ARTS AND CULTURE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF AND RESPONSES TO CURRICULUM CHANGE

By

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DECLARATION

I, Jeffrey John Lombard declare that "Arts and Culture teachers' experiences of and responses to curriculum change" is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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Signature   Date

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear and ever-loving wife, Moira; children, Leighton and Leanka

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the following people:

ABSTRACT

The provision of quality education for all South African learners has been an issue of central concern since the advent of the democratic dispensation in 1994. One initiative since 1998 was the implementation of a new curriculum for South African public schools, C2005 as it was then called. This curriculum was later revised and streamlined as the NCS. There was a mixed reception to this new curriculum. Some perceived it as a progressive initiative by the Ministry of Education, while others argued that it was ambitious and that it undermined the conditions and context of South African schools. Essentially the curriculum policy implementation was intended to change the entire system and introduce new ways of doing in all sectors of education. This links strongly to processes of systemic change and that is the considered policy backdrop to this research.

In this study I work from an interpretive perspective and draw on the cognitive sense-making framework to develop in-depth, understanding of teachers' roles as interpreters and enactors of education policy change in South Africa related to the implementation of the NCS. More specifically, the study examines the ways in which six Arts and Culture school teachers in six diverse South African educational contexts experienced and responded to the implementation of the NCS.

Data from the study indicates that teachers found it difficult to adjust to the more complex and demanding teaching methodologies, which took up a great deal of time and required very different roles in the classrooms. Data from the study also suggests that the way teachers come to understand and enact policy or reform initiatives is influenced by their prior knowledge, the social context within which they work, and the nature of their connections to the policy or reform message. The study further suggests that teachers adapt a curriculum rather than adopt it as it is, and that their prior understandings and beliefs about knowledge, beliefs and

experiences combined with their contexts in which they work frame their classroom practices explaining why policy is not enacted as intended.

Conceptualising the problem of policy implementation in this way focuses attention on how implementing agents construct the meaning of a policy message and their own behaviour, and how this process leads, or does not lead, to a change in how they view their own practice, potentially leading to changes in both understanding and behaviour.

ABSTRAK/OPSOMMING

Die voorsiening van kwaliteit-opvoeding vir alle Suid-Afrikaanse leerders was 'nsentrale besorgdheid na die totstandkoming van die nuwe demoktratiese bestel in 1994. 'nInisiatief was die implementering van 'n nuwe kurrikulum vir Suid-Afrikaanse openbare skole sedert 1998, die C2005 of NKV soos dit tans bekend staan. Die instelling van hierdie kurrikulum was op verskeie maniere ontvang. Sommige het dit as 'n progressiewe inisiatief van die Ministerie van Onderwys beskou, terwyl ander verskillende perspektiewe het en geargumenteer het dat dit ambisieus is en die toestande en konteks van SA skole ondermyn. Vir onderwysers was die resultaat na die oorgang van meer komplekse en veeleiesende onderrigmetdologie moeilik, omdat dit baie tyd geverg het en swaar gerus het om hulle rolle in die klaskamer te verklaar. Wat belangrik was, is dat die doel van hierdie kurrikulum beleidsveranderinge daarop gemik was om die totale skolestelsel te transformeer tot 'n vernuwende manier van hoe dinge in alle sektore van die onderwysstelse egter behoort gedoen te word. Dit sluit sterk aan by prosesse van sistemiese veranderinge en hierdie is die oorwegende beleidsagtergrond van hierdie navorsing.

Die doel van die studie was om maniere te ondersoek hoe ses Kuns en Kultuur onderwysers in verskillende onderwyskontekste die NKV ervaar en hoe hulle daarop reageer, veral in die Kuns en Kultuur leerarea omgewing. Die studie was meer spesifiek daarop gemik om te eksamineer hoe onderwysers die KK leer-area in die klaskamer aanneem, aanpas en implementeer. Die studie openbaar, deur die kognitiewe raamwerk te gebruik, dat die wyse waarop onderwysers die beleid of hervormings-inisiatiewe verstaan en begryp, beïnvloed word deur hulle bestaande kennis, die konteks waarin hulle werk en die aard van hulle verbintenis tot die beleid of hervormings boodskap.

Die studie suggereer verder dat onderwysers 'n kurrikulum aanneem soos wat dit is en dat hulle bestaande begrippe en opvattings in verband met kennis en

opvattings en ervaringe gekombineer word met die kontekste waarin hulle werk en dat dit hulle klaskamer praktyke vorm en hierdeur word verduidelik waarom beleid nie kan plaasvind soos wat dit beplan is nie.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A&C	-	Arts and Culture
ACTAG	-	Arts and Culture Task Group
ANC	-	African National Congress
C2005	-	Curriculum 2005
CNE	-	Christian National Education
CUMSA	-	Curriculum Model for South Africa
CRC	-	Curriculum Review Committee
DACST	-	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DNE	-	Department of National Education (pre-democracy)
DoE	-	Department of Education (national, post-apartheid)
DRNCS	-	Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement
ECD	-	Early Childhood Development
EEA	-	Employment of Educators Act
ELRA	-	Education Labour Relations Act
FET	-	Further Education and Training
GET	-	General Education and Training
ILP	-	Illustrated Learning Programme
ILPs	-	Illustrated Learning Programmes
INSET	-	In-Service Training
LACs	-	Learning Area Committees
LPPG	-	Learning Programme Policy Guideline
LSM	-	Learning Support Material
NETF	-	National Education and Training Forum
NCS	-	National Curriculum Statement

NGO	-	Non-Government Organisation
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	-	Outcomes-based Education
RDP	-	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RNCS	-	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	-	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	-	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAQA	-	South African Qualifications Authority
SMT's	-	Senior Management Teams
WCED	-	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

> *"[O]ne [sic] of the toughest nuts to crack in educational change is policy itself, not this policy or that policy but the basic way in which policy is conceived, developed and put into practice." Darling-Hammond (1998: 642)*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The rate of curriculum reform, particularly with the ascendancy of standard-based and outcomes-based education (OBE) policies, has accelerated in many countries across the globe since the late 1990s. South Africa, the focus of this study, is thus no exception. Over the past decade we as educators and teachers here in South Africa have witnessed new curricular changes which have been marked with complexities and criticisms, with some raising concerns that teachers are not adequately trained to handle new curriculum demands (Olivier, 1998). These curricular changes, as embedded in policies such as Curriculum 2005 or C2005 as it was commonly referred to in 1998 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement RNCS in 2000, defined challenging classroom pedagogies and learning outcomes for all South African schools. They were all part of a new vision for education transformation in South Africa, as well as steps to change the obviously unequal apartheid education system prior to 1994, which was subsequently urgently required. Policy-making in South Africa at this stage had predominantly two tasks: to dismantle the past and to put in place foundations for the future. Its first move was to have one overarching body for education, with different levels of responsibility for curriculum matters within the new educational system.

However, the forecasts of outcomes-based education (OBE) in South Africa was both ambitious and unrealistic in that they expected teachers on ground level to possess the necessary knowledge that could enable them to adapt to new styles of teaching and learning when they were actually not part of the planning of the curriculum policy process (Jansen, 1998). On the other hand they also challenged deeply rooted beliefs about who could do intellectually demanding work as well as questioning popular conceptions of teaching, learning and subject matters. In turn, the South African government's attempts to change what counted now as teaching and learning in South African public schools, were characterised by them by using? these new policy directives to press for fundamental and complex changes in schools. This is why Smit (2001: 66) in a study on curriculum policy implementation in South Africa, argues that "policy-makers at national levels usually produce policy and schools and teachers remain in the background," explaining that, "education policy for education change only becomes a reality once it is implemented at the micro-level or at the classroom level." By this disjuncture between policy development and policy practice, Smit (2001: 67) holds the position that teachers are indeed the key role players in the curriculum implementation phase and accordingly are, more often than not the silent voices in the process, ignored and often discounted at this stage of educational change.

As a consequence, policy makers who seek to change the school curriculum without regard to the knowledge, the insights and the understandings of teachers, are likely to find that the changes they actually bring about are very different from those their planning envisaged. In reality the effects of their efforts are unlikely to lead to the improvements they are seeking and may well be detrimental to the quality of new curriculum provision. In such instances Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) view such cases, when the legitimacy of policy makers flows from the consent of the government, that the state risks losing legitimacy when citizens equate force, often necessary for successful implementation, with state action. If this occurrence of compliance is the goal of

policy implementation, then how local practice can change through policy initiatives is especially problematic.

The proceeding points lead to the following section, which is the background to the study and serves to justify why this research was undertaken.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The events immediately following the demise of apartheid prompted a series of changes in the political and economic systems of the country. While political reorientation and economic redress were of immediate concern, there was also an acknowledgement of the importance of educational change in the rebuilding of the country. The expressed intention of the new government was to transform education and to develop an education system that provides all South Africans with equal access to education and training, something that the repressive former government had denied the majority of the population. To achieve this, the government developed a large number of policy documents to guide transformation of the education system. The new policies that were developed for implementation in schools expressed strong ideas for change in teaching practice and specified new roles for teachers in all education institutions**.**

By 1997, the principles of government policy had been clearly delineated and the basic foundations for a new education and training system were set out in a number of major new policy frameworks, which using Christie (2008: 123) included the following:

- The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995;
- The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995;
- The South African Qualifications Act of 1995;
- The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996;
- The South African Qualifications Authority of 1996;

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- The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996;

- The Education Laws Amendment Act of 1997;

- The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997;

- The Employment of Educators (EEA) Act 76 of 1998;

- The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998;

- The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (amended in 2005);

- C2005, which introduced an outcomes-based curriculum for general education, and was phased into schools from 1998, reviewed in 2000, and replaced by the revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS);

- The National Committee on Further Education and Training (FET), which presented its report in 1997, as the basis for the Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998 (FET Act);

- The White Paper on Early Childhood Development (ECD) of 2000;

- Frameworks for teacher employment, as set out in the Education Labour Relations Act (ELRA) of 1995. Conditions of work, codes of conduct, and duties and responsibilities were agreed upon for educators. All teachers were required to register with the South African Council of Educators (SACE).

What possible relationships exist between policy and change? Manganyi (2001:27) argues that public policy sets out a Government's intentions regarding certain matters that have a bearing on common good and welfare of a people. He adds that policy needs to sculpt the long view of both the present and the future. In this period in SA policies were aimed at bringing about far-reaching change to education and represented a departure from the 'old' system in *all* ways. An important assumption in this process was that policies developed would drive the transformation process and bring about the desired changes in education. Kraak (1999:24) indicates that there is clear evidence that the South African policy process is based on the ideas of systemic reformers and that **in** South Africa systemic reform represented a more consensual form of reconstruction and

development. What are the main tenets of systemic reform and how has it played out in the SA policy process?

Grant (1996:24) writes that the systemic argument has strong appeal as it is rational, is all encompassing and it is activist. Like any grand theory however, systemic reform is rooted in a complex of assumptions which may or may not accurately represent the realities actors at all levels face. Given the uncertainties inherent in large-scale change many observers are still guarded about the prospects for systemic change and according to Cohen and Spillane (1992) it has both allure and allusiveness.

O' Neil (1993:8) writes that systemic change and systemic reform mean different things to different people but that a nest of assumptions underlie systemic reformers argument. The term systemic change is used loosely to describe any effort to address several elements of the education system in a comprehensive fashion. In general systemic reformers argue that real change will only occur when we re-examine all elements of the education system. According to Smith and O' Day (1991:237) systemic reformers argue that the problem lies with the system itself and other issues like student performance, poorly trained teachers and so on are merely symptoms rather than the illness itself. This is in keeping with the assumptions of systemic reformers who believe that state policy that is aligned and leads to a more coherent system can change the way students and teachers live their lives in the classroom.

Holzman M (1993:18) in turn states that:

Systemic means fundamental change. The usage implies that improvements needed in education are so extensive that they cannot be done within the limits of the present system; thus people should seek to change the nature of the system.

According to Hertert (1996:381), "systemic reform involves fundamental and substantive change in both state policy making and local education processes. She adds that "if fully used, systemic reform has the potential to revolutionise public education, as it involves a realignment of power, authority, and responsibility to provide a policy structure that supports and encourages coherence."

Considering these policy initiatives in South Africa, Christie (2008: 124) holds that these new directions in education policy making, although they represented some new directions in school teaching and learning, they faced a familiar public tension in South African schools. This is because they were considered in many ways as "state of the art", seen to envisage a functioning education system linked to a high-skill economy and fully-fledged democracy.

Nonetheless, immediately after these policy initiatives, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced in 1998 by the national Department of Education (DoE). This breaking away from the past was seen as a process of opening up new possibilities that could give new direction to the education system in a democratic South Africa. Not only was the objective of C2005 to overcome centuries-old educational practices, social inequalities linked to educational differences and apartheid-based social values, but it was also expected to place South Africa on the path to competitive participation in a global economy (DoE, 1997a). Unlike the earlier curriculum, the then so-called Christian National Education (CNE) which focused on content and knowledge acquisition, this new curriculum initiative (C2005) was characterised by the philosophical principles of outcomes-based education (OBE) which emphasised the application of knowledge acquired through performance outcomes (Jansen, 1998).

Teachers now faced the demands of a new teaching approach, from a subject-centred curriculum to one that was learner-centred and which cherished the ideal of preparing and producing critical thinkers who were able to play a significant role in the development of the country (DoE, 1997a). Moreover, the OBE

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approach emphasised the empowerment of learners through the achievement and mastering of outcomes, knowledge and skills needed to achieve the outcomes. To obtain its objectives, OBE focused on learning outcomes rather than on content acquisition, and placed greater emphasis on problem solving and the transfer of skills (DoE, 1997a).

Nonetheless, although there was consensus among key role players on curriculum change in South Africa, there were serious doubts about the readiness of the teachers, the schools and the supervisory officials to cope with the new approach (Christie, 2008; Jansen, 1998; Potenza & Monyokolo, 1999). The most contentious issues in the debate were the teacher's capacity to implement the new curriculum approach, the skewed resources in schools and the support that such a system would require for it to succeed. Other criticisms of OBE related to its structure, design and implementation (Jansen, 1998; Taylor & Vinjevoldt, 1999; Chisholm, 2000). C2005 soon ran into a myriad of difficulties that threatened the survival of the new curriculum (Jansen, 1998; Olivier, 1998; Stoffels, 2005). Teachers complained of frustration, disillusionment, poor training provisions, the complexity of the language and design of the new curriculum, lack of support, and the general haste of the curriculum (Taylor & Vinjevoldt, 1999; Chisholm, 2000).

Drawing on Christie (2008) and her reflection of the many education policy changes in South Africa, she argues that the curriculum policy, National Curriculum statement (NCS) could not be implemented as had been envisaged because it was a far cry from what actually existed in South Africa in terms of education. It was formulated in terms of the ideal, rather than in terms of what was possible given and what actually existed. It emphasised structural design, without giving sufficient attention to the implementation and support mechanisms that might be required in different contexts. Funding was inadequate to meet the policy designs, as were the level of expertise and the capacity of people working within the system. All these obstacles were also raised by the

C2005 Review Committee (Taylor & Vinjevoldt, 1999; Chisholm, 2000). As a result, Christie sees this split between the production and implementation of policy in South Africa as having resulted in a direct top-down conception of the policy process, as if policy could 'get done' to people.) In addition, the policy had many unintended consequences, with policy actors at school level interpreting them in ways unanticipated by the policy makers.

These concerns forced the Ministry of Education to appoint a committee to review C2005 under chairmanship of Linda Chisholm. After a three-month review process, the Chisholm Committee published its findings. It found that the implementation of C2005 was compromised by the complex structure and design of the curriculum, tight time-frames, lack of resources, a weak model of teacher training, insufficient learning support materials and poor departmental support to teachers (Taylor & Vinjevoldt, 1999; Chisholm, 2000). The C2005 Review Committee also referred to widespread evidence that teachers tended to have a rather shallow understanding of the principles of C2005 and OBE (DoE, 2000b). There were reports of schools "doing their own thing," and of a situation in which, "anything goes" in schools (Taylor & Vinjevoldt, 1999; Chisholm, 2000).

The review team recommended that C2005 be streamlined and "strengthened" with a revised version in the form of a National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The proposed streamlining included reducing the number of learning areas from eight to six and discarding some of the problematic designs of C2005 like the arcane language, range statements, performance indicators and phase organisers (Stoffels, 2005).

The National Education Department acknowledged some of these recommendations, the school curriculum (C2005) was streamlined and in 2004 replaced by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). However, regardless of the changes, the NCS still seemed to have many unprecedented consequences for teachers to the calls of translating the NCS successfully into schools. Most of

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these concerns were on the readiness towards the implementation of the eight learning areas that formed part of the General Education and Training Band (GET). In particular, teachers who were teaching one of these learning areas, Arts and Culture (A&C) which is the focus of this study, still seemed uneasy about adopting it into their schools. The reasons seem to be as follows:

The Arts and Culture (A&C) learning area dates back to 1997 and was first introduced in 1998 as an examinable learning area in South African schools. Before the introduction and implementation of A&C in 1998 as part of the new school curriculum, most schools offered separate tuition in Music, Dance, Drama and the Visual Arts as four different art disciplines. Some schools historically specialised in either one of the four art disciplines, or a combination of some of these subjects, depending on the specialised teachers that they had. Thus for many years, the art disciplines were seen as separate subjects. Now, suddenly for teachers associated with one of the four arts strands in the past, this new curriculum approach demanded a total new restructuring in teaching methodology. This is because the Arts and Culture learning area now combined the four art disciplines of Music, Dance, Drama and the Visual Arts. All teachers in the General Education and Training Band (GET) involved in this learning area were expected to teach the four art forms as set out by the NCS (DoE, 1997a).

For Arts and Culture teachers, this meant that the approach in this learning area progressed from a broad experience involving several art forms within diverse cultural contexts, to an increasing depth of knowledge and skill by the Eighth and Nineth grades (DoE, 1997a). Teachers were now required to be well versed in various A&C components and themes. This implied a shift from the traditional individual approach, where each teacher was responsible for his/her own subject, to a situation where a teacher may not be an expert on all the subject matter that had to be facilitated in terms of the curriculum. In effect, it appears that these teachers were confused by the introduction of the new A&C learning area

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because they were accustomed to teaching one of the four strands using traditional instructional methodology.

Initial indications gathered through the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) training workshops in 1999 and 2006 (which I was a part of), showed that Arts and Culture teachers were not sure of how to approach lesson planning in the new learning area and that they were unsure of what to teach learners in class, as well as how to facilitate such lessons. The explanation, in part, for this is that it is rare to find someone in South Africa who is skilled in all four strands of this learning area. Another problem is that teachers who have no formal training in aspects of this learning area are expected to teach the subject if the need arises at schools.

Raising all these concerns, it seemed that A&C teachers were facing numerous challenges ranging from an adoption level to a conceptual level, and which were beyond their control. As long as policy expectation is asking them to put something in practice in which they had no say, policy won't be implemented as planned. This brings me once more to Smit (2001) in her argument that policy makers usually produce policy and schools and teachers remain in the background.

The following section states my focus and main arguments regarding this research study. It also forms part of the problem statement and emphasis is placed on the reasons why this study was chosen and undertaken.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since the introduction of the new curriculum in 1998, and now 13 years later after the inclusion of the Arts and Culture learning area within the NCS, it seems that teachers in this learning area are still unsure about the approach and how to implement it successfully in their schools. This is despite numerous workshops being conducted for Arts and Culture teachers by the National Department of Education. Yet, during quality assurance workshops and moderation sessions, teachers still admit to "being in the dark" in achieving these learning areas' goals and to translating them adequately into schools according to new policy requirements. In line with the experiences of these teachers, McLaughlin (1998: 12) sagely remarked "policy can't mandate what happens." In effect, what policy makers usually intend is not actually enacted in classroom practice. Consequently, in line with McLaughlin (1998) studies of school reform often ask how a given reform impacts schools, or how schools implement a particular policy initiative (Fullan, 1991; Smit 2001; Bascia & Hargreaves, 2002; Stoffels, 2005).

Influenced by McLaughlin (1998), what drove my interest further into this study, was that most of the research literature on curriculum policy implementation accurately reflects the difficulty that teachers experience when they are asked to change their curriculum practice. This was also based on my own personal experience which stemmed from my 22 years as a school teacher and nine years as an Arts and Culture teacher in South Africa. As such, I assumed that relatively little had been done on the insights of experiences and responses of Arts and Culture teachers on curriculum policy change in South Africa. This belief grew out of my preliminary investigation on this matter in South Africa, where it seemed that literature that was available on teachers and curriculum implementation and in particular Arts and Culture learning, related mostly to educational contexts where schools were well resourced, teachers were highly qualified, and teacher-student ratios were low.

During the WCED training sessions on the implementation of the NCS in the following year, I was struck by what Arts and Culture teachers said they were actually doing in classrooms as opposed to what the new curriculum required. What struck me most was the close similarity between the fragmented way the four different strands of Arts and Culture were approached in the "old curricula" and the supposedly integrated format that was required in the NCS. I took the view (which was borne out by my 22 years of teaching experience) that numerous schools in South Africa seemed to have been unsuccessful at implementing the concept of outcomes-based education (OBE), specifically concerning the Arts and Culture learning area.

In order to shed some light on these matters and to strengthen my arguments, I turned my attention to studies conducted in South Africa and elsewhere on education policy issues.

According to Stoffels (2005) in his study on the use of Learning Support Materials (LSMs) in Pretoria and several scholars like Richardson (1990), Fullan (1991) and Bascia & Hargreaves (2002) who tried to delve into this puzzle of curriculum implementation problems, teachers, when faced with instructional curriculum policy shifts they interpret and enact it through the unique filters of their own experiences, beliefs, personal resources, theories, contexts, ideologies, Stoffels (2005) saw this as invariably leading to a multiplicity of interpretations and manifestations of the intended instructional change, even amongst teachers at the same school. This may also have been because implementation of curriculum policy posed many demands on teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which does not take place without interpretation or recreation of policy. Stoffels (2005) also referred to the influence of the sense-making processes of teachers, that is, their subjective experiences and thinking that shape their use of Learning Support Materials (LSMs). On the strength of his study, Stoffels (2005) concluded that there was compelling evidence that the study of teacher-thinking

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and decision-making, together with the context in which they operated, provided a better understanding of why teachers do what they do in their schools.

Similarly, Smit (2001: 68), to whom I have already referred to in the introductory section of this chapter, and in her study on primary school teachers' experiences of policy change in South African education, mentioned that "it appears reasonable to assume that teachers' experiences and understandings of policy change in a developing context would be influenced and constructed by the contexts in which they work." On the basis of strengthening her argument, Smit (2001: 68) held that "practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, and they have vested interests in the meaning of policy." She further afforded this to reasons why policy seldom seems to permeate the classroom practices. As such, Smit saw this as policy makers not being able to control the meanings of their texts and as a consequence, policywriters' texts will be rejected in part, selected from, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, and responses to them may be frivolous.

Also contributing to the issue of teacher involvement and school context as having an effect on policy implementation, Blignaut (2008) in his study of teachers' sense-making and enactment of curriculum policy in the Eastern-Cape, indicated the enormous weight of evidence that context is important. According to him, school teaching does not take place in a vacuum, but is part of a unique context. Blignaut (2008) concluded that since each school operates in a different context, teachers' work is constrained and enabled by a myriad of influences, which emanate from all directions in the web of public schooling.

From a Western-European point of view, authors like Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubmaun (1995) in Utomo & Yeom (2000: 10) also made similar assertions on policy implementation in arguing that curriculum policies have historically flowed down "from authoritative sources through the medium of school." This

means that policy is inevitably interpreted differently since the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests that make up the arena differ.

Fullan (1982), who is perhaps the best known protagonist in the area of educational change and whose contribution has been prolific in the phenomenology of schooling and curriculum implementation concurred that "an understanding of the subjective world of those involved in a change process is a necessary precondition." He argued that "the subjective way in which teachers mediate meaning through assumptions and perceptions and act with regard to educational change, has an impact on the possibilities of realising the educational ideals represented by policy as initiation to educational change" (1982: 120).This implies that teachers should play an active role in the education policy process.

Albeit writing from a western-liberal perspective, Bowe and Ball (1992: 9) argued that education policy, in the form of legislated texts, is recontextualised through different kinds of interpretations: "… it is not simply a matter of implementers following a fixed policy text and putting the Act into practice." Policy initiating educational change needs to be understood within a variety of contexts.

Sarason (1990), who also takes a Western perspective, strongly argued against implementing reform in schools where teachers are not involved in the decision-making and their opinions about, and participation in, the reform are not invited.

Writing about curriculum implementation from a developed world perspective, Hargreaves (1996: 12-19) argued that "schools have become an intermediate place of reform, nonetheless, and 'teachers' voices have not been fully involved in the reform."

What all these authors have in common, is their emphasis on issues such as teachers sense-making, decision-making, experiences, behaviours, and individual

school contexts as playing a key role to help explain why curriculum policies are not enacted as intended. Drawing upon these authors, it appears reasonable for me to assume that Arts and Culture teachers' experiences and understandings of policy change in a developing context like South Africa could also possibly be influenced and constructed by their subjective experiences, their current knowledge structures and the contexts in which they work. Embarking on this could provide telling insights into why the curriculum policy (NCS) is not enacted as intended at school level.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

After ten years at a high school, I took up a teaching post at a primary school in 1998. The following year in 1999, provincial and district education officials called upon primary school teachers, irrespective of our subjects of specialisation, to attend the OBE training sessions that they had initiated. We were all thrashed?(squashed into) in one hall where strict timeframes were allocated to trainees for training in all of the eight learning areas. Everything just had to be completed in one week. After these training sessions, we were more confused about applying C2005 in the schools.

In 2004, I again took up a teaching post at a high school. I was shocked to see what A&C teachers were actually doing there. It was not what the policy guidelines for A&C required of them to do. They had no indication or sufficient knowledge of the content and learning outcomes as set out by the curriculum policy guidelines for this learning area and everyone only did what they thought were "best practices" for this learning area just to   provide and have assessment marks for learners at the end of the year.

I also came across teachers who were not specialised in any one of the four art disciplines of the A&C learning area. They were more confused than teachers

who at least had pre-service education in one of the art subjects who then had some idea of what learning to put in practice.

My question then arose:

- How do arts and culture teachers experience and understand curriculum policy change in South Africa
- How do teachers respond to the calls of A&C learning at school level

Trying to make sense of my own personal experience and those of other Art and Culture teachers in my school circuit, initiated my realisation that taking a cognitive perspective on curriculum implementation problems in South Africa might help to explain why curriculum changes are not always implemented as planned. I specifically became interested in this perspective while reading and reviewing a similar study done in American public schools. These researchers in their study on mathematics and science teachers used the cognitive sense-making approach, not as an alternative to other conventional explanation models, but to help explain policy implementation problems in schools (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). This cognitive study found how teachers interpret, adapt and even transform curriculum policies as they put them into practice (Coburn, 2001 cited in Utomo & Yeom, 2000; Spillane & Reimer, 2001 cited in Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002).

My interest in this framework is the way in which natural sense-making processes can lead to the types of challenges observed in reform efforts. More importantly is the notion that the process, by which teachers come to understand the policy result, and the consequences of those understandings for policy implementation, are rarely analysed explicitly in conventional implementation models. I will explain some of these conventional models briefly in Chapter Two.

The starting point of the research was that individuals assimilate new experiences and information through their existing knowledge structures (Spillane *et al.*,

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2002). Influenced by this realisation, I was curious to embark on (look at) how Arts and Culture teachers noticed and interpreted the curriculum policy change (NCS) in South Africa and how their prior knowledge, beliefs and classroom experiences in the different arts subjects (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama) influenced their construction of new understandings of the A&C learning area as reflected in the NCS. My objective in the proceeding is congruent with the central tenet of the "cognitive science" that a complete understanding of the minds of people cannot be attained by studying only a single level. An understanding of how these three levels relate to each other is needed. In doing this, this study sets out to highlight new, deeper and more complex understandings of Arts and Culture teachers' cognitive sense-making in interpreting and enacting curriculum policy change.

1.5 AIMS OF STUDY

Based on the foregoing?, and influenced by Spillane *et al's*. (2002) cognitive sense-making approach, this study by using the cognitive framework, aims to explore the experiences and responses of six Arts and Culture teachers on the implementation of curriculum policy in the Cape/Winelands District. By focusing on A&C as a new learning area in the curriculum (NCS) my main aim is to explore how these teachers, given their circumstances as explained in section 1.4, make sense of these curricular changes and how their experiences influence what they are noticing concerning the embedded policy messages. Arts and Culture will therefore serve as a particular example of curricular reform in South Africa. A further intention here of my cognitive framework is to outline an approach to understanding the conditions under which curriculum change for A&C teachers is possible by focusing on how they interpret the demands that are made on them and how they respond to them. To accomplish these demands this study will draw on the design features and the processes of the cognitive framework (Spillane *et al*. (2002), to characterise A&C teachers' sense-making in the implementation process by identifying a set of constructs and the relations among

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these constructs. Focusing in depth on one key dimension of the implementation process, agents' sense-making with regard to reform initiatives, I highlight the particular ways individual cognition, situational cognition and the role of embedded policy messages of these teachers helped shaped their response to curriculum change in ways both similar and distinct. Finally, I look at the implications of this work for thinking both about alternative efforts on school reform initiatives in this moment of curriculum change (NCS), as well as the particular implications for Art and Culture teachers today.

I hope that this study will provide new insights as to why it sometimes seems so difficult for Arts and Culture teachers to implement a new national curriculum. A unique feature for the usage of the A&C in this study is that it is a totally new learning area in the NCS and definitely requires teachers to construct new understandings. The study therefore offers the opportunity to make a theoretical contribution that could provide insight into how to approach and develop training programmes for new subjects/learning areas within the NCS. All this together suggests the value of refining the theory and implementation of instructional policies by investigating the connections between the way in which teachers understand the content of instructional reform efforts, how they enact such an understanding in specific classroom practices in the situated context of their school, and how both such understandings, in turn, influence teacher learning and change.

1.6 CHAPTER DELINEATION

This study consists of six chapters. In Chapter One I provide a general orientation (overview of?)to the background of this study. Chapter Two provides a brief orientation(outline?) of the policy discourse globally and locally and discusses three perspectives on curriculum changes dealing with ideas related to whether policy has succeeded as leverage of change or not. The limitations of two conventional models and the proposal of an alternative model to these

conventional models are also sketched. In addition, the chapter outlines what the A&C learning area is, how it was conceptualised and developed and what is expected of both learners and teachers through government policy guidelines. Chapter Three explains my research methodology and choice of data-gathering methods, as well as the presentation of the research findings. In Chapter Four, I report on the data gathered through the focus group discussions, the semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires, while Chapter Five is devoted to an interpretation and analysis of the data produced. Chapter Six serves as a conclusion to the research process and poses questions regarding policy processes and teacher mediation possibilities. I also discuss the dimensions and possibilities for further research on educational policy processes and policy development in this regard.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW, OVERVIEW OF POLICY AND ARTS AND CULTURE IMPLEMENTATION

"A researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field. Not understanding the prior research clearly puts a researcher at a disadvantage." Shulman (1999: 162)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss my research literature to put the broader context of the study into perspective, clearly demarcating what it is and justifying my decisions made related to literature selected.. From this point, I will not only report the claims made by the chosen literature, but also critically examine and reflect why these claims are warranted for my research. My main objective in following these protocols of a literature review is to draw on what Creswell suggested (1994: 37), that a literature review is "to present results of similar studies, to relate the present study to the on-going dialogue in the literature, and to provide a framework for comparing the results of a study with other studies." Taking this perspective enables me to distinguish what has been learned and accomplished in the area of my interest and where I can provide additional insights through my study as to what still needs to be learned and accomplished.

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part I lay the foundation and inspiration for my research to improve current debates on policy implementation matters. I accept that, one needs to understand how policy is developed and that this is not without messy and complicated problems.

I start off my theoretical orientation by focusing on some explanations on the meaning of policy and then the development of the policy process. Then I move

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on to some conventional explanations of curriculum implementation studies that have provided insights into assessing where policies have succeeded as levers of change, what they are able to effect, what their limitations are and where they have not succeeded.

