

PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY IN SUPPORT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

SUMMARY

This study highlights focal issues of literacy and lifelong learning within the context of the formal schooling system. Problems and issues pertaining to policy and practice are examined within the broad framework of a selected set of perspectives on literacy. The nature of the problem of literacy worldwide, and in South Africa in particular, provides sufficient scope to investigate literacy in terms of research, theory and practice. The synergy between curriculum change and social transformation in South Africa which lies embedded within Outcomes-based Education (OBE), creates possibilities for developing functionally literate citizens who are able to negotiate their lives successfully and independently.

The qualitative and interpretative nature of this literature study entails a process of researching and comparing the different levels of literacy within a framework of multiple perspectives. These different perspectives on literacy also highlight contrasting conceptualisations, and consequent definitions of literacy emphasise the importance of both context and content. What being literate means, thus, lies embedded within these conceptualisations. Finding new ways of seeing and doing literacy, in order to improve literacy policies and practices, is at the heart of this research endeavour. The "golden thread" running through the different perspectives signifies the functional role of literacy and suggests a stronger emphasis on viewing literacy as a functional and social practice underlying lifelong learning in the broadest possible sense. Teachers have a cardinal role to play in building capacity in and adding value to the South African citizenry and in supporting learners to develop the necessary functional and critical literacy skills to express themselves adequately on a written and and spoken level.

The objective of this study is to offer a broader conceptualisation of literacy which embraces it as a lifelong endeavour, honed through use and purpose. The significant differences between the traditional and the more modern approaches to literacy development underscore the emphasis on its functionality and potential for human resource development.

All these issues have implications for literacy policy and practice. Acquiring literacy skills entails taking into consideration that: different levels and standards of literacy skills are possible, subject matter differs and different purposes for literacy exist. Only when people are equipped with the personal knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that enable them to live as productive and self-sufficient citizens, able to make informed decisions and responsible choices, can sustainable, social transformation become a reality.

SAMEVATTING

Hierdie studie beklemtoon hoofsaaklik geletterdheid en lewenslange leer binne die konteks van die formele skoolsisteem. Probleme en geskilpunte aangaande beleid en die praktyk word binne die breë raamwerk van 'n geselekteerde stel perspektiewe oor geletterdheid ondersoek. Die aard en omvang van die probleem van geletterdheid, wêreldwyd en in die besonder Suid-Afrika, bied voldoende geleenthede om geletterdheidsbeleid, -teorie en -praktyke te bestudeer. Die sinergie tussen kurrikulumvernuwing en sosiale transformasie in Suid-Afrika, wat ten grondslag van Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys (UGO) lê, skep moontlikhede vir die ontwikkeling van funksioneel geletterde burgers wat in staat is om hul lewens suksesvol en onafhanklik te bestuur.

Die kwalitatiewe en verklarende aard van die literatuurstudie behels 'n vergelykende navorsingsproses wat geletterdheid op verskillende vlakke ondersoek, binne 'n raamwerk van veelvoudige perspektiewe. Hierdie verskillende perspektiewe oor geletterdheid huldig verskillende opvattinge, met die gevolg dat definisies van geletterdheid uiteenlopend van aard is terwyl raakpunte ten opsigte van die belangrikheid van konteks en inhoud sterk na vore gekom het. Wat dit beteken om geletterd te wees is gegrond op hierdie sienswyse. Die ontdekking van nuwe benaderings tot geletterdheid wat mik na die verbetering van geletterdheidsbeleid en -praktyke vorm die kern van hierdie navorsingsproses. Die "goue draad" wat deur die onderskeie perspektiewe loop, dui op die funksionele rol van geletterdheid en beklemtoon geletterdheid as 'n funksionele en sosiale praktyk, wat lewenslange leer ten grondslag lê. Onderwysers het 'n belangrike rol om te speel in die opbou van kapasiteit en toevoeging van waarde tot die burgerskap binne die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, verder ook in die ondersteuning van leerders om die nodige funksionele en kritiese geletterdheidsvaardighede te ontwikkel om te verseker dat hulle hulself toereikend op 'n gesproke en geskrewe vlak kan uitdruk.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om 'n meer uitgebreide beskouing ten opsigte van geletterdheid as 'n lewenslange strewe wat deur gebruik en funksie vasgelê word (op beide gesproke en geskrewe vlakke), daar te stel. Die beduidende verskille tussen die tradisionele en die meer moderne benaderings tot geletterdheidsontwikkeling

beklemtoon funksionaliteit en die potensiaal wat dit inhou vir die ontwikkeling van menslike hulpbronontwikkeling.

Al hierdie aangeleenthede het implikasies vir geletterdheidsbeleid en -praktyk. Die aanleer van geletterdheidsvaardighede noodsaak dat die volgende aspekte in aanmerking geneem word: dat verskillende geletterdheidsvaardigheidvlakke en standarde moontlik is, dat vakinhoud kan verskil en dat verskeie uitkomstes vir geletterdheid bestaan. Slegs wanneer mense met die nodige persoonlike kennis, vaardighede, houdings en waardes toegerus word - wat hulle in staat sal stel om ingeligte besluite en verantwoordelike keuse te maak, kan volgehoue sosiale transformasie 'n realiteit word.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
CLE	Concentrated Language Encounter
CO	Critical Outcome
DoE	Department of Education
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NLEP	National Language in Education Policy
NLP	National Language Project
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PRAESA	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa
SANLI	South African National Literacy Initiative
SAILI	Scientific and Industrial Leadership Initiative
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTEXTUALISATION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Literacy has gradually become a cause for major concern worldwide (Verhoeven & Durgunođlo 1998:x). In every country the nature of literacy problems differs, but what is common is the fact that there is greater awareness of literacy problems and the consequences of being illiterate (Verhoeven & Durgunođlo 1998:ix).

Being literate in the South African context is made more complex by the multilingual nature of the society. At present there are eleven official languages all vying for equal status. Inherited practices governed by the political past have resulted in millions of learners often being confronted with the task of communicating and learning in their second or third language, a situation which creates serious barriers to learning (DoE 2001:18-19). In turn this has served to devalue ethnic literacies and, consequently, has seriously derailed the early learning and emergent literacy development of millions of young learners in this country. To compound the issue there is a legacy of illiteracy amongst the youth and the adult population, which poses a serious threat to economic stability and sustainable development.

In the new South Africa the focus for the last eight years has been on the expansion of provision for primary education and Adult Basic Education as well as the redistribution of educational resources. The ensuing large-scale societal instability as a result of job losses and increased teacher/pupil ratios was followed closely by the restructuring of the curriculum.

Many more children are now attending school. This has translated into overfull classrooms, too few teachers in the populous areas and inadequate resources to provide satisfactory education. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has not left the educational arena unscathed and is impacting on the education system in different ways. Attrition rates are increasing as learners affected by HIV/AIDS are dropping out of school to fend for their younger siblings or are looking after sick parents. Teaching and learning is

being interrupted as teachers infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS are on extended sick leave or are terminally ill.

Learners both at primary and secondary school levels - even those in the previously privileged educational dispensations - have traditionally been schooled through the use of programmes where the focus was on the accumulation of facts and knowledge. The end result is a paper chase for a matric certificate, which merely serves as a gateway or passport, offering learners access to Higher Education and Tertiary facilities. In and of itself the matric (Grade 12) certificate is at present not an endorsement of the critical outcomes, but rather a stepping stone which necessitates continuing training, either formal or vocational. The result of twelve years of schooling sees scores of unskilled school leavers unable to find employment and, most often, requiring extra training to acquire usable and marketable skills or emigration in search of work.

Understanding the bigger picture and purpose of being literate, particularly within the South African context, and how it has impacted historically on the lives of millions of disenfranchised and marginalised South Africans, is at the heart of this study. Every one of these factors plays a role in the state of the education system at present.

1.2 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

My education career has provided me with exposure to literacy support and development projects across the spectrum of formal schooling. My position as policy planner and teacher trainer for learning support and special needs in the mainstream has exposed me to the complex problems which teachers face with regard to reading problems specifically, and language and learning problems in general.

My familiarity with this field was partly responsible for my choosing to do research on the topic of literacy. As Ely (1991:30) so aptly puts it, "topics for study and research questions do not arise out of a vacuum or special choice, but instead mesh intimately with a researcher's deepest professional and social commitments".

My initial interest in literacy was fuelled by my involvement in remedial education and the growing numbers of learners who were not progressing in reading and writing at school. Teachers' understanding of how reading happens and how it impacts on learners' access to learning across the curriculum are also limited.

This research study has challenged my theoretical, procedural and personal knowledge and the exercise has continually forced me, as Green (in Beach, Green, Kamil &

Shanahan 1992:30) puts it, "to move outside of my world so I could reflect back on the world with new eyes, both personally and professionally". More importantly it has raised questions and opened up other perspectives on the issues highlighted here.

1.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The literacy crisis in South Africa has received much attention in the past decade, in particular within the schooling sector, and increasingly in the Adult Education sector. This is reflected in various documents, amongst others the MLA (Monitoring Learning Achievement) Report, November 1999 and the Implementation Plan for Tirisano (January 2001 - December 2004). The National Language in Education Policy (Towards a Language Policy in Education November 1995) focuses primarily on issues of multilingualism and multiculturalism. No explicit policy is in place which operationalises the language policy in literacy terms.

The role of language and literacy is acknowledged as a vehicle for accessing information, and as "the medium for much of the other learning in the curriculum" (Department of Education, July 2001:16). Beyond schools choosing first, second and optional additional languages, no explicit guidelines exist to assist school communities to focus on improving literacy levels in schools. Reactive reading campaigns have been put into place, which in essence do little to change teachers' understanding of literacy learning. Issues around teacher/learner language mismatches, large percentages of second language learners in classes and inappropriate reading approaches remain unresolved and are compounded by a lack of teacher expertise. All these factors serve as substantial learning barriers for large numbers of learners in our schools.

In general, literacy has yet to become an explicit cross-curricular concern - one for which every teacher in the school system takes responsibility (Gambell 1989:274). Teachers beyond the foundation phase have little, if any, training in reading practice and even less knowledge or a broader understanding of the concept of literacy as a means to self-empowerment and active learning. Teachers play a vital role as literacy models, but are often not language proficient beyond the textbook and are often as functionally inept - in terms of their literacy skills - as their learners (Routman 1996:166). Children come to school to learn to read and write, but often this remains an unsuccessful end in itself rather than a means to learning and development (Verhoeven 1994:4). The MLA (Monitoring Learning Achievement) project (Strauss 1999:7) implemented on Grade 4 learners during 1999, reported that only 12,8% of learners

achieved a high level of literacy competency, whilst the majority obtained scores that ranged between 25% and 50%. 13% scored below 25% (Appendix C).

Current curriculum policy for language development focuses on separate language elements e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. Despite indicating that these need to be taught in an integrated way (National Curriculum Statement: Languages, Draft revised 2001:45), no explicit cross-curricular literacy outcomes exist. Literacy continues, therefore, to play an implicit rather than explicit role within the general school curriculum. Even though it is referred to in the new literature on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), classrooms in general reveal little change in the reading practices of old. There is little evidence that teachers are approaching reading from a more functional perspective. Teacher-training has neither equipped nor empowered teachers to take on this task, and hence they continue to consider the problem as independent of their own teaching responsibilities and obligations - and more of an issue related to learners' socio-economic backgrounds, poor language development, social and cultural deprivation and illiterate parents and communities.

1.4 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

A plethora of reading approaches exists and many teachers have retained old reading teaching practices. Consequently, language becomes a formidable learning barrier for many learners and results in classrooms full of second language learners unable to understand or access the curriculum effectively enough to manage their learning independently (Verhoeven & Aarts 1998:118). The language teacher remains primarily responsible for language and literacy development and "... language arts teachers have developed their meanings for literacy whilst other subject area specialists have very different meanings for what constitutes literacy within their respective subject areas" (Gambell 1989:269).

Literacy as a social practice has value in that it allows the literate individual the privilege of greater understanding and access to information and expression. For literacy to be functional in the true sense of the word, to allow the learner access to the rest of the curriculum and to serve a lifelong learning purpose, it needs to be constructed within the contexts in which it operates. Gambell (1989:273) maintains "the school's contribution to the literate graduate is one of ensuring his or her capability to access information and transmit it in different situations or different audiences for different purposes".

The role of literacy within the bigger picture of nation building and lifelong learning, towards the development of a democratic society, cannot be underestimated. It must be acknowledged that this process begins in school and that, as educators, we are all responsible for helping to transform the society by empowering learners to be able to think critically and negotiate their worlds through active participation (Powell 1999:22).

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focuses on the following problem: exploring the conceptual parameters of several perspectives on literacy in the context of lifelong learning.

1.6 THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to address the problem stated earlier (see 1.5), namely, that we need to have a common conceptualisation of the transformational role of literacy in the development of our citizens, the following primary objectives have been identified for this study:

- to investigate a range of perspectives on literacy and locate these within the South African context
- to provide a conceptual framework for understanding the concept of literacy for lifelong learning.

Secondary objectives which will be alluded to, but which cannot be investigated in depth within the limited scope of this study include:

- the identification of possible criteria to be used in policy and practice for developing literacy for lifelong learning
- problems within Adult Basic Education.

The following key questions related to literacy policy and practice have been identified and will be addressed in this study:

- how can the approaches to and strategies for literacy development be modified to ensure that value is added to the South African citizenry?
- how does literacy policy ensure that the focus on literacy becomes a means to lifelong learning and not a formal learning outcome with no relevance or post-school purpose?

- how can all educators be equipped to enable them to assume an accountability and co-responsibility for literacy development?

1.7 AN EXPLANATION OF RELEVANT TERMS

In order to familiarise the reader with the scope of this study, the following pertinent terms of reference used in this research study will now be clarified:

1.7.1 Literacy

The increasing societal concern about problems of literacy development has given way to new definitions and models of literacy (Verhoeven 1994:3). To be literate has become more important as technological and social demands on the individual increase, and his/her economic sustainability resides more in his/her own empowerment than in formal employment opportunities.

Street (1993:5) distinguishes between two models of literacy, namely the autonomous model and the ideological model. The autonomous model defines literacy in technical terms, independent of social context and intrinsic in character. This traditionally narrow psycho-educational or "schooled" view of literacy rests more on the notion of neutral skills of reading and writing (Powell 1999:5).

In contrast, the ideological model concentrates on the specific social practices of reading and writing and stresses the significance of the socialisation process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for participants (Street 1984:2). In redefining literacy, ethnographic and socio-linguistic researchers have begun to focus more heavily on the purposes of literacy and the contexts in which they operate. The social perspective on literacy links it to social advancement and views it as "more than skills, abilities and competencies ... a set of social and political practices" (Brodkey 1992:299).

Broadly-speaking, Powell (1999:8) outlines three different conceptualisations of literacy. There are those who define being literate as anything from:

- the ability to decode print into speech
- the ability to acquire meaning from written text
- to the ability to read and write at a specified proficiency level. The discussion in Chapter 3 (3.5) expands on this in detail.

The role which literacy plays in empowering individuals to participate fully in their worlds is gaining recognition. Boyd (in Fleischer & Schaafsma 1998:xiv) alludes to the fact that being literate

"is not merely the capacity to understand the conceptual content of writings and utterances, but the ability to participate fully in a set of social and intellectual practices. It is not passive, but active, not imitative but creative, for it includes participation in the activities it makes possible."

The following definitions will serve as the frame of reference for this study:

- UNESCO's 1962 definition [in Harley, Aitchison, Lyster, & Land, (1996:18); Hutton (1992:10); Baynam (1995:8) and Wolfendale & Topping (1996:168)]

"A person is literate when he (sic) has acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable him to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group and community and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic make it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development."

- UNESCO's current set of definitions (in Bhola 1994:29) distinguishes between basic and functional literacy in the following way:

*"A person is **basically** (my emphasis and addition) literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life."*

"A person is illiterate who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life."

*"A person is **functionally** (my emphasis) literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community's development."*

- The International Symposium for Literacy in Persepolis 1975 (Bataille 1976:273) defined it as follows:

"Literacy is not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it and of defining the aims of authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and

human relations. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right."

- The Australian Council for Adult Literacy (in Baynham 1995:9) suggests that:

"Literacy involves the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking; it incorporates numeracy. It includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia, the goal is an active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, in order to participate effectively in society."

Given the responsive nature of literacy, no single definition will be identified for the purpose of this study. I have chosen to highlight a few definitions from the literature which capture the essence of the complexity and multi-faceted nature of this concept, and which go beyond the narrow definitions which equate literacy simply with reading and writing.

1.7.2 Lifelong learning

By definition, the philosophy of lifelong learning has to be embraced by all sectors of society if it is to be realised. Lifelong learning demands social and political change and does not settle for superficial panaceas and fix-it programmes which maintain the status quo (Longworth & Davies 1996:10).

Elliot (1999:25-26) distinguishes between strong and weak models of lifelong learning. The strong model envisages not only after-school learning opportunities for adults and older learners to re-engage with both formal and informal learning opportunities, but more importantly seeks to change the nature of primary and compulsory education itself. In contrast, the weak model of lifelong learning, or adult education, involves "second-chance education for adult returners", essentially a deficit model which aims to "plug gaps" and focuses on the basics of reading and writing.

As with literacy, lifelong learning has social, economic, political, personal and educational dimensions which develop not in a fragmented or linear way, but rather unfold in an integrated and complex way within the many learning contexts in which individuals find themselves. The all-encompassing definition from the European Lifelong Learning Initiative (ELLI) is inclusive of all these dimensions of learning and development. The following summary of the aspects embraced by the term are cited more comprehensively in Longworth and Davies (1996:21-23) as:

"the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments."

- *"the development of human potential"* takes an optimistic view of human development and places emphasis on optimising the learning potential of every individual.
- *"continuously"* has implications for the appropriate provision of and reasonable accessibility to learning opportunities for a wide diversity of learners regardless of age, creed, gender or ability.
- *"supportive"* refers to the aspects of the system such as an inclusive philosophy, support staff provision, a learner-friendly assessment system and success-orientated learning environments focused on learner needs.
- *"process"* highlights the fact that learning is a personal activity which unfolds over time within or without a supportive group environment.
- *"stimulates and empowers"* implies more than the provision of services, and instead actively promotes learning and places the power and responsibility for learning in the hands of the individual.
- *"knowledge"* refers to the interpretation of information towards making personal meaning.
- *"values"* embody attitudes, both individual and systemic, which ensure a positive approach to continued learning throughout life.
- *"skills"* demonstrate learning in action and reflect levels of enablement.
- *"understanding"* refers to personal comprehension which results from the application of knowledge and skills and culminates in feelings of personal empowerment.
- *"throughout their lifetimes"* applies from cradle to grave and involves both formal and informal or incidental learning.
- *"confidence, creativity and enjoyment"* motivates learning and makes it worthwhile.
- *"all roles, circumstances and environments"* emphasises both the educational and social aspects of learning and covers both leisure and work.

Lifelong learning is referred to, in most literature and research, within the framework of adult learning (Rassool 1999; Longworth & Davies 1996). In terms of the continuum of

life, however, lifelong learning stretches from cradle to grave and extends to include learners of all ages. It is grounded in an:

"optimistic viewpoint of human capacity, based on the belief that all of us, irrespective of background, genetic make-up, environmental development, creed, colour or nationality, can make quantum leaps in the achievement of our own human potential - and that we would, if we had the opportunity, and experienced joy in doing so" (Longworth & Davies 1996:22).

This principle is echoed in the Education WHITE PAPER 6 on Inclusive Education (2001:16) and focuses on optimising the learning potential of all learners i.e. young and old, developed and developing, gifted and intellectually challenged. Lifelong learning has a pervasive nature and is more a way of life than something which is done formally in relation only to education and training (Longworth & Davies 1996:23).

1.7.3 Research perspectives

In the opinion of Kamil (1992:141-142), a perspective does not have to be as explicit as a theory. Perspectives are usually also more inclusive than paradigms and generally describe what the researcher believes, in the most global sense, about the phenomenon to be studied. He identifies the following issues which perspectives usually address:

- the nature of the reality as it relates to the acquisition, use and instruction of literacy and literacy skills
- the nature, acquisition and structure of general knowledge about literacy i.e. how individuals come to know about literacy
- the nature, acquisition and structure of theory concerning literacy
- the consequences of individual differences (i.e. individual group differences) for literacy use, acquisition and instruction.

