

**A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF
STRUCTURAL AND CONCEPTUAL
TRENDS UNDERLYING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF OUTCOMES-
BASED EDUCATION**

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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.

However, after doing an analysis and an interpretation of the data of the study on Teacher Training (1996), it appears as if OBE will be "forced" into schools.

The study also reveals that as a result of globalisation that the world is becoming a global village and that the knowledge production which assumes that school is a site of knowledge production is being challenged by the global reality, our education should be considered as being of an OBE nature.

The findings of the research suggest that OBE will be forced into schools and that the transformation of its own Rationalisation, creating and maintaining a new paradigm of education embedded in practices of teaching and learning. It is doing this, OBE will create transformative opportunities for school communities at large.

ABSTRACT

This study looks at the structural and conceptual trends underlying the development of outcomes-based education.

Part of the democratisation process of South African education involves the introduction of a system of outcomes-based education (OBE) in South African schools. Proponents of OBE claim that it constitutes a radical break from the previous apartheid education system. For this reason OBE is viewed as a transformational perspective on the curriculum. Viewed against this backdrop OBE strives to guarantee success for all learners; to empower learners in a learner-centred environment thus creating a critical, investigative, creative, problem-solving, communicative future-orientated citizen (Department of Education 1997:10).

However, after doing an analysis and an interpretation of the White Paper on Education and Training (1996), it appears as if OBE with its "fixed" outcomes has a tendency to manipulate and control learners. The analysis shows that OBE stifles learners' critical, investigative, creative and problem-solving ability.

The study also reveals that as a result of globalisation there is a global discourse on knowledge production which assumes that unless our system of education conforms with this global reality, our education could be considered as being of an inferior quality.

The findings of the research suggest that OBE with its fixed outcomes cannot engender transformation on its own. Rational reflection, creativity and imagination need to be imbedded in practices of teaching and learning. By doing this, OBE could offer transformative opportunities for school communities at large.

UITTREKSEL

Hierdie studie poog om die strukturele en konseptuele tendens onderliggend aan die ontwikkeling van UGO (Uitkomsgebaseerde onderwys) te ondersoek.

Die bekendstelling van 'n UGO model in skole word gesien as deel van die demokratiseringsproses wat binne die Suid-Afrikaanse onderwysstelsel plaasvind. Ondersteuners van UGO is dit eens dat UGO radikaal wegbeweeg van die apartheidsonderwysstelsel. Om hierdie rede word UGO dus gesien as 'n transformatoriese perspektief tot die kurikulum.

Teen hierdie agtergrond streef UGO daarna om sukses te waarborg vir alle leerders in 'n leerlinggesentreerde omgewing. Op die manier wil UGO 'n kritiese, ondersoekende, skeppende, probleemoplossende, kommunikatiewe en toekomsgerigte landsburger skep.

Nadat daar egter 'n analitiese studie van die Witskrif vir Onderwys en Opleiding (1996) gedoen is wil dit tog voorkom asof UGO eerder daarop gemik is om leerders te manipuleer en te beheer. Trouens, die huidige diskoers oor kennisproduksie aanvaar dat indien 'n land se opvoeding nie die realiteit van globalisasie in ag neem nie word dit as minderwaardig beskou.

Die bevindinge van die navorsing stel voor dat UGO, met sy vaste uitkomst, weinige verandering alleen kan meebring. Daar word dus aan die hand gedoen dat indien rasionaliteit, kreatiwiteit en verbeeldingrykheid deel sou vorm van onderwys en leer dit op so 'n manier uitkomst kan komplementeer en sodoende betekenisvolle transformasie in die onderwys kan bewerkstellig.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY	I
ABSTRACT	II
UITTREKSEL	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1	General Introduction	1
1.2	Motivation for study	2
1.3	Aims and Objectives	4
1.4	Statement of Problem	4
1.5	Research Methods	6
1.6	Outline of Study	7

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A CRITICAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Rationale of Study	12
2.3	Research Methodology	12
2.4	An Analysis of the Concept Education	18
2.4.1	The Implausibility of a Positivist Educational Theory	19
2.4.2	Critical Educational Theory as a Justification for Education	23
3.1	The Australian Approach to OBE	
3.1.1	Australia's National Curriculum	
3.1.2	Types of OBE in Australia	
3.2	The Canadian Education System	
3.3	OBE in the UK	
3.4	An International Comparative Analysis of OBE	
3.5	Conclusion	

CHAPTER 3**OBE AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

3.1	Introduction	28
3.2	The American approach to OBE	31
3.2.1	Traditional Outcomes-Based Education	35
3.2.2	Transitional Outcomes-Based Education	35
3.2.3	Transformational Outcomes-Based Education	35
3.3	The Australian Approach to OBE	36
3.3.1	Australia's National Curriculum	39
3.3.2	Types of OBE in Australia	41
3.4	The Canadian Education System	44
3.5	OBE in the UK	48
3.6	An International Comparative Analysis of OBE	52
3.7	Conclusion	58

CHAPTER 4

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1	Introduction	60
4.2	Education in the 1950s and 1960s	62
4.3	Education in the 1980s	65
4.4	The findings of the De Lange Committee	68
4.5	Education Policy Transformation in the 1990s	71
4.6	Outcomes-based education: in Perspective	76
4.7	The role of Curriculum 2005 in the Restructuring of Apartheid Education	79
4.8	Role Players in Policy Formulation	83
4.9	The Impact of Globalisation on Policy Formulation in South Africa	88
4.10	Conclusion	94

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

AND IMAGINATION

5.1	Introduction	96
5.2	The South African Justification of OBE	96
5.3	Education Policy Enactment and Transformation	98
5.4	Towards a Non-instrumentalist Justification View of Education	115
5.5	Can Transformational OBE Effect Meaningful Change?	125
5.6	Conclusion	127

6.4.2 Positive liberty

6.5 Rationality

6.6 Conclusion

CHAPTER 6

**AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH COMPLEMENTED BY RATIONALITY
AND IMAGINATION**

6.1	Introduction	130
6.2	In Defence of Critical Consciousness	132
6.3	The Importance of Being Imaginative	140
6.4	Autonomy	143
	6.4.1 Negative liberty	145
	6.4.2 Positive liberty	147
6.5	Rationality	150
6.6	Conclusion	156

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER 7

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH RELATING TO AN OBE SYSTEM	158
BIBLIOGRAPHY	163

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Education under Apartheid experienced a crisis which was characterised by unequal educational opportunities for blacks in a system which clearly favoured reproduction and memorisation. This implies that the education system was used by the government as an instrument to protect the status quo.

Viewed against this background, as well as the realisation on the side of government that education has an important part to play in the whole implementation process of a new social ideology, it became a matter of urgency to democratise the schooling system in South Africa. This implies that the educational system was in need of expansion in order to meet the demands of a democratic society. These ambitions of government regarding educational reform in South Africa is clearly reflected in the White Paper on Education and Training of 1996 (here-in-after referred to as the WPET). Government's aim was to abandon the old established educational dogmas in order to create the necessary space for a new educational system that would enhance critical reflection, dialogue and rationality. In its search for an educational model that would address the challenge of equity and redress, Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was chosen as a vehicle to address the crisis. Proponents of OBE claim that if (OBE) is more than a mere reform strategy, it is in fact a "radical paradigm shift" (Claasen 1998: 36).

According to the Department of Education (DoE 1997a: 7) this new approach is described in the following way:

Active learners; assessment on an ongoing basis; critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action; an integration of knowledge; learning relevant and connected to real-life situations; learner-centredness; the teacher as a facilitator; groupwork and teamwork; open learning programmes allowing teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes; learners responsible for their learning; emphasis on what the learner becomes and understands; flexible time-frames allowing learners to work at their own pace; comment and input from the wider community encouraged.

Higher

South Africa's new democracy merits an education system that aims to emancipate both students and teachers alike from educational practices which are grounded in educational inequity. Moreover, Peters (in Aspin 1995: 56) argues that: Citizens of a democracy do not simply arrive at political maturity and stand ready, willing and able to run its institutions. They have to be trained. This implies that the growth of any democratic society is directly dependent on the principles of a democratic school system which serves as a guide to define our relationships with our fellow human beings. Finally, Gazman (in Chapman *et al.* 1995: 14) argues that the fundamental psychological shifts necessary to bring about democracy in education and in a society depend largely on the possibility of qualitative changes taking place in the social and economic life of the country.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

As an educator who have spent my entire schooling career under a system of Apartheid education, I have a dire need to understand the kind of processes which guide democratic

reform in our schools at this point in time. The moral foundation in terms of which the majority of South Africans were denied access to serve and guide the democratisation process includes the principles of “equality, justice, tolerance, respect for others and personal freedom” (Aspin in Chapman *et al.* 1995: 7). This implies that in order to transform and accommodate principles of democracy, government structures had to change in a drastic way to meet these challenges, and in so doing, the Department of Education needed to put an education system into place which would be attuned to the democratic demands of the country as a whole. The adoption of Outcomes-based education (OBE) with its commitment to empower its learners can be seen as an effort on the side of government to transcend the legacy of the traditional curriculum and, therefore, invariably contribute towards the transformation process in South Africa.

Moreover, a necessary condition which is needed for democracy and education to flourish is that of individual autonomy. Both Locke and Mill view individual autonomy “as the bullwark of the morality that is supposed to be confirmed by its delivery in the modern democratic state” (Chapman *et al.* 1995: 5). It is with such an understanding of democracy that one comes to the realisation that without real fundamental change, that is, change which affects the relationship between student and teacher, but, more importantly, real organisational change with regard to its management structures, it is inconceivable that real democratic change can be realised. In this regard, Morrow (1989: 149) argues that:

One of the central aims of education is to generate “democratic agents”. This aim is expressed in the views that education aims to contribute to people’s autonomy, to their capacity for critical thinking, to the discovery of what is in their real interests, to

the development of their moral and political sensibility, and so on, and these capacities and commitments are precisely those of a “democratic agent”.

OBE which claims to be emancipatory, is thus inextricably linked to the whole idea of democratic education. Therefore, as an educator, my primary concern is to investigate whether OBE holds promise to effect meaningful change in schools.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary concern of this study is to establish to what extent OBE as a mechanism for change can be successful in the democratisation of education in South Africa. It has often been claimed that OBE has been chosen as a model to engender meaningful change in education and, therefore, it creates the necessary breeding ground for democratic praxis. The topic of this thesis concerns itself with an analysis of the various theories which guide OBE and how these theories inform democratic practices in education. The aim of this study is to reach greater clarification regarding the democratising potential of OBE and to identify its strengths, weaknesses and challenges posed by democratic education in South Africa.

With this study, therefore, I hope to clarify these issues and in so doing contribute to the continuous debate on educational democracy in South Africa.

1.4 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

To have a democratic vision of education means to give recognition to the role of education in bringing about an informed and educated society. Therefore, any educational reform should be clear in its understanding of what constitutes democratic educational practice. The

question arises as to whether the mere promulgation of policy documents is sufficient to engender meaningful change in education.

The number of difficult and complex issues surrounding policy formulation clearly suggest that bringing about these envisaged changes is no easy task. A fundamental error on the side of government, which has severely impeded the capacity of policy to bring about the desired change, is the assumption that the policy formulation process can be divorced from its implementation process. Moreover, Christie (in Jansen & Christie 1999: 284) argues that “policies are best understood in terms of practices on the ground, rather than idealist statements of intention or blueprints for action”. Against this background, implementers have often been seen as not having the necessary strength of will to implement policy changes.

Furthermore, the overwhelming effect of the phenomenon of globalisation which is inextricably linked to democracy in education policy transformation in South Africa, culminated in the formulation of the WPET in which education is largely viewed in terms of economics. The central imperative behind this way of thinking has been the urge to synchronise education with economics and in so doing, South Africa would enable itself to meet the challenges of a world market economy.

Bearing the above in mind, one comes to the conclusion that the process of change is not an easy task. However, for a society that has so long been denied democratic freedom afforded to them under the new political order, it is the task of the state to make citizens aware that with these privileges also come obligations. In a different way, it is the duty of the state to educate its citizens that democracy requires one to be responsible for freedom, and this is one of the main reasons for OBE's existence in South Africa.

In brief, the main problems in the context of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. What implications does the implementation of an Outcomes-based approach have for education in South Africa?
2. Is the mere promulgation of policy documents sufficient to engender real change in terms of practices on the ground?
3. Does the phenomenon of globalisation hinder or assist democratic transformation in education?
4. What kind of impact does globalisation have on democratic transformation in education?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODS

The main method which I use in this study is conceptual analysis, that is, analysis of policy documents and a literature review. This thesis is a critical analysis and argues that transformational OBE needs to create the necessary space for critical reflection and rationality if it is to play a significant role in the democratic transformation of education in South Africa.

Furthermore, this thesis attempts to analyse the WPET of 1996 and critically examine the relationship between the process of policy promulgation and policy implementation, and the impact it has on the transformation process in education. It examines key concepts such as OBE, democracy and transformation as well as critical theory in order to establish how critical theory through OBE can further democratise education.

An attempt is made to answer the following questions: Where does OBE fit in a global perspective? What were the main features of an Apartheid education system? What are the

main features of a democratic schooling system? To what extent can OBE enhance opportunities that would engender meaningful change?

This conceptual study focuses on clarifying concepts such as positivism, critical theory, rationality, imagination, critical reflection, praxis, democracy, transformation and liberalism (positive liberty and negative liberty). Finally, my research also identifies some of the main strengths and weaknesses of a democratic education system under the newly elected government which culminates in some challenges and possibilities facing an OBE system of education.

1.6 OUTLINE OF STUDY

Chapter 1 comprises the introduction and orientation to this study. Included is an outline of the motivation for the study, aims and objectives, statement of the problem and research methods used.

In Chapter 2 the explanation of the key concepts, such as “philosophy”, “positivism” and “critical theory” is dealt with, with a view to clarifying their use in this study.

Chapter 3 seeks to give an informed understanding of what OBE entails and for this reason it gives an international account of both the commonalities and the variations of the movement.

Chapter 4 firstly attempts to give a historical overview of education in South Africa. Secondly, it investigates the reasons why South Africa has opted for transformational OBE as a system of education. Finally, it looks at the forces which shaped educational policy formulation in South Africa.

Chapter 5 examines educational policy. It gives an account of the many influences which shaped the policy on education and training in SA and it seeks to give reasons why the gap exists between policy promulgation and policy implementation.

Chapter 6 puts emphasis on the fact that OBE with its fixed outcomes cannot engender meaningful change in education. For this reason, this chapter examines the notions of rational reflection and imagination in an attempt to find new possibilities that would compliment fixed outcomes in order to bring about effective transformation in education.

Chapter 7 focuses on a personal reflection as a student at a university and a teacher at a high school. Furthermore, it looks at possibilities for future research towards the implementation of an OBE system of education in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A CRITICAL THEORY OF EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the wake of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, a dramatic and daring change in the education arena took place, which would significantly transform the face of education in South Africa. The main idea behind the change was to "purge the apartheid curriculum of its most offensive racial content and outdated inaccurate subject matter" (Jansen 1999: 56).

The announcement of the South African Schools Act on 28 September 1995 was a major step forward in the formation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 1997. The NQF aimed at co-coordinating the South African education system that would respond to the fragmentation and the inequity of the past system of education. Outcomes-based education (OBE) was the new democratically elected government's response to apartheid education. The government has specifically created policy initiatives in order to transform the education system in all spheres of the public sector. Carrim (1998: 301) states the following in relation to past South African education:

The system of apartheid seriously affected the nature of educational provision and order in South Africa. It ensured that South Africans were schooled in segregated environments. This meant that every level of schooling (and university education) was cast in a racial mould; educational budget provisions, the structure of educational bureaucracies, the composition of staff and pupils in schools (and universities), the

kind of curriculum followed, and the ethos prevalent in schools. Transforming education in South Africa, therefore, entails *erecting changes on all of the levels. 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 (my italics).

Undeniably the apartheid education system could not be sustained. Inherent parts of its make-up were the predominance of authoritarianism, non-transparent policy processes, rote learning, an obsession with content, lack of integration between education and training, rigid divisions, and punitive formal examinations designed to yield high levels of failure (Morrow 1999: 23). The education system under the apartheid regime was designed to serve the interest of state apparatuses for ultimate power and control of the majority disenfranchised population.

Prior to 1994 the entire education system in South Africa was organized along racial lines. The promulgation of the Christian National Education (CNE) policy in 1948 was inherently geared towards the social upliftment of the white Afrikaans-speaking learners, but instead it had a major impact on the lives of all learners in South Africa. Enslin (in Schreuder 1999: 121) uses the following quotes from the Act which deals with “Coloured Teaching and Education” and “Bantu Teaching and Education” respectively to prove this point:

Black education is the responsibility of white South Africa or more specifically the Boer nation as the senior white trustee of the native who is in a state of cultural infancy. A subordinate part of the vocation and task of the Afrikaner is to ...

christianise the non-white races of our fatherland ... It is the sacred obligation of the Afrikaner to base black education on Christian National principles.

From the point of view of the ruling class, therefore, there was a dire need to mass-produce unskilled and semi-skilled labor from amongst the ranks of the black youth. In order to understand why this is so, it is necessary to take a closer look at education as a process. Education can be seen as the name we give to those formal and informal ways in which adults of a society pass on their accumulated knowledge to the younger generation in that society. This kind of knowledge includes more than knowing content, but also refers to the ways in which people are supposed to lead their lives. In this way, the education system of a country prepares young people to take their "place" in society in more ways than one. They become labourers, educators, nurses, doctors and so on. Besides the acquisition of knowledge, they (referring to youth) also acquire attitudes that are needed to fill their designated positions in society. Consequently, CNE was used as a vehicle by the apartheid regime to assist in entrenching and strengthening rules, ideas and values to the apartheid ideology. The main idea behind CNE was that it would assist in the conservation of a segregationist and discriminatory educational policy. In the light of the discriminatory nature of the apartheid education system in South Africa, OBE emerged as a direct response to overhaul the debilitating effects of apartheid education, which mostly served the interest of the white minority.

Without giving a detailed exposition of OBE at this stage (chapter two deals more adequately with the concept), briefly, OBE is aimed at sanctioning various pathways for learners in different contexts in order to allow adults, out-of-school children and youth, as well as school-going children to be able to achieve different learning outcomes after the completion

of specific learning activities. In the words of O'Neil (in Deever 1996: 180), OBE "seeks to ensconce the skill, knowledge, and habits of mind that students should be able to demonstrate in order to be prepared for life after graduation". The aim of this ambitious reform agenda is to meet the demands of both equity and human resources development that would be brought together in educational policies geared to transform apartheid education, as well as moving towards establishing a democratic educational dispensation.

2.2 RATIONALE OF STUDY

The purpose of this thesis is to critically analyse structural and conceptual trends underlying the development of OBE within the South African context. It aims to describe, explain and analyse structural and conceptual meanings of the OBE system that make its implementation in the South-Africa education system somewhat plausible. Why? Thus far, several policy documents have been promulgated regarding OBE. Moreover, the Chisholm Task Team of 2000 – 2001 also completed a review vis-à-vis the feasibility for implementing the proposed OBE system of education. As I shall show later on in this thesis, the debates surrounding OBE and its implementation have not always been informed by rigorous conceptual analysis with specific reference to a more nuanced understanding of the concept OBE. In this way, I hope to contribute towards providing much clarity on the concept which might enhance towards its impending implementation. Similarly, the thesis also attempts to become another critical voice in the on-going debate surrounding the feasibility of an OBE system to be used in South African institutions, in particular schools.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research methodology entails a conceptual-analytical approach and a literature review. A conceptual-analytical approach concerns itself with questions of a reflective kind, which

come to the fore when social processes like education is under discussion. To reflect on and about educational matters is to be “concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, beliefs, action and activities” (Hirst & Peters 1998: 28). I shall now further elaborate on this notion of conceptual analysis. In a different way, I shall investigate as to what constitutes an analysis of concepts. But first, I need to examine the word “concept”.

To find out what the term “concept” means is to know what makes a thing what it is. This involves examining the use of a term and to see which underlying principles govern its use. For example to know what the word “punishment” means is to examine the use of the term with the aim of uncovering the underlying guiding principles, which make the word what it is. Thus, we find that actions such as insulting a person or physically abusing one’s relatives might be ways in which the term punishment can be lived out or experienced. However, what makes “punishment” what it is, is the fact that something unpleasant should be done to somebody. This guiding principle, which constitutes punishment, manifests itself in actions such as physically abusing a person or perhaps actions one has never seen before. Kovesi (1967: 60) refers to the guiding principle of a concept as a formal element (that which makes a thing what it is). The formal element (guiding principle) of a concept constitutes actions, what he refers to as material elements. In his words:

... to be able to understand the significance or the meaning of a term, we have to be able to follow a rule in using that term, not to be able to perceive an entity of which our term is a name (Kovesi 1967:20).

Hence, Kovesi (1967:8) refers to knowing the meaning of a term as the formal element

(guiding principle) which makes a thing what it is. The material elements are those practices or perceivable entities, which are shaped by the formal element.

Moreover, when we do an analysis of concepts, it is important to realise that one does so by looking at their (concepts) relation to other words and how they are being used in different contexts. It is not sufficient to examine the use of words in any self-contained way. In other words, one does not get to understand their use in different contexts without understanding the different sorts of purposes that constitute the basis for their use, and which requires us to reflect on the practices of human beings. What this amounts to is that the use of concepts is not unrelated to the context in which the concept unfolds. Revenge is “revenge” because it unfolds in a specific context at a specific time. Of course, one does not have to know the history of “revenge” in order to use the term. However, understanding the historical context to the word is to know how and why the word is being used in a particular situation. In the same way, in chapter two, I shall investigate the relation of OBE with other concepts, with particular reference to the way in which OBE developed historically in relation to say, particular understandings of education. In this regard, Taylor (1989: 35) argues that one would gain more clarity about the use of a particular word if one is familiar with the context in which the word is being used. Likewise, I shall argue in this thesis that the use of the concept OBE needs to be examined in terms of the context(s) in which the concept evolved. To know the historical context of the concept OBE would give more clarity to understanding the guiding principles, referred by Kovesi (1967) as the formal element, which shaped its use in different contexts.

To come back to the reasons as to why one performs a conceptual analysis, I content that it enables one to use concepts in order to get a better idea of the similarities and differences

when looking at different words. Conceptual analysis creates the opportunity for one to stand back a bit and to reflect on the status of the understandings, which constitute OBE. It frees us to ask a fundamental question in ethics, which is that of whether particular understandings of a concept are justifiable (Hirst & Peters 1998: 34). In a different way, reflecting on what makes a concept what it is to find reasons as to why a concept is what it is. Not just anything makes a concept what it is. The guiding principle referred to as the formal element of a concept, is shaped by reasons, which are defensible, and which grow out of the moral consciousness of people, that is the way they understand or perceive particular situations. It is our reasons which determine the way in which different understandings of concepts are organised. Different reasons constitute different formal elements of guiding principles that organise practices (material elements).

In addition, in order to tease out the notion of conceptual analysis further, consider the following aspects. One cannot address the ethical question of whether there are any good in it if we take revenge on people unless we have clarity of what the term “revenge” means. When we perform conceptual analysis it is important to be able to justify the meaning of concepts. In a different way one has to provide reasons and clear arguments as to why a concept is used in a particular manner, particularly in relation to other concept. If we do not understand how certain concepts operate in relation to other words we are unable to do an analysis of the specific concepts in question. In other words a concept does not operate independently or in isolation, but rather in conjunction with other concepts or words and that is how it derives its meaning. In this regard, Hirst and Peters (1998: 35) aptly claim:

For in the process of trying to make explicit the guiding principles, which underlie our use of a word, we should have become clearer both about how things are and about

the sorts of decisions that have to be faced in dealing with them (in relation to other words).

The upshot of the above is, in order to perform a conceptual analysis one has to find logically necessary conditions for different uses of a concept. Only after one understands and comprehends the different ways a concept operates in relation to others can one gain more clarity about its use. In sum, conceptual analysis involves getting to know the guiding principle, which makes a concept what it is. This guiding principle or formal element manifests itself in human practices and gives meaning to such practices. Guiding principles are defensible reasons or logically necessary conditions, which make concepts what they are. Also, knowing a concept involves establishing its relation to other concepts such as those which explain practices in particular historical contexts. It is with such an understanding of conceptual analysis that I shall in the next chapter examine what OBE means.

The question arises: How does the above explanation of conceptual analysis link up with an understanding of philosophy of education as used in this thesis. I use philosophy of education as a tool of reflective inquiry concerned with matters of an educational nature in order to get a clear picture about how things are and what to do in this particular realm, namely an investigation into the structural and conceptual underpinnings of OBE. I draw on Soltis' (1998) three-dimensional view of philosophy of education as reflective inquiry. He refers to the personal, the public and the professional dimensions of philosophy of education. The personal dimension involves "guiding one's own individual practice" (Soltis 1998: 197). This is different from viewing philosophy of education in its public dimension, which is "aimed at guiding and directing the practice of many" (Soltis 1998: 197). Moreover, Soltis (1998: 197) sees public philosophy of education as everybody's business. The whole point of this

exercise is to “articulate public aspirations and educational values, give sense and purpose to the cooperative public enterprise of education and provide the opportunity for thoughtful participation in the direction of education by all who care seriously about it” (Soltis 1998: 197). The professional dimension, according to Soltis (1998:198), includes both the personal and the public dimensions, but it also creates a dimension of its own. When philosophers of education perform professionally, there are less proposing and they tend to concentrate on the analytical side of things, such as that which my thesis addresses. They also become more reflective, and seek to clarify educational matters such as what my thesis attempts to do. The whole crux of the matter (when being philosophical in this way) is to make the educational enterprise “as rationally self-reflective as possible by providing philosophically rigorous examinations, critiques, justifications, analysis and syntheses of aspects of the educators’ conceptual and normative domain” (Soltis 1998: 199). It is with such an understanding of philosophy of education that I can safely claim that my intended use of conceptual analysis is in fact located within an integrated personal, public and professional understanding of philosophy of education. Put differently, I shall attempt to analyse in a rational and reflective way what OBE means. Grounded in this view of philosophy of education, my research method, which entails a conceptual-analytical approach and a literature review, argues for a philosophical approach to educational studies as reflective and critical enquiry, which can hopefully guide my investigation into a more enriched understanding of OBE.

