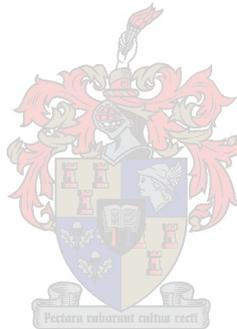


**A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF OUTCOMES BASED  
EDUCATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION OF  
EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

**THEODORE IAN LINDERTS**



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## **DECLARATION**

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

**DATE: 10 OCTOBER 2003**

**Theodore Ian Linderts**

## SUMMARY

South Africa had its first democratic elections in April 1994. This achievement was the start of a bold break from the apartheid era and was signified by a new wave of optimism that swept the country. Democratic rule and practice has been hailed as the goal so long fought for and this has finally been realised. In an effort to sustain the optimism and to widen the cleavage between the old and the new, South African policy makers set out on a course of major policy changes that affected all spheres of South African life. Education is but one sphere that did not get spared and on 24 March 1997 the break from the past was achieved with the adoption of Outcomes-based Education as the official educational approach through the introduction of Curriculum 2005.

In this study I will argue the concept of democracy and highlight some of the different interpretations that people hold. This is done to establish a conceptual framework against which the South African democracy can be measured. Further issues related to the implementation of democracy in South Africa are debated to give a clear indication of which direction the South African government is steering this process.

I will also discuss the introduction of Outcomes-based Education and focus on the reasons why policy makers decided to adopt this particular educational approach. Various concepts that tie in with Outcomes based Education are explained and offer the reader a opportunity to form an understanding of how the system functions.

The research consists of six chapters, with each chapter offering a different perspective on the research topic. Chapter 2 contains a conceptual clarification of various concepts relating to the study and these clarifications are informed by the views of various authors. Chapter 3 deals with the issue of democracy and has two objectives. Firstly, the construction of a common understanding of what is meant by the term democracy, and secondly, the formation of a framework against which the South African society could be assessed.

The main theme of Chapter 4 is the advent of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa, and reference to the North American experience is made for the purpose of comparison. In the discussion on the criticisms of Outcomes-based Education the researcher highlights an alternative perspective and discusses the proponents' point of view. This is offered for the purposes of presenting an informed discussion, but also for the sake of comparison.

In Chapter 5 the researcher presents a view of South African Society against the framework set out in Chapter 3. The second section of the chapter deals with Outcomes-based Education and its possibilities for the deepening of democracy in South Africa.

The study concludes with a summary of the various issues that were dealt with and suggestions offered. Lastly, recommendations on how this process can be taken forward are offered which includes suggestions for further research.

## OPSOMMING

Suid Afrika het sy eerste demokratiese verkiesing in April 1994 gehad. Hierdie mylpaal was die begin van 'n bepalende breek met die apartheid era en was gekenmerk aan 'n flaag van optimisme wat die land gesweep het. Die bereiking van demokrasie was lank voorgehou as die ideaal waarvoor gestreef was en dit het nou finaal gerealiseer. In 'n poging om die optimisme te behou en om die gaping tussen die ou en nuwe te verbreed, het Suid Afrikaanse beleidsmakers nuwe wetgewing geproklameer wat alle vlakke van die Suid Afrikaanse samelewing geaffekteer het. Onderwys is in die proses nie gespaar nie en op 24 Maart 1997 is die toekoms betree met die aanvaarding van Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys as die amptelike metodologiese benadering deur middle van Kurrikulum 2005.

Ek is van voorneme om in hierdie studie die konsep demokrasie toe te lig asook om die verskeie interpretasies van die konsep te illumineer. Dit word gedoen om 'n konseptuele raamwerk daar te stel waarteen Suid Afrikaanse demokrasie gemeet kan word. Verder, aspekte rakende die implementering van demokrasie word ook bespreek om as duidelike rigtingwyser te dien ten opsigte van die rigting wat die huidige regering die proses instuur.

Die bekendstelling van Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys word ook bespreek met die fokus op die beweegredes waarom beleidsmakers op hierdie besondere onderwysbenadering besluit het. Verskeie konsepte wat Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys toelig word verduidelik en dit bied aan die leser die geleentheid om die werkinge van die stelsel te begryp.

Die ondersoek beslaan 6 hoofstukke, met elke hoofstuk wat die leser 'n verskillende perspektief op die tema van ondersoek bied. Hoofstuk 2 bied 'n konseptuele analise van verskeie konsepte relevant tot die studie vanuit die oogpunt van verskeie skrywers. Hoofstuk 3 handel oor demokrasie en het twee doelstellings. Eerstens, die daarstelling van 'n gemeenskaplike verstaan wat met die term demokrasie bedoel word, en tweedens, die ontwikkeling van 'n raamwerk waarteen die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap beoordeel kan word.

Die tema van Hoofstuk 4 is die opkoms van Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys (UGO) in Suid-Afrika met verwysing na die Noord Amerikaanse ondervinding as 'n vergelyking. Tydens die bespreking van die kritiek teen UGO, bied die skrywer 'n alternatiewe siening en word die ondersteuners-siening gestel. Dit word gedoen om 'n ingeligte asook vergelykende diskussie daar te stel.

In Hoofstuk 5 word die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap teen die raamwerk vervat in Hoofstuk 3 voorgehou. Die tweede gedeelte van die hoofstuk bespreek UGO en die moontlikheid tot die daarstelling van 'n verdiepte demokrasie in Suid-Afrika

Die ondersoek word afgesluit met 'n opsomming van die aspekte rakende die onderwerp asook sekere voorstelle. Laastens, bied die skywer aanbevelings van hoe die proses voort geneem kan word wat voorstelle vir verdere ondersoek.

## **DEDICATION**

### **This work is dedicated to:**

- The memory of my late father and mother, John and Janeira Linderts, who moulded me into who I am today. Their dedication to what they believed, their courage in the face of trouble and their belief in God serve as a source of strength.
- My beloved wife, Desiree, and my sons Caleb and Jotham. I want to thank you for affording me the opportunity to complete this research. Your input, love, encouragement and support in this process were invaluable.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa had its first democratic elections in April 1994. The outcome of the elections ensured that the oppressive and dehumanising policy of apartheid would be replaced with policies that guaranteed the freedom and rights of everyone living under the new liberal democracy. This situation inevitably presented a number of challenges to the incoming government, and many of these challenges are still in the process of being met. The successful overcoming of these challenges will determine whether or not the expectations of the electorate can be met. One of the major challenges is to replace the previous educational system of Christian National Education – which was marred by many discriminatory inequalities – with an educational system that would ensure equality of access to teaching for all, promote democracy, ensure that all citizens would be globally competitive, and would ensure that the ideal of “a good life” could be achieved by all citizens.

From the outset the task of transforming South African society from one that was severely oppressive for the majority of the population to one that would be characterised by democratic principles and values, proved to be quite a challenge. At all levels of our society the question of how this transformation process should be guided was discussed, again and again. It became clear that the transformation of our society, with a view to redressing the inequalities of the past, would be a complex task that had to be managed with the greatest of care. We had to avoid alienating any section of the population and we had to prevent the country from falling into conditions of lawlessness or into conditions where the previously oppressed would become the oppressors.

Fortunately for South African society the leadership of the incoming government was strong, and the example set by the then president of the country – Nelson Mandela –

revealed a person who has forgiven the previous regime for his incarceration as a political prisoner for 27 years. His example of tolerance and forgiveness contributed tremendously to the acceptance of the new government and to avoidance of the bloodbath that many feared might happen.

On the educational front there were lengthy discussions and debates, sometimes feverish and acrimonious, about which new educational path South Africa should follow. Because education is such a vital part of the transformation process, the choice of an educational system became a crucial issue. Although alternatives to Christian National Education have been proposed, they never became part of mainstream educational thinking and they were never considered to be viable options that could be exercised. A change in the discussions on educational policy was brought about by the release of the *National Education Policy Investigation* (NEPI, 1993), which introduced the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress (NEPI 1993:51). Although these principles were reflected in other education policy trends, such as People's Education, never before had such a complete strategy for educational reform been introduced into the debate. In response to the NEPI, the government launched its own policies on educational reform, the first called *Education Renewal Strategy* (1992). This policy was also more liberal in its approach and offered valuable insights into the nature of policy reform. The second policy, dubbed CUMSA – A new Curriculum Model for South Africa, controversially contained the foundation for some of the curriculum reforms initiated after the 1994 elections (Jansen 1999b:5).

Since 1994, the principles set out by the NEPI seemed to come to the fore in official policy documents on educational reform. In this regard the theme of democratic transformation dominated the Education White Paper, *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (RSA 1995). These early attempts at ensuring democratic transformation were boosted by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996c) and the promulgation of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA 1996b). All education legislation to be promulgated had to comply with the guiding principles of democracy encapsulated in

these Acts. This set the stage for the democratic educational reform that had to take place.

Discussions on education policy were at this stage characterised by the exchange of opinions on competency-based education, and the role players in these discussions came mainly from organised labour. This was because labour saw clearly, and felt strongly about, the need for a more comprehensive approach to education, and that career-pathing was difficult within the restrictive nature of the then current system. Furthermore, recognition of prior learning was non-existent, and it was not possible to acquire a single, comprehensive certificate under a single umbrella system. The failure of the Education Ministry to take part in the general debate led to strong criticism of the Ministry. But the discussions and debates did give rise to various initiatives, for example the determination to cleanse the education system of all racial and sexist content (Jansen 1998:321), and the controversial introduction of continuous assessment in 1995/6 (Jansen 1999b:7).

On the 24 March 1997, South African education entered a new dispensation with the declaration by the Minister of Education, that a new educational approach based on outcomes would be officially adopted (Jansen 1999c:1). This would be accompanied by a new revised curriculum that would be phased in over a number of years. The introduction of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (C 2005) can truly be hailed as a bold break from South Africa's educational past.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

When the National Party government came to power in 1948 it immediately set about passing many discriminatory laws, but the adoption of the policy of separate development was one of the most determined attempts at securing white supremacy in South Africa. It could be said that all legislation passed was aimed at promoting one race, the whites, above the other races, and because of this, huge disparities became characteristic of South African society. Taylor comments as follow: “ The main features of South Africa's educational development have been defined by political conflict and by confusion over

constitutional structures to accommodate the country's competing group interests and unequal levels of development: British policies of Anglicisation in the nineteenth century and the awakening of Afrikaner nationalism ... contributed to the educational separation of Blacks to become underdeveloped resources of cheap labour just when South Africa's age of industrialisation commenced..." (Taylor 1987:1)

Education reflected what was happening in society politically, and the passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1995 and the National Education Act of 1967 underscored the efforts of the National Party government to ensure white supremacy. Furthermore, the introduction of the 'homelands' policy aided these efforts and resulted in a situation where 17 different education departments operated within the broader national boundaries of South Africa (Taylor 1999:36).

Needless to say the quality of education differed from department to department and state spending per pupil favoured those who were at white establishments. Because this disadvantaged the majority of South Africans it soon became clear that the aim of black education was to relegate blacks to a position of servitude to their white masters. Resistance to this situation started to arise, but the catalyst in this process of resistance was the forced introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools in 1976 (Taylor 1999:39). This resulted in mass demonstrations and riots, and the demand for equal education became an aim of the struggle for democracy. This struggle continued until 1994 when following a process of negotiation and adoption of an Interim Constitution, the first democratic elections were held.

### **1.2.1 Problem Statement**

The practice of democratic expression in all spheres of public life has since the early stages of colonisation been eluding black South Africans. Now that the ideal is becoming reality, our society is faced with many challenges to demonstrate and reflect democratic principles. Furthermore, the maintenance of democracy in South Africa through the

setting up of mechanisms that will foster and deepen the democratic way of life, is one of the greatest challenges with which government is faced.

Since the introduction of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) and in consequence of the expectation that education will promote a deepening of South Africa's fragile democracy, many sceptical opinions that see OBE as a huge educational problem have been raised. The problem or question investigated by this study is, therefore, whether Outcomes-based Education can contribute to the democratic transformation of education in South Africa and in so doing advance the culture of democracy in South Africa.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this research was to assess the role of Outcomes-based Education in the democratic transformation of South African education. Since democracy is a relatively new development in South African society, an assessment of the level to which democratic principles have found expression in our society was a crucial part of the answer to the main question.

#### **1.3.1 Specific aims of the research were:**

- a) to elucidate and evaluate the understanding of the term democracy;
- b) to identify factors that will point to a deepening of democratic practices;
- c) to make suggestions that will promote the maintenance of democracy in South Africa;
- d) to identify the criticisms levelled at Outcomes-based Education;
- e) to assess the possibility of successfully implementing Outcomes-based Education;
- f) to offer suggestions on how to secure successful implementation;
- g) to establish the role of Outcomes-based Education in the transformation of education.

## 1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

South African education has for the ordinary person (and for some members of the teaching profession) become something that is far removed from daily life, and the effect that the changes in the field of education will have on other spheres of public life is for such people incomprehensible. This must be seen in the light of the apathy of various sectors of the South African population and the refusal of many people to become involved in discussions on education. Bearing in mind that the transformation of education was being carried out for the “people” and that the interests of the general public were central to the efforts of the curriculum planners, one becomes confused by certain of the options that the planners have exercised. The fact that the transformation of education was being carried out for the people is reflected in the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) which places the following words in its preamble: “WHEREAS it is necessary to adopt legislation to facilitate the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights” (RSA 1996a). This explanatory preamble gives reasons for the Act and highlights clearly the link between education and what it is expected to contribute to the reconstruction of South African society.

When we consider the changes that have come about in education over the last 10 years, what has been achieved so far is phenomenal. It must be said that not everything that has been achieved is good. However, I would like to think that pedagogical progress has brought much more good than bad. Looking at the efforts of teachers in their endeavours to make sense of the educational maze called Curriculum 2005, one is moved to reflect critically on what we deem to be “the right thing”. In my experience, the feeling of “anything goes” in an outcomes-based environment is overwhelming. Could it be that teachers’ apathy towards OBE has given rise to this situation, or is it a lack of training that has brought to the surface many insecurities in our professional conduct? Can the lack of creative innovation be placed at the door of a “demoralised teaching corps” or are there other reasons behind the general confusion that comes with the Curriculum 2005

package? In an attempt to probe for answers, Thulas Nxesi tried to address some of these questions in an article called “Masterful media moments put pupils on the road to nowhere”(Sunday Times – Insight 09 Jul 2000).

Whatever the reasons might be, we will have to address these first if we want teachers to believe in the ideals that OBE reflects. Successful implementation of Curriculum 2005 depends on an inspired and energetic body of teachers who are fully aware of what the new system expects of them. It is my contention that the difference between teachers’ interpretation of what the new system expects of them and what they are willing to deliver, will determine the success or failure of Curriculum 2005.

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

The implementation of Outcomes-based Education and the introduction of Curriculum 2005 in schools is currently underway. Various problems are being experienced with regard to policy content and policy implementation. However, teachers are still expected to cope with the changes taking place in the South African educational system, and to heed the call to “make OBE work”. This has presented a number of challenges to a teaching corps already demoralised by large classes, inadequate support from the Education Department and the burden of an ever-increasing workload.

Secondly with the advent of democracy in South Africa, education policy has been directed at the promotion of this ideal. In this regard, schools are expected to transform themselves into institutions of democratic expression and to be at the forefront of democratic transformation. At the same time it is expected that teachers will create a classroom atmosphere that fosters democratic participation and that they will model the principles of democratic conduct. Because these expressions of democracy are new to most teachers, it is understandable that a great deal of insecurity underlies the daily classroom experience of thousands of teachers.

The call to “make Outcomes-based Education work” is the central focus of this study, and this new system of education is evaluated in order to provide some answers to the many questions that have surfaced in the debate on Outcomes-based Education

## **1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH AND SEQUENCE OF CHAPTERS**

The preferred method of research for this study was primarily a review of existing literature. Reasons that prompted this choice were the following:

- The availability of research material;
- The level to which discussions have risen on democracy, Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005;

- ❑ Convergence in the findings of several reports based on fieldwork

Because the concepts of democracy and Outcomes-based Education are crucial to this study, they are also reflected in the way this study unfolded, forming two main focuses of enquiry in two separate chapters.

Chapter 2 contains a conceptual clarification of the key concepts that informed this research. Although the key concepts were analysed only briefly, the purpose of the analysis was to introduce these concepts and to show how they relate to other concepts. In this regard the relationship between Outcomes-based Education, inclusive education, mastery learning and other relevant concepts has been highlighted. Furthermore, a discussion of the various forms of Outcomes-based Education is also offered for the purpose of understanding the complexity of the South African situation.

The aim of Chapter 3 is to create a conceptual framework against which South African society can be evaluated. The chapter also offers an analysis of how democracy evolved and which political systems would count as democracies. Lastly, the chapter deals with a discussion of the conditions that will ensure the survival of democracy as well as the threats to democracy.

Chapter 4 deals comprehensively with the concept of Outcomes-based Education and offers a survey of:

- ❑ the advent of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa;
- ❑ international perspectives on Outcomes-based Education;
- ❑ criticisms levelled at Outcomes-based Education; as well as
- ❑ a positivist view of Outcomes-based Education.

In Chapter 5 various issues arising from Chapters 3 and 4 are clarified and critically discussed. Several suggestions are offered to overcome the various dilemmas that were



identified in the course of this study. In this chapter an attempt is made to answer the following questions:

- Is South African society a democratic society?
- What is the possibility of the implementation of Outcomes-based Education achieving success?

The final chapter (Chapter 6) summarises the findings of the previous 4 chapters, presents conclusions and makes recommendations for the successful implementation of Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005. The study concludes with suggestions for further research aimed at dealing with other issues relating to democracy, relevant to the focus of this study.

