the research involve any questions, stimuli, tasks, investigations or procedures which may be experienced by participants as stressful, anxiety producing, noxious, aversive or unpleasant during or after the research procedures? If yes, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
<b>BENEFITS</b>			
20	Is this research expected to benefit the subjects directly or indirectly? Explain any such benefits. Comment: This research is expected to benefit the educators in terms of offering guidance in curriculum design and implementation.	Yes	X
		No	
21	Does the researcher expect to obtain any direct or indirect financial or <i>other benefits</i> from conducting the research? If yes, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
22	<b>SPONSORS: INTERESTS AND INDEMNITY</b> Will this research be undertaken on the behalf of or at the request of a company, or other commercial entity or any other sponsor? If yes, identify the entity. Comment:	Yes	
		No	X
23	If yes to 22, will that entity undertake in writing to abide by Durban University of Technology's Research Committees Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines? If yes, do not explain further. If no, explain Comment:	Yes	
		No	
		N/A	X
24	If yes to 23, will that entity undertake in writing to indemnify the institution and the researchers? If yes, do not explain further. If no, explain. Comment:	Yes	
		No	
		N/A	X
25	Does the researcher have indemnity cover relating to research activities? If yes, specify. If no, explain why not. Comment:	Yes	
		No	
		N/A	X
26	Does the researcher have any affiliation with, or financial involvement in, any organization or entity with direct or indirect interests in the subject matter or materials of this research? If yes, specify Comment:	Yes	
		No	X

The undersigned declares that the above questions have been answered truthfully and accurately.

STUDENT NAME : Sumithra Jaysooklal Soni



SIGNATURE : .....

11th November 2009

DATE : .....

## LETTER OF CONSENT



Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: Maye babo! A self study of curriculum design for the teaching and learning of isiZulu as an additional language in primary schools.

The results of this research will offer parents, school management teams, school governing bodies, researchers and DoE officials some guidance and clarity on the teaching and learning of isiZulu at primary school level.

The researcher undertakes to assure you of the following:

- To maintain your confidentiality;
- To protect your rights and welfare, i.e. to ensure that no harm comes to you as a result of your participation in this research;
- No manipulation or withholding of information is involved in this study;
- To present information and transcripts used in this research in such a way as to maintain the participant's dignity, and if in doubt to first consult with you;
- To make available to you the final copy of this research publication; and
- The participant is free to withdraw from this research process at any time, if the need should so arise.

It is hoped that education at large will benefit from your input. I acknowledge your sacrifice in volunteering to add to a body of academic knowledge and your perseverance in carrying out this research to its completion.

Yours sincerely

---

S.J. Soni  
Student Number: 20930370

---

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant's name), agree to participate in this study, to add to the body of academic knowledge on the teaching and learning of isiZulu at primary school level.

---

Participant's signature

Date

## LETTER OF CONSENT IN ISIZULU



Mbamb'iqhaza

Ngiyabonga ngokuvuma kwakho ukuba ingxenye yalolu cwaningo lwe: Maye babo! <sup>1</sup> A self study of curriculum design for the teaching and learning of isiZulu as an additional language in primary schools.

Imiphumela yalolu cwaningo izonika abazali, izinhlaka zokuphatha ezikoleni, izigungu zokubuswa kwezikole, abacwaningi nabasebenzela umnyango wezemfundo izindlela zokucaciseleka ngokufundisa nokufunda isiZulu ezikoleni zamabanga aphantsi.

Umcwaningi uzokwenza loku okulandelayo njengesiqiniseko:

- Ukungadaluli igama lobambe iqhaza;
- Ukuvikele amalungelo nenhlalakahle yakho, ukuqiniseka ukuthi awuhlukumezeki ngokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo;
- Akuzobakhona ukusetshenziswa nokufihlwa kolwazi kulolu cwaningo;
- Ukuveza ulwazi nokusetshenziswa kulolu cwaningo ngendlela ezovikela isithunzi sobambe iqhaza, okuyothi uma ngingenasiqiniseko ngixhumane naye;
- Ukukwenzela ikhophi yokucina yokubhalwe kulolu cwaningo;
- Obambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo ukhululekile ukuhoxa kulona noma ngasiphi isikhathi, uma kuvela isidingo;

Ngikholwa ukuthi ezeMfundo zonkana ziyosizakala ngemibono yakho. Ngibonga ukuzinikela kwakho ngokuba ingxenye yokwandisa ulwazi emkhakheni wezemfundo kanye nokubekezela ukwenza lolu cwaningo luphothulwe.

Ozithobayo

---

S.J. Soni

---

Mina, \_\_\_\_\_ (igama lobambe iqhaza), ngiyavuma ukuba ingxenye yalolu cwaningo, nokunenezela kulwazi emkhakheni wezemfundo ngokufundisa nokufunda isiZulu ezikoleni zamabanga aphantsi.

---

Obamb'iqhaza

---

Usuku



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