A diverse set of research perspectives is available today to frame explorations into the nature of literacy and language studies. The existence of so many perspectives can be both a boon and a problem (Green 1992:19-20). Green defines any perspective as:

"a keyhole or looking-glass through which a researcher examines a phenomenon. The lens is selective and does not capture the totality of the phenomenon. A perspective enables the researcher to deliberately select a focus, to define the nature and the boundaries of the phenomenon, to pose specific questions, and to design ways of studying the phenomenon. From this viewpoint, no single perspective is seen as adequate to capture, describe or explicate all aspects of the phenomenon".

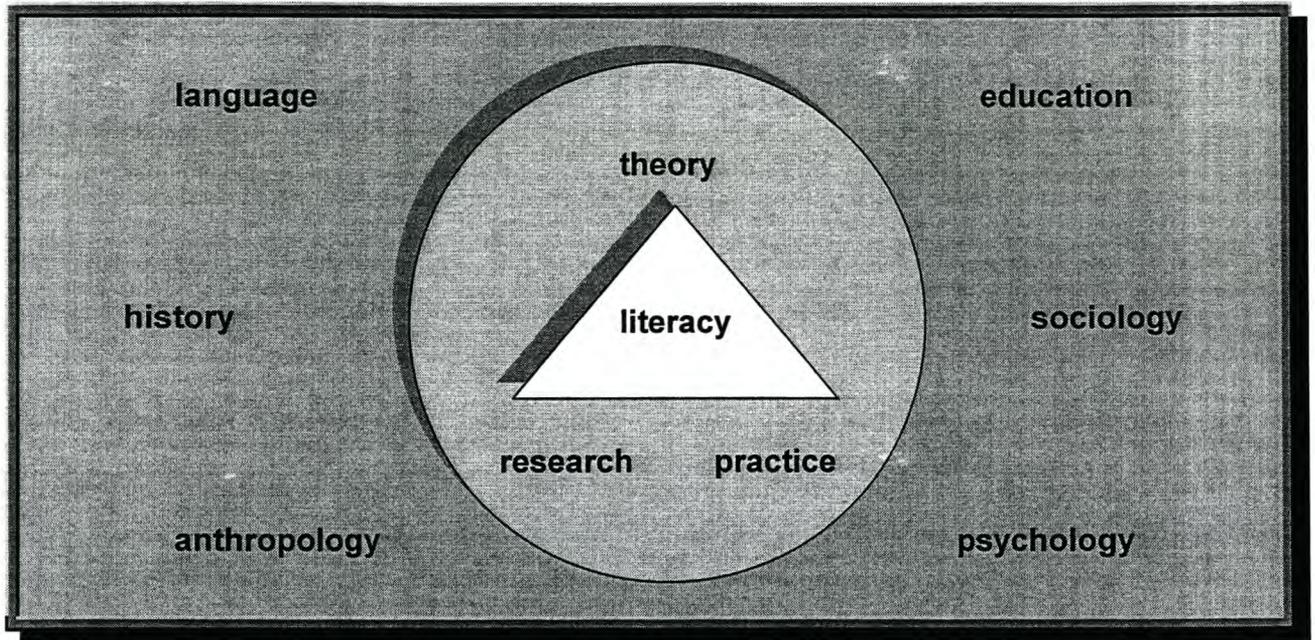
It has been useful to use this particular focus on literacy for this study in order to remind myself, as a researcher, that each perspective chosen is but one view of the whole concept. This has allowed me the space to hold back my perspective and judgement in order to see other viewpoints.

The product of this research is, therefore, a collective, cross-disciplinary perspective on what I have read and learnt about literacy in the process of conducting this literature study. This study does not endeavour to offer every perspective on literacy, say everything there is to say about literacy research, nor resolve every issue raised in the process of analysing and comparing these perspectives.

This research serves more as a platform from which to engage with specific aspects of literacy development, to give a richer and more descriptive picture of the concept of literacy. Beach (1992:106) maintains that a multidisciplinary perspective allows the researcher to adopt a range of stances on literacy research, namely:

- the textual stance - the participant's knowledge of discourse organisation
- the social stance - the social purposes, motives, roles, contexts and uses of discourse
- the cultural stance - the participant's cultural attitudes, values and assumptions
- the field/disciplinary stance - the participant's knowledge of topics and conventions unique to a field or discipline.

Heap (1992:35) makes mention of the complexity of literacy phenomena, and expresses "the hope ... that the use of multiple perspectives will tell us more than we could know about literacy from any one perspective". These perspectives are naturally interrelated and overlap - hence the reference to "cross-disciplinary" perspectives (Baynham 1995:16; Barton 1994:33). Cross-perspectives or partnerships between and across disciplines (Figure 1.1) are illustrated and described by Barton and Ivanic (in Baynham 1995:16) as follows and are discussed in full in Chapter 3 (3.4).

Figure 1.1: Cross-disciplinary perspectives in the study of literacy

(Sourced from Barton & Ivanic in Baynham 1995:16)

- The *educational perspective* looks at the role of instruction in the acquisition of reading and writing skills.
- The *anthropological perspective* looks at relational issues between literacy, power and emancipation.
- The *sociological perspective* looks at the influence of socio-cultural issues like multilingualism on the development of literacy as well as the social and transactional nature of literacy (Kamil 1992:169).
- The *language/linguistic perspective* looks at the social value of spoken and written language.
- The *psychological perspective* looks at the influence of the home environment and parental input on literacy and language development and also at the issue of the motivation to learn to read and write (Verhoeven & Durgunoğlu 1998:ix).
- The *historical perspective* is pertinent especially in terms of localising the debate around literacy within the South African context, and looks particularly at issues of disempowerment and political hegemony and how illiteracy and poverty interface. These are discussed in full in Chapter 3 (3.4).

1.8 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Reflected within the parameters of the above-mentioned perspectives are assumptions about the world and how it works. Qualitative research endeavours to investigate and describe the nature of these assumptions through findings in qualitative terms. This study focuses on the development of literacy theory and takes a comparative look at various perspectives on literacy using different definitions of the term.

Two assumptions outlined by Creswell (1994:145) underpin a qualitative research methodology and serve to strengthen and thicken the "perspective assumptions". Firstly, as the qualitative researcher, I am the primary instrument for data collection, analysis and construction and am more concerned with describing the process through words and pictures than reporting on the product in quantitative/statistical terms. Secondly, qualitative research mostly involves fieldwork, which entails direct contact with those being researched. I strive to understand and make meaning by an inductive process and thus build on my understanding incrementally.

The qualitative research design chosen for this study is therefore motivated by the strength which the comprehensiveness of perspective offers me as the researcher (Babbie & Mouton 2001:309). Research into the meanings of literacy needed a flexible and open process that would allow for the interpretation of models in order for new understanding to unfold in the process. The context of my own educational experience serves in turn to locate this endeavour in the local educational context and root it firmly in present day South Africa. The research design for this study is outlined graphically in Chapter 2 (Table 2.1).

1.8.1 The research method

Since qualitative research is an emergent process, the procedures for going about this type of study are not as precisely or rigorously stipulated as with quantitative research. The type of literature study used here to investigate literacy theory (over the past few years) is described by Cooper (in Creswell 1994:24) as a "combination of a theoretical and methodological review". The former focuses specifically on theory which relates to the problem being researched, whilst the latter focuses specifically on understanding different models of literacy theory. In this way the heuristic process of looking comparatively at contrasting models, approaches and definitions of literacy in the literature selected for this study is set in motion.

1.8.2 Data collection, analysis and construction

Typical of qualitative research is the characteristic emergent nature of data analysis which happens simultaneously with data collection and interpretation (Creswell 1994:155). In order to reduce the information to categories and patterns, the constant comparative method, typical of grounded theory, has been used for this study. Data construction occurs in the process of data collection and analysis. During this research procedure I make use of "constant comparisons within and between levels of conceptualisation" (Merriam 1998:159), which allow for the development of a process of defining and redefining the elements of literacy between and within different literacy models. I have then recontextualised these findings within the larger consolidated context of lifelong learning.

According to Creswell (1994:148), data collection involves deciding on the parameters of the study, collecting the information through various means such as interviews, documents and observations, and recording the information. Since this is a literature study by definition, the collection of data has been limited to reviewing publications such as books, journal articles, theses, documents and reports.

1.8.3 Delimitation

The emphasis which this study places on gaining a better understanding of the notion of lifelong learning from the perspective of formal education, has allowed me the opportunity to investigate the specific implications this has for the development of literacy in the General Education and Training Band (GET). The specific focus of this study which is aimed at literacy within the context of the school system, in particular the GET Band i.e. Grades R - 9, serves to delimit the parameters of this investigation and to argue more strongly for an explicit focus on literacy development throughout the formal schooling years in preparation for effective lifelong learning. The study scrutinises the relationship between literacy and lifelong learning and attempts to find common ground using the critical and developmental outcomes as points of departure.

1.8.4 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study rests on data triangulation, within the spectrum of perspectives offered, of possible views on literacy as a phenomenon as well as the documentational extensiveness of the literature study. My role as the researcher formed a cardinal part of this undertaking and included the assimilation and integration of my ideas, thoughts and assumptions with the documentational evidence which I

collected and maintaining throughout an honesty which lends credibility to this research endeavour.

Ely (1991:158) suggests that one criterion for checking credibility is to collect data until they start to repeat themselves - a sign that you have the "necessary information". This is by no means an exhaustive view on the subject of literacy but, for the purpose of this study, it offers the necessary scope for me to investigate the nature and anomalies of literacy theory and practice.

1.9 THE CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study to follow consists of a further four chapters. In brief:

- *Chapter 2* is an overview of the research design and overall qualitative research methodology of this study
- *Chapter 3* is the literature study of literacy theory and practice
- *Chapter 4* explores literacy in support of the principle of lifelong learning
- *Chapter 5* examines the implications for policy and practice. Conclusions and recommendations for further research are also outlined. This is followed by a comprehensive bibliography and the relevant appendices referred to in each chapter.

1.10 A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Chapter 1 fulfils several functions. It serves to outline the broad parameters of this study and at the same time alerts the reader to the focal issues of literacy and lifelong learning within the context of the formal schooling system. It introduces the reader to a selected set of perspectives on literacy. In outlining in broad strokes the nature of the problem of literacy within the bigger picture, as well as within the South African scenario specifically, it offers the necessary scope for me to investigate the nature of literacy research, theory and practice. Finding new ways of seeing and doing literacy and offering ideas for improving literacy policies and practices are the ultimate aims of this endeavour. In conclusion, it explains my stance whilst conducting this research and contextualises the study within my personal frame of reference.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research is in and of itself also a personal journey. This research project has unfolded dynamically in tandem with my understanding of literacy. By definition, thus, the qualitative nature of this literature study has created the space for looking both at alternative perspectives on literacy, as well as focusing on different approaches to research.

This chapter aims to describe the process of utilising a literature study as an end in itself - as a method of research, and clarifies my choice of an eclectic mix of complementary and sometimes contradictory perspectives on literacy, rather than on a particular theory as my frame of reference. Since comparative analysis is used as a research methodology, the process of data production happens continually throughout the literature reviewing process and is continuing even after completion.

2.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In qualitative research, the research design serves as a flexible guide, outline or route of the research process ahead, allowing the necessary scope to modify plans and adapt methodology as needed (Babbie & Mouton 2001:309; Le Grange 2001:78). Deciding on the design of this study was defined in part by my experiences in the field of special needs which raised questions around disempowerment concerning:

- a lack of effective educational provision
- low levels of teacher empowerment
- unequal educational opportunities for many learners.

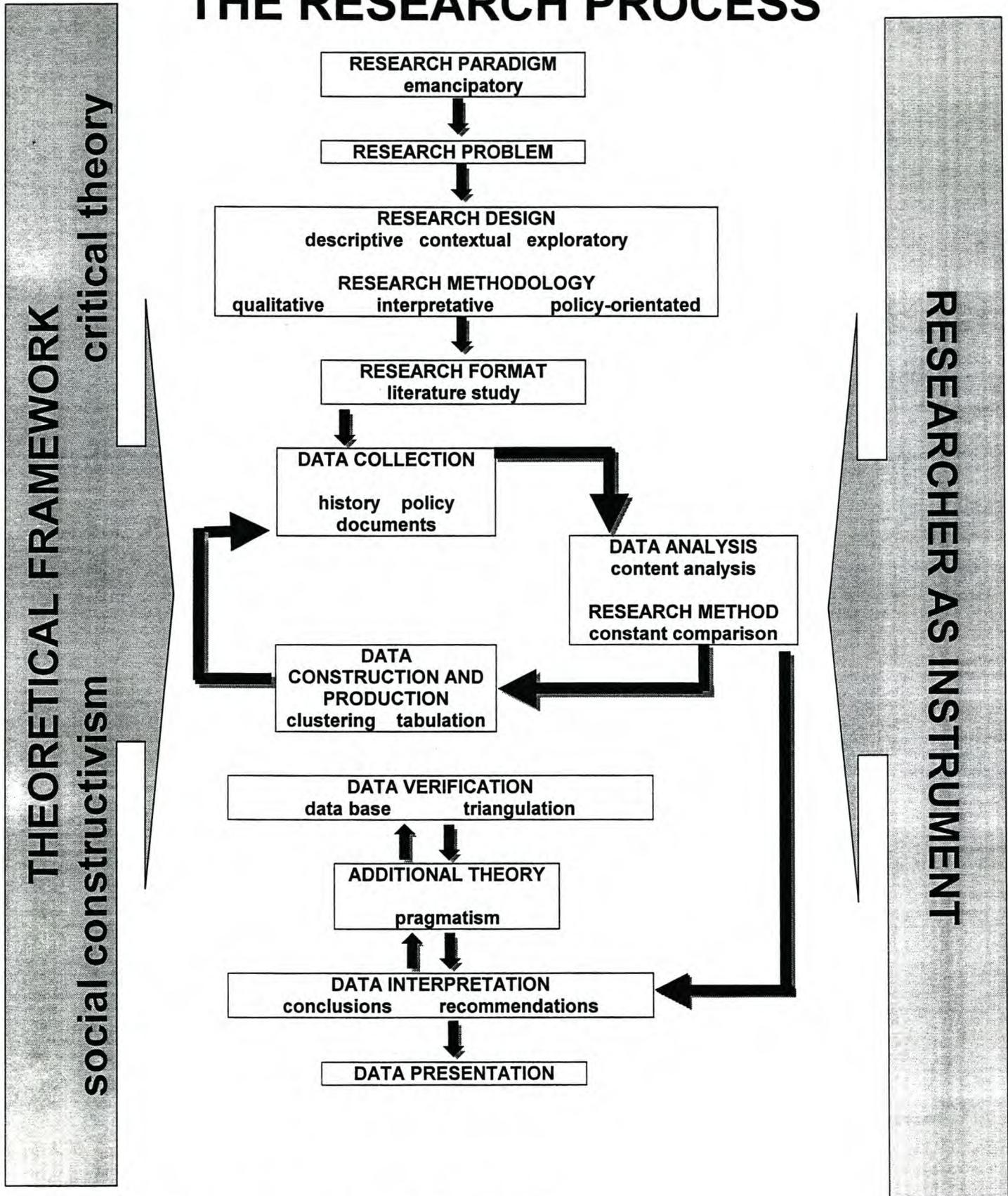
The process of research has nurtured my thinking about the nature of research itself. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:309), the examination of social processes over time necessitates a deeper understanding, which only qualitative research can offer. The assumptions underpinning qualitative research are identified by Creswell (1994:5-7) as:

- *ontological* assumptions which view reality as subjective, multiple and seen by participants in a study
- *epistemological* assumptions which focus on the relationship between the researcher and that which is being researched
- *axiological* assumptions which allow for the values and biases of the researcher to be reported
- *rhetoric* assumptions which illustrate the distinctiveness of the qualitative paradigm in the use of the language which is constructed in such a way as to emphasise the qualitative nature of the research process. The language is more personal, informal and often in the first person and based on definitions that emerge during the course of the study
- *methodological* assumptions which emerge out of an inductive form of logic whereby categories emerge from the data. This in turn provides "context-bound" information which leads to patterns or theories that help to explain the phenomenon under scrutiny.

I chose therefore to undertake a proverbial "paper trail" first and foremost, which would immerse me in the field of literacy policy and research and offer me a wide perspective on the topic. Table 2.1 illustrates a schematic representation of the research design and process undertaken here.

Table 2.1

THE RESEARCH PROCESS



(Sourced and adapted from Goodyer 1997:43)

2.2.1 The research process

The focus of this study is primarily interpretative in its search for meanings, but also acknowledges its emancipatory intent in its attempts to offer solutions around strategising for functional and pragmatic changes to literacy practice. It has therefore been necessary for me to remain open and flexible to the ever-evolving and emergent nature of this process as I build up my knowledge and understanding of literacy from a range of perspectives (Mertens 1998:36).

Where post-positivist researchers postulate a hypothesis based on previous research, this interpretative/constructivist process has entailed the re-examination of literature as well as the addition of new literature as the process has unfolded over time. Mertens (1998:37) outlines the literature review process in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Steps in the literature review process

STEPS IN THE LITERATURE REVIEW PROCESS	
Step 1:	Identify a research topic
Step 2:	Review secondary resources to get an overview of the topic
Step 3:	Develop a search strategy
Step 4:	Conduct searches and select titles
Step 5:	Obtain sources
Step 6:	Read and prepare bibliographic information and notes
Step 7:	Evaluate the research reports
Step 8:	Analyse the research findings and synthesise the results
Step 9:	Use the synthesis to develop a conceptual framework, research questions and /or hypotheses

(Adapted from Mertens 1998:37)

The basis for this study then, is in fact, a synthesised view of the findings of my literature search. There are two main options for the synthesis of research studies in Mertens' (1998:49) view, namely narrative and statistical methods, with the former being most appropriate for a qualitative design.

Collectively thus, the literature study undertaken here serves to establish a historical background to literacy research and simultaneously provides a vision of the need for changes to literacy practice as well as scope for additional research. It has enabled me to develop a conceptual framework for the research (Mertens 1998:53).

2.2.2 An emancipatory paradigm

Critical theory, or emancipatory research (Mertens 1998:15) is the backdrop to this study with its emphasis on ideological critique of power, privilege and oppression in areas of educational practice (Merriam 1998:4). Mertens distances herself from the label "critical theory" because of its close association with Marxist theory and makes a suggestion that the term "emancipatory paradigm" or "theory" is used in its place. For the purpose of this study I shall use the terms interchangeably to draw the parameters of this critique closer.

It is important to understand the complexities of being or becoming literate, not only from an educational perspective, but more importantly from a social, cultural and political perspective (Rassool1999:1). The assumptions and value judgements on which understandings of literacy purpose, policy and practice within the new information age are based play an important part in how we approach both educational research and development.

Critical/emancipatory research goes on to maintain a watchful eye on the assumptions underpinning the basis for research, and consistently asks questions about the validity of the research at hand, from the vantage point of those being researched (Merriam 1998:6). In plain terms, critical/emancipatory research has to translate into practice rather than merely aim to produce a theory.

Waghid (2001:54) maintains that theory, which culminates from research, should ideally serve to shape the policies which are produced, in order to change situations that are currently not serving the interests of the very people one is hoping to empower. Understanding the bigger picture and purpose of being literate, particularly within the South African context, and how it has impacted historically on the lives of millions of disenfranchised and marginalised South Africans, is at the heart of this study. Finding new ways of seeing and doing literacy and offering ideas for improving literacy policies and practices are the ultimate aims of this endeavour.

Critical theory provides the political impetus which is necessary to ensure that educational reform and change is essentially in the interests of democracy and political reform. It aims to go beyond interpretative theory, which culminates in describing the social world we live in (Waghid 2001:54). In Freirian terms this means that more than merely research needs to be done - goals and objectives have to include action plans which spell out how the implementation of these actions will be realised (praxis). Critical

literacy theory therefore must "challenge taken-for granted assumptions about social, economic and political inequities in our society" (Powell 1999:120).

In order to do this responsibly, I have located this study within a framework that conceptualises education both as a social and political institution in which learners are offered the opportunity to think about, and are empowered to influence their own lives. Emancipatory literacy pedagogy has this capacity as it offers learners the chance (and the tools) to understand and transform their relationships with the world and others (Freire 1985:14; Popkewitz 1984:45). This can only occur in classroom spaces that are concerned primarily with legitimising the knowledge and experiences through which learners give meaning to their lives (Giroux 1988:164).