Finally, in this part, I draw upon the integrative, cognitive scholarship of Spillane *et al.* (2002) to explore Arts and Culture teachers' sense-making in the curriculum implementation process that is especially relevant for recent education policy reforms such as OBE in South Africa. As mentioned in Chapter One this cognitive theory advanced? by these authors presupposes that a key dimension of the implementation process is whether and in what ways implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process. This theoretical departure helps to explain the value of a cognitive perspective on curriculum implementation, as is the case in my study. It focuses on teachers that adapt a curriculum rather than adopt it as it is. This model thus helps to suggest reasons for the disjuncture between policy reform and practice. Within this model I explore, in contrast to other conventional models, teachers' sense-making with regard to reform initiatives.

In the second part I explore the term "Arts and Culture" as it is the most important one for this study. This section of my literature review is broadly located around the art, culture, education policy reforms and curriculum implementation. As I draw further on the literature, develop a commentary and come to my findings about these concepts, I am also developing my own understanding and knowledge. As I reflect on the object of my analysis, i.e. Arts and Culture teachers' sense-making in the curriculum implementation process (NCS), I am constrained to focus consciously on my understanding of the language that forms the key concepts of this phenomenon. It then becomes necessary to develop a conceptual framework as a means of understanding how meaning has been mediated through the data that I present.

PART ONE

2.2 THE THEORETICAL FRAMING

My theoretical framing is interpretivist in orientation. In order to do this, I endeavour to understand the conditions under which curriculum change is possible by focusing on policy conditions, and especially how teachers interpret the demands on policy initiatives that are made on them.

The following section briefly details the policy debate in this chapter, starting off by what i8s meant by policy.

2.3 THE MEANING OF POLICY

Much has been said about what constitutes policy. Distinctions usually separate the generation and the implementation phase and there are many definitions of policy, ranging from the very broad to the precise and specific. As a result, much has been said about what constitutes policy. According to Singh (2007), distinctions usually separate the generation and implementation phases. In this section certain of these distinctions refer to policy as one of the ways in which the governments of modern states envisage what they would like, and how they intend to "make things happen." It also shows how governments, as legitimate decision makers in societies, act to achieve goals in their particular political, social and economic contexts. According to (Christie, 2008) when governments act in the manner as stated above, policy is seen as part of the cut-and-thrust of politics, as groups and individuals with competing interests strive to decide how society should be organised and what actions should be taken in the best interests of all.

I will now focus on the two broad perspectives of policy making processes, i.e. the critical perspective and the modernist perspective.

Firstly, critical policy sociologists advance some pertinent views on the definition of policy, regarding what it is, how it is constituted and the values that it projects. According to one of them, Prunty (1985: 137), "policy represents a political commitment to a set of social ideals that are constructed in deeply contested ideological and political processes." According to this view, policy is a matter of the authoritative allocation of values in which policies are the operational statements of values, statements of prescriptive intent. This definition emphasises some values more than others. Critical policy sociologists thus point to the way in which certain values are privileged in policy by governments and become institutionalised. They argue that it is not enough to consider whether there has been fair play and due procedure in policy construction. They are more concerned to place the criterion of justice at the forefront of policy (Prunty, 1985). Thus, unlike those who take the view that policy represents the neutral intent of the state to resolve problems and to enhance operational functionality, proponents of the critical paradigm convincingly suggest that, whilst policy represents a statement about the ideal society, it logically derives from conflicting and value-driven processes.

Looking at the definition above, it seems that an understanding of the dynamics involved in such processes will reveal much of the actual meanings of policy.

Secondly, modernist perspectives are usually concerned with macro level policy intent and emphasise the role of the state as holding a dominant, and even hegemonic, position. Here, the 'policy cycle' approach of Bowe, Ball & Gold (1992) and Vidovich (2002) has been particularly influential in broadening definitions of policy and approaches to its analysis. The policy cycle approach rejects the idea of separate phases of policy formulation and enactment. Instead there are, according to Bowe *et al.* (1992) and Vidovich (2002), three primary policy contexts: the context of influence (where interest groups struggle over construction of policy discourses); the context of policy text production (where texts represent policy, although they may contain inconsistencies and

contradictions); and the context of practice (where policy is subject to interpretation and recreation).

Ball (1994a) later revised his analytic framework to include the context of outcomes and political strategy, the latter of which focuses on issues of social justice. By doing this he draws on post-structuralism and critical theory in his approach to policy analysis stating "what we need in policy analysis is a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories" (Ball, 1994a: 14). Ball (1994a: 18) further stresses the creativity of reactions to policy text, claiming that response to policy "is not determined by policy." Translation of policy text for Ball requires interpretation and is dependent upon "commitments, understandings, capability." By this he means that response to policy text always occurs in context. As can be seen here, policy may therefore be understood as "both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (Ball 1994a: 10). This involves recognition of agency at all levels of the policy cycle.

However there is concern about the power of hegemonic structures in relation to policy dynamics, and with exposing structures as they are, rather than as they appear (Crotty, 1998). A "fluid interrelationship" (Ozga, 2000) exists between intention, interpretation, and enactment, and policy must therefore always be understood within its unique context.

This definition of policy brings me again to one of the central focuses of this research study: Why does it seem so hard to implement policies in classroom practice?

In trying to shed some light on this question, I will draw on recent literature as to how policy develops into practice.

2.3.1 The development of the Policy Process

According to Christie (2008: 115), there are many debates about the development of the policy process and how it works. This section looks at some of the debates because it helps us to understand what can be expected of policy, and where the policy processes "go wrong." Using Bowe *et al*. (1992) for this discussion, a distinction will now be drawn between two common conceptual models of the education policy process in helping us understand the policy making process.

The first is known as a "rationalist" model of policy making. It assumes that policy making is essentially a rational process, which operates through classic steps, from formulation through to implementation. The educational problem is seen as one that requires technical solutions. Policies are seen as blueprints which exist prior to action, and which are imposed on the external world in a controlled way, which is assumed to be consensual.

The second is seen as a "political" model of policy making which typically begins with the assumption that policy is "the authoritative allocation of values" and hence, that policy making is essentially a political activity. In terms of this model, understanding power relations, conflict and contestation is crucial to understanding the nature of policy. Policy analysts who adopt a "political" model are critical of the notion that implementation is a matter of automatically following a fixed policy text and putting legislation "into practice" (Bowe & Ball, 1992). These two models will now be discussed in further detail.

2.3.1.1 Rational Approaches

Rational theories of policy often see policy formulation and policy implementation as two separate steps in the same process. The challenge, in terms of such theories, is to move smoothly from one step to the next recognising that the process may get stuck along the way. The rational approaches assume

that the policy process is best understood as taking place in a sequence of steps, forming a linear or cyclical progression. The starting point of a policy is an issue that requires attention, or a problem that needs to be addressed. Policy makers, those in bureaucracies, decide how to deal with the issue. They "decide how to decide" (for example; through an act of Parliament, a set of new procedures under an existing act, a commission of inquiry or public consultation, and so on). They investigate different options, drawing on expert knowledge and taking into account the views of different interest groups. They then decide what option to take, and formulate policies accordingly. Often (but not always) such policies are written. They allocate resources and draw up regulations and procedures. They then implement the policies, monitor the results and adjust the policies to ensure that they meet their goals. Then the cycle begins again.

However, some researchers and policy makers have questioned the assumptions and analytical validity of the "rationalist" model. Gordon (2004) cited in Hill (2001: 8) notes that "the power and survival ability of the 'rational system' model is surprising, given that its assumptions have been undermined by empirical studies of the policy process, and that its predictive record is uneven." They explain this durability with reference to its status as a normative model and to the fact that the policy makers themselves often support it.

Nonetheless Carley (1980) cited in Christie (2008: 120), argues that even if the policy process as seen from a rationalist viewpoint, is not as neat as this description suggests, there is still value in defining its different stages and activities in a rational way.) The rational approach is particularly useful in analysing how to intervene in the policy process, or improve it.

Next is an outline on critical approaches to policy making.

2.3.1.2 Critical Approaches

Critical approaches to policy, in contrast, assume that the policy process cannot be neatly sequenced. In fact, according to this viewpoint, trying to impose a rational approach is likely to distort our understanding of what actually happens in the policy process. Ranson's (1995) work illustrates this "political" or "values" approach. Ransom (1995: 44) proposes that policies "have a distinctive and formal purpose for organisations and governments to codify and publicise the values which are to inform future practice and thus encapsulate prescriptions for reform." He further argues that policy is essentially contested, intrinsically political and necessarily a temporal process, involving issues relating to tasks and people.

Also, according to other critical analysts such as Bowe & Ball (1992), policy making is not necessarily a step-by-step linear or cyclical process. It consists of a mix of simultaneous activities, often at cross-purposes. The complexity of policy processes, they argue, can neither be understood in terms of sequential steps nor without taking into account the competing interests and power of the social actors concerned. Thus, critical policy sociologists favour a conception of the policy making process as one that is an interactive, dynamic and contradictory political process. They oppose the linear view that emphasises a separation between formulation and implementation. Rather, they view policy as constantly formulated and re-formulated, being subject to interaction at various stages by key policy respondents and stakeholders. Policy is thus, fundamentally a socio-political practice in connection with which groups with different interests struggle and attempt to assign meaning.

This distinction between a "rationalist" and a "critical" model of the policy making process is clearly a very broad one, which masks debate within each model among those who claim to offer superior explanatory frameworks. Drawing on the critical policy sociology tradition, I support the view that the

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policy making process is complex and interactive. Policy is contested vigorously by groups in civil society with a view to securing specific interests and commitments, and is thus always subject to negotiation and compromise. Understanding the various contexts in which policy is made is thus crucial. Bearing in mind that the distinction provides a very broad tool of analysis, it is useful for the purpose of this chapter that the distinction between these two conceptual models be used to interrogate(or challenge?) the policy making process concerning outcomes-based education (OBE) for Arts and Culture teachers in South Africa.

2.4 CONVENTIONAL ACCOUNTS OF CURRICULUM POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation scholars such as Moessinger (2000), Elmore (1980) and McLaughlin (1998) have offered numerous explanations as to how policy is implemented. Their investigations were on policy reforms that focused on the nature of social problems, the design of policy, the governance system and organisational arrangements in which policy must operate and the will or capacity of the people that changed with implementing the policy. Many of these explanations are premised on principal-agent and rational choice theories, in which the principal requires the assistance of an agent to achieve a particular outcome. The agent's decisions are guided by rational choice ideas in which utility maximisations are the guiding principle for human behaviour. Both the principal and the agent are motivated by self-interest, hence appropriate incentives and monitoring systems are essential if principals are to have their way. But rational choice theory assumes that choice is at the centre of an individual's life, that there is no interaction among individuals' choices or preferences and that all choices can be reduced to personal interest or utility maximisation. Individual preferences are not considered to be vague or contradictory.

Following Spillane *et al.* (2002), some explanations for implementation focus on the inability of principals to formulate clear policy outcomes or to adequately supervise the implementation of their goals. This inability from certain principals to craft clear and consistent directives with respect to the behaviours desired from implementing agents can undermine local implementation. Then there are still other explanations that focus on the governance system and organisational arrangements that structure principal-agent relations. Responsibility for policy making is not clearly demarcated or defined in the various branches and levels of government that exercise policy jurisdiction, often over the same issues. The segmented policy system often sends competing signals that can undermine the authority and power of policy. These arrangements complicate principal-agent relations because it is often unclear to which policy signals implementing agents should attend and to whom they are accountable for implementation.

Following Elmore (1980) his explanation for how policy is implemented focuses on the differences between top-down, macro-level approaches to change and bottom-up, or micro-level approaches. He describes the first as "forward mapping," and the second as "backward mapping." Policy that is not conceptualised in terms of the implementation dimension is top-down and bureaucratic. Such policy adopts what is called a forward mapping approach. Such an approach begins at the top of the process, with as clear a statement as possible of the policy maker's intent, and proceeds through a sequence of increasingly more specific steps to define what is expected of implementers at each level. At the bottom of the process one states again, with as much precision as possible, the original statement of intent.

From a top-down and bottom-up perspective policy makers usually use a "forward mapping" approach, which provides an analytic solution that stresses formal organisational structures, rules and regulations. This favours form devices of command and control, such as organisational structures, rules and regulations, together with lines of authority. Policy, which is designed in this

way, can never be sufficiently rooted in the dynamics at ground level. Such policy produces vague recommendations, which are ambiguous and in conflict with one another. Accordingly, thinking that implementation is controlled from the top is erroneous.

The best way to approach policy formulation is to conceptualise it in terms of the backward mapping approach, which Elmoredefines as starting at the lowest level of the education system in order to generate policy, that takes implementation conditions on the ground into consideration. Backward mapping begins not at the top of the implementation process but at the last possible stage. It begins not with a statement of intent, but with a statement of the specific behaviour at the lowest level of the implementation process that generates the need for a policy. Backward mapping is an analytical solution that focuses attention on factors that influence the knowledge and problem-solving abilities of low-level implementers, and on what motivates them. This approach, therefore, argues for a conception of policy making which takes implementation seriously. This is based on the assumption that an understanding of what occurs at this level maximises one's ability to influence it.

Also on curriculum implementation matters, McLaughlin (1998), has offered numerous explanations which focus on issues such as: implementation dominates outcome; policy can't mandate what matters; local variability is the rule; uniformity is the exception; implementation signals mutual adaptation and internal institutional conditions. He used these concepts by explaining the inevitable gap that develops between intended and actual policies. These explanations focused on the autonomy of implementing agents and their unwillingness and limited capacity to change their behaviour.

Accordingly implementing agents failed to notice, intentionally ignored, or selectively attended to policies that were inconsistent with their own interests and agendas. In such cases, implementation of policies failed because the

implementers did not do what they were told to do, and thus did not act in ways that would maximise policy objectives. Local choices about how (or whether) to put a policy into practice have more significance for policy outcomes than policy features such as technology, programme design, funding levels, or government requirements. Change ultimately has to occur at the level of the smallest unit. What actually happens as the result of the implementation of a policy depends on how the policy is interpreted and transformed at each point in the process, and finally, on the response of the individual at the end of the line. Policy makers need to anticipate difficulties and blockages, rather than to be surprised by them.

Focusing on local capacity and will? McLaughlin (1998) explains that education policy making, which operates on the scale of state and civil society, and which deals with government intention and action, often struggles to mandate what matters on the terrain of schools and classrooms. The actual effect of a policy depends on how the policy is interpreted and transformed at each point in the process. In other words, policy cannot command or order that quality teaching and learning will occur in schools and classrooms. For example, policy cannot always mandate what matters to outcomes at the local level. Individual incentives and beliefs are central to local responses, effective implementation requires a strategic balance of pressure and support and policy-directed change ultimately is a problem of the smallest unit. The local expertise, organisational routines and resources available to support planned change efforts generate fundamental differences in the ability of practitioners to plan, execute or sustain innovative effort. Implementation is more likely to succeed if support is provided in the form of finances and teacher training, on condition that the support is substantial and continues over a period of years. The presence of the will or commitment to embrace policy objectives or strategies is a pre-condition for generating the amount of effort and energy necessary for a project to succeed.

Another account for policy not being translated into practice is that policy implementation requires a strategic balance over pressure and support. Pressure

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may be used to achieve changes in behaviour (for example, complying with the rule that staff and students must come to school on time). However, pressure seldom changes people's beliefs and values (for example, it cannot make staff and students enthusiastic about coming to school). Pressure is important in focusing attention on what is required, but it needs to be accompanied by support. Support might be used to build capacity and will (motivation). However, experience shows that support alone is not enough to change peoples' practices. A combination of pressure and support is essential for the achievement of policy change. Though pressure is needed to concentrate attention on a specific innovation, it must be balanced by support, in the form of expert assistance and finance.

Although attitudinal changes among teachers and administrators are difficult to achieve, such changes occur if local leaders show commitment to the project and convey a sense of enthusiasm to school staff. In part, questions of motivation and commitment reflect an implementer's assessment of the value of a policy or the appropriateness of a strategy. However, motivation and commitment are influenced by factors largely beyond the reach of policy. Environmental stability, contending priorities or pressures and other aspects of the social-political milieu can influence implementer willingness profoundly.

McLaughlin (1998) also suggests that teachers' resistance to new policies might, in some cases, reflect their professional judgement that new policies are no better than those that are already in place. Policies that fit their agendas are more likely to be implemented, and those that do not are more likely to be either opposed or modified so that they do fit. The implementing agent's ability to ignore policy is in great part a function of the nature of their work, which involves unpredictable human relations not reducible to programmatic routines or easily regulated and monitored from above by principals. Implementing agents also often lack the capacity, the knowledge, skills, personnel and other resources necessary to work in ways that are consistent with policy.

2.5 LIMITATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL ACCOUNTS

While these conventional accounts discussed above provide wonderful insights into the difficulty of curriculum policy change for schools (on implementation), they do not seem to explain adequately the disjuncture between policy initiatives and teachers' roles in the process. This is because many of these conventional accounts, regardless of the variables they foreground? assume that implementers understand a policy's intended messages or that failure to understand stems from the policy's ambiguity.

Recent work however, challenges some of these assumptions. Following Fullan (1993), an understanding of the subjective way in which teachers mediate meaning through assumption and perceptions, and in which they act with regard to policy has an impact on the possibilities of realising the educational ideals represented by such policy. Teachers will not change their practice, adopt new methods, or rethink their approach if they do not believe in the goals of the reform. This means that portrayals? of implementing agents as resisters and saboteurs working to circumvent policy proposals that do not advance their self-interest are insufficient to account for these outcomes. Fullan (1993) later concludes that any effort to reform education should recognise how "personal purpose and vision are the starting agenda" of any change campaign "because the will to change is situated within the individual, a framework for reform needs to be guided by a moral dimension, which underscores the teachers' roles as 'agents of educational change and societal improvement'" (1993: 13).

Based on the foregoing and drawing on Spillane *et al.* (2002), I suggest that by assuming that implementing agents understand what policy makers are asking them to do, is what most conventional accounts theories fail to take into account, namely the complexity of human sense-making. In these conventional accounts implementing agents are portrayed, either implicitly or explicitly, as intentionally interpreting policy to fit their own agendas, interests, and resources. Consistent

with their rational-choice foundation, these accounts assume that teachers are responding to the ideas intended by policy makers, which they either ignore or modify. Viewing failure of implementation as demonstrating a lack of capacity or a deliberate attempt to ignore policy overlooks the complexity of the sense-making process. Also the process by which implementing agents come to understand policy, the understandings that result and the consequences of those understandings for policy implementation are rarely analysed explicitly in conventional implementation models.

According to many authors, sense-making is not a simple decoding of the policy message; in general the process of comprehension is an active process of interpretation that draws on the individual's rich knowledge base of understandings, beliefs, and attitudes Carey, (1995); Markus & Zajonc, (1985); Rumelhart, (1980); Schank & Abelson, (1977) all cited in Spillane *et al.,* (2002). Differences in interpretation or in acting on understandings are a necessary aspect of the human understanding process. Blignaut (2008), also commenting on conventional explanations to curriculum implementation problems, also holds the view that these conventional theories fail to consider the complexity of human sense-making. The challenge of meaning is how those involved in change can come to understand what it is that should change, and how it can be best accomplished, whilst realising that the what and how constantly interact and reshape each other. On these grounds it is my contention that allegiance to the conventional curriculum implementation perspectives that neglected teachers' own personal roles in the change process has contributed considerably to the lack of transformation of teachers' classroom practices.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1996) also underscore that education policy makers and administrators typically overlook the role that a teacher's sense of understanding plays in education change. Thus implementing agents' sense-making provides numerous opportunities, aside from any wilful or intentional efforts to revise policy to fit with local agendas, for the transformation of policy makers' ideas

about changing local practice. To explain the influences on implementation, in contrast to these conventional accounts, we must explore the mechanisms by which implementing agents understand policy and attempt to connect understanding with practice.

In the following section I explore a third and emerging paradigm that holds considerable promise for attempts to bridge the gap between curriculum policy initiatives and teachers sense-making. It reviews the contributions of the cognitive perspective developed by *Spillane et al*. (2002) on curriculum implementation in the course of their research studies on Mathematics and Science Teaching reform in Michigan between 1992 and 1996. Cognitive science can make a contribution to the implementation debate, especially with regard to recent education policy initiatives in South Africa, such as the outcomes-based education (OBE) that pressed for tremendous changes in curriculum change in South Africa.

It may be helpful at this point to explore some of the terms and attributes of the cognitive perspective that I use in this study. I shall begin with a very short explanation on the concept of cognition, though widely known amongst scholars and then move on to a detailed review of the integrative cognitive framework, showing how it becomes an interpretivist tool for analysis in this study.

2.6 FRAMING COGNITIVISM

Cognitive science is the interdisciplinary study of how information is represented and transformed in the brain. Christopher Longuet-Higgins coined the term in 1973. It spans many levels of analysis, from low-level learning and decision mechanisms to high-level logic and planning, from neural circuitry to modular brain organisation. This study of science has a pre-history traceable back to ancient Greek philosophical texts since its beginnings in the 1930s and 1940s, with authors such as Warren McCulloch and Walter Pitts, who sought to

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understand the organising principle of the brain. McCulloch and Pitts developed the first variants of what are now known as artificial neural networks, models of computation inspired by the structure of biological neural networks. In the 1970s and early 1980s, much cognitive science research focused on the possibility of artificial intelligence. This was an attempt to formally characterise the steps that human beings went through for instance, in making decisions and solving problems in the hope of better understanding human thought and also in the hope of creating artificial minds. The late '80s and '90s saw the rise of neural networks and connectionism as a research paradigm. Under this point of view, the mind could be characterised as a set of complex associations, represented as a layered network.

Next I will illuminate the interpretive or sense-making dimension of the implementation process.

2.7 SKETCHING THE COGNITIVE SENSE-MAKING FRAMEWORK

The cognitive sense-making framework developed and advanced by Spillane *et al.* (2002) is designed to underscore the need to take account of and to unpack implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy. Moving beyond a purely behavioural focus on what implementing agents do, this framework articulates a model for how implementing agents construct understandings of the policy message, construct an interpretation of their own practice in light of the message and draw conclusions about potential changes in their practice as a result. A cognitive perspective underscores that behavioural changes have a fundamental cognitive component. From this perspective, a policy message about changing the behaviour of implementing agents is not a given that resides in the policy signal (e.g., legislation, brochures, regulations). Policy messages are not inert, static ideas that are transmitted unaltered into local actors' minds to be accepted, rejected, or modified to fit local needs and conditions. Rather, the

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agents must first notice, then frame, interpret and construct meaning in policy messages.

Spillane *et al*. (2002) outlined their integrative framework as threefold: the individual implementing agent; the situation in which sense-making occurs; and the policy signals. By doing this, they suggested that what individuals' make of new information has much to do with their prior knowledge, expertise, values, beliefs, and experiences.

The constituent parts/core elements of the cognitive framework can be represented in the following adapted figure:
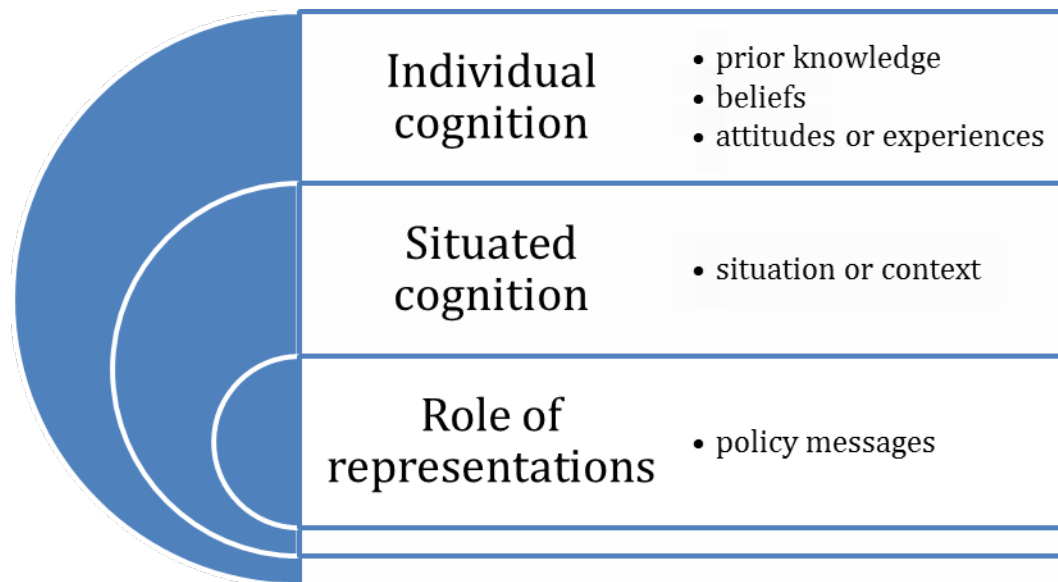
Figure 1: The dynamics of the cognitive approach (Adapted from Spillane *et al.*, 2002).

As portrayed in Figure 1, the meaning of a policy for a teacher is constituted in the interaction of their existing individual cognition (including knowledge,

beliefs, and attitudes), their situated cognition and the policy signals. How teachers understand a policy message depends to a great extent on the teachers' repertoire of existing knowledge and experience. This means that teachers' prior beliefs and practices can pose challenges not only because they are unwilling to adapt to new policies, but also because their existing subjective knowledge may interfere with their ability to interpret and implement a reform in ways consistent with policy makers' intent. Conceptualising the problem of implementation in this way focuses attention on how implementing agents construct the meaning of a policy message and their own behaviour, and how this process leads or does not lead to a change in how they view their own practice, potentially leading to changes in both understanding and behaviour.

With reference to the second element, a considerable body of literature exist that emphasises the importance of context, as school teaching does not take place in a vacuum, but is part of a unique context Lortie, (1975); Bryk, Lee & Holland, (1993) and Louis & Kruse, (1995) all cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002). What this means is that implementing agents' sense-making is situated in particular "thought communities," and organisations. On the basis of this, consideration is given as to how aspects of the situation influence what implementing agents notice and how they interpret what they notice.

Considering the third element, the design challenge for policy makers involves representing ideas about instruction in ways that enable the implementing agent's sense-making. Inherent in this task is a critical tension between the abstract and the concrete in communicating the ideas.

Below I address each element separately. Some of the views may overlap with what has been said in Chapter One and the previous section. But this is an exposition of each of these three core elements of the cognitive sense-making perspective as outlined by Spillane *et al.* (2002). The first one is individual cognition, followed by situated cognition and thirdly the role of policy

representations. Under each element, the different cognitive processes involved in the sense-making of the curriculum implementation process are expounded.

2.8 CONSTRUCTING THE ELEMENTS OF THE COGNITIVE SENSE-MAKING PROCESS

2.8.1 The implementing agent as a sense-maker

The first component of the cognitive framework involves applying the mechanisms of comprehension and sense-making to an analysis of the implementers' sense-making of policy and the complex practices of learning and teaching. The cognitive processes involved in this element of the framework will now be discussed.

2.8.1.1 Prior knowledge and sense-making

It is clear, in many cases that agents faithfully attempt to implement reforms, but fail to do so. Teachers' prior beliefs and practices can pose challenges not only in as far as they might be unwilling to change in the direction of the policy, but also because their understandings might interfere with their ability to interpret and implement the reform in ways that are consistent with the designers' intent. Due consideration must be given to what role prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences play in shaping agents' understanding of policy and their relation to it. Considering the role of human sense-making in implementing policy underscores the importance of unintentional failures of implementation, while still allowing for wilful misinterpretation. What is of paramount importance is not simply that implementing agents choose to respond to policy, but also what they understand themselves to be responding to.

The "what" of policy only begins with the policy texts, such as directions, goals, and, regulations. The content of policy, concerning its ideas about changing

extant behaviour, depends crucially on the ideas, expertise and experiences of the implementing agents. Individuals must use their prior knowledge and experience to notice, make sense of, interpret and react to incoming stimuli, all the while actively constructing meaning from their interactions with the environment of which policy is part. Cognitive researchers such as Cohen & Weiss for instance, write that "when research is used in policy making, it is mediated through users' 'earlier knowledge,' with the policy message 'supplementing' rather than 'supplanting' teachers' and other implementing agents' prior knowledge and practice" (2000: 394).

Building on the work of Cohen & Weiss (2000), the cognitive emphasises the need to construct new understandings of policy on present understanding, supplementing rather than replacing knowledge. Thus they emphasise "sense-making," rather than referring simply to "information encoding" or "interpretation" in order to focus on active attempts to bring one's past organisation of knowledge and beliefs to bear in the construction of meaning from present stimuli. All acts of understanding require accessing prior knowledge and applying it to guide the noticing, framing and connecting of new ideas and events to what is already encoded in memory. Such a process is active, not a passive encoding of information and that, which is novel, is always seen in terms of past understandings. To a large extent , "people generate what they interpret – they create the environment, and select the cues and signals that they interpret", Cohen & Weiss (2000:394),

This importance of accessing the known and familiar in order to make sense of new stimuli has been a recurring theme in the cognitive studies of comprehension, which have drawn on early notions of building and the use of Gestalt schemas and developmental psychology. The fundamental nature of the notion is that new information is always interpreted in the light of what is already understood. An individual's prior knowledge and experience including tacitly held expectations and beliefs about how the world works, serve as a lens, which

influence what the individual notices in the environment and how those stimuli which are noticed are processed, encoded, organised and subsequently interpreted. Cognitive theorists such as Spillane *et al*. (2002) conceptualise this notion as schemas. Schemas according to them are knowledge structures that link together related concepts used to make sense of the world and to make predictions. They represent understandings of complexes of ideas related to everyday objects and events, such as "kitchen," "classroom," or "reviewing homework." Schemas can guide the processing of cognitive and social information, helping to focus information processing and enabling the individual to use past understandings to see patterns in rich or ambiguous information. Once assessed, a schema can focus on the interpretation of information presented in such a context. What is understood in a new message depends on the existing knowledge base. Apart from throwing light on how a lack of knowledge interferes with the ability to understand, such an approach explains how different agents construct different understandings and allow what is new to be understood in terms of what is already known and believed. With this, cognitive theorists mean that what we see is influenced by what we expect to see.

A second implication of the sense-making framework concerns the difficulty of major restructuring as part of learning. In the early accounts of learning and development Piaget (1972) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002), stresses the importance of what he termed "accommodation" or the restructuring of existing knowledge. However, the complementary process of "assimilation" which refers to the encoding of stimuli into existing knowledge frameworks often forms the core of perception and action. Assimilation according to Piaget, is a conserving process, as it strives to "make the unfamiliar familiar" transforming the new into the old. On the other hand, "assimilation" or programming stimuli into existing frames is often the central part of perception and action. According to Flavell (1963) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002: 394), assimilation is a conserving process, as it strives to "make the unfamiliar familiar, to reduce the new to the old."

Thus, the sense-making framework implies that learning new ideas, such as instructional approaches, is not simply an act of encoding the new ideas. Learning requires restructuring a complex of existing schemas, with the new ideas being possibly misconceived as minor variations of what is already understood, rather than as different in critically important ways.

A third implication of the sense-making framework concerns the mechanisms of assessing and applying knowledge structures. In the light of this, this framework sees the concrete features of a situation as highly salient. The superficial aspects of a situation, although not the most significant for deep conceptual analysis, nevertheless serve as effective memory triggers for superficially similar situations. People often rely on superficial similarities when accessing related information from memory, even when knowledge structures connected by means of deeper principles might be more relevant. Experts can see deeper meaningful patterns in problem situations, which might not be apparent to novices. Experts focus their attention on features of stimuli that are more significant conceptually: they can see situations in terms of the larger concepts and core principles of a specific domain. The difficulty that this poses for reform is that agents with less expertise in the substance of the reforms might come to rely more than they should on superficial similarity, assuming that two situations are similar in important principled ways, because they are similar in salient superficial ways.

In the next three sections, I examine the evidence for each of the implications of the cognitive sense-making framework. Firstly, I consider how top-down comprehension can lead to differences in the interpretation of the same messages and experiences. Secondly, I consider the obstacles to true restructuring, and the dangers of seeing what should be partially new ideas as mere examples of what is already known. Finally, I consider how implementing agents might be distracted by superficial similarities, becoming overconfident about their success in achieving the true principles of the reform.

2.8.1.2 Different interpretations of the same message

Different teachers may receive the same policy message and interpret ideas such as "inquiry" in very different ways. Misunderstandings about implementation cannot be blamed on lack of effort, incomplete buy-in, or explicit rejection of reform. Certain studies have also underscored how teachers' and administrators' prior knowledge and practice tend to influence their ideas on changing instructional practice, (Cohen & Barnes (1993), Guthrie (1990) and Jennings (1992) all cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002). In these studies, even teachers who used the same language (e.g., in terms of reading strategies) did not have identical conceptions about how to revise reading instruction. Some differences they indicated might have been due to teachers' varying opportunities to learn about the policy, including the policy texts available, the related professional development workshops and the guidance and support available from the district or school.