## **1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The researcher is a full-time teacher at a school located within one of the informal settlements within the Philippi area of the Western Cape Province. Serving a community that has been previously disadvantaged and is still living in impoverished circumstances, has made the researcher sensitive to the plight of the poor.

- Furthermore, being part of senior management at a secondary school with an enrolment of 1836 students (2002 figure) exposed the researcher to various problems, such as large classes, timetabling, human resource management and financial difficulties.

The limitations to which the researcher was subject can be summarised as follows:

- The researcher is based at a secondary school, whereas Outcomes-based Education was first implemented in primary schools.

- ❑ The exposure of the researcher to the introduction of Outcomes-based Education as presented by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) was confined to the Mitchell's Plain area.
- ❑ First-hand experience of Outcomes-based Education was limited to the collective experience of the group of schools in Area 7 of the Metropole South EMDC.
- ❑ Although there is an abundance of literature on Outcomes-based Education, the focus of this study placed certain issues beyond its scope.
- ❑ Because the introduction of Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005 is an ongoing process, the problems experienced during implementation change every day.

## **1.8 SUMMARY**

In this introductory chapter, the importance of the whole topic of this research report is highlighted and a description of the research problem provided. A statement of the aims of the research is presented which varied from identifying the term democracy to offering suggestions to the successful implementation of Outcomes-based Education. A brief motivation for the study is given which detailed the personal experience of the researcher in dealing with democracy and educational renewal. The significance of the study, in the light of the fact that transformation is an ongoing process, is substantiated with supporting arguments. The chapter also deals briefly with the development of the debate on Outcomes-based Education, it looks at the implementation of democracy, and then outlines the scope and limitations of the research.

The methodology used consists principally of a review of the literature. The reasons for the selection of literature as research material are given, including the availability or non-availability of material and agreement between the findings of the selected material.

Taking into account that South African society is still coming to grips with the responsibilities inherent in democracy, it is nevertheless imperative that the development

of democracy in South Africa should succeed. The struggle for democracy has been long and hard, and to retreat from the gains so far achieved cannot be seen as an option.

It is particularly in respect of education that the process of transformation must succeed, because the inequities perpetuated by the previous system of education simply have to be redressed. We must use everything at our disposal to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved. In this regard the research can make a significant contribution since it attempts to reflect what is really happening at school level in society. Policy makers need to take note of the prevailing conditions in order to ensure that education policy is fashioned from within the real context of our society.

In the next chapter this research report deals with the identification and discussion of key concepts relevant to the research problem.

## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Key concepts relating to the democratic transformation of the South African System of Education are set out in this chapter. The focal point is a determination of consensus on the meaning of the concepts Democracy, Outcomes-based Education, the National Qualifications Framework and Curriculum 2005. Because these concepts play a significant role in the formation of the new educational system, an understanding of the interrelatedness of these concepts is crucial to the understanding of the current educational dispensation in South Africa.

Taking into account that these concepts exist within the South African context, the interpretation of them should be understood as the backdrop to the political struggle for democracy. This struggle to change the unjust system of apartheid to a democracy that will benefit all the people of South Africa has not only informed most of the policies implemented since 1994, but it has also left its mark on the understanding of these concepts. Although various perspectives and opinions make up the definition of democracy, concepts such as equity and redress underscore the South African understanding of democracy.

South African education has been on a roller coaster ride since 1992. Now that political change is a reality, the search for an educational alternative to Christian National Education (CNE) has gained new momentum. With various alternatives being sought (Peoples' Education, Education Renewal Strategy), the discussions on educational policy since 1992 reflected the principles encapsulated in the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI, 1992). Since this document included the views of the politically disadvantaged, it was expected that it would father the new educational dispensation.

The 1994 elections ushered in a new political dispensation, and with the birth of its newfound democracy South Africa was set to face its many challenges. The entrenchment of democratic principles in public life and the overhaul of the education system seemed to be the two main challenges that the country had to face. Judging by the discussions on educational policy at the time, the adoption of Outcomes-based Education and the introduction of Curriculum 2005 took everybody involved in the discussions by surprise. Because the discussion centred mainly on a competency-based model, the shift to an outcomes-based model was rather unexpected. However, in March 1997 the new educational policy was adopted with the symbolic release of 2005 balloons (Jansen 1999b: 10).

The implementation of Curriculum 2005 was not without its problems, and this resulted in significant changes to the implementation plan. After review of the implementation process, the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) were revised and a more streamlined version of Curriculum 2005 was proposed. Up to October 2002 the curriculum has thus far been streamlined 3 times and new National Curriculum Statements have been drafted in an effort to make the new educational system more pliable. The challenge now facing the Ministry of Education is to bring the Further Education and Training band (Gr. 10 – 12) within the framework of Curriculum 2005.

The rapid pace of change in the educational system is alienating some educators and even contributing to a sense of exclusion. The changes are coming at a time where society as a whole is confronted with transformation in all spheres of public life. The biggest threat to the successful transformation of the education system is the confusion that might be created in the process. In this regard the importance of the role of the Ministry of Education cannot be overstressed.

## 2.2 DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

There are almost as many definitions of democracy as there are people. The concept can be interpreted in many ways, depending on one's political agenda. However, for the "Athenians of the sixth century BC, democracy was the rule of equals by equals" (Kelly 1995:6). For Winston Churchill, following Abraham Lincoln, government for the people, by the people was the best description of democracy. Albert Einstein said: "My political ideal is democracy. Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolised". For Raymond Hutchins "democracy ... is the only form of government that is founded on the dignity of man, not the dignity of some men, of rich men, of educated men or of white men, but of all men", and for Abraham Lincoln the expression "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master" encapsulated the essence of democracy (Steyn 2001b: 2).

In respect of the changing nature of democracy, Karl, quoted by Steyn (2001:4), commented that "... divergent concepts of democracy have been developed ..., but it was never viewed as a clear-cut or static concept and distinctive modes of democracy have emerged all over the world". However, there are a few principles that are essential for any definition of democracy. I intend to focus on these essential principles later in this chapter. These principles refer to the conditions that must exist for a democracy to be sustainable. I would now like to turn my attention to the relevant literature in an attempt to illustrate the concept of democracy.

Steyn, agreeing with Cloete, describes democracy as "...that system of government in which the ruling power of the state is legally vested in the people"(Steyn 2001:4).

For Waghid (2001:22) democracy is best defined as "a concept that is constituted by rules." He quotes Barber, who said: "Democracy enjoins constant, permanent motion (reflexivity) – a gentle kind of permanent revolution, a movable feast that affords each generation room for new appetites and new tastes, and thus allows political and spiritual migration to new territory ... (with) reflexivity the chief mode of (discourse)" (Waghid 2001:23).

In an explanation of the above, Waghid (2001:21) argues that if democracy is made up of rules, this highlights three interrelated aspects, namely a) democracy as a system, b) democracy as a sphere for debates and c) democracy as a set of rules. Democracy as a system and as a sphere for debates can, for him, be linked to two broad conceptions, namely, democracy as a representative system of political decision making and democracy as a sphere for social and political life in which people enjoy equal opportunities and are engaged in self-development, self-fulfilment and self-determination (ibid). With the former being seen as a representative system of government and the latter being seen as a sphere of social relationships, social democracy undermines class distinctions and advocates equal opportunity for all citizens (Waghid 2001:22).

In order to clarify his point that democracy is a set of rules, he quotes Taylor and Fay, who said, “To know the rule of a concept is to know the language or discourse which gives meaning to the concept” (Waghid 2001:21). By ‘language’ he is referring to the relationship between people in a society, the way in which they articulate their understanding and make sense of each other’s practices. In summary he corroborates Hernandez’s criticism of Barbers’ statement that “It seems to me that this conceptualisation (of democracy) is the basis for an empowering theory of action: individuals both get constituted and constitute themselves and through it (constitutive rules) they can come together to build a dynamic unity for social change and transformation ... Also it aims to critically open up the possibility of transforming experience while creating a more liberating public discourse” (Waghid 2001:23). For Waghid the constitutive rules of a democratic discourse hold the most radical possibilities for the restructuring of educational policy.

John Dewey said: “A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (Dewey 1916:101).

For Lipset as quoted by Vanhanen (1997:28) democracy “is a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing governmental officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence

major decisions by choosing amongst contenders for political office”. Lastly, for Sartori “Democracy is a system in which no one can choose himself, no one can invest himself with the power to rule and, therefore, no one can arrogate to himself unconditional and unlimited power” (ibid).

From the above, it is clear that the concept of democracy centres on the relationship between the state (constitutional entity) and the people and how this relationship is upheld. Since this relationship is characterised by concepts such as transparency, participation, liberty, equality etc., in measuring the depth of democratic practice, we need to evaluate to what degree these concepts are adhered to.

### **2.3 TRANSFORMATION**

Transformation is currently a much-used term in South African society. There appears to be an insistence that everything must be transformed. Transformation must affect all spheres of social life. In the current South African context there are different interpretations of the concept of transformation. Firstly, transformation is being viewed as an ongoing process. Here the central issue is not reaching a specific goal, but the process of renewal that is being brought about. A proponent of this notion of transformation, Van Niekerk, stated that “transformation is not its own goal, the goal is an improved, more just and more equitable society” (Waghid 2000:101). On this topic Harvey and Knight responded that: “Transformation is a form of change of one form into another” (ibid).

Secondly, transformation is also viewed as a goal in itself. In terms of this notion, the objective is to bring about a complete and sudden change. However this form of transformation might meet with a lot of resistance and apathy due to its nature as a radical and instantaneous break from the past. Also, because of the hurried and often haphazard implementation of the desired transformation, the benefits often do not materialise. However, the transformation of South African society, particularly its institutions, has become the politically correct thing to do.

We need to ask ourselves whether transformation will be employed as a tool to reach a certain goal, or as a goal in itself. If we agree on the former, we need to know “what we would like to achieve”. This implies that we must know what is wrong with the existing state of affairs. Synonyms for the word transformation are alteration, change, conversion, revolution, renovation and makeover. It seems, judging by recent social events, that the South African interpretation of the word tends to lean more towards the extreme, namely the complete remodelling of (educational) institutions, etc.

What do we really mean by educational transformation? In answer to this question Steyn (2001a:1) postulates that “... it may refer to the removal of inequalities; the shift away from monocultural education; the shift to a more just system (financial matters, staff composition, curriculum, access, etc.); the shift from content based education to outcomes based education; the democratisation of education; the shift from low quality education to high quality education.” Carrim stated, “Transforming education in South Africa, therefore, entails erecting changes on all of these levels (educational budget provision, the structure of educational bureaucracies, the composition of staff and pupils in schools, the kind of curriculum followed and the ethos prevalent in schools). This requires no less than an overhaul of the past educational order, a redefinition of the culture prevalent in schools throughout the country and a shift in mentality, from being racist, undemocratic and authoritarian to being non-racial, democratic and enabling” (Waghid 2000:101 – brackets are my addition).

To summarise: transformation has hit South African society, but we must be cautious that we do not radicalise our transformation and throw the good out with the bad. It is my contention that we must also explore the other nuances of the word. In respect of the future, it is worth referring to Esterhuyse’s description of transformation as a process “where no ‘correct’ projection can be made into the future in the light of the present and past socio-political developments” (Waghid 2000:102). With this backdrop South Africans need to realise that transformation is not a goal, but it is an ongoing process and as such it is continually redefining and changing that which is. In an educational sense, transformation is about empowering educators and learners alike and searching out new ways in which this relationship can be redefined.

## 2.4 CONCEPTS OF TRANSFORMATION

### 2.4.1 *Quality or Equality?*

The debate on whether the new approach in education should be to bring about quality education or equality in education has been going on for a long time. Both sides of the argument have their proponents and the arguments within context are valid. However, I would not like to expand on the pros and cons of the debate, but for further reading I suggest the article “Quality education and equality in education: a dilemma for democratic South Africa” by J.C. Steyn as published in *The South African Journal of Education*, 2000, 20(1) 46 - 49. From the literature, it seems that the most effective path to choose would be that of striking a balance between equality and quality. The success of the process of transforming the South African educational system would depend on the extent to which this balance can be achieved.

Taking into account that we have inherited a system of education with vast inequalities, bringing about redress is of the utmost importance. Not only are these inequalities perceptible between the races – with each race previously served by its own department of education - but also between those who are in rural schools and those fortunate to attend an urban school. This in itself feeds the problem of urbanisation and becomes a logistical headache in terms of planning for the provision of facilities. In the light of the aforesaid, education policy makers have opted for a model of Transformational Outcomes-based Education which has its roots in principles promoted by the theories of behaviourism, social reconstructivism, critical theory and pragmatism (Steyn and Wilkinson 1998:205). Thus, it is quite clear that it is the intention of policy makers to achieve equality in education, at least in the short to medium term, and then to pursue quality education later.

As one of the cornerstones of democracy, as stated by Steyn (2001:5), ensuring equality has become the focal point of most of the policies that have been applied since 1994. In support of this I can quote the Constitution of South Africa (RSA 1996c). Furthermore,

it is clearly the intention of the S.A. Schools Act (RSA 1996b) to bring about equality in all spheres of educational provision. The preamble to this Act states:

- “Whereas the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation ...
- This country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision ...
- Whereas it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners ...”

These guiding statements lay the foundation for all educational policy to be developed and are truly a turn around from the past, but the underlying implications, especially the practical implementation of what is referred to, could be problematic for educational planners in the future. Here I am referring to monetary constraints, shortages of teachers, high concentration of manpower in urban areas and the lack thereof in rural areas, urbanisation and the provision of services, etc.

#### **2.4.2 Equity and Redress**

Taking into account the historical legacy of South Africa, bringing about equity and redress to the millions of disadvantaged South Africans has been one of the main priorities of government. With reference to education, the importance of equity and redress in the process of transforming the educational system cannot be overemphasized. In this regard Karlsson states, “Equity instead of discrimination and inequalities, has been one of the main principles framing the new education system. Achieving equity is through redress in order to eradicate the inequalities and disadvantages entrenched by apartheid, so recognition of diversity in the school system, capacity needs and backlogs are intrinsic to this” (Karlsson 2001:28). This position is reinforced by the Bill of Rights included in The Constitution of South Africa (RSA 1996c) where it is stated that in the

process of considering educational alternatives, the choice will be guided by the principles of:

- ❑ equity;
- ❑ practicability; and
- ❑ the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices.

In a study done by the Centre for Education Policy, Development, Evaluation and Management on educational policy implementation and change, the report states “The explicit aim of education policy since 1994 has been to achieve equity and redress” (CEPD 2001:3). To show the serious intent of government to bring about equity and redress, the following has been applied:

- ❑ Government has sought to shift resources from well-endowed provinces to needy ones, with the result that the poorer provinces will benefit from a greater share of resources.
- ❑ The development of funding norms to ensure that the poorest schools receive the largest slice of resources. The new Norms and Standards for school funding (1998) seek to ensure that recurrent costs will be addressed through schools being targeted for resources on the basis of need. The main effect of this will be that the poorest 40% of schools will receive 60% of the provincial schooling budget.
- ❑ The redeployment of teachers which was aimed at addressing inequalities in terms of pupil/teacher ratios and at the relocation of teachers to the areas of need, and
- ❑ Through the projects for physical infrastructure improvement that focussed on the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure of schools (ibid).

From the above it is quite clear that government has set out on a path to ensure that the issue of equity and redress are effectively dealt with, with the utmost urgency.

### **2.4.3 Access**

In order to bring about equity, the government had to ensure that those who had been marginalised now have greater access to that which they had been denied in the past. This spurred the government to improve access both qualitatively and quantitatively by various means. Karlsson states that these include desegregation of schools, the development of an admissions policy, and improvement of the quality of education through curriculum reform, teacher development strategies and the development of a culture of teaching and learning (Karlsson 2001:4). Furthermore, in dealing with the problem of slow progression through the system, projects such as systemic evaluation, whole-school evaluation and the development of common papers for matric in five key subjects are indicative that the promotion of quality education now enjoys high priority. Even the development of the admissions policy in 1998 was aimed at reducing the number of pupils repeating grade 1.

### **2.4.4 School Governing Bodies**

Empowering the masses through the devolution of power in order to bring about ownership of education was tackled immediately after the Government of National Unity came to power. Establishing the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 was a major step in achieving and promoting these goals of democratic participation. Through this Act two legally recognised categories of schools were established namely, public schools and independent schools, which were both required by law to establish a School Governing Body (SGB). These SGB's – which consisted of all school-level stakeholders – dealt with the governance aspect of schooling and had to give effect to the principle of democratisation of schooling (Karlsson 2001:5).

Although the establishment of the SGB's was an attempt to decentralise power in the South African school system, this did not imply that ownership of the educational processes at schools would be automatic. Reality dictates that there are a lot of schools, particularly in the townships and rural areas that have governing bodies that do not

function effectively, mainly because of a lack of knowledge or expertise. The process of empowering these bodies must be accelerated in order that education can assist in deepening our democracy.

## **2.5 OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION : A DEFINITION**

Currently within the ranks of the education fraternity, there are various interpretations of OBE. Some view OBE as “group work” and hence students are being kept busy within groups of 4 or 5 (Sunday Times – Read Right 7 February 1999). The same rule goes for homework, and working on a project together is being perceived as practising Outcomes-based Education. This, however, cannot be the case because the assessment of such an activity will always be seen as a process of synergy and hence does not measure the true potential of each learner in regard to the acquisition of the individual skills. Another view is that OBE is merely “mastery learning”, and hence a student should be kept busy with several activities (worksheets) that hone a specific skill, before advancement to the next level will be permitted. This misinterpretation of what OBE entails could be because of the level of training that was offered by the Department of Education. I will discuss this later. However, research by Evans and King (1994:1) has shown that the various misconceptions of ‘what OBE is’ exist because OBE is an umbrella concept under which various reform efforts can be placed. Noting that a definition of OBE is illusive, let me rather confine myself to definitions as stated in literature.