"It is an effort to work within educational institutions and other media to raise questions about inequalities of power, about the false myths of opportunity and merit for many students, and about the way belief systems become internalised to the point where individuals and groups abandon the very aspiration to question or change their lot in life" (Burbules & Berk 1999:50).

2.2.3 A pragmatic perspective

Literacy enquiry necessitates a broad-spectrum worldview that reflects its social, cultural, educational and political dimensions (Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman 2000:13). This broader perspective to education in pragmatism stems from philosophy, and is described as "a new way of looking at old problems" (Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman 2000:17).

The spirit of the pragmatist tradition lies in the fact that it implores one to undertake meaningful research and conduct enquiry to useful ends. Busying oneself with answering important questions, rather than finding ways to defend one's theoretical position is far more constructive (Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman 2000:18). The problems that pragmatists address by default then contribute to a more democratic way of life. The problem of literacy, which is the focus of this study, justifies a pragmatic approach in that it is socially situated and a legitimate focus of enquiry within the context of transformational changes taking place in South Africa.

Responsible literacy enquiry should impact on pedagogy and on solving problems at grassroots level in the field of educational practice and social reform. This perspective offers literacy enquiry a means for getting "on with the important work of defining the literacy problems we need to solve, determine how best to solve these problems, and

ensure that the results inform practice" (Mosenthal in Dillon, O'Brien & Heilman 2000:20).

It is my intention to keep the perspective of pragmatism in mind and to use it as a lens through which to evaluate my findings consistently, and through reflexivity, to check continually whether I am on track.

2.3 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology according to Harding (in Le Grange 2001:70) is the theory of knowledge and the interpretative framework guiding a particular project. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research as qualified by Merriam (1998:6), is its primary concern with the "lived realities" which individuals construct as they participate and engage with their social worlds - from *their* perspective.

2.3.1 A qualitative approach

Qualitative research is distinguished by Babbie and Mouton (2001:309) from more empirical, qualitative studies in the following ways:

- research takes place in natural settings and usually involves fieldwork
- a qualitative research design emphasises process rather than outcome
- the role player's perspective is emphasised
- the primary aim is in-depth descriptions and understandings
- understanding social action in terms of its specific context
- the qualitative researcher is seen as the primary instrument in the research process.

Creswell (1994:145) adds to this the notion that qualitative research makes use, primarily, of inductive research strategies whereby the researcher builds towards theory from understanding, rather than a search for theory to explain data. The decision to undertake a qualitative research study as opposed to a quantitative one, was a personal preference. A key factor was that as a researcher, I am most comfortable within the framework of qualitative research and attach value to the subjective, value-laden learnings which such research offers.

"One of the dilemmas of educational studies is that often the more rigorous and scientific research becomes, the less it is connected to human experiences" (Connolly & Clandinin 1999:132).

A second motivation for choosing a qualitative research design lies in its strength when it comes to the comprehensiveness of perspective which it offers me (Babbie & Mouton 2001:309). Research into the meanings of literacy needed a flexible, and open process that has allowed me to explore possible notions, understandings, consequences and implications within the research process. The literature study outlined in Chapter 3, offers a broad scope on literacy from several perspectives and entailed a scouring of documents, texts and articles.

This data gathering process involved a parallel process of data collection, analysis and construction as I selected and discarded source material. It was a natural process of interpretation and the production of new understandings as I broadened the scope of the reading material and created integrated conceptualisations of literacy and lifelong learning. The very choice of source material already involved decision making about the scope of this study - in essence, a broad perspective and critical look at the research problem at hand. The framework of perspectives on literacy, which the literature study provided, gave me the scope within which to investigate the implications that this has had for local literacy learning contexts.

2.3.2 Policy-orientated research

Policy-orientated research is by definition applied, purposeful research and runs the risk of being uncritical and restrictive in that it does not question theory and dominant assumptions about educational practice. I therefore use it in this study, and understand it to consist "of careful systematic attempts to understand the educational process, and through understanding, to improve its efficiency" (Nisbet 1999:65).

The nature of this study is both critical and interpretative in its endeavour to offer new perspectives - through my lens - on issues of literacy policy and practices. Research is needed which is instrumental in its function in order to make a difference and to culminate in policy change and development, and ultimately to effect change within the classroom. Nisbet (1999:64) maintains that policy-orientated research is designed very specifically for this purpose and outlines its benefits in the following ways:

"... it operates within the context of accepted theory; it challenges established policy; it informs policy decisions; it is responsive; it addresses practice; it assists implementation; and finally it evaluates effects".

2.4 THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research method is described by Harding (in Le Grange (2001:70), as "techniques for gathering empirical evidence". Kerlinger (in Popkewitz 1984:16) outlines his definition of methods of inquiry as "procedures in which beliefs have no effect. The character of method ... remains entirely independent of our beliefs, perceptions, biases, values, attitudes and emotions".

In contrast, Popkewitz (1984:16) argues that "the procedures of enquiry contain assumptions about social relationships which are interrelated with theory, human purpose and social affairs". The techniques I have utilised in this study support Popkewitz's stance and reflect a combination of strategies of enquiry which have been influenced by the contexts and purposes of literacy. Consequently, I have drawn conclusions based on my personal assumptions and understanding of the field of literacy theory and practice.

2.4.1 A literature study

The literature refers mostly to a literature study or review as a part of, but not as the core method of data production in most studies (Merriam 1998:48; Silverman 2000:226). Mertens (1998:34-35) is of the opinion that there are two main reasons for conducting literature reviews: to conduct primary research oneself, or as an end in itself. In primary research the purpose of a literature review is to provide the reader with an overall framework of where this study fits into the "big picture" of the topic from existing studies, explain the topic at hand and build a rationale for the study.

In contrast, a literature study as an end in itself, serves to inform practice and/or provide a clearer and more grounded understanding of what is known about the topic. The literature study should serve as a summarised critique that integrates and pulls together important ideas and thinking in the field. I then add my voice as researcher, by putting this into a narrative or dialogic essay organised around pertinent issues and themes in the literature and showing my understanding of the problem at hand (Merriam 1998:55; Silverman 2000:226).

Mouton (2001:180) mentions the limitations of doing a literature review or study in that it "can at best only summarise and organise the existing scholarship. Even a critical review of the literature cannot produce new, or validate existing, empirical insights".

The purpose of a literature review can be debated, but depends largely on the nature of the study and should essentially:

- emerge as a combination of knowledge with critical thought (Silverman 2000:226)
- provide a historical backdrop to the study, be an impetus for new research as well as enable me, as the researcher, to develop a conceptual foundation for the study (Mertens 1998:53).

An interpretative literature study provides me with the scope to investigate my understanding of literacy in its broadest sense and assists me in making sense of the different literacy practices and contexts. In essence, then, the process of finding common ground as well as fundamental differences in the ways in which literacy is defined will assist me in looking more specifically at questioning the role it plays across the curriculum and also in terms of lifelong learning.

2.4.2 Data collection

By the very nature of a literature review, data collection and analysis is a simultaneous and cumulative process (Ely 1991:86; Merriam 1998:155), guided by questions, educated hunches and emergent findings (Merriam 1998:120). In order to be able to contextualise the debate within the bigger framework of literacy research and practice, a literature review that offers a wide scope of perspectives on the topic of literacy - both in terms of contexts as well as theoretical positions, is necessary.

Library research is not very different to fieldwork. Both involve tapping into the insights, opinions and perspectives of others. According to Glaser and Strauss (in Merriam 1998:120):

"When someone stands in the library stacks, he is, metaphorically speaking, surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee".

It is my responsibility as the primary instrument of investigation to determine as much as possible about the primary and secondary documentary sources which I have used throughout this study. These include mainly books, theses, educational journals, National Education policy, curriculum policy and implementation documents. Utilising documentary material for qualitative research has, according to Merriam (1998:126), several benefits:

- it offers stability
- it is relatively unobtrusive
- it grounds an investigation in the context of the problem
- it is unaffected by the research process.

2.4.3 Data analysis and construction

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data, which involves reducing, consolidating and interpreting what other people have said and what I, as the researcher, have seen and read (Merriam 1999:178). Grounded theory is therefore interactional by nature and involves a non-linear process of making comparisons of the data collected and the analyses drafted at different levels of complexity (Mertens 1998:352). The interpretation and construction of new data can occur at different levels (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Different levels of data interpretation and reconstruction

LEVELS OF ANALYSIS	
Descriptive account:	compresses data and links the information gathered into a narrative which conveys the meaning the researcher has derived from the study.
Categories:	a step-by-step process of constructing conceptual categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern and commonality or "golden thread" which stands separate from the data itself.
Theory:	a speculative mode of thinking - developing a model or generating theory that allows the researcher to draw inferences about future activity.

(Sourced from Mertens 1998:352)

Mertens (1998:352) joins Glaser and Strauss (in Merriam 1998:70) in describing grounded theory as "a general methodology for developing theory" that "is grounded in current data collection and analysis efforts". What makes grounded theory distinctive is its emergent nature as data is systematically weighed against previous data using the constant comparative method.

Using Kaestle's framework (1990:66) for categorising definitions of literacy, I embarked on a journey of selecting all the definitions I could find of literacy. Using the constant comparative method as a means to analyse the data, I attempted to find commonalities and differences between the different definitions, which proved an erroneous task as context and purpose specificity made it difficult to de-contextualise the definitions. Since I was thus unable to use them as points of reference, I abandoned this process and embarked on a different journey. Using Rassool's categorisation of literacy levels (1999:45), I proceeded to analyse and interpret the concept of literacy by looking at definitions and practices in relation to lifelong learning and the critical outcomes as outlined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

2.4.4 The researcher as instrument

In my position as learning support planner and policy developer within the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) from 1996 - 2000, I was instrumental in starting a literacy project in 1998, which was a joint venture between the WCED and Rotary International. The pilot project started off in ten schools and has cascaded into more schools since 2001. The project is still unfolding with 100 more schools being added each year over a five-year period. The pilot school project was completed in April 2002 with the training of the intermediate phase teachers.

This project led me directly to the question of how literacy is viewed within the school system, and I came to realise that teachers generally have different ideas of what being "literate" entails. Different notions exist and different viewpoints are contested between the phases. Little conversation between the teachers along the continuum from Grades 1 to 7 or Grades 8 to 12 really takes place.

Over the last ten years my specific interest in literacy issues has provided me with a broad personal network which I consult on a regular basis in terms of locating my understandings - the most vital being my continuing studies which provide the theoretical framework for understanding practices in the field. Attending conferences and being involved with ongoing teacher education and curriculum training has ensured that I remain engaged with new understanding.

The role which I play as researcher in this study is heightened and emphasised by its qualitative nature. One of the inherent characteristics of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam 1998:7).

Although no participants were involved directly in this study, personal qualities such as my being highly intuitive, able to tolerate ambiguity, a sensitive observer, a good communicator and flexible (Merriam 1998:20-21; Ely 1991:132-136), have been characteristics that I have had to draw on in this introspective process. These traits have stood me in good stead whilst tackling this study as I have often had to reframe my problem question, rethink my point of departure and begin again.

My experience and position in relation to the topic under discussion cannot be kept outside the debate (Popkewitz 1984:87). My conceptual framework and relationship to literacy policy and practice is a pivotal part of what I bring to this study and has influenced my decision to investigate this field of educational practice. As a researcher the levels on which I contribute personally range from:

- my own educational history and background
- my ideological position in terms of equity in education
- my prior experience in the field of education policy development and the governmental education system
- my interest and experience in literacy teaching and teacher empowerment
- my involvement with special needs and inclusive education issues
- my experiences within the education transformation years and the advent of Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa
- the conscious choice of resource material such as books, journals, articles and other resources such as colleagues' recent theses which I have consulted to extend my knowledge base.

Since this is not a participative study, which involves others directly, I have had to rely more on reflection and self-analysis to keep track of where I am in the research process. This reflexive practice has necessitated a frequent return to the beginning as well as the consistent re-questioning of my agenda with this study.

The way I have chosen to write this thesis follows the lines of a narrative analysis more than a formal research report in that it is written in the first person, precisely to acknowledge my "presence" in the inquiry (Connolly & Clandinin 1999:138).

2.4.5 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is of itself an ethical endeavour. Kelly (1999:430) distinguishes between data, investigator, theory and methodological triangulation. Every effort has been made to ensure that throughout this study, ethical considerations have been at the heart of the research process - i.e. data collection and analysis and the reporting on data findings. By nature, a qualitative approach to research is value-laden (especially from within) and ethical concerns are enmeshed in the very fabric of the research process (Ely 1991:218). Trustworthiness as defined by Guba and Lincoln (in Ely 1991:94), include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability all rolled into one. It reminds me continually of the issues and processes that must weave their way through my qualitative research to keep it and me as honest and believable as possible.

"Being trustworthy as a qualitative researcher means at least that the processes of the research are carried out fairly... must be grounded in ethical principles about how data are collected and analysed, how one's own assumptions and conclusions are checked ... and how results are communicated" (Guba & Lincoln in Ely 1991:93).

My level of awareness and reflectivity of how my own perspective on literacy might influence and possibly cloud my representation of other's points of view has been accentuated by this study and hopefully this is reflected sufficiently in Chapter 4. Issues of confidentiality are not applicable here. I have made use primarily of written sources (both primary and secondary), and consequently I have had to keep focused throughout the investigation on being true to what has been said before.

"Here I would like to highlight the ongoing work we undertake as qualitative researchers to rethink, and rethink again, considerations revolving around the objective/subjective fulcrum ... (and) accept that multiple interpretations exist, however one chooses to define reality, and that to be completely unbiased or 'objective' is impossible" (Ely 1991:220).

Ely (1991:97) claims triangulation is a method for validating data and substantiating findings and characteristically depends on verifying data collected by different methods e.g. interviews, observation, field notes, questionnaires and documentation. In this study only text data was used and hence the process of triangulation is based on using the same method, but on different reports about the same phenomenon. Triangulation also serves other useful purposes besides confirming, which Mathison (in Ely 1991:98) describes as follows:

"In practice, triangulation as a strategy provides a rich and complex picture of some social phenomenon being studied, but rarely does it provide a clear path to a singular view of what is the case. More accurately there are three outcomes that might result from a triangulation strategy, ... convergence, inconsistency and contradiction".

The quest is therefore, to make this research project credible, produce results that can be trusted and establish findings that are useful to practice (Ely 1991:156). I have endeavoured on every different level, to put my emergent understanding into my own "research story". I accept, however, that this is my personal perspective on literacy at present, and that as my understanding continues to grow, this too will shift.

2.5 A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Chapter 2 explores and defines the interpretative framework of this research study and offers the reader the opportunity to join in the journey of investigating literacy from multiple perspectives. It looks at different levels of comparison which are necessary, given the degree to which conceptualisations of literacy are context-bound and content specific. The qualitative nature of the literature study to follow in Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive scope for investigating the concept of literacy theory and practice.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERACY THEORY REVISITED

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Literacy research over the last twenty to thirty years has been undergoing a steady paradigmatic shift towards problem-solving or applied research (Waghid 2001:1). The views of the different interest groups looking at and working with literacy problems are often quite disparate. Given its origins in adult education, literacy work has been located primarily in the context of the wider social environment, but within the confines of non-formal education.

Concerns about "schooled literacy" have increased in the last decade. Researchers have grappled with the tendency of instructional practices to emphasise basic skills and the mastery of facts and details of mechanics and correctness, and to largely ignore the importance of social interaction in language acquisition (Powell 1999:28; Rassool 1999:8).

In order to make sense of the assumptions and assertions on which different understandings of literacy are based and to grasp how relative and context-bound definitions of literacy are (Wolfendale & Topping 1996:165), a thorough investigation into how literacy is constructed and understood must be undertaken.

This literature study aims to represent the changes in literacy research and explore different perspectives and models of literacy theory and practice in an endeavour to offer possibilities for literacy development within the South African context.

3.2 CONCEPTUALISING LITERACY

Historically, literacy was narrowly conceptualised as learning to read and write, but in recent years there has been a gradual shift to a broader, more holistic, understanding of the role which language and literacy play in social contexts.

Forty years ago reading was seen as the end product of decoding, and comprehension was checked through the asking of questions. However, checking comprehension did not improve nor teach it, and the 1980s saw the advent of focused discrete

comprehension skill instruction. It is only in the last ten to fifteen years that constructive efforts have been made to focus on reading in the broad perspective of literacy learning. The result of this period became more commonly known as the "whole language movement" (Cooper 2000:5-6).

The whole language era of the early 1990s spawned a tension between "back to basics" and liberal language protagonists and resulted in greater clarity which indicated that, in fact, these two approaches should not be juxtaposed but should be seen in relation to each other. Thus, the balanced approach to literacy was born which advocates a combination of authentic reading and writing experiences (Metsala 1997:519) and direct instruction.

Literacy is in essence a cognitive and socio-cultural construct. The learner lives and learns as a social being in conversations with others. Being literate goes beyond decoding and entails "meaning making" as a lifelong process which involves both natural language development as with mother tongue acquisition, as well as specialised language development as in more formal contexts e.g. school (Hasan 1996:379,385). It is neither one nor the other, but both lines that need development for the individual to benefit maximally.

Gee (1990:154) sees this distinction between acquiring literacy skills versus learning literacy skills as vital in terms of how literacy is conceptualised. These two principles deserve explanation at this point. In terms of the acquisition principle, literacy is seen mostly as a product of acquisition and not learning. It requires exposure to models in natural, meaningful and functional settings and is hampered by overt teaching. In terms of the learning principle, literacy entails discourse critique and requires meta-knowledge that is best developed through learning.

Since literacy in the real world involves more than reading and writing, basing school literacy programmes on isolated reading skills creates problems for learners. Powell (1999:5) maintains that in pragmatic terms literacy cannot be construed this simplistically. It is necessary to expose the hegemonic role of language and consequently literacy, which serves to solidify social hierarchy and maintain social order. In our post-apartheid South Africa it is not difficult to see how effectively this has served the interests of the state.

The debate around the purpose of literacy in society rages even today. Gee (1990:39) points out that literacy can in and of itself not lead to grandiose cognitive capacities.

"The history of literacy shows that education has not ... been directed primarily at vocational training or personal growth and development". Historically, literacy has served to empower those in control, ensure that people lower in the hierarchy accept the values, norms and beliefs of the empowered and keep them politically uncritical and happy with their lot. On the other hand are those who believe that literacy is a basic human right and believe that it will make the lower classes accept the values of the empowered and behave in a manner more like the middle classes i.e. become better citizens.

Neither of these positions takes into account the Freirean notion of the emancipatory role of literacy in terms of empowering people to understand and ultimately improve their lived realities (Gee 1990:41). All these viewpoints serve merely to illustrate, at this point, how differing assumptions and beliefs about reading, writing and learning influence how literacy is defined and impact on literacy policy and practices.

3.3 THE DILEMMA OF DEFINITIONS

Definitions of literacy arise from theoretical, empirical and philosophical sources and have bearing on pedagogy and policy at grassroots level (Chall 1990:54; Kaestle 1990:64). From the literature it is clear that looking at literacy definitions *per se* is problematic, unless one makes sense of the contexts within which each respective definition operates. Even more importantly, it has become clear that every context defines literacy for a specific purpose and hence understands it to "mean" something different or specific.

Definitions of literacy abound and literacy work at the present moment is regarded as an important instrument of social transformation and upliftment. The term is, however, often over-generalised and used glibly. Just using the term does not mean that everyone involved with literacy is referring to the same thing, let alone doing the same thing (Mikulecky 1990:24).

This is supported by Halliday (1994:339) when he comments on the fact that literacy "no longer has a single definition". We need to distinguish between literacy at its broadest level and conversely at another level, where we investigate the composite aspects that make up being literate - both orally, or in terms of written discourse (Halliday 1994:340).

The Oxford dictionary (1995:353) defines the word "definition" as "a statement of the meaning of a word or the nature of a thing". The merit of using definitions rests on the fact that they highlight criteria whereby certain judgements are made about how literacy is thought of and viewed within the society at large. Being literate in the new millennium means something more than simply being able to read and write.