Yet teachers who encounter the policy in the same policy texts or who experience the same professional development opportunities understand the policy's message differently. Teachers' beliefs about subject matter, teaching students and learning which are based on their interpretation of state and national standards influence their practice. These studies reveal the importance of the meanings that implementing agents create when they interpret policy messages.

2.8.1.3 Agents can misunderstand new ideas as familiar, hindering change

Another implication of the top-down nature of comprehension is that ideas may seem more familiar than they actually are. Schematic knowledge is accessed automatically by people and used to guide understanding. Thus, when implementing agents present an instructional idea, it might be interpreted as essentially being the same as the belief or practice that the teachers already hold. Existing knowledge structures help to focus understanding and might lead to the

rejection of information that does not agree with such interpretations. The cognitive perspective thus suggests that seeing new ideas as familiar hinders implementation. This means that fundamental conceptual change requiring the restructuring of existing knowledge is extremely difficult. Understanding involves accessing relevant structures in memory and applying them to make sense of what is presented.

The top-down nature of the process often causes inconsistencies or results in unexpected features being overlooked. In some situations however, features that violate expectations might become the focus of attention since they are noticed and remembered as inconsistent information when one should be attentive to all details. The incongruities involved might trigger explanatory reasoning to account for the violation of expectations. Learning in respect of fundamentally restructuring prior beliefs is difficult, even in the case of focused instruction. More typically, people encode new information by adapting it to fit what they know; or they encode it without exploring the implications of the new ideas for what they already know, resulting in their possessing pockets of inconsistent knowledge.

In conclusion, peoples' usual approach to processing new knowledge is a conservative process entailing their preservation of existing frameworks rather than their radical transformation of them. New ideas are either understood as familiar ones, without sufficient attention being paid to aspects that diverge from the familiar, or they are integrated without restructuring existing knowledge and beliefs resulting in piecemeal changes being made in existing practice. Thus, the teachers constructed understandings of the reform fit into their existing models of instruction. Only by substantially rethinking the ideas they hold can important differences between the intended policy and the teachers' understanding be attained. Teachers see new policies in terms of their current understandings, interpreting reforms, , in terms of policy changes but linked to access to more textbooks or an emphasis on hands-on activities. The usefulness of change ideas

are also "filtered" by teachers and only adopted if considered to be of value to their practices.

2.8.1.4 Understanding might focus on superficial features, missing deeper relationships

This section describes how people can be misled by superficial similarities in situations. Only with substantial expertise can they look beneath the surface and recognise deeper principles. For this reason, agents might contrast classroom implementation with goals, seeing similarities which might only be superficial as important. They may perceive an implementation to be as intended by the policy makers, due to the core surface features such as "problem solving," "using manipulatives" or "hands-on activities" being represented as ways of doing required in such an implementation process. Unfortunately when it comes to the implementation process, especially the implementation of policies that press for complex and novel changes in extant behaviour, most implementing agents are novices. Few are experts when policy charts new terrain.

2.8.1.5 Values, emotions and motivated reasoning in sense-making

Here, the debates about reform concern more than purely scientific and empirical questions about the nature of learning, and the most effective ways in which to teach. Indeed, changes in teaching practice affect the core behaviours that are central to one's self-image. Hence, one's motivations, goals and affect come into play in making sense of and reasoning about reforms. The rich connections of abstract intellectual ideas, such as the concept of inquiry in science to deeply held values, colours the cognitive processes involved in understanding, interpreting and acting on reform initiatives. The influence of motivation and effect on cognitive processing is called "hot cognition" or "motivated reasoning" by social psychologists Dunning (1999) and Kunda (1999) as cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002).

2.8.1.6 People are biased toward interpretations consistent with their prior beliefs and values

There are a number of ways that goals affect and biases can influence reasoning about complex judgements. Existing structures can be very resistant to change and an individual's own experiences are more heavily counted in reasoning about debates than those of external experts. Concrete and familiar examples from one's own experiences carry more weight in judgement and decision making than abstract information does. Furthermore, strong motivation can affect the way in which reasoning is carried out, leading people to pay more attention to information consistent with the desired outcome or to discount inconsistent information. For example, according to Klayman and Ha (1987) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002: 401), if implementing agents are presented with a problematic idea such as the need for substantial changes in the way they teach science, they see this as a bias towards asserting that "things are working fine as they are" and that this may lead them to focus on information from experience consistent with that point of view. On the other hand, according to Edwards and Smith (1996), motivation towards an outcome can also affect the investment we make in reasoning, so that implementing agents commit more effort to understanding and evaluating undesirable evidence than to desirable evidence, which is more easily accepted.

Also on motivation in the cognitive perspective Sanitioso, Kunda & Fong (1990) argue that it can also affect the use of personal memories in reasoning, biasing or searching one's memory to recall examples consistent with the target assertion. They use the example that if one is pressured to assert, that one is behaving in ways consistent with a reform initiative, so one may more easily recall examples consistent with the reforms. For Sanitioso, Kunda & Fong (1990) this is particularly critical given the tendency discussed earlier to make superficial connections rather than deeper connections. Hence implementing agents may

jump to conclusions and focus unduly on familiar aspects in understanding new policies or reform initiatives.

2.8.1.7 The affective costs to self-image can work against adopting reforms

According to cognitive theorists Bower & Forgas, (2000); Ortony, Clore & Collins, (1988) all cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002) affect is an important part of memory. Here these authors highlight emotional associations that are an integral part of knowledge structures used to reason about the world, and which might affect reasoning about value-laden issues, accessing to them, emotional associations can affect the judgements that people make; for example, negative effects might lead to more pessimistic judgement.. For them, reasoning about changes in one's core practices is likely to engage affective responses and these responses may colour perception and judgement. As a result one may persevere in behaviours that have been rewarding in the past, or shy away from ideas perceived to be similar to negative experiences, such as unsuccessful attempts at reform teaching.

A related factor according to these cognitive theorists is the strong motivation to maintain a positive self-image. Typically they hold that people want to believe that they have performed well in the past and are hesitant to believe that their efforts have failed. As such, reasoning and judgements about changes in one's core practices are likely to engage affective responses and trigger a motivation to affirm one's own value. This bias towards self-affirmation can affect judgements, exerting pressure in favour of the view that what one has done in the past has value or that whatever threat is challenging self-esteem can be discounted. Alternatively, teachers might accept the need for change, but attribute the reasons for not adopting the reform to factors in their context (the children, the parents, lack of support from administrators). In any of these situations, the challenge to self-esteem and the tendency of human judgement-making to preserve self-

esteem, can work against convincing implementing agents of the need to change and of the differences between their current practices and the goals of the policy.

A few studies of teaching and of change in general have noted the importance of some of these factors. For the implementing agents, understanding and adopting an innovation often involves a reinterpretation of existing ways of thinking about the world, about themselves and about their purposes – it involves parting with some familiar ways of thinking about and acting in the world. As Hargreaves (1998) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002: 403) points out, "teaching and learning are not about knowledge and cognition alone; they are also emotional practices.".This means that some teachers, for example, are deeply upset when they encounter reforms that basically tell them that the way they have taught for ten or twenty years was "wrong". These sorts of transformations can be seen as highly emotional, involving considerable human cost. The relations between local implementing agents' values and emotions on the one hand, and what teachers come to understand about reforming their practice from policy on the other hand, is one of the areas where studies of cognitive science and social cognition can help frame new lines of inquiry into the implementation process.

The cognitive framework has considered how an individual's prior knowledge and belief systems affect how they make sense of policy, and how they translate that understanding into action. By adding the dimension of social context suggests another way that differences in knowledge affect sense-making and action in implementation. The following section explains this second construct of the cognitive sense-making process and the role of its cognitive entities within this construct.

2.8.2 The implementing agent as social sense-maker

Although individual cognition and the search for universal patterns are important, sense-making is not a solo affair. According to Spillane et al (2002), social

psychologists, scholars working on situated and distributed cognition and researchers working in the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory traditionally all argue the importance of situation in human cognition. However, their treatment of it differs in some important respects. Social psychologists tend to explore how representations of knowledge about social situation influence individuals' cognition and their frames and schemas for understanding new knowledge. Scholars like Greeno (1998) who was working in the situated and distributed cognition traditions, treat situation as a constituting element of sense-making activity, shifting the level of analysis from the individual's knowledge structure to the activity system. For them it is important that sense-making and action are distributed in the interactive web of actors, artefacts and situation, and that this system becomes the appropriate level of analysis.

2.8.2.1 Sense-making occurs in a social context

In this construct, the framework has considered how knowledge embedded in social contexts as the practices and common beliefs of a community, affects sense-making and action in implementation. The argument within this framework is that situation or context is a multifaceted construct, which includes a wide range of topics ranging from national and professional identities to the structures of the offices and organisations in which people work. Implementing agents encounter policy within a complex web of organisational structures, professional affiliations, social networks and traditions. Both macro and micro aspects of the situation are important for the sense-making of implementing agents.

At a macro level, individuals' mental frameworks or schema for apprehending new knowledge depends on their "thought communities" or "worldviews." People typically belong to multiple thought communities by virtue of their national and ethnic identity, their religious affiliation, their membership of social class, their professional identity and their political leanings. According to Vaughan (1996), by virtue of our position to the world – doctor, parent, child,

and so forth – we develop a unique set of experiences, assumptions and expectations. From this integrated set of experiences and expectations we construct a "worldview, or frame of reference," that shapes our perceptions of things. This means that implementing agents' ways of categorising the world in which they live, which they have acquired by means of their socialisation as children and adolescents, and their socialisation into particular professions, influence how they define things and the meanings that they attribute to them.

An aspect of the situation highlighted by the cognitive perspective that has featured prominently in scholarship is the institutional sector – such as schools, hospitals, social service agencies – in which implementing agents work. From an institutional perspective, social agents' thinking and action are situated in institutional sectors that provide norms, rules and definitions of the environment, both constraining and enabling action. These tacit schemata define appropriate structures and give meaning and order to action in institutional sectors. Institutional theory then challenges models of social and organisational action in which relatively autonomous actors are seen as operating with unbounded rationality. Showing that individual cognition and agency are constrained by the institutional sectors in which they are situated, the cognitive perspective illuminates how different sectors structure work practices, innovations and the implementation process.

At a micro level, the immediate environment that the cognitive framework might consider in terms of the organisational arrangements of the workplace, contributes to defining the ways in which people make sense of new experiences and situations. Social norms and organisational structures are important contexts for implementing agents' work and their effort to make sense of policy. Individuals draw on existing reservoirs of individual and collective knowledge to determine what particular policies mean, in order to decide on how to respond to policy makers' recommendations. Ball's (1994b) work on the local response to education policy in the United Kingdom shows how policy texts' evolve as they

are apprehended and read in different local contexts, which entail shifts in the meaning of the policy message.

Social interactions can aid sense-making not only because individuals learn from one another, but also because group interactions bring insights and perspectives to the surface that otherwise might not be visible to the group. Discussing ambiguous situations with co-workers might allow an individual to be exposed to alternative interpretations of shared stimuli. Calling on the distributed expertise of their communities, local actors can mediate confusing situations by interacting with their colleagues, leveraging the knowledge that is situated in social relationships.

2.8.2.2 Social interactions can shape sense-making in implementation

Studies of the mediating role played by teachers' professional communities in their construction of messages about their practice, which they learn about in policy documents and other sources, underscore the importance of socially mediated sense-making in the implementation process. As members of a community interact over time in response to problems of shared concern, they negotiate meanings about the nature of their work and, in some instances, share understandings about what they need from outsiders (e.g. the district or state) to do their work well. Such shared understandings become a filter for ideas about how to revise extant practice.

Reporting on another implementation study of teachers' responses to state and national Mathematics and Science standards, Spillane & Zeuli (1999) illuminate how social context influences the ways in which teachers make sense of policy and the need to revise their practice. According to these findings, the potency of policy levers in getting teachers to change their practice depends in part on teachers' "enactment zones," the spaces where the world of policy meets the world of practice. Teachers' local contexts of enactment serve as a powerful

mediating function between policy levers and classroom practice. The study highlights three areas in which the enactment zones of teachers differ: the extent to which the zones are social rather than individualistic; the extent to which they involve rich deliberations with other teachers and reform experts about instruction; and the extent to which they include material resources or artefacts that support those deliberations. Teachers whose enactment extends beyond their individual classrooms to include frequent and on-going deliberations with fellow teachers and other experts about the policy proposals and their implications for practice understand the standards in ways that resonate with policy makers' proposals. Those teachers undertake fundamental changes in their instructional practice, changing its core in response to the standards. Most teachers in the study, however, have enactment zones that are mostly private and individualistic and afford them very few opportunities to grapple with meaning of policy makers' proposals for revising practice. They undertake less fundamental, frequently surface-level, changes in their practice. Thus, although the teachers in the study by Spillane & Zeuli (1999) all receive the same policy message, the presence of a social context that supports productive group sense-making leads to more substantial engagement with the policy ideas

2.8.2.3 Sense-making is affected by the organisational context

According to this construct, human interaction patterns in schools and other delivery agencies are, in part, a function of organisational structure. What this means is that organisational arrangements can either hamper or enable interactions among implementing agents in relation to policy and practice. For example, in schools the prevailing "egg-carton" structure in which teachers work chiefly as isolates with little interaction with colleagues, undermines opportunities for teachers to test or be exposed to alternative understandings of policy proposals. According to Hargreaves & Fullan (1996), schools vary in their ways of structuring the work of teaching, especially in the extent to which their structural arrangements support interactions among the staff about their work.

For them these arrangements are especially influential when it comes to the adoption of innovations by schools. What they further mean by this is that teacher collaboration can provide access to new ideas and knowledge as well as incentives for instructional improvement, and when focused on student learning, can contribute to improvements in student performance.

Like Hargreaves & Fullan (1996), recent implementation research suggests that organisational arrangements are also important when it comes to the implementation of state education policy. For example, Wolf (2000) illuminates how organisational arrangements and norms can enable the implementation of reform by providing opportunities for implementing agents to deliberate. In his study of the Kentucky Instructional Reform Act, on Michigan's state reading policy, he argues that the development of the human capital necessary for successful implementation is closely tied to the school's social capital as reflected in relations of trust and collaboration among school staff. He further illuminates how teachers' limited opportunities to talk with each other about reading practice and about policy makers' proposals for revising it, contribute to substantial differences among teachers (even within the same building) in the meanings that they construct about revising their practice on the basis of the reforms.

According to Cohen, Spillane, Jennings & Grants (1998) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002), organisational arrangements are also influential in the sense-making process at other levels of the school system. The study of a district office's role in the implementation of state policy illuminates how organisational arrangements can contribute to the construction of multiple and sometimes contradictory understandings in the same office about the same policy on revising instruction. Specifically, they indicate that responsibility for reading instruction in the district office is often divided among subunits such as an assessment office, a staff development office and a curriculum office. The study reveals that district administrators' situations influence their understandings of reading policy; that

is, organisational arrangements and the accompanying vertical and horizontal segmentation of responsibility enable different parts of these school districts to construct the policy message differently and to respond separately and often in different ways. These researchers find that different subunits take their cues from different parts of the school system, cues that influence their particular missions. The result is that efforts to enact the reading reforms vary among subunits because they construe and prioritise state policy through their distinct missions and respond to the policy in ways that reflect those different understandings. Cohen *et al.* (1998) conclude that different subunits send teachers different, and at times, conflicting messages about the reforming reading instruction. The Michigan reading policy study illuminates how overlapping contexts situate teachers' efforts to make sense of state reading standards and other education policies.

2.8.2.4 The historical context affects sense-making in implementation

A historical perspective, at both individual and organisational levels, is also important because situation involves more than the here and now. As is the case with individually held beliefs, most of what people know about the cultures that they inhabit is tacit – learned primarily through experience and the unconscious integration of contextual cues from being immersed as a member of the community. It is this tacit knowledge, actively acquired through participation in a culture, which forms the basis of an individual's belief and expectations about how to act in a certain situation. Arguing for a person-centred approach to policy analysis, Lewis and Maruna (1998) suggest that individual life histories and biographies may be useful analytical tools for investigating the implementation of public policy. They hold that recent work in this tradition shows how the life stories of implementing agents help to account for the way they make sense of and respond to reform proposals. According to Drake, Spillane & Hufferd-Ackles (2001), organisations also have histories that can be especially influential in the efforts of implementing agents to understand what a policy is asking of them.

Hence the history of an implementing agency, as embodied in organisational norms and stories, serves as an influential context for implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy.

The next section discusses the third construct in the sense-making process, i.e. the role of policy messages and the different cognitive processes entailed within this construct.

2.8.3 Policy design, representation and implementing agents' sense-making

This section shows the importance of policy design in the implementation process as represented through verbal and written media, including regulations, directives, legislation, workshops and pamphlets of various sorts. The message and design of policies significantly influence implementing agents' sense-making efforts. What is of importance here, is that some policies do better than others in enabling implementing agents to understand what is problematic about their current behaviour and to construct more appropriate practices in overcoming areas of difficulty related to implementation.

2.8.3.1 Substantive rather than superficial change is very difficult

The first issue is the difficulty of restructuring belief systems because of the cognitive complexity and affective challenges that this process involves. According to the cognitive perspective, policies are not monolithic. Some policies press for tremendous changes in existing behaviour, others seek less fundamental changes. These differences matter greatly when it comes to policy implementation. The tractability of the problem that a policy seeks to address, coupled with the nature of change, influences the implementation process. In the cognitive framework, the nature of the changes sought by policy makers is also important because some changes involve more complex cognitive transformations for implementing agents than others.

Focusing on the balance between continuity, growth and loss, Marris (1975) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002) identifies three levels of social change. The first level is incremental change, which requires little or no alteration of the extant purposes or expectations of the people undertaking the change. The example that Marris (1975) uses here is that changing the time at which a particular mathematical skill or topic is taught during the school year requires no alteration of the teacher's existing instructional purposes and expectations. The second level of change requires growth on the part of those undertaking change, but extant purposes and expectations can remain intact. According to Marris (1975) such change can be incorporated into existing schemas and frameworks rather than undermining them. The third level of change represents loss for the implementing agent, in that it necessitates the discrediting of existing schemas and frameworks. This level of social change is, according to Marris (1975), the most difficult to achieve because the more fundamental the changes sought by an innovation, the greater the extent to which existing schemas must be restructured to form coherent understandings of the new ideas.

Although the cognitive framework is relevant for all types of changes promoted by public policy, it is especially relevant for considering policies that require implementing agents to give up existing frameworks and schemas. Policies that seek more complex and fundamental changes in local behaviour are more prone to implementation problems because they require such fundamental changes in agents' knowledge structures.

As discussed before, implementing agents may rely excessively on superficial similarities between their current practice and the reform ideas and may lose important aspects of the reform in the push to assimilate them into existing knowledge structures. These agents may also face affective challenges in coming to terms with problems with their current practice. Hence reforms often reflect the superficial aspects of a new policy rather than the deeper ideas intended by reformers.

2.8.3.2 The tension between general principles and specific examples in the representation of policy

From the cognitive perspective, external representations are interpretations, only partial depictions of social reality, reflecting choices made by individuals creating the representations about what to include, what to exclude, and what problems have been addressed / targeted. Analysing how the policy makers external representations enable or constrain implementing agents' sense-making is pivotal from a cognitive perspective. Accordingly, Spillane *et al.s'* (2002) examination of state and national policies suggests that policies differ with respect to their external representations; the dominant mode for representing reform ideas is as a series of brief, often one-sentence statements cast as goals or objectives. According to them other external representations of reform ideas are found less frequently, including extended essays that attempt to unpack the key change ideas and justify the changes, as well as vignettes that illuminate the reform ideas as they might be applied in practice.

This means that policy makers face serious challenges in crafting a system to communicate and enforce reforms. The goal is to communicate deep underlying principles rather than the superficial aspects of specific examples. Using the following example, in reforms for teaching approaches in science education Spillane *et al.* (2002) highlight in their study that the core change advocated by national standards is specified in terms of using inquiry as a fundamental element of teaching. As a result the standards assert that "inquiry into authentic questions generated from student experiences is the central strategy for teaching science." Inquiry is contrasted with simply learning terminology and scientific facts. Similarly in the mathematics reforms, according to Spillane *et al*. (2002) a core idea is "teaching for understanding" rather than for learning of algorithms. This example for these authors means that policy documents need to focus on underlying principles rather than advocating a particular programme or prescribing a particular set of practices, such as using mathematics manipulatives

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or "science projects." Yet the language of the abstract principle is very susceptible to being understood in superficial and idiosyncratic ways from the perspective of agents' existing belief and knowledge systems. There is thus a very real tension between communicating abstract principles and being concrete enough to provide adequate constraint on the understanding process.

Communicating the rationale that motivates a reform is critical. Indeed, the surface form of practices can be implemented in such a way as to miss the underlying intent of the reform. Adopting a practice without understanding or fully constructing the underlying idea can lead to these types of "lethal mutations." On the other hand, it is well known that many teachers characterise their teaching as consistent with reform when the judgement of observers differs from theirs. Fullan (2001) describes that belief by teachers as "false clarity." This means that people can mean very different things in such a report. Indeed, practitioners often develop a superficial understanding of the reform, viewing the reform idea as a set of specific practices.

2.8.3.3 Policy must affect a system of practices

The challenge to the communication of abstract policy ideas is, in fact, that those ideas represent a system of practices. Incoherence results when the reform is interpreted as consisting of a set of specific practices, essentially out of context. In the cognitive study by Spillane *et al.* (2002), the science teacher who interprets the reforms as prescribing an occasional activity in which students design an experiment, has not understood the system of practices necessary for scientific inquiry. It requires a different model of work for students in which classrooms focus on posing questions, generating hypotheses, building theories based on interpretation of data, socialising interpretations with others, receiving feedback and continuing the cycle of questioning, investigation and interpretation. It represents a major shift in how students think about science and how they think about their role as learners. It is a change not only in activity but also, more

fundamentally, in discourse. It is a change not only in the cognitive practices of scientific reasoning but also in the social interactions of learners and teachers. Spillane *et al.* (2002) indicate that such reform cannot be accomplished by having teachers learn only the surface ideas of reform practices. It requires grappling with the underlying ideas too and may require deep conceptual change in which teachers rethink an entire system of interacting attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

Some policy representations are likely to be more effective than others in enabling sense-making on the part of the users, helping them to develop better understandings of the intentions of the designers. A key challenge in the sense-making process is that when presented with new information, individuals tend to draw analogies to surface rather than structural features of their existing knowledge, thus misunderstanding the new information. Gentner and his colleagues (1993) as cited in Spillane *et al*. (2002: 417) point out, "when individuals are reminded of structural similarities they are more likely to draw analogies." Hence they suggest that it is critical that "policy representations supports agents in looking beneath the surface" perhaps by juxtaposing potential form- and function-based understandings of central reform ideas.

Similarly research on external representations suggests that when new ideas are represented in a manner that matches the internal representation (prior understanding) of the user, it is more likely that the ideas will be used and adopted and the targeted behaviour changed (Norman, 1988; White & Frederiksen, 1998 cited in Spillane *et al*. 2002). Hence implementing agents' internal representations or prior knowledge is a key leverage point for the representation of reform ideas in policy. Representations that build on and engage implementing agents' existing schemata are likely to enable implementing agents to construct understandings that more closely approximate policy makers' goals. If implementing agents' sense-making is central in the sense-making process, then the nature of the external representations used by

policy makers is as important a design feature as the rewards and sanctions attached to the policy to ensure that implementing agents and agencies comply.

2.8.3.4 The system for providing support for sense-making is as critical as the content of the message

A key theme of this cognitive study on Science and Mathematics teachers is that agents will need to make sense of policy. It is thus not enough simply to communicate the policy. There is a critical need to structure learning opportunities so that stakeholders can construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own behaviour. Some studies, though not many, offer additional insights into the influence of policy representations on implementing agents' sense-making from policy. For example, they concur that some recent work suggests that under the right conditions, involving classroom teachers in scoring students' tests can enhance their understanding of instructional reform proposals (Murnane & Levy, 1996 cited in Spillane *et al*. 2002). Similarly research on teachers' professional development, another context in which policy makers frequently represent their proposals for reforming practice, also offers insight. For example Cohen & Hill (2000) argue that policy is more likely to influence teaching when teachers' opportunities to learn are grounded in the curriculum that students study, are extended in time and are connected to several dimensions of teaching. Wiley & Yoon's (1995) also cited in Spillane *et al*. (2002), point to the importance of providing teachers with extended learning opportunities that are grounded in mathematics curriculum and instruction.

2.8.3.5 The tension between creating dissonance and triggering rejection

The literature on restructuring emphasises the need firstly to lead implementing agents to recognise an existing model as problematic, and secondly to focus resources and support on attempts to make sense of the novel idea of

restructuring existing beliefs and knowledge. So it is vital to create a sense of dissonance in which agents see the issues in their current practice rather than seeing the new ideas as achieved within their current practice. This dissonance, or dissatisfaction with one's own behaviour, is essential to the reinterpretation of one's beliefs. But this process cannot be too negative, or it may trigger the natural tendency toward self-affirmation, leading agents to find fault in or explain away the reform idea. Reformers need to create a context in which agents focus considerable resources on analysing practice. To avoid the risk that abstractions will be interpreted through the teachers' own schemas for practice, it is important to begin with examples and then build up to generalisations.

2.9 RATIONALE FOR USING THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE TO THE ARTS AND CULTURE IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

I have chosen to use Spillane *et al*.s' cognitive approach to curriculum implementation problems and their three core elements of processes as the basic structure of my thesis. I find in this framework, related connections between the expectations and demands of a changing educational landscape for teachers globally and especially, the observed challenges for A&C teachers as part of the outcomes-based education (OBE) in South Africa.

To round off this part of my literature review, the elements discussed that made up the cognitive approach in the proceeding sections has shown that several factors, some of which relate to both the teacher's understanding and the context in which the innovation takes place and the representations of policy messages can either, constrain or enhance curriculum innovation. In applying this theory to my study, I present some of the observed challenges for A&C teachers in striving to implement the NCS. By focusing on the interpretive or sense-making dimension of the implementation process, I am going to show that this cognitive framework is designed to underscore the need to take account of, and unpack, implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy.

Part Two reports on my conceptual framework used in this study. This conceptual framework is not about my personal experience, but contributes to the discourse of the development of the Arts and Culture learning area as part of putting curriculum implementation into South Africa schools.

The follow-up sections of this part of the chapter are devoted to the policy making process in general. I feel it is important to have a sense of how policy is defined, developed and the expected transformation is put into practice. Following on from what Christie (2008) said in Chapter One, I agree that engaging with "policy" requires critical reflection on a number of concepts that are complex and "essentially contested." This also strengthens my assumption that working definitions are necessary because the idea of "policy" makes little sense outside of these concepts. Furthermore, it is vital for teachers to have first-hand knowledge of how policy is defined before they can come to terms to what the policy directive is asking of them.

Finally, although referred to in Chapter One, I opt that a thorough discussion on curriculum change in South Africa is a prerequisite, in particular to the NCS. This is to demonstrate some of the efforts made by government officials to implement outcomes-based education in South African schools as part of the NCS and the subsequent demands and challenges for A&C teachers.

PART TWO

My conceptual framework begins with the exploration of the importance of the arts in education and its new stakes? and challenges in current educational practice. I have already presented a brief context of the Arts and Culture learning area in South Africa as part of my problem statement in Chapter One. In this chapter, I have moved to a more generalised account, discussing "culture" as an allied discipline. In this section, I do not trace the history of the discipline of

cultural studies in South Africa since the learning area does not itself define culture on that basis. Instead I attempt to unpack the multiple interpretations and interplays of culture related to curriculum in general and in a more specific South African apartheid-related context.

My intention here is to bring together the conceptualisation of culture in the Arts and Culture curriculum with the notion of the arts. These two areas were brought together by the new government through its policies and in response to public needs. This coming together created a need for a detailed and coherent curriculum policy, which was exemplified in the Arts and Culture policy framework. It came about as a result of political change and it caused a change in the curriculum landscape of art education. The creation of the new learning area is both the result of change and the cause of change. It therefore appears in two ways in my depiction of the framework.

2.10 THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS IN EDUCATION: NEW STAKES AND CHALLENGES

Throughout the past few decades, new challenges, roles and functions have developed for the arts, artists and arts educators. These have emerged as a result of developments in industry and communications and increasing urbanisation and globalisation. The arts have always played a key role in the lives of humankind, and artistic creativity and endeavour have been central to the evolution and development of human beings and human civilisation. It is in this that arts education has become crucial; since teaching and learning about the arts are not only helpful for art's sake, but for the additional benefits that children derive from arts education. For instance, this view considers that arts education encourages attention to perception and expression and contributes to the building of language and communication skills, critical thinking and time management and problem-solving skills (UNESCO, 2001).

Hence, in society, the arts play an essential role in social and development issues. Not only do they constitute some of the most effective components of participatory research and communication strategies, but they also play an important role in ensuring that development efforts are appropriate and implemented with the full participation of the community. This is particularly true of development and communication strategies among rural communities. The harmonious development of the individual, that they help to bring about, is directly linked to the development of the society. This phenomenon tends to explain why there is a growing instrumentalisation of the arts, a process that sees the arts practiced for very specific purposes in a variety of fields such as development, social integration, education and communication.

According to Dimitriadis, Cole & Costello (2009), the history of writing and research on the arts in education has been marked by the effort to justify its existence and importance. According to them, much of the contemporary justification for the arts in school can be traced to pragmatist philosopher John Dewey, whose philosophy greatly influenced education in the arts in the twentieth century. Dewey laid out a broad and ambitious project for philosophers of aesthetics to re-suture or stitch arts back into the flow and continuity of everyday life. For Dewey (1934) cited in Dimitriadis, Cole & Costello (2009: 5), arts were "refined and intensified forms of experience" that must always be connected to "everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognised to constitute experience."

More iterations of the history of arts in education came from Elliot Eisner (2002) and Maxine Greene (2001). They specifically emphasise the role that the arts play in the cognitive benefits of arts education. For Eisner (2002), the arts help young people expand their imaginations and sensory capacities, thus experiencing the world in more subtle and complex ways. This expansive disposition goes beyond the affective and emotional domains alone. This means that the teacher's task is to unlock the creativity of the child, not to "teach art".

Although these ideas have taken time to become practice, they provide the materials and occasions for learning to grapple with problems that depend on arts-related forms of thinking.

The titles of Eisner's *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002) and Deasey's *Critical Links compendium* (2002) have taken up the question of arts and school curricula using traditional research methodology concerned with what habits of mind are cultivated in the arts and how these habits can transfer between different domains. For Deasey, much of it has established a correlation between arts and learning. That is, students who tend to participate in the arts, tend to be the kind of students who do well in schools.

The arts also have a historic role in the struggle for social justice, equality, democratic values and human rights in the struggle of historically marginalised communities and in the affirmation of heritage and history. In these times of globalisation, the arts promoted the recognition and value of different cultures and their diversity. The contribution of the arts to understanding cross cultures is vital in the promotion of personal and national identities. Firstly, they have helped us to rediscover a cultural heritage that has sometimes been forgotten and contribute to the establishment of a common culture. And last, but definitely not least, the arts have helped to reinforce the dynamics of social integration, based upon the interdependency and mutual benefits of artistic expression.

Arts do indeed make a difference by providing a means of exploring our cultural identity and building the future of our nation with citizens who are given the opportunity to share what they know and understand the world in which they live.

2.10.1 Tracing the history of arts in education

According to Singh (2007), industrialisation changed the nature of education in the early 1900s and paved the way for a more receptive view of arts instruction as part of formal schooling. Singh (2007) goes further stating that during the early part of the century, art was seen in two ways: an application of skills to create various crafts and the product of geniuses called artists. This means that in the early twentieth century school contexts, the utilitarian function of drama for instance, became popular. Pioneers of drama in the language learning class used drama to engage students (Taylor, 2000). According to Singh (2007) in an early Arts and Culture Policy document from 1917, Caldwell Cook advocated drama as a powerful learning medium and a conduit through which information could be taught. It was the philosophy of John Dewey (1934) that greatly influenced education in the arts in the twentieth century. Those influenced by progressivism were concerned with using art to provide children with opportunities for creative self-expression. For Singh this meant that the teacher's task was to unlock the creativity of the child, not to "teach art." Although according to her these ideas took time to become practice, but they influenced the conceptualisation of art education for the next three decades.