For William Spady “Outcomes Based Education means clearly focussing and organising everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for the students to be able to do, then organising curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens”. (Naicker 2000:24).

According to Naicker (2000:11-12) education that is outcomes based “is a learner-centred, results-oriented system founded on the belief that all individuals can learn. In

this system: (i) what is to be learned is clearly identified, (ii) learners' progress is based on demonstrated achievement, (iii) multiple instructional strategies are available to meet the needs of each learner; and (iv) time and assistance are provided for each learner to reach maximum potential.”

In summary, one can argue that Outcomes Based Education is much more than just the activities that are performed within the classroom, but it encapsulates the holistic social and educational development of each and every student within that class, school, and education system.

## **2.6 FORMS OF OBE**

Spady and Marshall, who are widely regarded as the originators of Outcomes-based Education, have made a distinction between the various forms of OBE approaches that exist. These include Traditional, Transitional, and Transformational Outcomes-based Education. In describing the differences between the three approaches, the DOE (2000 : 9) makes the following distinction:

### **2.6.1 *Traditional OBE***

- Traditional OBE is, strictly speaking, not outcomes based, since the starting point in most cases is the existing curriculum from which outcomes are derived.
- This approach could rather be seen to present curriculum-based objectives. The outcomes are synonymous with traditional, content-dominated categories that do not relate to real-life demands and experience of Outcomes-based Education.
- According to Evans and King (1994:1) this approach can operate within an existing school system.

### **2.6.2 *Transitional OBE***

- This approach lies between the traditional subject matter, curriculum structures and planning processes and Transformational OBE.
- It gives priority to higher-level competencies such as critical thinking, effective communication, technological applications and complex problem solving, rather than to particular kinds of knowledge or information.
- Broad attitudinal, affective, motivational and relational qualities or orientations are also emphasised.
- It extends beyond the traditional form, as subject matter becomes more of a vehicle to assist in the cultivation and integration of higher competencies.

### **2.6.3 *Transformational OBE***

- This is a collaborative, flexible, trans-disciplinary, outcomes-based, open system, empowerment-orientated approach to learning;
- It aims at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competence, and orientations needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training.
- Hence, its guiding vision is that of a thinking, competent future citizen;
- Success in the learning environment, for example, is of limited benefit unless the learners are equipped to transfer that success to life in a complex, challenging and changing society.
- According to Evans and King (1994:1) the implementation of this approach requires the creation of a whole new school system.

## **2.7 CONSTRUCTIVISM**

Transformational OBE in South Africa is characterised by the fact that it is learner-centred, and this places emphasis on constructivism. Marlow and Page describe constructivism as follows: “Each of us constructs our own meaning and learning about

issues, problems and topics. Because none of us has had exactly the same experiences as any other person, our understandings, our interpretations, and our schemata (knowledge constructs, learning) differs” (DOE 2001a:11)

Constructivism differs from traditional ways of teaching in that it:

- ❑ Helps learners to internalise and reshape, or transform new information. Transformation occurs through the creation of new understandings that result from the emergence of new cognitive structures.
- ❑ Emphasis is on promoting learning through the learner’s intellectual activity, such as questioning, investigating, problem generating and problem solving. It is about constructing knowledge, not receiving it.
- ❑ It’s about understanding and applying.
- ❑ It’s about thinking and analysing (nonsense detecting), not about accumulating and memorizing information.
- ❑ It about being an active, not a passive learner. (ibid)

In an attempt to capture the difference between the ‘old’ approach and the ‘new’ learner-centred approach of the South African OBE policy, the following table by Brooks and Brooks, stating the difference between the traditional and the constructivist classroom is used.

<b>TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM</b>	<b>CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOM</b>
Curriculum is presented part to whole, with emphasis on basic skills	Curriculum is presented whole to part with emphasis on big concepts
Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued	Pursuit of learner questions is highly valued
Curriculum activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks	Curricular activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials
Students are viewed as “blank slates”	Learners are viewed as thinkers with

onto which information is etched by the teacher	emerging theories about the world
Teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students	Educators generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment with learners
Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning	Educators seek the learner's points of view in order to understand learners' present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons
Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing	Assessment of learner learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through educator observations of learners, learner observation of learners at work and through learner exhibitions and portfolios
Students primarily work alone	Learners primarily work in groups

(WCED 2000:32)

As can be seen from this table, constructivist learning represents a major shift in the methodological approach to educational delivery. The aim is to engage learners in such a way that it will engender discussion and reflection upon the information presented. This is a radical shift from the 'content delivery approach' that was followed up till now. It is exactly with the delivery of information and the way in which delivery will be facilitated that some critics of OBE have a problem. This point will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

## 2.8 CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL OBE

According to the Department of Education (DOE 2001a : 9 -10), Transformational OBE involves the integration of concepts in a cross-curricular approach that embraces both the structure of the curriculum, the methodologies as well as assessment. Furthermore,

curriculum development is learner centred, recognising and building on the knowledge and experience of the learners and responding to their needs. It also places emphasis on the constructivist approach to learning and promotes co-operative learning. Furthermore, progress is monitored through integrated tasks and the application of skills to real-world problems and is assessed through multi-dimensional methods of assessment. Transformational OBE also caters for all learners – that is both mainstream and learners with special needs – and in order to avoid the negative impact of failure, no learner fails, but progression towards mastery of outcomes happens at individual rates. Lastly, the responsibility for the construction of meaningful learning experiences that will lead to the mastery of outcomes, rests with the individual teacher.

In conclusion, noting what Marlow and Page (DOE 2001a:11) said, it implies that for learning to be effective, the methodology used must be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the learner and not the learner adapt to the prescription of the methodology. The three main elements that transformational OBE is built on are: inclusive education, mastery learning and co-operative learning.

### **2.8.1 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

One of the characteristics of Transformational OBE is that it includes all learners and that it takes into consideration the needs of all learners. According to Naicker inclusive education is “an approach to education that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, gender, disability, learning styles and language. It is one free from discrimination, segregation and harassment” (Naicker 2000:11). Although the idea of inclusive education comes from the human rights framework, making this a viable option within South African education will take a monumental effort. The Department of Education defines inclusive education as: “a system of education, which is responsive to the diverse needs of learners” (DOE 2001a: 16). Because inclusive education is such an integral part of transformational OBE, making it happen requires the commitment of all education stakeholders, especially the teaching fraternity.

### **2.8.2 MASTERY LEARNING**

Mastery learning is another concept that is integral to the practice of Transformational OBE. Mastery learning is a model used to structure curricula. This structure was designed to maximise the likelihood that each student reaches the performance levels essential for competence (Naicker 2000:27). Seeing that it is linked to the premise that all learners are capable of learning and that OBE is learner paced and learner based, the two central elements of mastery learning are “the student’s aptitude for learning ... and the amount of time the student needed in order to attain mastery” (DOE 2001a : 19). It is thus crucial to progress that there should be flexibility in respect of the time it takes for learners with a particular aptitude to achieve mastery. On the success of mastery learning as an educational practice, Kulik, J. Kulik and Bangert-Drowns came to the conclusion after an intensive study of the subject that “the overall effect of mastery learning is impressive when compared with other educational treatments” (Evans & King 1994:2).

### **2.8.3 CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING**

The last of the concepts integral to the practice of Transformational OBE is co-operative learning. The aim of co-operative learning is to harness the collective knowledge base of all learners in a class and to direct such knowledge towards productive learning activities. Furthermore, it is imperative that the participants take responsibility for each other and learn to appreciate each other regardless of ethnicity, performance level, or disability (DOE 2001a : 20).

## **2.9 NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF)**

The importance of the role that the National Qualifications Framework plays in OBE cannot be overemphasised. The NQF is a system for enhancing flexibility and for increasing the educational opportunities of learners in both formal and non-formal learning. Since South Africa has a large segment of its workforce from a previously disadvantaged background, such a framework would “redeem their unqualified

competencies (recognition of prior learning) and permit recurrent and multiple re-entry for purposes of re-skilling (lifelong learning)” (Muller 1998:178). These concepts of prior- and lifelong learning have been taken up in most documents in which the intentions of the Department of Education have been made known.

Although it is not within the scope of this study to discuss the NQF, I would like to give a brief explanation of how it is expected to function. The NQF and its overseeing body the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) were called into being by the passing of the South African Qualifications Authority Act (RSA 1995b). It is the task of this body to generalise the outcomes approach through all tiers of the educational system. The purpose of the NQF is “to make it possible for all candidates to achieve national qualifications through a wide variety of mechanisms and a multiple delivery system”. (Muller 1998:179) The NQF is the brainchild of the National Training Board (NTB), and the Board’s intention with the NQF is twofold. Firstly, it should promote access and maximise progress by accrediting prior learning and permitting multiple re-entry and multiple sites of delivery. Secondly, by permitting multiple reassessments on a pass/fail basis, this implies, theoretically, “that all students can pass” (Muller 1998:179). This facilitates the shift to competency-defined curricula and to a focus on skills and competencies.

Furthermore, due to the interconnectedness of the NQF levels, one can start on any level and proceed. This meant that opportunities that required formal certification and was thus not in reach of the disadvantaged, is now made possible. Thus the NQF views all knowledge and skills as interwoven and has created learning pathways which allow the “learner to proceed at his or her own time and pace through the learning pathway which is facilitated by arrangements of re-entry, reassessment and credit transfer and accumulation” (Muller 1998:180). The new curriculum, called Curriculum 2005, is based on the notion of ‘learning outcomes’ and this refers to two things. Firstly, it refers to what learners have demonstrated, their level of competence, and, secondly, it refers to the stipulation or description of the expected standard of performance (unit standard).

Unit standards recognise capabilities and a set of unit standards make a qualification, which recognises competence.

To summarise: It is clear from the above that the development of the new Curriculum 2005 and OBE in South Africa cannot be separated from the idea of setting up a National Qualifications Framework. It is also worthwhile noting that the linking of an outcomes-based approach with a national qualifications framework is not common practice and that South Africa and New Zealand are but a few of the exceptions to this rule. However, the greatest value of the NQF in South Africa is that it will afford thousands the opportunity to redeem their prior learning, and that it will open up various pathways of learning to those who previously could not pursue their dreams.

## **2.10 CURRICULUM 2005 (C 2005)**

In a South African context Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-based Education are conceptually linked. In many discussions on either topic, the other is always mentioned. Curriculum 2005 is an attempt by the Ministry of Education to replace the content-based and often ideologically distorted apartheid curriculum with something that would serve the needs of all the people of South Africa. Hence C 2005 is regarded as "... the uniting vision for transforming apartheid education" (DOE 2001a : 6). An outcomes-based approach is regarded as the vehicle by means of which this will be realised. Bearing in mind the interrelatedness of C 2005 and OBE, the following is presented to highlight this relationship:

Drawing on the 'essential outcomes' as set out in the NQF, the new curriculum is organised around eight learning areas. These include:

- Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC)
- Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS)
- Human and Social Sciences (HSS)
- Natural Sciences (NS)
- Technology (TECH)

- Arts and Culture (AC)
- Economics and Management Science (EMS)
- Life Orientation (LO) (DOE:2001a:7)

Further, the main aspects of C 2005 are the 12 critical outcomes, 8 learning areas and 66 specific outcomes. The critical outcomes considered to be the most important for learning are the ability to:

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
- Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation or community;
- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
- Communicate effectively, using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation;
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation;
- Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies that make it possible to learn more effectively;
- Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- Explore education and career opportunities;
- Develop entrepreneurial skills (DOE 2001a : 6)

All learning (formal and non-formal) should help learners to achieve these outcomes. It is regarded as essential for the establishment of a new democratic society that all South Africans develop these qualities. C 2005 allocates less importance to examinations but

stresses the value of continuous assessment. Furthermore, “using a complex matrix of range statements, assessment criteria and performance indicators, teachers are able to construct learning programmes and prepare lessons based on outcomes (Christie 1999:282). She adds that C 2005 emphasises ‘learning by doing’, problem solving, skills development and continuous assessment and allows greater space for teacher involvement in curriculum construction.

### **2.10.1 Implementation of Curriculum 2005**

Curriculum 2005 was officially rolled out in March 1997 with implementation intended for 1998. From the outset the implementation of C 2005 was highly problematic, to say the least. Many critics were to be found and criticism of the policy came from people of all political persuasions. In this regard the *Sunday Times* of 8 July 2001 reported the following problems:

- That the language that was too difficult,
- Training was done too early and on other occasions too late,
- Training in the form of crash courses of 3 – 5 days was inadequate,
- That trainees were not adequately trained to demonstrate concepts / lessons practically,
- That teachers had nowhere to go for support when they had problems,
- Teachers did not know how to assess pupil’s progress,
- Textbooks arrived late at schools or some did not receive any, and
- Practical problems such as dealing with classes of up to 60 pupils.

The overhasty and poorly planned implementation of C 2005 gave rise to numerous problems, of which the first was that teachers experienced the curriculum as a top-down imposition due to their non-involvement in the drafting of the curriculum. Secondly, teachers were not sufficiently prepared to make the conceptual shift to an outcomes-based pedagogy as a result of the poor quality of in-service training and the lack of the necessary resources. This has been the major logistical problem, and it resulted in the

government moving from its original intention to implement the curriculum in Grades 1 and 7 simultaneously in 1998, to implementation in Grade 1 only. Christie (1999:283) states "... provincial report-backs for the first school term of 1998 showed that up to half of the primary schools in some provinces, including those with the most rural schools, have ignored the launch of Curriculum 2005."

After the confusion that followed its introduction, C 2005 went into a phase of evaluation that ended with the National Curriculum Statements being rewritten in May 2000. The intention was that this process should provide for the following:

- ❑ Firstly, recommendations on steps to be taken in respect of the implementation of the new curriculum in Grades 4 and 8 in 2001.
- ❑ Secondly, to identify key success factors and strategies for a strengthened implementation of the new curriculum.
- ❑ Thirdly, to restructure the new curriculum and,
- ❑ Lastly, to assess the level of understanding of Outcomes-based Education (Review Committee On Curriculum 2005 2000:2).

Although it was found that there was overwhelming support for the principles of Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005, implementation has been confounded by:

- ❑ A skewed curriculum structure and design;
- ❑ Lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy;
- ❑ Inadequate orientation, training and development of teachers;
- ❑ Learning support materials that vary in quality, are often unavailable and are not sufficiently used in classrooms;
- ❑ Policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms;
- ❑ Shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C 2005; and
- ❑ Inadequate recognition of curriculum drafting as the core business of education departments (Review Committee On Curriculum 2005 2000:3).

In order to address these problems, the review committee proposed a five-step plan. Firstly, to deal with the overcrowding in the GET-band, it was proposed that the learning areas in this band be reduced by two to six, with more time allocated to languages and mathematics. Secondly, that a streamlined National Curriculum Statement be written for the ECD (Early Childhood Development), GET (General Education and Training), FET (Further Education and Training) and ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training). Thirdly, that the NCS should be written in clear language and that it should have two main features, namely critical outcomes and learning area statements that would specify outcomes and assessment standards. Fourthly, that the sixty-six specific outcomes, assessment criteria, phase and programme organisers, range statements, performance indicators and expected levels of performance be dropped. Lastly, that the values of a society striving towards social justice, equity and development through the development of creative, critical and problem-solving individuals should lie at the heart of the curriculum (ibid).

With these suggested improvements in the conditions for implementation, the way was opened for further implementation. A plan to roll out OBE in grade 8 in 2001 was on the table and all attention was shifted to this exercise. Although the recommendations were made to smooth the implementation in Grade 8, again a situation of insecurity about what should be done manifested in many schools. This led to another process of evaluation that was focussed on how high schools were dealing with the implementation of OBE. At the end of 2001 the situation culminated in an informal 'directive' that a process of blanket promotion should be followed, and only in extreme cases which required strong motivation was a student allowed to be held back. This step fed the notion that within the OBE process the student could not be failed irrespective of the circumstances.

Outcomes-based education was scheduled for introduction in Grade 9 in 2002. Although this process went ahead, in terms of addressing the problems experienced in schools, the department has not done much.

## **2.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter set out to identify the four main topics of this study, namely: the concept of democracy (which was linked to transformation and the various transformation concepts), the concept of Outcomes-based Education, the National Qualifications Framework, and Curriculum 2005. These concepts were defined and an analysis of the concepts was offered. Because these concepts are interrelated, the relationship between the concepts was highlighted. Other concepts relating to the four main concepts were also highlighted and their relationship to the theme of this study indicated. Although Curriculum 2005 was only defined, a more in-depth analysis of it is given in chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEMOCRACY IN PRACTICE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is not difficult to prove that democracy is very popular. In discussions about human rights, for example, the term democracy would most probably be applied to various situations to substantiate various viewpoints. As a buzzword, the term democracy is highly overused. Steyn (2001:2) states that as a buzzword democracy is popular all over the world and that it usually catches on very quickly because everyone is in favour of it. However he warns against the misinterpretation of the term and indicates that Hitler's Nazis called themselves "true democrats" (Steyn 2001:2). He continues by saying that as a precondition to the successful establishment of a democratic culture "the hearts and minds of South Africans must be won over to the cause of a true democracy, seeing that South Africa is not a country with a democratic tradition or culture (ibid).