Kaestle (1990:66) suggests that definitions of literacy reflect the wide range of perspectives which exist in the field of literacy work. The following synopsis of his findings is offered as a broad summative categorisation to illustrate these contrasts and as a framework for investigating the theoretical foundations informing literacy development (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: A summative categorisation of definitions of literacy

Definitions which ...	Definitions which ...
<p>refer to the dichotomous variable of being literate or not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>use minimum standards as criterion levels</i> • <i>speak of the "problem of illiterates"</i> 	<p>refer to being literate as a range of skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>refer to a range of literacy proficiencies based on context</i> • <i>speak of the "problems of literacy"</i>
<p>see literacy development along a single, linear and hierarchical continuum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>are grounded in school-based literacy</i> • <i>use grade-level equivalents</i> 	<p>see literacy development as a collection of discrete, definable, non-linear skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>explore non-school uses of literacy</i> • <i>embrace the notion of different reading skills</i>
<p>are based on content-free skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>emphasise "basic skills"</i> • <i>are narrow and conservative</i> • <i>emphasise received tradition</i> • <i>stress the value of common reference points for a democratic society</i> • <i>emphasise memorisation of fragmented sub-skills</i> 	<p>are based on content application in the development of skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>emphasise the importance of content</i> • <i>are liberal and permissive</i> • <i>emphasise cultural diversity</i> • <i>stress the value of critical thinking and reading skills for a democratic society</i> • <i>emphasise thinking as a part of making meaning through using literacy skills</i>

(Sourced and adapted from Kaestle 1990:64-66)

It is essential to have in the background a concept of the purposes of literacy. Definitions help to do that and they serve as concise embodiments of how literacy is viewed.

"Not only are there reciprocal causal relationships between definitions of literacy and policies about literacy, but behind these different definitions and policies are differing visions of what kind of society we are and what kind of society we aspire to be" (Kaestle 1990:66).

Traditionally, the literature referred primarily to reading and writing within the schooling contexts. However, in the last twenty years, different understandings about literacy have emerged that have led us to question this assumption and have broadened our understandings to include all discourses, both written and spoken into the definition (Halliday 1996:340). Being able to take part in social processes effectively now forms the basis of being literate in most instances.

The literacy work done by UNESCO began in the field of adult education. But after the International Symposium for Literacy in Iran in 1975, the broad definition drafted there gave a clear indication of the shifts in understanding of how literacy was being reconceptualised - for application even beyond the parameters of adult education. The Declaration of Persepolis (Bataille 1976:273-274):

"considered literacy to be not just the process of learning the skills of reading and writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiatives and his participation in the creation of projects capable of acting upon the world, of transforming it, and of defining the aims of authentic human development. It should open the way to mastery of techniques and human actions. Literacy is not an end in itself. It is a fundamental human right".

The basic assumption that all students who leave school after seven or even twelve years are adequately literate is, according to Harley *et al.* (1996:23), highly problematic - given the fact that literacy demands determine the level of competency. There is little common ground between the curriculum competencies required at school level and the literacy demands at tertiary level or in the world of work. Since there are no ready or tangible indicators of how many years of schooling are sufficient to equate it to a specific level of functional or basic literacy, using this criteria remains contentious.

Furthermore, Harley *et al.* (1996:18) maintain there is no single criterion by which one can deem someone literate. The school's contribution to the literate learner is one of ensuring his or her capability to access information and transmit it in different situations for different audiences and purposes. However, the school cannot guarantee that learners will be equipped to exercise their capabilities in any or all situations, for any or all possible audiences and for any or all purposes (Gambell 1989:273).

All UNESCO definitions of literacy have a common thread, namely a functional perspective. Statistics within South Africa and internationally, are inclined to equate literacy levels with a certain grade achievement of primary schooling (Hutton 1992:12; Harley *et al.* 1996:21). Harley *et al.* (1996:19) make an argument for equating this functional level with 7 years of schooling, but caution against equating the levels of literacy and basic education of a 12-year-old Grade 7 pupil with that of an unschooled 40-year-old.

Being literate has different connotations within different contexts and consequently different perspectives. Consequently, various definitions of the term have arisen, serving only to confuse and cloud the issue more and more (Bhola 1994:10). Literacy by default has something to do with the ability to read. To read is a transitive verb, i.e. to be able to read *something*. This "something" will always be a text of sorts. Different types of texts/genres call for different types of background knowledge and require different skills to be read meaningfully (Gee 1990:42).

3.4 PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACY THEORY AND PRACTICE

Different perspectives illustrate that, conceptually, literacy is multifaceted and requires different levels of analysis within a broad and flexible framework that incorporates complexities (Rassool 1999:42). The following perspectives on literacy, as identified by Barton and Ivanic (in Baynham 1995:16), will be discussed: educational, anthropological, psychological, historical, sociological, and language/linguistic.

3.4.1 The educational perspective

The educational perspective looks at the role of instruction in the acquisition of reading and writing skills and the influence of immersion approaches to reading and writing practices, in which learners acquire their literacy skills progressively, either as mother tongue or second language learners.

3.4.2 The anthropological perspective

The anthropological perspective looks at the influence of socio-cultural issues like multilingualism on the development of literacy. Pertinent issues include: the choice of a majority language with the largest communicative potential, the secondary role of minority languages and literacies and communicative bi-literacy to further intra-group communication.

3.4.3 The psychological perspective

The psychological perspective looks at the influence of the home environment and parental input on literacy and language development, as well as the issue of the motivation to learn to read and write (Verhoeven & Durgunoğlu 1998:ix).

3.4.4 The historical perspective

The historical perspective looks at the impact of issues around illiteracy which, according to Freire (1985:176) implies injustice that "involves more serious implications, such as the castration of illiterates in their inability to make decisions for themselves, to vote, and to participate in the political process" in order to improve the quality of their lives.

3.4.5 The sociological perspective

The sociological perspective looks at how literacy use is embedded in the social structure and challenges the language in use in society (Barton 1994:215). It prioritises people's uses of literacy over their formal learning of literacy and illustrates that literacies are not equally valued and vary in what purposes they serve (Barton 1994:39). Social change and new social practices demand new ways of communicating and either increase or alternatively reduce literacy demands (Barton 1994:52).

3.4.6 The language/linguistic perspective

The language/linguistic perspective according to Gee (1990:112) looks primarily at the function of human language as a means to think and gain various perspectives and viewpoints of the world, rather than merely talking about it. This happens on several levels simultaneously: on a text/discourse level, a process level and a practice level (Baynham 1995:21-22).

Perspectives thus offer one the opportunity to examine various understandings and aspects of literacy from different viewpoints.

3.5 THEORETICAL MODELS OF LITERACY

Educational research into the way language, reading and writing are viewed, has been influenced by a range of disciplines, from psychology, psycholinguistics, education, reading, sociolinguistics, anthropology and critical theory (Jaggar 1989:72). Understanding the function of language and literacy in modern society necessitates continual engagement with and redefinition of the complexities of learning to read and

write in social contexts. Newer studies have placed the emphasis more on cross-cultural and socio-linguistic frameworks. The shift - from the "discrete elements of reading and writing skills" to the "social practices and conceptions of reading and writing" i.e. literacies - has resulted in a plethora of challenging studies in this field (Street 1993:1), which have in turn impacted on educational policies and school practices.

Traditional models of literacy have limitations in their apparent neutrality and hegemonic buy-in, which has blinded researchers to the impact of this perceived universal literacy on those who are being taught to read and write. Those who have embarked on emancipatory and participative research have begun to make sense of literacy by involving and empowering those who intend to use it (Street 1993:3; Beach 1992:2).

How one views language and understands the different discourses employed within contexts ranging from home, school and church to streets, places of work and bureaucracies, will have implications now for being literate is constructed and understood within these contexts (Powell 1999:120). The connections between orality and literacy have been brought to the fore and challenge the universal premise that has equated being literate with print literacy, by default, for so long.

In order to understand the term literacy, it is critical that different models of literacy theory are looked at in depth. Referred to widely in literacy studies, are Brian Street's "autonomous and ideological models of literacy theory" (Street 1996; Street 1993; Street 1984; Gee 1990; Barton 1994).

3.5.1 The autonomous model

Within this framework, approaches, practices and policies which subscribe to the autonomous model of literacy are referred to as typical of "schooling literacy" or the "transmission model" (Powell 1999:33). Within this model there is an emphasis on essential skills and facts, not defined as essential by the learning community, but rather representative of the perspectives and beliefs of those in power. This ties in with Freire's notion of a "banking" model of education in which learners are construed as empty vessels which need to be filled with skills and knowledge designed to uphold the *status quo*, rather than encourage self-expression and regulation (Powell 1999:33; Freire 1985:21).

Since school is a social institution, it has developed its own discourse. This is again based on dominant standards and behaviours, which reflect the mainstream or middle-class (Powell 1999:25-26; Gee 1990:144). Powell (1999:25-32) suggests *three assumptions* underlying "schooled literacy" which deserve careful scrutiny to ensure that the underlying premise on which many pedagogical practices rest are understood. What appears as liberal and seemingly emancipated education (i.e. OBE) is often fundamentally nothing new:

- *Some discourses are more literate than others, and are thus inherently superior.* Children come to school with their primary discourse from home in place. This is for many children no different from the school discourse, if in fact they come from the dominant middle class. But for children from marginalised groups whose primary discourse differs from that of the school, it creates difficulties. Teachers have lower expectations of these learners and, consequently, the quality of these teacher-learner interactions differs substantially from those where the teacher and learners share cultural expectations of how language is used for communication.
- *Practices that are founded on scientific principles and technological rationalism are preferable to more subjective practices.* Looking at education through an input-output lens devoid of social or cultural context, allows one to conceptualise literacy and language as tools for acquiring information and processing it efficiently. However, it is important to differentiate between information and ideas. The role of thinking and the generation of own ideas and concepts within this framework are less important than learning to do it the "right" way and memorising facts. Powell highlights how this has shaped prevailing views of educational failure, which are currently being challenged. Within the medical approach to dealing with literacy problems, the emphasis is on returning to basics because that is what learners who are failing "lack" and generally reducing the problem to one which resides in the learner and not the system.
- *It is possible for literacy instruction and research to be neutral.* Underlying this assumption is the notion that reading and writing are processes that can be removed from their functions. Research undertaken within this framework assumes that reading and writing are skills that are used to acquire and transmit information as opposed to means of personal expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Literacy cannot be conceptualised independently of the political agenda of education. In essence, literacy instruction and schooling in general, are forms of acculturation designed to teach reality as defined by those in power (Powell 1999:33). Literacy itself, under this assumption, becomes a set of skills one needs to learn in order to be regarded as literate according to criteria determined by the educational establishment. An instrument of education which serves the purpose of the transmission of knowledge and skills, is the textbook which offers pre-determined and "packaged" knowledge, or even basal reading schemes based on the acquisition of graded reading skills. Decisions of what to include and exclude are made on the basis of what is deemed important - not to the learning community - but rather in terms of what is in the interests of those in power.

"Conceptualising literacy as a mere tool allows us to design lessons that teach and test skills of written language without having to examine the implicit assumptions of our actions, or the tacit values that are embedded in the texts we use. It allows us to be indifferent to the needs of many of our students, who are required to remain in the margins and digest a form of literacy that devalues their own primary discourse, yet often fails to provide them with the linguistic knowledge that would lead to empowerment" (Powell 1999:35).

Thus, within the autonomous model of literacy theory, literacy within the schooling system is viewed as a learnt skill or a set of technical skills.

Table 3.2: Approaches to literacy practice within the autonomous model

AUTONOMOUS MODEL	
Back to basics approach	Implies that a decline in literacy standards is caused by progressive teaching practices and that the return to formal instruction in the three "R's" will remedy this.
Skills development approach	Sees the acquisition of literacy as a series of discrete skills, which need to be learnt.
Deficit approach	Construes the literacy learner as an empty vessel that needs filling with knowledge and skills.
Medical approach	Treats the lack of literacy as a medical condition which certain individuals suffer from and which needs to be cured/remedied. Examples of this: over-diagnosis of dyslexia, diagnostic testing, remedial measures.

(Sourced from Baynham 1995:14-15)

Viewed in this way, schooled literacy is an example of a secondary discourse which is representative of the language of the educational institution (Powell 1999:37). Those students who can adapt to these schooled literacy tasks succeed, whilst those whose

primary discourse does not prepare them for the school experience, fare badly and in many cases fail dismally.

3.5.2 The ideological model

In contrast, the ideological model of literacy moves from the premise that all literacy and language is socially constructed and only has value insofar as it is a meaning-making endeavour. Street (1993:7) defines this as viewing "literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and to recognise the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts".

Constructivism offers a useful perspective on this model, in its emphasis on the social construction of knowledge, which is developed and learned primarily through social interaction. The fundamental tool for this interaction is language, which plays a role, both as a carrier of understanding, but also as a means for its own development (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 1997:49). This shift has implications for instructional practices and has resulted in a move - away from a skills-based approach to language instruction, towards a more holistic, child-centred perspective that begins with the learners' interests, strengths and experiences (Powell 1999:120).

Within this model it is not enough for literacy to be seen only as an end in itself. It is viewed in terms of its transformative potential and in that way is truly functional by enabling individuals to "question and engage in critical dialogue so they may be educated for participation in a democracy" (Powell 1999:20-21).

The importance of this model for literacy development lies in its underlying focus on a broader, socio-cultural or ecological perspective, whereby the whole individual is concerned with the construction of his/her reality and is an active participant in that construction (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana 1997:40). It is important to note that being literate is not synonymous with written forms only within this framework. Orality plays an important part in the acquisition of the primary discourse of the first language and serves as the basis for learning to read and write (Herselman, Van Heerden & Steyn 1998:71). Many oral communities that have no written language form are thus often defined as illiterate in the traditional sense of the word and this assumption is strongly challenged by this model.

Since models refer, in Rassool's terms (1999:35), to pedagogic frameworks in which theories about the literacy process are generated, they include a range of meanings produced in literacy practices, conceptions of how and what meanings can be obtained

in texts and contexts, and they frame instructional techniques. Affording literacy this scrutiny has brought to the fore the many tensions and contested interests within the field of literacy research. In contrast, it also highlights the problems of polarising the shift in focus from the positivist paradigm (autonomous model) to the post-positivist, more interpretative paradigm (ideological model).

Within the ideological model of literacy theory, (most often seen in Adult Education practice), literacy is viewed as a social practice and literacy skills are seen as only relevant when a context has been created for them.

Table 3.3: Approaches to literacy practice within the ideological model

IDEOLOGICAL MODEL	
Functional approach	Emphasises the social purpose of literacy and provides learners with the skills and abilities to fit in and achieve within the social framework as it currently exists.
Therapeutic approach	Sees literacy development within a psychological framework as a way of working out problems.
Personal empowerment approach	Sees literacy development as a process of developing confidence and personal power, not just in the area of literacy, but also in other life areas.
Social empowerment approach	Moves beyond the goal of personal empowerment and links literacy development with social change.
Critical approach	Emphasises social purpose and context and does not take these purposes and contexts as given, but subjects them to critical analysis as part of the educational process.
Multi-cultural critical approach	Views literacy along a contextualised continuum that is inclusive of cultural sensitivities, multiple literacies, and complex relationships that affect literacy learning.

(Sourced from Baynham 1995:14-15; Macrine 1999:12)

These approaches outline the diversity in literacy theory and practice and provide a framework within which to look at literacy from several perspectives. The tension which exists between these perspectives highlights the serious implications this has for literacy development. When understandings of the role and purpose of literacy within the larger educational picture are oversimplified and seen exclusively from only one viewpoint, the wholeness of literacy as a phenomenon is lost.

The autonomous model is not strictly juxtaposed with the ideological model in Street's (1993:9) terms, but is rather subsumed by it. By definition this means that looking at

literacy from this perspective in no way denies the value and legitimacy of the technical skills of reading and writing, but "rather understands them as they are encapsulated within cultural wholes and within structures of power".

What is advocated is a transactional paradigm which puts an emphasis on the active roles of both the child and the teacher - the former transacting with the environment and the latter as the facilitator of an environment that facilitates learning (Weaver 1988:222-223).

3.6 DIMENSIONS OF LITERACY PRACTICE

Literacy is always embedded in a discourse about knowledge and learning, about working and living in society, about culture and about social development (Rassool 1999:6). Given the complexity of the phenomenon and the need to construct literacy within the contexts in which it operates, necessitates the development of a model which focuses on literacy, both as a social process *and* a social practice (Baynham 1995:24). Within the above-mentioned models there appear to be several dimensions of literacy practice.

The critical and functional dimensions of literacy operate in tandem and formulate literacy as a social construct and subject the very contexts in which it is utilised, to rigorous scrutiny. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to focus on the critical and functional dimensions in particular as a means to contextualise this debate within the bigger picture of educational transformation in South Africa.

3.6.1 The functional dimension of literacy practice

Functional literacy has its origins in UNESCO's work that has focused on literacy as the initial step and core component of the development programmes aimed at "underdeveloped" countries (Barton 1994:192). Important to note is the fact that the UNESCO philosophy of literacy was based strongly on Gray's definition of being literate (in Barton 1994:193) i.e. to be able to "engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in their culture or group". Barton (1994:193-194) cites the following problems with a functional perspective on literacy:

- It is difficult to define what the functions of literacy are, given how context specific they are.

- In practice, functional literacy has always been closely connected to employment and vocational and economic outcomes.
- Starting from peoples' needs is not enough and functional approaches do not extend learners beyond these limits.
- Functional literacy is most often perceived as being imposed from the outside, rather than from peoples' perceived needs.

Thus it appears that there is a gulf between literacy theories and practices. Within the outcome-based framework, which is presently being implemented in South Africa, the key purposes of education are reflected as:

- ensuring that all learners are equipped with the knowledge, competence, and qualities needed to be successful *after* they exit the educational system
- structuring, developing and operating schools so that those outcomes can be achieved and maximised for all learners (Spady 1994:9).

This implies that the responsibility for ensuring that learning and increasing competence are the primary focus of instruction rests with the school system. Thus the educational system is accountable for increasing teacher competence in order to ensure increased learner competence and appropriate learning. This is, in essence, a functional skills approach, with the focus of learning resting strongly on skills.

Within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is currently being implemented in South Africa, the focus is ultimately on building citizenry and increasing every individual's social and economic sustainability. This is guaranteed in principle through the critical outcomes that outline the intended competencies, attitudes and values which learners need to accomplish in order to develop fully.

A functional approach to language and literacy learning therefore would seem an appropriate perspective in that it suggests that communication through reading and writing i.e. literacy, is essentially a functional act, used for realizing certain purposes within particular social contexts (Powell 1999:9). Harley *et al.* (1996:19) refer to being functionally literate within the South African society, as having skills in:

- vernacular literacy
- English oral communication and literacy
- numeracy

- post literacy skills such alphabetical order and map reading
- familiarity with administrative and clerical conventions
- basic economic information.

Adult Education programmes that utilise this perspective fall into the trap of educating adults to do their jobs better, to read and write functionally and to manage their lives sustainably from an economic perspective. This does not, however, necessarily equip them to be able to use these skills in any way that will empower them to question their political reality. What is needed is a paradigm shift in terms of how the purpose and function of literacy in peoples' lives is constructed.

"To be functionally literate ... comprises a minimal, essentially negative, passive state. Functional literacy equips the person to respond to the outside demands and standards, to understand and follow. There is no suggestion of leading, commanding, mastering or controlling" (Lankshear & Lawler in Powell 1999:17).

Viewed in this light, the functional approach to literacy resembles a more basic approach which refers to the acquisition of technical skills involving the decoding of written text and the writing of simple statements within the context of everyday life (Rassool 1999:7). This falls short of the critical outcomes as drafted by South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in that it places little or no value on equipping individuals to view the current *status quo* mindfully, but rather prefers them to follow blindly and not question the system. There is no critical enquiry within this approach and the focus remains on skills and competence.

Bhola (1994:10-11) gives us yet a different perspective on functional literacy. He purports that an expanded understanding of functional literacy includes a social view, (Barton 1994:215) reflected in statements such as:

- Literacy is not merely ... the skill of reading and writing. It is a powerful potential - a quality with many uses - given to individual men and women, boys and girls who become literate.
- Literacy makes it possible for individuals to use their minds in new and different ways. The ability to find and use new information gives them a new sense of freedom.
- Literacy is a social process. It brings the literate person new respect and social status.

- Literacy can and does bring development to societies.

This perspective on functional literacy includes its social purpose and, to some degree, acknowledges the impact which being literate has on people's lives, but also does not include the aspect of empowerment and participation which is needed when people are involved in improving their lives.

Viewing literacy from this perspective therefore includes looking at literacy longitudinally along the continuum of lifelong learning. Is it appropriate that this functional approach to literacy should be reserved for post-school learners? Why is literacy after school defined as something different from what is taught within the school system? Different contexts therefore seem to govern the respective practices and programme outcomes along the continuum of lifelong learning and consequently, it is necessary to investigate the impact which these phases along the continuum have on one another.