Furthermore Singh (2007) proclaimed that the term "creative dramatics," coined by Winifred Ward in the USA during the 1930s, indicates the direction being taken in drama in education. According to her, Ward was influenced by Dewey and she argued that creative dramatics developed the whole person. Singh (2007) went on to state that during the 1940s, influential scholars like Herbert Read (1943) in the UK, and Victor Lowenfield (1947) in the USA, published works that maintained that art education facilitated the creative development of the child.

Following Singh (2007), she states that the conceptualisation of arts education in the twentieth century changed dramatically in the latter part of the century.

Initially located in progressivism, and to some extent modernism, art education shifted into a new, more post-modern approach in the late 1980s. During the '50s, '60s and '70s, in the UK and the USA, this approach was based on a psychological paradigm in which personal learning, creativity, spontaneity and self-expression were the aims.

According to Singh (2007), the titles of Peter Slade's *Child Drama* (1954) and Brian Way's *Development through Drama* (1964) show something of the conceptualisation of drama in education and most art education at this time. Peter Slade introduced the concept of "child drama" in England. Arising from his own observations of children's dramatic play, he stressed the child's natural impulse to create. For Slade, child drama was an art in itself. The teacher's task was to nurture the child's natural impulse and become a "loving ally" (Slade, 1954 cited in Singh, 2007). This seems more like eighteenth century romanticism than Dewey's pragmatic progressivism.

The progressive education movement of the 1960s also influenced Brian Way. He advocated developing the "individuality of the individual" (Way, 1967). The teacher was seen as the "releaser of the child's innate creativity through acts of self-expression and self-discovery" (Abbs, 2003: 49), rather than a teacher of skills or "content." Brian Way emphasised the development of "people" over the development of "drama", his goal being to fully develop people who would be adept at social and life skills such as sensitivity, understanding and co-operation (Way, 1967).

Art education was not in any sense seen as an apprenticeship into the sustaining traditions of the art form or discipline. In educational drama, this led to the separation of drama as a learning medium from drama as an art form. For many decades, the word "theatre" did not feature in the drama teacher's vocabulary; the functional held away over the aesthetic. Thus the concept of learning through the arts translated very easily to the notion of arts across the curriculum.

In the 1980s, a conceptual shift as exemplified by the works of drama theorists like Gavin Bolton (1979, 1984) and Dorothy Heathcote (1999) cited in Singh (2007) began to emerge. In this new paradigm, the arts were seen not only as acts of self-expression and psychological growth, but also as vehicles to understanding a cognitive element. The new paradigm required the induction of the learner into the art form and what is called the "aesthetic field" – a more dynamic concept than traditional use of the word "aesthetics." Taylor (2000) cited in Singh (2007), describes aesthetics as the satisfaction we find in the work and how it massages our senses. Greene (1989) cited in Singh (2007), claims that aesthetic education requires people to attend to the artwork with discrimination and authenticity. These points to the capacity for understanding of how form manipulates content, i.e. how art conspires to generate meaning. This approach alleviates the dilemma faced by drama teachers who, for instance, would not move from "process" to "performance" (the great "drama versus theatre" debate) for fear of inhibiting the child's spontaneous creativity. It also reduces the notion of self and culture as opposites. The self becomes part of the cultural matrix, and there is the possibility of placing contemporary work in a continuum of all art, allowing for intertextuality and multiple readings. At the core of artistic practice, Greene argues, are the elements of reflectiveness, self-discovery and surprise (Greene, 1989).

2.10.2 Development of a perspective of "The Arts"

According to Singh (2007: 66), the arts were seen as a family of related forms, all working through the aesthetic, all addressing the imagination and all concerned with the symbolic embodiment of human meaning. According to her, visual arts (including architecture and photography), drama, dance, music, film and literature make up the generic community of the arts. Singh (2007), using Taylor (2000) in asking why it is that the term "arts" education has crept into the vernacular of the music, dance, theatre and visual art specialisations, provides an answer by asserting that it was political imperatives that drove arts specialists to

align in a manner previously not considered important. Singh (2007) cites the example of Australia where "the arts" were identified by the government as one of eight learning areas to which all children should have access. According to her it was left to the curriculum experts to decide how to conceptualise the field. Singh (2007) concluded that if what happened in Australia, Canada, the US and the UK is indicative of the global trend, it is no wonder that - given the close working relationship that South Africa had with many of these countries during the period of the formulation of the National Qualifications Framework and the introduction of Outcomes Based Education - this country, too, followed global trends in including the arts in the General Education and Training band.

2.10.3 Approaches to Arts in Education

Singh (2007: 68), in citing Eisner (1972) mentions that there are at least two ways of conceptualising education in the arts. Firstly she mentions the contextualist justification, emphasising the instrumentalist consequences of art in work and utilising the needs of students and society. Secondly she mentions the essentialist justification, emphasising the contribution to human experience and human understanding that only the arts provide.

This second position was one espoused by theorists like Dewey (1934), who felt that the arts should not be subverted to serve other ends, and that what art has to contribute is precisely what other fields cannot contribute. Suzanne Langer (1957) cited in Singh (2007) pointed out the unique non-discursive mode of knowing that all arts provide. A decade later, Foucault also in Singh (2007: 69) said very much the same: "making a form appear is not a roundabout way (whether it is more subtle or more naïve) of saying something." This duality of approaches to art education remains largely unresolved and affected the curriculum debates in 1996 in SA. It was especially prominent in the arguments for and against the integrated approach advocated by C2005.

Referring to Singh (2007), the major debates were about whether actual knowledge and skills in art techniques should be the focus of the curriculum, or whether the arts should be used to develop social skills and national identity. The orientation of Outcomes Based Education leads curriculum developers to focus on all knowledge events as skills, competencies and practices, which is a somewhat instrumentalist approach. Knowledge as knowledge was not part of the discourse of reconstruction.

The curriculum developers needed to find a theoretically sound and practically feasible unity of the dual approaches in art education. Beyer (1995) cited in Singh (2007) maintained that the "social" and "personal" should not be perceived of as separate and argued for the sort of critical aesthetic theory that is consistent with an integration of the personal/political, and of art/politics. This view of Beyer (1995) saw the arts as contributing to both personal and social development, connected with "material, structural, and personal relations that are complex, dialectical and sometimes oppositional." As Eisner (1972) cited in Singh (2007: 69) pointed out, there is seldom a single unified approach to the teaching of art at any one particular period.

According to Nuttall & Michael, (2000) culture (and arts and culture education) in the South African scenario, is recognised both as an instrument of policy and as something socially desirable, of which it is the business of the state to promote.

2.11 THE CULTURE CONNECTION

Culture in this learning area refers to the broader framework of human endeavour, including behaviour patterns, heritage, language, knowledge and belief, as well as forms of societal organisation and power relations (DoE, 199d7: A&C4). According to Nuttall & Michael (2000), whilst this definition is all encompassing, it does not indicate how selections are to be made from culture

and whose culture is being referred to in the pluralistic, heterogeneous mix that is South Africa. Taking this further, according to Singh (2007: 70) cultural theorising in South Africa because of its history of segregation, has tended to focus on "the over-determination of the political, the inflation of resistance, and the fixation on race, or more particularly on racial supremacy and racial victimhood as a determinant of identity." According to the DOE (1997d: A&C4) culture expresses itself through the arts, life styles, behaviour patterns, heritage, knowledge and belief systems. Cultures are not static – they have histories and contexts, and they change, especially when in contact with other cultures.

2.11.1 Dealing with the Cultural legacy

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1989, 1990) cited in Singh (2007) maintains that at the centre of all cultural studies is the interest in combining the study of symbolic forms and meanings with a study of power. In his work he shows how the cultural perspectives become skewed to favour the dominant group. Hegemony results in the empowerment of certain cultural beliefs, values and practices to the submersion and partial exclusion of others.

Singh (2007) maintains that the difficulty faced by the curriculum developers was precisely how to subvert this dominance in a democratic and transformative ethos whilst writing a workable curriculum for people who themselves were steeped in the values and ontology of their subgroups. The writing of the curriculum according to Singh (2007) in citing Ashcroft et al., (1995) can be viewed then as a form of post-colonial reconstruction and resistance, an "interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices." With this Singh (2007) states that the problem lies at the heart of the debate of integration of the arts as a single entity, or seeing the arts as discrete forms being integrated in combined projects. It manifests itself in the RNCS version of the curriculum particularly in the music component, which combines Western music training with for example, the use of polyphony in African music.

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The attempt to write specific outcomes to include marginalised cultural practices and to explore the origins and functions of cultural performances can be seen as an indication of how the writers dealt with the issue of exclusion and dominance. Whether it is a sufficient critique of modernity and a strong enough antidote to the suppressions of the apartheid state, it is too early to judge. Furthermore, how the school or individual teacher would make their selections is not specified in the policy framework. The writers were forced to assume that all teachers were committed to the same national goals and values or that all teachers subscribed to a common culture. Codd (1988) cited in Singh (2007: 71) notes that policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest.

This is extremely problematic, according to Singh (2007) as the teachers themselves are products of pre-democracy discourse. Furthermore, according to Mugo (1999: 211) cited in Singh (2007: 71), the curriculum developers (not only of Arts and Culture) were faced with the task of "reviving and reconstructing a new image that would negate existing colonial models." It was not only the legacy of apartheid but apartheid meshed within the effects of colonialism that confronted the curriculum developers. This was the cultural matrix within which the new educational policy and consequently the new arts curriculum had to be developed. As Hartshorne (1999) cited in Singh (2007: 72) reminds us, "education cannot exist in a vacuum, but in a particular political, economic, social and constitutional surround or context." Nuttall and Michael (2000) also noted that complex configurations at the level of identity, which apartheid tried to mask with the identity of segregation, were always there. The new nation has tried to mask these complex configurations by foregrounding an over-simplified discourse of "rainbow nationalism" which approximates with multiculturalism. So the question of identity becomes an important issue in considering the cultural legacy of South Africa.

Like Singh (2007) it is worth considering Hall's (1990) notion of identity as a "production" which is never complete, always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation. There are two ways of considering cultural identity posited by Hall (1990). The first defines identity as a shared culture of the true self, hidden below the superficial imposed selves – a common history and shared cultural code. The second recognises both similarities and differences, which constitute what we have become. This latter view includes the raptures and discontinuities that many postcolonial people experience. This cultural identity belongs to the future as much as to the past; it is constantly undergoing transformation (Hall, 1990 cited in Singh, 2007: 72).

Transformation was the key for the need to create a "new" South Africa and the new curriculum was part of that transformation. Yet whilst this was the agenda, the experiences of those attempting to bring about these changes were based in the old ways of constituting identity. Dolby (2001) cited in Singh (2007) situates development of identity in South African youth at the juncture of continually changing traditional cultures, urbanising modernity and the globalising influences of postmodernity. According to him, the curriculum writers had to not only be aware of these influences but also perform a balancing act of the many forces at play in approaching the notion of "culture" in the curriculum.

2.11.2 Culture in the Classroom context

Working from a more traditional position than theorists such as Dolby (2001), Lawton (1975) in his work *Class, Culture and the Curriculum*, questions what kind of selection from culture is appropriate for secondary school education for all. Although most cultural theorists, like Lawton, acknowledge the importance of the transmission of culture as the basis of education, they differ in the emphasis they place on certain aspects of culture and the kinds of selection they would make as a basis for curriculum planning. Lawton (1975) identifies two problems, the first being the extent to which it is possible to identify a general or

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common culture as the basis for selection for curriculum planning. The second is the extent to which sub-cultures should be reflected in educational programmes or processes of curriculum planning. This question of aspects of "sub-cultures" has of course loaded connotations for South Africa, given its history of racial tension and minority rule. Furthermore, as Nuttall and Michael (2000) point out, in South Africa, the kind of cultural forms that might have been seen as creole are often seen as sub-cultures. According to Thomas (2000) cited in Singh (2007), many cultural discourses that occur during schooling can create a cultural capital that is not valued by the larger community.

The irony of the minority culture being the dominant culture applies specifically to South Africa and raises the concerns regarding the hegemonic culture as described by Singh (2007) above. The approach taken by cultural theorists such as Lawton and others of the 1970s reveal a tendency towards cultural absolutism and essentialism in respect of identity and national belonging. More recently, according to Shain (2003) cited in Singh (2007), cultural theorising has offered a challenge to static conceptions of culture and focuses more on the productive tensions between global and local influences. Dolby (2006) offers a view of popular culture as a site for identity construction – "being part of popular culture is a key component of modernity and feeling that one is somehow connected to the global flow" (Dolby, 2006 cited in Singh, 2007: 74). So popular culture can be seen as one way of approaching culture in the classroom, where it becomes a site for negotiation and struggle with issues of race, gender and nation.

2.11.3 Emergence of "Arts and Culture" as a learning area

There are multiple interpretations and interplays of culture related to curriculum generally and in a more specific South African apartheid-related context. These two areas were brought together by the new government through its policies and in response to public needs. As stated in Chapter One, Arts and Culture in South Africa as a single learning area came into being only in 1997. Prior to this time

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the arts were treated as separate disciplines in educational institutions. The concept of "integrated arts" especially in respect of primary schools, was known, but was not in use in this country in the formal public school curriculum. It was generally confined to more progressive private schools, especially in the junior primary grades. According to Singh (2007) the term "arts and culture" first began to be widely used when the ANC set up an "Arts and Culture" desk prior to the establishment of the new government. As Maree (2005) cited in Singh (2007: 67) reminds us, "artists played a prominent role in the political struggle…enduring the wrath of the apartheid government in order to tell the world their stories of oppression." Singh (2007) further proclaims that the cultural movement in the trade unions produced a core of "cultural" activists committed to cultural work alongside union work. Cultural work assumed a significant role as part of the struggle against oppression, particularly as part of the organised working classes.

There was a need, as the resistance movements grew, to develop a cultural position. Accordingly this helped workers remember their history, identify their heroes, write and sing new songs, start newspapers, literary circles, theatre and discussion groups. This coming together created a need for a detailed and coherent curriculum policy, which was exemplified in the Arts and Culture policy framework. The creation of the new learning area was both the result of change and the cause of change. It came about as a result of political change and it caused a change in the curriculum landscape of art education.

Flowing from this, the term "arts and culture" became and remained part of the discourse of the new democracy. The main purpose of the learning area is to provide a general education in the arts, and culture, for all learners.

The next section turns to a brief review of the A&C learning area statement as set out in the NCS.

2.12 THE ARTS AND CULTURE LEARNING AREA IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the Department of Education (DoE 1995b), the A&C, which was one of the eight learning areas in the General Education and Training Band, integrates all the core disciplines within the arts. It creates a basic appreciation of A&C issues that inform the creative process. The National Curriculum Statement (DoE 1995b) emphasises that this learning area should, at all times, be concerned with expression and communication, embracing the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects of human endeavour within society.

2.12.1 Arts and Culture learning in the classroom

The rationale for the Arts and Culture learning area describes quite unequivocally, the importance of this learning area to the new curriculum of the country: Arts and Culture are an integral part of life, embracing the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects of human society. Culture embodies not only expression through the arts, but lifestyles, behaviour patterns, heritage, knowledge and belief systems. Arts and Culture are fundamental to all learning (DoE, 1997d: A&C3).

The process of Arts and Culture becoming a school discipline (or learning area) with a "body of knowledge" or at any rate with specified outcomes, adds to our understanding of how knowledge is socially constructed, passing from the domain of everyday life/societal knowledge into the more codified knowledge of the academic domain.

The approach towards culture in this learning area encourages learners to move from being passive inheritors of culture to being active participants in it; to reflect creatively on art, performances and cultural events; to identify the connections between artworks and culture; to understand the geographical, economic, social and gendered contexts in which A&C emerge; to identify the

links between cultural practice, power and cultural dominance; to analyse the effects of time on culture and the arts; and to understand how the arts express, extend and challenge culture in unique ways.

Furthermore A&C contributes to a holistic education for all learners, which is achieved by means of the creation of opportunities for learners by striving to develop a healthy self-concept or self esteem; to work as individuals and collaboratively; to develop understanding and acknowledgement of South Africa's rich and diverse cultures and heritage; to develop practical skills within the various art forms; to respect human value and dignity; and to develop lifelong learning skills in preparation for further education and work.

The learning area addresses the vision embodied in such outcomes by means of using critical and creative thinking, decision making and problem-solving strategies when creating, presenting and reflecting on artworks. It further linksindividual A&C works to larger cultural systems; selecting materials appropriately and arranging different elements into meaningful wholes; collecting and organising information relating to artists, art history, art-related careers, heritage and cultural practices. Another aspect attends to multiple forms of communication in various art forms and mass media; becoming involved with both the collaborative aspects of group and ensemble work, as well as with opportunities for individual development and appraisal. It also engages with developments, trends and styles from a wide range of cultural practices, and thus with matters of direct social concern; acknowledging and responsibly using the technological aspects of A&C; preparing for employment in the arts industries and the world of work; and developing creativity, resourcefulness and entrepreneurial skills

The intention of the A&C learning area is to expose learners, during the GET phase, to a wide range of dance, drama, music, visual arts and design from many cultures, at increasing levels of complexity, depth and breadth; to provide experiences for the learners in dance, drama, music, visual arts, craft, design,

media and communication, arts management, arts technology and heritage; to develop creative, innovative individuals as responsible citizens in line with the values of democracy according to the Constitution of South Africa; to build awareness of human rights, culture fairness and anti-bias practices, by means of the well-placed learning area; to create a safe environment for learners to explore, experience and express thoughts, ideas and concepts within an atmosphere of openness and acceptance, namely the establishment of a mediational   climate in the classroom; to emphasise, develop and value equally across the range of processes and products of the arts. to provide access to A&C education for all learners, as part of redressing historical imbalances; to develop an awareness of national culture to promote nation-building; to establish, develop and promote the creativity of South Africans as a rich and productive resource; to provide opportunities to develop usable skills, knowledge, attitude and values in A&C that can prepare learners for life, living, and lifelong learning; and to develop an understanding of the arts as symbolic language.

The learning area aims to cover equally both a variety of African and other classical A&C practices, which will expose learners to the integrity of existing traditions and conventions; and innovative, emergent A&C practices, which will open up avenues for learners to develop inclusive, original, contemporary, South African cultural expression and facilitate engagement with trends in the rest of the world.

Furthermore in education, arts and culture teaching in the core education system is a channel for imparting social and moral values and knowledge. It fosters group expression, critical and innovative thinking, and provides participatory and experiential learning opportunities across the board in the school curriculum. It develops creativity, a capacity that is not only an aspect of arts practice, but also one that informs the performance of any task in any field requiring originality, innovation, imagination and improvisation.

Arts & Culture is at all times concerned with expression and communication and as such is a form of literacy: oral literacy, aural literacy, visual literacy, spatial literacy and kinaesthetic literacy. The arts enable learners to communicate and express themselves in a variety of different ways according to individual needs and preferences. These expressions can reflect personal interpretation and understanding as well as become the means by which the learner communicates with others.

The arts bring together a variety of thinking processes in order to provide a holistic education for all learners, in doing this they provide every learner with the opportunity to develop their potential through promoting a sense of personal identity and self-worth, emotional and psychological well-being. The arts are communal and contribute towards the building of social interactive skills and understanding.

In the Foundation Phase, the arts are integrated and used to introduce general arts concepts and skills. Such skills and concepts should be used in the core learning areas of Literacy, Numeracy and Life Orientation, where it is essential that the different learning styles are acknowledged in order to provide learners with every opportunity for improving and enriching their understanding.

In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, the arts will begin to be taught as discrete disciplines to ensure the development of usable skills for the informal work-place by the end of compulsory education, or prepare learners for further specialised training in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase.

This approach in Arts & Culture reinforces a positive, affirming and encouraging teaching environment to build up learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, and to be culture-fair, gender-fair and without bias. Learners and teachers must treat one another with support and respect e.g. not laughing at the individual's efforts; avoiding sarcasm, irony or nasty remarks; acknowledging all cultures and learning to recognise and negotiate different understandings.

This learning area follows an integrated "minds on - hearts on - hands on" approach i.e. the cognitive, affective and the practical experiential aspects of learning are integrated (C2005).

Arts skills, knowledge and values are developed and built on through experience, practice and increasing maturity. Active learning is the basis for Arts and Culture learning throughout the year. In some art forms such as dance, drama and singing the body is the "instrument" and every lesson should begin with a warm up of the body and voice to prepare the "instrument" for work.

In addition, to get learners started on their creative journey, each should have a "visual diary" or journal or sketch book, file or storage container that can be used for exploring the "language of the arts", planning, storing found objects from the natural and the built environment. This can be used in building up a personal "reference library" of photocopied and/or photographed images that relate to the arts, recording ideas in writing, sketch plans or notation, cutting and pasting scraps or swatches of fabrics for colours and textures. Furthermore observational and/ or expressive drawings, mind maps, collages, designs for choreography or a drama performance or for music can also be collected and stored in this manner. This is the learner's own resource book or file that contains qualitative evidence of her or his personal development in the different art forms throughout the year. Every learner is innately creative. The task of the Arts and Culture educator is to draw out and develop this creativity in diverse ways to ensure the development of each student as an innovative, resourceful, confident, self-disciplined, sensitive and literate citizen for the 21st century.

Looking at the requirements of the A&C learning area, it seems that to achieve the education shift envisaged by the NCS requires not only changes in policy, organisation and practices of education, but also significant changes in the philosophy, principles, beliefs and underlying assumptions about people and knowledge. According to Blignaut (2009) the challenge of meaning for Arts and Culture teachers is how those involved in change can come to understand what it

is that should change, and how it can be best accomplished, whilst realising that the what and how constantly interact and reshape each other.

The Arts and Culture curriculum as espoused above, poses serious challenges to teachers in school implementation. Hence, it can play a vital role in fashioning the ethos on post-apartheid South Africa through its effects on school-going youth. Importantly though, the overall vision through this learning area is that of a uniquely South African arts context presented in an internationally accessible manner.

The implementation of A&C in South African school did not always go according to plan. This links to the central question of this study and I briefly look at similar studies to ascertain what was found. According to Mbeshu (2010) who studied four schools implementation and did evaluation of the implementation process of arts and culture as a learning area, three main areas of constraint became apparent. These were a lack of background knowledge of art forms, limited time provided in the timetable and a lack of formal training in the learning area. Her findings indicate that the main factors that hinder implementation are poor pre-service preparation – in arts themes and poor resources.

Van Blerk's (2007) study of implementation of six teachers showed similar trends. Problems included no text books available for this learning area to guide teachers made people feel insecure. The combination of four art themes in the learning area presented a problem to teachers who were inadequately qualified. No qualified teachers exist for this learning area as defined with most being specialists in one or at most two of the themes presented for the learning area, for example qualified art, music and or drama teachers. Often arts and culture teaching was delegated to another teacher often young novice teachers. She distilled the following themes from interview data that summarises problems expressed by teachers:

- Educators are frustrated and angry
- Not sufficiently empowered with knowledge and skills
- Not trained as arts and culture teachers

- Curriculum documents unclear
- Not sure what other colleagues were doing in the same or other schools

Delacruz and Dunn (1996) in a study in South Carolina discuss approaches to Arts education developed in this state in America. The idea was to improve arts education through a discipline based teaching process. The school curricula were reviewed and teachers were afforded opportunities to make input into the development of curricula. One of the main products of this project was integration of the different art themes often identified in Art education, namely Visual art, Drama, Dance and Music. Art pieces in the different art forms form the central discussion point and were then integrated by curriculum materials and assessment strategies that made links between the art forms. Specialists in different art forms contributed to the curriculum units to successfully integrate the forms. This provided space for collaborative work and according to this study worked well to achieve the integration objectives and broke isolation between teachers. Teachers essentially shared their expertise in the fields they were qualified in and developed integrated materials for Art education. The curricula often included topics that extended beyond just the arts and gave art education a broader and more liberal perspective that included and integrated art disciplines with other social, economic and often political issues of the day.

2.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have indicated that several conventional research studies that have been conducted in relation to curriculum implementation, though serving to explain leverage for educational change, seemingly failed to explain teachers' sense-making and subjective realities in the implementation process. As an alternative to these conventional accounts, this chapter has succeeded in showing and suggesting that the cognitive sense-making perspective (Spillane *et al.,* 2002) can enhance our understanding as to how and why curriculum policy seldom seems to permeate to teachers' classroom practices. I have shown how this can be

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made to work in explaining the disjuncture between policy and practice as supporting theory, and as an analytical tool.

The use of the cognitive model also made it possible to identify categories of variables that help to account for the understandings that implementing agents construct from policy. This is what I have attempted to achieve in designing this part of my study. In its conclusion, it has demonstrated that teachers adapt to a curriculum rather than adopt it as is, and that their prior understandings and beliefs about knowledge, assessment and what constitutes effective teaching, combined with the context in which they work with the policy representations, frame their understanding of what reform initiatives require from them.

All of the issues described above are linked and inter-woven to make up the fabric of my research study into the Arts and Culture learning area and curriculum implementation. This literature review has helped me explore the focalisation of the study, and the discursive practice that shaped the Arts and Culture curriculum, in some depth. Each of the major components has been put under the spotlight briefly so as to expose the thinking and practices associated with them. In examining the issues of curriculum change, policy, culture and arts education, I have in some measure prepared the ground for the focalisations and themes that will be brought to light by the data.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

> *"A research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. It describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989: 30).*

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss my research methodology and how it was best designed to provide answers to my research questions. While reflecting on the methods, procedures and processes undertaken in this study, it also provides an insight into the reasoning behind the way I conducted the research. The chapter that follows presents the research procedures in three broad sections.

In the first section, I focus on the approach and research methodology as well as my techniques for data production. In the second section, I go on to describe the generation of data and the processes of analysis. In the third section I examine the issues of ethics, confidentiality, validity and quality as well as other issues that arise as part of the methodology. Aspects of all three sections are interwoven and overlaid in the chapter as the need arises.

3.2 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Purpose and Paradigm

I chose a qualitative approach as described in Creswell (1998) and collected data through focus group interviewing, semi-structured individual interviews and

open-ended questionnaires. I chose these three techniques on the understanding that qualitative research, has as its underlying assumptions the development and better understanding of situations as presented by the research participants. This was done on the basis of my intention for this study to explore the experiences and responses of A&C teachers of curriculum change and the conditions under which Arts and Culture teachers' sense-making of the curriculum policy (NCS) in South Africa is possible for the translation of curriculum policy into practice.

To accomplish this, I located my study in an interpretive paradigm on the premise that my selected aims were to construct understanding epistemologically and ontologically in a trustworthy and authentic manner. Put differently, my analysis drew on Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 21) who suggested that ontological assumptions gave rise to epistemological assumptions, and then in turn gave rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection. My epistemological assumption was that we as researchers could understand others' experiences by interacting with them and listening to them. My ontological assumption on the other hand, was that peoples' subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously. In keeping with these assumptions, I took careful account of the fact that in order to understand how the glossing of reality of whatever is being researched goes on at one time and in one place so I can compare it with what goes on in different times and places. I also assumed that realities are varied, and that how one knows and understands reality, differs greatly.

3.2.2 Research Questions

Having established my purpose and paradigm I then strategised how best to answer the research questions of my study in the light of the chosen methodology. My central questions asked:

- How do arts and culture teachers experience and understand curriculum policy change in South Africa?

- How do teachers respond to the calls of A&C learning at school level?

Firstly, to answer this question I will argue as stated in Chapter One, that the meaning of policy change for Arts and Culture teachers is constituted in the interaction of their existing cognitive structures (including knowledge, beliefs and attitudes), their /context and the NCS policy signals. Put differently, what curriculum policy means for them and how they understand the policy's message(s) is defined in the interaction of these three dimensions. This question also reveals the interpretivist paradigm of my study, premised on the understanding that meaning is socially constructed and that events have multiple interpretations. This I frame as A&C teachers' experiences of curriculum change and will serve to answer the first part of my main question.

Secondly, my data gathering will be (as I also mentioned in my introductory chapter) an approach to understanding the conditions under which curriculum change (NCS) is possible for A&C teachers by focusing on the demands that are made upon them. Unpacking those conditions and demands, I explore how A&C teachers understand and respond to the requirements of curriculum change (NCS) and how they strive to put this in action in their various schools. This also covers the second part of my main question.

To obtain this objective, I will add a cognitive dimension to my research study that demonstrates how situation sense-making acquires content, based on the interplay between the policy that attempts to direct action on the part of the teachers and the ways in which the direction is constructed by them. With this in mind, I want to explore one key dimension of the implementation process, A&C teachers' sense-making with regard to the NCS and how their local practice can change through this policy.

My framework for data gathering, drawing on Spillane *et al.s'* (2002) cognitive framework, is to use the cognitive component of the implementation process by

identifying a set of constructs and the relations among these constructs which are based on teachers sense-making and curriculum implementation matters. My aim for using this framework, as argued in Chapter One, is to characterise A&C teachers' sense-making in the implementing process, by drawing on Spillane *et al.s'* (2002) cognitive processes, social cognition and situated cognition. A further objective is also to demonstrate the ways in which policy is at times not fully enacted as intended by policy makers. To do this I firstly need to explore A&C teachers' as individual sense-makers. To obtain this data, I need to explore these teachers' prior and current understandings of curriculum change which came forth in and which is directly linked to their attendance of the OBE training work sessions for the implementation of new curriculum policy (NCS). This data was gathered by engaging with them through focus group interviewing. During this stage of exploring A&C teachers as individual sense-makers, I paid attention to how they noticed and interpret policy stimuli and how prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences influence construction of new understandings and how they use this knowledge to bring about curriculum change.

Taking the above-mentioned process in progress?, I intentionally begin this data gathering process with an oversimplified notion of human cognition developed by Spillane *et al.* (2002) and then add layers of complexity to the human sense-making process. My search for data gathering takes into account basic information processing as well as the complexities and influences involved in the processing of information about implementing ideas for the Arts and Culture learning area within the NCS (including reform ideas such as "Arts and Culture learning," These include "Arts and Culture implementation strategies," "Arts and Culture training discourse" the influence of motivation and affect, and the ways that social context and social interaction affect sense-making. This framework also allows teachers rejection of the government's educational policy initiative that is unworkable or harmful. But to reject a policy directive because it is not workable for schools, teachers must first understand what it is that the directive is

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asking them to do. To understand directives requires cognitive processes of interpretation.

The format of the focus group interviews involved discussions with Arts and Culture teachers from six high schools in the Paarl region. These were three lengthy workshops using my school as a research site during October and November 2005 and again in April 2006. This strategy strengthened my research objectives of assuming that pre-existing knowledge, attitudes and behaviour influence the meaning accorded to the implementation of curriculum policy. This process of focus group interviewing also sought to determine teachers' newly found curricular understandings shaped by their prior knowledge systems that they should have acquired through their attendance at the OBE training workshops. Further in this process, I examined and interpreted their experience, attitudes and understanding of the Arts and Culture learning area as part of revised curriculum implementation. Part of this process involved the assistance of an accredited facilitator who was an ex-principal and ex-circuit manager, renowned for his facilitation work with different teachers around the country. Respondents in this part of the process commented on their personal understandings and interpretations of the curricular process, especially with the implementation of the A&C learning area in schools.

This focus group inquiry into curriculum policy change from the perspectives of Arts and Culture teachers' experiences assumed my acceptance of different assumptions, perceptions, and multiple realities. I therefore chose the focus group observations as the best means of obtaining this data. The result was the exposition of A&C teachers' current curriculum experiences by listening to them and was linked to the OBE training workshops held in 2000 and 2006. - For example what they thought they learned and their construction of new curricular understandings.

In the second stage of my data gathering process, still keeping my theoretical orientation in mind, I moved from a purely cognitive account to consider how A&C teachers' beliefs, values, and emotions influenced the sense-making process. To do this, I complicated the human sense-making process by arguing that situation or context is critical in understanding the A&C teacher's sense-making. In achieving this objective, I complemented the focus group interviews with semi-structured interviews, engaging individually with each participant. I purposely used the same research population in this process. The interviews sought to ascertain how the shifts in policy impacted on the Arts and Culture curriculum. My objective here was to, whilst listening to them, interpret their responses as to how they noticed and made sense of the incoming policy stimuli. Also critically here is the notion of whether, how and in what ways teachers come to an understanding of their practice, and potentially change their beliefs and attitudes in the process. Throughout this whole process I set out to gain interpretive findings as to how these Arts and Culture teachers at six high schools and in one province (Western Cape) and in one district (Cape Winelands) responded to the New Curriculum Statement (NCS). Also during this process, I illuminated how multiple dimensions of a situation influenced the A&C teacher's sense-making from and about policy. I then complicated the social sense-making process by adopting a situated cognition perspective, arguing that situation or context is not simply a backdrop for the A&C teacher's sense-making but a constituting element in that process.