Thus far, I have explained what a conceptual-analytical approach entails and how it can be used to investigate OBE. However, it is not sufficient to talk about conceptual analysis as a research method and presume that a concept such as OBE would be thoroughly explained after one has reflected critically on and about the concept. The point is that analysing a concept such as OBE is not just any kind of analysis, but rather one, which presupposes a

particular understanding of education. In a different way, conceptual analysis is itself a practice guided by a particular understanding of education. Therefore, in order to use conceptual appropriately, I shall focus my discussion on the framework (paradigm) of thinking, which ought to guide education. In this way, conceptually analysing a concept presupposes a particular understanding of education. It is to such a discussion that I now turn my attention.

2.4 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT EDUCATION

My emphasis is on an understanding of education being linked to “political and social realities”, that is, aspects which relate to a critical understanding of education. In other words, education cannot be delinked from “political and social realities”. Linking education to “political and social realities” involves critical and reflective thinking which, according to Brookfield (in Marsick & Watkins 1999: 80-81) should “variously emphasise *logical reasoning, judgment, reflection, the making of meaning*, emancipation from socio-cultural forces that shape one’s self-image and actions, or dialectical thinking” (my italics).

What the above explanation of reflective thinking points out, is that education is shaped by a particular understanding or framework of thinking which makes the concept what it is. In other words, not just any reason can be used to justify an explanation of the concept education. The line of argument to which the above explanation of education is attuned, links strongly with a particular framework of thinking which underpins an understanding of education. Put differently, practices such as “logical reasoning, judgment, reflection, (and) the making of meaning” are heavily influenced by a particular framework of thinking (argued for in this thesis as the guiding principle or formal element) which makes a concept what it is. My contention is that the notion of education can best justified according to a critical theory

of education, for the reason that such a guiding principle of education gives rise to issues of rationality, reflexivity and critical meaning making. Before I justify as to why an understanding of education should be along the lines of a critical educational theory, I shall first examine as to why an explanation of education akin to positivist educational theory (for purposes of my thesis) is untenable.

2.4.1 The Implausibility of a Positivist Educational Theory

Positivist educational theory sees knowledge in the world as objective without the value judgements of people. Morrow (1989) argues that the underlying assumption of positivism is that there is fundamentally only one mode of understanding. This assumption is in favour of the scientific point of view. For this reason they (positivists) distinguish between two forms of knowledge. On the one hand Fay (1975: 20) claims that only scientific knowledge, according to the positivist, has the ability to give a truly objective account of how conditions or events are related, “and thus it alone can provide us with the power to requisite for the task of social control”. On the other hand, the more traditional attempts at understanding society are frowned upon by positivists because these observations are influenced and guided by human needs and wants. The implications of such an epistemology is that an objective account of education can only be ascertained by means of some kind of scientific investigation. According to Fay (1975), the usefulness of science lies not in its objective approach of how the world functions but rather in the kind of account it gives. For this reason scientific reasoning is based on the Verification Principle “which proposes that unless a statement was in principle verifiable it must be rejected as meaningless” (Morrow 1989: 41). Waghid (2000) is of the opinion that to say that all science has the same logical form implies that there is only one true form of explanation, referred to by positivists as the Deductive-nomological (D-N model) of explanation. The D-N model, according to Waghid (2000),

contains a nomological statement (validated, universal, reliable, objective, factual, empirical or general statement applicable at all times and places) and a deductive argument. In a deductive argument the nomological statement logically entails the conclusion:

- 1 Whenever A then B (the premise or nomological statement)
- 2 A happens
- 3 Therefore B occurs

If 1 is true and 2 is true then 3 must be true. 1, 2 and 3 form a valid deductive argument. For example:

Statement: Whenever A happens, then B occurs.

Example: Whenever the moon shines, light is given off.

Moreover, the deductive form of the D-N model of explanation suggests that it is bent on prediction.

Waghid and Schreuder (2000: 87) use the following example to explain such a model of explanation:

(1) Whenever educators can help politicians to anticipate the outcomes and problems which are likely to arise when educational policy has been put into effect, the quality of education (as was assumed with apartheid education) improves; (2) that educators anticipate the outcomes of policy, then they can predict; (3) which planning procedures should be designed and education programmes formulated for future action. And, once we can make predictions on the basis of the D-N model of explanation, we can control the situation; that is, we can manipulate it.

In summary, a positivists theory of education, according to Waghid and Schreuder (2000: 86), stresses:

- Testing that is designed to provide causal explanations of events such as to deduce outcomes in a particular context and to shape them into universal (absolute or law-like/must be) generalisations that can work in other contexts. For example, educational programmes during the apartheid years were designed with imperialist imperatives and imposed on the majority of South Africa's indigenous population;
- Predicting what can happen if, for instance, educational programmes are put into practice. In this instance the educator can be involved in program formulation. His (her) task is to propose decisions, which will, when executed, achieve predetermined objectives and / or formulate outcomes for future action; and
- Manipulating educational policy analyses of policy documents and or decisions stating the structural procedures and processes to be applied in varying contexts. For example, educational policy under apartheid was manipulated to reflect the values of the dominant power and even labour market conditions.

The question that arises is what is wrong with a positivist theory of education for purposes of this thesis? First, positivist educational theory presents technical assumptions regarding knowledge as factual “with little awareness of questions of reflectivity and problems of the social independence of knowledge formation” (Young in Waghid 1999: 124).

Secondly, Waghid (1999) argues that positivist educational theory leaves no room for metaphysical value judgments and therefore removes itself from the domain of ethical and

political commitment. It does not take human values into consideration and therefore leaves no scope for intersubjective human action to occur. Positivism wants to reduce humans to quantifiable and measurable objects of investigation. Therefore, a positivist sees human action as something to be determined or guided by specific events. Humans, according to positivism, do not act from a sense of reason and moral conviction. According to Higgs (1995: 10):

In the process of this reduction aspect of human experience such as human subjectivity and agency that cannot be explained in quantitative terms are ignored and even denied by positivism.

Third, positivist educational theory sees reality as facts of the world (Waghid 1999). In other words, facts are stable and unchanging. The positivist can therefore adopt “an objective and detached epistemological stance towards reality, and can employ a methodology that relies on control and manipulation of reality” (Terre Blanche & Durheim 1999: 6). Unlike this thesis, the main focus of positivist educational theory is to provide a precise description of the laws and mechanisms that guide society.

Finally, the complexity of human thought and action cannot be explained satisfactorily in terms of a positivist educational theory. This is so, for the reason that human beings enjoy a self-consciousness and linguistic ability (not considered by a positivist educational theory) which allow them to set goals which they can pursue and justify rationally. Also, thought and action of humans cannot be limited to the regularity and predictability of objects whose behavior is guided and explained by the universal laws of science. The conduct of humans varies too much and is consequently too complex and specific to be influenced by the

invariant uniformity of universal laws. In essence, education is a product of social interaction and cannot be guided or influenced by the laws of natural science such as propounded by a positivist theory of education. Now if a positivist educational theory does not adequately explain human actions involved in a process of education, I shall examine whether a critical educational theory provides a plausible framework to articulate an understanding of education, such as the one I shall use throughout this thesis.

2.4.2 Critical Educational Theory as a Justification for Education

A critical educational theory, according to Waghid (1999), is best explained through the work of Habermas. In Waghid's (1999) explanation of Habermasian critical theory, he refers to two recent works – *Becoming Critical*, by W Carr and S Kemmis (1986), and *A Critical Theory of Education*, by R Young (1989). Carr and Kemmis (in Waghid 1999: 122) use “action research” as their premise for their ideas on critical educational theory. They see action research as “a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices and their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (Carr & Kemmis in Waghid 1999: 122). According to them the first criterion of Habermasian critical educational theory is associated with that which engenders self-reflective enquiry amongst humans that will give rise to the clear articulation of arguments in an atmosphere in which openness prevails. They argue that action research can enable participants, through a process of self-critique and rational discourse, to overcome ideological distortions generated within social relations and institutions (Carr & Kemmis in Waghid 1999: 122).

The second aspect of their action research program, according to Waghid (1999), is referred to by Habermas (in Waghid 1999), as the “organisation of enlightenment” theory. This theory of

education promotes critical action in others which creates conditions to “replace one distorted set of practices” with less distorted practices (Carr & Kemmis in Waghid 1999: 123). For Young (in Waghid 1999: 123) this is a two-dimensional process: the “ideal pedagogical speech situation” and the reform of institutions. The “ideal pedagogical speech situation” refers to the “mutual communicative relationship between teacher and student,” (Young in Waghid 1999: 123) in which the student is able rationally to assess views or, at least, “come to hold them in a manner open to rational assessment” (Young in Waghid 1999: 123). Education is therefore seen as a social process of enlightenment and not indoctrination. Following Young (in Waghid 1999: 123), a mutual communicative relationship between educator and learner prevents the domination of one party by the other. Both educator and learner produce and reproduce the rules of the epistemological discourse (Young in Waghid 1999: 123).

The third aspect of critical educational theory referred to by Carr and Kemmis (in Waghid 1999: 123) is based on Habermas’ theory of communicative action. According to them, critical educational theory is able to offer guidance on rational and democratic decision-making (Carr & Kemmis in Waghid 1999: 123). With regard to the first aspect of a Habermasian critical educational theory which refers to self-reflective enquiry, Young (in Waghid 1999: 123) rejects traditional educational theories which operate in a positivist paradigm. For him, as has been explained earlier, positivism views knowledge as historical, value-free and as a finished product. He argues for a critical educational theory and posits that the result thereof would lead to knowledge being characterised by “little awareness of reflectivity and problems of social independence of knowledge formation”. (Young in Waghid 1999: 123). This explanation of critical educational theory finds expression in the work of Hargreaves and Goodson (1997: 240) for whom critical action emerges when

“critical theory encounters education”.

What the above explanation of a critical educational theory amounts to, is that in the educational process educators need to create conditions whereby learners not only acquire “knowledge of empowerment” but also through education learners are capable of overcoming social barriers by engaging them in the “exploration of different ways of reading the world, methods of resisting oppression ...” such as those which can result in their emancipation (Hargreaves & Goodson 1997: 29). In such an educational process, education is viewed as a site of political struggle in relation to establishing an educational discourse. I shall now elaborate on this notion of education being a site of political struggle, more specifically, one guided by the idea of a discourse.

In an educational discourse, human beings (educators and learners) creatively transform not only the world of objects but also themselves and their social relations (Gould in Waghid 2000: 10). Such a discourse of education guided by a critical dimension aims to ensure that a process of human action and reflection takes place in a balanced way in the learning environment. This implies that an educational discourse wants to ensure that curricula are not studied in some kind of vacuum, but that different ideas, skills and insights learned in the classroom situation become real life experiences. In other words, education should extend beyond just classroom relations (that is, teaching and learning) and deals with “all forms of social relations aimed at transformation and emancipation” (Waghid 2000: 10). My concern, however, is more geared towards how an educational discourse is linked to the dynamics of self and social empowerment in education. Here I draw on Giroux’s (1989: 197) work on *Schooling for Democracy*. In *Schooling for Democracy*, Giroux (1989) argues for an educational discourse which would fundamentally be concerned with learners’ experiences in

so far as it takes the problems and needs of learners themselves as its starting point. An educational discourse, according to Giroux (1989: 197), promotes the idea of a critique of dominant forms of knowledge and social practices which have an impact on meanings and experiences that give learners voice and identity. In a similar way, it aims to provide learners with critical knowledge and skills that would enable them to examine through reflective practices their own particular lived experiences. In this way, educational discourse initiates learners into recognising social injustices. Furthermore, it enables learners to look at how society is structured to sustain and maintain inequities. Learners should, therefore, become aware of the fact that knowledge and power is inextricably linked to one another and they also need to see themselves as having a crucial role at “problematizing knowledge, utilizing dialogue, and making knowledge meaningful so as to make it critical in order to make it emancipatory” (Giroux in Smyth 2000: 50). The important pedagogical principle that comes into play here is that experiences of learners need to be considered in order to empower them to question and challenge existing assumptions about knowledge and knowing. The kind of knowledge that is modified and produced through the voice of the educator should be made meaningful to learners before it can be considered as critical.

What I want to illustrate with such an explanation of educational discourse, is that a critical educational theory which underscores such a view of education should be aimed at promoting self-reflection in learners. In a different way, a critical educational theory brings into the discourse elements of criticism and transformation which can give rise to emancipation. Unlike positivist educational theory, a critical educational theory is based on the premise that all humans should be free from oppression. A critical educational theory is, for this reason, powerfully geared towards bringing about social change. It is with such an understanding of a critical educational theory that I shall examine in later chapters whether the idea of OBE is

Human philosophy is

educationally justifiable.

In conclusion of this chapter, I have shown that conceptual analysis in philosophy of education is a useful tool to explore and explain the meaning of concepts, particularly that of OBE. Also, I have argued that positivist educational theory does not provide a defensible way of explaining education. Rather, I contend that a critical educational theory is an appropriate and justifiable way of explaining the concept education. It is with such an understanding of education in mind, that I shall, in the next chapter use conceptual analysis to trace the historical development and philosophical manifestations of OBE. In a different way, I shall examine what OBE means and whether such a concept of education can be reconciled with one shaped by a critical theory as has been developed in this chapter.

NB

CHAPTER 3

OBE: AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Educationists, business leaders, and more specifically politicians the world over ascribe the transformation of education in several countries primarily to the emergence of globalisation. The perpetual influence of the global market economy invariably influences educational developments in countries, including South Africa.

In the process, educational transformation, in relation to adjusting to the growing demands of the global market economy, has resulted in an increase in the value placed on educational provision. In order to compete more effectively in the global market economy, the leading societies are convinced that a country should, if it is to remain economically competitive, invest in a dynamic workforce. Hence, the renewed emphasis on quality education. In a different way, education is continuously regarded as a necessary part of the mathematically calculated market economy and has become a primary vehicle to produce semi-skilled workers to fill appropriate public spaces. However, the most pressing concern for South Africans is the “ever mounting unemployment levels which are the real issues here” (Skinner 1999: 126).

In Skinner's (1999: 126) words:

The commodification of education is not new but it may be the first time in history that a society has been prepared, in general terms, to rationalize education down to this simple deployment of isolated profit-maximising individuals divorced from any

sense of community, into whatever spaces 'fate' dictates. Yet educationists, even progressive educationists, are coming to accept all of this, if reluctantly, because they can see no alternative. Among the most significant of these are the education policy-makers themselves.

In view of the above, it is evident that changing the South African education system is of paramount importance if the country wishes to keep up with the imperatives of the global market economy. Furthermore, the kind of education provided will have to be fundamentally different from the old educational system. Pretorius (1998: 1) posits that South Africa will have to develop a radically different thinking about educational provision.

One way of improving education and which has been perceived as a viable education system over the past few decades is Outcomes-based Education (OBE). Supporters of OBE see it as "... a means of meeting the needs of all students regardless of their environment, ethnicity, economic status or disabling condition" (Capper & Jamison 1993: 2). This brings me to a discussion of OBE, particularly analysing the historical origin and some of the basic tenets of the education system.

Wherever the OBE system has been implemented it has always sought to challenge the status quo, with the primary aim being to produce an autonomous (i.e self-directed) person. So the kind of education provided through OBE should reflect a wide range of skills, knowledge and values, which should serve as a pre-condition for an autonomous modern life. In a different way, preparing someone to become autonomous implies that the person should have free access to both values and knowledge. To possess values such as dignity and autonomy does not in any way imply that one does not acknowledge the good, that dependence holds for

each of us on relationships with others. Indeed we are, in the words of Taylor (in Appiah 1997: 88) “dialogically” constituted: beginning in infancy, it is in dialogue with other people’s understandings of who I am that I develop a conception of my own identity. In essence, educating children for autonomy means that we prepare them for relationships, not just preparing them to respect the autonomy of other people. Moreover, Morrow (1989) argues that a person acting in an autonomous way is not acting under the dictates, constraints, or control of others; however, it does not mean that the person is disobedient or insubordinate.

OBE is considered to be a learner-centred, result-orientated education system which is based on the belief that individuals have the capacity to learn, as well as to demonstrate learning after having completed an educational activity. That is, learners are to become autonomous beings. According to Spady and Marshall (in Pretorius 1988: ix), we are Outcomes-based when we teach a child to cross the road. We know exactly what the child must do and see it in our mind’s eye. We go to great lengths to teach skills correctly to the child and insist that he or she practices it until we are convinced that he or she can do it safely. In a different way, OBE accentuates the demonstration of learners who have completed a specific learning activity.

In contrast to OBE, Spady sees curriculum selection as a shapeless heap of knowledge subjected to time constraints known as semesters. Educators then face the daunting task of working through this morass of knowledge in record time. Thus, learning and teaching is calendar driven rather than driven by the need of students. The system, therefore, becomes input-driven rather than Outcomes-based. Inputs refer to the experiences from which we learn and outcomes are the results of learning. Thus, according to proponents of OBE, learning is

dictated to by an “ill-defined curriculum, and the pace at which the material is covered is driven by the calendar, rather than student needs” (Capper & Jamison: 1993: 3). This brings me to a discussion of OBE in the United States of America (USA).

3.2 THE USA APPROACH TO OUTCOMES - BASED EDUCATION

King and Evans (in Capper 1993: 2) trace the roots of OBE back to that part of the USA education system which has developed over a period of thirty years (1970s – 1990s) and which includes the work of Tyler and Bloom. OBE assumes that all students have the capacity to learn and succeed whether gifted, disabled or in-between. Schools, therefore, control the conditions that determine whether or not learners are successful. Furthermore, Spady (1994) claims that illiteracy and failure are neither inevitable nor acceptable. The vehicle that makes this success a reality in the OBE approach is located in mastery learning. Mastery learning, according to Torshen (in Naicker 1999: 48) drawing on the work of Carroll (1971) and Bloom (1971), is the name that is given to a model being used to structure a curriculum. According to him, “the mastery process operates on the proposition that almost every student can learn the basic skills and knowledge that is the core of the school curriculum when the instruction is of good quality and appropriate for him (her) and when he (she) spends adequate time in learning” (Torshen in Naicker 1999: 48). The assumption here is that “... the ability (intelligence) does not set a cap on the amount that a student can learn, but rather on the time needed to master the material” (Carroll in Capper & Jamison 1993: 3).

Moreover, Bloom’s mastery learning principles require learners to master pre-requisite skills before being promoted to advanced skills. No student shall be required to master a skill for which he or she does not possess the pre-requisite knowledge. According to OBE philosophy, the learner should be provided with additional opportunity to master the pre-requisite

knowledge as it is taken for granted that the learner simply requires more time to learn (Spady in Malcolm 1999: 90), for the reason that no student moves to the next unit until he (she) has mastered the current one. Towers (in Naicker 1999: 48) argues that whilst OBE and mastery learning are not synonymous, the two concepts have a great deal in common. He adds that the important connection between OBE and mastery learning techniques are generally employed by teachers professing to have implemented Outcomes-based learning environments. He suggests that mastery learning is often the engine that propels OBE programmes and argues that understanding the tenets of mastery learning is fundamental to understanding OBE. Thus, like mastery learning, OBE demands that learners “master” prerequisite knowledge which can lead to the successful completion or attainment of a learning outcome, the latter also signifying the “mastery” of an advanced skill. For this reason Jasper (in Boschee & Baron 1994: 195) claims that OBE is essentially a more advanced version of Benjamin Bloom’s Mastery Learning technique which is pure Skinnerian, behaviourist, stimulus-response conditioning tantamount to indoctrination.

If the above explanation of OBE is taken into account, Spady seems to be trapped in a behaviourist position. Why? Outcomes, according to Spady (in Malcolm 1999: 91), must be demonstrations or performances of learners and not thoughts, understandings, beliefs, attitudes and so on. Morrow (1999) argues that outcomes are examples of good training, the efficient use of effective means to reach an unambiguous and clearly circumscribed end. The force of the example is that the “outcome”- what we were being trained for - was a measurable skill; we might add, the exercise of which did not require reflection or autonomous judgement. Morrow, in his argument, clearly accentuates the relevance of notions such as reflection and autonomy in education which I intend to further investigate in this study. In a different way, learners should be able to show some form of competency at

the end of a learning programme if he (she) wants to progress to the next level. Furthermore, he makes a clear distinction between psychological models of learning (what happens in the head of learners) and sociological models (ability to translate mental processing into forms and kinds of action that occur in real social settings) (Spady in Malcolm 1999: 91). Outcomes must be based on the sociological kind. What occurs in the mind assists the learning process, but the outcome should be seen in terms of the behaviour. The behaviour is the learning and the thing assessed (Malcolm 1999: 91). Verbs such as understanding, knowing and so on, do not feature in Spady's OBE (Malcolm 1999: 91). However, Ashworth and Saxton (in Kraak 1999: 46) regard "the depiction of "competence" as a complex entity made up of simpler items of ability", as a problem. They view the "atomisation" of knowledge as something which impedes the learning process as the following example of a motorist highlights. A motorist never learns separately to change the gears, to turn the wheel, to control the pedals, and to judge the distance between the vehicle and the vehicle in front; all this happens as a coordinated whole. A complex skill such as learning to drive a vehicle entails a coordinated array of elements and cannot be defined independently of the rest.

Ashworth and Saxton (in Kraak 1999: 46) posit:

Any behaviour is a 'meaningful Gestalt'; a whole in which the individual elements affect each other in a manner that changes their nature. The elements of skill are not recognisable or separable from the complex whole.

Moreover, competence models such as OBE fail to recognise that human behaviour and understanding entail a complex series of activities, none of which can be defined in terms of outcomes. In this way, it (OBE) is flawed because of its insistence to interpret the complexity

of human activity in terms of outcomes. Kraak (1999) argues that competence models (like OBE) tend to describe competence in precise, transparent and observable terms, in order to predict the specific outcome of effective action. However, the above discussion clearly suggests that all human knowledge (which incorporates human action and understanding) cannot be explained with such precision.

For this reason Ashworth and Saxton (in Kraak 1999: 47) conclude that:

The lack of concern for context, the frequent inability of the notion of competence to include the range of human activities necessary to accomplish fully skilled performance, and the atomistic and additive view which the competence model imposes on activities makes it a poor guide for the teacher. The professional skills of the teacher are not likely to be assisted by the adoption of a view of action which is so lacking in sensitivity to the radically individual psychologies of the learners. We believe that 'competence' is the embodiment of a mechanistic, technically-oriented way of thinking which is normally inappropriate to the description of human action, or to the facilitation of training of human beings. The more human the action, in the sense of being un-mechanical, creative, or sensitive to the social setting, the more inappropriate the competency model of human action is.

From a global perspective, Spady and Marshall (1991: 91) draw a clear distinction between traditional, transitional and transformational OBE. I shall now briefly expound on those three types of OBE for further clarity on the historical development of the concept.

3.2.1 Traditional Outcomes-based Education

The emphasis, according to Spady, is on the knowledge and skills of the traditional subjects. In a different way, traditional OBE is defined in terms of instructional objectives which are based on the existing curriculum. The focus here is on the mastery of content which puts emphasises on understanding. The challenge of this approach is that the culminating demonstration is frequently limited to small segments of instruction which makes each an end in itself while the curriculum content remains unchanged (Pretorius 1998: x).

3.2.2 Transitional Outcomes-based Education

Its roots can be traced back to the early 1980s. It moves away from existing curricula and identifies outcomes which reflect higher order competences that cut across traditional subjects. The result is outcomes which “emphasise broad attitudinal, affective, motivational and relational qualities or orientations” as well as “critical thinking, effective communication, technological applications, and complex problem solving” (Pretorius 1998: x).

3.2.3 Transformational Outcomes-based Education

Spady refers to this form of OBE as the highest form because it demands a radical change to existing structures and operations in schools. Unlike the transitional and traditional approaches, transformational OBE does not acknowledge subjects but focuses rather on role performances in order to meet the demands of society. Moreover, Spady and Marshall (1991: 68) view transformational OBE as a collaborative, flexible, trans-disciplinary, Outcomes-based, open-system, empowerment-orientated approach to schooling”. Its main aim is to equip all learners with the knowledge, competence and orientation needed for success after they leave school. Furthermore, transformational OBE takes nothing about education as a

given, “non-existing features are considered untouchable in carrying out a curriculum design” (Pretorius 1998: x).

To summarise, OBE can be characterised as traditional, transitional or transformational and pivots on objectives related to learner outcomes, core and extended curriculum, mastery learning and accountability. OBE’s historical development is not only confined to the US or more specifically to the American education system. I shall now trace the development of OBE with reference to Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.

3.3 THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Since the mid 1980s politicians and educationists in a number of Western countries which include Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom have made concerted efforts to introduce national curricula which are based on the principles of managerialist OBE principles even though such principles are not clearly supported by educational research. .

In Australia all young people aged between 6 and 15 are compelled to attend school. As far as the constitution is concerned, the State and Territory Ministers for Education are accountable for all schooling in their respective states and territories –Australia consists of six states and two territories. Despite this, the Commonwealth of Australia remains an important role player as far as the broad purposes and structure of education is concerned. Moreover, it promotes national consistency and coherence as far as the provision of schooling throughout Australia is concerned. The Commonwealth, in co-operation with the six States, is also concerned with resource, equity and quality issues in relation to its general recurrent capital and programmes designed for specific purposes in mind. Australia has more than 9000 schools and a learner population of 3 000 000. There are two basic schooling systems operational in Australia: a government sector which accommodates 72% of the learner population; and a non-

government sector which accommodates 28% of all learners (Chapman, Frouman, & Aspin 1995: 6).

In the early part of this century, education in Australia was organised along bureaucratic lines giving rise to a system of centralised manipulation and control in which the school population enjoyed only a small degree of freedom. Since the mid-1980s, however, there have been bold initiatives on the side of the government to diverge from this system of schooling in response to market related forces. It is for this reason that the Australian Education Council made an attempt during the period 1988–1991 to construct a national curriculum. An important fact, however, is that the framework of this nationally developed curriculum is based on OBE principles which I will discuss later. But more importantly is the fact that educational reform in Australia, as in most other countries, has been driven by demands of a market related economy such as “the development of improved labour productivity and the technological advance necessary for economic growth and social well-being” (Barcan 1996: 3). Today we find a decentralised administrative schooling system bent on the belief that “qualitative improvement in education would be a function in the processes of decision-making at school and system level” (Chapman, Froumin & Aspin 1995: 6). It has been assumed that empowering the local school community by allowing them access to direct participation at school management level would engender a feeling of ownership and responsibility which could then lead to greater effectiveness and quality of the schooling process and provision. In essence, the whole reform process has been aimed at modifying the curriculum including the teaching and learning styles and programmes.