However, what do we mean when we talk about democracy? Do we refer to a political establishment and a political way of doing things, or do we refer to the rights that a certain group of people have. Does democracy mean that we have to treat everyone as equal – and what do we mean by equal? – or does it refer to the promotion of group interests? Although there are several interpretations of what a democracy is, what is certain is that, because of sometimes radically different group interests, democracy means one thing for a particular group but something entirely different for some other group. This does not mean that I define democracy by what it offers, but it definitely influences how people view democratic principles. Furthermore, looking at South African society, the different democratic values that are emphasised by the various cultural groups, might be seen as a dividing factor, but it could equally well be said that such different values are the means by which democracy can become stronger and so survive any attack made on it.

### 3.2 THE ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACY

According to Steyn (2001:3) the concept of democracy developed in the Greek State of Athens a few centuries before the birth of Christ. According to Basson as quoted by Nortier, democracy "... stam uit die woord demokratia, wat waarskynlik reeds vyf eeue voor die geboorte van Christus in die stadstaat Athene in gebruik was as 'n samestelling van twee ander Griekse woorde, t.w. demos = die volk en kratia = mag... Vir die Grieke het demokratia die mag van die volk beteken" (Nortier 1999:20). The first democratic government was formed in the time of Pericles (c. 495-429 BC), and the Greek citizens of that time enjoyed specific democratic rights. As a form of governance, it is widely accepted that democracy is the best way.

The first public statements on democratic political theory were made by Pericles when he was asked to make a funeral oration for the soldiers who died during the war with Sparta. In his speech he emphasised some of the major features and advantages of the democracy practised in Greece at that time. He said:

*Our constitution... has been called a democracy because it is governed not for a few but for many. In private disputes, there is equality for all according to the laws; public advancement is based on individual merit rather than on social class; and no one who has something of value to offer the state is prevented from offering it by obscurity... We are tolerant in our private relationships and in public matters we adhere to the laws... In education, while our opponents from birth seek to attain manliness by arduous discipline, we live without such restrictions and yet are no less ready for equal dangers... We promote culture with moderation and pursue the intellectual without effeminacy... We alone consider the person who takes no interest in public affairs not as impractical but as useless, and we are able to make sound judgements on public policies even if we cannot originate them; we also regard as a hindrance to effective action not debate but the failure to discuss matters fully before taking necessary action... In summary, I say, ... that it seems to me that each of our citizens in all circumstances is able to demonstrate complete self-sufficiency and to do so with grace and versatility. (Kelly 1995:5)*

Nortier (1999:20) states that the Greeks used the democratic idea as a political model 2000 years ago with the concept of freedom and equality as its cornerstones. Steyn (2001:3) concurs when he states, "It is these concepts of freedom and equality that were the two key concepts of the first democracy".

According to Kelly (1995:6) three main types of theory can be found in political philosophy pertaining to the concept of democracy. The theories are a) social contract theories, b) metaphysical theories and c) liberal political theories. Social contract theories attempt to highlight the question of the obligation of the citizen to the state and the reciprocal obligation of the state to the citizen. The social contract theories are based on the idea that there is an unwritten agreement or moral obligation between the two parties based on benevolence. The prime concern of these theories is to curb the competitive tendencies of individual members of society and / or to ensure effective and stable government. Hobbes and Machiavelli are but two proponents of these theories. According to Kelly (1995:7) such theories are in the final analysis incompatible with the concept of democracy because it attempts to limit the individual in expressing him or herself.

Metaphysical theories view the state as "having life, existence, a direction" with the aim of evolving into a condition of perfection. These theories, according to Kelly, are fundamentally totalitarian rather than democratic. They have to stress the primacy of the state over the individual or even collectively over all citizens. Hegel and Marx are two proponents of metaphysical theories.

Liberal political theories stress things such as equality, individual freedom and human rights. According to Kelly these theories are the only kind that offer support for democratic forms of social organisation, and they are the only theories that offer and demand moral justifications for policy decisions.

In an attempt to answer the question “what counts as democracy?” Steyn (2001b:5) agrees with Kelly when he says that there are three main ways in which the concept of “democracy’ can be understood. These are:

- Democracy as a form or rule of government – which refers to the institutionalised forms of democracy.
- Democracy as a way of life – referring to the moral worth of the individual, and
- Democracy as a goal or an ideal – representing a set of values and principles.

### **3.3 FREEDOM AND EQUALITY**

According to Steyn (2001:5) the emphasis on personal freedom gave rise to individualism and that in turn formed the basis for liberalism from which liberal democracy stemmed. On the other hand, equality gave rise to the idea of socialism from which Social Democracy is derived. However, with freedom and equality as the cornerstones of democracy, maintaining a balance between them is crucial to the development of a strong democracy. South Africa’s constitution is widely regarded as an example of true democratic expression, probably because it contains elements of both liberal and social democracy.

Liberal democracy, with its emphasis on the personal freedom of the individual, has the following as some of its characteristics. Firstly, human rights such as religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, economic freedom and intellectual freedom are all under the protection of our constitution. Secondly, as part of the process of transformation and social reformation, decentralization is emphasized in all spheres of institutionalised government. Thirdly, the advancement and development of the individual are encouraged. Social democracy, with its aim of establishing equality, emphasises communality, a communal value system, centralization and the strengthening of state control (Steyn 2001:7). Since society and not the individual is the focus of social

democracy, I would like to turn my attention to the relationship between society and democracy.

### **3.4 DEMOCRACY AND SOCIETY**

Democracy is a tool of society and as such the purpose of democracy is to bring cohesion within the society that it is serving. To ensure that democracy is effective, society must ensure that certain “conditions” prevail to guarantee the maintenance of democracy.

In talking about democracy, John Dewey focused on the relation between democracy and society. His understanding of society was that it is built up of many individuals with a common purpose or goal. He believed that the terms community and society are ambiguous because they have both a normative and a descriptive sense. He also stated “Society is not a unity, but built up of a plurality of societies – of associations eg. religious, political etc.” The implication of the foregoing in terms of reaching consensus is that: a) the members of the different societies must share a common view of what benefits them b) the societies in relation to one another must feel that they benefit from the arrangements proposed. In the case of (a) Dewey comments that “Any education given by a group tends to socialize its members, but the quality and value of the socialization depends upon the habits and aims of the group.”(Dewey 1916: 95-96) In the case of (b) Dewey explains “In order to have a large number of values in common, all the members of the group (societies) must have equable opportunity to receive and to take from others. There must be a large variety of shared undertakings and experiences. Otherwise, the influences which educate some into masters, educate others into slaves” (Dewey 1916: 97-98).

What then does a democratic society look like? Plato (c. 428 – 348 BC) said that a society is stable when each individual is doing that for which he has aptitude by nature in such a way as to be useful to others (or to contribute to the whole to which he belongs). In reflection Dewey commented that a truly democratic society is “... a society in which all share in useful service and all enjoy a worthy leisure” (Dewey 1916: 300). I will now

further explore the nature of democracy by looking at the constituent properties or principles of democracy (different writers use one or other of these terms but for me they have the same meaning).

### **3.5 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC LIVING**

In his book *Philosophy of Education*, Dewey (1958:35) relates the following story: “A woman once asked a well known statesman ‘what would you do for the people of this country if you were God?’ His reply was ‘I would look people over and decide what it was that they needed and try to give it to them’ She replied, ‘I expected that answer from you. There are people who would ask other people what they wanted *before* they try to give it to them”. This story illustrates an essential aspect of democracy, namely that people should be asked what they would like and what their needs are before any decision is taken on what they should be given. This democratic attitude should be upheld by all office bearers, in line with what the Romans called “*virtus*, the notion that those elected to office in a democratic society have a moral obligation to fulfil the duties of office, in so far as they are able, in the best interest of the society or community as a whole” (Kelly: 1995:102).

As has been demonstrated earlier in this study, democracy is not at all a new concept. Ever since the ancient Greeks it has gone through various phases of interpretation, but it has “most definitely stood the test of time” (Steyn 1997:3). However, even though the concept of democracy is susceptible to such varying and apparently contradictory interpretations, there are a few concepts common to them all.

According to Waghid (2001:23) the rules of democratic discourse are equality and liberty, plurality and difference, dialogism and solidarity, and power. In his interpretation equality allows everyone to see themselves and everyone else as essentially of equal worth. Liberty entails freedom of thought and association, freedom of political, cultural and religious expression, and the right to control one’s body and express one’s preferred spiritual, aesthetic, and sexual style of life. Plurality implies that smaller groups can

develop their own voice and articulate their specific needs if they have their own place in society and are not seen merely as subject to the dictates of larger groups. Plurality (or diversity) implies also that the differences found amongst various groups are essential to the expression of democracy since such differences help to transform not only knowledge about ourselves and our reality, but also our awareness of our own subjectiveness. Dialogism is said to extend and radicalise democratic discourse, whereby it is possible for different ethnicities, cultures, nations and populations to share and live together in solidarity, different yet of equal worth. Lastly, power is viewed as being produced in a diversity of forms by multiple entities. Although Waghid has based his views on the writings of Hernandez, Flecha, Bowles and Gintes and others. I find that the thesis he has put forward for what constitutes democracy closely resembles the description of what Kelly has labelled metaphysical theories.

From the aforementioned it is clear that it is not easy to achieve consensus on how democracy can be maintained. In an attempt to formulate a general understanding of what helps to maintain democracy Myers and Williams (1954:192) list the following:

- ❑ A democracy demands active and intelligent participation of its citizens.
- ❑ A democracy demands active co-operation amongst its members.
- ❑ A democracy demands that its finest and ablest citizens should be elected to position of leadership.
- ❑ A democracy demands the exercise of initiative and independence of thought on the part of its citizens.
- ❑ A democracy demands that all its citizens be given the best possible training for service, both to self and to society.
- ❑ A democracy demands continuous social change, with the purpose always of achieving the greatest good for all. This must be a major objective of a democracy.

According to the above the key to a successful democracy consists of individuals who are democratically minded. This situation can only be reached by society educating and

socialising its members in such a way that democratic principles and values become firmly embedded in the mind of each and every member. Myers and Williams state that “...*the training of citizens for their active role and participation within democracy is the role of the school. Hence the school should be the most democratic of our social institutions...*”(1954:192). This again emphasizes the relation between democracy and education.

In a discussion about the conditions for democratic living, Kelly (1995:28-29) states that there are four essential concepts in the work of those who have offered us a positive, liberal view of human society. These essential concepts are:

- All human beings have certain inalienable ‘natural rights’.
- All human beings have the right to ‘equality of treatment’.
- All human beings have the right to ‘natural liberty’.
- The notion of ‘popular sovereignty’.

The claim to natural rights comes from the concept of natural law, and this can be traced back to the time of the ancient Greeks. The claim to natural rights suggests that people have “rights which are in some way independent of and different from those rights which are granted them by the laws of their society” (Kelly 1995:30). Although the concept natural rights or human rights as it is referred to these days is a contentious one, Kelly states that “The notion of natural rights, then, seeks to do no more than offer us a set of criteria by which we can evaluate particular laws or decisions within particular social settings” (Kelly 1995:32). He continues by saying that the concept of “natural rights” must be properly understood because it is crucial to our understanding of democratic forms of social living and that any society claiming to be democratic must undertake all its planning and decision making in full awareness that the interests – the rights – of all citizens must be taken into account at every stage. Insofar as democracy is a moral concept, a democratic society must be committed to recognizing, respecting and attempting to meet the needs of all its citizens.

Societies through the ages have been troubled by the concept of the equality of people. For how can a man of noble birth be equal to a man born to a servant? However, in a Western Social Democratic view, all people are equal because of their common humanity rather than because of individual merit. This notion is widely articulated in landmark documents that stress the fundamental equality of people, such as the American Declaration of Independence, the French Revolution's statements of 'Les Droits de l'Homme' (The Rights of People) and UNESCO's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to name a few.

It is not within the scope of this document to show whether or not all people are equal. But it does attempt to show, within the framework of democratic practice, what is meant by equal treatment. Do we mean that all people should be treated in the same way, or do we mean that all people should be given the same opportunities? According to Kelly (1995:36), fundamentally "... the demand is for social justice, for fairness and impartiality of treatment ... social justice requires that individuals be treated appropriately rather than identically." Therefore, social justice would be situation-dependent, and any assessment of what is appropriate treatment should come from the person receiving treatment and not from the person administering it. Kelly concludes by stating that the term 'equal' says little if it is not used in context.

Like the term equal, the term freedom is open to various interpretations. Can we really claim to be free? Can we say that we are at liberty to express ourselves in any way we can? This is surely a recipe for anarchy, with respect for others totally absent. However, the concept of freedom has been described in many ways. Hobbes views freedom as that which the law allows (Kelly 1995:38). This however does not place emphasis on freedom but reflects the restrictive nature of law. If we view freedom as a "concept that place checks and balances on the power of government" as Locke does, this brings up the idea that the individual should be protected from abuse by government (Kelly 1995:39). For John Stuart Mill (Kelly 1995:40) the essence of freedom lies in self-protection and the restraint not to cause harm to others, and the statement by Rousseau that "Man is born free; but everywhere he is in chains" calls for the prescription of certain conditions for

social living. What is certain is that every man lays claim to certain liberties and that these liberties form the basis of democratic expression. However, this expression is subject to the good of society as a whole and is subordinate to the expression of society's greater liberties. This is but one dilemma that faces South Africa today with its approach to social reconstruction. Do we accept that that which is deemed good for the majority is the only acceptable way to go or do we take cognisance of the objections of the minority? In an attempt to address this question Kelly (1995:41) suggests, " Preferences, however, which may be different from, but not incompatible with, the majority opinion must, on Mill's principle be protected. For interference in them, and certainly suppression of them, can only be justified if they can be shown to be contrary to the interest of the community as a whole"

Sovereignty in a democratic society is a contentious concept. The question underlying this argument is "who should rule?". The logical answer is 'the people', but this brings about some complications, especially on the operational level. These complications centre mainly on the democratic expression of the political sovereignty of the individual and how this should be extended. In our society we have a process whereby the representatives of the people are elected and in this process they are given certain powers. However, it is the task of these representatives to work for and decide on matters of social importance by passing appropriate laws. This inherently implies that representatives have to be accountable to the people who have put them in power. However, if these representatives act in their own interest and the interest of society are neglected, then this may pose a treat to the existence of democracy in that society. From the above we can deduce that accountability is crucial in promoting the transparency that encourages democratic involvement. I would like to argue that this should be one of the core values that the South African society should promote in order to sustain our democracy.

### 3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have tried to bring about a common understanding of the term democracy by addressing the following questions:

- ❑ What is the origin of democracy?
- ❑ What counts as a democracy?
- ❑ What conditions should exist within a society for it to be deemed democratic?
- ❑ What conditions can lead to the erosion of democracy within a society?

As stated in Chapter 2, defining democracy is a difficult task, and the interpretation of the term has its own complications. However, I would like to side with, amongst others, Kelly and Steyn in arguing that liberal political theory holds the most promise for South Africa. This also has its own set of complexities, but as a positive point I can state that the discussion of this subject is well developed and that informed decisions can be made drawing on the inputs of others. Also, taking into consideration the four fundamental principles for democratic living as stated by Kelly, promoting a deepening of our democratic values should be a priority in order for South Africa to secure a sustainable democracy.

In building a democratic culture amongst learners – tomorrow's society - the school has to fulfil its crucial role of carrying out this function. That the school should be the most democratic of all institutions is true because it is here that democratic values can be effectively modelled for learners. However, in order for the school to achieve this we must have a teaching staff that not only understands democracy, but is also willing to practise it.

Since 1994 all education policies implemented have encouraged the broadening of democratic participation. The introduction of School Governing Bodies that, by law, govern schools and gives parents and learners a voice in the organization of schools, was a bold move. Although various difficulties are being experienced with the setting up of

these structures, the introduction of School Governing Bodies is evidence of the government's intention to bring all role players on board. The new methodological approach that accompanies the introduction of Curriculum 2005 also testifies to an attempt to broaden democratic participation. I would now like to explore the newly proposed democratic approach that is termed Outcomes-based Education coupled with Curriculum 2005.

## CHAPTER 4

### OBE IN SOUTH AFRICA

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa was an attempt to make a concerted effort to move away from the stranglehold that the policy of Christian National Education had on the provision and delivery of education in South Africa. In consequence of the cry for change, education was not spared the wave of transformation overtaking South African society. This process was characterised by the proliferation of white papers as well as laws passed by parliament. In this regard Muller remarked that "...the new rulers of South Africa have for a short time at least, a grace period in which to institute a new polity, policy and policing conjugation" (Muller 1998:177).

On the educational front the new government proclaimed Outcomes-based Education as the new educational approach, with Curriculum 2005 (C 2005) the vehicle that would ensure this. From the outset C 2005 endured attacks from various quarters, but it has withstood the test of time and was not scrapped, although it was claimed to be plagued with political, philosophical and implementation problems. Since its inception C 2005 has largely been replaced with C21, it has been through two review committees, and the National Curriculum Policy Statements have been changed. But an end to the problems is not in sight.

Nevertheless, in spite of the problems, C 2005 has been praised for the contribution it has made to the restructuring of the educational system. In the words of Berkhout et al. "Kurrikulum 2005 kan nie anders gesien word nie as 'n prysenswaardige poging om die onderwysstelsel te herstruktureer" (Berkhout 1998:288). At the heart of the implementation of the new system are the thousands of teachers who must make this system work. It is also their interpretation of the policy and what is expected, that will be reflected in their actions in the classroom. Although they were largely ignored when the

policy was designed, it will be their efforts and dedication that will determine the success of the system. Various questions that need answering come to the fore at this time. Firstly, since OBE is here to stay, how can we (the South Africans) ensure the success of this momentous project? Secondly, if OBE needs to be “tailored” to suit South African conditions, what conditions are we talking about? Thirdly, if we follow the advice of the prophets of doom and we scrap this endeavour, what are we going to replace it with? Fourthly, now that the critical moment has been reached, if we could revert to the state of affairs that existed before this critical moment, what conditions would have been necessary and which routes would have had to be followed in order to secure the success that everybody so surely wants?