Finally, in Chapter Two, I stated my acceptance that, one needs to understand how policy is developed and that this is not without messy and complicated problems. Following then, and in the next and final stage of the data gathering process, I distributed open-ended questionnaires to the same research population.

Here I considered the role of policy stimuli in A&C teachers' sense-making, focusing mainly (in keeping with the cognitive framework) on the role of external representations in the sense-making process. Of critical concern for me

here was the development of representations of ideas about changing practice so that they could enable the A&C teacher's sense-making. Here I considered the design challenges of the NCS policy to influence teaching. This process enabled me to ascertain Arts and Culture teachers' personal views of their sense-making on the embedded messages in the NCS. Further it adds meaning to the   role of policy stimuli, hence together with their extant knowledge structures, and diverse school contexts be able to make sense of curriculum reform initiatives.

These three sets of data gathering methods as argued in Chapter One and in keeping with my theoretical framework, are an interactive process trying to answer the central questions and they represent an attempt to access teacher thinking and sense-making with regard to extant knowledge structures, context and teaching and how these understandings mediated their interpretation of the NCS and how this act of interpretation are practiced at their schools.

3.2.3 Negotiating access to schools

Before collecting the data, I first obtained permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to conduct the research involving the teachers. As an ethical requirement, the study observed the necessary procedures and protocols in gaining access to the schools concerned. In February 2004, a letter was written to the Research Directorate of the WCED, outlining my proposed research and requesting permission to do it at the selected high schools (see Appendix A). A letter of permission was granted, and the processing of appointments with school principals and respondents commenced, using the permission letter as reference. Prior to collecting the field data, I had to determine the current issues regarding curriculum implementation.

In the study, teachers were assured of confidentiality and encouraged to be forthright in their responses. They were also informed of the aims and purposes of the research study and asked to decide whether they would participate in the

research process or not. According to Foster (1996: 105) "the procedure of informing respondents and allowing them to refuse or consent to involvement is felt to respect their rights to know and control what happens to them and what information about them is publicly available." Furthermore, according to McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 23) the researcher is "ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects while conducting a study. In light of potential biases, key values need to guide the planning, conduct and reporting of research." To ensure anonymity, the names of the participating schools and respondents were coded.

The following sections describes how the three research processes/methods as explained in the first section of this chapter support each other and how they develop to the response of my central question. Firstly I briefly explain my choice of sampling/instruments used in the study followed by the three qualitative research techniques to conduct the fieldwork and collect the data.

3.2.4 Sampling

The population studied consisted of Arts and Culture teachers from six different high schools in the Western Cape, in particular the Cape Winelands Education District. I decided to limit myself to twelve A&C teachers, two from each selected school because they all formed part of a cluster school network. Another consideration was their differences in terms of socio-economic class, background, geographical features, location and access to resources. Due to this, I opted to include schools from different social contexts, so that I could obtain a broader picture of the perspectives and sense-making of teachers in the Cape Winelands Educational District, particularly with regard to one of the research questions in the study. For the sake of convenience, I selected schools that were close to my home. According to Durheim (cited in Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999: 44) "sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and / or social processes to observe".

What emerged as I drew up my list was that every one of my prospective interviewees was someone whom I had worked with during quality assurance workshops, or moderation sessions, during the annual standardising or assessment process of the Arts and Culture learning area. Given my relationships with the proposed respondents, I did not anticipate any real difficulties (apart from busy work schedules) in obtaining my data. I decided to use a purposive sampling-type of strategy (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998): schools were selected because of particular characteristics, different social and historic characteristics and their availability. However, Patton (2002: 244) contends that "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources." This worked well, since access to teachers was not always easy. During the focus group discussions, interviews and semi-structured questionnaires, I set out to gather data with a list of twelve names, but ended up with six respondents.

3.2.5 The Focus Group Schedule

At the onset of the data gathering process held at my school, I conducted three focus group discussion sessions with Arts and Culture teachers. I invited twelve Arts and Culture teachers from nine high schools, but only six attended the workshops on the scheduled dates. These discussions took place between October 2005 and April 2006. My use of focus group interviews closely followed Morgan (1988: 9), Bailey (1994: 192) and Robson (2002: 284). According to these authors, focus group interviews allow the discussion of a particular theme or topic. One of my assumptions in using focus group research was that it facilitated an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals believed to be representative of some class or topic (Robson, 2002). Another assumption was that the verbal interaction between the discussants would elicit collective perspectives (Morgan, 1988: 9). The selected theme for discussion was the

experiences of teachers through OBE-training workshops held in 1998, 2000 and in 2006 as part of teachers' construction of curriculum reform (NCS) at school level. My particular objective was to gain insights into understandings of the OBE-knowledge Arts and Culture teachers had gathered from being part of the OBE training workshops, and the curriculum understandings that they translated into their classroom practices.

The following questions were used during the focus group discussions to elicit teachers' responses on the selected theme and to find meaning on the topic selected.

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1. Describe your experiences regarding the initial training workshops on the A&C learning as part of the implementation of the curriculum policy (NCS).

2. Sketch some of the problems that you initially encountered at the beginning stages for implementing the curriculum.

3. What strategies were put in place at your school to promote the smooth implementation of A&C?

4. What do you think are still the biggest challenge(s) for A&C at schools?

5. What is your opinion of the WCED'S once-off quality assurance workshops for assuring proper implementation of the A&C learning?

6. Describe the kind of support that you have so-far received from the education officials for ensuring proper understanding of putting the A&C learning into classroom practice.

7. Can the support system from government officials and the schools concerning the curriculum policy somehow be strengthened?

8. What are the current needs regarding provisioning and fostering of A&C knowledge and understanding?

9. Do you think there exists a constant need for the establishment of an A&C network in your district where the exchange of important curricular information can take place on a continual basis?

3.2.6 The Interview Schedule

In the second part of data gathering, I used semi-structured interviews and was guided by the work of Bogdan & Biklen (1992) and Kvale (1996). The process of interviewing each interviewee took up to two hours. These interviews took place during the period between October 2006 and April 2009 and some were conducted at the respondents' homes and others at their schools, as was their personal choice. Each interviewee one-to-one "conversation" was audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim. Where permission for audiotaping was not granted, extensive notes were taken. These written notes in addition to the tape recording were also taken for cross-checking purposes. Before the interview, teachers completed a brief questionnaire, on which basic biographical information was recorded (See Table 1).

The use of the interview method allowed me access to more in-depth information and a greater understanding of the research problems than might have been achieved by means of a survey. With the interviews, data collection could remain flexible, providing opportunities for each teacher to explain their responses at length. In addition, the use of semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for teachers to revisit their responses via transcripts, to clarify ambiguities and misunderstandings, and to meet with me to provide feedback and comments about their final accounts before the preparation of this dissertation. Moreover, undertaking interviews over an extended period of time increased the chance of gaining access to the thinking and verbalised experiences of teachers, given that such "crucial revelations are much more likely to emerge from change incidents, extended comments, and both informal and formal gatherings" (Bryman & Burgess 1994: 250).

According to Birley & Moreland (1998: 45), the interview is a "tactical and strategic instrument that gives the researcher a prerogative to make follow-ups on crucial and incomplete information that the respondent may give as the

respondents answer the questions in the presence of the researcher." Conducting an interview is a more natural form of interacting with people than having them complete a questionnaire, do a test, or perform some experimental task. It therefore fits well with the interpretive approach to research. Interviews are also very useful when a researcher wishes to gain a full understanding of someone's impressions or experiences, or to learn more about their answers to questionnaires. I wanted to gain access to the Arts and Culture teachers' worlds, both in terms of them being individuals and being part of a larger group within the same bounded context. This allowed for the responses and experiences of teachers involved with implementing their learning area within their different contextual backgrounds to be explored.

Checking of responses and the discussion of transcriptions and the interpretations of interviews was undertaken with all six respondents. The interviews became increasingly informal in the latter part of the research, which was an experience also noted by Adler & Reed (2000). I sought to hear and make sense of each respondent's voice about the A&C learning area in relation to the NCS, as well as in relation to how the NCS would, and did, impact on their Arts and Culture understanding and practice. I sought to identify fluctuations in the way in which they addressed issues relating to curriculum change. The notes made and memos recorded in connection with the encounters were not, in all cases, returned to the respondents, but were often triangulated with further conversations or encounters, or checked against earlier notes or interview data.

The following six teachers were interviewed individually; their profiles are illustrated below. The reason for constructing biographical profiles of individual teachers was to ensure that all relevant data concerning the context of the study was collected. The profile was also designed to find out about the teachers' characteristics, such as their training and experience in teaching A&C. The profile included notes on the impressions of the physical and social fabric of the schools and their surroundings, such as the type of housing in the locality of the

schools and the condition of the school buildings. The importance of including the teachers profile as part of my data gathering was based on my theoretical framework and as suggested by Lewis and Maruna (1998) that individual life histories and biographies may be useful analytical tools for investigating the implementation of public policy. These researchers hold that recent work in this tradition shows how the life stories of implementing agents help to account for the way they make sense of and respond to reform proposals.

Table 1: Profile of Arts and Culture teachers

Teacher	Arts and culture specialist	More than 10 years of teaching experience	Number of years in teaching A&C	NCS training courses attended	Specialised teaching subjects	Number of Arts and Culture teachers at each school	Infra-structure at school for A&C
TA	No	Yes	4	No	Afrikaans and History	3	Under-resourced
TB	Yes	Yes	8	Yes	Music and ACE (A&C)	4	Well-resourced
TC	No	Yes	7	Yes	Needle-work and Afrikaans	3	Under-resourced
TD	Yes	Yes	8	Yes	Music and MA Degree (A&C)	1	Well-resourced
TE	Yes	No	6	Yes	Diploma in Music Education	2	Medium-resourced
TF	Yes	Yes	8	Yes	Music and Afrikaans	2	Medium-resourced

In the interview schedule, I wanted to be as broadly inclusive as possible about all the features related to the curriculum implementation process and at the same time I wanted the respondents to relate to school contextual issues and to the issues of Arts and Culture education. My questions were therefore framed with this in mind. I also achieved this by having different parts to the schedule that

dealt with different aspects of the process. At the same time I had to remain true to my conceptual framework and my theoretical approach. I used elements of critical policy sociology (Ball, 1990, 1994a and Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry 1997) to frame questions on agency, legitimacy and representation. My own experience of the curriculum implementation process as an A&C teacher by attending all the training workshops also guided me in drawing up the questions related to teacher sense-making, prior knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of key players. First and foremost in the schedule were the critical questions of the study, although I reframed them somewhat. The final version is attached as Appendix B.

In the schedule one question in each section reflected the theoretical focus and the thrust of the other questions in that section. For instance, in Part A- 1- 4 (designed for biographical information and "specialised" A&C teachers) the central question reads: "What is your A&C or non-specific qualification and in what other subject did you major?" This question speaks about issues of teacher philosophies and prior knowledge and allowed the respondents an opportunity to indicate their own personal placing in the A&C learning area and in those of their schools. In Part B 5-6, I asked in question 5 indirectly why Arts and Culture was included as a learning area in NCS. The questions that follow in that section (6-8) are all related and provided me with an understanding of the contextual realities that would shape/not shape teachers' sense-making concerning Arts & Culture education in the curriculum implementation process. According to Drake, Spillane & Hufferd-Ackles (2001), organisations also have histories that can be especially influential in the efforts of implementing agents to understand what a policy is asking of them. Hence the history of an implementing agency, as embodied in organisational norms and stories, serves as an influential context for implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy.

Later in the schedule, I asked respondents how they went about translating to the calls of the NCS by putting the A&C learning area actually into practice. This

question allowed for free discussion from the respondents' point of view of the whole process, not only their own contributions. It also gave them a chance to stand back and reflect. In these questions I wanted to allow the people being interviewed to bring their personal motives and reasons to the fore so that I could then interpret them. I wanted "thick" or rich data from which I could build a escription that captured a sense of actions as they occurred and placed events in context. My interview schedule was intended to encourage and inspire the flow of conversation.

I also used the schedule of questions to assure the participants of their confidentiality in their contributions and ask their permission to use their offerings.

Following is the question schedule used to collect data through the semi-structured interviews:

Biographical data

1. How long have you been teaching Arts and Culture (A&C)?

2. What is your A&C or non-specific qualification (and in what other subject did you major)?

3. Are you the only teacher in the A&C learning area?

4. Have you attended in-service training provided by the WCED?

 General curriculum and A&C practice

5. What is your opinion of the combinations developed for the A&C learning area (consisting of four sub-disciplines in one area)?

6. Do you have a specific classroom for your learning area work?

7. Is your school resourced to provide A&C as a learning area, in line with the prescriptions contained in the policy document?

8. How many periods per week/cycle are made available for A&C at your school?

Personal practice

9. How do you spread the learning area subsections in your own school practice?

10. Are you, in your opinion, managing to do justice to the work? Provide a brief explanation of your answer.

11. What are the main 'opportunities' for making A&C work as a curriculum area in your school?

12. What, if any, are the impediments (hindrances) to making A&C a reality and meaningful learning area in your school?

General

13. What, in your opinion, would help you make the curriculum for A&C work at your school?

14. What is needed to make A&C work in your district?

15. Do you think A&C is an important learning area in the school curriculum?

16. Do you wish to make any general comments in regard to A&C?

3.2.7 The Questionnaire Schedule

In addition to the focus group and the one-to-one interviews with teachers, open-ended questionnaires were also distributed and used to collect data from the same population of teachers. There was an open-ended element to the process. This was in keeping with my paradigm and purpose on the interactive element of the sense-making process of curriculum implementation. All teachers were informed that they could answer the questions as they chose and leave out questions if they wished. So this questionnaire was not used in a quantitative or comparative way; it was an instrument used to engage with the events and processes of curriculum implementation. My overall objective here was to elicit Arts and Culture teachers' understandings on the embedded messages in the NCS, as well as the design features of the NCS. Hence together with their extant knowledge structures and diverse contexts they would give me guidance on interpreting how they made sense of curriculum reform initiatives.

This section shows the importance of policy – as represented through verbal and written media, including regulations, directives, legislation, workshops, and pamphlets of various sorts – design in the implementation process. The message and design of policies significantly influence implementing agents' sense-making efforts. This is what I intended to explore here. Following is the questionnaire instrument used to collect data on how teachers interpreted and noticed policy messages in the NCS:

1.   How were you informed of the curriculum policy change (NCS)?
2.   What does the new curriculum policy personally mean to you?
3.   How do you currently experience the latest curriculum policy change for South African schools?

4. What are your personal thoughts on the design features of the NCS, especially for the A&C learning area?

5. Which learning opportunities were provided for you to construct an interpretation of the NCS and its implications for your own behaviour?

6. How does curriculum policy change affect the teaching morale at your school?

7. To what extent, or how could you as a teacher impact or influence curriculum policy change, both positively and/or negatively?

8. How does curriculum policy change influence your understanding of the A&C learning area?

9. What is your understanding of the curriculum implementation process for the A&C learning area at your school?

10. In line with the question above, how do you, in your own personal context, apply the meaning of the content of the A&C learning in line with the objective of the NCS?

3.3 THE DATA PRODUCTION AND ANALYSIS

In my study of Arts and Culture teachers' experiences and responses to curriculum change, the interview transcripts and questionnaires, the research article on Spillane *et al.s'* integrative cognitive framework, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and various policy reports, become the texts that I read and interpreted. According to Samoff (1999: 144) qualitative and interpretive inquiry deals with issues pertaining to "the educational dynamics on the ground." As such, I was particularly interested to explore A&C teachers as individual sense-makers and how their understandings are used to construct curriculum policy and why curriculum seldom permeates school practice. My intention was therefore interpretive and assumes, like Neuman (1997: 72), that "facts are context-specific actions that depend on interpretations of particular people in a social setting."

This interpretive approach calls for contextualising the experiences and responses of the Arts and Culture teachers and for being prepared to look at multiple interpretations of different point of views. For example in my interviews it is important to note who was being interviewed and what position they were holding in relation to the curriculum, and to allow biographical, social, political, historical, economical and other influences to emerge and be incorporated in the findings. While participants' focus group observations, interviews and questionnaires were primary methods of data collection, commentaries by participants and research articles, dissertations, internet sites and policy reports such as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) were also important. They had to be seen not only in the specific context of curriculum development, but also in the broader context of the emergence of a post-apartheid South Africa.

I have chosen to refer to my interviewees not as participants but respondents. Polkinghorne (1996) cited in Singh (2007) points out that when stories are produced as part of a conversation or interview, they are shaped by the questions and responses of the person to whom they are told, so the resulting story is not a product of the teller alone but can be said to be co-authored. I had shared a previous experience with all of the respondents through workshop seminars and so already had a relationship with each one. Each respondent assumed a common knowledge and a bond of some kind between us. Notwithstanding my own participation in the interviews (and in the OBE training workshops), I tried to adopt a stance during the focus group discussion and interviews that encouraged respondents to tell their own stories in their own ways. So I maintained a critical distance. The production of data is an iterative process too; the respondents and I collaborated over time to produce a common story.

Authors such as Bogdan & Biklen (1992); LeCompte & Preissle (1993) and Schumacher & McMillan (1993) informed my qualitative data analysis. Once the notes from the focus group interviews, questionnaires and the one-to-one individual interviews were transcribed into text, the reduction and analysis began.

The raw data from the interviews and questionnaires proved to be of tremendous volume and had to be processed, analysed and reduced to manageable proportions. I read the transcriptions, made notes, drew diagrams, brainstormed and edited where necessary. I repeated this process by reading through my texts many times. This data was then classified, a process of organising and assigning data to categories or classes and identifying formal connections between them (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In the case of the data gathered by means of the interviews and questionnaire, I first coded the data variables according to categories or themes. The names that were assigned to the different categories resulted from the insights I gained during the field research, and from the literature reviewed. In using the categories, I looked for instances of teachers' responses that fitted such categories. I used phrases and words as guidelines for the development of such categories.

The process of organising data into categories was mainly inductive, in that I identified patterns or relationships among these different categories. As I went along I coded phrases, lines, sentences and paragraphs of the A&C teachers' responses, identifying the textual bits that contained material pertaining to the themes under consideration. By breaking up these bodies of data into labelled, meaningful pieces (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) I was able to cluster all the bits of coded material together, under the code heading. I did this with a view to further analyse this data both as clusters and in relation to other clusters (Merriam, 1998). This process also entailed marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of my themes (Creswell, 1998: 57). This process of breaking data into themes made it possible to bring all the data together in a new way resulting in the development of broad categories. All the data was then further compared to develop sub-themes, enabling me to make a decision whether to maintain the original categories or not. My aim was to sort the data resulting from the interviews and questionnaires into themes and categories, which could be interpreted and analysed. The names of the categories developed, were my own ideas as well as some from the literature. The main

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themes that I developed were: teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation, the influence of context to get teachers to change their practice and the role of policy stimuli in A&C teachers' sense-making

Using the constant comparison method, I was able to group and compare the new data with existing data and categories, so that categories achieved a perfect fit with the data (LeCompte & Presissle, 1993: 256; Merriam, 1998). Using these authors' descriptions of the constant comparative method of data analysis, which involves comparing one segment of data with another (Merriam, 1998), I was able to determine similarities and differences between my data and thus arrive at new dimensions, codes and categories. This also enabled me to divide the broad categories that were derived from the earlier analysis into smaller segments or subfields (Miles & Huberman, (1994: 57). Some of these were: constructing new curricular knowledge (NCS); the importance of differences in curricular interpretations; challenges for putting A&C into practice; school contexts; organisational arrangements; policy must affect the system of A&C learning practice and the content of the policy message.

My guiding theoretical lens acts as a rule for inclusion and helps move data from the "looks/feel similar" rule to the "fits the lens" rule. The looks/feels criteria advanced by Guba & Lincoln (1989) are a way of describing the emergent process of categorising qualitative data. I ask whether the unit of meaning in one interview is similar to the unit of meaning in another, so that salient categories of meaning are inductively derived (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In my representation of the data, I discuss the core issues in relation to the actual words of the speakers, so I include excerpts from their stories. I end the analysis with a set of propositions based on the early categories. By working with the categories and themes in this way, I can provide a "reasonable reconstruction" of the data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:134). In this way I move between surface analysis and a deeper interpretation.

Although I do not claim a grounded theory inquiry, the process of identifying codes and categories, certainly embodies elements of a grounded theory approach, since I tried to stay as close as possible to the data. Furthermore, the data analysis was done purely on the basis of the patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews and questionnaires.

3.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Maxwell (1992) argues that qualitative researchers need to be cautious not to be working within the agenda of the positivists in arguing for the need for research to demonstrate concurrent, predictive convergent, criterion-related, internal and external validity. Like Guba & Lincoln (1989) he argues for the need to replace positivist notions of validity in qualitative research with the notion of authenticity. Maxwell (1992) echoing Mishler (1990) suggests that "understanding" is a more suitable term than "validity" in qualitative research. We, as researchers, are part of the world that we are researching and we cannot be completely objective, hence other peoples' perspectives are equally as valid as our own and the task of research is to uncover these. My possible bias as a teacher of many years standing, as well as my strong views on imposed curriculum policy changes, was potentially a form of bias. I was however aware of this. I was vigilant about not letting such bias dilute the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data produced. Kelly (1999: 433-434) notes that the criteria for social science research should surpass categories of reliability, validity and generality, which he considers to be remnants from a modernist correspondence theory of truth. He refers instead to principles of 1) congruence, consisting of internal consistency and coherence and 2) plenitude. In developing the accounts of the focus group workshops and analysis of the questionnaires and interviews transcripts, I strived to adhere to such principles and to develop comprehensive accounts that maintained what he calls "a balance between generality and contextual detail."

Therefore the peculiarity of my study, particularly its inquiry into disparate areas such as education policy, arts education, curriculum determinants and culture, made it necessary for me to employ a variety of methods best suited to my intent and rationale. I needed therefore to show that the assumptions on which my research methodology rested were rigorous and trustworthy but, like Lather (2001a) I questioned whether the discourse of 'validity' was still adequate to the task. The soundness of qualitative research say Guba & Lincoln (1989) depends upon criteria such as credibility, transferability and dependability. All these criteria were addressed in this study in a number of different ways. For example, my selection of documents that most closely identified the Arts and Culture phenomenon, my full transcriptions of interviews and the use of verbatim extracts in the analysis and the corroboration of the literature also established the credibility of this study. Another way in which I could attest to the rigour of the study was to show how it was guided and shaped by its theoretical framing.

Interestingly, according to Bogdan & Biklen (1992), researchers need to locate discussions of validity within the research paradigm that is being used. Hammersley (1992: 50) suggests that validity in qualitative research is what allows us to have confidence in our results, but that as reality is independent of the claims made by researchers, our accounts will be representations of that reality rather than a reproduction of it. Hammersley (1992: 179) further notes that the validity of qualitative research lies in its internal rather than its external validity. Therefore in this research it is the relationships of the observed responses that matter.

According to Bogdan & Biklen (1992: 48) reliability in qualitative research can be regarded as a fit between what researchers' record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. there should be a high degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness in the coverage. This is not to strive for uniformity; two researchers who are studying a single setting may come up with very different findings but both sets of findings might be reliable. As

Bogdan & Biklen (1992: 45) point out generalisability, construed differently from its usage in positive methodologies, can be addressed in qualitative research. Positivist researchers, they argue are more concerned to drive universal statements of general social processes rather than to provide accounts of the degree of commonality between various social settings (e.g. schools and classrooms). Bogdan & Biklen (1992) are more interested not with the issue of whether their findings are generalisable in the widest sense but with the question of the settings, people and situations to which they might be generalisable.

According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007: 141) it is vital to be systematic about establishing the trustworthiness of data. One way of improving the trustworthiness of data is through triangulation. Triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research. The use of multiple methods, or the multi-method approach as it is sometimes called, contrasts with the ubiquitous but generally more vulnerable single-method approach. Furthermore, the more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the possible trustworthiness. Guba & Lincoln (1989: 315) suggest that triangulation is intended as a check on data, while member checking? and elements of credibility, are to be used as a check on member's ?construction of data. The researcher needs to be confident that the data generated is not simply an artefact of one specific method of collection. Such confidence can be achieved when different methods of data collection yield substantially the same results. Triangular techniques are suitable when a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought or where a complex phenomenon requires elucidation.

Although I see triangulation as a rather positivist construct, in working within the constraints I have accepted here, I am obliged to refer to it. Triangulation in qualitative research usually refers to how data from different sources can be used to corroborate or elaborate a claim (de Vos et al, 2005). In my study triangulation is readily applicable to the various methods of data production. For example, in the current research the triangulation of different data sources such as interview

and questionnaire summaries was done, in keeping with the view of Miles & Huberman (1994: 438) that "triangulation is less a tactic than a mode of enquiry." They add "by self-consciously setting out to collect and double-check findings using multiple sources and modes of evidence, the researcher builds the triangulation process into on-going data collection." I produced data from different sources, using focus groups, one-to-one interviews and questionnaires and constantly squaring the findings by means of triangulation.

It is through all of the steps described above that the research establishes its credibility and dependability. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the research support all of this further. Finally, I offer the following criteria proposed by Riessman, (2002) and cited in Singh (2007) for making it possible for others to determine the trustworthiness of my work by:

- Describing how the interpretations were produced

- Specifying how I achieved successive steps of analysis and representation.

(Riessman, 2002: 261)

In adhering to these prescriptions of interpretive analysis, I met the internal constructs of rigour, as well as making my study trustworthy.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The research methodology and research process defined in this chapter informed the investigation of the research questions. I showed how I linked the cognitive theory to the methods and techniques that I used to produce the data and analyse it. The research design used made provision for the fluidity and pragmatic nature of qualitative processes, which are concerned with not compromising the validity of the data generated. Care was also taken to ensure that the research design and

process, the research method and data collection techniques were appropriate. As such, data was produced through a variety of interview modes and open-ended questionnaires. I described how the instruments for analysis were created. In sum, every care was taken to ensure that I could do a focused and critical study in order to arrive at credible findings. In the next chapter, the data is presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

> *"The purpose of analysing data is to find meaning, and this is done by systematically arranging and presenting the information. It has to be organised so that comparisons, contrasts and insights can be extracted and demonstrated."*
> (Burns, 2000: 530)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the data that was gathered from the selected Arts and Culture teachers by means of focus group discussions, one-to-one interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. The presentation of the analytical findings represents an interpretation of the experiences and responses of these teachers as to how they make sense of the changing curriculum policy processes, the conditions under which such change is possible and the challenges they are faced with. In order to represent their ideas and viewpoints, I have grouped parts of their experiences into certain categories. These categories emerged largely from their own stories based on their experiences, responses, point of view and my cognitive framework. Once I examined the structure of the data and how it was organised, the method I followed when analysing the data could be summed up in Spillane *et al.s'* account of how they conducted the cognitive analysis: "from a cognitive perspective, a key dimension of the implementation process is whether, and in what ways, implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process" (Spillane *et al.,* 2002: 387). The meanings that I gleaned from my respondents, through individual cognition, situation cognition and the role of policy representations are structured into three main parts or categories.

The main categories that emerged from the three data gatherings sets, also explained in Chapter Three, were:

- Teachers' experiences of curriculum implementation

- The influence of context to get teachers to change their practice

- The role of policy stimuli in A&C teachers' sense-making.

The categories were further refined into sub-headings in order to avoid overlap. Teachers' responses which fell into several subcategories and which were relevant to one or more of the selected main themes were included in such themes. Following this pattern, I adhered to the "importance" of this cognitive perspective on policy implementation for my research study. I was aware that the various cognitive constructs were interconnected, so the interpretation and presentation of my data reflects this. For me an important part of following this data production process was my assumption that policy must affect a system of practices. The challenge here was how the underlying ideas within the policy were communicated to teachers and how they made sense of them. They represented a major shift in how teachers thought about the new curriculum (NCS) and changing their local practice, in contrast to their initial training as teachers or prior to the curriculum change.

Following are the data as gathered through the research instruments.

4.2 TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The data here mainly emerged from the focus group discussions/workshops that were done at the start of the data gathering process in 2006 and 2007. The objective was to focus on teachers' responses as individual sense-makers and

how they received and experienced the NCS through OBE-training workshops. By listening and interpreting the respondents, I assumed, in keeping in line with my framework, that new information is always interpreted in the light of what is already understood, meaning that what a policy comes to mean for teachers, depends to a great extent on their repertoire of existing knowledge and experience and how they have constructed new understandings of curriculum reform. I particularly paid attention to instances of how they experienced the presentation of the new policy messages and how the influence of their prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences impacted on their construction of these new curricular understandings.

However, some teachers' responses seemed to present a very different picture from what the curriculum expectations asked of them. This seemed to be evident in their explanation of how they put the A&C learning area into effect in local practice. By listening to their stories and interpreting and analysing their experiences of the OBE-training workshops, it seemed that teachers' existing philosophies, principles and beliefs were not recognised in terms of this curriculum training process, especially for those teachers who were not at all familiar with the Art and Culture learning area. The following sub-sections illustrate these dynamics of teachers' experiences in response of their OBE-training sessions held in South Africa.

4.2.1 Constructing new curricular knowledge (NCS)

In this section I present data reflecting that reform ideas cannot be accomplished by teachers learning only the surface form of reform practices. It requires grappling with the underlying ideas and may require deep conceptual change, in which teachers rethink their entire system of interacting attitudes, beliefs and practices. It is not enough to simply communicate the policy. The rationale that motivates such changes is critical. There is a critical need to structure learning opportunities so that teachers can construct an interpretation of the policy and its

implications for their own behaviour. I am emphasising this, because of the concerned respondents' critical views about their experiences on the OBE-training workshops that they had on the conceptualisation of the NCS. Seemingly there were various problems in this regard. The respondents mostly criticised education officials for the observed lack of training skills. The following quotes are typical respondents' comments:

> "…some facilitators are not efficiently skilled; could not answer questions posed to them on curriculum implementation, especially the teaching methodology for A&C learning…" (T4).

Indeed the surface form of practices can be implemented in such a way as to miss the underlying intent of the reform. Respondents highlighted the fragmented focus of training officials on only one sub-discipline of the A&C learning area. According to the cognitive framework, curriculum conceptualisation or construction of new curricular understandings cannot occur with one isolated activity or sub-discipline. If this is the case, then incoherence arises when the curriculum reform is interpreted as consisting of specific practices essentially out of context. The A&C teacher, who was exposed to the reforms relevant to drama or art alone, has not addressed the system of practice necessary for the underlying idea of the whole learning area. A typical response was:

> "…trainers for the A&C learning area were mostly from different and specialised A&C sub-disciplines. As such, training for A&C was too fragmented to learn anything new. Would have welcomed structured training sessions for the whole learning area.…" (T1).

One of the most striking features of the construction of new knowledge or conceptualisation of the A&C learning area in the design and structure of the new curriculum, was the principle of integrating the A&C as one learning area at school level. In Arts and Culture, this concept of integration was especially important as it was linked to the view of how the arts within the ambit of its different forms were conceptualised. However, respondents felt that this

conceptualisation of different art forms into one learning area fell short at the training courses. According to them, training in this learning area was fragmented as can be captured in the views of T2 and T6:

> "Where integration of all four sub-disciplines is required as part of the teaching methodology of the A&C learning area, they (trainers) mostly concentrated on disciplines they are individually specialised on…very confusing" (T2).

> "…Although there was a high level of presentation (specialised), for me, trainers' only taught basic and generic things about the A&C learning area sub-disciplines." (T6).

In general, integration was only one of the many design principles of the NCS. But it is the concern of its importance for the A&C as a new learning area that was singled out by respondents.

Linking to the point made above, respondents' indicated the need to be trained in all the different A&C sub-disciplines as an on-going cycle, especially in those that they felt short to fully understand and implement it in their schools.

Another overwhelming issue for all respondents was the lack of time to fully engage with issues of how to implement the NCS properly and effectively at schools. Policy is more likely to influence teaching when teachers' opportunities to learn are extended in time. Concerning the duration of the training courses one of the respondents felt that the short training courses caused them to be ill-prepared, especially for the implementation of A&C as a new learning area:

> "…in-service training – limited time-frame, not enough time to absorb new knowledge. One day or one week is too short. Should at least run for two years…" (T5).