The mood of the times among leading Australian educationists have been well described in 1991 by Garth Boomer, South Australia’s Associate Director-General of Education

(Curriculum). Boomer (in Clements 1996: 1) justified his support of an OBE-structured national curriculum in Australia in the following terms:

After some decades of centralisation of curriculum (which history may argue led to new forms of conservatism and certainly did nothing about educational injustice), we are now entering an era of curriculum re-focussing at the national and state/territory levels. Various predictions can be made about what will result. If the teachers in the era of so-called school-based development have learnt to be their own confident masters, the national curriculum collaborators may find themselves pulling levers with one at the other end. On the other hand, if teachers have lost their way a little in the fields of a thousand flowers, they may welcome a sensible statement of what they need to address, based on a sensible analysis of what they actually do in classrooms.

However, despite the overwhelming support from governments and educational authorities, there is a general feeling that most teachers are now convinced that student outcome statements, indicators, profiles and other such expressions of neo-behaviourism have added unnecessarily to the burdens of teaching and have not facilitated classroom teaching and learning (Clements 1996: 1). What is quite interesting to note is the fact that even OBE proponents in Australia such as Willis and Kissane (in Clements 1996: 15) caution that OBE makes considerable professional demands on teachers both individually and collectively and that OBE is unlikely to occur on a wide scale without the necessary support and consistency in policies. However, despite these warnings the teaching community as a whole has not been co-opted into the new curriculum. One of the main reasons is the fact that curriculum reform has become a highly politicised issue in Australia. Why? The direction and kind of curriculum reform has become a function of who has won the last State or Federal election.

The unfortunate result of this politicisation of curriculum reform has resulted in thousands of teachers being skeptical not only towards curriculum reform processes, but also towards curriculum reformers who, if given the least amount of power, stand to become centralist, secretive and managerial.

3.3.1 Australia's National Curriculum

The top down means provided to bring about the National Curriculum not only contributed towards the division of Australia's educators but did very little in generating educational enlightenment to compensate for the efforts and emotional energy which were invested in the schooling system.

Another main reason behind the curriculum reform process which was administered by the Australian Educational Council (AEC) was to:

- maximise the positive effects of Australia's scarce curriculum development resources; and
- reduce the impact of curricula differentiation from one State to another.

Attempts to achieve these objectives resulted in the overt politicisation of curriculum issues (Ellerton & Clements in Clements 1996).

The two objectives as spelled out by the AEC in 1986 were largely based on the innovative ideas of the State and Territory Curriculum Directors. Many of them had a narrow, almost instrumentalist view of education. They were in favour of a core curriculum "and they wanted to engineer systems in which achievement-orientated schools would generate data

which would enable accountability mechanisms to be employed with a minimum fuss” (Clements 1996: 2).

However, the dilemma that curriculum directors were faced with was that in all States and Territories there were academic and school groups who supported the concepts of school-based curriculum development. They were also against the idea of a centralised curricula and State-wide testing. They criticised the idea of being part of a system which attempted to rank pupils or schools, either on the basis of performance on externally set tests or on the basis of levels which were based on curriculum profile documents. Such opposing views were in direct conflict with the idea of senior educationists and certain politicians. In general, educators were expected to fit into a groove in which “the essential, non-negotiable elements of curriculum are contained in student outcome statements” (Ministry of Education, Western Australia in Clements 1996: 2).

According to Clements (1996) much of the opposing views against the National Curriculum project have not only been directed against the idea of a formulation of a National Curriculum framework per se, but also against the lack of consultation in the policy formulation process. Slowly but surely the original National Curriculum concept has been losing its momentum starting with the AEC’s astounding move in 1993 to refer the National Developed Curriculum documents back to the States and Territories indefinitely. Only some, among the ranks of teachers and educationists, who have received special funding for training, continue to believe in the inadequacy of OBE as a means to achieve desirable educational reform.

Despite the decision on the part of the AEC not to adopt a National Curriculum, it can be claimed that the nationally developed curriculum materials for the eight key learning areas (KLA’s) have been influenced by further developments in the States and Territories (Collins

& Wilmott in Clements 1996). These Key Learning Areas (KLA's) refer to eight areas of study: English, Languages other than English, Mathematics, Science, Technology, the Arts, Society and Environment, and Health and Personal Development (Barcan 1996: 8). This is hardly surprising, given the financial and professional inducements which have been offered to many of those prepared to toe the official line (Clements 1996).

Many of the professional associations have failed to come out in strong support of OBE approaches. For example, in August 1995 the Mathematical Association of New South Wales urged all involved to consider these issues before thrusting teachers and students in the State into a system which has been shown in the UK to be unwieldy, time-consuming and not beneficial. However, many OBE supporters are of the opinion that OBE practices are likely to promote greater professionalism on the side of teachers particularly as the national developed curriculum documents are likely to encourage teachers to adopt a wider range of assessment techniques and methods (Clements 1996: 15). This brings me to a discussion about how OBE functions within the Australian educational system. But first, it is important to look at two interpretations of OBE, namely "clockwork" and "organic" interpretations, which have been used in Australia.

3.3.2 Types of OBE in Australia

The conception of the world as a clock, according to Western philosophers, dates back to Plato but gained momentum in the 17th century with Newton and Decartes. It believes that God constructed the world as a giant machine and stood back. Malcolm (1999: 94) states that "As surely as the turning of cogs and the pumping of levers, the world's future was predictable because it had been designed according to quantifiable laws". Moreover, the view

of the world as an organism dates back to Aristotle. It later re-emerged through the theories of Darwin, Freud and Jung. In the words of Malcolm (1999: 95):

The tree that results depends not only on the seed, but soil, wind and rain, birds that nest in its branches, lightning and bush fires that feed from it, people with axes, migration from distant lands. The eventual tree cannot be predicted because its surroundings shape it. The tree also shapes its surroundings; leaves and branches steer the wind, roots change the river's course, bark supports particular animals, leaves clean the air. The tree and the world are connected.

On the one hand, the clock work idea expresses itself in terms of bureaucratic management, behaviourist learning theories, positivism and content-centered curriculum. The organic interpretation on the other hand, expresses itself in terms of organic management, constructivist learning theories, post-modernism, and learner-centered curriculum. Australia has opted for the organic approach which relies heavily on constructivist learning theory. In this approach the teacher assists learners to develop their knowledge and skills, bringing together past experiences, their work in the classroom, their hopes and aspirations and their links to classmates and communities. Morrow (1999: 40) argues that, according to the constructivist perspective, learning takes place in the mind and expresses itself in many ways of which performance is one. Moreover, concepts and skills which lead to outcomes are not fixed but are rather open ended. Put differently, "Australia (OBE) does not culminate in outcomes or standards that all students must reach" (Malcolm 1999: 90).

Furthermore, Australia, unlike the US, has very seldom relied on textbooks. In Victoria, for example, there have been no State syllabi, State examinations or State-endorsed textbooks

since the mid-1960s. Teachers have for many years been the designers of their own curricula. Therefore the tradition in most States, has been one of school-based curriculum which in turn received support from teacher development programmes, school management and leadership. However, this does not imply that all teachers are engaged in the organic paradigm, but many schools are experimenting with it. Furthermore, Australian teachers have a high degree of trust in learners' preparedness to take responsibility and provide a degree of input in the whole process of curriculum design. The Australian approach uses existing knowledge in school as its premise and builds out from these.

In addition, politicians and education bureaucrats have constructed the framework of OBE in a way that would support the underlying tenets of constructivism as well as organic approaches in the classroom. Simultaneously it makes allowances for behaviourist, teacher-centred approaches. The Australian version of OBE, like in many countries lies, somewhere between traditional and transitional. They derive their outcomes jointly from learning areas on the one hand, and over-arching "national goals of schooling" or "critical outcomes" on the other hand (Malcolm 1999). "Critical outcomes refer to the broader intended results of education and training" (Pretorius 1998: 28). In a different way, this implies that outcomes of schooling are not only seen in terms of a set of academic and practical skills but also in terms of political and social outcomes.

According to Malcolm (1999) Australia's national goals of schooling are therefore aimed at achieving the following:

- to provide an excellent education for all young people, being one which develops their talents and capacities to full potential, and is relevant to the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation;
- to enable all learners to achieve high standards of learning and to develop self-confidence, optimism, high self-esteem, respect for others, and achievement of personal excellence; and
- to provide a foundation for further education and training, in terms of knowledge and skills, respect for learning and positive attitudes for life-long education.

Australian schooling has a different approach in that continuous assessment includes the information that teachers systematically gather while observing learners at work, talking with and to them, making and testing inferences about what they know. It forms an integrated part of the teaching process, especially when learners are gaining knowledge through projects and tasks. Having looked at OBE in Australia, I now wish to focus my attention on OBE in Canada.

3.4 THE CANADIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Canadian federal system of power sharing consists of ten provinces and two territories. Within these provinces and territories resides the responsibility for education. Although the various provinces and territories have been responsible for the development of their own educational structures and institutions, they remain similar in many ways. However, they still reflect the rich cultural diversity which forms an inherent part of the country's social make-up (the Canadian education system reflects the religious and linguistic diversity of the Canadian society in an explicit way). Furthermore, it is within the power of the provincial and territorial authority to create decentralised governance structures within the various local

school boards and other bodies due to the growing interest in school-based management and parental involvement in school policy. The federal government on the other hand has its focus on economic planning and human resource development, it concentrates on areas such as learning technologies, literacy, the collection of various relevant data, research, the creation of the necessary support structures for research, and the links between learning and employment.

In 1967 the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) was started by the various ministers at provincial level, with the co-operation of their respective governments. By means of CMEC greater co-operation amongst the various provinces and territories has become a reality with regard to elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. A federal ministry of education is non-existent at national level but a number of federal departments have related areas of interest. Several of these federal departments include:

- Statistics Canada which is responsible for the provision data and data about all aspects of education;
- Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) which conducts surveys, provides services and information, and does research in the areas of literacy, lifelong learning, and school-work transitions;
- Industry Canada (IC) which offers services and links to Canadian schools and teachers through SchoolNet;
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) which funds
- educational research (CERIS –Introduction to Canadian Education).

At the national level there has been a tendency towards greater co-operation among the various organisations and provinces pertaining to matters of curriculum and general policy which concerns the practice of sharing information and linking research, policy and practice. In an effort to be more responsive to learners' needs schooling systems have become more inclusive in their approach when faced with the challenges concerning "at-risk" learners, such as those with disabilities, those in need of special efforts in the instruction of language and visible minorities. Furthermore, schools are moving towards the expansion of their services such as the provision of day-care facilities in an attempt to recognise changing family patterns, as well as providing the necessary programmes in conflict resolution, health, safety and tolerance. From the above it is evident that schools and school systems have made serious attempts to address the divergent needs of the various communities they serve. In an effort to make the kind of schooling learners receive more responsive to the needs of a global economy, many schools are moving towards a system of OBE. In a different way, there is a tendency among Canadians to focus increasingly on student learning outcomes. However, most of the definitions tend to rely on three domains of learning which comprise of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor models of learning. The first domain focuses on cognitive understandings and puts emphasis on the acquisition of skills, strategies and processes that focus on knowledge, understanding and thinking. The second domain focuses on affective learnings such as interests, attitudes, values and appreciation. The psychomotor reflects motor manipulative and skill development (Canadian Restructured School Plan (CRSP) 1998: 3). Outcome statements are therefore defined in the following way:

Outcome statements identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to acquire.

Outcome statements identify what students are expected to know, be able to do, and be like (Canadian Restructured School Plan 1998: 4)

Moreover, these definitions of outcome statements in Canada clearly indicate strong undercurrents of a kind of technocratic behaviouristic approach to education.

In many Canadian schools there have been increased attempts to emphasise the importance of the kind of skills that would enhance job opportunity. The Learning Outcomes Project (LOP) is seen as the first important step of the Canadian Restructured School Plan (CRSP). The main aim of the programme is to provide the necessary assistance and guidance to selected secondary schools in an attempt to identify student learning outcomes and in the process preparing appropriate learner guides and assessment materials supportive of these outcomes. There are at present two major initiatives across the various provinces to develop a common core curriculum, one in the Atlantic Provinces and the other in the Western Provinces and the Territories. Atlantic Canada, together with its provincial partners, have come up with a set of Essential Graduation Learnings that offers a description of the kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes all graduating learners should possess. "These learnings describe expectations that are cross-curricular and confirm that students need to make connections and develop abilities across subject boundaries if they are to be prepared for the demands of life, work and study today and in the future" (Canadian Restructured School Plan 1998: 4). Out of these learnings the Atlantic provinces have developed Curriculum Outcomes for three study areas: Language Arts, Maths and Science. By achieving Curriculum Outcomes, learners invariably demonstrate Essential Graduation Learnings. In short, Essential Graduation Learnings represents the framework for curriculum development since all subject areas must assist learners to reach them.

Furthermore, certain efforts have been made in identifying key cross-curricular outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, communications, technological competence, problem solving and thinking skills. There is a tendency to increase the impact of core subjects especially languages, maths and science. The provision of new curriculum areas such as technology and interdisciplinary studies have also become important in recent years.

Canadian education is experiencing changes on all levels which includes structural, financial and operational changes. Even though it is being influenced by certain developments in the US, it has still led the way in many areas of educational reform. Moreover, many of the distinctions among the various schools and jurisdictions have become less obvious as common pressures and greater collaboration among various institutions result in similar policies and practices across the country. This brings me to a discussion of OBE in the UK.

3.5 OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Plowden Report, "Children in their primary schools" of 1967, supported the idea of progressive pedagogy. It emphasised the whole idea of "pupil-chosen activities rather than class teaching, project work, integration of subject matter around centres of interest, and group work, but depreciated extrinsic rewards and punishment" (Barcan 1996: 13). The idea of all-ability comprehensive secondary schooling gained popularity after 1965 when the Department of Education and Science called upon education authorities to introduce them. The Education Act of 1965 further re-inforced this idea which stated that access to secondary schools should not be governed by tests. As a result many English conservatives saw the introduction of comprehensive schooling as a start of the decline in British education.

Furthermore, the new clientele meant that new approaches to teaching and curriculum had to be developed. With the raising of the minimum school leaving age from 15 to 16 in the early 1970s came the increased proportion of non-academic learners at school. The Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, expressed his concern in 1976 about the falling standards in education and alluded to the widespread feeling that the standard had to be raised. This gave rise to a great debate on education which further resulted in eight regional conferences to be organised. A Green Paper, *Education in the Schools*, saw the light in July 1977. Despite numerous policy statements by the Department of Education and Science and despite reform efforts on the side of the new government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, discontent about the state of affairs in education continued unabatedly (Barcan 1996: 13).

The economic recession which came about in the mid 1970s – which resulted in rising inflation, a falling British pound, increasing unemployment and so on – was mainly characterised by the decline of job availability for school leavers in particular, which highlighted the problems experienced by low achievers in education (Fowler in Williams & Raggatt 1998: 277). One of the major shortcomings experienced by young people was that the kind of skills they had developed during their school-going years were not marketable in the workplace. As a result the notion that education is a mainstay of economic empowerment augmented the idea that there should exist strong functional links between education and the world of work dominated British educational policy during the 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, the Manpower Services Commission embarked on a Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in 1982 to promote the idea of pre-vocational education in schools by developing generic skills, such as basic literacy, mathematical skills and problem-solving skills. This initiative was aimed at learners who were less successful in knowledge-

based academic education, although many educators and unions felt threatened by the skills-orientation approach.

Attempts were made to increase parental and community involvement in schools. The Green Papers of 1984: *Parental Influence at School: A New Framework for School Government in England and Wales* gave rise to an Act in 1986 aimed at widening community participation. Schools were expected to establish governing boards on which the head teacher and governors served who were elected by parents, educators and nominees of the Local Education Authority (LEA). The Education Reform Act of July 1988 resulted in major education reforms in England. It meant that power was transferred from education bureaucrats to politicians and parents. One of the main aims of the Act was to provide a National Curriculum and the testing associated with it. The Act identified ten subjects that would be provided for in schools: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, a Foreign Language, Technology, Art, Music and Physical Education. Schools were also responsible for providing learners with religious education. This resulted in the establishment of two supervisory bodies, the National Curriculum Council and the School Examinations and Assessment Council. Learners at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 were to participate in the national testing programme. Private schools were not required to participate in the National Curriculum. The intentions behind the reforms were to improve standards and to wrest curriculum control from the progressives by pushing aside the bureaucrats and academics (Barcan: 1996: 13-14).

The new force behind vocationalism has influenced policy at all stages of education which resulted in an emphasis of an education system with greater vocational relevance. This

emphasis led to the emergence of competence-based vocational qualification policy in Britain.

In the words of Williams and Raggatt (1998: 278):

Curriculum innovators attached to the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and its associated agencies became increasingly interested in the notions of work based learning, experiential learning, the accreditation of prior learning and the assessment of learning outcomes rather than teaching and course inputs. It was hoped that the individual learner would come to replace bureaucratic and ineffective educational establishments as the dominant influence in the education system. Such novel and distinctive approaches to learning and the consequent production of qualifications seemed potentially more effective in delivering opportunities for young people.

It was clear then that one of the main desires of policy during the 1970s and 1980s was to link education to the needs of industry in a stronger way, the result being the emergence of the competence-based qualification policy.

Furthermore, research indicated that employers were seeking new ways to organise their employment practices. What the economy needed, however, was a multi-skilled labour force that would have the willingness and the ability to face up to the whole concept of change, much of which was led by technology. This growing emphasis placed by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) on flexibility and transferability in the development of education and training for employment, gave rise to the realisation that to refer to the development of "skills" was becoming more demanding. The concept of "skill", it was argued, was linked strongly to a particular occupation. The MSC policy makers opted to

move away from the notion of “skills” towards broadly based competences. However, the most important reason for the emergence of competence based *qualifications* arose from a politically motivated necessity to alleviate, in the short term, the impact of increasing levels of youth unemployment. It was thus driven by a number of inter-related economic, political and instructional factors (Williams & Raggatt 1998).

To conclude, the UK was in a fortunate position of implementing reform through a single National Parliament. This implies that reforms could be introduced with speed which had a direct impact on its success rate. The cornerstone of English educational reform was the National Curriculum and the testing associated with it.

Having said this, I now want to focus my attention on the similarities and differences that exist in the various educational systems of the above-named countries with reference to OBE.

3.6 AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OBE

The variations which occur in OBE have come about as a result of the different choices of outcomes, as well as different management styles opted for, to achieve them. Spady (1994), as I have pointed out earlier, identified three approaches to OBE, namely traditional, transitional and transformational. Following Spady’s classification, OBE models in most parts of the world which include Australia, Canada and the UK are located somewhere between the traditional and the transitional OBE model. The basic motivation behind the reform movements with regard to education was to devolve authority and responsibility to the schools. This move had economic advantages (government expenditure was reduced and politicians and business people could take over control from educationists, academics and administrators) and leaders of teacher unions. However, the reform process differed from one

country to another. In the US it was a slow and tedious process. America came up with a whole range of models for educational change because of the fragmentation of responsibility in the federal system. (The challenge was that America, unlike any other country, divided into 50 states and 16 000 school districts). Performers had the daunting task of encouraging change under these circumstances. In the US reform was heralded by a considerable amount of educational reports but this was never the case in the UK. More importantly, many of the problems which first appeared in the American schooling systems later surfaced on the Australian front. As mentioned earlier, the English reform process went much easier due to the single National Parliament. In other words, the implementation of the reform process took place, in relation to a single national authority.

Australia has opted for an education system which is intermediate between that of the UK and the Americans. During the reform process the national government in Australia had a greater influence on schools and universities than in America, but less than in Britain. The greater part of the educational responsibility rested with the six states and two territories. It must be noted that in Australia, nine major agencies were involved in the reform process which meant that there was much more room for contestation with regard to policy formation and implementation. Furthermore, Australian schools, unlike those in UK, are self-managing rather than self-governing. By contrast with the UK system, Australian educators remain employed by the central government and schools are not encouraged to opt out of the state system. In Canada, as previously mentioned, there are two major inter-provincial initiatives concerned with the educational reform process and the responsibility or curriculum expectations, requirements and guidelines rest with the Canadian provinces and are developed either under provincial department leadership or under the leadership of ministries of education.

I shall now elaborate on the various understandings of OBE, particularly by comparing the way the concept was used in the afore-mentioned countries. Knowledge can never be neutral; it is always value laden and will acquire a strong political flavour. Moreover, new forms of knowledge production over the last few years have influenced the structured boundaries and function of various institutions. Therefore, the exercise of setting out what a nation perceives as being important in what all learners should know is a major political challenge. It is a direct reflection of how society views schooling. It is to create a certain kind of person (as the US model suggests) or the idea to simply eradicate ignorance (Australian point of view). The US defined outcomes in terms of what students should be. Australia's policy focuses on what learners should know but is based, as mentioned earlier, on constructivism. The US version of OBE, on the other hand, rely strongly on mastery learning and behaviourism.

In a different way, the Outcomes-based curriculum in the US was defined in terms of what learners would demonstrate successfully at the completion of schooling. OBE involves what learners have learned and not about what educators must teach or the time period in which they have done (teach) it. This seemed to have been the main focus of the reform efforts. However, according to Barcan (1996), two goals related to curriculum modification were very ambitious: American learners were to become the first in the world in mathematics and science; and all adults were to be literate, to possess the necessary skills for global economic competition, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This serves as yet another example of the kind of effect the globalisation process has on determining curriculum design.

In Canada the emphasis was on reform in order to link education to goals of social equality and justice. The focus was on the expectations that learners would have the ability to solve problems and make responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking, demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems and participate as responsible citizens in the life of the local, national and global communities (Hargreaves & Moore 2000: 4). This implies that the Canadian model has a tendency to shift more towards the direction of transformational OBE. In the words of Malcolm (1999: 87) “Ontario teachers work mainly with learning area outcomes, indexed back to critical outcomes to ensure that critical outcomes are addressed”.

In essence, all types of reforms have distinctive social histories as well as social geographies. Castells (in Hargreaves & Moore 2000: 13) refers to this as variable geometry which led them to play out very differently from one another “according to the moral, political, economic, social and historical contexts of their development”. There will be common themes running across all these contexts, but these themes are, as Castells (in Hargreaves & Moore 2000: 13) argues, a matter of empirical determination, not theoretical presumption”. Hence, a proper understanding of what OBE entails must give account of both the commonalities and the variations of the movement.

I have previously discussed Spady and Marshall’s (1991) three Outcomes-based designs namely, traditional Outcomes-based education, transitional Outcomes-based education and transformational Outcomes-based education. My aim is to determine how the various countries, which I have discussed, fit into the three Outcomes-based designs. Moreover, it is important to note that Spady (1994) assigns value by the names he gives – traditional is

viewed as being old, transformational is new while the transitional model is viewed as being on the way from traditional to transformational. The transformational model requires the biggest change to the existing structures and operations in the learning environment.

As mentioned earlier Spady, (1994) views OBE models in the majority of countries in the world, which includes Australia, Canada and the UK to be located somewhere between traditional and transitional. According to him, They derive their outcomes jointly from learning areas on the one hand, and overarching “national goals of schooling” (Australia) or “critical outcomes” (Canada) on the other. Hargreaves (in Barcan 1996: 21) concludes that while common ground existed between various governments, immense differences in structures and culture also operated. Different issues and different problems will, therefore appear. But there is much in common. It is evident then that amidst the great differences that exist between the various countries, there still remains much in common.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has for a number of years acted as a catalyst for educational reform. The OECD started to replace the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as the dominant source of educational ideas towards the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Australia, it was the OECD, together with America, England and New Zealand, which gave shape to its educational policy.

As previously mentioned, OBE models in the US rely heavily on mastery learning and behaviourism. In Australia the view of learning is much closer to constructivism. The

Australian model is derived from the UK's National Curriculum. In the words of Ellerton and Clements (in Barcan 1996: 16) there could be no doubt that during the period 1987 – 1990 most of the Australian education bureaucrats who pushed for a National Curriculum in Australia were strongly influenced by the events in the UK. Canada, on the other hand, has been continually influenced by developments elsewhere around the world, especially the US.

In essence, although Spady views most OBE models in the world to lie somewhere between the traditional and transitional, these models, although influenced by one another, are not all the same. As mentioned earlier, the traditional approach puts emphasis on knowledge and skills in traditional subjects while the transitional approach assigns importance to broad competences such as problem solving and using technology, and finally, the transformational approach focuses on role performances which serve the needs of society. These variations in models of OBE result from different choices of outcomes together with different management systems to achieve them. Furthermore, the decisions governments make about whether to develop or reject particular ideas of OBE, and which version to consider, is a clear indication of the degree to which education is dependent on politics, economics and cultural norms.

Finally, I want to investigate how the current OBE approach used by the countries in my investigation is attuned to critical educational theory. Darling-Hammond (in Schwarz & Cavener 1994) argues that there are two different philosophies of educational reform at work today. On the one hand, we find the traditional positivist behaviourist approach, which is dependent on objectives and control; and on the other hand we have the constructivist approach which sees both learners and educators alike, not only as mere consumers of knowledge but also as independent producers thereof. The second approach assists schools,

educators, learners, parents and the broader community to create a unique learning community. The challenge created by OBE is that it attempts to embrace both.

In Darling-Hammond's (in Schwarz & Cavener 1994: 10) words:

A kind of Alice in Wonderland world in which people ultimately begin to nod blithely at the inevitability of incompatible events in a world in which educators cease to try to make sense of their environment for themselves as professionals or for their students.

The real challenge is that mastery learning principles, which are based on the philosophy of privileges, predictability, uniformity, certainty and therefore ultimate control, and constructivism on the other hand, which demands creativity both on the side of learner and educator, do not connect well. Moreover, mastery learning harps on prespecified, measurable objectives (such as a 70 percent mastery on an objective test), while creativity is not clearly defined beforehand except in the broadest and least quantifiable sense.

In constructivism, however, the curriculum happens through the interactions of learners and educators, thinking and feeling. Knowledge is seen as not being objective (as something "out there") but rather subjective. This position can be linked to critical educational theory where there is no longer a single truth as positivism claims. There is a definite separation between subject and object, learner and learned. In short, one of the greatest shortcomings of OBE is its reliance on technical rationality.