The literature is clear that functional literacy skills are not enough. Individuals need more than skills to be able to negotiate their world. They need to be able to communicate about how they think, reason, feel and solve problems about issues in order to be able to participate in their worlds. They need to be helped to reflect on the importance of language and the role of critical awareness and how it influences their realities (Barton 1994:215).

3.6.2 The critical dimension of literacy practice

The critical dimension of literacy requires a shift in how one thinks about the role of language, literacy and communication and views literacy along a contextualised continuum that is inclusive of cultural sensitivities, multiple literacies, and complex relationships that affect literacy learning (Macrine 1999:12). It emphasises social purpose and context, and does not take these as given, but subjects them to critical analysis as part of the educational process (Baynham 1995:15).

Phillion (1998:57-58) offers the following assumptions as fundamental points of departure underpinning this approach:

- Critical literacy entails involvement in the multidimensional activity of reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Critical literacy consists of a dynamic movement between reading words and reading the world.

- Critical literacy can only be nurtured in the context of attending carefully to the word universe of learners.
- For literacy programmes to have critical value, they must be situated within the word universes of learners.

The ways in which the hegemonic language and practices of schooling have silenced learners has been explored amongst others, by researchers such as Freire (1985), Gee (1990), Street (1984) and Powell (1999). Common to all these views of critical literacy is the focus on the power relations associated with language. An empowering (i.e. critical) literacy:

"teaches learners to find their voices ... teaches them how speech works to empower or oppress ... and challenges them to interrogate their unexamined assumptions" (Powell 1999:80).

A more critical perspective on literacy necessitates a redefinition of what it means to be literate. Routman (1996:6) maintains that even though there is a cry for "back to basics" i.e. "the return to overfocusing on discrete skills and superficial learning" - the irony of why our learners are not coping with the literacy demands of the information age is because we are not teaching them to think critically i.e. "how to analyse, interpret, evaluate, and apply knowledge".

Developing critical literacy skills entails a very different approach to literacy policy and practice. Gee's claim (Gee 1990:154), that literacies are both acquired and learnt, implies that the nature of language instruction and classroom discourse needs to change fundamentally before one will begin to see the kinds of gains in terms of learners using meta-skills to understand their learning and thinking. Teachers and learners need to engage in meaningful, authentic conversation that is aimed at making sense of their shared realities.

A critical perspective of literacy makes room for its social character and understands it to be a means by which reality is constructed and managed (Siegel 1992:380). At the heart of literacy, from this vantage point then, is not merely its usefulness in terms of reading and writing, but its potential to empower those who have it to exercise control and choice over what they have to say (Meek 1991:10).

For literacy to function in this way within the school system, there are implications for how it is employed across the curriculum. For as long as teachers are bound to use programmes and materials over which they have no choice, and instructional methods

which discourage learners from taking ownership of their learning and thinking, the situation will remain the same.

Progressive curricula, such as OBE, and new terminology alone will not shift the ethos of apathy, nor encourage learners to make their voices heard. The only way this will happen, claims Powell (1999:87), is when instructional approaches such as the problem-posing type are utilised in which learners are challenged to understand and explore the political complexities of their lives and societies. This in turn will give them the opportunity to participate in the transformation process of social change.

Literacy is perceived by teachers across grades and learning fields, in a variety of ways. Traditionally the onus for teaching learners to read and write has been on the primary grade teachers. The focus of this assistance has always been primarily in teaching discrete reading and writing skills such as spelling and grammar. Only in the last few years has the teaching of thinking skills come into its own to address the problem of inferior performance and superficial learning. Language teaching has begun to include the role of literacy in learning, using tools such as mind-maps and other problem-solving strategies.

For literacy to serve its true purpose of ensuring accessibility to learning, teachers from all disciplines will be required to engage in the type of problem-posing pedagogy mentioned above (Powell 1999:89). Critical literacy plays itself out across the curriculum in different ways, and it is important that teachers of all disciplines offer students the opportunities to question and examine relevant issues within all learning fields. Preparing learners for participation within a democratic society requires that teachers resist indifference and engage themselves and their learners in political and social debate (Powell 1999:95).

3.7 A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

Differences in perspectives on literacy and consequent definitions of literacy have arisen for various reasons - namely, languages of literacy are different, different levels and standards of literacy skills are possible, subject matter differs and different objectives exist for acquiring literacy skills. Table 3.4 illustrates the link between theories of literacy and definitions that flow from these conceptualisations, using the contrast between the autonomous and ideological models as a framework. These comparisons served as a framework within which to structure all the information about

literacy theory and practice which I had collected in such a way, as to enable me ultimately to extract the significant differences between the traditional, conservative and the more modern, liberal approaches to literacy development.

Largely, how one construes what literacy means lies embedded in the conceptual understanding one holds. The objective of this study has been to find the "golden thread" that runs throughout and to give an indication of the functional role which literacy plays across the curriculum in ensuring the accessibility to lifelong learning for all learners.

Comparatively, the autonomous and ideological models of literacy have been juxtaposed to show the shift towards seeing literacy as a functional and social practice (Table 3.4). Definitions of literacy highlight this shift even further and illustrate clearly the movement from understanding literacy as reading and writing - to a broader conceptualisation which embraces literacy development as a lifelong endeavour, honed through utilisation and purpose, rather than grade specification and qualification.

Table 3.4: A comparison of literacy models and definitions of literacy

Models of literacy		Definitional categories	Elements of literacy	Broad definitions of literacy
AUTONOMOUS	Back to basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literate or illiterate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ speak of the problem of "illiterates" ➤ use minimum standards as criterion levels 	Literacy is a dichotomous concept based on the development of a linear hierarchical continuum of content-free skills
	Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy skills develop along a single linear and hierarchical continuum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ are grounded in school-based literacy ➤ use grade-level equivalents as criteria of proficiency 	
	Deficit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content-free skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ emphasise "basic skills" ➤ are narrow and conservative ➤ emphasise received tradition ➤ stress the value of common reference points for a democratic society ➤ emphasise memorisation of fragmented sub-skills 	
	Medical			
IDEOLOGICAL	Functional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ speak of the problems of "literacy" ➤ refer to a range of literacy proficiencies based on context 	Being functionally literate is seen as that demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables an individual to function, appropriate to her/his age, independently in her/his society and with a potential for movement in that society.
	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a discrete, non-definable collection of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ explore non-school uses of literacy ➤ embrace the notion of different reading skills 	
	Multi-cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy skills develop through content application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ emphasise the importance of content ➤ are liberal and permissive ➤ emphasise cultural diversity ➤ stress the value of critical thinking and reading skills for a democratic society ➤ emphasise thinking as part of making meaning through the use of literacy skills 	
	Social empowerment			
	Personal empowerment			
	Therapeutic			
				Literacy is a functional construct based on the development of a collection of discrete, non-linear skills through purposeful, content application

(Sourced collectively from Street, Baynham, Macrine, Kaestle, Gambell & Verhoeven)

CHAPTER FOUR

LITERACY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of literacy has become a powerful forum for educational change and development. Definitions of literacy and standards differ from country to country, but are often more about what is ideal than what is possible and resources play a fundamental role in terms of what can be realised. In Chapter 1 several definitions are provided which serve as a frame of reference for this study.

What is understood about "being literate" in the South African context, and the implications this has for many people who are not deemed literate in the conventional sense of the word, needs careful deliberation. Literacy is a complex construct and needs thorough scrutiny if it is to serve as a function of thinking and lifelong learning.

Most often literacy is defined in terms of minimum standards or graded levels of enskillment. However, conceptualising "being literate" as a decontextualised skill or simply, the ability to read and write, is problematic. Furthermore, the tendency of literacy research and surveys to use isolated reading and writing skills as the primary indicators of being "literate" (Harley *et al.* 1996:20-21), poses several pertinent questions with regards to literacy development within the school system:

- What are the objectives within the general school system with regards to the development of a culture of lifelong learning?
- Does general education (Grades R - 9) develop literacy in a functional way?
- How do teachers across the curriculum become involved in the development of literacy in support of lifelong learning?

Since literacy proficiency is located within the specific social practices where it is utilised (Gee 1990:59; Winer 1996:390), it is important to contextualise it within the framework of lifelong learning. This functional perspective on the purpose and meaning of literacy in people's lives highlights the need to understand the contexts in which it operates, but more importantly also requires an appreciation of its dynamic and variable nature (Fordham, Holland & Millican 1998:151). The notion of a continuum of lifelong

learning is used as a basic framework within which to gain an understanding of and insight into this complex construct within the South African situation.

4.2 THE CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

There can be no doubt that developing human potential is one of the most important issues facing modern civilisations across the world. The implications of unskilled and uneducated citizens for under-developed nations can be counted in terms of financial and economic costs. However, estimates of what the implications of limited education and learning deprivation are on the personal lives and the general quality of life of a nation's people are less tangible (Ramarumo 1996:345).

4.2.1 The historical background

It would be naïve to begin this discussion on the future of lifelong learning and literacy development in South Africa, without giving recognition to our history. The apartheid system with its restrictive policies saw the majority of South African people denied access to adequate educational opportunities and to little or no provision for future education and training (Naicker 1999:75).

The advent of the new government and changes in education policy since 1994 have been witness to the establishment of structures like the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). With the advent of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) the gradual shift from the traditional model of education, which Freire (1985:2) refers to as "banking" education, to an empowerment model is beginning to show fundamental changes in educational practice across the country.

The philosophy of lifelong learning is referred to extensively throughout education policy and curriculum documentation in South Africa (The ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training in Naicker 1999:20; The Implementation Plan for Tirisano January 2000:8; Department of Education, July 2001:8). The NQF itself is described, among other things, as "a guide to lifelong learning" (Understanding the National Qualifications Framework 1996:6).

Described as the "access" to learning throughout life, the term "lifelong learning" holds much promise for citizens in this country, regardless of age, circumstance and attained level of education and training. The National Minister of Education, Professor Kadar Asmal, makes mention of the important task ahead to ensure that "all individuals value,

have access to and succeed in lifelong education and training" (The Implementation Plan for Tirisano January 2000:8). The Implementation Plan for Tirisano (2000:18), which includes the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) pledges to "break the back of illiteracy among adults and youth within five years". The plan for educational transformation outlines five core programme areas for the improvement of education over the next five years. These are:

- HIV/AIDS
- school effectiveness and teacher professionalism
- literacy
- Further Education and Training and Higher Education
- organisational effectiveness of the national and provincial education departments.

Although this document makes reference to literacy only in relation to adult education, it is my contention that the same parameters need to be put into place for learners within the formal, compulsory school system.

4.2.2 The continuum of lifelong learning

The notion of developing human potential (i.e. lifelong learning) needs to start at a young age and be developed age-appropriately along the way. The motivation to learn resides within the individual and is dependent on the learner having a sense of the purpose of learning and thinking and an appreciation of the value it adds to his/her life.

However, within the traditional education system the opportunities and methods by which such learning can take place are most often outside the influence and control of the learner. If access to these resources and facilities, which are available for such learning to take place, are readily available, the individual can exercise this option. This implies that it is essentially NOT only the learner who plays the cardinal role in this development. Definitions of lifelong learning generally make little reference to the circumstances and systemic factors e.g. teachers and resources that play a role (Elliott 1999:25-26; Longworth & Davies 1996:92).

4.2.3 Models of lifelong learning

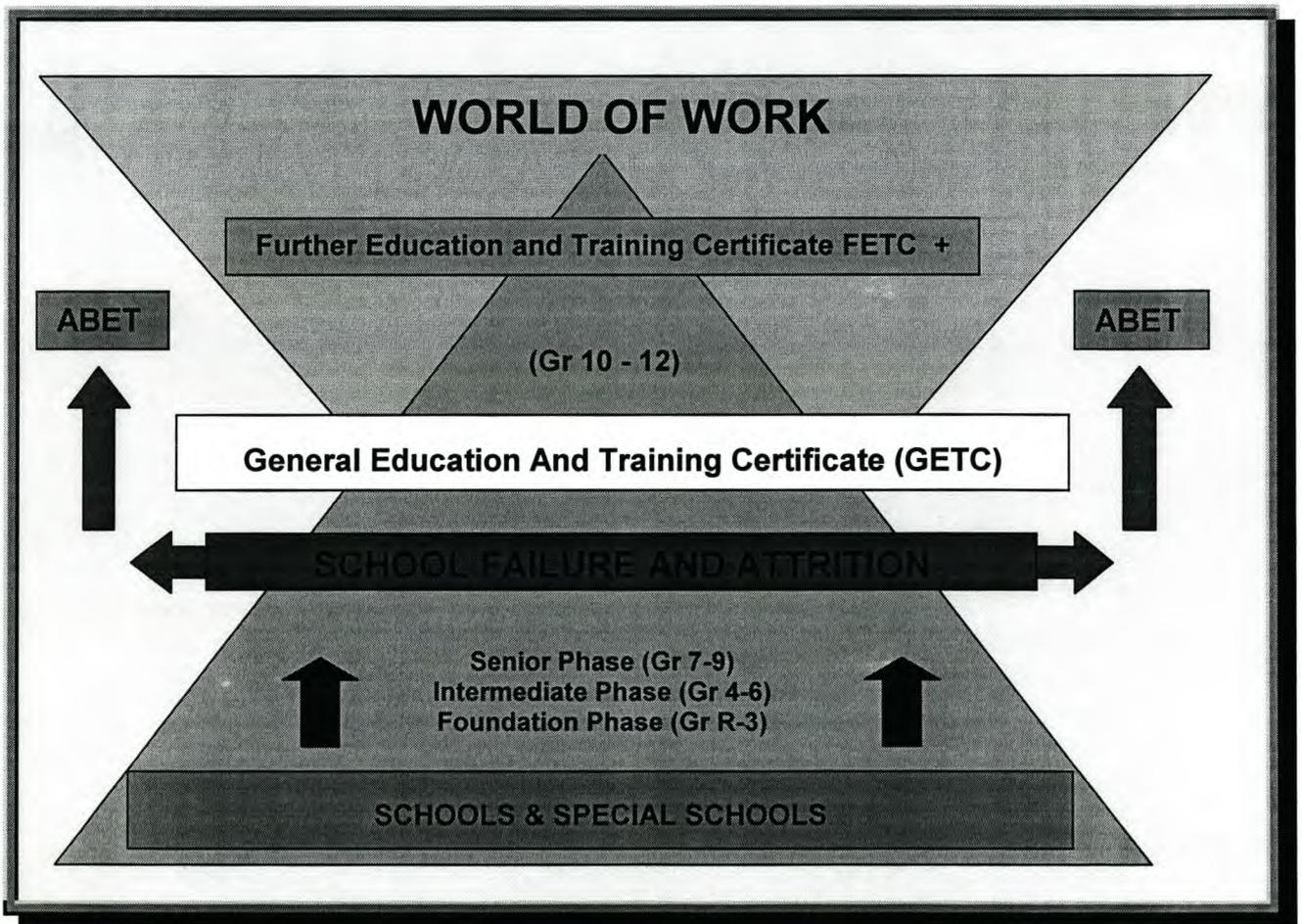
In order to understand lifelong learning within the South African context requires an investigation into whether the approaches and programmes which are employed are modelled on what Elliott (1999:26) refers to as either a "weak" or a "strong" model of

lifelong learning. Although not the primary focus of this study, it is necessary to highlight these differences, since they have important implications for education in general. According to Elliott (1999:26) a "weak" model, which is most often equated with adult education, refers to the provision of second-chance educational opportunities i.e. assuming therefore that initial, primary education was inadequate or not provided for. It implies that educational opportunities for adults:

- are designed to catch up what was missed
- in general serve vocational, professional or general education needs.

This focus on crisis literacy campaigns and interventions, which are primarily aimed at the adult-population suggests that South Africa is following a "weak" model (Elliott 1999:26) of lifelong learning (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: An illustration of the "weak" model of lifelong learning



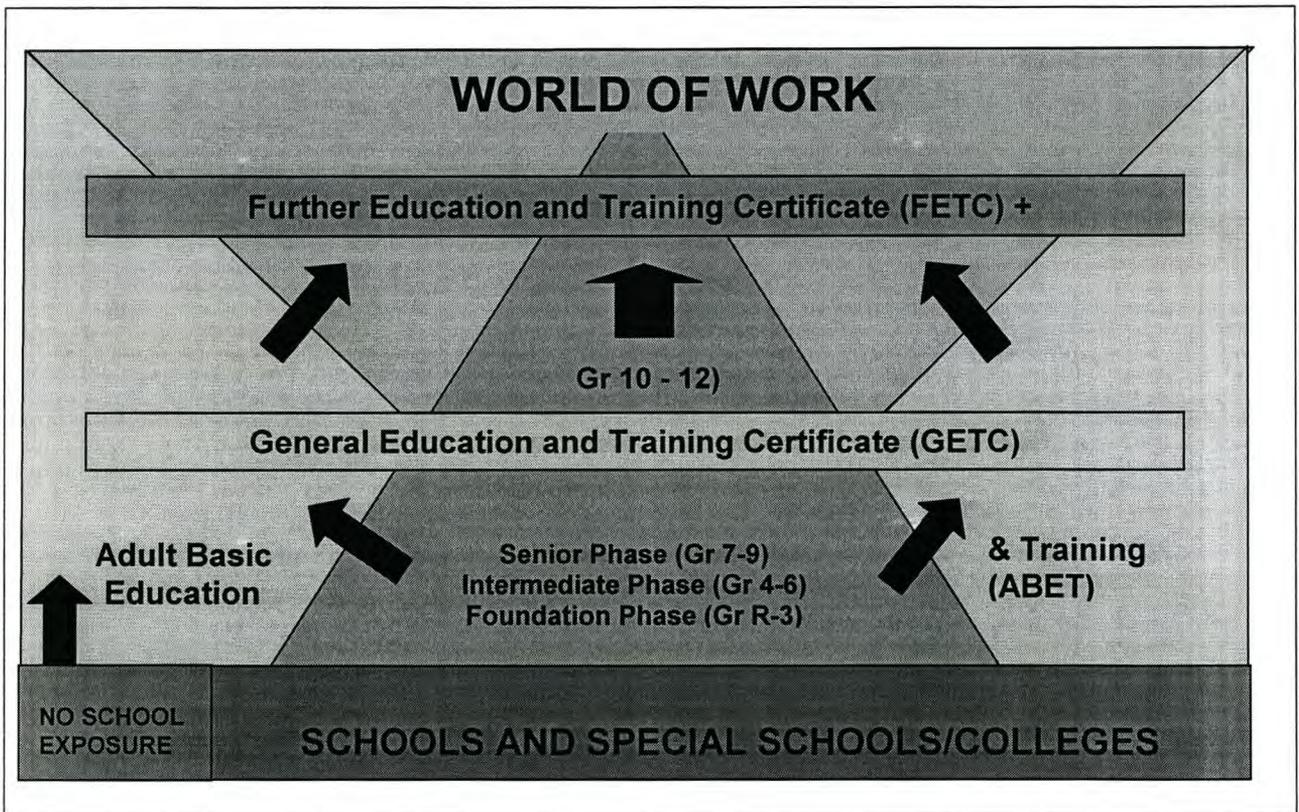
The explicit focus on literacy (Programme Four) for adult education (ABET) through the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) in the Tirisano Plan (2000:18) rests on

the faulty assumption that the compulsory schooling system addresses the learning of language, literacy and communication functionally and successfully. This is not the case however, and adult education classes remain full, despite increased numbers of learners in both primary and high schools.

In contrast, what Elliott (1999:26-27) refers to as the "strong" model (Figure 4.2) demands political and social change, asks questions about compulsory, primary schooling, and suggests:

"availability throughout the life span, maximisation of choice, vocational and non-vocational provision, prioritisation for those currently excluded from provision, focus on personal and social skills development, ... social relevance, avoidance of separation between learning and career choice, action on economic, social and psychological problems".

Figure 4.2: An illustration of the "strong" model of lifelong learning



The emphasis on nation building and democracy in this country calls for a "strong" model (Elliott 1999:26) of lifelong learning (1.7.2) to be adopted. This model would:

- envisage the empowerment of individuals and groups for the ultimate improvement and sustainable self-management of their lives irrespective of age
- place equal emphasis on literacy along the continuum of lifelong learning

- be explicit in its objectives to ensure that learners leave Grade 9 (GETC) functionally equipped to continue learning throughout their lives.