According to Spillane *et al.* (2002) the presentation of the policy is likely to be effective in enabling sense-making on the part of users, helping them to develop

better understanding of the intentions of the designers. As the policy (NCS) seemed to have been poorly presented as in the case of the A&C learning area according to teachers' views, they encountered numerous problems. Some of these problems were:

> "…Lack of enough Arts and Culture teachers to teach learning area efficiently at school" (T2).

> "Large classes…not suitable for group work/ painting/ singing/ dancing/ too much? noises, and limited time-frame to complete practical work..." (T3).

To sum up this subsection on the construction of new curricular knowledge, similar studies by Smit (2001), Stoffels (2005) and Blignaut (2008) in South Africa, also reported on the lack of sound preparation for teachers on policy implementation matters. According to them new curriculum initiatives through new policies cannot deliver the intended outcomes if the necessary training, sense-making and support structures are not in place amongst all role players. Furthermore, structural changes in education will not have the desired effect if they are not supplemented with integrated policies intended to empower teachers to perform their role effectively.

4.2.2 The importance of differences in curricular interpretations

This subsection reports that teachers' prior knowledge and practice influenced their ideas about changing curriculum practice. In the previous sections, teachers reported on the fragmented training during the OBE-training courses. These fragmented training courses also caused differences due to the teachers' varying opportunities to learn about the policy, including the policy text available, professional development workshops, and guidance and support from the district and school. Yet respondents who encountered the policy from the same training

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experiences constructed different understandings of the policy message about curriculum change.

According to some respondents, prior knowledge of systems of art subjects, gained during pre-service tertiary training in either one of the four sub-disciplines or prior teaching thereof, tended to feature prominently in their implementation efforts. The following extracts are examples of this:

> "Because of my music qualifications, I feel that I have the required A&C knowledge to teach the learning area according to the curriculum statement. I have also attended and completed an Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) course in A&C" (T2).

> "As a music teacher, I feel that I have some of the necessary knowledge to implement A&C effectively at school level. I think, with the obtaining of my M. Music degree in A&C in 2008 at the University of Stellenbosch, I may regard myself now as an A&C specialist" (T4).

As can be seen from the above these extracts about teachers' beliefs of their prior subject matter, whether Music, teaching or learning, were influential in what they interpreted from the NCS about their A&C practice. The emphasis that was put on Music knowledge as being more important, fragmented the whole idea of the Arts and Culture learning area, and illuminated the importance of differences in interpretations based on prior knowledge in influencing implementation of policy.

Another characteristic of the experiences of respondents was that they had misunderstood the new ideas of the NCS for the A&C learning as familiar, and in the process may have hindered the change initiative. Due to the over-emphasis on Music knowledge, this idea was over-interpreted as essentially the same as the belief or practice that the teachers already hold.

According to Spillane *et al*. (2002) new ideas are either understood as familiar ones, without sufficient attention to aspects that diverge from the familiar, or are integrated without restructuring of existing knowledge and beliefs, resulting in piecemeal changes in existing practices. The case of the teachers' experiences in the above extracts, are no different to this.

What is important, and what trainers and district officials should have taken into account is that curriculum reform should require teachers to understand key aspects of their work and how to teach it to their learners based on their existing knowledge. One of the key aspects is a change, not only in cognitive practices, but also in the instructional ideas of the subject matter. If presentations of curriculum reform in training sessions are not in line with the policy makers' intent or not building on teachers' existing knowledge structures, then they are likely to constrain new policy understandings. For positive changes to take place, teachers must have a sound prior knowledge structure of A&C learning for effective implementation.

These findings, which mainly stem from teachers' experiences and their views of the OBE-training workshops, illuminate the importance of prior knowledge in the implementation of curriculum policy and change. According to Cohen and Weiss, (1993) cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002: 410) "all acts of understanding require accessing prior knowledge and applying it to guide the noticing, framing, and connecting of new ideas and events to what is already encoded in memory." These teachers should have had sound opportunities to develop new understandings of the policy, built on their present understandings. In other words the understandings should have supplemented, rather than replaced, knowledge (Cohen and Hill, 2000 cited in Spillane *et al.* 2002: 410). Teachers need the opportunity to draw on their prior knowledge and experiences to notice, make sense of, interpret and react to new policy initiatives. Since the teachers' responses suggested that this was not the case, enactment of A&C and in

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particular the NCS, seems limited at best to translating curriculum initiatives into schools.

In addition, what a policy means to teachers largely depends on their repertoire of existing knowledge structures. It means that curriculum reform requires teachers to understand key aspects of their work and how to teach it to their learners based on their existing knowledge. One of these key aspects is a change, not only in their cognitive practices, but also in the instructional ideas of their subject matter. If presentations of curriculum reform in training sessions are not in line with the policy makers' intent or not building on teachers' existing knowledge structures, then they are likely to constrain new policy understandings. For positive changes to take place, teachers must have a sound prior knowledge structure for A&C learning for effective implementation.

4.2.3 Challenges for putting A&C into practice

In this subsection, respondents were probed on the major challenges still facing them in curriculum implementation efforts. Whilst this might seem to overlap with some of the responses in the previous sections, it needs to be discussed here in terms of teachers shared concerns. Central here is that if teachers interact on problems of shared concern, then they negotiate meanings about the nature of their work .. The following responses are drawn mostly from the focus group discussions.

When teachers were asked about what they felt would encourage the success of the A&C curriculum in schools, the following responses were received:

> "I definitely would say smaller classes and more resources" (T5).

> "More support from colleagues. We also need support from parents and art schools" (T6).

In relation to questions regarding what was still needed to make A&C work in their school district, respondents were concerned that their interactions with Arts and Culture teachers at other schools in the district, as well as with parents, were not built on healthy relationships:

> "Regular meetings should take place between Arts and Culture teachers from different schools to focus on challenges for implementing A&C effectively. In-service training should take place on a continual basis in the area. Problems and challenges in the learning area should be identified and addressed by curriculum advisors. Schools should assist each other where necessary" (T1).

> T5 continues, "…we need more support and communication between Arts and Culture teachers at various schools in the district" (T5).

The inclusion of a range of stakeholders into the implementation process meant that there was a concern over whose voice was heard. Respondents emphasised the need for all stakeholders, including the parents, to be actively involved in promoting the A&C learning area by showing interest and emphasising the importance of the learning area in the school curriculum and society. The poor relationship with parents was seen as a key factor for constraining outcomes-based curriculum initiatives at schools. Respondents expressed a need for the following:

> "Parents should show interest in the artistic performance of their children and also participate in making the learning area work at school level. Arts and Culture teachers from different schools in the area should try to work together on problem issues. The different art centres should also try to get involved in establishing the learning area effectively at school level. Learners should get opportunities to go on field trips in visiting art theatres. The school should also try to take learners on educational field trips" (T2).

> "There should be more co-operation and interaction between different school circuits in the district. We also need closer co-operation with curriculum advisors" (T3).

> "Our schools are still in need of suitable or qualified Arts and Culture teachers with regards to the new ways of teaching this learning area" (T2).

Although already mentioned earlier in this chapter, T2 also raised the problem of teachers not being qualified, despite their attendance at the workshops. Qualified Arts and Culture teachers are considered by all respondents to be one of the main challenges in implementing A&C successfully at school level and how this should be addressed. The following responses indicate these viewpoints:

> "The fact that we must give specialised teaching in art subjects, for example dance, drama, music and visual arts, we should therefore be trained to be able to teach all sub-disciplines as required by the learning area statement" (T1).

> "…I think that we need more qualified Arts and Culture teachers. We also need more support from the Education Department" (T3).

Respondents also expressed concerns over workshops and training courses that are offered only once, without any follow-up event.

> "We need more training courses in A&C. In the meantime, we do not get any support from any of the local district offices for expanding our knowledge level in A&C" (T6).

All these findings in this sub-section are also reminiscent of teachers' experiences at the OBE-training conducted in Pretoria by Smit (2001) and Stoffels (2005), as well as in the Eastern Cape by Blignaut (2008). They have all found that the OBE-training workshops were not up to standard, that facilitators were ill equipped and that teachers eventually had more questions than answers when going back to school to implement the new curriculum policy.

In a similar vein Fleisch and Potenza, (1999: 15) argue that in order for curriculum change to be effective, it must allow teachers to practise and refine the science of pedagogies as well as become involved in sustained follow-up,

supported by classroom observations and feedback. Teachers should be given the freedom to practise and explore new teaching techniques. They require a significant amount of support and feedback to allow them to learn from their endeavours. Due consideration must be given to whether teachers receive enough support for, and feedback on, their practices.

4.3 THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT TO GET TEACHERS TO CHANGE THEIR PRACTICE

The second part of this chapter, "the influence of context to get teachers to change their practice" presents respondents' experiences explored through the semi-structured interviews based on their contextual or situational influences at the different schools. Here I consider how the experiences and responses of teachers, influenced by their context as the practices and common beliefs of a school, affect sense-making and action in implementation. I base this on the assumption, as stated in Chapter Three, that the situation or context is critical in understanding A&C teachers' sense-making. By illuminating how multiple dimensions of a situation influence the teachers' sense-making from and about policy, I looked at the particular ways that social context and social interaction affect sense-making in changing practices.

To start off with, teachers encounter policy in a complex web of school structures, committees, informal school gatherings and school traditions. Both macro and micro aspects of the situation are important for teachers' sense-making of curriculum policy. By adopting the situated cognition perspective, I present this section of my findings based on my argument in Chapter Three, that the situation or context is not simply a backdrop for teachers' sense-making, but also a constituent of the process.

Important in the ensuing presentation of the different school contexts, is that organisations have histories that can be especially influential in the efforts of

teachers to understand what a policy is asking of them. Showing that teachers' cognition is constrained by the institutional sectors in which they are situated, this section illuminates how different schools structure work practices, curriculum innovations and the implementation processes.

At a macro level, teachers' schema for apprehending new knowledge depends on their "though communities'' or histories of the school. These histories, such as the contextual features as embodied in schools, their ethnic identity, religious affiliation, social class membership, professional identity and political leanings all serve as influential contexts for teachers' sense-making from and about curriculum policy.

At a micro level, the immediate school environment considered in terms of the organisational arrangements of the workplace, contributes to defining the ways in which teachers make sense of new experiences and situations. Social norms and organisational structures are important contexts for teachers' work and for their efforts to make sense of policy.

To give a clearer picture of some of the historic and social influences that some teachers in this study might have experienced, which might have influenced how they define curriculum change and the meanings they give to them, the school contexts of teachers are briefly described.

4.3.1 School Contexts

School 1 is a previously disadvantaged school where the language of instruction is Afrikaans. This school is situated in a formally, exclusively "coloured" residential area. Historically such areas received less economic support for infrastructure and services and this included lower per capita expenditure on education nationally. The school buildings are basic and does not include

specialised rooms for arts and culture and is therefore characterised as under-resourced for A&C learning.

School 2, is also a previously disadvantaged school but was initially intended to serve as a specialist Art school which offered classes in dance, drama, music and visual art. The infrastructure was developed for this purpose and it would be considered to be very well resourced, with all the equipment needed for teaching A&C. The language of instruction is dual-medium (English and Afrikaans) and this school has a very good internal support mechanisms. While drama and music was presented with ease, visual art was not however presented successfully at this school

School 3 is another previously disadvantaged school and is under-resourced for A&C learning. Despite the low level of resourcing the internal support mechanisms at this school are reported as being very well developed. No specialist Arts and Culture teachers are part of the staff at this school.

School 4 is a very well-equipped historically white school, which is situated in a high socio-economic context. The learners at the school are taught in Afrikaans and English. There is a well-developed formal in-school support mechanism in existence here and the arts and culture learning area is well presented. All the teachers are specialised in one or other strands of the Arts and Culture and one teacher has a Masters qualification in Arts and Culture education.

School 5, a previously disadvantaged school, is one of the oldest schools within the previously disadvantaged community of the region, and has a very rich tradition. The learners at the school are taught in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Music has been discontinued but visual art still forms part of the core curriculum presented at this school.

School 6 opened seven years ago. The school building was only completed in 2009. During my research there, the teachers were teaching in temporary

buildings. The surroundings consist largely of corrugated shacks and small to medium brick houses. The learners at the school are taught in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. As the school consisted largely of temporary buildings the teaching of arts and culture was not seen as a priority as the facilities were inadequate for this purpose.

Following, from these schools historic and social fabric a number of contextual challenges surfaced which all seems to constraining or enabling action. Teachers' experiences are the following: the availability of specific classrooms for A&C, time-constraints, the lack of suitable learning support materials and lack of collegial support as having major impacts on the successful implementation of the NCS, the school's organisational arrangements for A&C, and opportunities for A&C implementation at school and district level.

4.3.2 Organisational Arrangements

As stated in Chapter One, studies by Smit (2001), Stoffels (2005) and Blignaut (2008) revealed that the lack of appropriate resources and materials at schools decreased the possibilities of sound curriculum implementation. In this study, I have looked at how organisational arrangements at schools can hamper or enable interaction amongst teachers in policy and school practice. These arrangements are especially influential when it comes to the taking up of curriculum reform in schools.

When teachers were asked whether they felt that their schools were adequately structured and resourced for A&C, as stipulated by the curriculum policy document, they expressed their consternation about the lack of specific classrooms for A&C learning:

> "Classrooms at my school are not suitable for all four sub-disciplines of Arts and Culture. We do not have a school hall for art performances and drama exhibitions" (T1).

"We are also lacking classroom spaces. The practical side of Arts and Culture can't be taught in ordinary classrooms" (T6).

"No, our school is under-resourced to teach Arts and Culture, due to the fact that it is a new learning area and the school is therefore not built to accommodate it" (T3).

"No, learning takes place in normal classrooms which makes it difficult to do justice to the completion of practical work" (T5).

Similarly, teachers in the study expressed deep concerns about the lack of adequate learning materials, such as textbooks and artefacts:

"We are experiencing limited resources in the form of suitable learning support. This includes a lack of adequate textbooks and other suitable resources such as drawing equipment, music equipment, and mostly everything used in Arts and Culture" (T2).

Also in relation to organisational arrangements was the issue of time constraints for A&C teachers. Respondents were particularly critical of School Management Teams for their apparent failure to recognise the time required to do justice to A&C as indicated in the NCS. The allocation of time scheduled for A&C teaching lessons also differed markedly from school to school. Some schools had four periods for A&C, whereas others had five periods per seven-day cycle. All the respondents however, felt that the class periods were too short for doing practical or group work, especially in visual arts and drama. The following excerpts from the responses of four of the respondents summed up the teachers' feelings in this regard:

"I feel that I do not have enough time to complete practical activities, such as drama and visual arts" (T1).

"Arts and Culture emphasises a lot on group work. If your lesson periods are too short, then it is difficult to adhere to the assessment guidelines of this learning area" (T2).

> "Especially when we have to do art forms such as the visual arts, dance and drama, we are experience most of the time difficulties in completing these assessment tasks on time" (T3).

These feelings of teachers are congruent with a similar finding by Hargreaves (1994: 15), who states "shortage of time is one of the perennial complaints of teachers and teaching." This is especially true in times of educational change, school improvement, curriculum implementation and staff development. Time constraints, could lead teachers to ignore core concerns.

Organisational arrangements are also influential in the sense-making process at other levels of the school system. Another disturbing finding relates to the lack of sufficient Arts and Culture teachers at certain schools and the disintegration of the sub-disciplines of the learning area:

> "I am the only one who teaches Arts and Culture at my school for both grade eight and nine learners. This is an enormous task for me." (T1).

> "We are only two teachers teaching A&C at school" (T5).

According to T2 the danger of sometimes dividing the different sub-disciplines of the learning area and assigning it to one teacher each, as it is occurring at her school, leads to the disintegration and misinterpretation of the learning area:

> "I am one of three teachers who are teaching Arts and Culture at school and each teacher concentrates on his /hers area of specialisation" (T2).

Linking to the above, a different approach concerning the integrative format of the A&C learning area might result not only in the construction of different understandings, but different teachers for each sub-discipline are sending out conflicting messages about the NCS instruction at times. As in the words of T3 who added that

> "not only would assessment standards be lowered and the important learning   outcomes superficially reached, but also attaining the

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requirements of the A&C learning area as set out in the NCS might prove to be difficult."

On the other hand the shortage of suitably qualified teachers in A&C, for successful implementation of the curriculum policy at certain schools as part of their organisational arrangements, can also contribute to substantial differences in the meanings that teachers construct from revised curriculum practice. The following extract sums this up:

> "Some teachers are teaching Arts and Culture regardless of not being trained or qualified because of the lack of suitable teachers at our school and they are sometimes only used to fill up their timetables. This is definitely lowering the standards for this learning area" (T4).

On a more positive note, structural arrangements that are more supportive are especially influential in sense-making when it comes to curriculum reforms in schools. Typical positive responses were:

> "Yes. We have four big classrooms, each for Dance, Drama, Music and one classroom specifically for Arts and Culture" (T2).

> "Yes, I have a well-structured classroom that caters well to the needs of the Arts and Culture learning" (T4).

In addition, the views of these respondents were congruent with findings by McLaughlin (1998) on policy implementation. He saw local conditions (context) and the support of people as important for any implementation to take place. In addition McLaughlin (1998: 72) concluded that although teachers might be eager to embrace change efforts, their eagerness would not amount to much if their institutional setting or broader organisational environment did not support them: the school climate must be conducive to change.

These teachers' accounts of their situational and social experiences in trying to implement the curriculum help to explain why their situated practices either do,

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or do not, conform to policy prescriptions. In broad terms, the potency of policy levers in getting teachers to change their practice depends on teachers' "enactment zones", the spaces where the world of policy meets the world of practice. Respondents were asked to identify some of the school level factors that influenced negatively or positively on the implementation of A&C learning within the curriculum reform in South Africa.

4.3.3 Organisational Structures in relation to School Support

Similar to the above sub-section, an aspect of teachers' thinking that can both constrain and enable action of curriculum implementation efforts, is situated in institutions that provide support, norms and rules of the school environment. I refer to these as the organisational structures. The immediate environment, considered in terms of the organisational structures such as the principal's office, the School Management Teams and fellow colleagues, contributes to defining the ways in which people make sense of new experiences and situations. These organisational structures that I've just mentioned are important contexts for teachers work and for their efforts to make sense of curriculum policy. In this study, however, respondents felt that full-scale enactment of A&C within the NCS was difficult because of the lack of strong leadership at schools.

Relating to the observed role of school principals and fellow colleagues in curriculum implementation, T4 expressed her concerns of her principal's negative attitude towards A&C:

> "… If I can do away with Arts and Culture and replace it with one or more foreign languages, I gladly will do so…" (T4's principal).

Referring to the role of her colleagues, T2 added that they undermine this learning area:

> "Some of my colleagues see Arts and Culture as a 'joke subject' and not as important within the NCS" (T2).

T3 picked up the point:

> "A&C in their eyes (colleagues) is 'worthless' and doesn't count as important enough in the school curriculum."

Reporting on the role of active support structures of Senior School Management Teams (SMT's) after the initial training workshops, T4 felt that they (SMT's) had done nothing to introduce this new learning area to learners, parents and other stakeholders and that this had impacted negatively on teachers' morale and professional self-belief. According to her, SMT's did not empower teachers enough in these new changes; they themselves had no knowledge of A&C as a new learning area and how to effectively support them to put it effectively into classroom practice (T4).

Also commenting on the expected supportive role of SMT's, T1 felt that the SMT's should have had a thorough prior understanding of all the requirements of this learning area within the curriculum policy so as to offer the necessary support. However, according to him, this was not the case (T1).

It seems that teachers in the above extracts may need a great deal of collegial support. This is another dimension of the situation and sense-making where teachers draw on existing and collective knowledge to determine what particular policies mean, in order to decide on a response to policy makers' recommendations. Asking respondents how they would have welcomed initiatives from the SMT during this curriculum policy change for Arts and Culture teachers T4 and T5 suggested the following strategies:

> "…the identification of other teachers with experience in some of the Arts and Culture sub-disciplines which could have enhanced the effective implementation of this learning area at school level…" (T4).

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> "…find ways for enabling teachers to develop further expertise in Arts and Culture learning area content and teaching strategies…" (T5).

Some teachers are in need of specific guidance, in particular through interactions from peers, colleagues or groups. This could aid sense-making not only because individuals learn from each other, but also because group interactions bring insights and perspectives to the surface that otherwise might not be made visible to the group. Asking respondents which challenges they were still facing with regard to implementing A&C at schools, their responses reflected what was said above:

> "Teachers from other subjects and learners should show more appreciation for Arts and Culture. There should be enough support for teachers in the form of continued teacher development programmes" (T4).

> "Teachers should learn to work together on a mutual understanding for effective implementation of the learning area. Learners must also learn to show great interest and also learn to work together on tasks. Schools should avail more resources for successful implementing of Arts and Culture. Time should be spent more on practical work and less on theory" (T5).

There is also the acknowledgement of distributed expertise from local communities, such as local actors or artists who can mediate confusing situations by interacting with teachers and learners, leveraging the knowledge that is situated within these group relationships:

> "We could give more opportunities to artists in visiting the school and to talk to learners about their achievements in the real 'artistic' world. But there should be financial assistance to achieve this" (T6).

> "And I am experiencing a lack of Art and Culture resources, as well as problems for coping with very large classes" (50 learners) (T3).

In summation, the responses of the teachers is an indication that organisational arrangements are important when it comes to the implementation of policy, as they provide opportunities for the teachers to deliberate. The teachers' feelings of not receiving support from colleagues and School Management Teams contributed to their negative disposition towards the ineffective implementation of A&C at their schools. Teachers' feelings in this regard resonate with the findings by Spillane *et al*. (2002) that the interaction patterns in schools are, at least in part, a function of the overall organisational structure. As such, organisational arrangements can either hamper or enable interactions among teachers in relation to policy and practice.

Together with the above mentioned the school structures and teachers' relationships with all of the role-players as indicated through the findings in the study, undermined opportunities for the teachers to test or be exposed to alternative understandings of policy proposals. Schools, nevertheless, vary in their ways of structuring the work of teaching and especially in the extent to which their structural arrangements support interactions among staff about their work. Such arrangements are especially influential when it comes to the adopting of innovation in schools.

This section of the inquiry has demonstrated how social contexts affect how teachers make sense of policy, by arguing that knowledge is distributed and emergent from the interactions of teachers. Such views help to explain important variations in implementation that arises from the role of context in the curriculum implementation process.

4.4 THE ROLE OF POLICY STIMULI IN ARTS AND CULTURE TEACHERS'SENSE-MAKING

In this third and final part "The role of policy stimuli on Arts and Culture teachers sense-making" explores the effects of the reinterpretation and recreation

of the NCS on teachers' school practice. In this section, I consider the implications of my sense-making for the design of the NCS. I drew up my structured questionnaire that characterises a collection of the design challenges for the NCS to communicate messages to A&C teachers about how to change extant local practice. For the purpose of my data gathering process, in this section, the design of the NCS for A&C teachers is especially relevant from a cognitive perspective. To adhere to this objective, and based on the development of policy representations of ideas about changing practice in policy, I looked at instances where these representations of the NCS have posed several demands on teachers' sense-making in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Considering my cognitive framework, these demands cannot be met without interpretation or recreation of policy. Put differently, teachers filter educational policy, and those parts that fit with their personal perspectives and intuition are selected. This means that the message and the design of the policies, in this case the NCS, influence teachers' sense-making.

To start off with, the Draft document *Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education Training* (DoE, 1996b: 6-8) and the *Norms and Standards Document* (1998: 5), emphasise teachers' active participation and ownership in the curriculum development process, such as interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials. What is important here is that a curriculum is primarily concerned with knowledge and understanding of how teachers view knowledge, based on how the policy messages are represented, and has a significant influence on curriculum practices. If knowledge of the new curriculum policy is presented to teachers or organised in a way that does not conform to their particular framework of how knowledge is constructed, it may lead to internal cognitive conflict. As such, the messages embedded in the NCS as represented through the A&C learning area might be misread and not implemented a intended originally.

The next subsections focuses on the envisaged curriculum changes for A&C as expressed by respondents. It deals with their observed design features of the Arts and Culture learning area within the NCS, how teachers are experiencing it and their responses as to how they must change their current practice.

4.4.1 Teachers' substantive rather than superficial change is very difficult in the curriculum implementation process

To understand the process of curriculum change, particularly at the beginning of the process, the importance of creating policy and its design features should promote mutual understandings by all participants. This is because policy, and in this case of the NCS in particular for the A&C learning area, presses for instructional changes that require the teachers involved to give up existing frameworks and schemas. Teachers must understand what policy is and why it is developed because for their part it seeks complex and fundamental changes in local behaviour. If they do not understand the rationale of policy development, curricular initiatives through policy reforms are more prone to implementation problems because they require such fundamental changes in teachers' knowledge structures. A mutual understanding of what is written in a new curriculum policy is necessary to ensure that all stakeholders communicate clearly and work together productively. This point about common language and mutual agreement leads us to the category of teachers' sense of purpose in the curriculum policy development process.

However in this inquiry, teachers responded that the education administrators and policy makers typically overlooked the role that teachers' sense of purpose on common language and mutual agreement could play in the curriculum policy development process. The result causes the understanding of the new policy (NCS) often reflecting on superficial aspects rather that the deeper ideas intended by the government. This sub-section captures these experiences of A&C teachers on the new curriculum policy that they had no hand in developing. The first

question was first to capture teachers' sense of what policy is before moving on to what the design directives require from them. Following this, to gather teachers' responses, I needed to explore their experiences of the design features of the policy for the inclusion of A&C learning and what this meant for A&C education in the future. This was also to elicit the issue of how people make sense of and their personal meaning constructed by policy. What is important here within the framework is that communicating the rationale that motivates a curriculum reform is critical.

Teachers expressed varying opinions of how they see the policy development as part of curriculum change. These differences are consequential when it comes to policy implementation.

T1 presented a political perspective, arguing that the curriculum change is a mandate for local implementation:

> "…It is an attempt to adapt OBE to local conditions, instead of developing an educational system for South Africa" (T1).

T2 had similar reservations:

> "It is an attempt to adapt teaching and learning in current local conditions – socially and economically" (T2).

The nature of the changes sought by policy makers is also important because some changes involve more complex cognitive transformation for teachers than others. Linking to this was notably the emotional responses some teachers adhered to curriculum policy change:

> "Just getting used to these changes…then there's another call to re-evaluate implementation problems…after all these streamlinings; we don't know any more what the changes are" (T4).

The following interpreted versions of respondents' understanding of policy are created from their personal, subjective frames of reference:

> **"…**A document giving guidelines with regards to what to do, how to do it and when to do it… also stating benchmarks and parameters" (T1).

> "…A framework or guidelines as what to do/achieve…" (T4).

> "…A document giving guidelines/frameworks as to what to do, how, and when to do…" (T2).

> "…Mainly giving broad guidelines as what to achieve…" (T3).

How policy is viewed, understood and experienced only becomes a reality once teachers try to implement it. The respondents expressed very different personal opinions of the policy:

> "It should provide a working document that one could use to teach the learning area. In some cases though, the policy is very vague" (T1).

> "It should give broad guidelines of how to teach the learning area in our current local conditions" (T2).

However, teachers expressed their confusion and disappointment about the unprofessional manner in which this policy process had been conducted. The following is a typical response:

> "…If not thoroughly explained by curriculum advisors or facilitators, a lot of confusion can occur" (T4).

Teachers in this inquiry were also profoundly precarious of the curriculum policy change concerning lack of teacher non-participation in the development of the curriculum process:

> "The policy changes were not consulted with all role-players in teaching sphere, like teachers for example" (T5).

And, policy changes were also associated with rushed implementation and constant changes leading to uncertainty among most teachers. According to T6, too many changes in a short space of time have negative consequences:

> "Change in curriculum policy is often not thoroughly considered, very hastily implemented and not well communicated. It leads to frustration and impact on teaching and learning" (T6).

T2 added to this comment, emphasising some teachers as slow to change:

> "Regular and rapid changes lead to confusion and frustration as many teachers are slow changers and therefore negative to policy change" (T2).

T3 felt that planning of the policy change was not well orchestrated:

> "The role out of policy was not very well constructed. This consequently led to a lot of frustration and misunderstanding." (T3)

T2 developed this point:

> "Just getting use (adapting) to OBE… and now a curriculum policy change? (negative mind-set for now) – And I do not yet know what the changes are – perhaps a mind-set change?" (T4).

Respondents also overwhelmingly reacted that the process of implementing the NCS had significantly increased their workload and impeded the implementation process:

> "Changes in policy often result in extra workload; it is time consuming and takes quite an effort. This ultimately impacts negatively on teacher morale" (T5).

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> "Teacher morale is generally at a low point. Infra-structure not efficient for curriculum changes at some schools" (T6).

Not only did respondents indicate that the teaching morale was low, but they also felt that it would take time to raise morale:

> "I think it is time that we must develop a customised curriculum for South Africa and stick to it for some time giving everybody time to adapt to it" (T1).

On a more positive note, respondents mentioned that the advantages of sound curriculum implementation, with a more teacher-centred approach to curriculum policy development, could be followed:

> "Due to the fact that the teacher is on grass root level, he/she would have first-hand information on what work and what did not work. I think that change in policy must be 99% teacher-driven" (T1).

These responses of teachers are congruent to similar findings by Smit (2001) during an investigation into the experiences of primary school teachers of education policy in South Africa. According to her, teachers responded to the ideas that they construed from policy, rather than some uniform, fixed vision of policy (2001: 4). This suggests that pre-existing knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, impact the responses, the meaning and the implementation of education policy. It is not surprising therefore that the realities of the education policy will also be diversely constructed, as these responses of teachers in this inquiry indicated. This also resonates with Spillane *et al.* (2002) who suggested that policy needs to consider adequately, either at a conceptual level or at the level of policy implementation, the process by which teachers make sense of curriculum.

Similarly, Fullan (1982: 120) argued that an understanding of the subjective world of those involved in a process is a necessary pre-condition. This assumes

that since teachers are the foremost persons mediating and implementing change, their understandings of educational policy would impact on educational practice.

To sum up, a study on the training of teachers in OBE in South Africa, Potenza and Monyokolo (1999: 236) argued that the success of the new curriculum depended on the training and support teachers had received. Based on their study, teachers were not really involved in the process of developing the curriculum. They also stated that OBE made enormous demands on teachers and that "intensive teacher development is a priority if we are to develop the calibre of teachers required by OBE" (1999: 237). In their thinking, teachers had to be trained to understand the new curriculum and its challenges, including how to plan learning programmes in an integrated way, how to facilitate learning using new methodologies, and how to use and be issued with appropriate learning support materials.

4.4.2 Policy must affect the system of A&C learning practice

Teachers respond to policy constructions in complex ways, adopting some practices contained in policy and contesting other meanings and practices. The challenge to the communication of abstract ideas is, in fact, that those ideas represent a system of practices. Incoherence arises when the reform is interpreted as consisting of specific practices essentially out of context. The A&C teacher who interprets the curriculum reforms as prescribing to the importance to one sub-discipline as to all four sub-disciplines of the learning area, has not addressed the system of practices necessary for the underlying idea. The following excerpts from the responses illustrate the strong influence that differences in interpretation, based on prior knowledge play in the implementation of policy. Here I've looked at how teachers spread the four disciplines as part of the curriculum practice for A&C learning. Respondents reported:

> "I concentrate more on visual arts and drama as on music and dance, because I feel comfortable with the first two" (T1).

> "I focus on one sub-discipline per semester and integrate it later during the year for my final assessment marks" (T2).

T3 held the same position as T1 and T2:

> "We are three teachers teaching the learning area with all the sub-disciplines integrated. We try to concentrate on one sub-discipline per semester" (T3).

However, T4 stayed as close to the instructional guideline for this learning area:

> "I concentrate on each sub-discipline of the learning area per term" (T4).

The different interpretations of the same policy message are clearly discernible in the above responses. All the teachers in the study constructed different understandings of the curriculum message in relation to the implementation of A&C learning instruction during training sessions. A&C learning and inquiry cannot occur as an isolated activity. Such reform cannot be accomplished by having teachers only practice the surface form of reform practices. It requires grappling with the underlying idea of the A&C learning as a whole and may require deep conceptual change, in which teachers rethink an entire system of interacting practices, beliefs and practices?. The differences here may be due to their varying opportunities to learn about the process that is entailed in A&C learning, including the attendance and format of the WCED training workshops and guidance, and support from the district or school. Teachers' beliefs about the A&C subject matter, teaching, the learners and learning were influential in how they saw curriculum reform in relation to their own practice.