3.7 CONCLUSION

OBE located in a positivist paradigm but makes use of constructivist approach

Although my discussion reveals that many aspects of OBE appear to be firmly grounded in a positivist paradigm, there appear to be at least in some places, a few possibilities within the

realm of OBE for redistributing the power relationships of education within the classroom and the greater community. In the following chapter I firstly wish to give a brief historical overview of the development of education in South Africa. Secondly, I shall discuss the transformational OBE model which South Africa has opted for and show why transformational OBE in South Africa has both elements of constructivism and positivism and how economic factors such as globalisation have influenced education policy in South Africa.

- Protecting group identities and interests of a privileged few
- Emphasising racial differences and diversity instead of creating a unified nation
- Promoting obedience to authority and to the general ruling order, and not individual independence and rationality; and

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

All modern societies, whatever their forms of government and underlying constitutions, view education as an instrument of social control, designed to a certain extent to support and maintain the status quo. In a different way, education policy, like any other state policy, can be defined as a course of action adopted by the state to benefit its citizens in reality, however, it is the government who stands to gain most from such a policy.

Moreover, education in any system is not neutral. The state cannot be an impartial provider of education. It is grossly influenced by the political, social and economic context in which it exists and used by the state to further its own ends. Education under the former Apartheid government is a clear example of how a government manipulates policy to be advantageous or expedient to its needs. Apartheid education used colour as a basis for racial discrimination but also as a social discriminatory framework against the poor, the weak and the oppressed. Its main concern was to protect those minorities with political and economic power. Above all, the systems main aim was to alienate black and white children from one another. In essence, Apartheid education, reflecting the society in which it operated, was concerned with:

- Protecting group identities and interests of a privileged few;
- Emphasising racial differences and diversity instead of creating a unified nation;
- Promoting obedience to authority and in the process stifling creative thinking, independence and rationality; and

- Preparing a few individuals to take up their “rightful” place in society instead of liberating the potential of all individuals (Hartshorne 1999: 2).

Because of this, when one wants to bring about fundamental change and transformation to an educational system, one must not look for an answer which is purely educational in order to solve a problem which has social, economic and political dimensions to it. The majority of South Africans were faced with a challenge not only to “improve” or reform the education system for the sake of change but to bring about a kind of transformation that would serve the interest of all South Africans in a democratic and equitable way. Given the legacy of Apartheid this would not be easily achieved.

For policy makers to have had an indication of the kind of changes that were needed to create an equitable democratic education system, a thorough understanding of the education system that existed before 1990 was crucial. It is for this reason that I now wish to focus my attention on education policy before the 1990s, focussing on the 1980s in particular, in order to elucidate an understanding of the old system, why it was created the way it was, what drove it, how it operated and what capacity existed within it. It is only after one has an understanding of this that one would be able to fully grasp the need and urgency for a new educational system in South Africa.

Archer (1984: 3) posits:

Once a given form of education exists, it exerts an influence on future educational change. Alternative education plans are, to some extent, reactions to it ...(and) attempts to change it are affected by the degree to which it monopolizes educational

skills and resources; and change means dismantling, transforming, or in some way grappling with it.

With this in mind, I now wish to focus more closely on the mechanics of the education system under apartheid.

4.2 EDUCATION IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

Apartheid and its system of education is not solely a product of the National Party government that came to power after 1948. Its roots of ideas, theories and practices can be traced back to the typical attitudes and actions of the colonialist who came from The Netherlands. They used the Dutch East India Company as a vehicle for economic exploitation of the resources at the Cape, exerting its imperialist power in order to establish political control so that it could exploit the mineral wealth and potential of South Africa (Hartshorne 1999).

The South African political system is obviously more complex than this, but the *modus operandi* of the imperialist from the 17th to the 19th century were of this nature. On the one hand, South Africa's past has been described in terms of racial and political discrimination and domination, and on the other hand, it has been seen in terms of class and economic domination. The single most disastrous act in South Africa's education history was the Bantu Education Act of 1953. According to Rose & Turner (in Hartshorne 1999) the ideology of Bantu Education can be traced to the concepts and ideas of Christian National Education and separate development. They summarise it as follows:

We believe that the calling and task of white South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianise him and help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focusing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation ... (W)e believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and world view of the whites, most especially those of the Boer nation as the senior white trustee of the native must be led to ... (an) acceptance of the Christian and national principles in our teaching ... (I)t is the right task of the state ... to give and control native education (Rose & Turner in Hartshorne 1999: 24 - 25).

The explanation of the concept “separate development” in its entirety, is expressed in the Eiselen Commission report (1949-1951) (in Hartshorne 1999). In the subsequent statements of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, the then Minister of Bantu Affairs. This concept is seen as:

- (a) The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitude, and their needs under ever-changing social conditions are taken into consideration; and
- (b) The extent to which the existing... educational system ... should be modified ... in order to conform to the proposed principles and aims, and to prepare Natives more effectively for their future occupations (Report of the Commission on Native Education, 1949 – 1951 (Eiselin Report in Hartshorne 1999: 25).

The whole point of departure concerning all recommendations with regard to Bantu Education was that the policies of Bantu Education were both justified and necessary because it was dealing with children “trained and conditioned in Bantu culture, endowed with a

knowledge of a Bantu language and imbued with values, interests and behaviour patterns learned at the knee of a Bantu mother” and with children who have to take their rightful place in society (Eiselin Report in Hartshorne 1999).

I contend that the notion of Bantu Education can be grounded in structuralism. Why?

Structuralist education theory views knowledge in the world as being objective without considering the opinions of others (as in the case of Apartheid education). Knowledge is considered to be final and applicable at any place and at any given time. Structuralists consider the knowledge we experience as being out there, part of an objective reality, a real world which is seen as being external to and independent of human beings. This world of objective knowledge conforms to logical methods and procedures of science; that is, the natural sciences such as physics, mathematics and chemistry (Waghid & Schreuder 1999: 120).

In the words of Waghid and Schreuder (1999: 121) some of the practices endorsed by this structuralist education theory are best described below:

- Research is designed to provide causal explanations of events such as to deduce outcomes in a particular context and to shape them into universal (absolute or law-like / must be) generalisations that can work in other contexts. For example, educational programmes during the apartheid years (Bantu Education) were designed with imperialist imperatives and imposed on the majority of South Africa’s indigenous population;
- Predictions are made; for instance, what can happen if educational programmes are put into practice. In this instance the educator can be involved in programme

formulation. His (her) task is to propose decisions, which will, when executed, achieve predetermined objectives and / or formulate outcomes for future action; and

- Policy is manipulated as it exists in education policy documents and / or decisions stating the structural procedures and processes to be applied in varying contexts. For example, educational policy under apartheid was manipulated to reflect values of the dominant power and even labour market conditions.

This notion of structuralism which formed the ideological base of Bantu Education in the 1950s and 1960s remained intact until the end of the 1980s. Having given a brief account of the origins of black education in this country I now wish to focus my attention on the period of the 1980s in order to show how this period of change impacted upon the change we experienced in the 1990s.

4.3 EDUCATION IN THE 1980s

The 1980s represents a time when political control of the State became stronger than ever before. During the late 1970s and particularly the mid-1980s several repressive policies were promulgated in support of the Apartheid ideology which promoted the idea of excluding and marginalising disadvantaged communities. However, during this time when the political control over education became even greater, education policies were subjected to pressures far greater than had previously been experienced. These pressures came from, amongst others, the parents as well as organised teaching professional groups, both urging for greater say in what was happening in education. Business also added its voice of dissent. An education system such as the one operational under the Apartheid regime, it was argued, was not conducive to an atmosphere in which economic growth and prosperity could flourish. In

short, the business sector demanded an efficient education system that would be capable of producing the kind of skilled person power required by a growing economy.

But it was the oppressed township communities who became the most ardent opponents of the Apartheid regime. The sudden explosion of 16 June 1976 can be attributed to their (black communities) dissatisfaction with the segregation and general inferior quality of the kind of education they received, the blatant discrimination along the lines of finance and resources of black education and its ideological direction, "all in the context of the social, economic and political position of black South Africans, together with the more immediate issues such as rents, housing, transport and citizenship" (Hartshorne 1999: 27). In essence, traditional South African education was no longer relevant. It became irrelevant due partly to (a) its oppressive nature and (b) the over emphasis of knowledge based on facts and memorisation.

Furthermore, educationists highlighted the following shortcomings with regard to the education model under the Apartheid regime in Pretoria:

- CAPS is exactly this?
- The curriculum was too structured, prescriptive and not easily adaptable, with little room for educational initiative;
 - Traditional curriculum processes were too restricted and without any stakeholder participation in the decision-making process;
 - The accent fell on academic education, while skills education remained behind;
 - A large gap existed between education in the formal educational sectors and training by employers;

- Too great an emphasis was placed on differentiation in the form of a wide variety of subjects. Successful economies need citizens with a strong foundation in general education to equip people for flexible movement between various vocations;
- The curriculum was content-based – the teacher instructed and the learners memorised;
- It was teacher-centred, rather than learner-centred;
- Learner achievement was measured in terms of symbols and percentages which are often no real indication of actual performance; and
- Learner achievement was compared to that of other learners and led to excessive competition (Pretorius 1998: ix).

It is, therefore, not difficult to understand why both business and parents (from both black and white communities) alike shared negative sentiments about the education system in the country. It must be made clear, however, that the business community and the white parents (white parents were in any case the owners of big business so they had similar interests at heart) had a different agenda to that of parents from the township. They were more concerned with safeguarding their own interests than with the eradication of Apartheid education. Township parents, on the other hand, saw the injustices of an education system guided by the principles of Apartheid. By the 1980s, therefore, black education had almost ground to a standstill and due to mounting pressure from disenfranchised communities The Apartheid regime requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to launch an enquiry into the state of the education system in South Africa. The De Lange Committee came into existence as a result of this. It was the first such inquiry since the Eiselin Commission on Native education in 1949.

4.4 THE FINDINGS OF THE DE LANGE COMMITTEE

The Committee started its work in August 1980. There were four major areas of concern: Firstly, in the late 1970s, parents, both black and white, became increasingly dissatisfied with the state of education in South Africa. The government, however, became more concerned about criticism from white parents which could have had negative results at the polling booths for the government. Secondly there was great tension between the government and various teacher organisations. They too expressed great concern about the state of education in South Africa which impacted negatively on their working conditions. Thirdly, as I have mentioned before, from 1974 onwards a great deal of pressure had been placed on government from business due to the fact that Apartheid education had serious impediments on economic growth in the country. The key phases in their criticisms were of the following kind: “usable skills”, “manpower needs”, “economic growth” and “productivity” (Harthorne 1999: 56).

But the most intense pressure as mentioned earlier came about as a result of the school-based protests, resistance and confrontation which culminated in the riots of 16 June 1976 and which had grown in intensity and geographical coverage, so that by 1980 the revolt had grown to such enormity that the possibility of moving completely beyond government control was threatening to become reality. Even a government such as the Apartheid regime with the kind of power it had at the time and which applied the most severe forms of repression in order to contain the situation, came to the realisation that the volatile situation they were faced with had to be diffused as soon as possible.

All of these concerns were set out by government as a mandate to be followed by the De Lange Committee and on which it was expected to make certain recommendations. These

recommendations included guiding principles for a feasible education policy in South Africa in order to:

- allow for the realisation of the inhabitants' potential;
- promote economic growth in the R S A; and
- improve the quality of life of all inhabitants of the country.

It also dealt with:

- (c) the organisation and control structure and financing of education;
- (c) machinery for consultation and decision-making in education;
- (d) an education infrastructure to provide for the person power requirements of the Republic of South Africa and the self-realisation of its inhabitants; and
- (e) a programme for making available education of the same quality for all population groups (HSRC in Hartshorne 1999 :57).

The investigation had to be conducted in the light of, among other things, the existing educational situation, the population composition in South African society and the means that could be made available for education in the national economy. The investigation had to cover all levels of education, i.e. pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary (HSRC in Hartshorne 1999).

The terms of reference mentioned above contain most of the basics of education policy of the 1990s, as set forth in the White Paper on Education and Training of 1996. This paper is concerned first with the relation between economics and education, marked by phrases such as "economic growth" and "manpower requirements". Secondly, it emphasises the importance of addressing the concerns of parents and teachers. Thirdly, the willingness of the

Apartheid government to bring about change was suggested in phases such as “quality of life”, “self-realisation” and education of the same quality (Hartshorne 1999: 58).

The basic spirit of the report, however, was not taken into consideration. Although more funds were channelled into black education, it was not sufficient to have an impact on the quality of education for blacks and therefore the fundamentals remained unchanged and the crisis continued. Moreover, it is interesting to note that out of the eighteen reports of the De Lange “work committees” a single unified report had to be agreed upon (Hartshorne 1999). However, what should have been a process guided by rigorous analysis and evaluation became a process which was based upon hard political bargaining. The kind of compromise between the various stakeholders at the time did not serve the interest of the individual but rather that of the various political interests groups, as was revealed when the negotiation process on the future of education in South Africa finally started.

Furthermore, the De Lange report served as an important indicator of the future of education in this country. For the first time, in an investigation sponsored by the government, the concepts of equality and openness were put forward as guiding principles. But the greatest impact of the report was the fact that “restrictions on access to education and on the provision of education facilities based purely on racial or colour discrimination”, according to the report (Interim Memorandum on the report of the HSRC on the Inquiry, into the provision of Education the RSA) had to be removed. The report, according to Hartshorne (1999), can therefore be seen as a landmark in the development of education policy in South Africa.

4.5 EDUCATION POLICY TRANSFORMATION IN THE 1990s

The question now arises: How did all of the above impact on the formulation of educational policy in the 1990s? It is important to note that the school curriculum in societies the world over represents the knowledge, skills and attitudes deemed as important by that society, and which it would like to transmit to its young citizens. Therefore, the curriculum has over the years become a site for contestation and the new curriculum in the South African education system is no exception. The critical turning point on curriculum debates in South Africa came about in 1990s. As I have shown in my discussion about Apartheid education, South Africa had a uniform and predictable centralised curriculum policy framework characterised by racism, sexism, authoritarianism, to mention but a few of its less desirable qualities. Education in South Africa was viewed by many as being a structuralist (positivist) instrument aimed at providing unequal educational opportunities to the majority of its population (Conditions in the educational arena deteriorated even further in the 1980s with the deliberate exclusion and marginalisation of disenfranchised communities through the formulation of a plethora of repressive legislative acts). The 1990s were marked by the coercion of the Apartheid State by both liberation movements and international communities alike into releasing key political figures from prison (including Nelson Mandela) and unbanning all political organisations.

What was the meaning of this for educational change in the country? It simply meant that within the borders of South Africa various social movements, political organisations, and non-governmental organisations including the private sector were feverishly staking their curriculum positions in anticipation of the inevitable birth of the first democratically elected government in South Africa. The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) gave rise to the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) to assist with the development of

education “policy options” for a new democratic South Africa. Although this framework emphasised values such as non-racism, democracy, equality and redress, no reference was made to OBE in its documents.

Furthermore, the Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC), initiated by the private sector, emphasised the importance of a vocational and entrepreneurial driven education system rather than a formal academic one considering the economic demands of South Africa. The same statements were shared by the influential Education Policy and Systems Unit (EDUPOL) of the Urban Foundation. Furthermore, non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) came up with a wide range of proposals for a new curriculum which mainly focused on Adult Education and early childhood development programmes, The government of the day also saw it necessary to add its voice to many other voices which called for curriculum change in this country. It did so by first publishing the Educational Renewal Strategy in two versions and then vis-a-vis a specific curriculum position termed A New Curriculum Model for South Africa (CUMSA) (Jansen in Jansen & Christie 1999). Its proposals, according to Jansen (in Jansen & Christie 1999), focused on the areas such as the rationalisation of the fragmented school syllabi, the development of core learning areas and a whole new approach to vocational education in the proposed curriculum. He is of the opinion that CUMSA heralded the start of curriculum transformation initiated after the 1994 elections which emphasised syllabus reduction, learning area specification and science and technology development in education. But more importantly he argues the fact that throughout the above-mentioned proposals concerning the form and content of a new curriculum no reference was ever made to a system based on an Outcomes-based (OBE) approach for South Africa.

Furthermore, he rightfully claims that it is in the National Training Board, however, where the roots of what only later became known as Outcomes-based Education can be traced. The National Training Board, according to him, forged close ties with COSATU and produced the National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI), viewed as one of the most important policy documents of its time. This policy document provided the framework for curriculum and assessment thinking in the country. It focused primarily on the labour and training sector with the emphasis on an integrated approach to education and training which would bind the entire education sector, including schools, into this framework of thinking. In a different way, this meant that for the first time in the history of South Africa, labour, business and education were going to work together in an atmosphere of democracy in order to bring about successful educational change (Jansen in Jansen & Christie 1999).

The whole process culminated in the White Paper on Education and Training of 1995. It ushered in a new era as far as education and training in South Africa is concerned. It contains far reaching policy initiatives with regard to a new system of education for South Africa and reflected the main ideas of “integration and competency as elements of a system-wide education restructuring ambition” (Jansen in Jansen & Christie 1999: 7). Furthermore, in accordance with the Constitution, it acknowledges that education and training is a basic human right. Democratic values such as equality, justice and peace are seen as necessary conditions for the sustainability of an equitable education system in South Africa.

On 5 October 1995, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act became law. The promulgation of this Act implied that the recognition of learning was no longer restricted to formal settings such as schools, universities and colleges but instead it recognised prior learning which might have occurred in a work situation or through a process of self-study.

After the establishment of SAQA the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was formed. Its main aim was to turn an Outcomes-based, integrated approach to education and training into reality. What is important to note is that at this stage the NQF pointed out the link of education qualifications to training qualification in an integrated system. The striking part about this whole integration process is that the whole debate was conducted within the labour movement and its expanding relationship with business. There was at the time very little input from within educational circles due to the fact that the debates around the whole idea of integrating education and training was more labour-driven. It meant that it took into consideration any possibility for building on what learners already know. In a different way, training would no longer assume a blank slate as far as trainees were concerned. As time progressed a series of discussion documents on curriculum policy saw the light. These documents mainly promoted ideas of integrationist and competency discourses without the slightest hint of an Outcomes-based approach to education (Jansen in Jansen & Christie 1999).

In 1996, however, a key document emerged without any warning, spelling out the proposals for Outcomes-based education. The fascination with OBE in the newly found democratic South Africa probably lies with the fact that it (OBE) creates the false impression that it has the ability to solve the crises in education currently facing South Africa; as official documents have announced, it (OBE) is of a “learner-centred, results-oriented design based on the belief that all individuals can learn”(Department of Education 1997: 17) and that it has the capacity to satisfy the needs of all children irrespective of race, colour or creed. With its announcement in March 1997, however, came intensive public debate about the nature and purposes of the school curriculum. The curriculum process has been criticised as being “bogged down in too much bureaucracy, academic rationality and theoretical logic” (Mail &

Guardian 9 January 1997). Another important criticism put forward by teacher organisations is that the labour and industrial sectors greatly influenced the various curriculum committees with very limited input from various teacher bodies and organisations.

The growing tendency to remove curriculum development and analysis from the hands of teachers is much related to the ways technocrats view teacher work. This kind of view of rationality takes place increasingly within a social division of labour whereby thinking is removed from implementation and in the process the teacher becomes a technician or white-collar clerk. In a similar way learning becomes a process of “memorisation of narrowly defined facts and isolated pieces of information that can easily be measured and evaluated” (Giroux & McLaren 1996: 220). This view is supported by Dewey (in Carr & Hartnett 1996: 59) who sums it up when he says that:

...(B)oth social progress and individual freedom are best understood as the growth of social intelligence that is developed when individuals participate intelligently and cooperatively in the search for solutions to the problems created by social change. By participating in this process, individuals develop those intellectual dispositions which allow them to reconstruct themselves and their social institutions in ways which are conducive to the realisation of their freedom and to the reshaping of their society. In this sense, the ‘individual’ and ‘society’ are neither separate nor distinct: they are both elements within a single process of ‘growth’: an endless spiral whereby individuals use their intelligence to reshape the society by which they themselves have been shaped in order to make it more conducive to the development of their individual freedom. ‘Growth’ is thus a dynamic and dialectical process of self-transformation

and social change. It is the process whereby individuals, in the course of remaking their society, remake themselves.

Once we have an understanding of how change should occur, it is important to have an idea of the kind of changes we wish to engender. The most obvious is that the contemporary educational debate is in actual fact a reflection of the wider debates taking place in the broader society. These are debates about which existing patterns of political, economic and cultural life ought to be reproduced, modified or transformed. Furthermore, these debates always expose the underlying ideological tensions prevalent in a society experiencing change. Since education plays a phenomenal role in the process of social reproduction, any debate that concerns contemporary educational policy must include the kind of society that education would want to foster and promote (Carr & Hartnett 1996). However, when we are discussing issues about the kind of society we wish to shape, we are inevitably raising issues about the “good society”: issues about the make-up of the kind of social, educational and political arrangements needed to allow members of society to lead lives which are both satisfying and worthwhile. (Carr & Hartnett 1996) It is with these ideas in mind that I now wish to look more closely at the kind of educational system South Africa has opted for.

4.6 OUTCOMES – BASED EDUCATION IN PERSPECTIVE

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, Spady (1994) not only sees outcomes as a teaching guide but as a force that drives educational reform. He distinguishes between three variants of OBE, namely traditional, transitional and transformational. While many countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada have opted for the transitional model, South Africa has chosen the transformational model. Jansen (1999) posits that one of the most striking things about the South African version of OBE is the almost word-for-word

translation of Spady's writing concerning OBE. The transformational model, according to Spady (1994), represents the highest form of OBE and traditional OBE the lowest form. Spady (1994) refers to his high form as transformational because it requires the biggest change to existing structures and operations in education. In a transformational OBE model the entire school organisation and instructional delivery system are driven and determined by the outcomes. As discussed earlier, the outcomes are based on a vision of what learners should know and be able to demonstrate when leaving school. All processes which include curriculum formation, school organisation as well as the entire instructional system, should be attuned to these outcomes. The outcomes thus become the main force behind the education system. His argument centers around the fact that successful learners should be able to occupy their position in society as citizens, producers/workers, life long learners, community and family members. Malcolm (in Jansen & Christie 1999) suggests that the word transformational could be somewhat misleading for South Africans, who see it differently. For South Africans "transformation" is a goal for a society moving from an era of Apartheid privilege and exploitation to a climate in which democracy, open and transparent management, economic and legal equity can flourish. Transformational OBE, according to Malcolm (in Jansen & Christie 1999) might not give rise to the kind of transformation South Africa dreams of. According to Spady (1994), however, South Africa's model of OBE, like that of most other countries, lie somewhere between traditional and transitional. The point I wish to make is that the transformation South Africa seeks needs to be much more radical than Spady's transformational OBE. It should be in the words of Schwarz and Caverner (in Jansen & Christie 1999: 110) "a transformation that celebrates and supports the imagination and intentionality of learners, educators and the broader communities, where schools are learning organizations not just for students, but for the whole school".

The South African situation, however, cannot be compared with that of the United States of America or Australia. It is a young democracy still experiencing the growing pains that accompany change. It is still in the process of remaking power relationships, rebuilding structures and transforming values that underpin a democratic society. The diverse cultures, languages, and socio-economic conditions together with the different kinds of school environments make school-based, learner-centred education, according to national outcomes, a viable option. As mentioned earlier, it represents a major shift from past practices and one that resonates with the ideals and values of democracy. For this reason Dewey (in Carr & Hartnett 1996) views a democratic society as one which has created the conditions under which its members can jointly determine the future of their society based on their shared social intelligence. It is the form of social life which creates the kind of opportunity that would allow the full development of individual freedom by allowing all individuals the opportunity to participate in the future shaping of their society.

Education policy development in South Africa has reached the point where the main emphasis is on delivery and implementation. The main issue here is about improving the quality of the teaching and learning environment. The main challenge, however, is to move from theory to practice. In other words, the process must now focus on translating the symbolic intents of policy into tangible beneficial outcomes in the entire South African schooling system. From a policy perspective, OBE, together with Curriculum 2005, can thus be seen as part of a suite of policies adopted by the new democratically elected government in South Africa to transform the Apartheid education system. I now wish to focus on the role of Curriculum 2005 in this process of transformation for the reason that OBE heavily shapes a curriculum.

4.7 THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM 2005 IN THE RESTRUCTURING OF APARTHEID EDUCATION

Curriculum 2005 is an attempt by government to move away from an education system based on rote learning and a philosophy of fundamental pedagogics. In a different way, Curriculum 2005, through OBE, aims to (a) transform the education system in order to produce citizens who are able to contribute to building an economy which is internationally competitive, and (b) simultaneously achieve equity and redress. (Department of Education 1996)

Curriculum 2005 does not only focus on outcomes, but is also learner-centred. Processes of schooling together with outcomes form part of policy. Although learning programmes should adhere to a coherent framework of principles and lead to the attainment of national standards the means for reaching these ends should be determined by providers in accordance with the needs of learners (Department of Education 1996: 20).

The general framework of Curriculum 2005 resembles that of the Canadian model (as discussed in chapter 2 : “an overarching set of critical outcomes and specific outcomes in eight learning areas” (Malcolm in Jansen & Christie 1999: 102). It focuses on communicating, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, environmental and social responsibility. Critical outcomes are closely linked to the broader intended goals of education while specific outcomes relate to particular learning areas. Critical outcomes relate to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which all learners are expected to attain in order to assist them to be successful in a wide variety of contexts including contributing to their communities and the country as a whole. Critical outcomes were developed in conjunction with various stakeholders in the education and training sectors and finalised by SAQA.

Based on the critical outcomes, learners will be able to:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses show that responsible decisions, using critical and creative thinking, have been made;
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, 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; and
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation (Pretorius 1998: 29).

Moreover, in order to make a sound contribution to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the larger society, any learning programme should assist to make the learner sensitive to the importance of:

- Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- Exploring education and career opportunities; and
- Developing entrepreneurial opportunities (SAQA 1997: 10).

Regarding specific outcomes, I think it is important to take cognisance of the fact that specific outcomes only came into being after the eight learning areas were developed. Learning areas refer to the domains through which learners in the General Education and Training phase experience a well-balanced curriculum. Moreover, learning areas form the basis for developing the learning programmes which are implemented in schools. Specific outcomes have been developed for all eight learning areas. They represent “knowledge, skills, attitudes and values within the particular context in which they are to be demonstrated” (Pretorius 1999: 30). They therefore form the building blocks which assist learners in achieving the overall competence in a particular field and at a certain level. They are termed “specific outcomes” due to the fact that they relate specifically to the eight learning areas which have been identified.