It is worth noting that OBE is built on the following premises in relation to learning:

- ❑ All learners can learn and succeed (not all at the same time or in the same way)
- ❑ Success breeds success.
- ❑ Learning sites/ schools (and teachers) determine the learner’s success.
- ❑ All learners have talent and it is the teachers’ task to develop it.
- ❑ The role of learning site teachers is to find ways for learners to succeed rather than find ways for learners to fail.
- ❑ Mutual trust between teachers and learners drives all OBET learning sites.
- ❑ Excellence is for every learner, not just for a few.
- ❑ By preparing learners every day for success the next day, the need for correctives will be reduced.
- ❑ Learners should collaborate rather than compete negatively.
- ❑ As far as possible, no learner should be excluded from any activity.
- ❑ A positive attitude is essential.

It was these premises that presented the positive image with which policy makers were so taken. Within these premises lie the answers to a number of educational dilemmas that the government of the day had to deal with. I now would like to turn my attention to a discussion on the advent of OBE in South Africa.

## 4.2 THE ADVENT OF OBE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The transformation of the South African curriculum was not an evolutionary process, but rather one which was sudden in its introduction and implementation. Although its introduction was accompanied by large-scale media publicity from the Ministry of Education and the Education Department, the official announcement on which route South Africa would take to transform its curriculum took many educationalists and stakeholders by surprise. Their reaction is quite understandable in view of the fact that at the time - post 1990 – no single policy discussion was dominant in South Africa. Rather, a number of policy discussions emerged, triggering a process of competition and collaboration, convergence and divergence (Kraak 1999:38). In tracing the trajectory to the establishment of Outcomes-based Education as the dominant discourse, one gets the feeling that not everything was as transparent as it was said to be.

In his paper “Historiographies of Curriculum Policy in South Africa” Jansen traces the various debates around education policy renewal that were prevalent at the time and how it came about that Outcomes-based Education was proclaimed to be the new route. He writes that “since the mid-1990’s OBE has triggered the single most important curriculum controversy in the history of South African education. Not since the De Lange Commission Report of the 1980’s (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 1981), has such a fierce and public debate ensued – not only on the modalities of change implied by OBE, but on the very philosophical vision and political claims upon which this model of education is based”. (Jansen 1999b:3)

The critical turning point in the curriculum debates came about in 1990 with the release of key political prisoners and the unbanning of political organisations brought about by mounting pressure from international sources and the liberation movements. This initiated an era of fierce debate about which curriculum model would best suit the needs of a future South Africa. Role players in this debate were mainly the unionised movements in South Africa, led by The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the private sector through the Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC)

and commerce through the Education and Systems Change Unit (EDUP) of the Urban Foundation. The role of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) – which represented education and labour stakeholders – in this process cannot be denied. It is through their efforts that the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) – which spelled out various education policy options – was developed in 1992. On the importance of NEPI Jansen (1999b:4) writes “What NEPI did was to provide a broad values framework for thinking about democratic education policy after apartheid; this framework emphasised non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equality and redress as the platform for post-apartheid education policy.”

So dynamic were the debates that the apartheid government joined the rush to take up a curriculum position by publishing its Education Renewal Strategy, which was followed by a specific curriculum position dubbed CUMSA or A New Curriculum Model for South Africa (Jansen 1999b:5). The importance of this document was that for the first time talk around syllabus reduction, learning area specification and the linking of education to economic development through emphasis on science and technology entered the educational debate. However, the concept of Outcomes-based Education would be introduced by the National Training Board through its policy document ‘The National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI)’, which provided the foundation for curriculum and assessment thinking within South Africa. Through this document the education sector was bound into an integrated system with a link between education and training qualifications, later known as the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

It must be understood that the main thrust of the debate around curriculum reform took place within the labour fraternity, without any active participation from the Education Departments. After 1994 a lot of pressure was put on the Department of Education for not having taken the lead in the transformation of education. Because the think tank on education reform was centred in the Department of Labour, this had left a void in terms of curriculum planning. Something had to be done and a process of reclaiming credibility started. First there was an attempt to revamp the existing syllabi and then a policy of continuous assessment followed. This however was done without the necessary

teacher preparation and with minimal guidelines. The Ministry of Education then issued a series of policy documents of which the most important was the White Paper on Education and Training (RSA 1995).

That there was a race to formulate and establish educational policy after 1994, can clearly be seen from the number of acts promulgated in the first years of our unfolding democracy. In his article “Public policy and transformation in South Africa”, Manganyi (1999:25) states, “the first five years of change produced four groundbreaking education white papers, six Acts of Parliament and nineteen associated government notices covering regulations of one description or another”. Amidst these groundbreaking changes, none was as bold as the shift from the legacy of Christian National - and Bantu Education to Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005. Then in late 1996 the debate took a new turn with the publication of a key document that spelled out a proposal for Outcomes-based Education. According to Jansen (1999:7-10) this document had the following characteristics:

- It brought teachers into contact with a curriculum debate completely foreign to their understanding and practices.
- It showed a lack of conceptual connection between the proposal for OBE and the early integration and competency debates. The latter being the main debate at the time.
- The development of an OBE for schools, which appeared distinct from discussions of OBE in the workplace or, as became clearer later, from OBE in the context of higher education.
- The heavy reliance on Spadyean OBE as the justificatory framework for an outcomes approach in South Africa, a framework very different from the Australian one.
- The shift in word usage from ‘competencies’ to ‘outcomes’, a move widely interpreted as an attempt to escape the more obvious behaviourism implied in ‘competencies’ in favour of the more educationally acceptable ‘outcomes’.

- The introduction of a new, complex and voluminous terminology to describe OBE, and
- The introduction of Curriculum 2005, which was ‘weakly coupled’ to OBE in official documents and discussions.

Amidst all the discussion Outcomes-based Education was accepted as curriculum policy with the launch of Curriculum 2005 on 24 March 1997, with its introduction into Grade 1 & 7 scheduled for January 1998.

### **4.3 WHY SOUTH AFRICA CHOSE TRANSFORMATIONAL OBE**

It is quite clear from the aforementioned that the situation in South Africa was quite unique at the time and that there has not been a lot of existing research from which South Africa could draw on in sorting out the alternatives. Also, the option the government exercised was deeply influenced politically. The chosen education system, Outcomes-based Education, had to serve a political purpose as well, and so the philosophical foundations of the new system came from the theoretical frameworks that dealt with issues such as social reconstruction, critical thinking, behaviour formation etc.

Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:203) postulate that OBE strives to “guarantee success for all; to devolve ownership by means of decentralized curriculum development; to empower learners in a learner-centred ethos; and to make schools more accountable and responsible in trying to ensure success”. They state also that according to the Department of Education the formulated outcomes would ensure the realisation of the aforementioned goals and emphasize the development of critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative and future-oriented citizens (*ibid*).

Cockburn (1997:8) remarked that OBE was “a South African initiative aimed at transforming the education and training system so that South Africans are fully equipped to meet the challenges of the coming millennium.” Further, transformational OBE is defined in terms of the transformation of groups or individuals by motivating them to

become involved contributors in the processes affecting their own educational advancement and that of their peers. This implies that group assessment and self-assessment become positive factors. In the old education system, educators were the centres of knowledge; the new education system is learner-centred, with the focus on the continuing development of all children.

Outcomes-Based education is usually attractive to politicians, policy makers and administrators because it appears to give them control over outcomes. In our present time of social reconstruction, having control over and steering the process towards what politicians and policy makers would like to achieve, is a big plus for OBE. Lastly, OBE is typical example of the social-reconstructionist view of schooling, where schooling is regarded as a way to change and improve society.

The above leads one to argue that the main reason for the adoption of an OBE approach, was to redress a political situation by means of education. Furthermore, the philosophical underpinnings and interpretations of OBE took the history and politics of education in South Africa into consideration and provided a conceptual framework within which these inequalities could be redressed. Because OBE drew on principles promoted by the theories of behaviourism, social reconstructivism, critical theory and pragmatism as stated by Steyn and Wilkinson (1998:205), this strengthened the OBE case. Lastly, in dealing with methodology, OBE is in direct opposition to CNE, which was characterized by content-based approaches, the central position of teachers, evaluation system, universal content and values etc., as pointed out by Cockburn (1997:5).

#### **4.4 INTENTIONS OF OBE AND C 2005**

From the literature it would appear that there is a convergence of views on what are taken to be the intentions of OBE and C 2005. In stating its vision the Department of Education said: “ The vision for South Africa encompasses a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens, leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence,

discrimination and prejudice. The realization of this vision requires appropriate Lifelong Learning. Training and development to empower people to participate effectively in all the processes of a democratic society ...” (WCED 2000:4).

Cockburn (1997:6) concurs, stating that the new curriculum will set out to create active learners and that this process will continue throughout their lives. Furthermore, in OBE lifelong learning and critical thinking instead of rote learning will always be emphasized and encouraged. In this regard the quote by C.P Bedford is apt: “You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity about life, he will continue the learning process as long as he lives”(Cockburn 1997:2).

In addressing the issue of the inclusiveness of OBE, Van der Horst and Ria suggested that for OBE to be successful, the establishment of a just and equitable education and training system that provides a relevant, high-quality education accessible to all learners, irrespective of race, colour, gender, religion, age or language, must be a reality.

In summary, it is not surprising, taking into account the claims as to what OBE has to offer, that the policy makers decided to adopt Transformational Outcomes-based Education as the route South Africa would follow in order to bring about the necessary change. Furthermore, since OBE seemed to kill the proverbial “two birds with one stone” – i.e. the political and educational problem - strengthened its case for adoption. Also, the fact that OBE was in all respects theoretically in direct opposition to CNE, made OBE more popular as the politically correct route to take. Lastly, with OBE motivating groups and individuals to be involved and taking responsibility for themselves and others, it seems to be promoting a culture based on the fostering of democratic values.

#### **4.5 RESPONSE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF OBE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The response to the introduction of OBE came from various sectors of the South African community. Not only was OBE vigorously debated within educational circles, but the

unions, the media, and various NGO's all made it a priority to enter the debate. Although on an operational level teachers showed a general apathy to the introduction of OBE, the DOE continued with its programme of popularising OBE. This was imperative because it had to succeed in winning the confidence of the people who will be instrumental in making sure that this new educational approach will succeed. The following is a summary of the responses to the introduction of OBE in South Africa.

Firstly, criticism of OBE came from all racial and ideological groups, although the Minister of Education tried to pass off the criticism as coming from conservative groups of parents or rival political organisations. In response Stephen Mulholland commented "I am becoming sick and tired of bureaucrats and politicians who resort to the race card in every debate. In this case the debate is about education, the mess which the minister and his hacks have created and the disastrous efforts to introduce outcomes based education (OBE), a faddish, experimental, expensive, complex, controversial and dangerous method which has been tried and, mainly, abandoned in several advanced countries." He continues by quoting some of the successes of Christian National Education and proposes "...Now surely we can build on this tried and proved method to fashion an approach to education for all our children" (Sunday Times – Business Times 24 May 1998).

Secondly, the criticisms were met with hostile and often personalised rebuttals from the Ministry of Education and its allies. Thirdly, OBE opened up a spontaneous public debate that was very encouraging, given the history of curriculum planning in South Africa in which official knowledge was handed down to be 'implemented' rather than designed through dialogue and discussion. Further criticism of OBE covered a much wider range of issues than those encountered in the USA, and, lastly and most striking, the debate unfolded along racial lines amongst the South African public (Jansen 1999:10-14). This could be, as is claimed by various writers, a result of the government's efforts in its struggle for legitimacy. However, it is my contention that the polarization of our society in the course of the unfolding debate cannot be good for the establishment of unity and in generating the political will that is needed for the successful implementation of OBE in South Africa.

While the debate on the conceptual level of OBE was always important, the focus after 1997 shifted to the operational level. Since one of the weaknesses that the hurried implementation of OBE exposed was the lack of empirical evidence, the Department of Education set out to provide such evidence. By using pilot school surveys and interpreting the data to its satisfaction, the Department of Education through the Media in Education Trust (MIET) subsequently announced that OBE works. This preconceived position was quickly invalidated because the methodology was hopelessly inadequate and because the impact of OBE could not be properly measured after only three months of implementation. Finally, because of the special attention that the pilot schools received, success was guaranteed. However, this method could not be duplicated on a large scale.

In contrast to the research carried out by the DOE, the Presidential Education Initiative managed by the Joint Education Trust secured some funds internationally for small- and large-scale evaluations of OBE implementation. The following is a summary of the findings of this research as stated by Jansen (1999a:206-210):

- There are vast differences of understanding of OBE amongst teachers, even within the same school.
- Teachers display considerable uncertainty about whether their practices do in fact constitute OBE, irrespective of the resources available in their schools or their years of personal teaching experience.
- Teachers all feel that their preparation for OBE implementation was inadequate and incomplete.
- Teachers in most classrooms have the basic C 2005 documentation, but do they use it?
- Teachers strongly expressed the view that OBE could not be implemented in the early part of the school year with young children.
- Teachers generally claimed that there were some things that they were doing differently since the introduction of OBE, but that they were mainly teaching as they did before.

- Teachers understand and implement OBE in different ways within and across different resource contexts.

## **4.6 OBE: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **4.6.1 Experiences from Northern America**

Outcomes-based education has been around for more than 20 years and there is a vast amount of information available on the subject. The problem however is that this knowledge is more concentrated on the conceptual level and the operational aspects have up to now been neglected.

In an overview of OBE in America, Naicker (2000:16) has found that OBE has been received with mixed responses. Although there was a certain section that welcomed the introduction of OBE, there has also been fierce resistance to it. In terms of successes, Evans and King in their studies have shown that a small body of favourable evidence does exist, but that this is restricted to the USA and specifically to certain areas, eg. Red Bank, New Jersey, Johnson City, New York, Utah, Missouri and Minnesota have been dealt with in a fragmented way and research has only focussed on certain aspects, eg. Mastery learning. They also found that the studies carried out were of a localised nature and were confined to certain states. They furthermore state that although it is widely regarded that OBE is a reform movement that raises the quality of education, the learners that were served were average to weak and that the wide spectrum of needs has not been covered. What has not been made clear, they point out, is what the socio-economic status, teacher pupil ratio and the funding allocation per pupil was.

### **4.6.2 *The Johnson City School System***

The example of the Johnson City School System is being regarded as an exception to the other studies mentioned above because of its relevance to the South African context. The similarities that this region shares with South Africa are the following:

- It is the lowest socio-economic school district in the New York area;

- It has a large non-English speaking population with 17 different languages being used;
- The amount of money spent on restoring equipment damaged by vandalism is extremely high; and
- A large portion of the school population is poverty stricken.

Johnson City has been credited with success in turning their situation around, from one of low academic achievement to one of outperforming the state and county academically.

#### ***4.6.3 Reasons for the success of Johnson City are the following:***

- The entire educational system was restructured;
- The implementation of OBE completely in the elementary school;
- Good planning and preparation; and
- The community and schools were kept informed on why education should be outcomes based.

#### **4.7 RESPONSE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF OBE IN NORTHERN AMERICA**

From the studies done on how OBE was accepted in North America the following became apparent:

- OBE requires a massive financial commitment;
- There is a lack of empirical evidence that OBE works;
- Resistance based on the multiplicity of religions;
- OBE did not contain all the requirements for restructuring schools; and
- OBE works well for learners with lower level test scores.

#### **4.8 RELEVANCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION**

From the aforementioned, there are a number of points that policy makers in South Africa should note:

- In contrast to the American experience one of the key principles of the new curriculum is to cater for a wide range of needs including learners with disabilities.
- OBE has mainly been implemented in a Western context and South Africa is widely regarded as a third world country.
- Seeing that OBE requires a huge financial input, getting the economics of S.A right is of the utmost importance in order for us to increase the amount allocated to education. The option of securing funding from other sources is, I think, not a sustainable one and will only help in the short term.
- South Africa with its array of religions must tackle the issue of values sensitively in order not to alienate groups from accepting OBE as an alternative.
- The acceptance and success of OBE might well be determined by how effectively the model is sold to all stakeholders.
- Good planning and preparation, not only from policy makers but also from the teaching fraternity, is essential.
- Lastly, since a supportive home environment enhances learning, ensuring that teachers and parents reinforce one another's efforts will lighten the task of the educators.

I now would like to examine the main criticisms of OBE in order to establish whether Outcomes-based Education can help in the democratic transformation of education in South Africa.

#### 4.9 MAIN CRITICISMS OF OBE

Before the adoption of OBE and C 2005 in March 1997, critical analysis of OBE was not part of the public debate until the appearance of a paper by Jonathan Jansen in May 1997 entitled “Why OBE will Fail”. The publication of this paper gave new impetus to the OBE discussions as to whether this will be a viable route for South African Education to take. In his paper, Jansen takes a critical stance against OBE and substantiates his thesis by stating 10 reasons why the implementation of OBE will, according to him, have a negative impact upon South African schooling. He continues by saying that “OBE will fail not because politicians and bureaucrats are misinformed about the conditions of South African schooling, but because this policy is driven in the instance by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life” (Jansen 1998: 2).

Jansens’ criticism spans the political, philosophical and operational levels of policy formation. Because many writers (Mason 1999, Kraak 1999, Mohamed 1999, Rasool 1999) refer to this paper as the turning point in the debate, I would like to reflect on the content of this paper. In my opinion, Jansen encapsulates the main criticisms against OBE, with other writers reflecting on his work or expanding on a particular issue that has been raised.