4.2.4 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The NQF (Appendix A) is defined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as:

"a social construct whose meaning has been and will continue to be negotiated by the people, for the people. It is a lifelong learning system that brings together South Africans from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds ..." (Qualifications Framework for the GETC for Compulsory Schooling 2001:29).

With reference to all qualifications at NQF Level 1 the primary purpose of the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) as outlined by (SAQA), is

"to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and values that will enable meaningful participation in society as well as continuing learning in further education and training, and provide a firm foundation for the assumption of a productive and responsible role in the workplace" (Department of Education, July 2001:3).

This vision of the NQF provides the needed scope to develop the potential of all learners within the educational system at large. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to focus on the General Education and Training (GET) Band i.e. NQF Level 1, particularly the formal school system. I believe the NQF mandates schools to play a vital part in the development of a culture of lifelong learning (Longworth & Davies 1996:15).

4.2.5 The Critical and Developmental Outcomes

The underlying principles (Appendix A), which support all qualifications at NQF level 1 are outlined in the NCS Grades R - 9: Qualifications Framework for the GETC for Compulsory Schooling (2001:4 and 24-25) as follows:

- *Access and portability*: there must be access to Further Education and Training.
- *Fairness and equality*: all learners must pass all eight learning areas.
- *Progression and transparency*: learners must be active participants in their progress and performance improvement plans.
- *Equity*: all learners regardless of race, gender, economic circumstance or geographic location are to have equal opportunity.

- *Integration and relevance*: the focus is to be on the full personal development of the learner as well as the social and economic development of the nation.
- *Flexibility*: learners are to be exposed to the broadest possible spectrum of areas of knowledge to enable them to choose to pursue learning from a broad range of possible learning pathways.

These principles require that the skills and the competencies, which the Critical and Developmental Outcomes reflect (Table 4.1), have, by definition, changed the way in which learning and teaching is viewed.

Table 4.1: The Critical and Developmental Outcomes

THE SEVEN CRITICAL OUTCOMES
<p><i>The individual should be able to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made. 2. work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community. 3. organise and manage him/herself and his/her activities responsibly and effectively. 4. collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. 5. communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation. 6. use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others. 7. demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.
THE FIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES
<p><i>The individual should be made aware of the importance of:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively. 9. participating as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities. 10. being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts. 11. exploring education and career opportunities. 12. developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

(Sourced from the Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training 1997:19-20; Department of Education, July 2001:35)

Moving from the narrow content-based approach to one more focused on equipping learners with skills, attitudes, values and competencies which can be applied across

contexts, necessitates a change in curriculum development and implementation. The concepts of lifelong learning - identified by the 1990 Creative Education Foundation as the "future skills requirements of productive citizens" (Longworth & Davies 1996:3) - show a distinct emphasis on the personal and interpersonal development of people through the advancement of their communication skills, thinking skills as well as teamwork and organisational skills. The relationship between the critical outcomes and lifelong learning, reveals that all the essential knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are reflected adequately in the critical outcomes. This provides teachers with the necessary framework to mine the gold in their learners (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: A comparison of the concepts of lifelong learning and the Critical Outcomes

CONCEPTS OF LIFELONG LEARNING	CRITICAL OUTCOMES
Teamwork	2
Problem-solving	1,4,7
Interpersonal skills	2,10
Oral communication	5
Listening	5
Personal/career development	3,9,11
Creative thinking	1
Leadership	6,12
Goal setting/motivation	8
Writing	5
Organisational development	11,12
Computation	5
Reading	5

(Sourced from Longworth & Davies 1996:3; Department of Education, July 2001:35)

In Table 4.3 the ten generic critical outcomes for the GET Band are listed in column 1. These outcomes have been compiled from the original 12 critical and developmental outcomes, and describe the envisaged successful GET learner. Column 2 shows the corresponding critical and developmental outcomes as drafted by SAQA.

Table 4.3: The characteristics of an envisaged GET learner

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ENVISAGED GET LEARNER EXITING NQF LEVEL 1	CRITICAL OUTCOMES
<p>In order to achieve future personal fulfilment and meaningful participation in society, to continue learning in Further Education and training, and to gain a firm foundation for a future career, the learner will need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. be equipped with the linguistic skills and the aesthetic and cultural awareness to function effectively and sensitively in a multilingual and multicultural society. 2. Display a developed spirit of curiosity to enable creative and scientific discovery and display an awareness of health promotion. 3. Adapt to an ever-changing environment, recognising that human understanding is constantly challenged and hence changes and grows. 4. use effectively a variety of problem-solving techniques that reflect different ways of thinking, recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. 5. use effectively a variety of ways to gather, analyse, organise and evaluate numerical and non-numerical information, and then communicate it effectively to a variety of audiences and models. 	<p>1,4,5,10</p> <p>1,5,6</p> <p>1,3,4,5,7</p> <p>1,5,7,8</p> <p>1,4,5</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. make informed decisions and accept accountability as a responsible citizen in an increasingly complex and technological society. 7. Display the skills necessary to work effectively with others and organise and manage him/herself, his/her own activities and leisure time responsibly and effectively. 8. Understand and show respect for the basic principles of human rights, recognising the inter-dependence of members of society and of society and the environment. 9. be equipped to deal with spiritual, emotional, material and intellectual demands in society. 10. have an understanding of, and be equipped to deal with the social, political and economic demands made of a South African as a member of a democratic society, in the local and global context. 	<p>1,5,9,11,12</p> <p>1,2,3,5,8,9</p> <p>1,6,7,5,9</p> <p>1,3,4,5,8</p> <p>1,3,5,9</p>

(Sourced from the Department of Education, July 2001:6-7)

The framework for developing productive citizens equipped with the necessary basic and functional skills has been provided for by the establishment of the NQF and the critical outcomes. The question is whether educational opportunities within the GET Band develop these life roles and fundamental cornerstones of lifelong learning effectively.

4.2.6 Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

The OBE system currently being phased into all educational institutions is also designed around the critical outcomes and essential life roles, but goes one further. It places strong emphasis on systemic accountability for the provision of the necessary services for these outcomes to be realised. Spady (1994:9) outlines the following underlying premises in support of the critical outcomes:

- all learners can succeed, but not necessarily on the same day or at the same level
- successful learning can result in more successful learning experiences
- schools can create the space and possibilities for success
- educators expect all learners to perform optimally.

Ideologically this has created the space for all learners to have access to optimal learning environments for the development of their respective potentials. The adoption of the philosophy of inclusion, which is focused on systematically removing all barriers to learning gives impetus to this ideal (Department of Education 2001:7). This raises many questions, not only about the rhetoric around lifelong learning, but also about issues of adequate and accessible provision of learning opportunities for all learners, irrespective of age.

"The demands made on children require urgent rethinking and reworking in order to ensure that the majority of pupils will be taught successfully in mainstream education. A reconstructed system needs to recognise cultural differences, linguistic diversity and socio-economic factors influencing educability" (Naicker 1999:22).

The real question is whether all children can be guaranteed access to general educational opportunities aimed specifically at assisting them to reach their full potential.

Lifelong learning is not explicit in the every-day curriculum business within the formal school sector. The learning experienced by learners within the school is shaped more by the objectives and outcomes drafted by the teachers and the system than by their

defined needs. Within the OBE framework there are endeavours which are focused on better contextualisation of learning material.

But to date, within the mainstream, it is only at the end of Grade 9 (GETC) that learners can take limited charge of their lifelong learning by making career pathway choices - albeit only in terms of subject choice or course of study. Within the special needs sector the business of curriculum adaptation focused more specifically on the individual needs of learners, and their appropriate development for the work sector i.e. lifelong learning, is much more visible (Education WHITE PAPER 6: Special Needs Education 2001:31).

4.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The concept of lifelong learning is an essential element of reaching one's full potential and is interwoven with being literate in complex ways. Baynham (1995:16) emphasises the interaction between linguistic and socio-political factors in the construction of literacy. Since both concepts operate within a historical context, literacy meanings are contingent and subject to change within different socio-historical frameworks.

The close relationship between literacy and the hegemonic order translates into educational practices aimed at reflecting the dominant culture (Powell 1999:18). Freire (1985:10) warns against a lack of integration between learning to read and write on the one hand, and learners' realities on the other. Within the South African situation, with its multicultural and multilingual make-up, this has resulted in policies and practices, which have served the ruling minority, but have not honoured nor done justice to *all* cultures and languages in the country.

The advent of OBE and the NQF have forced educational policy onto a new level. The introduction of new developments in literacy theory and language teaching inspire and draw teachers to workshops, but fundamentally general policy for sustained literacy development remains at the behest of each province, with little guidance from the national department. Not enough has been done to change the fundamental assumptions upon which specific decisions, made at both grassroots and policy level are based, and which affect language and literacy development within the broader context of lifelong learning directly and indirectly.

NGO's such as the National Language Project (NLP), PRAESA, Rotary, READ, and SAILI, working in partnership with the education authorities throughout the country,

endeavour to challenge old teaching methods and provide alternative solutions to deal with the increasing language and literacy problems within our schools.

Within the context of lifelong learning, literacy development can no longer be conceptualised as static set of skills which can be learnt and then applied in all contexts. It is essential to describe and define it within the parameters of learning for life, and this in turn demands both a functional and a critical emphasis (3.6).

4.4 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GET) BAND

As the individual progresses through the various levels of education, so the literacy demands change and increase exponentially (Sheehan-Holt & Smith 2000:226). Changes in the last decade have created the scenario for significant development within the educational sphere, but the concept of illiteracy continues to be generally perceived as an issue related more to the adult population and the "lost generation" of the 1970s and 1980s. Despite the fact that the schooling system's main aim and function is to ensure that the level of competence in literacy is sufficient to cope with everyday demands, it does not guarantee this for all (Verhoeven 1994:4). Harley *et al.* (1996:22) substantiate this by warning against making the assumption that the majority of learners who pass through the school system are functionally literate.

"Because of the very formal academic nature of most South African schooling, it is a matter of controversy as to what percentage of the school leavers at even high levels have genuine possession of the functional literacy and basic education that would equip them to function effectively in the world of work".

Learners only behave in critically literate ways when their mother tongues are valued and affirmed (Gee in Powell 1999:84). The present language policy serves to provide wide scope for language development within the school system, but fails to provide the practical implementation plan for this to be realised. The practical realities in schools prohibits the effective implementation and operationalisation of the policy. This results in huge literacy backlogs for millions of learners and continues to reflect low literacy levels within the school system. The level of literacy in South African schools is not sufficiently developed. The results of the research done in the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project reflect that the majority of Grade 4 learners assessed obtained scores for the literacy task that range between 25 - 50% (Strauss 1999:7) (Appendix C).

One cannot separate language and literacy issues. As the demographics of schools in South Africa change, there is increased pressure on schools to make politically and pragmatically motivated language choices which disregard the policy of mother tongue instruction in the initial grades (Lemmer 1996:324). These choices are most often in direct conflict with responsible and accountable educational practice. The underlying principle supporting the language-in-education policy is:

"to maintain home language(s) while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional language(s). Hence, ... an additive approach to bi- and multilingualism should be the normal orientation" (Bengu 1997:2).

The aims of the New Language-in-Education Policy (NLEP) (Bengu 1997:4-5) advocates to:

- promote full participation in society and the economy through equitable and meaningful access to education
- pursue the language policy most supportive of general conceptual growth amongst learners, and hence establish additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education
- promote and develop all the official languages
- support the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities
- counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of learning
- develop programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages.

Ironically the same policy provides for the protection of individual rights by stipulating that "the parent exercises the minor learner's language rights on behalf of the minor learner" (Bengu 1997:7). This results in making the policy unwieldy and difficult to implement.

4.4.1 A functional understanding (literacy across the curriculum)

UNESCO defines literacy very basically as "the ability to read and write in the mother tongue" (in Bhola 1994:10), but one can see what problems arise with such a narrow definition. For the purposes of this study, being literate is defined with strong emphasis on both the functional and the critical dimensions. Definitions of literacy which have

focused on the functional aspect are also varied. Hammond and Freebody make reference to Wells (1994:438) who describes the term as:

"being able as a member of a particular society, to cope with the demands of everyday life that involve written language. Such demands include being able to read a popular newspaper, write a job application, follow instructions that explain how to use a household gadget, or complete an official form".

Gambell (1989:56-57) quotes Hillerich's definition which refers to it being:

"that demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables an individual to function, appropriate to his age, independently in his society and with a potential for movement in that society".

For the purpose of this study therefore, being literate in a functional sense, shall refer to being able to communicate and express oneself age-appropriately, both on a written and spoken level, enabling one to participate as a lifelong learner within the worlds of school, work and citizenship towards optimising one's full potential (Table 3.3).

Defining literacy in this manner fits the ideological model of literacy and is also aligned with a "strong" (Elliott 1994:26) model of lifelong learning. This in turn implies a close link between school and society and ultimately an open continuum of learning opportunities for all learners.

The fundamental role which language and literacy play across the curriculum has gone relatively unnoticed in the curriculum development process. What is needed is an expanded understanding of literacy based on the recognition of the highly contextualised nature of the term. In distinguishing between autonomous and ideological models of literacy, the fundamental difference lies in the recognition of the role which contexts play in relation to being literate. In terms of pragmatics, literacy is usually described in functional terms (Gambell 1989:272).

"The premise of functional literacy within the context of the school culture is that a literate student is one who may gain access to information and transmit it to others ... The school's contribution to the literate graduate is one of ensuring his or her capability to access information and transmit it to different audiences for different purposes."

The explicit nature of its function across the curriculum demands that the development of literacy should receive priority, especially within the compulsory GET band. According to Gambell (1989:271), viewing language (and literacy) across the curriculum from a functional perspective means two things:

- Gaining power in all four language modes - speaking, listening, reading and writing - must take place in every school course at every level of schooling if this growth is to be substantive and substantial.
- Language across the curriculum stresses the inter-relationship of the modes - one learns to write as one learns to speak as one learns to read and listen. This rejects the teaching of reading and writing in isolation from each other.

This functional approach to developing language and literacy within the school needs to go beyond basic skills and teaching language as an end in itself. Like language, literacy is an instrument of cognition and reasoning and consequently, a tool for learning. Through language and literacy learners acquire their knowledge, attitudes, values and skills.

4.4.2 A critical understanding (critical citizenry)

To develop critically literate citizens who can engage in reasoning, problem-solving, reflection and making informed choices, requires a shift in teaching practices and policies of old that have served only to make learners relatively functional, but fundamentally passive in their learning. The emphasis has not been on empowering them critically nor challenging them to question their assumptions, thereby encouraging social responsibility and civic action (Powell 1999:80). This entails an ideological model of literacy which serves to empower learners to become "active meaning-making selves" (Routman 1996:6) through interpreting, analysing, evaluating and applying knowledge.

Being a critical citizen entails being able to make sense of the social, political and cultural world within which you live (Baynham 1995:24). For many learners their lived experiences differ vastly from their school experiences, hence what they learn at school does not necessarily help them understand their world or enable them to improve their lives by helping them to make more informed decisions. Powell (1999:33-37) maintains that the system used predominantly in schools to develop literacy skills does not serve to teach our learners to think. Rather it merely assists the system in keeping the learner masses within the parameters of the dominant ideology without developing them fully as citizens.

One of the aims of the NQF is for all individuals to develop their potential and to become fully-fledged citizens of this country, able to exercise informed choices, make

decisions which serve to improve their lives and to sustain themselves economically. Approaches to literacy practice within the autonomous model of literacy (3.4.1) do not necessarily lead to enhancing an individual's level of critical thinking or economic value. A reflection of this is the many young people who exit the school system with matric certificates, but are unable to utilise their skills functionally within the world of work or study.

4.5 CHALLENGES FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS

All this has implications for the nature of literacy policy and practice. Without a doubt, teachers serve as powerful role models for learners and especially where working parents have begun to play a lesser role, this is of vital importance to learners' development as people, and not just as learners.

4.5.1 Literacy development in the context of lifelong learning and nation building

The Critical Outcomes (Table 4.1), which underpin the OBE curriculum and the NQF, provide a framework within which the above-mentioned development can take place. Teachers and parents alike need to model these outcomes in their day-to-day lives, and need to educate learners in ways that are congruent with developing these characteristics explicitly. The development of lifelong learners and critical citizens needs to begin in early childhood.

The development of literacy does not occur overnight, however, and for sustained transformation and change, programmes need to begin in early childhood and run over a long period of time (Daswani 1994:289). It is essential within the South African context where, not only our children, but so many adults and youths are learning to read and write for the first time - not necessarily in their mother tongue - that the programmes focus strongly on learners' personal development as productive and participative citizens. A focus on literacy programmes, which includes both parents and children in functional endeavours aimed at improving their lives is essential within this framework.

"It has also become evident that literacy programmes must be planned in conjunction with programmes of universal primary education and continuing education" (Daswani 1994:289).

Verhoeven (1994:13) outlines the following causes of literacy problems:

- cultural and socio-economic background of people and poverty

- unemployment of parents, conflicts in the family or community correlate strongly with reading and writing difficulties
- factors within the educational system such as sizes of classes, lack of adequate resources, poor teacher training
- the cognitive capacity of learners and related learning difficulties.

I have identified the following challenges to illustrate the systemic hindrances, which serve to hamper literacy development in its broadest sense:

- teachers are loath to take responsibility for their learners' slow progress
- over-crowded classrooms and ineffective teacher support are cited as reasons for poor learning performances
- learners' socio-economic background is blamed for poor performance rather than a focus on possible problems with the teaching practices
- as a part of the inclusion policy, special needs learners are being accommodated in mainstream classrooms without teachers having the necessary skills to assist these learners effectively and with no access to class assistants/tutors
- the home environment and low levels of education in parents and a general lack of stimulation are still used to explain learners' lack of "readiness" for schooling
- school leavers are exiting the system with inadequate competency levels in reading and written language skills
- parents are still disempowered when it comes to challenging the education system in support of their children.

The challenges illustrated above highlight the fact that many barriers to learning are exogenous and are NOT located within the learner (Department of Education 2001:7), hence rendering the learner powerless to change the status quo.

4.5.2 Literacy development in the context of formal education and schooling

Teachers are also lifelong learners and need thorough training and re-education to be able to accommodate the changes expected of them from OBE, co-operative learning and other progressive pedagogic innovations. Learners, teachers and parents alike are all lifelong learners and should be given repeated opportunities to add value to their knowledge base and increase their competency levels.

There is thus an urgent need to look at the teaching practices employed in schools. The causes of literacy problems can be attributed to several complex factors, which Verhoeven (1994:13-14) cites as both endogenous (located within the learner) and as illustrated below, exogenous (located outside the learner i.e. environment). The complexity of language diversity in this country continues to compromise millions of native South Africans who are learning through the medium of English (Lemmer 1996:324). There are two common scenarios:

- A mismatch between the teaching language and the mother tongue of the learners as many English medium schools have enrolled African speakers in such numbers that the pupil majority are non-English speakers
- Many schools in predominantly African-speaking communities have elected to use English as the language of instruction, despite a general lack of proficiency in English by the teaching staff.

These scenarios are compounded by many problems within mainstream education practice. The following examples serve to highlight some of the problems in the GET Band which have a direct impact on literacy development:

- learners who struggle with reading are largely identified as special needs candidates (Ramarumo 1996:344)
- teachers are unable to discern between dyslexia and illiteracy (Ramarumo 1996:344)
- higher grade teachers are unable to assist learners with reading and writing difficulties
- learning support is inadequate or non-existent
- learners are still being kept back to "catch up"
- learners are being "passed" into higher grades without the necessary skills to cope and consequently fall further and further behind
- reading approaches in the classroom vary widely and many teachers lack the necessary training in reading methodology
- reading is only taught explicitly in the Foundation Phase and after Grade 3 learners are assumed "able to read" and therefore literate by their teachers

- teachers in the Foundation Phase (Grades R - 3) are seen to be primarily responsible for teaching learners to read and write
- in the higher grades only language teachers are involved with literacy development and are seen to be responsible for developing learners' language skills
- many learners are learning as second language learners as their parents have made conscious choices to educate them in English
- second language learners have little opportunity to utilise their first language in the classroom to make meaning and even less opportunity to practice their "school" language at home.

The principles underpinning the National Language in Education Policy (NLEP) suggest an emphasis on developing language in context, i.e. a functional model of language. Drawing on the systemic-functional model of language (Halliday in Hammond & Freebody 1994:425) entails placing a strong emphasis on the purpose of, and contexts in which literacies operate. Language and literacy become a vehicle for demonstrating skills and competencies just as much as skills and competencies are ways of demonstrating language and literacy skills.