However, the South African version of specific outcomes tend to be a much more broader understanding of definition to the learning areas than that of the Australian and Canadian reforms. In other words, apart from the more or less expected outcomes with regard to the content and processes of the various learning areas, Curriculum 2005 has specific outcomes that require students to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how technology might reflect different biases and create responsible and ethical strategies to prevent these biases (Technology);
- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical development of mathematics in different social and cultural contexts (Mathematics);
- Demonstrate an understanding of the changing and contested nature of knowledge in the natural sciences (Natural Sciences);

- Demonstrate managerial expertise and administrative proficiency (Economics and Management); and
- Respect people's right to have personal beliefs and values (Life Orientation). (Pretorius 1998: 30).

As far as the learning area frameworks are concerned (Department of Education: 1997), only three levels are identified: the Foundation Phase (normally to the end of grade 3), the Intermediate Phase (normally to the end of grade 6) and the Senior Phase (normally to the end of grade 9). Furthermore, learner-centredness forms part of policy in Curriculum 2005 and its approaches to learning are based on constructivism. Curriculum 2005 seems to favour an organic approach (which I have briefly discussed in the previous chapter) similar to that of the Australian one. Malcolm (in Jansen & Christie 1999: 103) describes the organic approach in the following way: Curriculum development ... should put learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs.

In addition, Curriculum 2005 focuses on eight learning areas which comprise the following: Communication, Literacy and Languages, Human and Social Sciences, Numeracy and Mathematical Sciences, Technology, Culture, Arts and Artistic Crafts and Life Orientation (Christie in Jansen & Christie 1999). Specific outcomes have been developed for each one of the above which total sixty-six in the entire nine years of the General Education Phase. Together with the Outcomes-based approach, Curriculum 2005 puts emphasis on continuous assessment rather than formal examinations at the end of each term. Moreover, Curriculum 2005 uses a complex range of statements, assessment criteria and performance indicators which are supposed to assist and enable educators to construct learning programmes and lessons based on outcomes. As I have mentioned earlier, Curriculum 2005 seems to represent

an important step away from an ideologically informed curriculum based on a strong technicist approach. It emphasises learning by doing, problem solving and skills development as well as a programme of continuous assessment. According to Christie (in Jansen & Christie 1999: 282), "Curriculum 2005 and the NQF represent specific South African forms of global, late modern curriculum patterns" (I shall discuss this later on).

4.8 ROLE PLAYERS IN POLICY FORMULATION

Having given a brief outline of Curriculum 2005, I now wish to focus my attention on the various role-players that have influenced policy formulation in South Africa. South Africans have been witness to a host of remarkable changes which have influenced their lives to various degrees. But it is particularly in the field of education where changes have been, in the words of Sayed (1998: 169), nothing less "than remarkable and spectacular". The spate of policy changes is phenomenal and represents a true reflection on the side of the government to bring about meaningful change in the education system. As I have mentioned earlier, one of the main intentions of the policy formulation process was to establish a unified, democratic and accountable system of education that would be participatory and responsive to the needs of the previously disenfranchised and oppressed. However, the rationale for curriculum change in South Africa has been influenced to a large extent by political as well as economic factors. It is with this in mind that I now wish to point out the various factors that have played a role in the process of policy formulation in South Africa.

The flurry of policy commissions and investigations that gave reports on various aspects of the education system culminated in the manifestation of the White Paper on Education and Training (which I have already discussed briefly), released by the national Department of Education in September 1994. What is important to remember is that the paper was an

attempt on the sides of both established and incoming bureaucrats to consolidate the new alliance between them. The paper places itself within the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and in doing so, it maintains that education should be seen in the words of Greenstein (1995: 199) as an:

...(E)lement in national economic reconstruction and development ... in order to provide the basis for employment growth, to raise workers' level of general education and skill, to support the introduction of more advanced technologies, to overcome the inheritance of racial and gender stratification in the workforce, and to achieve effective worker participation in decision-making and quality improvement.

Furthermore, it views education in terms of uplifting individuals in such a way as to enable them to contribute towards the development of the economy and society. Economists have come to realise the pivotal role that education plays in bringing about economic transformation. In the United States, for example, the relationship that exists between curriculum and competitive ability on world markets is given serious consideration by Heese (in Jansen & Christie 1999: 174). Moreover, strategies on the side of business corporations have in recent years come to rely more and more on the quality and versatility of their human resources. Whether the focus is on productivity, quality or innovation, delivery cannot take place if the people in the organisation are not committed and capable. The prevailing views around the whole idea of modernisation (also known as the human capital theory) claim that investment in the education of a nation (i.e. human resources) would be more influential in long term sustainability in terms of economic growth of a nation than the capital, natural and material resources of that country (Skinner in Jansen & Christie 1999: 174 –175). Put differently, because education forms part of the mathematically calculated market economy it

has to produce the people to fill the necessary gaps. Where machines do a better job, people either drop out or reskill themselves. The commodification of education is nothing new but in recent years there have been deliberate attempts by governments the world over to rationalise the entire educational process down to this “simple deployment of isolated profit-maximising individuals divorced from any sense of community, into whatever spaces fate dictates” (Skinner in Jansen & Christie 1999: 126).

According to Kahn and Reddy (2001: 208-209) an important fact to remember is that South Africa boasts with the largest economy on the African continent, accounting for more or less 40 percent of the continent's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The province of Gauteng, which houses the gold and base mineral industry as well as the manufacturing and financial services sectors, on its own contributes 40 percent of the nation's GDP. Furthermore the country is a leader in a variety of modern technologies; for example, extracting oil from coal. It also uses technology of world class in a variety of sectors such as clinical medicine, armaments and deep mining. According to them the economic sanctions imposed on the country have turned South Africa into becoming a very successful technology adopter. Whatever the state needed to keep the Apartheid machinery in place, it acquired overtly and covertly. Technologies from other countries were adapted and extended to serve the purpose. Because of this tendency, South Africa's economy has become an uncompetitive one. Moreover, economic sanctions together with protectionist policies created a generally inward-looking manufacturing industry that depended upon outdated technology and a low-skilled workforce. But they argue, however, that the demise of Apartheid, has created many new opportunities and challenges for South Africa. One is the chance of becoming part of the world community once more. But membership in this club can be demanding; it is

demanding in that it requires its members to live up to global standards – with specific reference to science and technology.

The reality, therefore, is that South Africa can only become globally competitive if it repositions the development of human capital resources as the most important priority at all levels within the education and training system. Despite the urge and the desire to make education a vehicle to bring about redress and transformation, close reading of the government's White Papers since 1994 reflect strong economic undercurrents. The De Lange Report (in Harthorne 1999) which I have discussed earlier in a similar way offered an entirely economic reading of education. The emphasis on Science, Technology and Commerce at the expense of other disciplines should be seen as an opportunity to allow South Africa to create the kind of graduate that would be able to fit into a global market economy. A crucial point to note is that the African National Congress (ANC) regards economic growth as a goal and therefore its concern lies with the impact education and training have on the structure of the labour market and the ability of the South African economy to compete globally. In a different way, this implies that instead of posing the question of how the economy can satisfy the educational needs of the country, the policy of the government is rather to ascertain in what way education can satisfy the economic needs such as skilled labour force, high and effective productivity, positive balance of payments and sustained economic growth and so on. But more importantly is the fact that the tension between the political and economic role of education in most national curriculums the world over is resolved on the side of the economy. This implies that although the state has the dual responsibility of producing an autonomous citizen that would be able to fit into a democratic society, as well as a dynamic worker capable of fitting into global economy. However, in some instances there is a

tendency on the side of the state to emphasise the importance of the dynamic worker over that of the democratic citizen. In this sense education acquires an instrumental value.

The point I wish to make is that if South Africa wishes to remain competitive as a global partner, it will have to address the following issues in an effective way:

Firstly, in an era when international interdependence supercedes national autonomy and where economic co-operation becomes a predominant global trend, it would be impossible for South Africa to have a competitive economy if it isolates itself. A growing economy such as that of South Africa does not only depend on healthy domestic politics, but also on international co-operation, business partners, higher and more effective productivity and exporting of quality products which are able to compete globally;

Secondly, South Africa will have to react rapidly to technological developments as well as the challenges that it poses if it wants to improve living standards of its inhabitants; and

Thirdly, in order to be competitive, South Africa will have to produce the kind of worker who is familiar with the latest technological developments, who is a lifelong learner, can face challenges, is creative, has a healthy work ethic, can work effectively with other team members and can be utilised flexibly.

Although I have alluded to the effects of globalisation in South Africa, I now wish to look more closely at the impact of globalisation in the shaping of education policy in

South Africa. It is my contention that the overwhelming forces of globalisation influenced South Africa's quest (as in most other countries) to implement a system of OBE.

4.9 THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON POLICY FORMULATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

It is difficult to discuss any form of transformation in South Africa without taking the effects of globalisation into account. In the words of Nzimande (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 1) "Globalisation is a term that is used to describe the process of transforming the world into a single world market dominated by the interests of big multi-nationals, mainly those from the most developed countries of the North". This view is expressed also in the ideas of Chisholm (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 52) who posits:

Globalisation can be seen as the cultural effect of the universalising tendency of the globalising force of modernity, where the spread of modernity is identified with the generalisation and universal application of a positivistic, technocentric and rationalistic logic.

This understanding of globalisation has transformed production systems of the entire capitalist world economy. Previously, competition was based on a Fordist economic regime which was characterised by mass production of goods and a low-skilled, low waged labour force. South Africa bears testimony to this.

The economic crises of the 1970s along with the introduction of information technology as well as the advent of internationalisation of finance capital witnessed the birth of a new economic regime which is today known as post-Fordism. What does post-Fordism entail?

First of all, post-Fordism is one of the main features of globalisation. It entails the manufacture of standardised goods, cheap raw material inputs, and a cheap labourforce (Kraak in Cloete *et al.* 1997). Innovation is the driving force behind this new market system – the ability to reinvent products on a continuous basis is at the heart of this new system. This new environment, however, has brought with it new demands in the field of training and education. I have alluded to the fact the need for a dynamic labour force with the necessary skills that would enable them to employ the new technologies remains crucial if we want to remain globally competitive. In short, flexible specialisation wants a greater responsiveness and adaptability to what is fast becoming a highly unpredictable and volatile, competitive global market. Therefore, the global market dictates a labour force which is capable of adapting rapidly to changes and has the ability to deal effectively with unforeseen circumstances. Although globalisation creates the impression that it is strongly in favour of economic growth and sustainability, we must not forget that the other side of globalisation is the vicious poverty cycle which has become part of most Third World countries. Proponents of globalisation have a tendency to emphasise the positive effects of globalisation without taking the negative social, economic and political consequences of this phenomenon into consideration (Nzimande in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 1-2).

Globalisation, together with its other main features of deregulation and privatisation, aims to reduce the state's involvement in provision of social services to its citizens. Education throughout the world is one of the social services most severely affected by this phenomenon. Why? Neo-liberalism, the ideology of globalisation, which involves recapturing the freedom of the individual, (Skinner in Jansen & Christie 1999: 122) is based on a particular notion of competitiveness on both national and international fronts. With neo-liberalism the nation-state remains under attack which in turn undermines the independence of many countries.

This in turn impedes the delivery of social services such as education, health and social security as being experienced by South Africans at this point in time. A case in point is that the World Bank recommends that education be allocated an amount of 17% from a country's budget. At present South Africa's education budget amounts to 20,3%. South Africa will probably not see any increase in its education budget in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, with international trends becoming more influential in South Africa, the budgetary allocation for education will in all probability be subjected to a marked decrease in the next few years (Fataar in Kallaway *et al.* 1997: 73).

In a different way, neo-liberalism attempts to redefine national territories as markets and in the process it ignores the fact that these national territories are in actual fact socio-economic and political entities with their own specific needs and desires. These assumptions obviously hold certain implications for education in South Africa. One of the implications is that there is now a global discourse on knowledge production which implies that we have to structure educational policy in such a way so that it could be compatible with this global reality. If we do not modify our education policy to fit in with this supposedly progressive global reality our education could be seen as not being up to standard. Archer (1984) points out that over the past few decades there has been a noticeable increase of globalisation in institutional domains such as science and technology, communications, politics as well as economics and culture. One of the main features of globalisation in education is that policy borrowing takes place between countries. A second feature of globalisation is that "notions of appropriate form and content of schooling are increasingly shared not least because of the role of multinational aid agencies in education in developing countries" (Finegold, McFarland & Richardson in Kallaway *et al.* 1997: 114).

Moreover, Meyer, Kamens and Benavot (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 114) posit that there are great similarities in primary curriculum outlines the world over and these similarities manifest themselves in definitions of success and failure, and of appropriate pedagogy. The current global trend in educational development is: (1) the creation of a more qualified labour force which I have referred to earlier and (2) an attempt to forge closer links between education and training and work skills. These two concerns are evident in South Africa around current policy debates in education. The White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) is an attempt by government to be more responsive to the ever-changing patterns of the working environment in the global economy. In its ambitious policy agenda it sets out to transform education and training in South Africa through a process of integration. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of establishing a system of life-long learning organized in terms of the NQF which would create learning opportunities for all South Africans.

The argument I wish to make at this point is that this new approach to policy concerning the integration of education and training which includes life-long learning and a modular, competency based curriculum under the NQF is in actual fact a combination of policy borrowing and local initiatives geared to suit South African socio-economic conditions. Trends of global policy abound, but in relation to needs and interests locally in the production of specific policy positions such as social reproduction and maintaining hegemony.

In Feinberg's (1983) book *Understanding Education* he argues that education can best be understood by recognising the fact that its primary function is that of social reproduction. According to Feinberg (1983: 155), education has two specific functions in serving as an instrument of social reproduction. Firstly, there is the "reproduction of skills that meet

socially defined needs. These skills include not only those related to specific economic functions but also those habits and behaviour patterns that maintain social interaction in a certain structured way” (Feinberg 1983: 155). Secondly, there is “the reproduction of consciousness or of the shared understanding ... that provides the basis for social life” (Feinberg 1983: 155). Furthermore, once it is acknowledged that “reproduction is the focal point of educational understanding” (Feinberg 1983: 155), then it becomes clear that to understand the form, content and control of an educational system is to understand “the specific habits and skills needed for an economic system to function” (Feinberg 1983: 155) as well as the various ideologies that influence the kind of consciousness that would guarantee social continuity. The point I wish to make is that to recognise the above is to acknowledge that educational transformation, as in the case of South Africa, must be understood in terms of the economic and ideological structures and processes through which social reproduction takes place. But it also implies that, as in the case of South Africa, any attempt involving considerable educational transformation is influenced to a certain degree by the structures and processes which guide social reproduction inherited from the past i.e. South Africa’s legacy of apartheid. For this reason, Feinberg (1983) distinguishes between two major functions of education, two theories that can begin to provide an understanding of the possibilities that exist for progressive change. The first theory deals with the social functions of education which are primarily economic and vocational. This theory involves the following:

Those areas that provide deliberate instruction in a code of knowledge, a set of principles and techniques designed to further the participation of an individual in the market through the mediation of skills that possess an exchange value. It would include not only all those performances that involve simple rote procedures in which one has been instructed, but also those performances that involve the ability to deal

with contingencies through the application of well-grounded scientific understanding. Hence, this category would include not only the simplest kind of vocational training, but education into a craft or profession as well, and it is primarily concerned with the transmission of technically exploitable knowledge (Feinberg 1983: 228)

Feinberg's (1983: 228) second theory functions primarily along political and cultural lines. He claims the following:

Those forms of instruction are primarily intended to further social participation as a member of the public through the development of interpretive understanding and normative skills. This form of instruction is often called general education. It is that component of education that prepares students for a common life regardless of the nature of their vocation and is often thought that because general education projects a life in common ... it requires a common curriculum.

If we look at the two theories above, it is not difficult to see where South Africa's educational policy initiatives come from. The primary reproductive function within the general education discourse is one driven by a political agenda: the main crux is to prepare learners for a kind of social life in which individuals are treated as free and equal members of society thus enabling them to participate in a collective manner in formulating the common good of society.

The theory of vocational education is primarily concerned with economics. It seeks to contribute towards the reconstruction and development of industry in order to advance the economic growth and development of modern society. In practice, this implies that subject matter should be taught and learned in such a way that places greater emphasis on its market

value. A conclusion that emerges is that to engage in the contemporary educational debate implies that one holds a particular view about the contemporary society of which education is a product and which the educational system itself helps to produce and sustain for the sake of hegemony. Apple (1995), in his book *Education and Power*, posits that the notion of hegemony is never free floating. It is inevitably tied to the state. This implies that hegemony is not a given social fact; to maintain hegemony, according to Apple (1995), involves "a continual process of compromise, conflict, and active struggle". Another important fact to consider, according to Apple (1995), is that "even the reforms to alter both the way in which schools are organised and controlled as well as what is actually taught in them will be part of this process." What this implies is that the school in actual fact becomes a site where the state, economy, and culture become interrelated and in the process many of the current reforms which are being proposed as well as the curriculum innovations currently in place will bear testimony to these interrelations. Since South Africa is a fully fledged partner of the world community it is obvious that its education policy is guided by the demands of globalisation and because schools form an important part of the state apparatus it has a tendency to echo the sentiments of the state and therefore the sentiments of globalisation.

4.10 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to say that the aim of the brief discussion offered here was to take a critical view of the major role players which have contributed towards the formulation of education policy in South Africa. The De Lange Report laid the first foundations for educational reform in this country in that, for the first time, in an investigation sponsored by government, concepts such as *equality* and *openness* were put forward as guiding principles. In essence, the De Lange Report gave clear indications as to the direction that should be

taken in education. Furthermore, the strong influence of labour and business in education is easily identifiable when one takes a closer look at education policy in this country. Finally, now that South Africa has entered the global arena, the overwhelming effects of globalisation as a process of economic, political and social transformation are embedded in all policies dealing with reconstruction and development in this country. This is the context in which OBE unfolds. In the next chapter I shall examine whether OBE, taking into account the context in which it evolves, can engender transformation in schools.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I have given an overview of Apartheid education. I shall now briefly analyse the first White Paper on Education and Training (1996) to find reasons why the Department of Education chose OBE as a vehicle to engender meaningful change. Secondly, I shall investigate whether mere policy promulgation is sufficient to guarantee the successful implementation thereof. Thirdly, I shall investigate whether real change can be enacted in schools. Finally, I shall examine some of the merits of a non-instrumentalist view of education, for the reason that, as I argue in this thesis, concepts of OBE seem to be trapped in an instrumentalist view of education.

5.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN JUSTIFICATION OF OBE

February 1995 saw the Education White Paper I on Education and Training being gazetted by the Department of Education. This document can be seen as the first official government framework aimed at overhauling the entire system of education in line with the Constitution (1996). Following Kholofelo (1998), the framework recommendations reinforce four key educational rights guaranteed by the South African Constitution (1996). The Constitution enumerates the following rights:

Everyone has a right to:

- Basic education;
- Equal access to education institutions;

- Choice of language of instruction where reasonably practicable; and
- Establish education institutions based on a common culture, language and religion, provided that there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race (South African Constitution 1996).

Furthermore, the White Paper on Education and Training (1996) identifies many problems with regard to the current system in terms of facilities, resources and the provision of quality education. It defines education as a basic human right based on the fact that all citizens should be allowed the space to further enhance their potential capabilities that would allow them to make their full contribution to society. According to Greenstein (1995: 200), in what seems as an inversion of the original rationale of People's Education, the goal of education is seen as uplifting individuals so that they may contribute to the development of the economy and society, which in turn, can lead to the development of previously marginalised individuals and communities. In this sense, the emphasis is also on the development of the individual rather than just transforming the society. The White Paper on Education and Training (1996) refers on numerous occasions to the development of the individual and the capacity of individuals to become critical thinkers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it also expresses concern, with challenges such as productivity, economic growth and technological advancement. However, Greenstein (1995: 201) posits that "there is an implicit tension between technological education and education for democratic awareness and critical thinking". For the reason that scientific-orientated education plays a major role in sustaining economic growth, promoting such a form of education at the expense of critical awareness and critical thinking may seem as the politically correct thing to do especially in the case of South Africa where one has "huge inequalities in skills and competences in the nations labour

force, with the same racial, ethnic and gender hierarchies reproducing themselves in private and parastatal employment, and in the public services” (Greenstein 1995: 200).

Moreover, Christie (1997: 119) posits that “this formulation of an education-economy link bears the hallmarks of human capital theory, which asserts that education brings returns for both individuals and society more broadly, and that education is linked to productivity”. In essence, what the White Paper on Education and Training (1996) calls for is a shift in focus towards a more technocratic discourse which would clearly focus on performance and outcomes thus paving the way for an Outcomes-based approach to education in post-Apartheid South Africa.

In view of the above, OBE as a model was chosen to alleviate the crises in education as mentioned in the previous chapter. The new democratic government has for obvious reasons opted for transformational OBE. Following Malcolm (1997: 3) it is learner-centred, where learning results in students changing the way they understand and act in the world around them. What this implies is that learners accept responsibility for their beliefs and deeds while the educator assumes the role of performer.

5.3 EDUCATION POLICY ENACTMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

I shall now explore the transformational possibilities within OBE which hold promise for meaningful change in an education system such as South Africa’s which has been heavily influenced by values and principles of democracy. Firstly, one needs to analyse the term transformation and, secondly, look at the various notions constitutive of a democratic praxis before looking more closely at the transformative possibilities within OBE. Harvey and Knight (in Waghid & Steyn 2000: 4) are of the opinion that “transformation is a form of

change of one form into another.” Van Niekerk (in Waghid & Steyn 2000: 4) posits that “transformation is not its own goal; the goal is an improved, more just and more equitable society”.

Proponents of OBE have made no secret in suggesting in documentation that OBE in SA will be able to address issues concerning social change. The curriculum has often been seen as a paradigm shift and for this reason “OBE is central to both the educational and social transformation in the present democratic era in South Africa” (Claasen 1998: 39). It has also been claimed that this new curriculum is built on principles of equity, redress, non-discrimination, democracy, access and justice” (WCED 1997: 1) A further claim is made concerning the quality of education: “For the first time high quality education will be available to everyone in South Africa irrespective of age, gender, race, colour, religion, ability or language” (WCED 1997: 1).

What the above illustrates is, that according to OBE proponents, meaningful change in relation to OBE will most definitely happen in schools. Now if this is the case, the question arises: To what degree are schools susceptible to fundamental change? Cuban (in Christie 1999: 286) argues “that there has been little fundamental change in pedagogy in the past hundred years, in spite of a wide range of policy interventions”. Cuban (in Christie 1999: 286) distinguishes between different degrees of school change:

First-order changes try to make what already exists more efficient and more effective, without disturbing the basic organisational features, without substantially altering the ways in which adults and children perform their roles ... Second-order changes seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations are put together ... (and)

introduce new goals, structures and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems.

Furthermore, Cuban (in Christie 1999: 286) asserts that most school reforms in the last century have centered around first order rather than second-order changes. Extensive research regarding school reform has revealed the many challenges of changing classroom practices in relation to state policy. Consequently it seems to be demanding to effect policy change in schooling systems during times of transformation. I contend that several facts impede OBE's ability to bring about meaningful change in South African schools. One of the first challenges is that policy promulgation does not automatically guarantee the successful implementation thereof nor can it bring about the necessary changes envisaged by policy practitioners who are out of touch with the many challenges facing education in South Africa today. For this reason Jansen (1999a: 89) posits that in order to bring about meaningful change "we need to develop a much more reserved approach to and understanding of policy, rather than rush into behaviour that assumes policy intends what it claims".

In addition, Jansen (1999a: 88) claims that "we now know that the reasons for making policy are often only vaguely related to intentions of changing curriculum practice at the classroom level". The point I make is that what practitioners had envisaged and what reality demanded were miles apart. For example, practitioners were more concerned about satisfying the demands of a global economy than with satisfying the needs in education. Therefore, very little thought was given to challenges pertaining to the complexity of resources and support systems needed to move from policy promulgation to policy implementation in schools. Moreover, the ability of provinces to enact policy is often constrained by the absence of

proper guidelines for enactment at provincial level. Other reasons include the lack of capacity as well as the required resources.

Jansen (1999a: 91) further argues “declared policy, implemented without the fundamentals of curriculum support, often creates policy cynicism among practitioners given any lack of evidence to signal improvement in teaching and learning at the classroom interface”. I agree with Jansen (1999a: 91) when he notes the lack of “curriculum support fundamentals (CSF’s) which had to be in place in order to achieve the kind of transformative change envisaged by the new democratically elected government of South Africa. These CSF’s, according to Jansen (1999a: 91), would also include “focused teacher development support”. To my mind this situation has not been seriously addressed with regard to teacher development. Malcolm (1999: 110) has the following to say: “Government policies, theoretical models, management and support systems must help teachers to do creative things”. Malcolm (1999: 110) further argues that “investments in teacher participation, teacher development, school development and management education are just as important”. He contends that:

South Africa appears to be embarking on this voyage with faith – faith that teachers can create learner-centered education, faith that teachers can shape as well as respond to the emerging concept of OBE, faith that school management can work to a different vision of schools. It is a high-risk choice in a country where teachers have a low knowledge base (in relation to what is required), the tradition is bureaucratic and text-centered, and the system is woefully under-resourced. But the human spirit is capable of unimagined flight, once liberated and supported. That is the task (Malcolm 1999: 110).

Jansen (1999a) also accentuates the importance of the basic material resources in order to bring about meaningful change in the schooling system. A major flaw in the new educational policy is the fact that it fails to make clear the distinction between privileged white schools and marginalised black schools. This inability to draw a clear distinction between the two, further impedes the possibilities of meaningful change. Therefore, practitioners fail to recognise the dire need that currently exists in black schools with regard to human capital development and other basic resources which are important to the day to day running of a school. The point I am making is, that despite the democratic climate that exists in South Africa our education system continues to be plagued by conditions of inequality which hamper the effective transformation to a new OBE education system.

In this regard Moodley (1997: 134) aptly states:

South Africans come together in the marketplace, as in Furnivall's classic depiction of the prototype of plural societies, yet live their private and personal lives in culturally homogeneous groups. The divisions are great. Schools and educational institutions in different areas are allocated very different resources – which conditions, who teaches, teacher:pupil ratios and even accessibility to basic school-texts. For example, in the city of Cape Town, schools within a ten minute drive from each other can have high-tech equipment to illustrate and concretise the concepts being learnt on the one hand, and on the other, not have a school library, laboratory or enough basic history textbooks for the students to read and study by themselves.