Starting with the operational level, Jansen begins his criticism of OBE by saying that the language of innovation associated with OBE is too complex, confusing and at times contradictory. Seeing that OBE implied a total change of system, naturally one can conclude that terminology would change. Noting that rapid educational change is a painful and confusing process, it is my contention that minimising the confusion that might arise, was of utmost importance. Against this backdrop, the DOE with its ‘training sessions’- which were not at all effective - neglected to take teachers through this process of educational change. Bringing about a common understanding amongst teachers with relation to terminology was a crucial process in formulating an understanding of OBE and what was expected of them. In retrospect, it would have allayed fears and motivated teachers to become more familiar with the new terminology.

Jansen continues by stating that OBE as curriculum policy is implicated in problematical claims and assumptions about the relationship between curriculum and society. He disputes the claim that OBE in South Africa is associated with, or is a prerequisite for or sometimes offered as a solution to, economic growth. He motivates his assertion by stating that there is not a shred of evidence in almost 80 years of curriculum change research that suggests that altering the curriculum of schools leads to or is associated with changes in national economics. He also asserts that the introduction of OBE as a proposed solution to economic as well as universal and deeply entrenched pedagogical problems is truly preposterous, and that the new role of teachers as portrayed by the DOE in their official documents “represents a conceptual leap of staggering proportions from outcomes to dramatic changes in social relations in the classroom (Jansen 1998: 4).

Jansen also asserts that OBE is based on flawed assumptions about what happens in schools, how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers there are within the system. In this regard he notes that there is a huge lack of qualified educators and that the emphasis on outcomes will direct teachers to become behavioural in their approach in order to achieve such outcomes. One can argue that offering teachers in-service training and empowerment workshops as the process unfolds, can overcome this problem. However, if we look at the vast amount of work that a teacher covers during school hours, giving them time off for empowerment workshops will only increase their already backlogged work schedule.

He suggests that there are strong philosophical reasons for questioning the desirability of OBE in a democratic school system. Drawing on McKernan, he argues that specifying the outcomes in advance offers an instrumentalist view of knowledge, a “means-ends OBE stance ... that violates the epistemology of the structure of certain subjects and disciplines” (Jansen 1998:5). In his view there are important political and epistemological objections to OBE as curriculum policy and he questions the shift in thinking from valuing the process of learning and teaching as ends in themselves to the current emphasis on “outcomes”. He qualifies this by drawing attention to the fact that teachers were excluded from participation in the formulation of this policy and yet they

are being defined as “implementers” of this policy. Official support for teachers, he feels, has been uneven, fragmented and for many non-existent.

Jansen notes that OBE, with its focus on instrumentalism, sidesteps the issue of values in the curriculum and that the value statements as prescribed are vague and are not specifically relevant to the South African situation. This leaves policy makers with a loophole that enables them to evade answering questions on what the purpose of education is. Since OBE does not define content, a wide range of interpretations of what learning outcomes means is possible among teachers. Jansen also notes that the management of OBE will multiply the administrative burdens placed on teachers and that this will result in teachers not being able to assess their students properly.

Speaking from personal observation and experience gained as a teacher during the past 13 years, the writer of this research report can assert that assessment and the application of appropriate assessment tasks, is one component of their daily tasks that teachers struggle with the most. Since the average class size is  $\pm 50$  pupils (Gr. 8 & 9) and all of their tasks must be marked, the multiplying effect can only be understood when we note that it is expected of post level one teachers to teach between 80 and a 90 % of their time (Resolution 7 of 1999). This amounts to them teaching about 5-6 classes, with the net effect of 250 – 300 tasks that must be marked per assessment task. This is the reality. And then there are the many other important administrative duties that teachers must deal with every day. Against this background, it is quite understandable that teacher apathy towards OBE centres mainly on the direct implications of the implementation of various policies that the DOE prescribes.

Jansen states that OBE trivialises curriculum content even as it claims to be a potential leverage away from the content coverage that besets the current education system. In dealing with this he comes to the conclusion that content does matter because it gives meaning to a particular set of outcomes, and that by overlooking the cross-curricular and inter-disciplinary demands encountered in learning a complex task, OBE threatens to atomise and fragment curriculum knowledge. He concludes by stating that OBE compels

the linear acquisition of knowledge and that this is one of the most common criticisms made of OBE, a criticism that is ignored in the move to enforce the implementation of OBE.

For OBE to succeed, even in moderate terms, a number of interdependent innovations must occur within the new educational system simultaneously. In short, Jansen argues that an entire re-engineering of the education system is required to support these innovations. He is of the opinion that there is neither the fiscal base nor the political will to bring this into being. In drawing to conclusion his criticism of OBE he postulates that OBE requires a radical revision of the system of assessment in schools. In this regard Jansen maintains that international experience suggests that assessment changes only moderately with an outcomes-based innovation. Also, drawing on the experience with the implementation of continuous assessment (1995/6) he holds the view that traditional examinations will continue to play a powerful role in shaping the nature of OBE-directed teaching and learning.

Finally, Jansen proposes two levels of analysis of these criticisms, namely the technical and political. He concludes by stating, “the prerequisites for fundamentally changing the apartheid curriculum is not in place” (Jansen 1998:7), due to OBE not taking adequate account of the resource status of schools in South Africa. From a political perspective Jansen argues that the introduction of OBE is an act of political symbolism that reflects the government’s pre-occupation with its own legitimacy, and that OBE is an attempt to implement something innovative in schools in order to reclaim credibility for a Ministry of Education that is said to have delivered little concrete evidence of transformation in schools.

In order to validate these claims as made by Jansen, I would now like to turn my attention to the contributions of others to this discussion, this with reference to the works of specific authors. Firstly, Mason’s perspective as documented in his paper “Outcomes-based Education in South African Curricular Reform: a response to Jonathan Jansen” (Mason 1999).

In his response Mason discusses the article by Jansen and contextualises the shift to Outcomes-based Education within an epistemological framework by drawing on Ryle's (1971) distinction between propositional and procedural knowledge (Mason 1999:137). In his article, Mason largely agrees with Jansen's assessment that successful implementation of OBE depends on significant levels of in-service development for South Africa's severely under-qualified teachers. The threat that under-qualified teachers pose to the delivery of quality education has been debated thoroughly. I tend to agree that the successful implementation of OBE requires a professional and skilled workforce. I feel it will suffice by stating that the current level of professionalism in the teaching fraternity leaves much to be desired. The changing role of the educator from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of knowledge is most probably the biggest threat to effective classroom practice. It is here where the success of OBE will be determined since it demands of educators that they should move away from what they have been doing for years. The importance of retraining cannot be overemphasised because this is vital to any attempt to prevent teachers from reverting to previous practices and the comfort-zone that it supplied.

Mason however (1999:138), in contrast to Jansen, concludes that "intense intervention at all levels stands more chance of success than piecemeal attempts". Drawing on complexity theory he suggests that new properties and behaviours emerge when a critical mass is reached. Claassen, in his analysis "Outcomes-based education: some insights from the complexity theory", came to the conclusion that "...OBE is compatible with post-Newtonian views, such as complexity theory". He continues by stating, "OBE bodes well for the future". (Claassen 1998:39)

That the scarcity of financial resources poses a threat to successful implementation of OBE and in particular to bringing about a significant degree of innovation, cannot be denied. However, I would like to side with Taylor (2001:12) when he comes to the conclusion that the answer to the problem of how to improve the quality of education delivery does not lie in increased budgets, but in improved institutional functionality. Furthermore, noting that countries that spend far less on education than South Africa

have a higher return on their investment tends to “indicate that South Africa’s schools are twice as inefficient as those of Senegal and Zambia” (Taylor 2001:12). In conclusion, to use an old axiom, throwing money at the problem will not solve it. We need to allocate the available resources in such a way that it yields the greatest returns. I do not suggest negating the importance of textbooks, but I contend that a highly skilled teacher can do more with a single textbook than unskilled teachers can do with more resources at their disposal.

Assessment lies at the heart of every curriculum, and this is also true in the case of OBE. Since the purpose of schooling is learning, and because the quality of knowledge, skills and attitudes gained is the ultimate indicator of successful system outcomes, the importance of assessment cannot be denied (Taylor 2001:6). Mason challenges the claim by Jansen that OBE requires a radical revision of the system of assessment and that this hinders curriculum change. According to him, the importance of the final year (Grade 12) examinations “presents itself as an important and probably very effective lever to encourage the implementation of C 2005” (Mason 1999:139). Taylor’s contention in this regard is that this “is the one part of the school system that works with exemplary efficiency; it should serve as a shining model for every other institution in the system. He continues by stating “the biggest problem with the matric exam is that it is the only quality assurance mechanism in the system” (Taylor 2001:9).

In refuting Jansen’s view that OBE assumes a instrumentalist view of knowledge and that it sidesteps the important issue of values in the curriculum, Mason, by drawing on the work of Ryle (1971), highlights the difference between propositional knowledge (content) and procedural knowledge (skills). Defenders of OBE argue that the acquisition of the latter is more important than the former especially because we need to develop a skills-based society in order to be competitive in the global economy. Proponents of the former, in contrast, argue that heavy favouring of procedural knowledge without propositional knowledge threatens the students and exposes them to exploitation. This argument rests on the assumption that you cannot expect students to perform a task without giving them the necessary theoretical grounding. Mason

introduces dispositional knowledge (knowledge associated with values, attitudes) and states that there is an inextricable link between the three types of knowledge (Mason:1999:142). Mason comes to the conclusion that there must be a careful balance between the three types of knowledge since this is what teachers strive for in their classrooms. I believe that overemphasis of one type of knowledge to the detriment of other types will not give us learners who are critical and responsive to the needs of their society.

In challenging Jansen's view that OBE atomises and fragments curriculum knowledge, Mason (1999:139) states that "OBE attempts to break down the occasionally artificial barriers between disciplines in its organisation of knowledge around integrated competences rather than within independent disciplines". He continues by arguing that OBE has a tendency to neglect specific disciplinary knowledge in favour of a loose interdisciplinary and cross-curricular organisation around competences. With reference to the financial resources needed to fund the curriculum change, Mason agrees with Jansen but adds that this view will not bring about educational change in the foreseeable future. He also states that "What is important is how South Africa's teachers and curriculum planners specify the learning outcomes that are deemed to be worthwhile, and this is a dynamic process of interaction between the content and theory of the discipline and its associated modes of inquiry and learning outcomes. It is not a linear process from outcomes to the necessary content or from content to outcomes" (Mason 1999:142). He concludes that what is needed is a careful balance between the three types of knowledge and that in the final analysis the quality of teaching will determine what is achieved in the classroom.

As we have seen from the aforementioned, the picture that Jansen paints is a gloomy one. Noting that his criticism spans the political, philosophical and operational levels it leaves one with the impression that OBE is doomed and that the current efforts by the various Departments of Education to bring about efficiency in the system is one of "beating a dead horse". In adopting this view Hartley wrote: "Whatever gloss he (Asmal) may put on it, he may as well shout: 'Curriculum 2005 is dead, long live Curriculum

21!”(Sunday Times 11 June 2000). This perception that OBE will fade into oblivion may also be cited for the general apathy that teachers display to the effective introduction of an outcomes-based approach in their classes. The hope that the current preoccupation with OBE will pass and that a return to the old system will come has prompted the minister of Education, Kader Asmal, to respond to these allegations. In an article entitled ‘Fads come and go, but OBE is here to stay’ Asmal said “ It is too soon to dance on the grave of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa ... It is a ghoulish dance that he (Mulholland) dances; it mimes death where there is life... Outcomes-based education is not dead” (Sunday Times 02 July 2000).

#### **4.10 BALANCING THE SCALES**

Although the work of most South African authors focuses on the problems that are associated with the implementation of OBE, in support to Asmal’s claims I would like to quote the work of Haroon (1999) who offers us a positivist perspective on the implementation of OBE. In his work “The implementation of OBET in South Africa: Pathway to Success or Recipe for failure” Haroon states reasons “why OBET could succeed in South Africa”. He then continues by giving us a few reasons “Why OBET has to succeed, rather than why it will fail”. From my point of view what this paper does, is to look at OBE in South Africa from another perspective. Rather than looking at the problems, he actually challenges them and offers us a new pathway to debate this issue further. I would now like to discuss his work.

##### **4.10.1 *Why OBET could Succeed In South Africa***

In dealing with this issue, Haroon offers the following:

1. We must accept that change is always difficult everywhere. The answer could be that we should just carry on with the change and to adapt to the situation.
2. The educational change and the controversy that surrounds OBET it is not unique to South Africa and international experience has also shown that

- questions of educational change in general – and curriculum change in particular – are always controversial.
3. The shared international and historical educational agenda of access, equity, quality, and relevance in educational reform can be further explored by asking whether the educational system provides education that suits the interest of all the people in a given country.
  4. The content of the old and major parts of the present curriculum tends to be Eurocentric and representative of middle and upper class Eurocentric ideas and values
  5. This legacy of inequality has produced a very poor record of human resource development, particularly in South Africa.
  6. The current curriculum is not keeping sufficient pace with the globalising patterns of modern life.
  7. The curriculum should equip our citizens to participate effectively in the political institutions of the new democracy as well as in civil society.
  8. The curriculum needs to be better aligned to the world of work.

One could argue that the above view is an oversimplification of the complexity of the problem that preoccupies other writers. However, he does urge us not to “throw the baby with the water out the door”. Let me now focus on the second issue as put forward by Haroon.

#### **4.10.2 *Why OBET has to succeed, rather than why it will fail***

The key arguments put forward by the proponents of OBET are two-fold, namely that we need to make a break with apartheid education and secondly that the main aims and goals of the current education system are in effect not being achieved. These goals as stated by Haroon (1999:161) include high-quality education, the acquisition and production of the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for production processes, citizenship and creativity. He states also that the emphasis on content, the content itself, the teacher-centred approach and exam-centred methodology of the current curriculum is what

prevents it from achieving its objectives. Moreover, since the entire social system of apartheid has alienated and broken the faith of the majority of people in the education system (Haroon 1999:162), he states that the premises of OBET “carry the potential of reaffirming people’s belief in themselves and can be a rehumanising force”.

Drawing on the work of Malcolm he states that OBET is favoured by many educators and policy makers because it offers a “technology of curriculum design, assessment and reporting that can enable a good mix of centralisation (national norms) and localisation (school flexibility), and a mix of common purpose with a local purpose, and overall coherence across schools without putting schools into a strait-jacket” (ibid). In a South African context this would imply: first that schools would enjoy greater freedom and autonomy since the authoritarian approach of the DOE will be relaxed; second, that learning can be context-based and schools will have the freedom to develop learning experiences to this effect; third, that a raised level of accountability will be functioning in schools since they will be accountable not only to the DOE but to the specific community that they serve; this in itself will promote the culture of learning and teaching in schools; fourth, acknowledging that OBET is goal oriented, it makes the educational process more precise because it maps exactly where we are going.

#### **4.10.3 Response to criticism of OBET**

In response to the criticisms that Jansen has put so eloquently, Haroon supports Mason in his stance that the difficulty experienced with the language in which OBE is couched, should be seen as a challenge, and that by engaging with it we could redefine the terms and in the process simplify them. Secondly there exists world-wide evidence that increasing educational levels lead to social and economic benefits for society. This, however, will not lead to the attainment of a 6% economic growth overnight, but that should not negate the positive changes that will be brought about. Further, since there is general consensus that the quality of teaching in South Africa needs to be improved, Haroon states that OBET sets out to do just that and if teachers are not ready for this challenge, the more reason to prepare them. On the fiscal constraints that seem to threaten

the implementation of OBE, Haroon contends that this situation for the foreseeable future will not change and that this in itself presents us with an opportunity to be innovative with regard to issues such as resource shortages, historical problems in teacher training and large teacher / learner ratios.

The prior stipulation of which educational outcomes are to be achieved has caused a heated debate. But, taking into account the legacy that apartheid has left, specifying the educational outcomes and striving towards attaining them is perhaps the most desirable option at this stage. The underemphasis on clearly stated outcomes and the criteria for achievement is possibly one of the causes of the non-attainment of the educational goals of the present system. Haroon maintains that if we follow this path it will result in a lack of direction. Furthermore, the emphasis on the outcomes implies that these will continuously be under scrutiny for their worthwhileness and thus subject to change. This is evidence of the dynamic nature of OBE and its ability to be flexible in its response to the prevailing situation. Lastly, Haroon argues that “If we do not specify the outcomes, it is likely that we will have an amorphous set of educational practices and outcomes into which a considerable amount of time, money and energy will have gone. In a context of scarce resources, one can argue that this is not really responsible” (Haroon 1999:166).

In dealing with the issue of the use of and emphasis on content, Haroon (1999:167) maintains that within an OBE environment content is not the be-all and end-all of learning. It is merely a vehicle for the attainment of knowledge, skills and values in a particular field of learning. Because outcomes are the focal point of learning experiences and not content, practices that are contrary to the desired outcomes can be easily identified and dealt with. He also maintains that the claim that OBET overlooks the basics of education, overemphasises group work and leads to a lowering of standards, is a fallacy. He contends that the 3R skills are emphasised in relation to how well learners will be able to demonstrate their understanding and use of them. He also contends that OBET makes possible the best possible use of energy, resources and skills that are present in groups should be used to achieve collective improvement. This dispels the

notion that individual growth is impeded due to both the individual and the group complementing one another.

Finally, Haroon addresses the implementation of Curriculum 2005 and asserts that although this process is unfolding in a fragile and volatile environment, there is no better time than now to take up the challenges that we are faced with. Noting that OBE is plagued with various operational problems, one should not lose sight that the appeal of OBET lies in its potential to address our critical educational problems.