From this perspective literacy, as a function of language, is developed as a means to understand the context of situations. This raises implications for literacy programmes (Hammond & Freebody 1994:427-428) insofar as learners need to be equipped within the schooling system with literacy skills across all the learning areas. Language should therefore not be taught only as a subject to be studied, but more importantly as a tool for thinking and learning (Gambell 1989:276). By definition, learners who are able to master the applied use of language to improve their thinking and learning, are in the functional sense of the word, literate.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

In this chapter literacy has been discussed within the context of lifelong learning, placing particular emphasis on its functionality and potential for human resource development. The OBE curriculum does in fact provide the scope to develop learners "for life", but fails to make this an explicit outcome. Table 4.1 juxtaposes the models of lifelong learning with models of literacy to illustrate the cohesion and links in the shift towards more liberal and empowerment-orientated approaches to lifelong learning and

literacy alike. Furthermore, broad definitions of these two concepts serve, yet again, on a different level of comparison, to highlight the conceptual synergy between literacy and lifelong learning.

Placing more emphasis on the culminating critical and developmental outcomes will ensure that teachers and learners alike are focused as much on curriculum content as they are on essential, and often intangible learning skills for life. It is my belief that these outcomes encompass our vision for lifelong learning, but my fear is that they are too implicit in the everyday business of the classroom, and so get lost.

Teachers have a cardinal role to play in this regard. Currently the responsibility for literacy development rests with primary grade and language teachers alone and literacy in the classroom remains narrowly focused on learning to read and write. A critical factor in building capacity in and adding value to the South African citizenry, is ensuring that, throughout the compulsory schooling phase, all learners acquire the necessary functional and critical literacy skills to express themselves adequately so that they can access their curriculum optimally. In this way a meaningful difference can be made towards ensuring people's long term personal, social and economic sustainability.

Developing functionally literate citizens who are able to hold their own in the workplace, tertiary education and society at large, has implications for both the policies and practices which we adopt with regards to literacy and general language pedagogy, both at macro and micro levels. Being able to utilise literacy skills in critical and informed ways is a sure way towards educating our learners in ways that will enable them to negotiate their lives successfully and independently. Recommendations in this regard will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 4.4: Aspects of lifelong learning

Concepts of lifelong learning	Definition of lifelong learning	Models of lifelong Learning		Models of literacy		Broad definitions Of literacy
Teamwork Problem-solving Interpersonal skills Oral communication Listening Personal/career development Creative thinking Leadership Motivation/goal setting Writing Organisational development Computation Reading	Lifelong learning (LLL) is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.	CONTINUING ADULT EDUCATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second-chance education for adult learners • a range of adult education provision serving vocational, professional and general education needs 	WEAK MODEL	AUTONOMOUS	Back to basics Skills development Deficit Medical Functional Critical Multi-cultural Social empowerment Personal empowerment Therapeutic	Literacy is a dichotomous concept based on the development of a linear hierarchical continuum of content-free skills Being functionally literate is seen as that demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables an individual to function, appropriate to her/his age, independently in her/his society and with a potential for movement in that society. Literacy is a functional construct based on the development of a collection of discrete, non-linear skills through purposeful, content application
		RADICAL LIFELONG LEARNING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predicated on a vision of an alternative education system which does not replicate previous inequalities in access • reaches back into the later years and practices of compulsory schooling • asks questions about schooling itself • requires availability • demands social and political change 	STRONG MODEL	IDEOLOGICAL		

(Sourced collectively from Baynham, Elliott, Gambell, Longworth & Davis, Macrine and Verhoeven)

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Literacy levels within the school system in South Africa are dropping despite the advent of OBE. Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres enrol learners who have often been through the school system, but are still not functionally literate in terms of lifelong learning. School leavers in the main (currently approximately 30% attend technical colleges), are often not trained appropriately for the economic sector or tertiary education when they exit after Grade 12 and struggle to get work. Attrition rates remain high with learners leaving school because of repeated failure.

Literacy business is currently enjoying high political priority and provides the impetus for much funding world-wide. However, it is essential for our country that the money received for literacy development be utilised in a sustainable way. Empowerment, self-reliance and autonomy are cited as crucial objectives of literacy education. This chapter aims to make recommendations to address the problems facing literacy education and development within the South African situation.

We need to take into account all the possible factors which have a direct impact on literacy proficiency within the compulsory schooling sector of the GET Band. It is essential that all learners leaving the system after nine to ten years of education are age-appropriately literate in functional and critical terms.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY IN SUPPORT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

My understanding about literacy, different approaches to literacy education and the importance of the functional and critical dimensions of literacy have grown in the process of this literature study. The move from the traditional understanding of functional literacy has highlighted the need to redefine our understandings, practices and policies with regard to literacy education.

The focus has shifted from regurgitating and memorising, decoding and interpreting in very passive ways, to a more enriched interpretation, which includes the critical dimension, purposeful in its support of learners to become an active part of what they are reading and writing. There must be an explicit focus on helping learners to find their voice, improve their lives and apply their literacy skills as operative tools for learning. Policies for literacy education are thus inextricably linked to the principle and business of lifelong learning.

"The internationally agreed goals of basic education are the consolidation of literacy and numeracy skills, the acquisition of life skills and lifelong learning skills" (Obanya 2001:13).

When looking at literacy development within the GET Band, one cannot ignore the issue of language or the specific issues related to reading and writing skills. The problems outlined in Chapter 4 (4.4.1) can be grouped into four main categories which correlate broadly with Verhoeven's causal factors mentioned above in 4.5.1, namely:

- Language related problems
- Reading and writing problems
- Systemic problems
- Environmental problems

In order to address these problems, I believe that the purpose of literacy within the GET Band needs to be defined quite clearly. The following sections 5.2.1 - 5.2.5 address these problems by looking at recommendations specific to lifelong learning and literacy policy, teacher development, literacy practice and research.

5.2.1 Recommendations specific to lifelong learning policy development

The school's contribution to the literate learner is one of ensuring his or her capability to access information and transmit it in different situations for different audiences for the purpose of expressing thoughts and ideas, solving problems and creating new knowledge. However, the school cannot guarantee that learners will be equipped to exercise their capabilities in any or all situations, for any or all possible audiences and for any or all purposes (Gambell 1989:273).

Education in the new millennium has broadened its base from formal content-based learning and memorisation to a more sociologically based process of understanding oneself in relation to the world and other people. The world of work requires of the

individual more than diligence and seeks self-help skills and entrepreneurship and the ability to handle constant change. Therefore, teaching and learning has to shift to allow learners to exercise and hone these skills and attitudes during their formative years.

UNESCO outlines four cornerstones upon which education should be built, and these serve as a valuable template to hold our curriculum up against (Table 5.1). Using these four as themes throughout the year, can provide teachers and learners alike with the opportunity to reflect on how balanced the learning programmes are and how far along the pathway of becoming self-actualised, effective and productive citizens they all are. Everything learners are experiencing should be able to be held up against one of these cornerstones - thereby ensuring that learning is functional and has value in terms of its applicability to and utility in learners' lives. The critical outcomes can be grouped to fit into these four categories (Appendix D).

Table 5.1: The four cornerstones of education for the new millennium.

<p>Learning to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquiring understanding and knowledge, learning how to learn 	<p>Learning to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational skills, working as part of a team, dealing with changing work situations
<p>Learning to live together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operative learning situations, working towards a common goal 	<p>Learning to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing oneself, interacting effectively with others

(Sourced from lecture notes from a workshop by Rattavich 1999, Bangkok and UNESCO, Delors Report 1998)

Schools are institutions that have clear societal functions in terms of preparing our young people to assume a contributing role in society (Hoffman 2000:616). Given the framework of the critical outcomes, it is therefore essential that teachers make these the foundation on which they build their teaching practice - regardless of discipline or subject area.

5.2.2 Recommendations specific to literacy policy development

Literacy needs to be constructed differently within the OBE and NQF, ensuring that the critical outcomes are realised. The way in which we approach the literacy development within our school system at present, is not essentially functional nor congruent with the critical outcomes of the NQF. In the National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, July 2001) no reference is made explicitly to literacy. I believe this to be

symptomatic of the implicit nature of literacy to our curricular endeavours. The lack of clear guidelines for, and explicit requirements of, teachers across the curriculum with regard to literacy development is noticeable. Thus, the development of literacy skills as generic skills for learning and thinking receive little, or no, explicit attention as fundamental tools of lifelong learning.

According to Hammond and Freebody (1994:428) an effective language programme takes into account:

- the context: the programme should make use of the "real" contexts in which both spoken and written interactions usually take place
- the purpose: the programme needs to consider the inter-relationship between the purposes for which the language is used and on the other hand, how purpose shapes language
- the text: the programme should make use of whole written texts within context.

Since being literate is in essence the functional application of language for learning, it is essential that outcomes are drafted explicitly for literacy. A credible literacy policy within primary education (i.e. GETC) needs to take into account several important factors, which affect curriculum implementation, teacher-training, education networking across sectors and learner support. These factors include:

- the progressive operationalising of OBE and its impact on schools, teachers and learners alike
- the pre-service and in-service training of teachers
- the strategic plans of other sectors such as ABET, ECD and ELSEN
- the socio-economic circumstances of learners and their families.

What is needed is a cohesive, systemically-based policy straddling the continuum of learning, joining home, school and work and thus enabling an onslaught on literacy which touches all corners of the community. Literacy is everybody's business. The following strategy for literacy policy development as suggested by Powell (1999:65) could be used as a framework:

- Literacy instruction ought to promote freedom of thought through encouraging diverse perspectives and welcoming productive critique.

- Literacy instruction ought to enhance students' communicative competence by considering the social, cultural and hegemonic dimensions of language use.
- Literacy instruction ought to be consciously political and aim to empower learners to improve their lives.
- Literacy ought to be taught in ways that make students aware of the power of language for transformation.
- Literacy ought to be taught in ways that nurture a culture of compassion and care.

Developing literacy policy within this framework would ensure that the critical outcomes are reflected not only in what is taught, but also in how it is taught and what learning environments are created for our learners. Freebody and Luke (in Verhoeven 1994:440) suggest the following competencies as the necessary minimum for learners to be regarded as functionally literate:

- *to crack the orthographic code* - i.e. develop the resources and levels of awareness to be able to work with the phonological relationships between sounds and letters, the conventions of print of formatting and directionality and the gradual control of spelling conventions
- *to understand the internal structure and purposes of text* - i.e. to develop the resources called upon to understand narrative texts
- *to crack the pragmatic code of using a text in a particular context* - i.e. to develop an understanding of the socially and culturally constructed purposes of using texts in particular ways e.g. reading a novel or writing a summary
- *the ability to analyse texts critically* - i.e. to develop the resources and levels of awareness that allow an appreciation of texts as crafted objects, written by persons with particular dispositions and orientations to the content about which they are writing.

Since policy drives practice, within this framework, an effective literacy programme should address all four areas of competence from the beginning. Emergent literacy learners, as well as advanced learners, should be presented with texts and literacy experiences that are complex and sophisticated from the start.

Walker and Rattanavich (1992:96) list the following characteristics of an ideal literacy programme in the context of a developing country:

- It should be inexpensive (i.e. accessible and viable even to the poorest schools and learners).
- The teaching methodology should suit the widest possible range of children (i.e. respond to diverse needs, both linguistically and cognitively).
- The teaching methodology should be uncomplicated (i.e. possible even where teachers have not received much pedagogy).
- The reading programme should relate strongly to everyday life (i.e. use learners' realities to ensure maximum ownership).
- It should bring rapid results (i.e. motivate teachers and learners alike through the achievement of success and enhanced learning performances).

An example of this kind of approach to teaching literacy is the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) programme currently being phased into several schools within the Western Cape. This genre-based programme is based on learner-generated texts, active text construction and a high degree of integration between speaking, reading and writing (Rattanavich 1992:14). Within the parameters of the National Curriculum Statement on Languages for Grades R – 9 (Department of Education, July 2001), this approach is well situated to address the principle of integrated language learning.

More importantly, the CLE teaching methodology is aimed at ALL teachers and is constructed around the principle of scaffolding, which refers to active mediation on the part of the teacher in order for learners to maximise their meaning-making - irrespective of subject area (Rattanavich 1992:12).

5.2.3 Recommendations specific to teacher development

Education policy in South Africa is in a state of flux and transforming continually. This has left teachers unstable and over-whelmed by the volume of work they need to muster and understand before they are OBE-proficient. There are explicit guide-lines for how the teaching ethos should change broadly speaking, but what is lacking are specific guidelines for how the essence of the teaching practice, and literacy didactics in particular, should change.

An obvious area for improving literacy practice is teacher training. Macrine (1999:15) maintains that one needs to develop literacy both for teachers and learners i.e. teachers need to be empowered before they can empower learners to be effective in

literacy terms. Teachers define what happens in the classroom and are responsible for providing the learning experiences and environments in which meaningful learning is to take place (Elliott 1999:25).

Teachers are expected to do things better with the new terminology, but little new pedagogy or methodology has been embedded to ensure that essential changes take place in the classroom. Teachers are not given enough opportunity to engage in debates around the purpose of education and learning, and hence their own conceptual frameworks do not change and they regard new innovations such as OBE as an add-on and ineffective attempt on the part of the state to improve education. The bottom line is, only teachers can change what is happening in the classroom.

If one follows a "strong" model of lifelong learning as Elliott suggests, and strengthens this with practices based within an ideological model of literacy, the outcomes for literacy development in terms of deeply embedded improvements in literacy and consequently learning levels, both in functional and critical terms become more achievable. I understand this to mean that any meaningful change in literacy teaching necessarily involves educating and training/enskillling teachers with skills and knowledge which they identify as a priority, and not relying on a policy decision based on perceived teacher needs.

Gambell (1989:278) outlines the following pointers for the literacy role of teachers:

- All teachers at all levels are teachers of literacy across the curriculum.
- All teachers need to assume responsibility for understanding the cognitive, social and attitudinal inter-relationships between language and learning.
- All teachers need to structure a learning climate in which students can explore learning in subject areas through all language modes.

Trusting teachers' intrinsic knowledge of their learners and themselves, and helping them develop their pedagogy accordingly is a good start to ensure relevance and increased performance levels. Longworth & Davies (1996:88) outline the following challenges for teacher education in terms of the development of the habit of learning (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Challenges to teacher education for developing lifelong learning habits

TEN CHALLENGES TO THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS	
1.	Helping to establish a cradle-to-grave habit of learning
2.	Providing leadership locally nationally and globally
3.	Continuously developing and upgrading skills and knowledge
4.	Developing values - organisational, national, societal and personal
5.	Auditing the learning needs of the whole community
6.	Developing appropriate partnerships to enrich learning
7.	Carrying out and using research that focuses on the needs of the learner
8.	Making effective use of the new learning technologies
9.	Creating national and international networks and using them effectively
10.	Creating non-threatening and portable accreditation and validation systems

(Sourced from Longworth & Davies 1996:88)

When the focus of the literacy programme is on basic reading skills, it does not necessarily translate into increased literacy proficiency. Sheehan-Holt & Smith (2000:241-242) did a study on adult learners involved in basic literacy programmes and reported findings that indicate an increase in idiosyncratic goals for participants, but no pervasive improvement in generalised literacy abilities.

"Today, children need to be prepared for much more than book literacies. The rapid appearance in many of our classrooms of networked information and communication technologies requires us to fundamentally redefine our literacy curriculum" (Leu 2000:424).

The pandemic of poor reading performances and low literacy levels poses the question whether the narrow definition of literacy, and the overemphasis on non-integrated basic skills - programmes which focus on phonics, writing and reading as sub-skills are, even within OBE, continuing to contribute to this problem (Appendix C).

The principle of integration underpinning OBE in our schools makes provision for the absorption of other learning area content into the language programmes (NCS: Languages 2001:8). Conversely, equipping all teachers with the skills to become "literate" or "read" their learning area will ensure that learners have open access to the learning, which is expected. Learners, in turn, will begin to apply the skills and knowledge they have learnt in their language programme in meaningful and functional ways across the curriculum - giving teachers opportunities to ascertain whether genuine learning has, in fact, taken place.

In a lifelong learning world the notion of teacher is redefined, since the teacher is also a participant in the process of lifelong learning, and thereby becomes a facilitator of learning environments in which teacher and learners learn together (Longworth & Davies 1996:92). Teachers and parents serve as both literacy and lifelong learning models for learners. Routman (1996:166) maintains that "if we want our students to be thinkers, researchers, collaborators, readers, writers, and evaluators, then they need to see us thinking, researching, collaborating, reading, writing, and evaluating".

Conceptualising literacy as an essential cross-curricular outcome implies that all teachers at all levels of schooling need to be trained in understanding the language of their subject area. In this way they are then able to construct learning climates in their classrooms where learners can explore their understanding and extend their learning (Gambell 1989:278). Teachers are managers of learning and they must be supported to create the conditions in which effective learning can take place.

5.2.4 Recommendations specific to literacy practice

Challenges arise out of the increasing diversity which teachers face as a result of the diverse backgrounds which both the student population and newly drafted education policies e.g. inclusion, represent. Teachers are not equipped sufficiently to teach literacy in its broadest sense. Reading approaches abound, but little enskillment takes place after their initial pre-service training. There is little integration of writing with reading, and classrooms reflect a worksheet culture, which keeps learners pinned in a passive role.

McCarthy and Dressman (2000:548) use the metaphor of "a multicultural quilt, made up of the diverse experiences and realities of the children and teachers, and stitched together by their contacts with one another within the seams of the school" to highlight these challenges. This also illustrates the need for a different approach to curriculum design - particularly for literacy development. Within this context:

- literacy education is on local, situational literacies
- skills are taught in context
- students have multiple opportunities to work in small groups
- students have many choices about the tasks in which they engage

- students read and critique texts created from a variety of sources and points of view that reflect the diversity of their cultural, racial, social and linguistic backgrounds
- teachers are knowledgeable about students' backgrounds and design literacy instruction in a culturally responsive manner
- there is greater parental involvement through the closer relationship between instruction and related community issues.

Literacy is, in essence, a cross-curricular responsibility. It straddles all learning areas, and all learning - be it formal or informal. Learning results from meaningful interactions between learner and teacher, learner and learner and learner and resources.

I view literacy across the curriculum as the operative tool for making critical thinking and meaningful learning happen. I see becoming literate as a lifelong process that is shaped primarily by the individual's social, vocational and educational needs along the way. Critical instructional needs which should be addressed are:

- more reading instruction across the phases and not only in the Foundation Phase
- more difficult texts, especially for average and better readers, and more appropriate, not less, reading for weaker readers
- a wider range of genres (text types) from early on to enable learners to engage in different styles of writing
- more active dialogue, critical analysis and synthesis of information from multiple texts by the learners themselves
- more active and co-operative involvement on the part of learners with regard to the writing and editing of texts
- more emphasis on meaningful and relevant vocabulary throughout the grades and across the learning areas.

Literacy needs to be seen in the context of the wider social environment (Hasan 1996:379). Literacy education is often seen as a necessary criterion for preparing children for life's opportunities (Leu & Kinzer 2000:113). Hasan (1996:385) explains "meaning making" as a lifelong process entailing both, quotidian or natural language development as with mother tongue acquisition, as well as specialised language development as in more formal contexts e.g. school. It is not a case of either/or - both lines need development for the individual to benefit maximally. This complicates the

issue of literacy development within a multilingual country such as South Africa even further, as reading materials are often not available in all the languages, which consequently makes mother tongue education in the initial years difficult, if not impossible.

It is therefore essential for all teachers to be primarily involved with Critical Outcome 5: (i.e. to communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written representation). This outcome forms the basis for all learning and should to be regarded as the generic outcome for building literacy competencies.

5.2.5 Recommendations specific to literacy research

How literacy is defined, taught and assessed, are all the result of both deliberate and tacit social negotiation (Hruby 2001:59).

"I believe ... there is actually considerable agreement, for example, on the importance of phonological awareness, learning the systematic relationships between letters and sounds, and meaningful and authentic literacy experiences. We do have some consensus on some key ingredients of a healthy literacy diet" (Goldenberg 2000:640).