In essence several structural inequalities prevail in schools and society which seriously curtail the momentum of educational transformation. This brings me to a discussion of whether real

change can be implemented in schools. OBE “relies on a complex change process” (Glatthorn 1993: 357) and for this reason it is excessively demanding on both human and material resources. The important issue which concerns the reallocation of resources to previously marginalised black schools is thus becoming one of grave concern. It is a known fact that in order for OBE to be implemented successfully one must have a well trained human resource base as well as sufficient material resources in place. Jansen (1999a: 90) has the following to say with regard to the importance of these resources: “The fact that OBE implementation did not distinguish between privileged schools (mostly white) and marginalised schools (mostly black) is in part a reflection of a non-discriminatory policy stance in the early transition. Therefore OBE policy documents does (sic) not recognise the fact that there is a dire need for basic resources in historically disadvantaged schools which can be seen as a major impediment for OBE policy implementation in this country”. In the same argument Jansen (1999a: 91) refers to the importance of curriculum support fundamentals (CSF’s) which refers to: (a) human resource development (teacher development) and (b) presence of basic material resources / learning resource materials that would support change.

De Clercq (in Kallaway *et al*, 1997: 163) posits the following:

The NQF believes that the playing field will be gradually leveled and that learning institutions will eventually achieve formal equivalence. However, little is said about how especially under conditions of fiscal discipline, resources are to be reallocated and redistributed across provinces and institutions to provide a basis for the improvement of the quality of education in the disadvantaged sectors. Nowhere is there an indication of how the deep structural root problems of poor quality education in educational institutions will be confronted whether it is the poor and depressed

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teaching and learning environment, the negative and destructive cultures of poor township and rural schools with struggling demotivated staff and students, the poor social and professional status of teachers and education bureaucrats or the fact that students do not assume responsible roles.

Moreover, Jansen (1999b: 153) posits that “OBE as a curriculum innovation has not taken adequate account of the resource status of schools and classrooms in South Africa”. Policy documents are therefore flawed in the sense that they fail to deal adequately with the challenge concerning the reallocation of resources within the various schools. The outcome of such a dilemma, following De Clercq (in Kallaway *et al*, 1997: 164), means that “the more privileged institutions (like white schools) with well-qualified teachers and the required resources and networks with the world of work are bound to survive and continue to dominate the education hierarchy”.

The question now arises: Why are policy initiatives regarding educational transformation on the side of government not sufficient to effectively address the problem of poorly qualified educators, limited learning resource materials and problematic learning environments? I now return to an earlier discussion around the dynamics of policy formulation versus policy implementation. For this purpose Kruss (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 97) draws a distinction between two common conceptual models with regard to the education policy process. Firstly, she refers to a “rationalist” model of policy-making, which assumes policy-making to be of an essentially rational nature. This implies that the whole process of policy-making “operates through classic steps, from formulation to implementation” (Kruss in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 97). Challenges facing education are interpreted as one in need of technical solutions. Furthermore, policies are regarded as blueprints which come into existence before action,

“and which are implemented on the external world through a controlled process. The process is assumed to be a consensual one” (Kruss in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 98).

Secondly, she refers to a “political” model regarding the policy-making process. It assumes that policy is “the authoritative allocation of values” and hence that policy-making is essentially a political activity (Kruss in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 98). Therefore, to understand the nature of the policy, one should be aware of the dynamics around power relations, conflict and contestation. It is widely accepted that South Africa has opted for the rationalist model. Kruss (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 104) concludes that the whole issue around curriculum over what would count as knowledge, what counts as valid transmission and what would count as valid realisation of knowledge can be seen as a technical issue. This implies that the challenges pertaining to education with regard to curriculum design were interpreted as technical issues which would have to involve technical experts. Greenstein (in Kruss 1997: 104) is of the opinion that there has been a shift in the education policy-making process from “an explicitly political and ostensibly stake-holder driven process, to one driven by state bureaucrats and experts, who are no less political but whose authority is backed up by a technical, professional and expert aura.” Greenstein (1995: 202) posits that “the inescapable conclusion is that the technocratic discourse has become deeply entrenched in current debates on education policy”. The process surrounding OBE curriculum development serves as an example.

Kruss (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 104) further argues that “in line with the implicit model of policy-making as classic steps in a rational process, what began to emerge was a firm conceptual and sequential division between the steps of curriculum formulation and curriculum implementation and the agencies responsible for each”. Therefore the process

concerned with formulation of curriculum policy was controlled at a national level. This implied that the Minister of Education would, after the process was completed, declare national policy and, in so doing, hand the responsibility of its implementation over to the provinces. This, however, is where the main problem regarding the implementation process lies.

According to the national Department of Education, as revealed in its documentation, the process of policy implementation would be a relatively smooth running exercise. Jansen (1999a: 89) posits that “declaring policy is not the same as achieving it.” Kruss (in Kallaway *et al* 1997: 104) argues that “there does not seem to be any anticipation of conflict and contestation in putting the curriculum framework into practice”. However, we are well aware of the fact that the whole implementation process has been plagued by conflict and disagreement by both provincial education departments and teachers alike. Provinces for instance, have argued that their officials do not have the ability nor the resources to implement the OBE curriculum effectively. This, together with stringent financial constraints, have greatly impeded the various provincial departments’ ability to bring about curriculum change. Furthermore, the Provincial Review Report questions the various provincial education department’s ability and capacity to effect change and deliver quality education (Department of Public Service and Administration in Kruss 1997). Finally, according to Jansen (1999c: 58) “there remain real constitutional constraints on national government, limited to setting ‘norms and standards’ for provincial enactment.”

Moreover, Greenstein (1995: 195) posits that:

by not making a quantifiable commitment of resources to the different sectors, one may get the impression that everything can be done simultaneously and no trade-offs need to be involved. Without specifying how programmes will be financed and where facilities and personnel will come from, the inclusion of new initiatives in the framework is little more than wishful thinking at times.

Furthermore, the WPET (White Paper on Education and Training 1996) in no uncertain terms reflects the government's commitment to policy on fiscal discipline by making it clear that the whole issue around educational development in this country will have to take place in an atmosphere that would guarantee financial sustainability, as well as the effective and efficient use of the limited resources available.

Thus far, in my discussion above, I have mainly highlighted the importance of having sufficient material resources in place in order to bring about the kind of educational change as reflected in OBE policy documents. I now wish to focus my attention on the importance of human resource development. In the words of Jansen (1999a: 91) "sustained and focused teacher development support was *sine qua non* for effective implementation of OBE." With these words he places great emphasis on the importance of teacher development in order to bring about sustainable transformation in education. According to Jansen (1999a: 91) "Decades of mal-education, among white and black teachers, almost guaranteed failure of any complex and sophisticated curriculum that placed heavy pedagogical demands on practitioners". He argues that the five-day training sessions regarding OBE implementation is clearly inadequate. Moreover, Hansen (in Morphet & Ryan 1967: 67) underscores this fact when he argues that:

the present emphasis on the development of technology, organisation and teaching content with its resultant or accompanying neglect of the development of people – may as well be self-defeating. We may be wasting our time, our resources and our opportunity. And this is not to mention the generation of children and the future members of society who suffer the consequences of our errors and inadequacies.

Thompson (in Hansen 1967: 67) is of the opinion that modern day societies specialise in either of two areas. He distinguishes between task specialisation and person specialisation. His ideas can be summarised as follows. Task specialisation refers to the the process of dividing into smaller parts. With task specialisation the worker becomes less and less involved in the task and therefore, he (she) loses control over what he (she) does and how it is being done. The result is that he (she) becomes less important in society. He (she) therefore has a low self-esteem and self-worth. Person specialisation on the other hand places the emphasis on the specialisation in one part of a complex exercise. Thompson equates person specialisation with professional training. The person involved works long and hard to obtain his/her place, the result being that:

- (a) he (she) increases his (her) worth in society;
- (b) he (she) has a greater self-esteem and self image; and
- (c) he (she) has the power that would allow him (her) to make competent decisions in his area of specialisation (Thomson in Hansen 1967: 67).

Hansen (in Morphet & Ryan 1967: 68) adds that “competent school people will be important to all of us for a long time to come”. In the light of this I wish to add the argument made by

De Clercq (in Kallaway *et al*, 1998: 158) regarding the importance of teacher training versus curriculum change in education. According to De Clercq:

Research has shown how curricular changes have often failed because they did not properly target educators, the key agents who should be centrally involved and participate in the development of new pedagogy. That is what the traditional curriculum-driven approach did not manage to do, and the same danger threatens the outcomes-based approach. While, in theory, this integrated form of learning could improve both the quality and relevance of learning and knowledge for a changing economy and society like South Africa, it is difficult in practice to implement this approach and change old entrenched institutional and pedagogical practices. It will require expertise, training and time, as well as public persuasion, to ensure that the learning outcomes of vocational and academic institutions are comparable.

Moreover, an article entitled "Curriculum 2005 in a shambles" which appeared in a local Sunday newspaper recently underscores the importance of Jansen's (1999a) CSF's. The present state of affairs is best summed up by the editor of the article Cornia Pretorius. According to the editor "Teachers and education experts have warned that the implementation of outcomes-based education in South Africa's high schools is turning into a national disaster (*Sunday Times* 8/7/01). Amongst the reasons cited are the following:

- Training done too late or too early;
- Training conducted like a "crash course" over three to five days;
- Trainers sometimes not knowing enough to give practical examples or demonstrate Outcomes-based lessons;

- Teachers having nowhere to go if they have questions;
- Teachers not knowing how to access pupils' progress;
- Schools receiving textbooks late, receiving too few of them or receiving none at all; and
- Major practical problems like dealing with group work in classes of up to 60 pupils
(*Sunday Times* 8/7/2001).

If one looks at the reasons given above it is evident that one of the main reasons for OBE's apparent failure in schools is due to the inability on the side of government to provide effective teacher development programs.

In conclusion of this section I wish to point out that if an individual's knowledge remains viable to him (her), it creates the opportunities of surviving within the parameters that living in a certain world has created for him (her). Should this knowledge become obsolete the individual needs to adapt that knowledge in order to remain a part of that world. In a similar way, the kind of knowledge educators possess is no longer viable for the new environment in which they operate. This implies that educators need to "adapt" their knowledge through government sponsored programmes if they want to remain a part of this new environment.

Following Jansen (1999a), policy routinely underestimates the complexity of the system into which such change is introduced. What this implies is that OBE has often been seen by many as a quick-fix solution to a complex problem. The sentiments of Sieborger (1997: 44) further underscore this point when he says that "the most important background aspect of the curriculum process was an unspoken one, yet all participants were aware of it. A new curriculum had to be in place before the 1999 general election, as the government had to be

seen to be delivering on its promises in education. This implied that the new curriculum had to be introduced in Grades 1, 4 and 7 during 1998". This in turn implied that from the start participants were faced with impossible deadlines and furthermore "the process was always constrained by severe time pressures and overly optimistic planning" (Sieborger 1997: 44). In a different way, this meant that in its haste to introduce a new curriculum framework into the schools, government failed to take cognisance of the complexities and demands of an education system such as ours. The result is that OBE is often viewed by many with skepticism which is not unfounded and it seems to be out of touch with realities in education at grassroots level.

In this regard Christie (1998: 121) argues that "policies are best understood in terms of practices on the ground, rather than in terms of idealist statements of intention or blueprints of action" Christie (1998: 122-123). argues that while the WPET (1996) is "generous in vision", it fails as far as implementation strategies are concerned. In a different way she posits that "outlining a policy vision is not the same as developing and implementing actual policies for change", Christie (1998: 123) She points out that "the extent to which (policy) is or can be acted on or acted out is a crucial issue: policy has no magic, though advocates of specific policies sometimes seem to believe this to be so" Christie (1998: 123). When one looks at the WPET (1996) with its comprehensive proposals and generalised statements on the process of integration one comes to the realisation that the WPET (1996) holds much promise but little chance of delivering the goods. Nevertheless, Christie is of the opinion that the WPET (1996) at least offers an "opportunity for these changes to begin".

Moreover, even though government is at the helm of the policy formulation process, they are by no means the only players and in order to realise policy outcomes it is eminent that they

should engage in a process, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter, to win hegemony. People need to take ownership of policy and they can only do so if they have a belief in it. In a different way, policy initiatives need to be translated into tangible outcomes before people can buy into them. OBE has often been labeled as being undemocratic in its approach and the fact that people on the ground had very little input in the formulation of policy further underscores this fact. Furthermore, one must bear in mind that any democratic society grows from the roots that a democratic school system has to offer. Herriman (in Chapman *et al* 1995: 15) posits that “democratic values can only be achieved when the total structure of education is democratic. Aspin (in Chapman *et al*, 1995: 32-33) holds the following view of “democracy as species of morality”:

(It) is about adopting, justifying, analyzing, applying and evaluating policies, programmes or plans in interpersonal affairs in the social world, and that all those people whose interests are likely to be affected by the implementation of those plans or policies have the right to be consulted about them and to have an equal say in their adoption, amendment or rejection. Implicit in these requirements is the presumption that our actions and decisions in such matters are governed by principles that are public, objective, generalisable, commendatory, other regarding, action-guiding, primarily related to the promotion of human welfare and the avoidance of human harm, and *accountable*. These principles are valued and adopted in those various forms of freely chosen self-governance that people call “democracy”, and they are made normative for the purposes that democracy has.

I must emphasise the fact that those who are consulted must be able to measure up to the demands of rationality, goodwill, autonomy and a commitment to the social order. Peters (in

Aspin 1995: 35) highlights the importance of ethical principles when he claims that those principles are presupposed in our commitment to a democratic way of life. Peters (in Aspin 1995: 35) is of the opinion that in a democracy we attempt to settle our differences which concern “matters of principle, policy and practice by appealing to rational procedures, in which reason-giving has a public character. The practices and procedures of democratic institutions are exemplifications of large-scale moral principles at work”. Peters (in Aspin 1995: 35) sees these principles as presuppositions of all democratic forms of life which include the following:

- Equality. This is the presumption that in interpersonal transactions there shall be no discrimination between or against one group of people and in favour of another, without good, relevant and socially operative reasons being given. All people and human beings are to be presumed to be equal until grounds are given for treating someone or some group differently;
- Freedom. All people shall be presumed to be free agents until good reason can be given for constraints to be applied and freedom to be taken away;
- Tolerance. This ensures regard for the expressions of opinion and choices made by other people and for their right to be different and to follow their own path towards the creation and fulfillment of their own life-options;
- Consideration of other people’s interests. This imposes on us the obligation to do nothing that will cause other people harm but to do everything possible to promote their welfare; and
- Respect for other people. This reflects our regard for other people as “ends-in-themselves” equally with us and our concerns to preserve and promote our own and other people’s search for happiness.

The point I wish to make is that in the OBE model these presuppositions are not always embodied and exemplified in its practices. In this way OBE seems to be democratically unjustifiable.

Steyn and Waghid (2000: 7) assert that “despite the existence of educational policy frameworks, such as OBE, one will have to take account of both the contexts and the “strength of will” of educators and other role-players to ensure its implementation and hence, enabling educational transformation”. Steyn and Waghid (2000: 7) further argue that “people in a society must be determined to chart out the transformation process”. Gutman (1998: 34) posits that transformation needs to be lived from the “inside”. Steyn and Waghid (2000: 7) are of the opinion that “people must show the commitment to make educational policy transformation work. In other words, policy without the support of the people cannot engender meaningful change. They contend that the principle of partnership between the various stakeholders who have an interest in education is an important one. My argument is that this process of consultation between the various stakeholders was not always strictly adhered to. My contention is that policy-makers together with the various other educational reformists have taken it upon themselves to “authoritatively construct outcomes”(Waghid 2001a: 12). For this reason, the South African version of transformational OBE seems to be “flawed by power structures such as control and manipulation” (Waghid 2001a: 12). Therefore it seems to remain trapped in an instrumentally justifiable view of education (Waghid 2001a: 12) which negatively impacts on its ability to change the system of education in South Africa. Having made this point, I now wish to highlight the importance of a non-instrumental justification of education and why it seems to be a more accountable education view than the instrumentalist OBE view.

5.4 TOWARDS A NON INSTRUMENTAL JUSTIFICATION VIEW OF EDUCATION

Waghid (2001: 12) refers to the article written by RS Peters, “The justification of education”, with specific reference to his perspective on the “non-instrumental” justification of education. Concerning the issue of the non-instrumental position, Peters (in Waghid 2001: 12) explains that the concern for justification is primarily aimed at the “educational pursuit of rational virtues, such as truth-telling and sincerity, freedom of thought or liberty, clarity, non-arbitrariness, impartiality, a sense of relevance, consistency and respect for evidence and people. In this non-instrumentalist view of education learners are given an opportunity to acquire the value of self-examination which is important to exhibit the virtues of critical, open-ended, disciplinary inquiry.

Educated people through self-examination:

- Develop a capacity to reason (to ask why), such as to be knowledgeable (people have grounds for what they say or think) and through understanding, transform and organise concepts in an objective and systematic manner (whereby reasons are given which count for or against points of view), inseparable from rational virtues;
- Establish logical and relevant connections between different ways of understanding as opposed to disconnected items of knowledge or interpreting in an imaginative way; and
- Do and know things for their own sake related to “what” constitutes knowledge and “how” knowledge is performed (Waghid 2001a: 12).

Having explained the non-instrumental position of education, I shall now explore what is wrong with an instrumental justification of education view. Jeevanantham (1999: 32) takes issue with the inadequacies of an instrumental justification of education. Knowledge, according to Jeevanantham (1999: 32), “is instrumental in nature when it is meant to serve a purpose that is external to itself”. Mckernan (1993: 345) posits that the “means-ends” OBE stance treats knowledge as instrumental, a position that violates the epistemology of the structure of certain subjects and disciplines”. Jeevanantham (1999: 32) argues that when knowledge is understood in this “means-ends way, it becomes a means to an end that is superior to the knowledge in question”. Knowledge, however, is an end in itself due to the fact that when mastered, allows us access to other forms of knowledge which is conceptualised in this manner and is “important for itself as well as for the access that it grants people to other forms of knowledge” (Jeevanantham 1999: 32).

Moreover, Jeevanantham (1999: 32) highlights a further problem with regard to the instrumental view of knowledge which implies that “knowledge now becomes instrumental to the attainment of outcomes, with knowledge being relegated to the level of being a vehicle for the attainment of nobler ideals, i.e. outcomes”. According to Waghid (2001a: 12) the main aim of an instrumental justification of education is “to search for its (education’s) extrinsic use for the individual (learner) and community”. Likewise in the game of golf, an excellent game played by a golfer such as Tiger Woods might not always be valued for its intrinsic merits such as to play the game out of love. It is rather valued because of the prize money and other royalties attached to it. Such an activity, in the words of Waghid (2001a: 13), can be done “for profit, for approval, for reward and for fame”. Reasons, as the ones which I have just explained are extrinsic and they are quite different from intrinsic ones. Waghid (2001a: 13) correctly points out that intrinsic reasons are “constitutive of performing an activity

well". By this I mean that it might have been due to his love for the game of golf and the professional skills he acquired that Tiger Woods has become a world-class champion. The extrinsic reasons such as money and fame only came afterwards. For this reason I agree with Waghid (2001a: 13) when he argues that "education cannot be adequately justified according to empirically verifiable extrinsic reasons, for such a justification of education would ignore reasons constitutive of education". Consequently Waghid (2001a: 13) argues for rational reflection and imagination as "constitutive meanings intrinsic to or in terms of which education should be justified". He posits the following:

And for the reason that outcomes alone do not necessarily accommodate rational reflection and imagination, such a notion of education would be impoverished and trapped in an instrumental (extrinsic) justification of education view (Waghid 2001a: 13).

Peters in (Waghid 2001a: 13) is of the opinion that a person who engages in an "activity of justification" such as education articulates:

... with increasing understanding and imagination, aspects of the situation in which he (she) is placed, and in pursuing various differentiated forms of inquiry he (she) will be instantiating, on a wider scale, the very values (of rational reflection) ... such as respects for facts and evidence, precision, clarity, rejection of arbitrariness, consistency, and the general determination to get to the bottom of things.

In order to "get to the bottom of things" by using one's imagination would mean that one would have to embark on a form of action whereby a person through his (her) curiosity

inquires, explores and makes complex judgments of perplexing situations through curiosity Peters (in Waghid 2001a: 13) and poses the question: "What is the purpose of it all?" An individual who is led by his (her) curiosity is one who wonders and poses questions about things he (she) explores. This implies that if one is involved in activities of an educative nature in a non-instrumental way, one should have "a sense of its connection with other things in life". In other words one should not pursue such an activity for mere material gain. Peters (in Waghid 2001a: 13) argues that "this non-instrumental pursuit of imaginative inquiry not only requires that a person stretches his own intellectual powers through rational assessment but also enjoys the experience of wonder". Following Waghid (1999: 13), one can say that "the non-instrumental justification of education view is grounded in both rational reflection (thinking through) and imagination (moving beyond)". In support of this argument, Mckernan (1993: 345) posits that:

the "means-ends" OBE stance treats knowledge as an instrument, a position that violates the epistemology of the structure of certain subjects and disciplines. Some activities or educational encounters are worth doing for reasons other than serving some instrumental purpose as a means to a predetermined outcome, aim or objective. They may be either intrinsically rewarding as in the case of understanding concepts like tragedy from a reading of Macbeth, or extrinsically worthwhile, as in the case of being able to create or solve problems as a result of inductive reasoning.

If one, therefore, treats knowledge as something that is instrumental, one dismisses an important possibility regarding knowledge: "that the justification of knowledge lies within the process itself" (Mckernan 1993: 346). This means that the learner who has been educated

in the true sense “may lead us into unexplored meanings and outcomes, into unanticipated and unpredictable directions” (Mckernan 1993: 346).

Moreover, Badat (in Kallaway *et al*, 1998: 27) argues that “the more or less exclusive concentration on the relationship of education to economic development tends to accord to education a purely instrumental role. As a result, concerns of general cultural and intellectual development are neglected. Similarly, little attention is paid to the role of education in relation to democratic institutions of the state and of civil society”.

Mckernan (1993: 344) draws a clear distinction between “training”, “instruction” and “education”. He sees training as a product, like “making a picture-frame”, and “knowing the names of states” he refers to as “instruction”. To him, however, “education” is “induction into knowledge (which) results in human understanding”. He adds, “I use induction into knowledge and understanding synonymously with “education”, for it represents initiation into culture and worthwhile episodes of learning”. One could thus refer to this as a process and therefore it is different from achieving a skill. To me, however, these “worthwhile episodes of learning” which Mckernan (1993: 344) refers to are compatible with the non-instrumental view of education. To him education is more than just the delivery of an end-product. Therefore, Mckernan (1993: 346) poses the question: “... is education about some standard packaging of outcomes as products, or is it more akin to a reflective social process?” Bruner (in Mckernan 1993: 343) was of the opinion some 30 years ago that “education is a process not a product” which supports the whole idea of education being a socially-reflexive non-instrumental process. Education, however, in terms of the Outcomes based model is perceived as a product that is the result of the “agglomeration of a series of smaller products

and then lead to the achievement of a macro product or outcome at a later stage or at a higher level” (Mckernan 1993: 346).

The point I wish to make is that these prepacked finished products deprive learners “from engaging in a rational way with outcomes. Outcomes, according to Waghid (2000: 14) are transmitted to learners who are expected to uncritically accept and apply a “stock of ready-made ideas.” In other words, education should be seen as a critical dialogue between the learner and the educator who are both constantly searching for truths in order to clarify their understanding of the solutions to the problems being raised. But more importantly is the fact that, in this critical dialogue between learner and educator, all individuals should be freely allowed to express justifiable opinions. Russell (in Zecha 1999: 44) posits that “freedom of opinion on the part of both teachers and pupils, is the most important of the various kinds of freedom, and the only one which requires no limitations whatever”. The views of Russell (in Zecha 1999: 45) on freedom in education incorporate the important idea of John Stuart Mill that “no one pretends that actions should be as free as opinion”. Needless to say, then, that when one is confronted with a learning environment in which education is presented in “some standard packaging of outcomes as products” (Mckernan 1993: 344) this “freedom of opinion” which Russell (in Zecha 1999: 44) refers to, comes under threat. Such a system of education, therefore, leaves very little room for critical inquiry. An important fact to keep in mind about the new curriculum is that it was created to allow self-empowerment and self-constitution as an active political and moral subject (Giroux & McLaren 1986: 229). Accordingly, “empowerment” used in this sense refers to the process whereby students “acquire the means to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside of their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world and the possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live.

Aronowitz (in Giroux & McLaren 1986: 229) views this one aspect of empowerment “as the process of appreciating and loving oneself”.

This kind of empowerment, following Giroux and McLaren (1986: 229) can only be gained from the kind of “knowledge and social relations that dignify one’s own history, language and cultural traditions”. However, although OBE has been identified as the vehicle that would empower learners, it does not always create the necessary space or conditions to do so. In fact, according to Mckernan (1993: 346):

The most fundamental criticism against OBE is that it reduces education, teaching and learning to forms of human engineering and scientific planning procedures – that view education as an instrumental means to specified ends. This model, which many educators find acceptable, amounts to moulding students through behaviour modification. It resembles the activity analyses of human behaviour discerned by Bobbitt 75 years ago.

Capper and Jamison (1993: 1) posit that although there do indeed seem to be facets of Outcomes-based practice which are empowering to students and teachers, much of the system continues to be lodged in a framework which aims toward structure and control. Furthermore, Waghid (1999: 265) argues that “different constructions of learning are simply different masks that conceal an underlying sameness, a singularity of purpose or function, namely prediction and control.” He says that OBE supporters are merely “translating and transporting behaviourist regulations, that is, specified outcomes into an OBE frame.”

I shall now tease out these “different masks” of OBE in more detail. The question now arises: What is the link between transformational OBE and behaviorism? Behaviourism is a philosophy which has strong psychological undercurrents. Its main focus is an external observable human behaviour. Behaviourists view human behaviour as “... overt, observable and measurable behaviour” (Brennan in Steyn & Wilkinson 1998: 203). Waghid (1999: 265) posits that “the concept of behaviourist learning is associated almost exclusively with controlling and manipulating observable human behaviour through conditioning of such behaviour”. Moreover, according to Waghid (1999: 265), “behaviourists tend to quantify behaviour, that is, learners’ work (products) are evaluated quantitatively (scientifically) and not qualitatively.”