The argument that Haroon has presented leaves one with much food for thought. In presenting his alternative to the views of Jansen and others he highlights the chasm that exists between the proponents and the detractors of OBE. Although both sides in the arguments are highly informed, choosing the best route to take is not easy in this minefield of educational debate. However a road must be taken and an educational decision will have to be, regardless of how popular or unpopular the decision may be. The only hope one can express is that solutions to these educational conundrums will be found before those who are charged with implementing OBE lose all faith in the proposals that are being put on the table.

#### **4.11 SUMMARY**

In this chapter I have tried to give an overview of the unfolding educational policy debate and how it came about that an outcomes-based approach was the preferred choice to other alternatives that came out of the debate. We have also noted that this shift was rather sudden, taking into account that the debate centred on competency-based models. The fact that the motivations for the choices were varied and that the historical legacy of apartheid also had to be dealt with, made the matter even more complex. I have shown why the powers that be chose transformational Outcomes-based Education as the model that should underpin our new educational approach, because of the benefits that it had in addressing the South African situation.

Turning our attention to OBE and C 2005, it was my intention to show how OBE was received in South Africa and to give an American scenario for the sake of comparison. With this I do not contend that there are not other examples for comparison, but I chose the New York experience based on the multiple reference made to it by various authors. In connection with the criticism levelled at OBE and C 2005, and in particular at its implementation, we had a look at both sides of the educational debate. This approach does not propose solutions since it is my intention to inform and to engender discussion that might lead to workable solutions.

It is rather unfortunate that the current debate does not clear the air for the thousands of teachers who have to make Curriculum 2005 work, regardless of whether it is workable or not. I believe that the question of whether OBE will work and deliver what is expected from it, is central to the debate. I do not think that this process will be without flaws, but there must be an openness and transparency to where this road is taking us. Furthermore, achieving the level of commitment that is needed for OBE to work demands that the implementation of OBE should be well thought through. It is demoralising to go through the painful process of adaptation and preparation only to be told later that what was proposed has been withdrawn. In this regard I refer to the exit exams for Grade 9 known as the Common Task for Assessment that has now been deemed “not workable” and hence not compulsory anymore (Sunday Times 03 November 2002). While noting the huge financial input that is needed but not forthcoming, what is more damaging is the impression that educational planning is a haphazard affair and that it is not driven by informed thinking. One can but hope that the DOE will get its house in order and that the efforts to introduce OBE in the FET band will be less chaotic as a result of the lessons learnt since 1998.

## CHAPTER 5

### MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I would like to reflect on the role Outcomes-based Education can fulfil in the democratic transformation of South African education. I intend doing this by exploring various debates that were highlighted in previous chapters.

#### 5.2 EXPECTATIONS, HOPES AND FEARS

South Africa has been hailed as an international example for its achievement of a smooth transition to democracy. The fact that this transition was more or less free of violence was quite remarkable. Because South Africa has just emerged from the dark ages of apartheid, mapping a new political dispensation was a matter of intense debate. In this regard the efforts at CODESA serves as an example. Moreover, because an end to the political struggle and the painful experiences that accompanied it was in sight, the masses were moved to unite behind the efforts that would bring this ideal to pass. This feeling of nationalism was heightened by the release of political prisoners, and particularly the release of Nelson Mandela in February of 1990 and his subsequent statesmanship gave new impetus to the ideal of a united South Africa. The success of the 1994 elections ushered in a new political dispensation. This, coupled with the forgiving attitude of Madiba, showed that the intention of the new government was to bring all the people together in a united South Africa.

Eight years down the line however, the euphoria of this momentous occasion has subsided and the reality of the huge task of transformation has dawned on South African society. Noting that the 'Madiba-magic' was replaced by the 'Mbeki-logic', this change of leadership style has for many signified the end to the fairy tale. Moreover, seeing that transformation is impacting on society at all levels, the pace of change has alienated

many and a general sense of apathy has engulfed a major portion of the South African population. This might even be attributed to what is happening on the educational front at the moment. The notion that something must be put on the table to show that there has been movement in terms of the transformation process might be causing more bad than good. It is my assertion that transformation should be driven by a clear-cut plan that is transparent and informed by logic.

### **5.3 IS SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY DEMOCRATIC?**

In order to generate an answer to this question, I would like to propose that this question be looked at from three different angles, namely the political, the social and the economic. The reason for this framework is because these factors operate simultaneously within society and sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the dominant and regressive factors at work. As a methodology, I firstly would like to examine the South African society against the framework proposed by Myers and Williams (1954).

Politically South Africa was democratised in 1994 when the first non-racial elections were held. This was the first opportunity for political participation presented to all South Africans. However, voting for one or another political party does not constitute all that there is to political participation. That there are many opportunities for political participation in activities at the local government level cannot be denied, but the fact that these opportunities are not exploited is evidence of the widespread attitude that “somebody else will do it”. This “culture” of non-involvement needs to be reversed and we need to become an empowered society that critically reflects on all aspects, even those of political importance. We cannot allow government or a political party to prescribe to the people what should be. In this regard I agree with Kelly (1995:45) when he maintains: “... within a democracy there can be no separation between the sovereign and the people nor, indeed, between the state and the society.” He continues that “...if governments can act in their own rather than the people’s interests, is there any sense in which this process can be describe as democratic...?” (ibid). He concludes by stating that “... representative governments are obliged always to act in the best interest of

society as a whole, to seek to display the Roman quality of *virtus*, to represent the will of the people in so far as they can determine what that will might be, or at the very least to be seen to be attempting to do this.” On the basis of this assertion we can say that it is the task of government to nurture the development of our democracy and to ensure the prolongation thereof, not to prescribe to the people which way our democracy should be headed or under which circumstances. It is understandable, taking into account our past experience, that no one would like to see us revert to the practices of the previous government. However, we also have to be careful that in our efforts to preserve our young democracy we do not smother that which will ensure its reinforcement. In this regard it is my contention that our democracy should not be driven by the politics of the day, but that it should grow out of the people’s educated understanding of societal growth.

I would like to reiterate what Myers and Williams (1954) said, namely that continuous social change must be a major objective in a democracy. However, my contention is that this change should be driven by factors within society and not from outside. South African society is currently riddled with a variety of social problems. Crime is on the rise, the majority of the population is living in poverty, illiteracy is widespread, HIV/Aids is escalating to enormous proportions, fraud and corruption are common everywhere. These problems can only be effectively challenged if we change the way we view society and the role that we can play. The notion that the individual cannot effect change within society needs to be challenged because this is the biggest threat to bringing about the desired change. I would like to propose that a certain level of accountability is included in the notion of responsible citizenship, and therefore I am not only accountable to myself, but also to the society of which I am a member.

Economically, South Africa will have to engage in practices that will put us on a path of economic prosperity. This is an absolute imperative if we wish to eliminate many of the problems that we are dealing with. With an unemployment rate of approximately 30%, the social problems that we are dealing with are to be expected. The problems are further exacerbated by the regional influence that is being exerted on our economy. With the

problems currently facing the Sub-Saharan region, South Africa is unfortunately pooled with other countries that face far greater economic instability than we do. This perception causes investors to be cautious when considering investment in South Africa. The realisation of a 6% economic growth has eluded South Africa for the past years despite the effort by the South African treasury and the policy changes that have been effected in order to make South Africa a more investor-friendly environment.

The policy of apartheid prevented the majority of people in South Africa from participating freely in economic activity. This left a situation where the economic muscle of South Africa is concentrated in the hands of a minority and more particular in the hands of the Whites. To redress this situation various initiatives under the umbrella of black economic empowerment have been launched. This attempt by government to spread the wealth of the country is commendable, but the pace of empowerment must be increased. Transformation has to more widespread in order to benefit society as a whole. In saying this I am not proposing that people who are not capable of doing the necessary work should be placed in a particular job, but I am proposing that those with the necessary ability should be given a chance to acquire the skills they lack in order to enable them to do the work. A remnant of apartheid, namely what is often referred to as gutter education, has left a great many people virtually illiterate and functionally unemployable. This challenge should be embraced as a priority for all to deal with. Combating unemployment, stemming the cost of living and creating more jobs should be priorities that need to be addressed seriously.

The uniqueness of the South African situation lends itself to the search for innovative ways in which to address the various problems that plague us. The plurality of our society is clearly reflected in the number of races, and the specific needs of the various races must be catered for. Moreover promoting democratic practice in a plural society demands that we should be tolerant of one another's views and appreciate that everyone has a contribution to make to the transformation of our society. Although the South African constitution has been hailed as a model of democracy, I would like to argue that the essence of democracy is not to be found in law, but in how the members of society

interact with one another. The function of law is only to serve as a guide, and it cannot give expression to the concept of democracy since this can only be done by the people.

In answer to the question “Is South African society democratic?” my contention is that the political platform for achieving this has been put in place, to judge by the various laws (SA Constitution and Bill of Rights, SASA) that have been promulgated in order to achieve democracy. Since the goal of achieving a deepened democracy, as proposed by Steyn (2001c:5), is a process, one can argue that although we are not there yet, we have already come a long way. Our democracy – at present enshrined mainly in policy – has to be put into practice and thus taken to the social level where it can be given expression. The promulgation of more legislation will not help, but society needs to address the various issues, such as democratic living, democratically, gender equality, democratic family life and democratic education, with greater intensity. This process is necessary for “The greatest enemy of any democracy is isolation (of ideas)” (Steyn 2001:9 brackets are my addition). He continues, “... the object of democracy is, after all, to reconcile differences and to ensure peaceful co-existence”. (Steyn 2001:10).

In order to deepen our democracy, the role of education cannot be overstressed. To highlight this Steyn (2001:17) postulates, “The failure of the democratic ideal in many countries may probably be attributed more than anything else to a simplified and superficial interpretation of the concept of democracy. The truth that is overlooked is that a successful democracy requires a democratic way of life. In successful democracies people live in accordance with democratic values and a democratic culture prevails”. The role of education in educating society around the concept of democratic living and what it entails is crucial. There needs to be a common understanding of what is being referred to when these concepts are being used.

In support of this I would like to cite some preliminary findings of the Interim Research Report on Values, Education and Democracy as commissioned by the DOE.

The key findings of the report are:

- Educators, parents and learners describe the current values in education in different ways – the meanings attached to these values differ;
- Educators and parents put overwhelming emphasis on ‘discipline’, ‘respect’ and ‘obedience’, largely emphasised within the context of authoritarian school norms;
- School stakeholders feel there is a dire lack of communication and opportunities for dialogue in the school context. All stakeholders expressed a deep desire for more forums to discuss values and matters of shared interest; and
- There is broad support for many ideas set out in the Values Report, aimed at deepening democratic values. Stakeholders called for more sports, arts, drama, debating clubs, discussions, meaningful mentoring, community projects, interesting curriculum and participation in group work (DOE:2001b : 2).

I am in agreement with the report where it states: “Given that the fundamental values and rights that guide education policy have been clearly articulated (in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and education legislation), the further deepening of democratic values in our schools will not be facilitated by further prescription or legislation, but rather by purposeful opening of pathways for school stakeholders to engage in value articulation on a personal and group level” (DOE: 2001b :2).

Recognising the crucial role that education has to play in the promotion of democratic values, the question is whether these values can be taught. This was one of the criticisms raised by Jansen in his discussion on Outcomes-based Education. Steyn (2001:17) states “Yes, a democratic life style may be acquired, but then it should also become a way of life manifested in the activities of everyday life: the sporting life, cultural life, family life”. This means that the mere acquisition of a few virtues does not constitute a democratic life style. For me, displaying a few virtues or displaying knowledge of them as requested in a school setting, does not indicate that you have internalised those virtues. It is only by expressing those virtues in everyday life that one can argue that these virtues have become part of a person’s living. Thus, mere exposure to a variety of values does not mean that one has changed. It is the heart, the being of a person, that needs to change before we can claim that education has been effective.

The challenge facing the South African education system is: to what extent does it contribute to the development of responsible citizens, bearing in mind that responsibility and democracy are linked. In the words of Holmes "...education should prepare children for their responsibilities in a democratic state" (Steyn 2001:34).

#### 5.4 OBE AND DEMOCRACY

If schools are the breeding ground for democratic practice, then schools should be the most democratic institutions in society. Myers and Williams say: "... the training of citizens for their active role and participation within democracy is the role of the school. Hence the school should be the most democratic of our social institutions" (Myers and Williams 1954:192). Most educational policies promulgated after 1994 were aimed at democratising schooling in South Africa. The introduction of School Governing Bodies was an attempt to promote active democratic participation by all educational stakeholders in the educational process at schools. Albeit the promulgation of the Norms and Standards was aimed at redressing the past, its main aim was to further the democratic processes at schools.

But no document has gone further than the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996c) in securing that democratic processes at schools should be a priority. The preamble to the act sets out the following conditional clauses which position the act within a firmly democratic context:

" WHEREAS the achievement of democracy in South Africa has consigned to history the past system of education which was based on racial inequality and segregation; and

WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will *redress past injustices* in educational provision, provide an *education of progressively high quality* for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the *development* of all our people's *talents and capabilities*, advance the *democratic transformation* of society, *combat racism and sexism* and all other forms of unfair *discrimination and intolerance*, contribute to the *eradication of poverty* and the *economic well-being* of society, *protect*

and advance our *diverse cultures and languages*, *uphold the rights* of all *learners*, parents and educators, and *promote their acceptance of responsibility* for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State; and

WHEREAS it is necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools and the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa” (SASA, Act 84: 1996 – italics are my addition).

From the above one can argue that the act requires the new educational system to meet the ten requirements set out in italics. It is at this juncture where a lot of authors have a problem. The big question is “Can OBE deliver that which we demand of it?” It would be rather short-sighted to reply with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’. In order to come to a conclusion, we need to examine the validity of the criticism levelled at OBE, as well as to what extent Outcomes-based Education will be able to survive the current onslaught against it. For OBE to play any significant role in the democratic transformation of South African education it will firstly have to be made “workable” by teachers and educationalists. It is of no consequence if we have an education system, which in theory can contribute to the eradication of a lot of our educational dilemmas, but which, in practice, is unattainable. We need to bridge the gap between the philosophical and the operational for us to benefit from what Outcomes-based Education achieves in respect of educational reform.

Firstly, I would like to address the issue that Gunter has termed “the tyranny of the crowd mind” (Steyn 2001:10). Degenaar refers to it as a populist form of “toi- toi” democracy, which gives a false perception of democracy (ibid). In the discussion of the relationship between the state and the individual, government has to act in the interest of all the people. It is natural for the efforts of government to be criticised especially by those who feel that they have a contrary view. For society to brand such contrary views as unpatriotic or working against the national effort, does not reflect well on our democratic practice. Morrow (2001:88) warns pointedly: “We are in dangerous territory here – it is territory characterised by political correctness, sacred texts, and suspicion about critical

and independent thinking. Anyone, ... who shows an inclination to be sceptical about OBE thereby, shows that they are in favour of retaining Apartheid Education.” He continues “The idea that OBE might not have been a viable path to take in ‘transforming education’, that perhaps it cannot be ‘made to work’ because there is something wrong with it, is a form of dangerous heresy, a symptom of arrogance and lack of faith, and without any need to investigate it, we should, in the national interest, repudiate this idea” (ibid). I do not believe that this notion serves the democratic transformation of society as required by SASA (RSA 1996c). Furthermore, respect for views different from one’s own ties in with Myers and Williams (1954:192) who say that “democracy demands the exercise of initiative and independence of thought on the part of its citizens”. I hold that criticism can bring a balanced view to the educational discussion on OBE. It is obvious that OBE cannot be beyond criticism, but it must also be said that it does have a positive role to fulfil.

## **5.5 OBE AND THE TEACHER**

The importance of the role of teachers in bringing about the successful implementation of OBE cannot be overestimated. It is with them, I believe, that the successful implementation or failure of OBE lies. Ultimately it is the teacher who acts as the facilitator of knowledge and who through modelling shares in the moulding of the students on their way to becoming responsible citizens. In order to gain a deeper understanding, I would like to examine what the role of the teacher should be. Referring to the changes in the classroom, Cockburn (1997:16–17) states: “There are major implications, since the Education Department will no longer be telling you what to do, but merely what outcomes are required, at the same time providing you with all the necessary source material to achieve these outcomes. Another change is one of attitude. You may have been a lifelong educator, now you must convert into a lifelong learner, a member of a planning group, a coach and team-builder, and an identifier of those resources in your community, which could be fruitfully employed to accomplish your goals. It’s not difficult, it’s your mind you have to master, and you can do this readily by writing an outcome for yourself. In doing this you will help yourself by identifying the

need for effective planning, planning which will enable you to play the different roles required: facilitator, assessor, researcher, community member, mediator of learning". He continues that educators should, amongst other activities:

- Serve as mediators of learning and meaning by encouraging and stimulating construction and production of knowledge.
- Apply learner-centred educational approaches – the design and planning of a variety of learning experience for the learners in your care to take part in.
- Show learners how to use the different ways of learning, note-taking, research, memory, co-operation with others, learning by doing.
- Help learners understand and use information critically, with problem-solving, decision making, encourage critical and creative thinking and show the benefits of developing effective communication and socialising skills etc. (ibid)

The question that begs to be answered is whether we are not expecting too much from our educators. Noting the problems raised by Jansen (1997), namely the language associated with OBE, the problems of assessment, under-qualified teachers, large pupil / teacher ratios, financial constraints, and inadequate preparation at INSET- workshops, it is not surprising that teachers find themselves not being able to cope with the demands of OBE. On the level of teacher preparedness for implementing OBE, Sigabi (1999:74-75) found that:

- teachers struggle with OBE associated terminology;
- Foundation Phase teachers in contrast to their counterparts in New-Zealand do not hold degrees and that those who do, pursue job opportunities in other sectors. He mentions that the requirement that teachers should be able to develop their own teaching material no doubt calls for highly qualified personnel;
- Although the conditions in some overseas countries in terms of learner ratios, resources, management, teacher qualifications etc. were more favourable than South Africa's, yet OBE still put a strain on these countries, for instance on New

Zealand, where teachers went on strike and the educational authorities reversed implementation plans.