The aims and objectives of this research study have been to do a comprehensive literature review of literacy, as well as look at possibilities in terms of redefining its meaning in the South African context. I am of the opinion that further research in this regard is urgently needed. The following areas of interest are listed as possible research projects:

- research in terms of drafting formal literacy policies both at provincial and national level for all role players within NQF Level 1
- helping schools to draft explicit literacy policies that operationalise their language policies in tangible and functional ways
- designing a continuing education programme for teachers to equip them as literacy facilitators - regardless of subject area and across all grades. The focus would shift depending on the teaching phase i.e. Foundation, Intermediate or Senior Phase
- a longitudinal study looking at the effects of the Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) approach being implemented in Western Cape schools - both on teachers' understanding of literacy and on literacy learning across the curriculum

- a baseline survey of the different approaches used in schools to teaching reading and writing and comparing this to corresponding functional literacy levels
- the merits of including literacy as a generic critical outcome giving substance to the national goal of building a literate nation.

5.3 THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THIS STUDY

The following shortcomings of this study have been identified:

- This study is not a critique of adult education, but refers to it in the broader framework of literacy development, thereby acknowledging its role in how literacy is constructed within the larger education system.
- This study is not exhaustive in terms of pressing issues with regard to literacy education.
- The scope of literacy was too wide for a project of this size. It needed to be more focused.
- The comparative nature of the study employs several concepts simultaneously, which makes it at times cumbersome and unwieldy.

5.4 THE CONCLUSIONS ARRIVED AT IN THIS STUDY

Being purposefully or functionally literate is a critical life role/skill, forms the foundation for lifelong learning, and empowers individuals to live fully in the world. Being literate within society has to include understanding one's world and consequently, being able to make choices which improve one's lived reality, rather than simply being able to read and write. Literacy needs to be redefined in terms of its communicative function. Teachers and parents alike need to become literate models, both on oral and written levels.

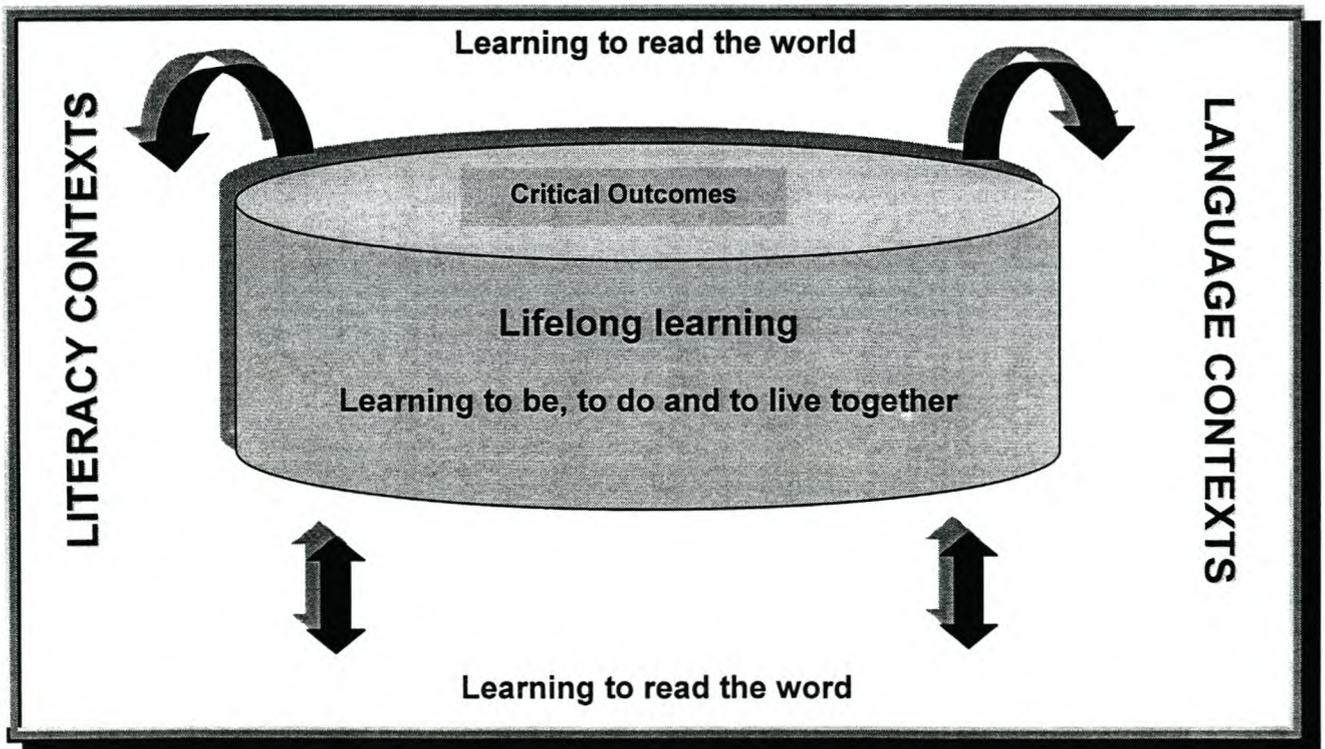
Perspectives offer ample opportunity to examine the elements, purpose and nature of literacy from different vantage points in a holistic and interrelated way. Researchers who are adherents of New Literacy Studies adopt this integrated approach and aim to look collectively at the divergent views on literacy, respecting that different perspectives have different foci and that they yield a wide variety of information on literacy within a broad framework (Rassool 1999:36). This study has endeavoured to find common ground between these perspectives and create a conceptual framework for rethinking literacy development within the context of lifelong learning and education for life, rather

than within specific contexts. Table 5.3 at the end of the chapter outlines this comparative framework.

Smith (in Gambell 1989:64) warns against the "overselling" of basic literacy as the panacea for all the social and economic ills which particularly impoverished communities are facing. He outlines the following fallacies:

- People who can read and write are not better people than those who cannot
- Being able to read and write does not make one feel better, nor equip one with higher values
- Being able to read and write does not necessarily make people more intelligent - thinking and communication does that
- Being literate does not guarantee work, but work almost guarantees specific literacies
- Being able to read and write does not equate being literate.

Figure 5.1: The link between literacy and lifelong learning



OBE creates the ideal space for literacy to be developed as the foundation of lifelong learning. With a strong focus on literacy across the curriculum, all learning and teaching is rooted in making meaning and understanding oneself and the world better. Given the diversity which learners in this country represent, it is essential that the focus on the critical outcomes becomes a more explicit focal point daily within the classroom. Tangible experiences and activities should be created in order for learners (i.e. children and teachers alike) to reflect on their progress towards becoming the best citizens possible. I can say it no better than Powell (1999:121) when she urges us to focus on developing

"a literacy that is child-centred and socially liberating, that enhances both our sense of individual worth and our collective consciousness, and that nourishes relationships of mutual care while compelling us to work for a more just and compassionate society".

Shifting the emphasis of literacy campaigns and literacy education to include all GET institutions i.e. ABET centres, mainstream schools, schools for learners with special educational needs and pre-schools would align such initiatives with a strong model of lifelong learning (Elliott 1999:6). This implies that the interventions are aimed at transforming education and making an impact on learner development along the continuum of lifelong learning, and not just be reactive to deficits and shortcomings within the general education (i.e. compulsory schooling) years. Since neither literacy (Leu 2001:568), nor lifelong learning, are static entities, their development needs consistent support along the entire continuum.

The link between literacy, the Critical Outcomes and lifelong learning illustrates the central role which literacy should play in the empowerment of the people of South Africa (Figure 5.1). Equipping citizens with the necessary functional life skills to manage and improve their lives must be at the heart of the business of education. The crucial issue with the nature of literacy is that it is not an end in itself, nor a set of skills to be learnt, but rather a means toward optimising the individual worth of every learner.

"It is an attitude toward the world. A literate attitude makes learning to read and write both possible and productive" (Smith in Gambell 1989:65).

Literate, thinking and skilled citizens have a better chance of claiming their just and rightful place in the family, community, economy and nation.

5.5 THE WAY FORWARD

Using the social, political and economic contexts within which we live as the content-base for understanding our world better will lead to a fundamental shift in the learning which takes place in our schools. Learners have to begin to make sense of their realities and teachers need to provide the learning environment where such questioning and learning can occur. Teachers need to become effective and relevant role models, in this particular case functionally and critically literate, lifelong learning role models.

Within the South African situation with its multicultural and multilingual make-up, it is essential that literacy policy and practices are developed which honour and do justice to all cultures and languages. Being "literate" in the broadest sense within a society must, by definition, include being knowledgeable about the collective culture which is shared by all. Powell's (1999:127) sentiments, appropriate in a South African context, suggest a vision for addressing the socio-economic ills which will befall younger generations unless things change fundamentally.

"Our society suffers from enormous social and economic problems, problems that demand a moral imagination that is embedded within an ethic of caring. These problems will not be addressed through our silence, but rather will only be solved by teachers and students ... who have begun to transcend their former limited visions resulting from their own school experiences and articulate rationality. Teachers must ... begin to question why they are educating, and whose purposes it ultimately serves. For it is only in seeking answers to these questions that teachers will come to understand the need for a critical, proper literacy for both themselves and their students - one that will allow them to interrogate their own reality and will empower them to work for change" (Powell 1999:127).

It is morally responsible to equip and support teachers as learners in this lifelong endeavour towards a truly literate, self-sufficient and empowered nation. Only when the capacity in every teacher is recognised and maximum effort is put into developing them as functional role models for their learners, will the benefits of the liberal educational transformation which this country aspires to, be reaped.

5.6 A FINAL CONCLUSION

The necessary synergy between curriculum change and social transformation in South Africa is not sufficiently explicit in the everyday business of teaching and learning. Democracy has to be moved from being an ideal and a vision to being part of the every-

day business of teaching and learning. Learners need to be equipped with the personal knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will ensure that they become the most they can be - productive, fulfilled and proud citizens of their country, able to make informed decisions and responsible choices.

Being literate in a functional and critical sense is a crucial part of that. Learners of all ages and in all schools need to be developed in ways that enables them to communicate and express themselves, both on a written and spoken level. This will enable them to participate as lifelong learners within the worlds of school, work and citizenship and build sustainable capacity by optimising every individual's full potential. This is at the heart of a true democracy.

Table 5.3: A comparison of literacy models and models of lifelong learning

Cornerstones of learning (UNESCO)	Concepts of lifelong learning	Definition of lifelong learning	Models of lifelong Learning		Models of literacy	Broad definitions Of literacy
Learning to be	Teamwork Problem-solving Interpersonal skills Oral communication	Lifelong learning (LLL) is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments.	CONTINUING ADULT EDUCATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second-chance education for adult learners a range of adult education provision serving vocational, professional and general education needs 	WEAK MODEL	AUTONOMOUS	Literacy is a dichotomous concept based on the development of a linear hierarchical continuum of content-free skills Being functionally literate is seen as that demonstrated competence in communication skills which enables an individual to function, appropriate to her/his age, independently in her/his society and with a potential for movement in that society.
Learning to do	Listening Personal/career development Creative thinking Leadership					
Learning to know	Motivation/goal setting Writing Organisational development Computation				Deficit Medical Functional Critical Multi-cultural Social empowerment	
Learning to live together	Reading					

(Sourced collectively from UNESCO, Baynham, Elliott, Gambell, Longworth & Davis, Macrine and Verhoeven)

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APPENDIX A: NQF STRUCTURE AND PRINCIPLES

1. The Structure of the National Qualifications Framework

NQF Level	Band	Types of Qualifications and Certificates		Locations of Learning for units and qualifications		
8	Higher Education and Training Band	Doctorates Further Research Degrees		Tertiary/research/ Professional Institutions		
7		Higher Degrees Professional Qualifications		Tertiary/research/ Professional Institutions		
6		First Degrees Higher Diplomas		Universities/Technikons/ Colleges/Private/Professional Institutions/Workplace etc.		
5		Diplomas, Occupational certificates		Universities/Technikons/ Colleges/Private/Professional Institutions/Workplace, etc.		
Further Education and Training Certificates = FETC						
4	Further Education and Training Band	School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all.		Formal High schools/ Private State Schools	Technical/ Community/ Police/ Nursing/ Private Colleges	RDP and Labour Market schemes/ Industry Training Boards/ Union/ Workplace, etc.
3		School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all.				
2		School/College/Training Certificates Mix of units from all.				
General Education and Training Certificates = GETC						
1	General Education And Training Band	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4	Formal schools (Urban/ Rural/ Farm/ Special)	Occupation/ Work-based training/ RDP/ Labour Market schemes/ Upliftment programmes/ Community programmes	NGO'S/ Churches/ Night schools/ ABET programmes/ Private providers/ Industry training boards/ Unions/ Workplace, etc.
		Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3			
			ABET Level 2			
		Foundation Phase	ABET Level 1			
		Pre-school				

(Sourced from Understanding the National Qualifications Framework: A Guide to Lifelong Learning 1996:24)

2. The Principles Underpinning the National Qualifications Framework

1. **Legitimacy and democratic participation:** the wide range of representatives are involved in the planning and co-ordination of standards and qualifications.
2. **Integration:** the bringing together of education and training will allow for easier movement from one level of learning to another.
3. **Relevance:** the provision of opportunities for people to gain the skills, knowledge, experience and understanding necessary to build a strong, productive and skilled workforce.
4. **Credibility:** standards recognised by the NQF will be accepted nationally and internationally.
5. **Coherence:** areas of learning should be connected to each other.
6. **Flexibility:** the provision of different routes, which will lead to the same ends - both formally and informally.
7. **Quality:** standards and qualifications developed will ensure a good quality education and training system.
8. **Access:** the provision of an open system where one can enter and exit the different levels of education and training by crediting one's previous experience.
9. **Progression:** the NQF allows you to move through different levels by gaining credits and qualifications that are nationally recognised.
10. **Portability:** allows you to transfer qualifications and credits more easily from one learning situation to another.
11. **Articulation:** allows you to move between the education and work environments according to you circumstance and choice.
12. **Recognition of prior learning:** by assessing your understanding, information and skills the NQF allows you to gain recognition for previous learning done either formally or informally.
13. **Equality of opportunity:** the provision of common learning outcomes.

(Sourced from Understanding The National Qualifications Framework 1996:15-20)

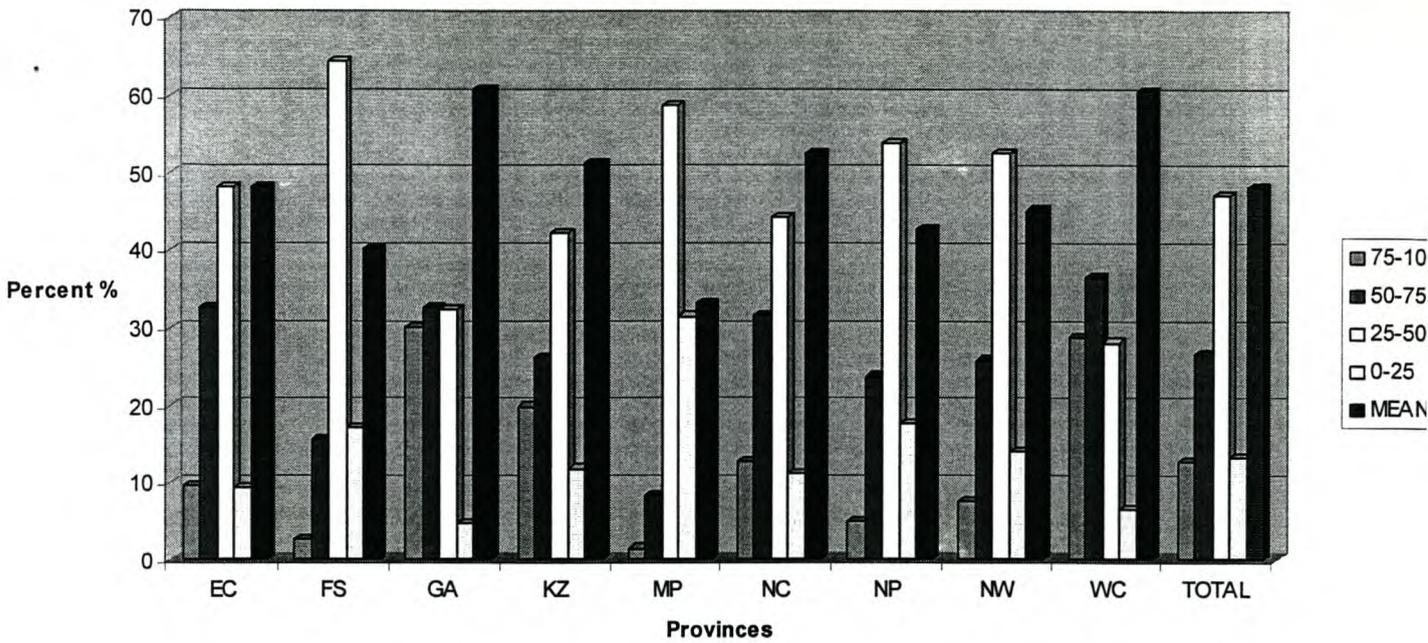
APPENDIX B: THE TWELVE CRITICAL OUTCOMES

CRITICAL CROSS-FIELD OUTCOMES	
The first seven are aimed at developing reflective, independent and productive citizens:	
1.	Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.
2.	Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation or community.
3.	Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.
4.	Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
5.	Communicate effectively using visual mathematical and or language skills in the modes or oral and/or written presentation.
6.	Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.
7.	Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.
In order to develop the full potential of every learner, it is essential that all programmes of learning must make the learner aware of:	
8.	Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively.
9.	Participating as a responsible citizen in the life local, national and global communities.
10.	Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.
11.	Exploring education and career opportunities; and
12.	Developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

(Sourced from the NCS 2001:35)

APPENDIX C: MLA REPORT

Cumulative results for the LITERACY task per province, MLA 1999



	EC	FS	GA	KZ	MP	NC	NP	NW	WC	TOTAL
75-100	9.67	2.61	30.01	19.84	1.47	12.76	4.93	7.61	28.87	12.82
50-75	32.63	15.65	32.72	26.16	8.3	31.63	23.72	25.8	36.56	26.78
25-50	48.3	64.57	32.47	42.17	58.73	44.39	53.79	52.61	28.13	47.14
0-25	9.4	17.17	4.8	11.83	31.5	11.22	17.56	13.98	6.44	13.27
MEAN	48.19	40.2	60.94	51.4	33.2	52.69	42.75	45.2	60.68	48.1

Details of MLA results for the nine provinces on the LITERACY task. (Sourced and adapted graphically from the Discussion Document on Monitoring Learner Achievement (MLA) Project 1999:7)

APPENDIX D: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE CRITICAL OUTCOMES AND UNESCO CORNERSTONES

CHARACTERISTICS OF GET LEARNER	CRITICAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES	UNESCO CORNERSTONES OF LEARNING
<p>In order to achieve future personal fulfilment and meaningful participation in society, to continue learning in Further Education and Training, and to gain a firm foundation for a future career, the learner will need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be equipped with the linguistic skills and the aesthetic and cultural awareness to function effectively and sensitively in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. 2. Display a developed spirit of curiosity to enable creative and scientific discovery and display an awareness of health promotion. 3. Adapt to an ever-changing environment, recognising that human understanding is constantly challenged and hence grows. 4. Use effectively a variety of problem-solving techniques that reflect different ways of thinking, recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. 5. Use effectively a variety of ways to gather, analyse, organise and evaluate numerical and non-numerical information, and then communicate it effectively to a variety of audiences and models. 6. Make informed decisions and accept accountability as a responsible citizen in an increasingly complex and technological society. 7. Display the skills necessary to work effectively with others and organise and manage herself/himself, her/his own activities and her/his leisure time responsibly and effectively. 8. Understand and show respect for the basic principles of human rights, recognising the inter-dependence of members of society and of society and the environment. 9. Be equipped to deal with spiritual, emotional, material and intellectual demands in society. 10. Have an understanding of, and be equipped to deal with the social, political and economic demands made of a South African as a member of a democratic society, in the local and global context. 	<p>The individual should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made. 2. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community. 3. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively. 4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. 5. Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation. 6. Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others. 7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. <p>The learner should be made aware of the importance of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively. 9. Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities. 10. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts. 11. Exploring education and career opportunities. 12. Developing entrepreneurial opportunities. 	<p>Learning in the new millennium entails:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to do *(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11) • Learning to know *(1,3,4,5,6,7,10,11,12) • Learning to be *(3,8,9,10) • Learning to live together *(2,7) <p>*() corresponding critical outcomes</p>

[Sourced and adapted from NCS (2001):6-7, 35; UNESCO (1998)]