OBE, as I have mentioned earlier, claims that all learners can succeed. This, however, implies “mastering what people other than the student deems important and performing mastered material in schools and society as they are currently structured” (Capper & Jamison 1993: 7). The following serves as an example. If a learner in OBE does not demonstrate the ability of mastery of all outcomes but shows competence in other forms of knowledge in addition to those of the lesson, he or she would not be given the necessary credit or recognition for this additional knowledge due to the fact that it (the additional knowledge) was not specified by the predetermined goals, objectives and outcomes.

Furthermore, OBE’s policy according to Capper and Jamison (1993: 8) “dictates and controls the social/educational possibilities of students in terms of what they should be like on graduation”. These predetermined outcomes re-affirm the suspicion of transformational OBE about its underlying philosophy of prediction and control. The concept of outcomes is defined in the following way: “Outcomes refer to the specification of what learners are able to do at

the end of the learning experience” (Department of Education 1997: 12). Malan (in Claasen 1998: 97) claims that “the prespecification of explicit outcomes may prevent teachers from taking advantage of those teaching and learning opportunities which may occur unexpectedly and unplanned in the classroom”. Steyn and Wilkinson (1998: 204) observe that the activity verbs in the policy document “relate to facets of observable behaviour such as *collect, identify, analyse, demonstrate, etc.*” The policy documents very seldom refer to concepts such as *wonder, aspire, visualise, reflect, meditate, imagine* etc. because according to Steyn and Wilkinson (1998: 204), concepts like these “indicate invisible and inherent learning behaviour, which behaviourism seemingly does not provide for. Therefore, behaviourism as well as the transformational OBE approach is guided by notions of prediction and control. Mckernan (1993: 346) claims that “knowledge and understanding can never be reduced to behaviours, lists of skills and observable performances. Knowledge is an open-ended inquiry, not some product or outcome to ultimately reach. To adopt the OBE stance is to trivialize knowledge, to reduce it to objective facts”. He continues by saying that:

knowledge has more in common with speculation than with mastery. To define education as a set of outcomes decided in advance of teaching and learning conflicts with the wonderful unpredictable voyages of exploration that characterize learning through discovery and inquiry. In essence, the educated or well-informed mind opens up many possibilities regarding knowledge production and therefore opens up possibilities for unique achievements and novel interpretations because knowledge is a tool to think with (Mckernan 1993: 347).

The question now arises: Does OBE create the necessary space to empower learners, thus enabling them to become critical thinkers as is currently being claimed by the Department of

Education? The new approach is described by the Department of Education (1997: 7) in the following way:

Active learners; assessment on an ongoing basis; critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action; an integration of knowledge; learning relevant and connected to real-life situations; learner-centredness; the teacher as facilitator; groupwork and teamwork; open learning programmes allowing teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes; learners responsible for their learning; emphasis on what the learner becomes and understands; flexible time-frames allowing learners to work at their own pace; comment and input from the wider community encouraged. All these components readily allow for complexity.

Proponents of the transformational OBE approach further argue that the rationale behind an Outcomes-led approach to education “is that the purpose of all serious learning is to change the learner, and that its effectiveness can only logically be measured in terms of these changes. Outcome descriptions are therefore explicit statements of achievement: What someone can do, know or understand as a result of a piece of formal or informal learning is something possible now that was not possible before” (McNair in Burke 1995: 219).

Having said this, my aim is now to investigate whether OBE’s implicit claim as a force to engender social change (more specifically educational equity) is justifiable. I start by giving a brief analyses of the critical theoretical paradigm as expounded by Capper and Jamison (1993). According to them, “critical theory’s hallmark is its unyielding drive to emancipate oppressed and disenfranchised populations. Towards that end critical theory relies on rational logical and reasonable thinking and discourse to help oppressed groups recognise, understand

and act against the objects of their oppression” (Capper & Jamison 1993: 4-5). However, they pose the important question: Does OBE have an orientation toward creating greater social equality and greater educational equity for students who have typically been discriminated against? Or does OBE simply present a repackaging of the same limiting educational opportunities that have been allowed for students in the minority for many years? Viewed against this backdrop they offer little hope for OBE to bring about true social transformation. Capper and Jamison (1993: 7) argue that there is very little evidence to support this lofty claim by transformational OBE proponents other than “tighter control of methods used to instruct those students”. Furthermore, the mere claim to have concern and empathy for those members of society who occupy subordinate positions as evidence for their desire to create the necessary climate that would enhance the kind of social transformation which would enable all learners to learn and succeed does not merit OBE’s claim as a strategy of reform. To my mind therefore, OBE does not represent a true embodiment of a sound approach to social transformation.

5.5 CAN TRANSFORMATIONAL OBE EFFECT MEANINGFUL CHANGE?

In my discussion thus far I have focused my attention on the OBE approach in general. I will now focus specifically on OBE’s transformational approach and give reasons why using this approach would be difficult to effect meaningful change.

Transformational OBE in South Africa, according to Monteith and Weldon (1999: 66), “has both constructivist and positivistic elements”. Furthermore, they argue that,

(t)he intended curriculum (and its rhetoric) foregrounds a competence mode, but in practice they are strong performance features. The performance aspects (having to

“cover” outcomes and assessment criteria and not being able to deviate from phase organizers for example) conflict with the competence dimensions which emphasise the active role of the learner in constructing meaning and practice for themselves in their own way and in their own time (Monteith & Weldon 1999: 66).

Put differently, the process of rational reflection is being undermined by the proposed OBE curriculum. Rational reflection, in the words of Peters (in Waghid 2001a: 13), refers to “a capacity to ask why, to develop grounds for one’s thoughts, and to give reasons which count for or against points of view in a logical and systematic manner”. What this implies is that although the curriculum is deemed to be a new vision it is still trapped in habits of the old. Moreover, a transformational OBE approach should allow for greater flexibility when addressing issues around knowledge construction. Justifiable education depends on inquiry and it is impossible to predict and control the ends of such inquiry. It is for this reason that Monteith and Weldon (1999: 66) argue that “the existence of 2005, which is a national curriculum, and that has to be implemented as policy, is at variance with transformational OBE. Even creating common approaches and structures in generic sessions of educator training and using textbooks is essentially in conflict with this form of OBE”.

Moreover, transformational OBE does not deem knowledge as an important factor, but instead “focuses on role performances which fulfill the needs of society” (Monteith & Weldon 1999: 67). In other words transformational OBE, via the exit outcomes, concerns itself with the ability of learners to function optimally in life-roles beyond formal schooling. Malcolm (1999) points out that transformational OBE fails to see the importance of knowledge. Put differently, transformational OBE creates the opportunity for policy-makers to disregard the burning issue in the South African transitional context, namely, what is the

purpose of education. In other words, transformational OBE fails to deal with the immediate issues pertaining to education in schools.

In essence, integration which is the focal point of transformational OBE in South Africa has given rise to many contentious issues in this respect. Following Monteith and Weldon (1999: 67) the Department of Education's policy documents released in October 1997 talk about integration. The complex process of integration is educationally flawed in that it places limited emphasis on knowledge production. In fact Glatthorn (1993: 360) argues that "this transformational approach is not necessarily effective or inherently superior to subject-centred approaches". Brophy and Alleman (in Glatthorn 1993: 360) share their sentiments when they note that "curriculum integration is a means, not an end". More evidence is coming to the fore which supports the idea that in-depth knowledge is crucial when one deals with matters pertaining to problem-solving. According to Glatthorn (1993: 361) "such in-depth knowledge would seem difficult to achieve in 'transformational' units that deal with broad and complex multi-disciplinary issues". Furthermore, Monteith and Weldon (1999: 69) posit that research in the UK in the 1980s found that for any integration to work educators must have a sound conceptual grasp of the subjects being integrated. However, as I have pointed out earlier, the formulated curriculum specifies something else and, therefore, many of the resources being published give clear indication of a structural breakdown.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion of this chapter I want to state that the above arguments are attempts to prove that transformational OBE does not necessarily have the ability to engender meaningful change. On the basis of this, I now wish to argue that OBE cannot be considered as a paradigm shift in Kuhn's scheme. Kuhn (in Arjun 1998: 22) sees a scientific revolution as

“those non-cumulative developmental episodes in which the older paradigm is replaced in whole or in part by an incompatible new one”. The scientific revolution referred to here is normally accompanied by a “paradigmatic crises” (Argun 1998: 22) which comes about due to the inability of the dominant paradigm to “offer a satisfactory explanation for any inadequacy or anomaly in the problems and solutions offered” (Argun 1998: 22). Kuhn (in Argun 1998: 22) sees the purpose of a crisis as to “signal the need for innovation, to direct the attention of social scientists towards the area from which fruitful innovation may arise, and evoke clues to the nature of that innovation”. A new paradigm can, therefore, only gain supremacy if it has the ability to “offer a plausible explanation for the anomaly and has a greater ability to solve problems” (Argun 1998: 22). This implies that a paradigm shift, according to Kuhn’s scheme, would come about as a result of deeper, more meaningful change in terms of people’s beliefs and world view, the result being that people will view the world in a different way, “with a consequent change in the mode of knowledge production” (Argun 1998: 22).

Proponents of the new OBE curriculum base their arguments on the fact that the radical shift in curriculum construction lies with OBE’s focus on outcomes rather than inputs. Argun (1998) argues that OBE’s preoccupation with outcomes is no different from Tyler’s means-end paradigm. Argun (1998: 25) posits that “the sequential model illustrates precisely the same thing – aims, goals, objectives (and outcomes) are selected before the content.”

Schwartz and Cavener (in Malcolm 1999: 109) offer a similar explanation:

In short, contrary to OBE advocates’ claim that OBE is a radical reform effort, a true paradigm shift, it seems that OBE is not radical enough. To view schools as complex,

living systems affected by larger social and economic forces rather than as simple mechanisms easily overhauled would be radical. To shift power relationships and approach reform dramatically would be radical. To adopt a new and consistent philosophy of learning would be radical ... (Such radical reform) might require that educators put less faith in exact procedures, practices and lists of operating principles and more faith in the unique potential of learners, teachers and human communities.

In essence, the new transformational OBE approach in our schools continues to display the technocratic characteristic of the old. As I have shown earlier, there seems to be no clear indication on the side of the new curriculum that meaningful change has taken place in our schools. The new curriculum continues to be trapped in its tendency to exercise "power and control over the new environment" (Waghid 1999: 267).

In the following chapter I attempt to investigate how notions of rationality and imagination can perhaps complement predetermined outcomes in a system of OBE in order to engender meaningful change in education.

CHAPTER 6

AN OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH COMPLEMENTED BY RATIONALITY AND IMAGINATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I have given an overview of the White Paper on Education and Training (1997) and throughout the previous chapters I have also alluded to the fact that government's emphasis on the role that education plays in relation to economic growth, bears testimony to the influence of globalisation. In terms of the White Paper on Education and Training (1997), education should be seen as an: "Element in national economic reconstruction and development ... in order to provide the basis for employment, growth, to raise worker's level of general education and skill to support the introduction of more advanced technologies, to overcome the inheritance of racial and gender stratification in the workforce and to achieve effective worker participation in decision-making and quality improvement" (Greenstein 1995: 200).

These goals, however, are in contrast with other concerns such as the development of democratic awareness and critical consciousness. According to Greenstein (1995: 200) there seem to be concerns about "productivity, economic growth, technological advancement and orderly development" throughout the White Paper on Education and Training (1997). Greenstein (1995: 201) adds that the above-mentioned concerns are being discussed within a technocratic discourse that puts greater emphasis "on tangible outcomes than on the legitimacy of decision-making procedures ...".

No wonder that the new Curriculum, which I have referred to in chapter 4, is often seen as being “retrogressive and in a certain sense even more technicist and mechanistic than the previous Curricula” (Meerkotter in Morrow & King 1998: 57). When one considers the thoughts of Thurow (in Kaku 1998) in a book called *Visions: How Science will Revolutionise the Twenty-First Century*, it is not difficult to see why the new curriculum has such a strong technicist approach. Thurow (in Kaku 1998: 129) posits:

Technology and ideology are shaking the foundations of twenty-first century capitalism. Technology is making skills and knowledge the only sources of sustainable strategic advantage. Abetted by the electronic media ideology is moving toward a radical form of short run individual consumption maximization at precisely a time when economic success will depend upon the willingness and ability to make long-run individual social investments in skills, education, knowledge and infrastructure.

Moreover the government’s position with regard to this view is succinctly captured by Dick (2001: 40) who argues in the following way:

The vocabulary of OBE reflects a shift to ‘market speak’ – the language of neo-liberalism and GEAR. This means that we now speak about transformation more in terms of the market than in terms of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). So, for example, words and phrases such as ‘international competitiveness’, ‘fiscal discipline’, ‘budget deficit’, ‘foreign direct investment’, ‘economic growth’, ‘investor friendly’, ‘deregulation’, ‘privatisation’ and so forth have replaced the more

familiar 'basic needs', 'social spending', 'equity', 'key performance indicators', 'monitoring progress', 'targets' and 'deadlines'.

The conclusion is that this technocratic OBE discourse has deeply influenced current debates around the formulation of policy in education in South Africa. My concern now is to establish to what extent the technicist approach of OBE has influenced the development of critical consciousness and democratic awareness in the practice of teaching and learning in our schools.

6.2 IN DEFENCE OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Firstly, I need to explain what critical consciousness entails. Brookfield in (Marsick & Watkins 1990: 81) argues that critical thinking variously emphasise logical reasoning, judgement reflection, the making of meaning, emancipation from socio-cultural forces that shape one's self-image and actions, or dialectical thinking. Brookfield (in Marsick & Watkins 1990: 81) then defines critical consciousness in terms of the following components: identifying and challenging the importance of context, imaging and exploring alternatives and reflective skepticism. For this reason Morrow (1989) sees a strong connection between an understanding of education and an understanding of critical consciousness. He sees the connection as being correlative; "if you don't know what critical consciousness is then you don't know what education is" (Morrow 1989: 152). In a different way real education enables its learners to think critically and to be imaginative. The more popular version of this theory in the South African context is to be found in the notion of "People's Education" in the 1980s. A central feature of this educative process is the notion of praxis which refers to "the dialectical unity of theory and practice, reflection and action" (Macleod 1995: 70). By using dialogue and praxis the learner will experience a process of "conscientisation", in

other words the learner will develop a “critical consciousness”. In this regard Macleod (1995: 71) posits the following:

This critical consciousness comprehends the dialectical relationship between humans and the world, and is able to rid itself of the consciousness that “houses” the oppressor.

In short, praxis as a form of human action, thus creates space for rationality and being rational therefore engenders critical consciousness. Morrow (1989: 153) posits that critical consciousness is an activity of some sort of which only people can conceive of guise the aspect of rationality.

This brings me to a discussion of praxis as an activity of critical consciousness. Carr (1995) identifies two forms of human action – praxis and poiesis. Poiesis, he argues, can only be rendered in English by our much less precise notions of “doing something and making something” (Carr 1995: 68). Poiesis which refers to “making action” – is action whose end is directed at bringing about a specific product or end result. Carr (1995: 68) argues that:

because the end of poiesis is an object which is known prior to action, it is guided by a form of knowledge which Aristotle called *techne* – what we would now call technical knowledge or expertise.

Poiesis is thus guided by rule following action. Weber (in Carr 1995) refers to this as “purposive-rational” action, better known as instrumental action.

However, although praxis is also driven by the achievement of some means-end, it differs from poiesis in a considerable way. Firstly, praxis does not have as its main aim a desire to produce an object or artifact, instead, its whole purpose is directed towards the realisation of something which is a “morally worthwhile good” (Carr 1995: 68). Carr (1995: 69) continues that “practice (praxis) is not a neutral instrument by means of which this “good” can be produced. This “good” for the sake of which a praxis is pursued cannot be “made”, it can only be “done”. “Practice” is a form of “doing action” precisely because its end can only be realised through action and can only exist in the action itself. In other words it is more of a “practical science” which seeks to guide us on how to promote the good through action which is morally correct. Moreover, praxis should not be seen as a form of technical expertise with an aim to reach an externally related end and neither can one specify these ends in advance of engaging in some sort of practice. In this regard Carr (1995: 68) posits the following:

Indeed, praxis is different from poiesis precisely because discernment of the “good” which constitutes its end is inseparable from a discernment of its mode of expression. Praxis is thus what we would call morally informed or morally committed action.

Within the Aristotelian tradition praxis included all ethical and political activities which also included all educational practices. Unlike poiesis, the ends of praxis are “neither immutable nor fixed, instead they are constantly revised as the “goods” intrinsic to practice are progressively pursued” Carr (1995: 68). What this implies is that while the possibility and desire always exist to theoretically specify what the ends of poiesis should be, the possibilities to determine the ends in praxis do not exist. For this reason Carr (1995: 68) posits that:

To practice is thus never a matter of individuals accepting and implementing some rational account of what the “aims” (or outcomes) of their practice should be. It is always a matter of being initiated into the knowledge, understandings and beliefs bequeathed by that tradition through which the practice has been conveyed to us in its present shape.

This implies that knowledge made available to learners cannot be mechanically or passively reproduced. Instead, critical thinking (consciousness) should create the opportunity for learners to be able to interpret and revise the learning material by means of dialogue and discussion about how to pursue practical goods. This implies that learners should be given ample opportunity for action and reflection in a balanced way. Brookfield (45) succinctly puts it as follows:

Learners intuitively sense that reflection and action need to be balanced for them to make the most of an educational event, and when the reflective component is neglected so drastically they experience a marked dimension of the richness of the event.

For this reason Giroux (1988: 174) argues for a kind of teacher education that would turn them into “transformative intellectuals”. Teachers who assume this role need to view students as “critical agents, question how knowledge is produced and distributed, utilise dialogue and make knowledge meaningful, critical and ultimately emancipatory” (Giroux 1988: 178). Instead of creating the necessary space for the development of critical

understanding, OBE emphasises “standardisation, competency and narrowly defined performance skills” (Giroux 1988: 179).

Unlike OBE outcomes (albeit transformational), the notion of “good” in practice does not represent a fixed terminal end point. Rather, what it specifies “are those modes of ethical conduct which constitute the appropriate means of pursuing this end” (Carr 1995:70). According to Carr (1995: 70) “means” are thus nothing other than concrete ways of specifying how the notion of the “good” is being understood, just as an understanding of the “good” is nothing other than an abstract way of specifying the particular means by which it is to be enacted and realised.

Since the ends of praxis always remain fluid – that is, that the ends cannot be fixed in advance – it always needs a form of reasoning in which key elements such as choice, practical judgment and deliberation become inadmissible, hence practical reasoning. Practitioners rely on this form of reasoning when they are faced with competing or conflicting moral ideals such as whether it would be more desirable to educate one’s kids at home or to send them to be educated in a public school. In other words a person might be aware of the outcome of such a dilemma between his real inclinations and the opinions of others; he suffers from the conflict between doing what really matters to him and that which will win public approval. Such forms of reasoning do not, according to Carr (1995), rely on technical calculation in order to determine the appropriate answer. For this reason Carr (1995: 70) comes to the conclusion that practical reasoning is not a method for determining *how* to do something, but for deciding what *ought* to be done. For Aristotle, this form of reasoning distinguishes itself from technical forms of reasoning in that it involves “proceedings in a measured or deliberative fashion” (Carr 1995: 70). The main aim behind

technical reasoning according to Carr (1995), is to consider the most appropriate form of action as a means to satisfy a specific end – as for example when a teacher has to make a decision between showing learners a video of the Second World War or sending learners to the Internet to gather information about the Second World War in an attempt to teach the destruction of the Second World War solely on the basis of finding the most effective way of reaching a specific outcome.

In a different way, one cannot resolve technical issues, for which there exist in principle some correct answer, by means of deliberation. It (deliberation) is rather a way of resolving those moral dilemmas which occur when different ethical desirable ends entail different, and perhaps incompatible, courses of action. The overall purpose of practical reasoning, is thus to make a decision when faced with competing or conflicting moral ideals.

The point of my argument is because of OBE's technicist approach with its fixed outcomes, it serves as a fine example of Weber's (in Carr 1995: 68) "purposive rational" action referred to as instrumental action. As mentioned before, knowledge is instrumental in nature when its aim is "to serve a purpose external to itself" (Jeevanantham 1999: 32). In a similar way Morrow (1989) argues that a crucial characteristic of any child's play is that it is non-instrumental. This implies that children do not use play as a means to some external end. In a different way, it means that they play not because they have been told to do so with the hope of achieving some goal extrinsic to what they are doing, but simply because this is what they feel like doing. Put simply, any human activity can be conceived in terms of means or ends, which implies that our activities can be seen as instrumental to some extrinsic end or goal or it could be valuable in itself. In a similar way the purpose of OBE is to reach a fixed set of outcomes.

Here, Dewey's (1966: 103) thoughts seem quite relevant:

... (T)he more numerous the recognised possibilities of the situation, or alternatives of action, the more meaning does the chosen activity possess ... Where only a single outcome has been thought of, the mind has nothing else to think of, the meaning attaching to the act is limited. One only steams ahead toward the mark.

This point is also echoed by Waghid (2001: 13) who states the following:

Rational reflection and imagination are constitutive meanings intrinsic to or in terms of which education should be justified. And, for the reason that outcomes alone do not necessarily accommodate rational reflection and imagination such a notion of education would be impoverished and trapped in an instrumental (extrinsic) justification of education.

Moreover, Morrow makes a similar point as follows:

It is a cliché – but a cliché with immense importance for education – that we live in a consumer society. What this means is that we are under continual pressure to conceive of ourselves, our activities and our very lives in instrumental terms. Coupled as it is with a utilitarian ethos, inclines us to conceive of all our activities as if they were means to the achievement of pleasures extrinsic to them rather than as themselves pleasures which cannot be justified in other terms.

The question arises: What makes praxis so distinctly important for a non-instrumentalist form of education? Praxis is a form of reflexive action which can itself transform the theory which guides it. Carr (1995) argues that poesis is a form of non-reflexive “know-how” precisely because it does not itself change its guiding *techne*. But more importantly is the fact that neither theory nor practice is pre-eminent: each is continuously being modified and revised by the other (Carr 1995: 73). For this reason an educational practice, in Carr’s (1995: 73) terms,

Cannot be made intelligible as a form of poesis guided by fixed ends and governed by determinate rules. It can only be made intelligible as a form of praxis guided by ethical criteria which serve to distinguish genuine educational practices from those that are not, and good educational practice from that which is indifferent or bad. While some people now want to reduce educational practice to a kind of ‘making action’ through which some raw material can be molded into a pre-specifiable shape, educational practitioners continue to experience it as a species of “doing action” governed by complex and sometimes competing ethical ends which by themselves be modified in the light of practical circumstances and particular conditions. It is in these terms that many educational practitioners understand their work. And it is in terms provided by the concepts and language of praxis that many of them would want to define and defend the essential features of their educational and professional role.

In a similar way, transformational OBE, because of its instrumentalist focus, fails to create the sufficient space that would enable policy practitioners to deal with the central question in the South African transition, namely, what is the purpose of education? The answer to this question I have attempted to provide by looking at Carr’s (1995) classic concept of praxis in the modern world.

The point is that praxis creates the necessary space for rational reflexive action which in turn allows one to be imaginative. In support of this view, Waghid (2001: 11) argues that “learners may be emancipated if they engage rationally, reflectively and imaginatively in educational discourse”. It is with such an understanding of emancipation that I now wish to discuss the importance of imagination in a critical educational discourse as an antithesis to a dominant OBE programme.

6.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IMAGINATIVE

Dewey (1966: 236) posits that only a personal response involving imagination can possibly procure realisation even of pure “facts”. The imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field. The engagement of the imagination is the only thing that makes any activity more than mechanical. (Passmore 1998: 238) makes the following subtle point:

Imagination, as such, has no boundaries, or more accurately its boundaries are set only by the fact it has to have some, however remote, connection with our prior experience.

However, very often the imaginative is often confused with the imaginary and this gives rise to “an exaggerated estimate of fairy tales, myths, fanciful symbols, verse and something labeled Fine Art, as agencies for developing imagination and appreciation and by neglecting imaginative vision in other matters, leads to methods which reduce much instruction to an imaginative acquiring of specialised skill and amassing a load of information” (Dewey 1966: 236). Moreover, it (imagination) is often associated with a childlike activity such as play. Again Dewey (1966: 236) posits the following:

And to overlook the fact that the difference between play and what is regarded as serious employment should be not a difference between the presence and absence of imagination, but a difference in the materials with which imagination is occupied. The result is an unwholesome exaggeration of the fantastic and “unreal” phases of childish play and a deadly reduction of serious occupation to a routine efficiency prized simply for its external tangible results.

A case in point is OBE’s preoccupation with achieving its external tangible results, namely, outcomes at the expense of imagination. In a different way it is a technicist response to pressures of the marketplace which guides exit outcomes. The consequence is that achievement becomes a well planned mechanical effort and the main idea of education, which is to achieve a life rich in significance, falls by the wayside. For this reason Dewey (1966: 236) notes the following:

An adequate recognition of the play of imagination as the medium of realisation of every kind of thing which lies beyond the scope of direct physical response is the sole way of escape from mechanical methods of teaching. In other words imagination should become as much an integral part of our daily activity as our muscular movements are.

Furthermore, I want to argue that an integral part of imagination is curiosity. In other words, if one is imaginative one would more likely be curious and for this reason Bruner (in Jarvis 1996: 86) maintains that “instruction should facilitate and regulate the exploration of alternative and a major condition for undertaking this curiosity is aroused in adults, as well

as in children, when their interpretation of their socio-cultural environment no longer provides them with relevant knowledge to cope with the present experiences”.

To be curious means to wonder why, and therefore, one can use one’s curiosity as a means of becoming more imaginative. However, Passmore (1998: 240) says that fancy can be destroyed only by rigorously confirming the child’s education to dogmatically presented facts, habit-formation closed capacities. In essence, it is important for us as educationists to guard against a system of education in which nothing is deemed as being more important than getting learners to be good at what they are being told to do, in other words, getting them into a system of conformity which leaves little or no space for instances of rationality and imagination.