He concludes by stating that South Africa operates from a considerable disadvantage and that all national resources should be harnessed in order to improve the conditions under which the majority of schools operate. These conditions include:

- Impoverished families are financially unable to provide for their children's school needs, e.g., basic equipment;
- The high illiteracy rate in SA makes the majority of families unable to support children with their schoolwork; teachers and educational planners need to take this factor into account in their planning;
- Management in the majority of our schools is unable to support changes that are taking place in our schools. It appears that successful change will only happen when schools are less chaotic than some of them currently are;
- Lack of (or a shortage) of basic teaching and learning materials is an area that needs to be addressed;
- Lack of proper classroom space for learners is another critical inhibiting factor; frequently, *teacher/ learner* ratios are way above the nationally stipulated ratio of 1 : 40; judging by the relaxed and educationally inviting atmosphere in the classrooms of schools that managed to keep the *teacher/ learner* ratio below 1 : 40, it would appear desirable to work towards bringing down the nationally recommended teacher / learner ratios.

Because of the crucial role teachers play in “making” OBE work, their initial engagement with OBE is very important. The way in which the DOE manages the transition to OBE will determine whether or not the transition becomes an enjoyable learning experience that will inspire teachers to rise to the occasion. Involving teachers in the whole transition process will eradicate the feeling that OBE is being imposed upon them in the old authoritarian style of the Apartheid years, and they will then be motivated to achieve even greater goals. If we assume, without testing our assumptions, that teachers are ready

and able to deal with the challenges stemming from the introduction of OBE, we are setting the stage for a rude awakening. Teacher morale is presently at its lowest, and if we add to the burdens that teachers now have to shoulder, this will only lead to non-involvement, mass defiance of the educational system and teacher strikes. All of this can be avoided if a route of consultation and discussion on educational issues is followed.

The hurried implementation of OBE may be the source of many of the problems teachers are facing. In this regard I would like to propose that the time frames set for the implementation should be extended since more time would eliminate many problems and so benefit everyone, including the learners. Teachers in most schools (especially high schools) are teaching across the curriculum and this implies that they teach in various grades. The implementation schedule assumes that teachers will prepare themselves during the current year for the introduction of OBE in the next year and the next grade. Unfortunately teachers have not been able to resolve the problems experienced in previous grades. In this regard the logical step would be to have a year of implementation and a year of review before OBE is begun in the next grade. I think that this would afford teachers the opportunity to prepare themselves better and so improve the quality of teaching.

Because sufficiently qualified teachers are vital to the successful implementation of OBE, the DOE has over the past two years launched various initiatives aimed at assisting underqualified teachers. However, more time must be allowed for these initiatives to produce the desired results. By extending the time allowed for implementation we will make it possible that these initiatives will produce maximum positive results. The need for an extension of the time allowed for implementation becomes more obvious when we bear in mind that the problem of under-qualified teachers exists mainly in the historically black schools, and that doing justice to the new curriculum in these schools will consequently be very difficult. As Christie puts it: "Certainly the new curriculum is not targeted at the conditions in the majority of South African classrooms" (Christie 1999:283).

Christie also states that the resource-strapped circumstances of the provinces have been a major logistical problem with the launch of the new curriculum. Unfortunately OBE and C 2005 cannot survive in an environment of severely limited resources. Resource provision demands that the necessary finance should be available, but schools are already at their wits end because of the many other financial pressures being put on them. In an environment where the state subsidies are supplemented by the school fees paid by parents, the gap is bridged between what the school needs and what the school can afford, and this creates a favourable for the successful implementation of OBE and C 2005. In the majority of historically black schools this is unfortunately not at all the reality. With high unemployment, high food prices and the general increase in the cost of living, many families cannot afford the fees that schools need to charge. This is reality of our education situation, and not all schools can deliver quality education under circumstances where financial resources are lacking. It is my contention that by extending the time allowed for implementation, the government and particularly the DOE will be able to deal with the needs of schools more effectively than under the present circumstances.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

From a political point of view South African history has been marked by the oppressive policies of the apartheid era, which came to an end in 1994. During the apartheid era educational policies were aimed at upholding the political status quo and advancing the interest of the Whites in this country. After the advent of democracy in 1994, educational policies were aimed at bringing about a more equitable society based on democratic values, rights and practices. To help in establishing a culture of democracy, schools have been given the task of producing responsible citizens who will be able to function within a democratic society. As part of the process to achieve this objective, the South African Schools Act (1996) provided the legislative framework within which this could be achieved.

The introduction of Outcomes-based Education as the teaching method and the adoption of Curriculum 2005 as the vehicle that will make it all happen, were bold moves by the Education Ministry to show that there has been progress towards transforming the school system. However, quite a few problems were encountered, with the result that the new curriculum has twice been revised. Currently the Education Ministry is concentrating on the task of introducing Outcomes-based Education to the FET phase in an effort to fulfil the requirements set out in the NQF.

The aim of this research study was to assess the extent to which Outcomes-based Education could contribute to the democratic transformation of South African education. The topic is relevant to the South African situation, especially in the light of the current efforts by government and other stakeholders to promote a culture of democratic participation in all spheres of public life. Since democracy is seen as a way of life, the role

of the school and its teachers in establishing and furthering a culture of democracy is crucial.

The introductory chapter highlights the importance of the research topic and sets out the central focus of the study. The chapter emphasises that it is imperative that the process of transformation should be successful, and reasons for this emphasis are given. The chapter then develops with a description of the problem that the researcher had chosen to research and the various subsidiary aims of the study are highlighted. This is followed by a brief discussion concerning the motivation for and significance of the study. The methodology used and the reasons for using it are presented and the chapter concludes with an outline of the scope and limitations of the study.

The research report is given in four chapters, with each chapter offering a different perspective on the research topic. Chapter 2 contains a conceptual clarification of various concepts relating to the study and these clarifications are informed by the views of various authors. The intention was to create a framework that would act as a backdrop to the rest of the study. Chapter 3 deals with the issue of democracy and has two objectives. Firstly, the construction of a common understanding of what is meant by the term democracy, and secondly, the formation of a framework against which the South African society could be assessed.

The main theme of Chapter 4 is the advent of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa, and reference to the North American experience is made for the purpose of comparison. In the discussion on the criticisms of Outcomes-based Education the researcher highlights an alternative perspective and discusses the proponents point of view. This is offered for the purposes of presenting an informed discussion, but also for the sake of comparison. In Chapter 5 the researcher presents a view of South African Society against the framework set out in Chapter 3. The second section of the chapter deals with Outcomes-based Education and its possibilities for the deepening of democracy in South Africa. Here various issues are dealt with and various suggestions are offered. Lastly, the purpose of presenting summaries throughout the text is to keep the

reader informed of the development of the theses, but also to conclude the various arguments that constitute the thesis.

## 6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Although various conclusions are presented in the text, the two main concepts dealt with in this study are Democracy and Outcomes-based Education. In an assessment of the level of democratic practice in South Africa, the study concludes, firstly, that democracy in South Africa is a form of legislative or institutionalised democracy. This has been informed by the quality of the laws promulgated to bring about democracy in society. This concept of democracy has not, however, filtered through to society at large and has thus not yet taken root sufficiently for our present political dispensation to be described as a mature democracy. The extent of democratic practice must, therefore, be broadened. South African democracy needs to become operational in all spheres of public life.

Our democracy currently functions well in terms of the political sphere, but it needs to be extended to the social sphere where a unique South African character can be given to it. It is the contention of the researcher that the democratic ideals can find expression only in the relationships of individual members of society towards one another and thus for the reinforcement and maintenance of our democracy the people need to become involved in the practice of democracy.

The promulgation of more legislation will not advance the cause of democracy in South Africa. With our constitution, and the various other laws that help to establish a democracy in South Africa, internationally hailed as one of the most democratic in the world, what South Africans now need is not more laws, but a change of heart. We need to bridge our racial and cultural differences and work towards the establishment of a united South Africa. The need to teach democratic values in schools is highlighted by the need for greater co-operation amongst all the people of South Africa.

Community participation needs to be promoted at the local government level. Communities have been encouraged by central government to institute programmes that will contribute to the advancement of the various interests of the particular community. Although legislation is in place to see that this happens, there is a general lack of participation. We need to empower our communities in order to extend our democracy to other levels.

In assessing the role of Outcomes-based Education the researcher concludes that in order for OBE to play a meaningful role in the democratic transformation of South African education it must first and foremost be “made to work”. Bearing in mind the time, finances and effort that has gone into implementing OBE and C 2005, the call to turn our backs on it now is incomprehensible. It will take a national effort to ‘make OBE work’ and we need to display the political will needed to implement it fully. The future of our education system is not a matter for the Ministry of Education to solve alone; we will have to draw on the collective involvement of all stakeholders to succeed in our endeavours.

Also, the role of teachers is crucial in addressing the various problems experienced with the implementation of OBE and C 2005. Bearing in mind that it is the teachers that must “make OBE work” successful implementation depends on their efforts. We cannot allow our teachers to become alienated because of their non-involvement by government in the construction of the new system. They need to be part of the process of seeking solutions to the various dilemmas and they need to engage with OBE and C 2005 in order to engender a better understanding of the process.

Planning of a more thorough nature needs to be applied in respect of future educational programmes in South Africa. South Africa finds itself in a precarious position in that we do not have the financial or the human resources to withdraw programmes that have already been launched. We do not have the time for applying new methods on a trial and error basis, in the hope of getting it right. It has to be done right the first time with a

reasonable chance of success. We need to learn from past lessons and try not to fall into the same traps.

Teacher preparedness will determine whether or not the implementation of OBE and C 2005 is successful. Bearing in mind the various problems encountered with OBE and C 2005, it is obvious that we must have a teaching corps that can meet the challenges, since this will enable us to overcome the various dilemmas. A thoroughly prepared teacher has the ability to be innovative, creative and to solve problems, and it is such teachers that will take us a long way in our efforts to “make OBE work”. Furthermore, a prepared teacher can also draw on a variety of teaching styles and possesses more than one method of applying discipline in his or her class. This could counteract the difficulties encountered in overcrowded classrooms.

More time is needed for the successful implementation of OBE and C 2005. The benefits that this will bring about, as stated in Chapter 5, will afford the DOE and schools an opportunity to get to grips meaningfully with OBE and C 2005. The value of evaluating and correcting previous mistakes cannot be overestimated. We cannot implement the new curriculum in a vacuum and in so doing decontextualise it from what is happening in our schools. We need to build on what we have and not what we want to have. We have to strike a balance somewhere and realise that our situation is unique and requires of us that we find unique solutions to our dilemmas.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having a functional education system is crucial to the establishment of a democratic culture as well as to the long-term economic prosperity of South Africa. Looking back at what we have achieved should inspire us to rise to the challenge of sustaining our democracy and employing an education system that will benefit all the people of South Africa. With this in mind I would like to recommend the following:

### **6.3.1 Empower communities by fostering a culture of participation.**

In order for South Africa to deepen its democracy, we have to encourage community involvement in all spheres and at all levels. Communities have to take responsibility for their circumstances and recognise that they are the determiners of their own future. Without this there will always be more or less total reliance on government to meet the needs of the people, and the innovativeness and creativity within each and every community will be lost. In this regard we need to realise the potential of the individual in a changing society. Many societal problems can be overcome if we can create a conscientious and responsibly critical society. We cannot allow ourselves to be forced into being subservient, which was a trademark of the previous government. Even on the education front, the role of society at large cannot be denied. We must be kept informed on matters of national importance and cannot allow a situation where the politicians and government dictate to us.

### **6.3.2 We must build a culture of tolerance and understanding amongst the various racial groups.**

Taking into account that Vanhanen has stated that the racial divide is the biggest threat to democracy in South Africa, building a culture of respect and understanding becomes of vital importance. It is my contention that language is a dividing factor that needs to be addressed. The call for the introduction of a third regional language has intensified to the extent that we are not left with any option but to go along with it. In this regard we need to open the avenues of dialogue between the races and add to the establishment of a common understanding of each other. Furthermore, it will add to the sense of nationalism that is so clearly lacking in our society.

### **6.3.3 Democratic education should be made a priority.**

Notwithstanding the various efforts that have been made to democratise South African classrooms, we need to ensure that our educational efforts will aid in the production of

democratically minded citizens. The role of the teacher in this process is vitally important, and noting that these values have to be modelled, the establishment of democratic institutions can only be made possible if the people in these institutions are committed to democratic practice. In essence, the establishment of a democratic society can only be brought about if we have democratic schools with democratic teachers.

#### **6.3.4 Constituency representation vs. party representation**

To combat the notion of a populist democracy, where accountability to the people is absent, I would like to recommend that the possibility of the establishment of a constituency representative and not a party political representative system be introduced. The former, in my view, lends itself to greater accountability on the part of the representative whilst the latter allows representatives to hide behind the political party. In this latter regard any questioning of the leadership is viewed as reactionary and wanting the old order to be re-established. Of course, this discourages positive and responsible criticism of official actions.

#### **6.3.5 Involve teachers as much as possible**

In dealing with the matter of Outcomes-based Education and C 2005, I would like to recommend that teachers should be involved at all levels of educational planning. Although the extent of such involvement is vast, structures such as the establishment of the Educational Management and Development Centres (EMDC) can be set up, and they will make the gathering and distribution of information easier. For a better understanding of how District Development could help teachers, I would like to recommend Jennifer Roberts' paper "District Development – The New Hope for Educational Reform" (2001). Teachers must know that their input in the shaping of the education system counts. Such shaping should not be experienced as a "top-down" process, otherwise teachers will simply not buy into the process, and a level of resistance to the anticipated change will be experienced.

### **6.3.6 Subject specialisation vs. classroom teaching**

It was quite possible for a teacher to be in control of a class of 45 students in an content-based environment. In an outcomes-based environment where continual assessment and individual teacher attention are demanded, large classes tend to be problematic. In this regard I would like to recommend that in determining the teacher / learner ratio, differentiation should be made between those undergoing C 2005 and others. If it is found that the teacher ratios differ my suggestion is that the Department of Education should be lenient in this regard. Moreover, noting the complexity of human resource management at schools the application of teacher / learner ratios become a contentious issue. Although it is intended that there will be 35 students to one teacher at secondary school level, the application of this provision, especially in the lower grades, has never materialised. Also, noting that top management in schools is included in this ratio, in my experience you seldom find principals teaching their full complement. Furthermore, since schools are built with a certain capacity in mind, this is never adhered to when talk on this topic arises. As part of the search for a solution to this problem the practicability of the introduction of classroom teaching in Outcomes-based Education should be considered.

### **6.3.7 Stagger implementation of Outcomes-based Education**

The value of this approach has been discussed in Chapter 5. Implementation of OBE and C 2005 cannot happen without the necessary reflection on the problems that have been experienced and without the time needed to correct them. We need to give our teachers more time to familiarise themselves with what is expected of them in order to enable them to deliver. As has been stated in the literature, the overhasty implementation of OBE and C 2005 has caused many problems. To now take a step back and to evaluate the situation again might prove to be the best under the current circumstances.

### **6.3.8 Pilot programmes should be more objective and reflect reality**

The need for pilot programmes cannot be denied, but we need to remain aware of reality. Scientific study has its value only to the extent to which it can give a true reflection of what is really happening. A situation whereby results are manipulated by the creation of an ideal situation does not aid our efforts for educational reform. Our pilot programmes should be a test only of hypotheses that are true and should reflect what is really happening in our schools.

### **6.3.9 Programmes should be implemented only after feasibility studies have been completed**

The GET certification exercise at the end of 2002 has been a huge disaster, and the introduction of the Common Task for Assessment has overburdened teachers to the extent that the Assessment was declared not compulsory for the promotion of learners to the next stage of learning. The time of implementation – September 2002 – led to many educators feeling that the DOE could not have chosen a more inappropriate time. A more suitable time would have been the first term, which would have offered teachers the time to address the various problems that they encountered. It is my belief that the value of the exercise would have been greatly increased if this more suitable time had been used.

## **6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is recommended that, as part on the ongoing extension of democracy, the role of parents in the provision of quality education should be further investigated. The undoing of the widespread culture of non-involvement of parents in the education of our children should become a priority. It cannot be left to legislation alone to ensure that this will materialise. Schools, SGB's and all relevant stakeholders will have to increase their commitment to bring about meaningful change in our schools.

**Other topics for further research include:**

- ❑ Teacher preparedness in the successful delivery of Outcomes-based Education and Curriculum 2005
- ❑ The impact of the possible failure of OBE on South African society – a future perspective
- ❑ Bringing about equity through education.

The last topic is crucial to the efforts of all involved in education. However, because the schools best equipped to deliver on C 2005 are the previously whites only schools, a question to be debated is whether equity will be reached if we continue along the current path.

**6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

South Africa has been blessed in that it experienced a smooth transition from apartheid. Furthermore it has withstood the onslaught that has been waged against its fragile democracy. Some remarkable legislation has been produced to secure the country's newly established democratic political system. The challenge of deepening our democracy now needs to be met with the same dedication that was displayed in establishing it. We will have to work hard to bring about unity and acceptance of cultural differences in order to bridge the racial divide that poses the biggest threat to democracy.

Outcomes-based Education can play, and to some extent already has played, a positive role in securing a brighter future for all South Africans if the teething problems experienced can be resolved. Establishing a education system that will benefit all South Africans is not an overnight process and cannot be accomplished in one political term of office. Politicians need to be future-oriented and realise that the mistakes and successes of today will impact on future generations.

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