This category reveals the importance of the meanings that teachers create when they interpret policy messages. What Bowe and Ball (1992: 119) call different "interpretational stances" imply an active role for the teacher. The active role of the teacher also resonates with Hargreave's (1994: 54) finding: "what the teacher thinks, what the teacher believes, what the teacher assumes – all these things have powerful implications for the process, for the ways in which [curriculum] policy is translated into [curriculum] practice."

The above responses are an indication that some teachers in the study perceived the instruction of the integration of the four art forms into one as not being viable, due to their over-interpretation of only one sub-discipline due to the lens of the belief or practice they already held. For these teachers the approach to processing new knowledge, in this case the combination of the different art forms, is a conserving process amounting to the preservation of existing frameworks rather than to their radical transformation. In this case, when reform ideas are represented in a manner that matches the internal representation of the teacher, it is more likely that the ideas will not be used and adopted and that the targeted behaviour not be changed.

4.4.3 Implementing the policy message

In this subsection, I report on how teachers attempted to make sense of the curriculum policy. How teachers were informed of the A&C learning as part of curriculum policy change (NCS) is a critical need for their sense-making and to structure learning opportunities so that they can construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own practices. To explore this aspect I looked at the lack of sufficient A&C knowledge that some teachers in this study had which could pose challenges to the point rose earlier. Such challenges result from teachers being unwilling to change in the direction of the policy, as well as their extant understandings possibly interfering with their ability to interpret and implement the reform in ways that are consistent with the reformers' intent. The

prior knowledge and belief of the teacher who fell into this category was not in line with the expectations of the new curriculum policy for South African schools, and might be blamed on his inadequate training and low qualifications in A&C.

Respondents were asked whether they felt as if they were managing to do justice to their teaching practice concerning A&C instruction irrespective of their training in this learning area. T1 expressed his concern that relates to the under-qualified Arts and Culture teachers, despite their attendance at the workshops:

> "No, as I've already stated, I do not have any formal training and I lack experience. I definitely feel that I do not manage to do any justice in teaching Arts and Culture. As said earlier on, I tend to concentrate on only two disciplines with which I am comfortable. Therefore I do not instil in my learners all the learning outcomes that are required from the learning statement of Arts and Culture" (T1).

T3 held the same position:

> "At the moment, I do not think so. I am trained in Needlework and History" (T3).

On a more positive note, T2, T4, T5 and T6 said:

> "I try to do justice, although learners seldom give their co-operation" (T2).

> "Yes. I have my own room which I personally arranged according to the needs of myself, my learners and the learning area. I am also specialised in one of the sub-disciplines and was part of the pilot programme for the ACE (Advanced Certificate in Education) for Arts and Culture learning at Stellenbosch university. Then I also recently obtained my MA degree in A&C. So, I know exactly what I must do and what the expectations of the learning area are" (T4).

"Considering the circumstances, I say 'yes'" (T5).

"I am trying my best and I feel that I am making progress" (T6).

On how the curriculum policy influences teaching activities in the A&C classroom, the following was a typical response:

"One normally builds up a data-bank for your Learning Area. Change in policy could destroy some very hard work. It also creates uncertainty which could result in time loss trying to work out it through" (T1).

With the exception of T1 and T3, most respondents felt as if they were contributing positively to the implementation of the A&C learning area in their classrooms. These teachers' positive disposition towards their management of A&C in classroom practice resonates with the finding by Spillane *et al*. (2002) where they, because of their qualifications, chose to respond to policy when they understood what they were responding to. Such positive responses resonate with such a notion. This finding reflects that because these teachers had the necessary knowledge their ideas, expertise, and their experiences assisted them to notice, make sense of, or interpret and react to the policy message all the while actively constructing meaning from their interactions with the curriculum policy (Spillane *et al*., 2002).

In contrast, this section's finding also indicated those teachers who were not qualified in A&C. T1 and T3 fell in this category, as their pre-service teaching subjects bore no relation to A&C. What they experienced, was the difficulty of major restructuring as part of learning. For them learning new ideas, such as instructional approaches, was not simply an act of encoding the new ideas. Such learning might require restructuring a complex of existing schemas, with the new ideas being subject to the danger of being seen as minor variations of what is already understood, rather than as different in important ways. The teachers were trying to implement A&C as part of the new policy directives, but because of

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their lack of the necessary A&C knowledge and skills, their attempts seemed to fail. In this case, their understandings interfered with their ability to interpret and implement the reform in ways that are consistent with the policy makers' intent.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to give voice to the selected Arts and Culture teachers in this study who worked with curriculum change, providing a rich description of their experiences and responses during the implementation process. In doing so, it has demonstrated that, in order to explain the influences on policy implementation, we must explore the mechanisms by which teachers understand policy and attempt to connect understanding with practice. Illuminating the interpretive or sense-making dimension of the implementation process can do this. The advantage of this process is that realisations can be drawn as to how teachers construct understandings of the policy message, and how they construct an interpretation of their own practice in the light of the message. Conceptualising the problem of implementation in this way, focuses attention on how teachers construct the meaning of a policy message in terms of their own experiences, their behaviours and how such a process leads or does not lead to a change in how they view their own local practice which, potentially leads to changes in both understanding and behaviour.

The teachers' experiences and responses in this study also indicated that resources still pose a major challenge regarding the implementation of A&C. In addition to the difficulty of having to cope with a lack of resources, the teachers also admitted to their own lack of ability to implement A&C. They saw this inability as one of the major challenges facing the implementation of the new learning area. Their responses showed that their teaching qualifications in A&C and the inadequate training they had received made it difficult for some of them to succeed in implementing the new approach.

Some teachers accentuated that teacher capacity development was at the core of successful implementation of the new curriculum. They asserted that resources alone would not facilitate their effective implementation of A&C in the classroom. What they considered important was being equipped with A&C-related skills and knowledge, in addition to the resources that they required for effective teaching being made available.

Teachers in this study also stressed the need for more involvement from senior staff and management teams in order to promote and expand A&C effectively within the school environment. They were not satisfied with the kind of support that they were receiving at the time of the study from the schools. According to them, the school principals should also have workshops not only for them to understand their roles in regards to the new learning area, but also for sustainability and regular support and monitoring in the schools and classroom level.

Other issues mentioned by the teachers related to the provision of both learning material and human resources. Some teachers highlighted these as the areas that would need most attention should AC become a reality. Teachers clearly require a more sustained teacher development approach, during which they should be given continuous support.

The data developed in my study is similar to other studies in South Africa, notably the work of Van Blerk (2007) and Mbeshu (2010). In both studies teachers focused on limited material resources as strong constraint and source of frustration.

Mbeshu (2010) focused on barriers to A&C implementation and distilled the following as important themes highlighted by teachers in her study:
• Poor pre-service preparation – in arts themes
• Never studied arts and culture (non specific teachers of arts and culture)

- Poor in-service – too short three day workshops to explain theoretical perspective and then also the practical application
- Poor resources at schools

Van Blerk on the other hand also highlighted teacher responses to arts and culture implementation as required by policy documents as follows:

- No text books available for this learning area to guide teachers
- Combination of four themes present a problem
- No qualified teachers exist for this learning area most being specialists in one or at most two of the themes presented for the learning area. Qualified Art, music and or Drama teachers
- Often arts and culture teaching delegated to another teacher often young novice teachers

The teachers also added that the Arts and Culture learning area was not considered to be important in the school setting and consequently there was little or no support from school management. They also indicated that curriculum documents were unclear and that they were not in touch with colleagues and so unsure of what others were doing. This data seems to suggest that Arts and Culture teachers were struggling with the implementation of policy as formulated for the NCS and their learning area in particular. While there are similarities in teachers responses the idea of sense making sheds a different light on the problem in my opinion and does add currency the my study.

This chapter suggests that what teachers make of new information is directly related to their prior knowledge, expertise, values, beliefs and experiences. They do not make sense of their world in a vacuum, as their sense-making is situated within particular "thought communities."

The next chapter will discuss the main findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

"Teachers do not simply receive policy as empty vessels; rather they filter policies of reform and change through their existing professional ideologies and perspectives."   (Shain & Gleeson 199:453)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The data presented in the previous chapter signals the importance of A&C teachers' experiences and responses to curriculum change based on the sense-making process. This chapter discusses the main themes and patterns that emerged from these findings. Reflecting on these, I extracted three key findings as to how Arts and Culture teachers' experiences and responses framed their sense-making of curriculum policy and why this is critical to the translation of the A&C learning area into practice.

5.2 POLICY MUST AFFECT A SYSTEM OF PRACTICES

As stated in Chapter Four the challenge and consideration for policy makers is about how the underlying ideas within the policy are communicated to and understood by teachers. This represents a major shift in how teachers think about any curriculum innovation and how they act upon it. Hence teachers' internal representations or prior knowledge is a key leverage point for the representation of reform ideas in policy.

Presentations of curriculum policy that build on and engage teachers' existing schemata are likely to enable them to construct understandings that more closely approximate policy makers' goals. If teachers' sense-making is central in the policy-implementation process, then the nature of the external representations

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used by policy makers is as important a design feature as the rewards and sanctions attached to the policy to ensure that implementing agents and agencies comply. What is important here is not simply that teachers chose how they would respond to policy change, but also what they understood themselves to be responding to.

The meanings attached to the above are that right from the first OBE training workshops, teachers in this study, who were somehow connected to some sub-disciplines of the A&C learning area due to their pre-service tertiary training unintentionally felt that they knew exactly what was required from them and how to put the A&C learning area into practice.

Three of the teachers' openly stated that their music qualifications assisted them to easily grasp the necessary A&C learning area requirements and to teach the learning area as set out by the NCS. But what these teachers were unintentionally doing wrongfully was that, when presented with the new curriculum information, they drew analogies between their music qualifications rather than the structural features of the new A&C knowledge. This could lead to misunderstanding the new information contained in the NCS. based on their prior knowledge. As a result, the comprehension of the A&C ideas seems more familiar than what they actually are.

Thus, the way these teachers interpreted and presented the instructional ideas of A&C was the same as the belief that they held from their Music practice. Consequently integration of the four sub-disciplines into one learning area as suggested by the curriculum policy was, although superficially, incorporated into the learning area's approach and not in line with the A&C learning area's structural design. Clearly these teachers' extant knowledge base was then incorporated into incoming policy stimuli, which seemed not in line with the policy makers' intent. They tended to assimilate the new knowledge about A&C instruction into their existing frameworks of understanding. Their prior

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understandings conflicted with their expectations regarding the way different art forms should be combined in the teaching of the learning area and this strongly influenced their perceptions and interpretations of policy messages as ones with which they were familiar. In this case I am referring to their over-emphasis on the Music part of the A&C learning area. The cognitive perspective thus suggests that seeing new ideas as familiar hinders implementation. This means that fundamental conceptual change requiring the restructuring of existing knowledge is extremely difficult. Understanding involves accessing relevant structures in memory and applying them to make sense of what is presented.

In sum, based on the aforementioned discussion, people's usual approach to processing new knowledge is a conservative process, entailing the preservation of existing frameworks, rather than the radical transformation of them. For these teachers new ideas were either understood as familiar ones, without sufficient attention being paid to the aspects that diverge them from the familiar, or they are integrated without restructuring existing knowledge and beliefs resulting in piecemeal changes being made in existing practice. Thus, the teachers constructed understandings of the reform fitted into their existing models of instruction. Only by substantially rethinking the ideas that they held can important differences between the intended policy and the teachers' understanding be attained. Teachers see new policies in terms of their current understandings, interpreting reforms, such as standards-based teaching and inquiry, in terms of access to more textbooks or an emphasis on hands-on activities as discussed in section 2.8.1.3,on page 45.

Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter Two, Fullan (2001) describes the holding of such a belief by teachers as amounting to "false clarity". Therefore, a very real tension can exist between communicating abstract principles and being concrete enough to adequately constrain the process of understanding. Indeed, the surface form of practices can be implemented in such a way as to miss the underlying intent of the reform. The surface form of knowing displayed by these teachers

only using their music qualifications to detect what policy asks of them, seems to have missed the underlying intent of the curriculum policy for the implementation of A&C learning. They adopted the A&C learning within the NCS without understanding, or fully constructing the underlying idea, which led to superficial change.

Consequently the NCS and in particular the A&C learning area were often interpreted in light of what teachers in this study already understood, or the knowledge they already had. When teachers misunderstand new ideas in this way they hinder change. They tended to see what was new in terms of what they already knew and believed. As they had definite views about their music knowledge, these views influenced them and were clearly visible when acted on the integrated A&C learning approach. Thus these teachers in the study saw the instruction to integrate the four art forms into one as not viable, in line with the beliefs or practices they already had. As such, their construction of the new ideas therefore prevented them from interpreting and implementing the proposed changes as the policy makers had intended. These views were therefore incorporated in their prior understanding irrespective of the policy requirements that foregrounds? integrated sub-disciplines for A&C. The examples of these teachers' actions are typical responses of this. The result here is that these teachers relied on superficial similarities when accessing related information from their memories, even when knowledge structures connected by means of deeper principles were appropriate, as required by the NCS.

It is clear from these examples that in these teachers' cases and by their responses above, that they faithfully attempted to implement the A&C learning as part of the curriculum reform, but in these instances failed to do so. Their prior beliefs and practices had posed challenges not only in so far as they might be unwilling to change in the direction of the policy, but also because their understandings interfered with their ability to interpret and implement the A&C learning area in ways that are consistent with the policy's intentions. According to the evidence in

my data, due consideration must be given to the role prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences play in shaping agents' understanding of policy and their relation to it. As these teachers' responses clearly indicate, considering the role of human sense-making in implementing policy underscores the importance of unintentional failures of implementation, while still allowing for wilful misinterpretation. What is of paramount importance in these instances is not simply that these teachers choose to respond to policy, but also what they understand themselves to be responding to.

In addition three teachers responses to A&C practices in this study, with no tertiary qualifications in any one of the four sub-disciplines of A&C but who still were required to teach A&C because of needs that arose within schools, were not in keeping with the intent of the curriculum policy requirements. One teacher clearly indicated that what he knew of A&C teaching was based on his prior interactions and experiences whilst being schooled in Music and Art. He used his existing knowledge base to assist him with his own A&C classes. These teachers were qualified in subjects other than A&C like History, Afrikaans and Needlework. They openly stated that they concentrated more on one sub-discipline per term due to their direct involvement, as either a teacher or a learner, with one of the art forms in the past. In this case, my sense-making framework concerns the difficulty of major restructuring as part of learning. The difficulty this poses for A&C is the teachers with no pre-service qualification in A&C and who are qualified in other school subjects, might assume that two situations are similar in important principled ways because they are similar in salient superficial ways. While teaching different subjects in the past, their newly prescribed roles for teaching A&C are very different now and those influences can act as powerful mediators (filters) as to how teachers make sense of the NCS.

Thus, these teachers sense-making of the NCS implies that learning new ideas, such as a new learning area and its instructional approaches, is not simply an act of encoding the new ideas related to the learning area.. Accordingly, the

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appointment of Arts and Culture teachers was not based primarily on their professional ability in the learning area. Some of these teachers were not accustomed to handling the current reform under such limitations as those that had been imposed on them by their lack of A&C knowledge and the shortage of school resources. When these teachers' knowledge structures interacted with other factors, such as their own socialisation as teachers and how they themselves were taught as learners, an even bigger obstacle was presented to the successful translation of policy into practice.

Such views also resonate with a statement by Chisholm (2000: 25) that "although the very emergence of the new curriculum to replace that of apartheid was an achievement, its structure and design was compromised by the availability of human and resources." Therefore, simply communicating the NCS policy is not enough. There is a critical need to structure learning opportunities, so that stakeholders can construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own behaviour.

These responses of teachers also lent credence to Cohen and Weiss's argument that "policy making is mediated through users' 'earlier knowledge', with the policy message 'supplementing' rather than 'supplanting' teachers' and other implementing agents' prior knowledge and practice" (2000: 394). From this perspective, what is of paramount importance here is not simply that teachers chose to respond to policy, but also what they understood themselves to be responding to.

Comparing two cases, the three teachers with no tertiary qualifications in any one of the four sub-disciplines and the teachers who were somehow connected to some sub-disciplines of the A&C learning like Music, calls for a third implication in my sense-making framework that concerns the mechanisms of assessing and applying knowledge structures. The superficial aspects of a situation as expressed by all of these teachers, although not the most significant for deep conceptual

analysis, nevertheless are effective memory triggers for superficially similar situations. People often rely on superficial similarities when accessing related information from memory, even when knowledge structures connected by means of deeper principles might be more relevant. The teachers who regard themselves as experts can see deeper meaningful patterns in problem situations, which might not be as apparent to novices. They focus their attention on features of stimuli that are more significant conceptually: they can see situations in terms of the larger concepts and core principles of a specific domain. The difficulty that this poses for reform is that teachers with less expertise in the substance of the curriculum reform might come to rely more than they should on superficial similarity, assuming that two situations are similar in important principled ways because they are similar in salient superficial ways.

Based on the experiences and responses of these teachers this study suggests that the policy needs to consider adequately, either at a conceptual level or at the level of policy implementation, the process by which teachers make sense of curriculum. The planning of the delivery of the new school curriculum in South Africa should have included a process, in terms of which the design features of the A&C learning within the NCS are interpreted and linked with the teaching approach. This could only have been possible if Arts and Culture teachers in this study had had a thorough understanding of the rationale of the learning area that should have been introduced and presented through the OBE workshops. Teachers respond to policy constructions in complex ways, adopting some practices contained in policy and contesting other meanings and practices.

On the basis of the findings presented so far it can be concluded, as already stated in previous sections, that considering the role of human sense-making in implementing policy underscores the importance of unintentional failures of implementation in addition to allowing for wilful misinterpretation. Educational innovations often focus on changing the visible structures within schools and tend to ignore the prior knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, norms and values of

teachers within schools. Whilst this seems to be the case in this study, all acts of understanding require accessing prior knowledge and applying it to guide the noticing, framing and connecting of new ideas and events to what is already encoded in memory. Such a process is active and not a passive encoding of information. However teachers in this study have excessively relied on superficial similarities between their current practices such as in the case of music teachers, where important aspects of the reform ideas are lost in the push to assimilate them into existing knowledge structures.

This study found that despite varying degrees of compliance with curriculum policy processes, the policy and markedly different approaches to the A&C learning area requirements. Curriculum innovations at the schools were inhibited by having teachers construct new understandings that were based on prior knowledge structures. The implications of building new understandings of policy on present understanding, i.e. supplementing rather than replacing knowledge, must be considered. This section has described how my cognitive framework has considered how an individual's prior knowledge and belief systems affect how they make sense of policy, and how they translate that understanding into action.

5.3 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS AND RESOURCES

A second finding of this study is that teachers' social interactions and their contextual experiences largely determine how they will implement curriculum changes and revise their current practice. Teachers' responses based on their experiences in this regard clearly indicated that curriculum processes must be understood within the context of each school. As such, I treat the situation as a constituting element of sense-making activity, shifting the level of my sense-making analysis from the individual's knowledge structure to the activity within a bigger system. For me it is important that sense-making and action are distributed in the interactive web of teachers and situation and this system. This

suggests another way in which differences in knowledge affect sense-making and action in the curriculum implementation process.

In the data, I observed evidence of reformed practice, though not the extensive change required by the curriculum policy process regarding A&C learning. The teachers' accounts of their contextual experiences of trying to implement the curriculum helped to explain why their situated practices either do, or do not, conform to policy prescriptions. Almost all of the respondents in the study blamed contextual constraints for their not meeting the NCS requirement to teach the A&C learning area according to policy requirements. These features included lack of specific classrooms for A&C, time-constraints, the necessary available learning support materials, large classes, lack of collegial support, especially from the School Management Teams and from district offices. According to the responses, it was highlighted that these challenges were all factors that affected the curriculum process and hampered schools, whilst leading to a lack of conformance to the requirements of the NCS policy. Respondents at all the schools stated that these contextual constraints from their schools and district offices (and the broader school community, i.e. parents) impinged on their confidence to implement the curriculum reform, especially for A&C learning.

Based on the cognitive framework, although individual cognition and the search for universal patterns are important, sense-making is not a solo affair. What this means in broad terms, is that the degree to which policy must succeed in getting teachers to change their practice, is directly related to teachers' contexts or "enactment zones", the spaces where the world of policy meets the world of practice. As a consequence, the lack of resources and materials in the "zone of enactment" might partly explain teachers' practices. The lack of suitable materials for A&C learning, time constraints to fully engage with the curriculum and lack of collegial support reduce the possibility of sound curriculum implementation in schools. Teachers used contextual constraints as reasons not to comply with the policy makers' intent and to explain why policies seldom seem

to permeate the classrooms. In this case teachers' extant knowledge structures, their beliefs and attitudes in this curriculum process are mediated by their context and help to explain, together with the policy messages embedded in the NCS, how these influence the curriculum that is ultimately enacted at schools. This suggests the existence of strong relationships between views of knowledge, situational constraints and the interpretations of curriculum policy.

McLaughlin (1998) came to a similar conclusion in her study when she found that whilst teachers may be eager to embrace change efforts; little change will ensue if their institutional setting or broader organisational environment is not supportive. In other words, context is often important when it comes to the implementation of policy, as it can either hamper or enable interactions among teachers in relation to policy and practice. Putting it differently, when teachers' extant knowledge structures and experiences fuse with their context, teachers use them to justify why teachers do what they do and how policy is enacted.

Based on my observations at five of the six schools, it is clear that the conditions and context for effective implementation of the NCS were not in place. The context in which these teachers had to work was characterised by difficult educational and social circumstances that did not support the kind of practices that were suggested in the NCS. Most teachers in the study, had enactment zones that were mostly private and individualistic and afforded them few opportunities to grapple with meaning of policy makers' proposals for the NCS. They undertook less fundamental, frequently surface-level changes in their practice. From this institutional perspective, these teachers' thoughts and actions were situated in institutional sectors that constrained action. As such, they contributed to defining the ways in which teachers had made sense of the new curricular experiences and learning area situations.

Teachers' reactions on the poor support by principals and senior management teams also hampered interactions among A&C teachers in relation to policy and

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practice. Due to little interaction with colleagues about shared understandings of the NCS, these poor support undermined opportunities for teachers to be exposed to alternative understandings of the curriculum policy proposals. If the opposite were true, for example if there were support interactions amongst the staff about their work, then these arrangements could have been especially influential when it came to the adoption of curriculum innovations by schools. This means that teacher collaboration could provide access to new ideas and knowledge, as well as incentives for instructional improvement. However in this study, teachers' limited opportunities at schools to talk with each other about A&C practice and about policy makers' proposals, contributed to substantial differences among the teachers as to how they revised their practice on the basis of the NCS.

Sarason (1990), Fullan (1991) and Elmore (1995) similarly found that context had a major influence on the relationship between structural change and change in school practices, with the intersection being marked by relatively powerful factors such as shared norms, knowledge and skills of teachers. The contextual realities of the teachers in this study are no different from those explained by Fullan (1993) and Elmore (1995). As such, this study has demonstrated that teachers' "scripts" or knowledge structures, in conjunction with workplace factors, largely accounted for what they did. In line with this Blignaut (2008) found in his studies on policy enactment in the Eastern-Cape that disadvantaged schools had to be creative in mustering additional resources and inventing alternatives, but without sufficient resources to sustain efforts, this was akin to providing teachers merely with a "lamp and three wishes."

Therefore, this study suggests that context serves as a powerful mediating function between reform initiatives and practice. The immediate environment in which teachers in this study had to make sense of the curriculum policy, in terms of the organisational arrangements of their workplaces, contributed to defining the ways in which they made sense of the new experiences and situations. Social norms, organisational arrangements and organisational structures in this inquiry

were important contexts for teachers' work and their effort to make sense of policy. Individuals drew on existing reservoirs of individual and collective knowledge to determine what particular policies meant, in order to decide on how to respond to policy-makers' recommendations.

To round off this section, a glimpse of the historic fabric of the schools involved in this study is also important. This historical perspective, at both individual and school levels, is important because the situation involves more than the here and now. As is the case with individually held beliefs, most of what people know about the school cultures that they inhabit is tacit – learned primarily through experience and the unconscious integration of contextual cues from being immersed as a member of the community. It is this tacit knowledge, actively acquired through participation in a culture, that forms the basis of an individual's belief and expectations about how to act in a certain situation. School One is a previously disadvantaged school. The language of instruction is Afrikaans and it is characterised as under-resourced for proper A&C learning. Most schools in the study are previously disadvantaged schools with some good internal support mechanisms, and others are not so well organised. Teachers reported in the responses a number of contextual challenges, which seemed to constrain or enable action. Some of these were the availability of specific classrooms for A&C learning.

The history of the school buildings helps to account for the way in which teachers made sense of and responded to reform proposals. According to Drake, Spillane & Hufferd-Ackles (2001), organisations also have histories that can be especially influential in the efforts of implementing agents to understand what a policy is asking of them. Hence the history of an implementing agency, as embodied in organisational norms and stories, serves as an influential context for implementing agents' sense-making from and about policy.

This study therefore suggests that teachers' knowledge structures are rooted in, strongly related to and formulated though practices. Together with the teaching context, they inform what teachers do in schools and largely determine how they make sense of the policy message. Therefore, what it means to be a teacher and to teach is defined by the confluence of teachers' knowledge structures, the context and the policy message.

5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF POLICY REPRESENTATIONS ON A&C TEACHERS' SENSE-MAKING

A third and final finding of this study is the influence that policy representations had on teachers in relation to policy and practice. The implementation of national curriculum reform in the context of teachers' A&C knowledge greatly depends on the readiness of all education departments to ensure that appropriate resources, including teachers, are available. The findings in this study indicated that the teachers' knowledge structures most probably exerted a controlling effect on how they made sense of curriculum policy. Teachers' prior beliefs (about teaching and learning) and their current beliefs, referring to their extant understandings, have been seen to hinder their ability to interpret and implement the new curriculum policy in ways that were consistent with the policy makers' intent. All the teachers' perspectives, experiences and knowledge structures played a critical role in their construction of meaning in terms of the NCS policy.

The challenge to the communication of abstract policy ideas is, in fact, those ideas that represent a system of practices. Incoherence occurs when the reform is interpreted as consisting of a set of specific practices, essentially out of context. Teachers' examples of relying only on one of the sub-disciplines of A&C support this argument. Based on the cognitive perspective, these teachers who interpreted the reforms as prescribing an occasional activity have not understood the system of practices necessary for A&C learning. Similarly, Spillane *et al.* (2002) indicate that such reform cannot be accomplished by having teachers learn only the

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surface form of reform practices. It requires grappling with underlying ideas and may require deep conceptual change in which teachers rethink an entire system of interacting attitudes, beliefs and practices. Hence they suggest that it is critical that policy representations support agents in looking beneath the surface, perhaps by juxtaposing potential form and function based understandings of central reform ideas.

Similarly, research done on external representations suggests that when new ideas are represented in a manner that matches the internal representation (prior understanding) of the user, it is more likely that the ideas will be used and adopted and the targeted behaviour changed (Spillane *et al*., 2002). Hence implementing agents' internal representations or prior knowledge is a key leverage point for the representation of reform ideas in policy. Representations that build on and engage implementing agents' existing schemata are likely to enable implementing agents to construct understandings that more closely approximate policy makers' goals. If implementing agents' sense-making is central in the sense-making process, then the nature of the external representations used by policy makers is as important a design feature as the rewards and sanctions attached to the policy to ensure that implementing agents and agencies comply.

However, some teachers' experiences on curriculum change in this study pressed for instructional changes that required them to relinquish their existing schemas or scripts for thinking about instructional practice. This refers to the difficulty of restructuring belief systems because of the cognitive complexity and affective challenges this process involves. Data from this study suggested that teachers had to unlearn a considerable amount of what they had already learnt in the past, as well as their current beliefs about instruction in the arts. Such unlearning implied them having to make a shift from the traditional individual approach, in terms of which each teacher was an expert in a particular subject, in this case music, to a situation where teachers might not be an expert in all the subject matter that they

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were required to teach in terms of the curriculum. The assertions of Teachers two, four and five lend credence to this argument. These differences matter greatly when it comes to policy implementation. In the data, the nature of the changes sought by policy makers is also important because some of the changes for A&C teachers involved more complex cognitive transformations for Teachers two,four and five.

This study suggests that teachers two, four and five seemed to rely excessively on superficial similarities between their prior practice in one of the four sub-disciplines of the A&C learning area and the NCS ideas. This presented the risk of losing important aspects of curriculum reform. The fragmented training of the learning area by facilitators also did not do any good. When new ideas are represented in a way that resonates with the prior understanding of these teachers, it is more likely that such ideas will be used and adopted.

Teachers' prior knowledge is a key leverage point for the representation of reform ideas in policy. If teachers' sense-making is central to the implementation process, then the nature of the external representations used by policy makers is as important a design feature as are the rewards and sanctions attached to policy to ensure that teachers comply with it. On the basis of the research evidence, it seems probable that what is understood in a new policy message depends critically on the knowledge base that teachers already have and how new understandings are presented to them.

The teachers concerned were confused by the introduction of A&C education, because they were accustomed to using traditional instructional methodology in one of the four strands. As such, they experienced difficulty in restructuring their belief systems because of the cognitive complexity and affective challenges that teaching the A&C learning area involved. Because these teachers had to unlearn a considerable amount of what they already knew and believed about A&C

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instruction, such fundamental changes in their knowledge structures and consequently to their teaching behaviours was deeply problematic.

Teachers one, three and six were required to be well versed in the various components and themes of A&C. What was also evident from the data was that these teachers were not sure of how to approach A&C as a new learning area. Few South African teachers were qualified and skilled in all four strands of the learning area, as Teacher one pointed out. On the one hand, some teachers were only specialised in one component of the area. On the other hand, some teachers lacked formal training but were still expected to teach A&C, if such a need arose at the school at which they taught. Teacher one's profile was evidence of this. The teachers tended mainly to concentrate on one or two familiar sub-disciplines to which they were accustomed, rather than on all four, especially those of which they had scant knowledge.

However such teachers, whilst concentrating on only one sub-discipline per semester as opposed to implementing the teaching of A&C in its integrated form, characterised their classroom practice as being consistent with the curriculum policy although the teaching of the different art forms to learners was superficial.

In addition Blignaut (2008) contends that teachers, who strive to implement such a curriculum, will often struggle to meet the requirements of two incompatible systems; since they are based on widely differing philosophies of education, teachers feel caught between content coverage and making sense of a new policy.

A key finding of this study is that the nature of the changes sought by policy makers for Arts and Culture teachers involved more complex cognitive transformation than seemed to be the case in other learning areas. The greater complexity of such transformation stemmed from the nature of the A&C learning area within the NCS. Such change required teachers to expand their knowledge structures. Teachers, who in the past had to teach only one subject, such as

Music, had to come to an understanding of the key aspects of the new work including the nature of A&C and what it means to teach A&C to children. Such an understanding meant that they had to make fundamental changes in their existing cognitive scripts. Teachers had to transform their models for teaching only one art subject, to those for teaching A&C, which entailed employing policy initiatives in their classroom practice.

As shown in this study, when teachers have to relinquish existing schemas of thinking about instructional practice, substantive change is very difficult. These are the reasons why teachers concentrated on only one sub-discipline per semester, rather than teaching A&C in its integrated format, as is required by the NCS. Ideas about changing behaviour that teachers construct from policy are a function of the policy message, their knowledge structures and the circumstances in which they attempt to make sense of the policy concerned. In other words, what a policy means is constituted in the interaction of teachers' existing cognitive structures, their context, and the policy signals. The nature of the changes sought by policy makers is thus important, because some changes involve having to make more complex cognitive transformations than others.

The current study suggests that instructional ideas involving minimal or modest changes to teachers' existing frameworks in regard to subject matter and instruction tend to figure much more prominently in their implementation efforts than do those ideas that require fundamental restructuring of their schemas or frameworks. Some policy representations are likely to be more effective than others in enabling teachers to make sense of them, as they help them to develop better understandings of the intentions of the designers. When new ideas are represented in a way that matches the prior understanding of teachers, it is more likely that such ideas will be used, adopted and the targeted behaviour changed.