Moreover, Peters (in Aspin 1995: 35) supports the idea of “rationality as a precondition of, and a requirement for democratic standing and operation”. He maintains the following:

In a democratic state the public and supposedly rational character of its institutions necessarily commits its citizens to establish and willingly participate in their political arrangements by recourse to rational procedures in which the fundamental principles of morality are implicit. (Peters in Aspin 1995: 35)

In a similar manner, rationality, according to Peters (in Aspin 1995: 35), forms an integral part of democracy. In this regard Morrow (1989: 99) makes a similar claim when he states that “rationality is not a product of natural growth, like a plant, but neither is it the product of the imposition of a dogma from outside. It develops gradually in an interpersonal context.

And autonomy is a central characteristic of rationality. To be rational is to be free of dependence on any doctrine dogma or tradition”.

Put differently, it means that a necessary condition for rationality is autonomy. But more important is the fact that rationality and autonomy are viewed as the basic preconditions of democratic rights and the freedom to vote. Therefore, if one wants to act in a rational way one has to be autonomous. For this reason Dewey (in Aspin 1995: 39) maintains that the aim of truly educational processes is to reach a kind of autonomy. I shall now expound on this notion of autonomy in further detail. In this way I hope to show how OBE seems to fail to instill autonomy in learners.

6.4 AUTONOMY

Autonomy is viewed as a necessary condition for liberty, hence, I shall firstly establish the link between rationality and liberalism. Almond (in Zecha 1999: 30) states that first among the intellectual values of liberalism is the ideal of rationality and as a presupposition of all argument and discourse, rationality needs no separate justification. However, once rationality is accepted as an endorsable value it carries with it “acceptance of the supporting ideal of impartiality for, from the standpoint of reason, the source or author of an argument is irrelevant to its truth or falsity” (Almond in Zecha 1999: 30). This implies that the person who says something is not important but rather what is being said - the idea being, rather to respond to the argument than the person. It is often being referred to as impersonality of judgement, which “constitutes a principle of impartiality implicit within the rational ideal” (Almond in Zecha 1999: 30). The notion of rationality as an indispensable precondition of, and a requirement for any democratic practice is reinforced by Peters (in Aspin 1995) when he argues that in a democracy the public and supposedly rational character of its institutions

necessarily commits its citizens to establish and willingly participate in their political arrangements by recourse to rational procedures in which “the fundamental principles of morality” are implicit. As mentioned in chapter 5, Peters (in Aspin 1995) is of the opinion that in a democratic state we settle our differences on important issues of principle policy and practice by appealing to rational procedures, in which reason-giving has a public character. In other words, the justification of democracy now becomes synonymous with the justification of morality. However, this ideal can only be realised when the “appropriate levels of rational autonomy, knowledge and benevolence have been reached” (Aspin in Chapman, Frouman & Aspin 1995: 6). Furthermore, democratic values *per se* become worthless if the individual is not afforded an opportunity to exercise them, that is, the opportunity to exercise his (her) individual freedom. For this reason Aspin (in Chapman, Frouman & Aspin 1995) argues that individual freedom is the value to be most sought in any educational process, and therefore it should be regarded as a necessary condition for achieving a sense of, and appreciation for democratic values. It is my contention that transformational OBE with its emphasis on the instrumental justification of outcomes seems to ignore the empowering role of autonomous learners. One of the main aims of education, after all, is to allow learners an opportunity to engage with knowledge in a creative and imaginative way, but in order to use knowledge in this way, learners should be free from any impediments that would constrain such an educational activity. In this way, the tendency to define specific outcomes or behaviours in advance that would result from an educational process impedes the autonomy of learners.

Moreover, an education programme which claims to be democratic cannot support educational reforms which promotes the language and values of a globalised economy and treat education as though it was a commodity to be purchased and consumed. On the

contrary, the driving force behind a democratic form of education is rather to create an informed autonomous citizenry who are willing and able to deliberate rationally about theories and practices which inform a democratic way of life, thus enabling them to exercise their collective choice as independent members within a democratic society. Following Spinoza (in Peters 1966: 181), there is nothing more useful to man than other rational men; for it is by conversing with other men that we increase our understanding of the universe. Furthermore, Dewey (in Carr & Hartnett 1996: 185) rightfully points out that individual freedom has no meaning unless those individuals are afforded an opportunity to control, challenge and change their existing living conditions.

In this sense, education ought to be seen as a critical dialogue between educator and learner in which participants should be allowed the opportunity to express their opinions openly and freely. However, a reasonable view of education recognises that freedom in this sense does not imply freedom without constraints, but freedom of opinion should not be constrained in any way. For this reason Russell (in Zecha 1999: 44), views this kind of freedom, on the side of both educators and learners, as the most important kind amongst all other forms of freedom, and the only one which requires no limitations whatever.

It is with such an understanding of freedom that I now wish to discuss the notion of liberty. I draw on the ideas of Berlin who distinguishes between two forms of liberty, that is, negative liberty and positive liberty.

6.4.1 Negative Liberty

Freedom in the negative sense refers to “the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity” (Berlin 1969: 7). Negative liberty in a negative sense therefore refers to the area

in which any person can do what he (she) wants to do. However, if I am prevented by the actions of others to do what I want to do then I am to that degree an unfree being. If my area of freedom “is contracted by other men (woman) beyond a certain minimum” (Berlin 1969: 7), I can describe myself as one who has been coerced. Berlin (1969: 7) argues that to coerce someone is to take his (her) freedom. He posits the following:

Coercion implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the area in which I wish to act. You lack political liberty or freedom only if you are prevented from attaining your goal by human beings. Mere incapacity to attain your goal is not lack of political freedom.

Taylor (1985: 213) is of the opinion that the negative theories have a tendency to describe freedom in terms of “individual independence from others” in other words, it is “concerned with the area in which the subject should be left without interference”. This implies that there should be no obstacle in my way that would threaten my freedom as a person.

Following Taylor (1985: 213), it is a sufficient condition of one’s being free that nothing stands in one’s way. The basic institution here according to Taylor (1985: 214), is that freedom is a matter of being able to do something or other, of not having obstacles in one’s way, rather than being a capacity that we have to realise. The meaning of this is to be allowed the opportunity to do what one wants to in the sense that “what you want to” is understood in an unproblematic way identifiable as one’s desires. This kind of freedom to me borders on a kind of (non)rationality in the sense that one is able to do entirely as one pleases without having any constraints.

This brings me to the whole idea of negative liberty in relation to OBE. Proponents of negative liberty, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, see freedom in terms of “not having any obstacles in one’s way” (Taylor 1985: 214). OBE, being what it is, namely a “means-ends” model of curriculum planning, would be out of synch with this kind of freedom in that it creates obstacles by having “intended goals and outcomes”. However, liberty in the negative sense is a radical form of freedom and leaves little room for accountability and, for this reason, I contend that it would most certainly be a difficult task to find a system of education in synch with the ideals and aspirations of this kind of freedom. What this implies is that in any system of education (even in liberal democracies) both learners and educators remain accountable for their actions to parents and to the state (or whoever the provider of education might be). The point I wish to make is that to have a system of education which is compatible with the ideas of negative liberty is too idealistic to say the least and borders on anarchy.

The second kind of freedom which Berlin refers to is the notion of positive liberty.

6.4.2 Positive Liberty

Liberty in the positive sense means to be one’s own master. This implies that the decisions concerning my life would depend on myself and not on that of other external forces. Berlin (1969: 16) posits the following:

I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men’s (women’s), acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons by conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside.

What the above implies is that the individual can only regard himself (herself) as a free person if such a person has an opportunity to plan his (her) life in accordance with his (her) own will. However, plans incorporate rules. Berlin (1969) argues that a rule does not enslave or oppress the individual if and when it is self-imposed and fully understood by that individual. More importantly though, as Berlin (1969) rightfully points out, is the fact that these self imposed rules should be of a rational kind, which means that they should conform to the necessities of things. “To want necessary laws to be other than they are is to be prey to an irrational desire - a desire that what must be X should also be not X” Berlin 1969: 29). To him this is the metaphysical heart of rationalism. To me this highlights the great barrier which exists between positive liberty and negative liberty. The notion of negative liberty interprets freedom as a vacuum in which the individual can do whatever he (she) wants to do and whenever he (she) wants to do it. The notion of positive liberty on the other hand, is a self-directed and self-controlled form of freedom. Berlin (1969: 29) sees positive liberty in the following way:

I can do what I will with my own. I am a rational being; whatever I can demonstrate to myself as being necessary, as incapable of being otherwise in a rational society - that is in a society directed by rational minds, towards goals such as a rational being would have I cannot, being rational, wish to sweep out of my way.

Berlin (1969) concludes that this is the positive doctrine of liberation by reason. The question now arises: Where does positive liberty stand in relation to OBE?

Spady describes OBE in the following way:

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) means organising for results: basing what we do instructionally on the outcomes we want to achieve ... Outcome-based practitioners start by determining the knowledge, competences, and qualities they want students to be able to demonstrate when they finish school and face the challenges and opportunities of the adult world ... OBE, therefore, is not a “program” but a way of designing, delivering, and documenting instruction in terms of its intended goals and outcomes.

To have a fixed set of goals and outcomes, decided in advance, impedes the ability of the learner and educator to embark on the “wonderful, unpredictable voyage(s) of exploration that characterise learning through discovery and inquiry” (McKernan 1993: 345). In this way, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, OBE has a negative impact on the freedom of learners and educators because it (OBE) does not give the necessary freedom to its learners and educators to become imaginative. OBE reduces education to episodes of human engineering “procedures that view education as an instrumental means to specified ends” (McKernan 1993: 346). Moreover, it (OBE) expects all learners to demonstrate similar outcomes and behaviors at the end of the programme. In this way OBE has a tendency to indoctrinate and to become manipulative. For this reason Berlin (1969: 22-23) sees these tendencies as being in conflict with the notion of positive liberty when he argues the following:

All forms of tampering with human beings, getting at them, shaping them against their will to your own pattern, all thought control and conditioning, is, therefore, a denial of that in men (women) which makes them men (women) and their values ultimate.

In essence, liberty in the positive sense requires human beings to act autonomously; “but as authors of values, of ends in themselves, the ultimate authority of which consists precisely in the fact that they are willed freely” (Berlin 1969: 21).

Therefore, I contend that the aims and objectives of OBE are out of synch with the ideals of positive liberty because it (OBE) seemingly (as I have argued for) does not adhere to the principles and practices of rationality and autonomy.

Finally, positive liberty accentuates the fact that it is the individual’s reasoning power that distinguishes him (her) from the rest of the world. It is with such an understanding of reasoning that I now wish to discuss the notion of rationality. In this way I hope to argue as to why rationality needs to complement an OBE curriculum framework in order to ensure that transformation could be enhanced in schools.

6.5 RATIONALITY

Following Gutman (1998: 31), rationality informs liberty of what is necessary to live well in a morally good society; it does not simply serve as a means of satisfying individual desires. The moral foundations of democratic deliberation “are the principles of equality, justice, tolerance, respect for others, and personal freedom” (Chapman Frouman & Aspin 1995: 7). Gutman (1998) argues that the liberal virtue of toleration is a necessary but not sufficient condition for living well in a society where people tend to differ in their moral convictions. Furthermore, she argues, that in a good society the democratic virtue of mutual respect for reasonable differences of opinion should be taught. Gutman (1998: 31) posits the following:

Mutual respect demands more than the attitude to live and let live; it requires willingness and ability to accord due intellectual and moral regard to reasonable points of view that we cannot ourselves accept as correct. In the political realm, toleration is a precondition for a peaceful competition and pragmatic compromise; mutual respect is a precondition for democratic deliberation and moral compromise.

For this reason Gutman (1998) claims that education in both virtues supports rational liberty in a liberal democracy.

For Plato and Aristotle reason is a condition of knowing. Plato (in Taylor 1985: 137) states in the *Republic* “to have real knowledge (*episteme*) is to be able to give an account of it (*logon didonai*)”. This seems to indicate to having the ability to articulate clearly what the state of affairs are. Taylor (1985: 137), therefore, comes to the conclusion that “rational understanding is linked to articulation”. According to him, this implies that “we have a rational grasp of something when we can *articulate* it, that means, distinguish and lay out the different features of the matter in perspicuous order”.

“Perspicuous order” for Taylor means being able to express something in a clear manner without any inconsistencies. Indeed Taylor (1985: 137) argues that “consistency” should be a clear criterion for being rational. He posits that consistency is (like autonomy) plainly a necessary condition for rationality. In a different way, to be inconsistent means to be irrational. Having discussed the two necessary preconditions for rationality I now wish to examine to what extent OBE shows consistency with the aims of rationality. And, hence, the emancipatory interests of critical theory, the latter also accentuates rationality.

OBE presents itself as a radical departure from the current educational paradigm (Capper & Jamison 1993: 4). Therefore it lays claim to the fact that it has the ability to free learners “from the shackles of the oppressive and ineffective system”. In a different way “it positions itself as a means of emancipating students and teachers from traditional practices which lead to educational inequity”.

Similarly critical theory seeks to bring about social change. Capper (in Capper & Jamison 1993: 4) posits the following:

Critical theory embraces a concern for suffering and oppression, a critical view of education, leadership orientated toward empowerment and transformation, an emphasis on morals, values, rationality, and a reliance on the intellect.

In other words, critical theory has an urge to emancipate those who are oppressed and disenfranchised. For this reason it (critical theory) relies on a system of thinking and discourse which is logical, rational and reasonable in order to assist the disempowered to recognise, understand and act against their subordinate positions in society.

Although OBE, as I have shown, makes claims along similar lines, it has been branded as simply being a repackaged version of the previous curriculum which was bent on manipulation and control. Put differently, OBE, which is grounded in a positivist, behaviourist philosophy has an orientation towards “predictability, uniformity and certainty” (Schwartz & Cavener 1994: 5). According to them, schools are in control of the conditions for success, and the success of learners become the responsibility of the educator. Moreover, OBE language is one of “instrumental rationality” often branded as an “elitist language”

which demands an extensive in-service training programme (Schwartz & Cavener 1994: 6). Indeed Schwartz and Cavener (1994: 6) argue that: OBE language, which uses such terms as corrective loop, instructional delivery, rubrics and curriculum alignment, is a language of machinery and control. Dobson *et al* (in Schwartz & Cavener 1994: 6) continue in a similar fashion when they argue that the goal (of OBE) is to create knowledge that can be used to predict and control both natural and human phenomena”.

Furthermore, students remain powerless through the processes employed in a system of OBE in that they come from various socio-economic backgrounds, experiences as well as varying degree of interests. Despite these realities decisions are made on behalf of learners by “select” adults who deem it their right to decide what all learners should know in order to become good workers or citizens. In a different way “OBE implies a mandated set of outcomes applied to all students regardless of their needs, personal status and interests” (Capper & Jamison 93: 8). Those who have the greatest influence are the policy-makers, education consultants, curriculum planners, etc. while the target groups (learners, educators and parents) are not included in the construction process of the curriculum. Their inclusion is important because they (learners, educators and parents) are the biggest consumers of this product and for this reason I feel that their rich experiences should be taken into account. Furthermore, I want to add that any democratic society should allow its members to collectively discuss relevant issues which have a direct influence on their lives, and for this reason, any democratic vision of education should enhance opportunities for wide public deliberation in which educational policies and proposals can be scrutinized through a process of critical dialogue. Furthermore, if such participatory opportunities are to be created participants might become less reluctant to take ownership of the reform process.

Moreover, Capper and Jamison (1993: 8) claim that: “OBE policy dictates and controls the social educational possibilities of students in terms of what they should be like on graduation.” This is done in the name of rationality and reason. However, I wish to argue that it seems irrational to specify objectives in areas of the curriculum that seek to enhance creativity in subjects such as music, art, poetry, etc. These subject areas, however, make it virtually impossible to predetermine “what they should be like on graduation” (Capper & Jamison 1993: 8).

Moreover, OBE stifles creativity of learners in school. To prove this point it might be useful to distinguish between the various forms of education. McKernan (1993) identifies three learning types. The first one he refers to is *training* which concerns itself with such student performances as making a picture frame, kicking a ball etc. *Instruction*, according to McKernan (1993), hints at retention of information for example, knowing the names of roads and so on. Finally, *induction into knowledge* gives rise to human understanding. He uses “induction into knowledge and understanding” synonymously with “education, for it represents initiation into culture and worthwhile episodes of learning” (McKernan 1993: 344). What makes “education as induction into knowledge” so successful, as perceived by him, is the fact that it makes the behavioral outcomes of the learner unpredictable thus making the possibility of predetermined outcomes virtually impossible. In a similar manner, if we plan to use knowledge in a creative way, then it would be a senseless exercise to define education in terms of desirable behavioral outcomes. This implies that to have fixed objectives or outcomes leaves little freedom for creativity, and thus imagination.

Finally, OBE deems a core and extended curriculum necessary to effect learning in schools. The core or basic curriculum is streamlined and only offers the most basic critical skills to

master. The extended curriculum on the other hand, provide “enriched opportunities for quicker learning students, while their slower peers complete the core curriculum” (Capper & Jamison 1993: 9). According to Capper and Jamison (1993: 9), OBE advocates claim that “the core and extended curricula are euphemisms for parallel systems, constructed in a rational, logical fashion for the betterment of disenfranchised groups”. However, they (Capper & Jamison 1993: 9) argue that the extended curriculum could have just as easily been labelled “gifted, advance or elite.” A system which creates knowledge exclusively for a particular student group “in the name of rational discourse simply limits opportunity by allowing those who are academically stronger an enriched learning experience. Another important fact to remember is that hierarchy forms an implicit part of the two curricula which implies that only learners who have succeeded in the core curriculum will have access to the extended curriculum. For this reason Capper and Jamison (1993) argue that there is a possibility that certain learners might never gain access to the enriched curriculum, thereby creating a class of learners who are being denied the opportunity to participate in a significant part of the curriculum.

Put differently, OBE’s extended curricula aims to empower only those students who have the ability to grasp more easily than their slower learning peers. For this reason Capper and Jamison (1993: 9) argue that:

Issues worth access, opportunity and control are prevalent in a system which will not allow a student entrance to all facets of the educational experience.

In conclusion Capper and Jamison (1993: 9) is worth referring to again:

Although OBE does attempt to function in a critical frame of reference, a deconstructive analysis reveals the overarching power structure that has infected the “rational discourse” used to arrive at the “best” possible system of helping all students: OBE.

6.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion I wish to echo the words of Mckernan (1993). I tried to approach my task in this thesis as “a critical friend of the OBE movement”. For this reason I have come to the following conclusion:

Although there seems to be some evidence that OBE attempts to operate within a paradigm of critical theory, there are strong indications to show that OBE continues to perpetuate “an ideological hegemony and its control of meaning” (Claasen 1998: 39). Moreover, as I have shown that although OBE claims to be transformational and emancipatory when, in fact, it has a tendency to “reproduce and exacerbate educational and societal inequities” (Capper & Jamison 1993: 9). Therefore it remains inconsistent with aims and objectives of critical theory. Because of these inconsistencies with the aims and objectives of critical theory, OBE on its own does not hold much promise for critical emancipation and student autonomy. Moreover, as I have argued for, because autonomy, tolerance and consistency are necessary constituents for rational practice, OBE does not necessarily engender space for rationality. And because rationality invariably forms the basis of democracy I conclude that OBE seems to undermine principles of democratic practices. For this reason I argue that OBE in itself is not sufficient to engender meaningful change in education and therefore I hold the view that rationality should complement such a policy framework if it aims to become more democratic. In the final chapter of this thesis I therefore wish to show how the notion of

rationality can complement the notion of prescribed outcomes with reference to my personal narrative that could, perhaps in turn, assist a process of meaningful change in South Africa.

CHAPTER 7

PERSONAL REFLECTION AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH RELATING TO AN OBE SYSTEM

The democratisation process of education in South Africa has been the main focus of this thesis. Although most people would agree that education has become more relevant since the demise of Apartheid, there is a general feeling amongst educationists that education ought to become more critical. The challenge, however, is that OBE was introduced in South Africa as a means to the democratise education in South Africa. Although OBE claims to engender critical thinking in the learning process, I have argued throughout this thesis that its fixed outcomes seem to undermine this possibility. For this reason, I showed that critical thinking is conceptually linked to education, which in turn, implies that only genuine education engenders critical thinking. In other words, not all forms of education are necessarily educative.

Furthermore, the notions of autonomy and rationality are necessary constituents for democratic praxis, hence critical thinking. Put differently, OBE with its specified outcomes, which are heavily influenced by market orientated global tendencies, does not seem to be favourable towards discourses of rationality, autonomy and reflection. The implications of a globally orientated policy on education have the effect whereby a new globalised discourse on knowledge production has emerged in recent years which assumes that in order to have a system of education which adheres to international standards we need to tailor our national educational institutions accordingly. By adhering to these global demands, however, education acquires an instrumental role, that is, knowledge becomes instrumental when it is meant to satisfy demand which is external to itself. Knowledge, as Jeevananatham (1999:

32) sees it, becomes instrumental to the attainment of outcomes. In this way, learners are educated in an epistemologically controlled environment, one which not only prescribes what learners should be like after having completed a learning experience but also one which hinders their ability to think critically in relation to “fixed” outcomes.

In the context of the above I now wish to show how critical (rational) thinking has shaped and influenced my way of thinking at an institution of higher learning by reflecting on my own praxis. I was an educator at Oaklands Secondary School for fifteen years. I studied at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), an institution of higher learning which was at the forefront of the political struggle against Apartheid education. During my years as a student at UWC I developed the ability to reflect and to think critically. When I first entered the high school environment as an educator I had many hopes and aspirations for the teaching and learning process. One of my aims was to cultivate critical thinking in learners which would in turn evoke their potentialities. I started teaching during the height of the Apartheid struggle which meant that learners were to a certain extent critically aware and suspicious of their surroundings. For this reason in a politically heightened environment such as the one I found myself as an educator it was not a difficult task to further develop the skill of critical thinking (questioning and challenging) among learners.

After the demise of Apartheid, teaching in a so-called coloured high school was not an easy task. The situation after Apartheid became worse and educators were faced with new challenges for which they had few answers. The daunting task of suddenly having to cope with overcrowded classes, a lack of essential resources and a shortage of educators, left little room for creativity amongst learners and educators alike. It was a challenging experience for most, including myself. I strongly felt that very little education, if any, was taking place in

our schools. Confronted with feelings of confusion, guilt, and desperation, I, together with many others decided to opt out of teaching.

I subsequently started work as a research assistant at the University of Stellenbosch. One of my first tasks was to prepare a seminar paper for a project called Demtrans (which focused on the Democratic Transformation of Education process involving academics from both Germany and South Africa). I saw it as a challenge and tried my utmost employing the skills and habits I had acquired from my previous university training as a teacher. I soon came to realise that the gathering of information was not sufficient. I needed to become reflexive and critical (skills which I thought I possessed). I also realised that preparing a paper at university level entailed more than the acceptance and regurgitation of other people's ideas.

However, meanings of becoming critical dawned upon me when I decided to do a Master's degree in education. I did not have the faintest idea what I was letting myself into. My first attempt at Chapter 1 was a complete disaster. However, I remained focused and determined to write although it was easier said than done. Many of the initial ideas and suggestions came from my supervisor which resulted in me frequently echoing his sentiments and ideas. I came to the realisation that I had very few ideas of my own and that I had not fully developed the skill of being able to think critically. What I actually developed over several years, however, was the ability to recycle the ideas and thoughts of others. Developing the necessary skills to become critical thus proved to be more than I bargained for. I tried to enhance these abilities by engaging with any material relating to the subject at hand, in this instance, literature on OBE. It became a long process in which I had to familiarise myself with the current debates concerning this particular subject area of study. I was expected to present convincing arguments throughout the thesis instead of merely producing unjustifiable statements.

However, as I engaged with various texts over two years of study I started to recognise and understand statements and arguments which I was not able to do before by reworking the comments my supervisor made in earlier drafts of my chapters. These various texts I had engaged with had a greater relevance than before. This had a positive impact on my ability to write more clearly and to argue more convincingly or should I say rationally. I started to gain greater confidence in the process which obviously impacted positively on the thesis I was writing. Acquiring the necessary skills to become more critical made me less dependent on my supervisor, instead we began to negotiate my research process.

However, being afforded the opportunity by my supervisor to work within a broad framework without any “fixed” outcomes for this study created immense possibilities and opportunities to develop my own ideas and to articulate them as justifiable and rational arguments. It is only when one has no fixed boundaries (outcomes) that one can truly claim to have the freedom to wonder, to reflect and to imagine without any constraints. Moreover, at a time of reflection I came to the conclusion that it is my own ideas rather than those of others that make the difference and articulate my arguments. Furthermore, being able to view things in a critical context opened my mind to new possibilities. In a different way, being able to think critically enhances one’s ability to act autonomously – a situation which became synonymous with my rational praxis as a Masters student.

I have tried to show throughout the thesis that OBE logic favours manipulation and control. Why? OBE requires educators to assume tighter control over the learning process thus creating a “success for all” environment. Secondly, fixed outcomes have a tendency to determine the guidelines for what ought to be taught in schools, and in so doing, it stifles learners’ ability to reflect in a rational way. With rationality being a necessary condition for

critical thinking and democratic praxis, I contend, that OBE alone is not sufficient to effect transformation in schools. With transformation I mean significant change in teaching and learning practices in schools. We also require programmes of teaching and learning which endorse rational reflection, creativity and imagination – practices that lie beyond the matrices of an OBE curricular programme. It is here where the possibilities for future research in OBE lie. To my mind, rational reflection, creativity and imagination are practices which cannot be ignored by proponents and performers (learners and educators) of an OBE programme. How these practices could be harmonised with an OBE system is a challenge and research agenda worth pursuing. My thesis has been one such attempt without of course demarcating structural adjustments to the OBE frame.

Also, my research provides a conceptual framework in terms of which future critical studies in and about or within OBE can be undertaken. My engagement with several policy issues involving OBE, as well as my critical analysis of the concept, offer people serious about democratising education, a methodological frame in terms of which pre-service teachers, in-service teachers; university academics and students could chart their pedagogical practices in educational environments. In other words, it's not only a matter of implementing OBE but also challenging and seeking for possibilities which could harness curricular reforms – practices South African educationists can ill-afford to ignore.

Finally, I want to add that although OBE is bent on manipulation and control it does operate in a paradigm of critical theory. However, to give more nuanced meanings to the word “empowerment”, proponents of OBE need to include the silent voices of all stakeholders in order to create a system of education that would be more relevant to the needs of the South African society – one such voice involves a critical understanding of OBE.

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