The data in this study indicated that the training teachers received was not at the level of competency demanded by the new curriculum. It seems that the facilitators themselves were not competent. The "how" of teaching large numbers of learners in terms of the new curriculum also seems to have proved a challenge for most of the A&C educators, some of whom needed more assistance in acquiring a knowledge and understanding of A&C. Participants felt that the policy that guides A&C learning should be familiar to all educators, and that the subject advisors should be used to facilitate the process. They revealed that they wished to be assisted to understand theoretical aspects of A&C such as the methods and strategies to be used in facilitating A&C learning.

When educators were asked about their curriculum development of the A&C learning area, they indicated that they felt ill equipped to do so, as they had not been trained to work like that. School realities and personal motivation appeared to be important factors that could either inhibit or promote curriculum change in schools. The educators listed factors such as the large numbers of learners in classes and the lack of resources as impediments to the implementation of A&C in terms of the new curriculum. It became evident that most educators had limited resources for A&C learning at their schools. Given that A&C educators could be guided and supported by having appropriate materials, such materials should be readily available to them, especially during periods of reformation and transformation.

Finally, looking at the responses on training that the teachers had, it seems that there was a critical need to structure learning opportunities so that stakeholders could construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for their own behaviour. For example, teachers in the study in their quest for adequate learning conditions, concurred that under the right conditions, they could have enhanced their understanding of curriculum reform proposals. Similarly, research on teachers' professional development, another context in which policy makers frequently represent their proposals for reforming practice, also offers insight.

For example, Cohen & Hill (2000) argue that policy is more likely to influence teaching when teachers' opportunities to learn are grounded in the curriculum that students study, are extended in time and are connected to several dimensions of teaching. With policy focusing so intensively on the desired effects of curriculum proposals, constraining realities with respect to curriculum implementation are easily overlooked. A commitment to a vision of what should be has undermined the ability of policy to consider seriously what is. In short, the harsh inequalities and contextual realities of South African schools appear to have been overlooked.

Although teachers in this study were fundamentally supportive of curriculum change, it appears as though the pace and scope of the imposed change proved to be too much for most of them. In essence, the study found that the training Arts and Culture teachers received meant that they were uncertain about their level of preparedness for implementing the new curriculum. The training did not seem sufficient to give them the necessary confidence to implement the curriculum optimally. This example of these teachers means that policy documents need to focus on underlying principles rather than advocating a particular programme or prescribing a particular set of practices, such as the integrated training of the A&C learning area.

According to Spillane *et al.* (2002: 398 - 401) peoples usual approach to processing new knowledge is a conservative process, entailing the preservation of existing frameworks, rather than the radical transformation of such. New ideas are either understood as familiar ones without sufficient attention being paid to aspects that diverge from the familiar, or are integrated without restructuring existing knowledge and beliefs, resulting in piecemeal changes being made in existing practice. Thus, the teachers' constructed understandings of the reform fit into their existing models of instruction. By substantially rethinking such ideas important differences between the intended policy and the teachers' understanding might otherwise be attained. Teachers in this study saw the new

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curriculum policy in terms of their current understandings, interpreting reforms such as standards-based teaching and inquiry, in terms of access to more textbooks or in emphasis on hands-on activities.

Finally what is important here is the need to first lead teachers to recognise the curriculum changes, and then to focus resources and support on attempts to make sense of the novel idea, restructuring existing beliefs and knowledge. So it is vital to create a sense of dissonance in which A&C teachers see the issues in their current practice rather than seeing the new ideas as achieved within their current practice. This dissonance or dissatisfaction with one's own behaviour, is essential to the reinterpretation of one's beliefs. But this process cannot be too negative or it may trigger the natural tendency toward self-affirmation, leading teachers to find fault in or explain away the curriculum reform idea. Reformers need to create a context in which agents focus considerable resources on analysing practice. To avoid the risk that abstractions will be interpreted through the teachers' own schemas for practice, it is important to begin with examples and then build up to generalisations.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study mainly focused on teachers' experiences and responses regarding the implementation of the current national curriculum reform, the NCS and specifically the A&C learning area. The teacher's sense-making in this regard in this study is considered the main factor in successful curriculum implementation, because an empowered and well-informed teacher is a significant variable of challenge in meeting curriculum decision-making at school.

This study supports the assertion that teachers often bring their own personal habits, thoughts, sentiments and predispositions to the act of teaching, while simultaneously being constrained by institutional arrangements. The schools also often structure teachers' work and strategies by limiting the resources such as the

materials, time and class size available to them. Fullan (1991) argues that there are three dimensions in the implementation of any new programme or policy: the use of new materials; new teaching methodologies; and alterations to belief systems. If an innovation is to be effectively adopted by individuals and groups, a significant refocusing of such dimensions needs to occur. Essentially, teachers deploy strategies to deal with difficulties encountered in the school, based on their interpretation of the situation and their interaction with the learners.

Finally, this study also demonstrates that substantive rather than superficial change is very difficult, and that teachers conserve their existing frameworks rather than radically transforming them. Those instructional ideas that involve minimal or modest changes to teachers' existing frameworks regarding subject matter and instruction tend to figure much more prominently in their implementation efforts than do those ideas that require fundamental restructuring of the teachers' frameworks.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the new curriculum policy messages were often interpreted in the light of what the teachers already understood, or the knowledge base that they already had in their possession. Such views were thus incorporated in their curriculum practice, irrespective of the curriculum requirements for A&C learning. Clearly, the new practices suggested by the curriculum policy conflicted with the teachers' knowledge structures and influenced the construction of new understandings. This study showed that, when teachers were faced with new policy ideas, the assimilation of such ideas into existing knowledge frames together with the influence of the contexts within which they are operating was required.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR RESEARCH

> *"In the real world, reflective practice should be seen as a process whereby problems are identified and situations ameliorated through a process of pragmatic reformulation; any claims that solutions (except a very few situations) are possible must be regarded sceptically*." (Golby & Appleby, 1995:118)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the course of this study I have come to see sense-making in curriculum reform as inevitably having a direct bearing on the key aspects of school practice, especially in the case of the A&C learning area. I support these claims by suggesting that policy needs to consider adequately the sense-making process by which teachers are able to meet the intentions of policy requirements.

To develop this argument I have identified three aspects that were found to be pertinent and interrelated in the curriculum change process, namely education policies, teachers' personal work context and continued teacher training. The discussion of such aspects will be related to the experiences and responses of the teachers obtained during the current study and to the curriculum change process. I conclude this final chapter by exploring possibilities for further research.

6.2 POLICIES IN EDUCATION

Teachers respond to policy constructions in complex ways, adopting some practices contained in policy and contesting other meanings and practices. During the course of this research study, it became apparent that the teachers in this study had not been directly involved in the policy development process, which made it more difficult for them to engage with the policy documents concerned. Those teachers who participated in this study felt that all teachers should at least at a conceptual level be familiarised with the policy that guides A&C learning and that Curriculum Advisors should be used to facilitate this process. They asserted their need to be assisted to understand theoretical aspects of the A&C learning area, particularly those related to the choice of methods and strategies to facilitate A&C learning.

Such a view is consistent with that of Kruss (1998: 97) who indicated that very little had been done by way of consultation with teachers as far as policy development was concerned. Furthermore, by all accounts, the planning for OBE-training (INSET) was generally found to have been less than ideal. The complex relationships between policy introduction and practice seem to have been trivialised, especially in relation to the "real world" of schools and classrooms. Jansen (1999a) stated that declaring policy is not the same thing as achieving it, making it clear that "there was very little consideration given to the complex of resources and support systems needed to move from policy enunciation to policy enactment within schools." Kruss (1998: 99) in turn, indicated that teachers have only been involved at implementation level, and not at the level of policy development and conceptualisation, which has resulted in reducing them to the position of being the mere implementers of predesigned ideas.

The Arts and Culture teachers in this study indicated that they were not consulted in the policy process, and that they were unfamiliar with the content of the final

documents, often hearing about curriculum implementation from colleagues. In this regard, Wood and Bennett (2000, in Reddy 2004: 10) noted that in an era of radical reform there are potential tensions between changes that are imposed externally through government policy and changes in professional knowledge and practice, which are generated by teachers.

In a related point, Fullan (1991) warned that although imposed policies can serve as a stimulus for change, they cannot bring about change on their own. Shain & Gleeson (1999: 453) highlighted another aspect: "teachers do not simply receive policy as empty vessels; rather they filter policies of reform and change through their existing professional ideologies and perspectives." This view resonated with the statement made by Fullan (1991) that change does not occur when the latest policies are implemented, but when teachers change the cultures of classrooms.

Another implication for policy makers to consider is that studies of the mediating role played by teachers' professional communities in their construction of messages about their practice, which they learn about in policy documents and other sources, underscore the importance of socially mediated sense-making in the implementation process. As members of a community interact over time in response to problems of shared concern, they negotiate meanings about the nature of their work and, in some instances, share understandings about what they need from outsiders (e.g. the district or state) to do their work well. Such shared understandings become a filter for ideas about how to revise extant practice.

In light of the preceeding, this study suggests that we need to explain/discuss/understand/unpack how and why policy evolves as it does. By using this cognitive approach to policy analysis, we can generate important insights into the implementation process, insights that can inform policy makers as to why it seems so difficult for policy to be translated into practice.

Finally, on this point, this study has indicated that the cognitive model can identify categories of variables that may help to account for the understandings that teachers construct from policy. These categories of variables can be used, as the study has shown, to generate findings about the ways in which curriculum reform might evolve as a result of teachers' sense-making as they percolate through the system.

6.3 TEACHERS' PERSONAL WORK CONTEXT

The accounts of teachers in this study also revealed that most schools still need to be supported with sufficient resource materials for the implementation of the A&C learning area to be successful. Teachers' responses showed that the issue of support remained an obstacle to A&C implementation. The lack of learning support materials and teacher support were frequently blamed for hindering the implementation of A&C as a learning area, as well as the negative disposition of Arts and Culture teachers towards curriculum implementation. The negative responses, especially about the lack of learning support materials (LSMs) was consistent with the report of the Review Committee (Chisholm, 2000), which made it clear that one of the main factors that hampered the implementation of the new curriculum was the poor quality of the new "outcomes-based" LSM. According to Potenza and Monyokolo (1999: 243), learning materials are a critical part of curriculum implementation. They state that the development, selection and supply of learning materials should, therefore, be seen as an integral part of curriculum planning. Such sentiments are similar to those expressed in Fullan (1991), which suggest that effective curriculum change should involve the use of appropriate resources and new materials.

About the availability of qualified Arts and Culture teachers, teachers' responses in this study clearly indicated the need for well trained Arts and Culture teachers in all four art forms included in this learning area. According to the responses of the teachers concerned, the schools lacked qualified Arts and Culture teachers.

One of the reasons for such a lack of properly qualified personnel was the status of the A&C learning area within the new school curriculum. Although the teachers' working conditions were often poor, they were found to be doing their best. This study has also indicated that, even if teachers construct understandings that reflect policy makers' intent, they may lack the necessary skills and resources to put those understandings into practice; that is, they may not have the necessary human and material resources to do what they understand the policy to be asking of them.

In essence, A&C teaching and learning involves the development of a range of process skills that might be used in everyday life, in the community and in the workplace. The problem in this context seems to be the disjuncture between technical policy processes and teachers in their local contexts. Such a disjuncture complicates the already complex relationships between policy and practice (Jansen, 1999c: 145-156) and serves to exacerbate several well-documented implementation problems as indicated in Reddy (2001). Teachers mentioned many harsh realities in their responses to policy change initiatives, including excessively large learner numbers and professional inadequacy. De Clerq (1997: 128) who cites policy sociologists Dale (1989), and McPherson & Raab (1988) cited in De Clerq (1997) warn against underplaying the human agency and conflict-ridden nature of state institutions which are involved in one way or another with the relevant policies. They argue that policies are above all about context, processes and the conflicts of the actors who relate and mediate their own actions within their institutional structures and state organisations. The nature of policies probably accounts for the largely negative responses obtained from the teachers interviewed in this study. Such a reality also lends support to Jansen's (1999a: 149) critique of OBE as being based on "flawed assumptions about how classrooms are organised and what kinds of teachers exist within the system."

Accordingly teachers personal work context is in part a function of organisational structure. What this means is that organisational arrangements can either hamper or enable interactions amongst implementing agents in relation to policy and practice. Schools vary in their ways of structuring the work of teaching, especially in the extent to which their structural arrangements support interactions among the staff about their work. For them these arrangements are especially influential when it comes to the adoption of innovations by schools. What this means, is that teacher collaboration can provide access to new ideas and knowledge, as well as incentives for instructional improvement.

6.4 TEACHER TRAINING

This study also shows that in-service or OBE-training workshops did not provide teachers with the necessary and sufficient conceptual knowledge and skills about the A&C learning area within the NCS. OBE-training processes, which were conducted by Education Department officials, were proposed by the National Education Department as a means of induction into the new curriculum for teachers. Such induction took the form of a cascade model, in terms of which representatives from the provincial education departments were trained nationally, who in turn then trained more people at provincial level. The accounts of the Arts and Culture teachers in this study about their experiences during the OBE-training workshops revealed that the OBE-training provided by the Education Department did not fully explain the practical implications of the A&C learning area, once confronted with implementation at school level. The programmes offered by the Education Department appeared to be driven by what Little (1997: 170) calls "a training paradigm grounded largely in a skill-dominated conception of teaching." She adds that "heavy reliance on generic pedagogy (one size fits all)" means that larger rationales underlying the activities remain unexamined. Arts and Culture teachers stated that their expectations regarding the OBE-training sessions were not met. Most of them felt uncertain about what they should facilitate in their schools. According to the teachers, they

were negatively influenced by OBE-training opportunities, which failed to provide them with the necessary hands-on knowledge and skills for teaching A&C effectively in the school environment.

Teachers' concerns were also that the training sessions were too short to allow them to gain a thorough knowledge of OBE and A&C practices. Training was for one session per learning area per weekly cycle. The teachers argued that such *"one week and short"* courses were not helpful. These teachers' concerns resonate with Potenza and Monyokolo's (1999: 239) discussion of the new OBE curriculum in South Africa: the "cascade" training model used by education officials is only satisfactory if it is used in conjunction with other models. According to Potenza and Monyokolo (1999: 236) teachers are, in many senses, the most important educational resource as they are the ones to determine whether the new curriculum succeeds or not. Therefore, the success of the new curriculum depends on the training and support that teachers receive, and their ability to mobilise and manage the resources around them to implement the curriculum. They state that curriculum change should have teacher involvement and development at its core. Teachers have to be trained to understand the new curriculum and its challenges, including how to plan learning programmes in an integrated way, how to facilitate learning using new methodologies and how to use a variety of methods to assess whether the prescribed outcomes have been achieved.

The implication here for policy makers and government trainers, is the tension? between general principles and specific examples in the representation of the NCS. This means that trainers face serious challenges in a training system that communicates and enforces curriculum reforms. The goal is to communicate deep underlying principles rather than the superficial aspects of specific examples.

 The training and communication of the NCS necessarily needs to focus on underlying principles rather than advocating a particular programme or prescribing a particular set of practices. There is thus a real tension between communicating abstract principles and being concrete enough to provide adequate constraint on the understanding process. Communicating the rationale that motivates a reform is critical. Indeed, the surface form of practices can be implemented in such a way as to miss the underlying intent of the reform. The challenge to the training and communication of abstract policy ideas is in fact, that those ideas represent a system of practices. Incoherence results when the reform is interpreted as consisting of a set of specific practices, essentially out of context.

Similarly research on teachers' professional development, another context in which policy makers frequently represent their proposals for reforming practice, also offers insight. As mentioned in Chapter Two for example, Cohen & Hill (2000) argue that policy is more likely to influence teaching when teachers' opportunities to learn are grounded in the curriculum that students study, are extended in time and are connected to several dimensions of teaching.

In conclusion unless teachers are properly trained and supported and they develop a sense of ownership of the process, the implementation of the new curriculum will simply not be realised. It is clear that Arts and Culture teachers need a more sustained teacher development approach, in which they are continuously supported.

In order to meet teachers' expectations, the topics that are covered in training should minimally, meet the following three criteria:

- They must engage teachers in the concrete task of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection, which illuminate the processes of learning and development.

- They must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice, rather than on individual teachers.

- They must be sustainable, on-going, intensive and supported by modelling, coaching and the collective solving of specific problems encountered in practice.

To meet the first criterion training sessions should involve INSET, which extends far beyond the one-shot workshop, and the need for learning opportunities incorporating how to question, analyse. Furthermore these should encourage changes of instruction methods so that they can be used to teach challenging content. Involving teachers in such a meaningful curriculum development could become the cornerstone for school improvement. As Gordon (2004: 237) argues "The involvement of teachers in curriculum development will facilitate a sense of a teacher's ownership and help the teacher understand and effectively apply a new curriculum."

To meet the second criterion INSET opportunities should focus on professional growth, which is central to school change both inside and outside the school. Such opportunities include teacher-researcher groups, peer review groups, teacher networks and organisational partnerships, as well as programmes that involve teachers in national, provincial and local school and curriculum reform activities.

By providing such opportunities teachers' cooperation in translating the national curriculum could be secured with regards to the sharing of knowledge, engagement in mutual problem solving and helping one another to elaborate competencies in classroom practice. School settings that are characterised by collaborative norms provide substantial support for teachers who collaborate

(Little 1982; McLaughlin 1993; Lieberman 1995). Such norms transform social interactions into opportunities for innovation and learning "in which teachers are enthusiastic about their work and the focus is on devising strategies that enable all student to prosper" McLaughlin (1993: 94). Cultures of collaboration facilitate "a sense of mutual security and encourage interpersonal and interprofessional openness" McLaughlin (1993: 2). Strong INSET requires partnerships among schools, higher education institutions and other appropriate entities to promote learning opportunities for all those who affect student achievement, as well as the combination of resources to address diverse educational needs.

To meet the third criterion requires that the learning of teachers takes place within professional learning that is nurtured and developed from both inside and outside the school, so that significant and lasting school change can follow. Outside learning groups must support individual initiative, so that teachers can share interests and support innovation.

It is my understanding that since each component constitutes a vital and indispensable part of the process of curricular implementation, it is fundamentally important that such elements should not be trivialised or treated as separate entities, but rather that their interconnectedness and interdependence be acknowledged and addressed by means of discussions on curriculum reform and transformation.

What this section entails? is that the cognitive model to policy understanding incorporates both bottom-up and top-down perspectives on the implementation of the NCS. The top-down perspective is important, in this case the cascade model of OBE training workshops, because the policy messages and the manner in which policy documents represent the messages are influential in teachers' understanding of them. Furthermore, the intent of policy makers' proposals serves as a tool for analysing teachers' understandings of the policy message. The bottom-up perspective, in this case teacher scripts or schemata, coupled with their

situation is also central because they are fundamental constituting elements in the sense-making process.

6.5 POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study collected data relating to Arts and Culture teachers' experiences and responses to the NCS. Future studies in the following areas would contribute to the results of this study.

Firstly, this study indicates that teachers' experiences and responses on the NCS, specifically in terms of the A&C learning area, were still at the level of being adopted. Future studies focusing on classroom observations and an in-depth analysis of how teachers adapt and implement the national curriculum in terms of classroom practice need to be conducted.

Secondly, this study found how teachers in some instances conserve their existing frameworks, rather than radically transforming them, with the result that new ideas are seen as minor variations of what is already understood rather than as different in critically important ways. Therefore, it will be necessary to carry out case studies on the conceptualisation and the development process of a curriculum at local (school or district) level, particularly in subjects that are new to the teachers. It might be useful to consider the work of Delacruz and Dunn (1996) who reported on a study of Arts education that included collaborative work across art disciplines. They report that working with specialists in the various arts disciplines on central topics or pieces provides the opportunity for teachers to share ideas and expertise to enhance learning of the fields. Teachers then work collaboratively to develop Comprehensive Holistic Assessment Tasks (CHAT) which include various perspectives on a topic as well as a broader perspective on the task at hand. This provides spaces for the integration of the disciplines in curriculum units and also provides opportunities for teachers to

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learn from and together with each other. This kind of structured in-service might go a long way to addressing issues as expressed through the data of this study.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The study was conducted at six high schools in the Paarl region. Accordingly, the findings and comments apply only to these schools. It may well be the case that the experience of teachers at other high schools in the region, as well as of those at primary schools, differ from those of the schools covered in the current research. Since the study did not necessarily capture the full range of views and perspectives of all A&C schoolteachers in the region, the conclusions reached in this study cannot be generalised.

Another limitation of the research was the small number of Arts and Culture teachers I was able to access during the research process. One of my concerns during the study was that I was only able to work with teachers for limited time periods, due to the demands on and the workloads of, both the teachers and myself. Since the research focuses largely on Arts and Culture teachers' personal views, it would have been helpful to conducted interviews with district officials to hear a more "official" side of the story, especially in relation to A&C curriculum implementation in schools.

6.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Research processes are related to time and space, and therefore have temporal and contextual components. Qualitative research such as interviews, is concerned with the complex and the particular, rather than with generalisable findings. I feel that the data produced provided significant insights into Arts and Culture teachers' experiences and responses to curriculum change.

The experiences and responses of Arts and Culture teachers to curriculum change in this study are influenced by a number of factors. Thus, the findings of this study indicate the serious issues and challenges that teachers encounter in the process of implementing A&C education in the schools. Some of the issues are embedded within the "structures" that organise the education system, the negative perception of colleagues about A&C as a learning area and the perceived heavy workload of Curriculum Advisors and teachers. The interviews, focus groups and questionnaires explored a range of in-depth experiences of Arts and Culture teachers' curriculum implementation efforts in South African schools. Such experiences presented deeper nuances interwoven with how the teachers saw themselves, their roles in the schools, their relationships with colleagues within their schools and their relationship with the Education Department and other stakeholders. This realisation requires them to be afforded ample opportunities to re-examine and strengthen their subject knowledge, to develop their competencies in respect of the required teaching methodologies, and to expand their knowledge of the applicable learning area.

The significance of this study is that previous studies of curriculum reform have often explored the impact that a particular reform has had on a school, or how teachers have implemented a certain policy. Such studies have identified several key findings that contribute to successful implementation: developing supportive organisational arrangements; providing training and on-going information support and consultation; and monitoring and evaluation (Hall & Hord 1987).

This study went further to explore how Arts and Culture teachers at six high schools experienced and responded to the calls of the NCS. It has contributed to several perspectives in this study on curriculum implementation, by expanding the small body of existing literature on how teachers make sense of the policy implementation through their prior knowledge, expertise, values, beliefs and experiences (Spillane *et al.* 2002). What is understood in a new policy message depends critically on the knowledge base that one already has. Not only does lack

of knowledge interfere with the ability to understand, but also different teachers tend to construct different understandings seeing what is new in terms of what is already known and believed. As such is the case in this study, teachers' attempts to implement A&C learning might succeed or fail.

Secondly, this study could contribute to more successful policy implementation approaches by clarifying how curriculum should be implemented, how the new curriculum should be adapted during the implementation process and how the curriculum should be shaped by the evolving construct of teachers. What is important here is not simply that teachers choose how they will respond to policy change, but also what they understand themselves to be responding to.

Finally, from such a perspective, what a policy comes to mean in terms of the three dimensions of the curriculum for A&C teachers in this study largely depends on their repertoire of existing knowledge and experiences, their local contexts and the meanings they have extracted from the policy text /messages. All respondents' prior views (about putting the A&C learning into practice) and beliefs, namely their extant understandings interfere with their ability to interpret and implement the NCS in ways consistent with the policy makers' intent. These views, experiences and knowledge structures played a critical role in their construction of meaning from the NCS policy. What these teachers had gleaned from the NCS was critically dependent on the knowledge base that they already had.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The research covered by this study explored some issues and challenges encountered by teachers in implementing A&C learning as part of the new school curriculum for South African schools.

Essentially the study I worked on was in a context of systemic change as discussed in the policy process and captured in the text of Hertert (1996:381) below:

 "systemic reform involves fundamental and substantive change in both state policy making and local education processes. She adds that "if fully used, systemic reform has the potential to revolutionise public education, as it involves a realignment of power, authority, and responsibility to provide a policy structure that supports and encourages coherence."

While systemic policy changes hold the promise of co-ordinated, uniform system wide change, this is apparently not the experience of teachers who participated in this research project. Rather than representing a uniform response to a systemic approach to policy there were many categories of responses. In other words varying responses were presented, ranging from resistance on the one hand to acceptance and support for policy changes on the other. The systemic agenda is an ambitious one and the systemic argument works well at a rhetoric level. It is however built on a set of assumptions that are problematic in real world situations.

Grant (1996:9) indicates that advocates of systemic reform presume that teachers can and will embrace new policies and will effect fundamental changes in their classroom practices. Fuller, Snyder, Chapman and Hua (1994:141) mention that where systemic approaches are privileged, state actors assume that central policies can penetrate the classroom to effectively change teaching practices. They mention that policy makers in many countries implement top-down regulatory controls (policies) in attempts to control teachers' behaviour. These include advocacy of uniform national curricula and narrowing of examination content and are based on the assumption that simple and routinised strategies employed by most teachers can be altered and made more complex through legislation and centrally organised action. The above sentiments seem to be reflected in the SA context where a departure from that which was (existed previously) and what was now desired formed a big part of the change process

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The relationship between policy and practice is complex and certainly not a simple linear causal process. In the context of this research policies represented an important impetus to change. However, the contexts into which policies needed to be implemented varied greatly materially and socially presenting a situation riddled with disparities which resulted in wide ranging responses.

Teacher preparation and understanding of policy can be better developed though processes of INSET and contribute to the success of systemic change initiatives. Data in this research seems to indicate that any attempt to provide INSET regarding A&C learning would be successful if teachers were allowed the opportunity to participate actively in training that meets their curriculum needs and the needs of the context in which they live and work. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992: 28) argue that:

> "[t]eaching [*sic*] is not just a collection of skills, a package of procedures, and a bunch of things you can learn. While skills and techniques are important, there is much more to teaching than this. The complex nature of teaching is too often reduced to matters of skills and technique, to things that can be packaged, put on courses easily learned. Teaching is not just a technical business."

Teachers value and want to achieve certain things through their teaching. There are also things that they do not value or desires, which will as a consequence, not work. A central factor as indicated in Reddy (2001) are the teachers' purposes, a factor that also featured strongly in this study. Sadly, reformers and change agents often overlook teachers' purposes, failing to give such a voice in the curriculum policy process. They treat such purposes as though they are unimportant, and as if they do not exist. Ignoring or riding roughshod over such purposes can produce resistance and resentment in the teacher body (Hargreaves & Fullan 1992: 31).

Reddy (2001) cites Goodson (1994) when making the point that teachers do not become the teachers that they are, not just out of habit. Teaching is bound up

with their lives, their biographies and the kinds of people whom they have become. Many factors are important in the making of a teacher. Among such factors are the times in which teachers grow up and enter the profession, the value systems and dominant educational beliefs of their communities and their stage of life. He adds that the education of teachers is an important contributory factor. Many of the factors mentioned are relevant to the South African context, in which socio-political factors have played an important role in the socialisation of teachers in the profession.

In reporting his work with in-service teaching Reddy (2001) emphasises that educational change involves more than just teachers and their personal views. Freire (1993) argues that educational change is bound up with personal, as well as social change. Such change includes multiple factors that tie schools to larger social structures and ideologies. Lipman (1997: 40) writes that in periods of change, the complex nature of things extends to the implications of economic, political (ideological) and cultural influences on school restructuring and teacher participation. She adds that efforts that are directed at school change occur in contexts that are neither neutral nor isolated from larger social forces: the actual character of outcomes of restructuring is likely to be mediated by the school, community and national contexts. Like Reddy (2001), I found that the varying responses of Arts and Culture teachers to curriculum policy change during the interviews emphasised the importance of particular contexts and the factors at work in such contexts.

The unique contribution that is made by the current research shows that in order for policy reform to be positively received by the teachers concerned, they have to build on prior knowledge systems. They also have to pay attention to the local context within which the teachers work. Such development is particularly important in the South African context, with its history of disparity and discrimination.

The schools that have participated in this study have made commendable efforts to face such challenges. This chapter also suggests that the present mode of delivery, timing and the content of the NCS intended to facilitate the implementation of A&C as a learning area does not contribute sufficiently to the perceived goals of this new school curriculum. Such programmes need to focus on the improvement of A&C teaching in respect of all its sub-disciplines. They also need to be designed with practical modes of delivery in mind, and to be allocated appropriate time schedules so that the needs of Arts and Culture teachers can be met optimally.

In the framework of this study, it became apparent that the ideas about changing behaviour teachers construct from policy, are a function of the interaction of the policy signal; the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences; and the circumstances in which teachers attempt to make sense of policy. It is my belief that unless these aspects of teacher's professional lives are taken into account the transition from policy to practice will always be less than ideal and the changes sought by policy makers may never see the light of day. My thesis is that unless there is a focus on the multiple elements of teachers' sense making, individual cognition, social cognition and context, policy implementation will not happen as planned and will possibly not make the transition from advocacy to implementation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Mr Jeffery Lombard

46 Bonaparte Avenue

PAARL

7646

Dear Mr J. Lombard

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: ART AND CULTURE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE OF AND RESPONSES TO CURRICULUM CHANGE.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1   Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.

2   Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.

3   You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

4   Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.

5   The Study is to be conducted from **1st March 2005 to 3rd February 2006.**

6   No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2005).

7   Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.

8   A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.

9   A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.

10   The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

> **The Director: Education Research**
>
> **Western Cape Education Department**
>
> **Private Bag X9114**
>
> **CAPE TOWN**
>
> **8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**   **DATE: 16th August 2005**

APPENDIX B

Focus group questionnaire

1. Describe your experiences regarding the initial training workshops on the A&C learning as part of the implementation of the curriculum policy (NCS)?

2. Sketch some of the problems that you initially encountered at the beginning stages for implementing the curriculum?

3. What strategies were put in place at your school to promote the smooth implementation of A&C?

4. What do you think are still the biggest challenge(s) for A&C at schools?

5. What is your opinion of the WCED'S once-off quality assurance workshops for assuring proper implementation of the A&C learning?

6. Describe the kind of support that you have so-far received from the education officials for ensuring proper understanding of putting the A&C learning into classroom practice?

7. Can the support system from government officials and the schools concerning the curriculum policy somehow being strengthened?

8. What are the current needs regarding provisioning and fostering of A&C knowledge and understanding?

9. What recommendation would you suggest regarding the future on-going training of A&C teachers to make the classroom practice of this learning area more effective?

10. Do you think there exist currently a constant need for the establishment of an A&C network in your district where the exchange of important curricular information can take place on a continual basis?

APPENDIX C

Interview questionnaire

A. Biographical data

6. How long have you been teaching A&C?

7. What is your A&C or non-specific qualification (and in what other subject did you major)?

8. Are you the only teacher in the A&C learning area?

9. Have you attended in-service training provided by the WCED?

B. General curriculum and practice

10. What is your opinion of the combinations developed for the A&C learning area (consisting of four sub-disciplines in one area)?

11. Do you have a specific classroom for your learning area work?

12. Is your school resourced to provide A&C as a learning area, in line with the prescriptions contained in the policy document?

13. How many periods per week/cycle are made available for A&C at your school?

C. Personal practice

14. How do you spread the learning area subsections in your own practice?

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15. Are you, in your opinion, managing to do justice to the work? Provide a brief explanation of your answer.

16. What are the main 'opportunities' for making A&C work as a curriculum area in your school?

17. What, if any, are the impediments (hindrances) to making A&C a reality and meaningful learning area in your school?

D. General

18. What, in your opinion, would help you make the curriculum for A&C work at your school?

19. What is needed to make A&C work in your district?

20. Do you think A&C is an important learning area in the school curriculum?

21. Do you wish to make any general comments in regard to A&C?

APPENDIX D

Open-ended questionnaire (look at the numbering here and alignment)

1. What are your views and feelings regarding the future of A&C education in South Africa; in general and in your personal, particular case?
2. How were you informed of the curriculum policy change (NCS)?
3. What is your opinion of the curriculum policy change (NCS)?
4. What is your understanding of policy?
5. What does policy mean to you?

    1. How do you experience curriculum policy change?
    2. How do you feel about curriculum policy change?
    3. How do teachers adapt to policy change?
    4. Which learning opportunities were provided for you to construct an interpretation of the policy and its implications for your classroom behaviour?
    5. How does curriculum policy change affect the teaching morale?
    6. To what extent, or how could you as a teacher impact or influence curriculum policy change, both positively and/or negatively?
    7. How does curriculum policy change influence your teaching activities in the A&C classroom?